Setting the Stage - Americans in the Mid-1800s

In 1787, "in Order to form a more perfect Union, " a group of political leaders wrote the Constitution of the United States. Some 50 years later, however, some people believed that the Union was still far from perfect. Most of them were not political leaders. Instead, they were everyday Americans—men and women, black and white, ministers and teachers.

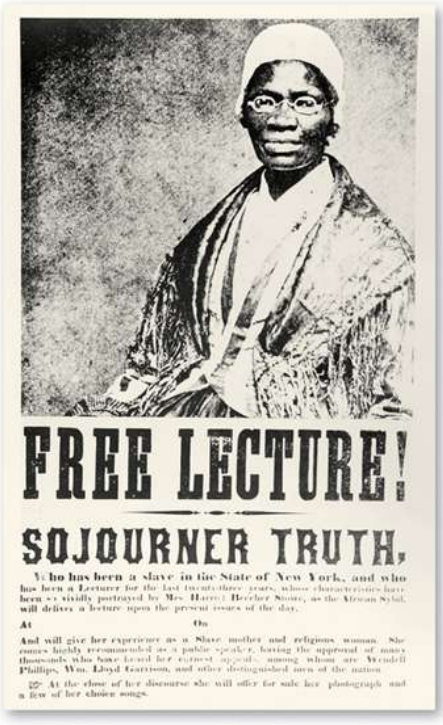
From the 1830s through the 1850s, these reformers tried to improve American society in many ways. Some of their efforts met with great resistance. One of the most controversial issues was the struggle to end slavery. Many Northerners, as well as many white Southerners, thought slavery was morally wrong. However, the South's economy depended on slave labor. Over time, that dependence grew.

The Constitution banned the importation of slaves starting in 1808. Yet, as white Southerners moved westward, the demand for slave labor increased. This demand was met by the natural growth of slave populations in older parts of the South. Slaveholders in these areas sold slaves to buyers from other regions. The map on the opposite page shows the cities where much of this slave trade took place. It also shows how slavery spread west. The map below shows the distribution of the slave population in 1860.

In this unit, you will learn about the movement to end slavery and about other attempts at reform. You will also learn about Northern and Southern society, including differences in the lives of free African Americans and slaves. Finally, you will learn about the economies of the North and South and why they made the end of slavery so difficult to achieve.

Section 1 - Introduction

In 1851, a group of people gathered in a church in Ohio to discuss the rights of women. A tall African American woman made her way through the crowd and sat down. Her name was Sojourner Truth. A former slave, she had learned to pay careful attention to white people. Now she listened as whites discussed whether women should have the same rights as men.


FREE LECTURE!

SOJOURNER TRUTH,

Who has been a slave in the State of New York, and who has been a Lecturer for the last twenty-three years, whose characteristics have been so vividly portrayed by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, as the African Sybil, will deliver a lecture upon the present issues of the day.

At On

And will give her experience as a Slave mother and religious woman. She comes highly recommended as a public speaker, having the approval of many thousands who have heard her earnest appeals, among whom are Wendell Phillips, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, and other distinguished men of the nation.

☞ At the close of her discourse she will offer for sale her photograph and a few of her choice songs.

Truth heard one speaker after another explain that women didn't need more rights because they weren't smart or strong enough to do much besides raise children. Women, they argued, needed help from men. One man summed it up by saying, "Women are weak."

Truth had heard enough. She rose slowly to her feet and walked to the pulpit. The room grew quiet as everyone waited for her to speak.

"That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and have the best place everywhere," she began. "Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place!"

Her voice rose to a thunderous pitch. "And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head [outdo] me. And ain't I a

woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it— and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen them most all sold into slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me. And ain't I a woman?"

When she finished, people applauded. Some cried. One witness said, "She had taken us up in her strong arms and carried us safely."

Sojourner Truth represented two of the great reform movements in America in the 1800s: the movement for women's equality and the movement to end slavery. Between about 1820 and 1850, many Americans devoted themselves to such causes as ending slavery, promoting women's rights, and improving education. In this chapter, you will learn to what extent these reform movements improved life for Americans.

Section 2 - The Spirit of Reform

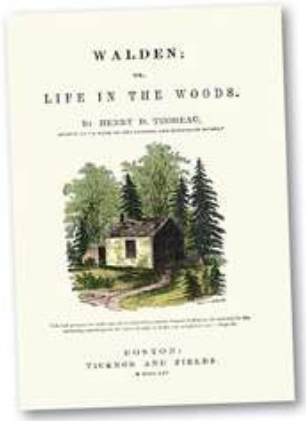
It was fitting that the meeting attended by Sojourner Truth took place in a church. New religious movements played a key role in inspiring thousands of Americans to try to **reform [reform: to make change in order to bring about improvement, end abuses, or correct injustices]** society.

The Second Great Awakening A revival of religious feeling swept across the nation from the 1800s to the 1840s. Church leaders called this period the **Second Great Awakening [Second Great Awakening: a revival of religious feeling and belief from the 1800s to the 1840s]** . Day after day, people gathered in churches and big white tents to hear messages of hope. Preachers like Charles G. Finney, a leader of the movement, urged Christians to let themselves be "filled with the Spirit of God." Their listeners prayed, shouted, and sang hymns. Sometimes they cried for hours or fell down in frenzies.

Like the Great Awakening during the 1730s and 1740s, this religious revival appealed to people's emotions. But the Second Great Awakening offered something new. In the past, most Christian ministers had said that God had already decided who would be saved. Now many preachers said everyone could gain forgiveness for their sins. Many of them taught that doing good works could help them to be saved.

This optimistic message attracted enthusiastic followers throughout the West and North. It gave men and women alike a reason to work for the improvement of society. Charles Finney's preaching, for example, inspired many people to oppose slavery.

Optimistic Ideas Other optimistic ideas also inspired Americans during this time. In New England, Ralph Waldo Emerson, a former minister, was the central figure in a movement called **transcendentalism [transcendentalism: a philosophy emphasizing that people should transcend, or go beyond, logical thinking to reach true understanding, with the help of emotions and intuition]** . Emerson believed that every human being has unlimited potential. But to realize their godlike nature, people have to transcend, or go beyond, purely logical thinking. They can find the answers to life's mysteries only by learning to trust their emotions and **intuition [intuition: to know or understand based on feeling, not facts]** .



Transcendentalists added to the spirit of reform by urging people to question society's rules and institutions. Do not **conform [conform: to obey established rules and patterns]** to others' expectations, they said. If you want to find God—and your own true self—look to nature and the "God within."

Emerson's friend Henry David Thoreau captured this new **individualism [individualism: to act based on one's own beliefs]** in a famous essay. "If a man does not keep pace with his companions," wrote Thoreau, "perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears."

Thoreau practiced what he preached. In 1845, he went into the woods near Concord, Massachusetts, to live alone and as close to nature as possible. Thoreau spent more than two years in solitude, recording his thoughts in a 6,000-page journal. In 1846, he was jailed overnight for refusing to pay taxes because of his opposition to the government's involvement in the Mexican-American War.

Model Communities While Thoreau tried to find the ideal life in solitude, other transcendentalists tried to create ideal communities. In 1841, George Ripley started a community called Brook Farm near Boston. Residents at Brook Farm tried to live in "brotherly cooperation" instead of competing with each other, as people in the larger society did. They shared the labor of supporting themselves by farming, teaching, and making clothes.

Brook Farm was only one of hundreds of model communities started by reformers in the first half of the 1800s. Most of these experiments lasted only a few years. But they were a powerful expression of the belief that people of good will could create an ideal society.

Section 3 - Prison Reform

One day in 1841, a Boston woman named Dorothea Dix agreed to teach Sunday school at a jail. What she witnessed that day changed her life forever.

Dix was horrified to see that many prisoners were bound in chains and locked in cages. Children accused of minor thefts were jailed with adult criminals. Were conditions this bad everywhere?

Dix **devoted [devoted: to give time, money, or effort to help a person or cause]** herself to finding out the answer to her question. She visited hundreds of jails and prisons throughout Massachusetts. She also visited debtors' prisons, or jails for people who owed money. Most of the thousands of Americans in debtors' prisons owed less than 20 dollars. While they were locked up, they could not earn money to repay their debts. As a result, they remained imprisoned for years.

Treatment of the Mentally Ill What shocked Dix most of all was the way mentally ill people were treated. Most were locked in dirty, crowded prison cells. If they misbehaved, they were whipped.

Dix and other reformers believed that the mentally ill needed treatment and care, not punishment. Massachusetts had one private asylum, or hospital for the mentally ill. Only the wealthy could afford to send a family member there. Even so, the asylum was filled to overflowing.

Campaigning for Better Conditions For two years, Dix gathered information about the horrors she had seen. Then she prepared a detailed report for the Massachusetts state legislature. "I come as the advocate of helpless, forgotten, insane . . . men and women," she said. "I proceed . . . to call your attention to the present state of insane persons, confined . . . in cages, closets, cellars, stalls, pens! Chained, naked, beaten with rods, and lashed into obedience!" Shocked by Dix's report, the lawmakers voted to create public asylums for the mentally ill.

Dix visited prisons in other states as well. After she prepared reports demanding humane treatment for the mentally ill, those states also created special mental hospitals.

Dix continued campaigning for prison reform for the rest of her life. By the time she died in 1887, state governments no longer put debtors in prison. Most states had created special justice systems for children in trouble. Many had outlawed cruel punishments, such as branding people with hot irons. Dix had shown that reformers could lead society to make significant changes.

Section 4 - Education Reform

A second reform movement that won support in the 1800s was the effort to make education available to more children. The man who would become known as "the father of American public schools," Horace Mann, led this movement.

The Need for Public Schools As a boy in Massachusetts in the early 1800s, Horace Mann attended school only ten weeks a year. The rest of the time, he had to work on his family's farm.

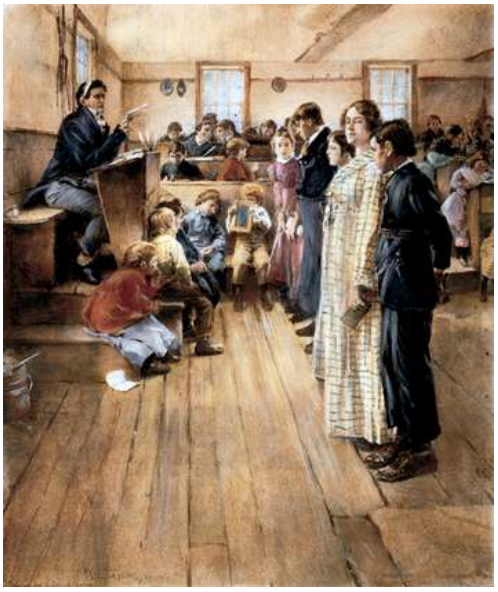
Mann was lucky to have even this limited time in school. In Massachusetts, Puritans had established town schools, but few other areas had public schools, or schools paid for by taxes. Wealthy parents sent their children to private schools or hired

tutors. On the frontier, 60 children might attend a part-time, one-room school. Their teachers had limited education and received little pay. Most children simply did not go to school at all.

In the cities, some poor children stole, destroyed property, and set fires. Reformers believed that education would help these children escape poverty and become good citizens. Influenced by the need for education in its big cities, New York set up public elementary schools in every town as early as the 1820s.

Meanwhile, in Massachusetts, Mann became the state's supervisor of education. In towns and villages, he spoke out on the need for public schools. "Our means of education," he stated, "are the grand machinery by which the 'raw material' of human nature can be worked up into inventors and discoverers, into skilled artisans and scientific farmers."

Citizens in Massachusetts responded to Mann's message. They voted to pay taxes to build better schools, to provide teachers with higher salaries, and to establish special training schools for teachers.



An Unfinished Reform By 1850, many states in the North and West used Mann's ideas. Soon most white children, especially boys, attended free public schools.

But states still did not offer public education to everyone. Most high schools and colleges did not admit girls. States as far north as Illinois passed laws to keep African Americans out of public schools. When towns did allow blacks to attend school, most made them go to separate schools that received less money. In the South, few girls and no African Americans could attend public schools.

Education for girls and women did make some progress. In 1837, Oberlin College in Ohio became the first college to admit women as well as men. When states opened the first public universities in the 1860s, most accepted female students.

African Americans, however, had few options. When Prudence Crandall admitted a black student to her girls' school in Connecticut in 1833, white parents took their children out of the school. Crandall responded by opening a school for African American girls. Angry white people threw stones at the school and had Crandall jailed. In 1834, she was forced to close her school.

Horace Mann realized that much more needed to be done to increase educational opportunities for women and African Americans. In 1853, he became the first president of a new college for men and women, Antioch College in Ohio. There, he urged his students to become involved in improving society. "Be ashamed to die," he told them, "until you have won some victory for humanity."

Section 5 - The Movement to End Slavery

In 1835, a poster appeared on walls throughout Washington, D.C. The poster showed two drawings. One drawing, labeled "The Land of the Free," showed the founding fathers reading the Declaration of Independence. The other, labeled "The Home of the Oppressed," showed slaves trudging past the U.S. Capitol building, the home of Congress. The poster posed a challenging question: How could America, the "land of the free," still allow slavery? By the 1830s, growing numbers of people were asking this question. These people were called **abolitionists [abolitionist: a person who supported abolition, or the ending of slavery]** .

The Struggle Begins Some Americans had opposed slavery even before the American Revolution began. Quakers stopped owning slaves in 1776. By 1792, every state as far south as Virginia had antislavery societies.

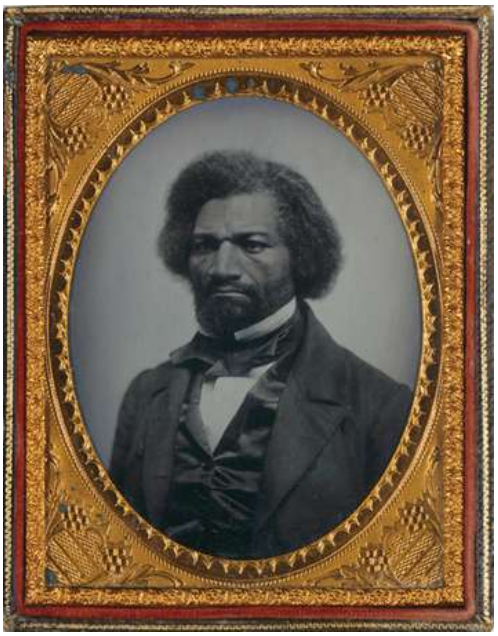
Congress passed a law that ended the Atlantic slave trade in 1808. Once it became illegal to import slaves, Northern shipping communities had no more interest in slavery. Northern textile mills, however, wanted the cheap cotton that slave labor in the South provided. Although slavery ended in the North by the early 1800s, many Northerners still accepted slavery.

Abolitionists wanted to end slavery, but they did not always agree about how to do it. Some abolitionists tried to inspire slaves to rise up in revolt. Others wanted to find a peaceful way to end slavery immediately. Still others wanted to give slaveholders time to develop farming methods that didn't rely on slave labor.

From its earliest days, both blacks and whites worked in the abolition movement, sometimes together, sometimes separately. Black activists often kept their distance from their white counterparts. One African American journalist remarked, "As long as we let them think and act for us . . . they will outwardly treat us as men, while in their hearts they still hold us as slaves."

In 1831, a deeply religious white man, William Lloyd Garrison, started a fiery abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*.

Braving the disapproval of many Northerners, Garrison demanded the immediate freeing of all slaves. "I will be as harsh as truth," he wrote. "I will not retreat a single inch—and I will be heard!" Angry proslavery groups destroyed Garrison's printing press and burned his house.



Frederick Douglass Speaks Out One day, Garrison heard an escaped slave, Frederick Douglass, speaking at a meeting of abolitionists. Over six feet tall, Douglass spoke with a voice like thunder. When he described the cruel treatment of enslaved children, people cried. When he made fun of ministers who told slaves to love slavery, people laughed. When he finished, Garrison jumped up and cried, "Shall such a man be held a slave in a Christian land?" The crowd called out, "No! No! No!"

Douglass quickly became a leader in the abolitionist movement. His autobiography, published in 1845, was an instant best seller. A brilliant and independent thinker, Douglass eventually started his own newspaper, *North Star*. Its motto read, "Right is of no Sex—Truth is of no Color—God is the Father of us all, and we are all Brethren [brothers]."

Women Get Involved Many women were inspired by religious reform movements to become involved in the fight against slavery. Like other abolitionists, they sometimes faced violence. When a young woman named Angelina Grimke spoke against slavery, an anti-abolition mob threw stones at her. When she kept speaking, they burned the building she was speaking in.

Angelina and her sister Sarah had been raised in a South Carolina slaveholding family. After traveling North and becoming Quakers, they saw slavery in a new way. In the 1830s, the two sisters began speaking out about the poverty and pain of slavery. At first, they spoke only to other women, but soon they were addressing large groups of men and women throughout the North. The Grimkes led the way for other women to speak in public.

Some abolitionists, like Sojourner Truth, were former slaves. Truth had always been strongly spiritual and had preached throughout the North at religious meetings and on street corners. When she met Douglass and Garrison, their enthusiasm inspired her to speak out loudly about slavery. An outstanding speaker, Truth argued that God would end slavery peacefully.

Abolitionists were a minority, even in the North. But their efforts, and the violence directed at them, helped change Northerners' attitudes toward slavery. In addition, the antislavery fight helped pave the way for the next great reform movement: the struggle for women's rights.

Section 6 - Equal Rights for Women

Women abolitionists were in a strange position. They were trying to convince lawmakers to make slavery illegal, yet they themselves could not vote or hold office. They worked to raise money for the movement, yet their fathers and husbands controlled their money and property. They spoke out against slave beatings, yet their husbands could discipline them however they wanted.

Even wealthy women like the Grimke sisters started to see that women and slaves had much in common. “What *then* can woman do for the slave,” asked Angelina Grimke, “when she is herself under the feet of man and shamed into silence?”

The Movement Begins The organized movement for women’s rights was sparked by the friendship between Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The two women met in 1840 at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. When they arrived, they were outraged to discover that women were not allowed to speak at the meeting. The men who ran the convention made women sit in the balcony, behind a curtain.

The men’s decision may have backfired, because it was in the balcony that Mott and Stanton met. At first glance, the two women seemed quite different. Mott was 47 years old, the mother of four children, and an active reformer. Inspired by the Grimke sisters and her Quaker faith, Mott had preached against slavery in both white and black churches. She had also helped Prudence Crandall try to find students for her school for black girls.

Stanton was 25 years old and newly married. She had never spoken in public. As a young girl, she had overheard women beg her father, a judge, to protect them from husbands who had beaten them. He had to tell them that there was no law against it. Later, she attended Troy Female Seminary, the nation’s first high school for girls. She knew from her history studies that the United States did not treat women fairly. When she met Mott in London, she readily agreed that something had to be done about the injustices suffered by women.

Unequal Treatment of Women Even a fine education like Stanton’s did not mean women would receive equal treatment. When Lucy Stone graduated from Oberlin College in 1847, the faculty invited her to write a speech. But a man would have to give the speech, since the school did not allow women to speak in public. Stone refused. After graduation, she spoke out for women’s rights. Because women could not vote, she refused to pay property taxes. “Women suffer taxation,” she said, “and yet have no representation.”

Stone’s sister-in-law, Elizabeth Blackwell, wanted to be a doctor. She had studied mathematics, science, and history. Yet she was rejected by 29 medical schools before one finally accepted her. In 1849, she graduated at the top of her class, becoming the country’s first female doctor. Still, no hospitals or doctors would agree to work with her.

To overcome such barriers, women would have to work together. By the time Stanton and Mott left London, they had decided “to hold a convention . . . and form a society to advocate the rights of women.”

The Seneca Falls Convention Eight years passed before Stanton and Mott met again. Over afternoon tea at the home of Mott’s sister, they decided to send a notice to the local newspaper announcing a women’s convention in Seneca Falls, New York. The organized movement for women’s rights was about to begin.

On July 19, 1848, nearly 300 people, including 40 men, arrived for the **Seneca Falls Convention [Seneca Falls Convention: the gathering of supporters of women’s rights in July 1848 that launched the movement for women’s right to vote]** . Many were abolitionists, Quakers, or other reformers. Some were local housewives, farmers, and factory workers.

The convention organizers modeled their proposal for women’s rights, the **Declaration of Sentiments [Declaration of Sentiments: a formal statement of injustices suffered by women, written by the organizers of the Seneca Falls Convention. Sentiments means “beliefs” or “convictions.”]** , on the Declaration of Independence. “We hold these truths to be self-evident,” the document began, “that all men and women are created equal.”

Just as the Declaration of Independence listed King George's acts of tyranny over the colonists, the new declaration listed acts of tyranny by men over women. Man did not let woman vote. He did not give her the right to own property. He did not allow her to practice professions like medicine and law.

Stanton's presentation of the declaration at the convention was her first speech. A few other women also spoke. One of them, Charlotte Woodward, was a 19-year-old factory worker. "Every fibre of my being," she said, "rebelled [against] all the hours that I sat and sewed gloves for a miserable pittance [small amount of money] which, as it was earned, could never be mine."

Debate About the Right to Vote The convention passed resolutions in favor of correcting the injustices listed in the Declaration of Sentiments. Then Stanton proposed that women demand the right to vote. For many, this step was too much. Even Mott cried, "Thou will make us ridiculous! We must go slowly."

At this point, Stanton received powerful support from another participant at the convention: Frederick Douglass. Everyone who believed that black men should have the right to vote, Douglass argued, must also favor giving black women the right to vote. And that meant all women should have this important right. Inspired by Douglass's speech, the convention voted narrowly to approve this last resolution.

The Legacy of Seneca Falls The Seneca Falls Convention helped to create an organized campaign for women's rights. Sojourner Truth, who would later mesmerize an audience with her "Ain't I a woman?" speech, became an active campaigner in the movement.

Stanton didn't like speaking at conventions, but she could write powerful speeches. She befriended Susan B. Anthony, a reformer with a flair for public speaking. While Stanton stayed in Seneca Falls to raise her children, Anthony traveled from town to town, speaking for women's rights. Of their lifelong teamwork, Stanton said, "I forged the thunderbolts, she fired them."

Slowly, reformers for women's rights made progress. New York gave women control over their property and wages. Massachusetts and Indiana passed more liberal divorce laws. Elizabeth Blackwell started her own hospital, which included a medical school to train other female doctors.

Other reforms, including the right to vote in all states, would take decades to become reality. Of all the women who signed the declaration at Seneca Falls, just one would live to vote for president legally: Charlotte Woodward.

Summary

In this chapter, you read about the reform movements in the United States from about 1820 to 1850.

The Spirit of Reform Many Americans were inspired by the Second Great Awakening, which emphasized the role of good works in the lives of Christians. Transcendentalist writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, who urged people to question society's rules and institutions, also inspired Americans. Some transcendentalists formed communities that attempted to create an ideal society of cooperation.

Prison Reform Dorothea Dix pioneered the reform of prisons and the treatment of people with mental illness. Her efforts led to improvements in state prison systems and the creation of public institutions and hospitals for the mentally ill.

Education Reform Horace Mann led the movement to make education freely available to all. His ideas led many Northern states to establish public schools. Education reform did not improve opportunities for most girls, women, and African Americans, however.

The Movement to End Slavery Inspired in part by religious revivalism, abolitionists worked to end the practice of slavery. Key leaders in the movement included William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Angelina and Sarah Grimke, and Sojourner Truth.

Equal Rights for Women The women's rights movement began with the Seneca Falls Convention and its Declaration of Sentiments. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized the convention. Susan B. Anthony was another key leader in the movement.

Evaluate the extent to which the reform movements of the mid-1800s improved life for Americans. For each reform movement, assign a grade. Then list two things the movement did well and two suggestions for improvement.

Reform Movement	Grade	Two Things the Movement Did Well	Two Suggestions for Improvement
Prison reform movement			
Education reform movement			
Abolitionist reform movement			
Women's rights movement			

Reading Further - Brook Farm and the Utopian Dream

In the early 1800s, social reformers were seeking ways to improve American life. Some were inspired by dreams of a perfect society. They formed model, or utopian, communities based on principles they believed would lead to a better world. One of the best known of these social experiments was Brook Farm in Massachusetts.

In April 1841, the writer Nathaniel Hawthorne became a resident at Brook Farm. He had not yet achieved the fame that would come with the publication of his novel *The Scarlet Letter*. But he was well known in Boston literary circles and had friends in the transcendentalist movement. Seeking a place to live and write, he decided to join the Brook Farm community.

Soon after his arrival, Hawthorne got his first taste of farm life."I have done wonders," he wrote about his first day of farm labor.

> *Before breakfast, I went out to the barn, and began to chop hay for the cattle . . . Then I brought wood and replenished the fires; and finally sat down to breakfast and ate up a huge mound of buckwheat cakes. After breakfast, Mr. Ripley put a four-pronged instrument into my hands, which he gave me to understand was called a pitch-fork; and he and Mr. Farley being armed with similar weapons, we all three commenced a gallant attack upon a heap of manure.*
>
> —Nathaniel Hawthorne, from a letter to Sophia Peabody, 1841

Hawthorne was not used to this kind of work, but he took to it with relish. He even referred to the manure pile as the "gold mine," in a joking effort to glorify farmwork. It was "a delectable way of life," he wrote. "We get up at half-past six, dine at half-past twelve, and go to bed at nine."

Brook Farm was one of more than a hundred utopian communities that sprang up across the country in the first half of the 1800s. The word *utopian* comes from the 16th-century book *Utopia*, which describes a perfect society on an imaginary island. These communities were all based on ideals and practices aimed at building a new society, free of social ills like poverty, crime, and injustice. Most of the communities had religious foundations. But even those that did not, like Brook Farm, were meant to create a kind of heaven on Earth.

The Origins of Brook Farm

George Ripley, a former minister, founded Brook Farm with his wife, Sophia, and several partners in March 1841. Ripley was concerned about the social problems he saw in urban, industrial America. He wanted to form a rural community where people could live a healthier life, in harmony with nature. He also wanted to bring different social classes together and help the working poor.

In a letter, Ripley expressed his goals for Brook Farm. It would be a place, he said, to "combine the thinker and the worker . . . in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom, by providing all with labor, adapted to their tastes and talents." He said that he hoped to "prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated persons, whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life."

In Ripley's vision, residents at Brook Farm would enjoy the benefits of physical labor. But they would also have time to take walks, create art and music, and converse. It would be the perfect blend of work and play. The community would support itself by selling goods produced on the farm. Everyone would share the profits equally.

These ideas reflected the era's reform spirit. But they also arose from the special features of the transcendentalist movement. Transcendentalists believed that people carried the light of God within them. They could experience that light by opening up to the beauties of nature and a simpler life.

Many young people at the time were also filled with the spirit of change, or what they called the "Newness." Freedom was in the air. Young men grew beards and let their hair grow long. They wore floppy hats and loose-fitting clothes. They embraced new ideas, such as vegetarian diets, and new ways of speaking. This sense of freedom was reflected at Brook Farm.

The farm itself was set in beautiful, rolling country just eight miles west of Boston. Its 170 acres were dotted with woods, pastures, and meadows. Running through the property was a little brook that gave the farm its name. A two-story farmhouse became the principal residence. Residents called it the "Hive" because it was the hub of activity. There was also a large barn with stalls for cattle and horses. Brook Farm was an ideal setting for a rural retreat.

Life on the Farm

Everyone at Brook Farm was expected to work. But they were free to choose the kind of work they did. Women could plow the fields, if they wanted, and men could do housework. All labor was "sacred, when done for a common interest," wrote one resident. Everyone was paid the same, and no one worked more than ten hours a day or six days a week. At the time, that was considered a short workweek.

Most residents seemed to enjoy work on the farm. One young woman, Marianne Dwight, took special pleasure in what she called "fancy work": sewing caps and other clothing for sale in Boston. She believed that the money and skills gained through this work would help aid the cause of women's rights. "We may start other branches of business," she wrote in a letter, "so that all our proceeds may be applied to the elevation of women forever . . . How the whole aspect of society will be changed!"

Residents at the farm did more than work. They also held dances, attended concerts and lectures, and performed in plays. During the winter, they enjoyed snow sports like skating and sledding.

Children attended a school on the farm. The quality of education was excellent, and the school soon attracted students from the surrounding area. The school became the farm's most profitable activity.

By the summer of 1842, 70 people were living at Brook Farm. Most were not permanent residents, however. Students and other temporary lodgers lived there as well. Many visitors also came to the farm, including such noted figures as the writers Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

Other visitors were less notable, and some were downright odd. There were "dreamers and schemers of all sorts," one resident wrote. For example, one visitor claimed he could survive without sleep, until he was caught snoring in the library. Another claimed to live on a diet of raw wheat. But he was found behind the barn one day, eating table scraps set out for the chickens.

Although visitors paid for their stay on the farm, they did not contribute labor. The farm had to add new buildings to house them. This placed a burden on the farm's finances.

The End of the Dream

In fact, Brook Farm's finances had never been solid. In the beginning, Ripley had asked members to invest in the farm, but few had done so. He had also hoped to sell farm products, but few residents had any farming experience. Furthermore, the farm's soils were not very good for growing crops. As a result, the farm was always short of money.

Residents began to drift away from the farm. Some complained of financial difficulties. Others tired of farmwork. Even Nathaniel Hawthorne lost his enthusiasm for farm life. He left after six months, saying he feared his soul might "perish under a dung-heap."

Concerned about the future, in 1844 Ripley and other residents decided to reorganize the farm. They established a new set of principles to promote small industry and put the farm on a firmer footing. They invited new members to join, including a number of craft workers and laborers. They also began construction of a new, much larger building and bought a steam engine to power new machinery. To pay for these improvements, the farm took out new loans.

Before long, however, tensions developed in the community. Some members insisted on holding religious services, which others opposed. Also, some of the new members complained of poor treatment by the original members. Creditors began to demand repayment of loans.

Difficulties were mounting when disaster struck. On March 3, 1846, a fire broke out in the new building and burned it to the ground. After that, more people chose to leave the community. The Ripleys and a handful of others stayed on until the fall of 1847. Then they, too, abandoned the farm.

Despite its short history, Brook Farm was not a total failure. It changed the lives of many of its members and influenced various reform movements, including the abolition and women's rights movements. It also inspired many people with its ideals of workplace equality and a simpler, more sustainable life. Those ideals live on today.

Preparing to Write: Making Generalizations

Throughout history, people have dreamed of having a perfect life. More than 2,000 years ago, the Greek philosopher Plato imagined an ideal society. Almost 500 years ago, an English statesman and author, Sir Thomas More, coined the term utopia from the Greek words meaning "no place." In other words, utopia was a dream but not a reality.

Nevertheless, people have not stopped trying to create perfect societies. The Americans who created Brook Farm were no exception.

1) Many utopian communities were formed in the first half of the 1800s. What were their goals?
2) Why did George Ripley want to combine thinking and working at Brook Farm?
3) How did Brook Farm reflect the beliefs of transcendentalists?

Writing a Commercial

Suppose you could start a utopian community. What goals would you have for the community? How would you attract other people to join you?

Create a storyboard for a one-minute television commercial about your utopian community. Your storyboard could contain sketches and words to show what will happen in the commercial. The goals of your commercial are to inform people about your utopian community and to attract people to live there.

Use this rubric to evaluate your storyboard. Make changes in your storyboard if you need to.

Score	Description
3	The storyboard clearly communicates the goals of the commercial. The commercial will strongly motivate prospective members of the community. There are no spelling or grammar errors.
2	The storyboard communicates the goals of the commercial. The commercial might motivate prospective members of the community. There are few spelling or grammar errors.
1	The storyboard does not communicate the goals of the commercial. The commercial will not motivate prospective members of the community. There are many spelling or grammar errors.

Enrichment Essay - Education in the United States 1: Schools and Schooling in Pre-Civil War America

Early American leaders agreed that the survival of democracy depended on an educated population. John Adams reminded his teenage son John Quincy that "the end of study is to make you a good man and a useful citizen." Thomas Jefferson believed that general education would "enable every man to judge for himself what will secure or endanger his freedom."

What would schools teach? The nation's founders made that clear in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which set the conditions for frontier lands to become new states. "Religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

Where Children Learned

Education changed little from the Revolutionary War to the 1840s. Wealthy children were taught at home by tutors. Poor children often received no schooling at all. But most children, especially in New England, went to village schools. Residents paid taxes to build a one-room schoolhouse and hire a teacher. Parents contributed additional money for firewood, textbooks, and other necessities.

Children sat on benches along the sides of the room, with the teacher's desk at the front and a stove in the middle. Pictures, maps, and blackboards were extremely rare. Sometimes there were dozens of students at different levels of learning. (There was no system of first grade, second grade, and so on.) The teacher had to keep all the children busy. If students misbehaved, the teacher could hit them with a rod, ruler, or lash.

Most students were boys. Some girls attended village schools, but girls often learned to read and write at home, if at all. The youngest girls might attend "dame schools," which were run by older women.

Few schools were in session as long as they are now. Usually the school year started around Thanksgiving and ended the following spring, when planting began.

What They Learned

In Protestant New England, religion and morality were part of almost every reading, writing, and arithmetic lesson. Students learned to read from the Bible and from textbooks loaded with moral messages. Noah Webster's *Elementary Spelling-book* was one widely used textbook. Here is one reading lesson:

As for those boys and girls that mind not their books, and love not the church and school, but play with such as tell lies, curse, swear and steal, they will come to some bad end, and must be whipt till they mend their ways.

(For more examples of 19th-century schoolbooks, see *The Progressive Era* Enrichment Essay-Primary Sources on American Education in the 19th Century.)

After reading, students sharpened their quill pens, made ink from black powder and water, and worked on their penmanship. There was no lined paper in those days, so the first lesson, when students had paper, was to draw straight lines across the page. Then the teacher had students write sayings like "Contentment is a virtue."

Spelling followed reading. The teacher spelled out words, and the students recited them back.

Then it was on to arithmetic. Math problems were often presented with references to the Bible. One typical problem asked, "Adam was 930 years old when he died, and 130 when Seth was born. How old was Seth when Adam died?"

The Decline of Village Schools

In the 1820s and 1830s, the Second Great Awakening swept the country. During this time of religious enthusiasm, many new Protestant sects were born, and they had different views of the Bible. To them, the morality taught in village schools was bland and ineffective.

An even bigger challenge to village schools came from immigration. Roman Catholics arrived in America mainly from Ireland and Germany. They soon discovered that American schools used the *King James* translation of the Bible, which was Protestant. Catholic parents had three unhappy choices. They could try to change America's traditional method of education. They could send their children to a school that taught Protestant beliefs. Or they could not send their children to school at all.

Horace Mann and other reformers solved these problems by creating free public schools. The public schools stuck to basic moral lessons like the Ten Commandments while avoiding religious ideas that caused conflict. Although some strong believers disliked Mann's compromise, they found it hard to refuse free public education.

Improving Education for Women

Both boys and girls attended public schools, but girls and women had fewer educational opportunities than their male counterparts. Most teachers believed that a woman's role was to be a wife and mother. Girls were generally not encouraged to go to high school or college unless they planned to be schoolteachers. Nor were they encouraged to study such subjects as history, mathematics, or the sciences.

Women reformers worked to change this situation. As early as 1814, teacher Emma Willard opened a boarding school in Vermont where girls learned mathematics, philosophy, history, and other subjects. In 1821, the city of Troy, New York, gave Willard money to start the Troy Female Seminary. Now called the Emma Willard School, it boasts of being the first school in the country to give girls the same educational opportunities as boys.

Another reformer, Mary Lyon, believed passionately that women needed and deserved higher education as much as men did. In 1834, she retired from teaching to start a college that would offer women the same kind of education that was available in men's colleges. Lyon worked hard to gather support and raise money. Three years later, she opened the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. Located in Massachusetts, Mount Holyoke became a model for other women's colleges. Today, Mount Holyoke College educates women for positions of leadership in society.

The work of reformers like Willard and Lyon created new educational opportunities for girls and women. Still, men continued to dominate many occupations and fields of study. In the second half of the 20th century, a new women's movement championed true equality for women in both educational and occupational opportunity.

1) Why did early American leaders believe education was so important?
2) How would you describe schools from the time of the Revolution to about 1840?
3) What was Horace Mann's solution to disagreements about the teaching of morality and religion?
4) In what ways did educational opportunities grow for females in the years before 1850?

Enrichment Essay - Primary Sources on American Education in the 19th Century

How did Americans of the 19th century view education? One good way to find out is to look at primary-source documents.

In this essay, you will find two kinds of documents. Document Sets 1 and 2 contain writings about the importance of education. Document Sets 3 and 4 illustrate the kinds of materials that were used in classrooms. Together, these documents reveal some of the teaching philosophies and methods of early American education.

Document Set 1: Joseph Lancaster Promotes Education Among the Poor

Early education in the United States was often based on a teaching method that featured one teacher working with a few students. This method was expensive, and it was unavailable to many children.

Englishman Joseph Lancaster experimented with teaching large numbers of poor children. In 1818, he brought his techniques to the United States.

Lancaster's plan was to gather a large number of students—as many as 1,000—in a single room. The students were lined up in rows. Quiet and discipline were strictly enforced.

In Lancaster's schools, older students served as unpaid monitors. The monitors went from row to row with a highly organized manual of instruction to coach the large mass of students.

Lancaster's model meshed well with American beliefs in equality of opportunity and the importance of education. His schools convinced some people that education could be affordably offered to a mass audience. In this way, Lancaster helped lay the foundation for offering free, public education to all American children.

Here are some passages from a book Lancaster wrote in 1803. The passages describe some of his methods. Imagine being a student, a mentor, or a teacher in a Lancastrian school. As you read, think about what your daily life would have been like.

Lancaster on Books to Be Used in His Schools

> *The books made use of in this school, as reading lessons, are the Bible, Testament, Turner's Introduction to the Arts and Sciences, Trimmer's Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature and Reading the Scriptures, Martinet's Catechism of Nature, and Watts's Hymns for Children.*

Lancaster on How to Educate Many Students at the Same Time

> *Now these twenty boys, if they were at a common school, would each have a book, and, one at a time, would read or spell to their teacher, while the other nineteen were looking at their books, or about them, as they pleased: or, if their eyes are rivetted on their books, by terror and coercion, can we be sure that the attention of their minds is engaged as appearance seems to speak it is. On the contrary, when they have slates, the twentieth boy may read to the teacher, while the other nineteen are spelling words on the slate, instead of sitting idle. The class, by this means, will spell, write, and read at the same instant of time. In addition to this, the same trouble which teaches twenty will suffice to teach sixty or a hundred, by employing some of the senior boys to inspect the slates of the others, they not omitting to spell the word themselves.... This experiment has been repeatedly practised by 112 and 128 boys at once.*

Lancaster on a System of Rewards for Students

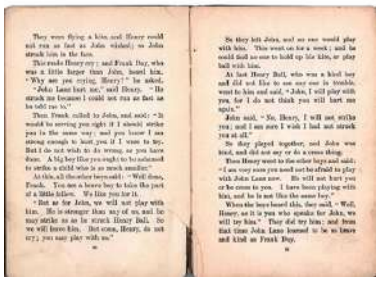
> *Commendation [praise], joined to a consciousness of merit, has a powerful effect; of this I was aware, I therefore engaged the bookbinder to make some leather tickets, gilt and lettered differently, expressive of the various degrees of merit they were intended to distinguish; these were suspended, by a small piece of ribbon, from the button of the wearer's coat, as a badge of peculiar approbation [approval]..... We have near two hundred of these tickets. As to the method of distributing them, I inspect the writing, arithmetic, &c. and distribute paper tickets, No. 1, 2, 3, &c. according to merit.*
>
> *This number, one, two, three, &c. is a small, square piece of paper, numbered, corresponding with a similar number of the gilt commendatory ticket the bearer is to receive: he carries this to the monitor appointed for that purpose, who gives him the ticket he is entitled to, and registers it in a book. When a scholar has, by merit, obtained a fixed quota of those numbers and commendatory tickets, he is entitled to a prize of an appropriate value.... The prizes consist of bats, balls, and kites, &c. &c. in great variety; —thus they are kept on the tip-toe of expectation.*

Document Set 2: Horace Mann Speaks Out

Horace Mann was an important advocate for free public schools. Here are three passages from a report he wrote in 1848. As you read, think about this question: How did Mann believe that education could improve the nation's social and political life?

> *If one class possesses all the wealth and the education, while the residue [rest] of society is ignorant and poor, it matters not by what name the relation between them may be called: the latter, in fact and in truth, will be the servile dependents [servants] and subjects of the former. But, if education be equally diffused [spread], it will draw property after it by the strongest of all attractions; for such a thing never did happen, and never can happen, as that an intelligent and practical body of men should be permanently poor….*
>
> *Education… is a great equalizer of the conditions of men—the balance wheel of the social machinery. [It] gives each man the independence and the means by which he can resist the selfishness of other men. It does better than to disarm the poor of their hostility toward the rich: it prevents being poor…. The spread of education, by enlarging the cultivated class or caste, will open a wider area over which the social feelings will expand; and, if this education should be universal and complete, it would do more than all things else to obliterate [erase] factitious [artificial] distinctions in society.*
>
> *[The] establishment of a republican government, without well-appointed and efficient means for the universal education of the people, is the most rash and foolhardy experiment ever tried by man. Such a Republic may grow in numbers and in wealth…. Its armies may be invincible, and its fleets may strike terror into nations on the opposite sides of the globe, at the same hour…. But if such a Republic be devoid of [without] intelligence, such a Republic, with all its noble capacities for beneficence [ability to do good], will rush with the speed of a whirlwind to an ignominious [shameful] end; and all good men of after-times would be fain [eager] to weep over its downfall, did not their scorn and contempt at its folly and its wickedness, repress all sorrow for its fate.*

Document Set 3: McGuffey Readers Enter America's Schools



William McGuffey was a teacher and a preacher who created readers (a kind of textbook) for use in grade schools. The readers taught young people the value of patriotism and morality along with reading and vocabulary.

First published in the 1830s, McGuffey's readers were used by millions of students during the 19th century. Here are some pages from one of McGuffey's readers. How are they similar to materials you have learned from? How are they different?

Document Set 4: Elocution Exercises

Public speaking was considered an important citizenship skill in the 19th century. In public schools, students were expected to study and memorize speeches as a part of their training. They polished their skills through elocution (clear speaking) exercises.

Here is an example of a beginning elocution exercise. After mastering basic sounds, students went on to more advanced lessons in pronunciation and clear speaking.

TABLE OF ELEMENTARY SOUNDS.

The elements in the following table must be uttered by the teacher first, and then by the class individually, or in concert. In order to give each element correctly, pronounce the word containing it distinctly and forcibly, and then utter the element alone; as *ape*, *a*¹; *arm*, *a*²; *bat*, *b*, &c. Let the practice upon this table be continued until every elementary sound can be uttered correctly and promptly.

Vocals.

	ELEMENT.		ELEMENT.
1. a, as in ape, is marked	a¹	9. o, as in old, is marked	o³
2. a, " arm, "	a²	10. o, " do, "	o²
3. a, " all, "	a³	11. o, " on, "	o¹
4. a, " at, "	a⁴	12. u, " mute, "	u³
5. e, " me, "	e¹	13. u, " up, "	u²
6. e, " met, "	e²	14. u, " full, "	u¹
7. i, " ice, "	i¹	15. oi, " oil, "	oi
8. i, " it, "	i²	16. ou, " out, "	ou

Subvocals.

	ELEMENT.		ELEMENT.
17. b, as in bib,	b	25. v, as in van,	v
18. d, " did,	d	26. w, " we,	w
19. g, " gay,	g	27. y, " yes,	y
20. j, " joy,	j	28. z, " zone,	z
21. l, " lad,	l	29. z, " azure,	z
22. m, " man,	m	30. th, " thy,	th
23. n, " no,	n	31. ng, " song,	ng
24. r, " run,	r		

Another publication that aimed to develop public speaking skills was the *Columbian Orator* . (An *orator* is a public speaker.) The *Orator* first appeared in the late 1700s. It provided examples of actual speeches for students to study. New editions of the *Columbian Orator* are still published today.

Here is a page showing part of a speech that 19th-century students studied as a model:

PRACTICAL PIECES FOR SPEAKING,

CONSISTING OF

ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, EXHORTATIONS FROM THE PULPIT, PLEADINGS AT THE BAR, SUBLIME DESCRIPTIONS, DEBATES, DECLAMATIONS, GRAVE AND HUMOROUS DIALOGUES, POETRY, &c. VARIOUSLY INTERSPERSED.

EXTRACT FROM AN ORATION ON ELOQUENCE, PRONOUNCED AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY, ON COMMENCEMENT DAY, 1794.

THE excellence, utility, and importance of ELOQUENCE; its origin, progress, and present state; and its superior claim to the particular attention of Columbia's free born sons, will exercise for a few moments the patience of this learned, polite, and respected assembly.

Speech and reason are the characteristics, the glory, and the happiness of man. These are the pillars which support the fair fabric of eloquence; the foundation, upon which is erected the most magnificent edifice, that genius could design, or art construct. To cultivate eloquence, then, is to improve the noblest faculties of our nature, the richest talents with which we are entrusted. A more convincing proof of the dignity and importance of our subject need not, cannot be advanced.

The benevolent design and the beneficial effects of eloquence, evince its great superiority over every other art, which ever exercised the ingenuity of man. To instruct, to persuade, to please; these are its objects.

Answer these questions for Document Set 1 in the student text

1) Who was Joseph Lancaster?
2) Why did Lancaster's schooling ideas appeal to Americans?
3) Imagine you are a student in one of Lancaster's schools, or one based on his ideas. What might a day be like for you?

Answer these questions for Document Set 2 in the student text

1) Who was Horace Mann?
2) List four reasons, using Mann's own words, that explain why education is important.

Answer these questions for Document Set 3 in the student text

1) Who was Williams McGuffey?
2) What themes did his readers promote?
3) What moral (lesson) was McGuffey trying to teach in the story of John Lane?

Answer these questions for Document Set 4 in the student text

1) What are elocution exercises?
2) What was the Columbian Orator ?
3) Are teachers and parents still concerned about elocution? How do we teach about elocution today?