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By the 1820s, America's white citizenry had embraced the republican political order. Their nation stood forth as a "promised land of civil liberty, and of institutions designed to liberate and exalt the human race," declared a Kentucky judge. White Americans were indeed fortunate. They lived under a representative republican government, free from arbitrary taxation and from domination by an established church. The timing of the deaths of aging political leaders John Adams and Thomas Jefferson seemed to many Americans to confirm that God looked with favor on their experiment in self-government. What other than divine intervention could explain their nearly simultaneous deaths on July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence?

Inspired by their political freedom, many citizens sought to extend republican principles throughout their society. But what were those principles? For entrepreneurial-minded merchants, farmers, and political leaders, republicanism meant a dynamic market economy based on the private ownership of property and capital. However, they welcomed legislative policies that assisted private business and, they claimed, enhanced the "common wealth" of the society. Other Americans in the northern states championed democratic republican cultural values, such as equality in the family and in social relationships. In the southern states, sharply divided by class and race, politicians and pamphleteers endorsed aristocratic republicanism. It stressed liberty for whites rather than equality for all.

Yet another vision of American republicanism emerged from the Second Great Awakening, religious revivals that swept the nation between 1790 and 1850. As Alexis de Tocqueville reported in *Democracy in America* (1835), the Second Great Awakening gave "the Christian religion . . . a greater influence over the souls of men" than in any other country. Moreover, religious enthusiasm—what Methodist bishop McIlvaine praised as "the quickening of the people of God to a spirit and walk becoming the gospel"—prompted social reform on many fronts. For those who embraced the Awakening, the United States was both a great experiment in republican government and a Christian civilization destined to redeem the world—a moral mission that would inform American diplomacy in the centuries to come.

IDENTIFY THE BIG IDEA

In eighteenth-century Europe, the leading principles were aristocracy, patriarchy, mercantilism, arranged marriages, legal privilege, and established churches. What principles would replace those societal rules in America's new republican society?



Mrs. Hugh McCurdy and Her Daughters This 1806 portrait of Grace Allison McCurdy and her daughters, Mary Jane and Letitia Grace, excludes her husband, the Baltimore merchant Hugh McCurdy, suggesting the increased cultural focus on mothers and children in the early republic. A few years earlier, the artist, Joshua Johnson (or Johnston, c. 1763–c. 1824), had painted a solo portrait of Letitia Grace. Here Johnson links Mrs. McCurdy and her elder daughter visually with a splash of vibrant red fruit near their laps, which probably also serves as a symbol of their fertility. Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA/Museum Purchase through the gifts of William Wilson Corcoran, Elizabeth Donner Norment, Francis Biddle, Erich Cohn, Hardinge Scholle and the William A. Clark Fund/The Bridgeman Art Library.

The Capitalist Commonwealth

What did republicanism mean for economic life? In early-nineteenth-century America, it meant private property, market exchange, individual opportunity, and activist governments. Throughout the nation, and especially in the Northeast, republican state legislatures embraced a “**neomercantilist**” system of government-assisted economic development. And it worked. Beginning around 1800, the average per capita income of Americans increased by more than 1 percent a year — more than 30 percent in a single generation.

Banks, Manufacturing, and Markets

America was “a Nation of Merchants,” a British visitor reported from Philadelphia in 1798, “keen in the pursuit of wealth in all the various modes of acquiring it.” Acquire it they did, making spectacular profits as the wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon (1793–1815) crippled European firms. Merchants John Jacob Astor and Robert Oliver became the nation’s first millionaires. After working for an Irish-owned linen firm in Baltimore, Oliver struck out on his own, achieving affluence by trading West Indian sugar and coffee. Astor, who migrated from Germany to New York in 1784, began by selling dry-goods in western New York and became wealthy by carrying furs from the Pacific Northwest to China and investing in New York City real estate (Thinking Like a Historian, p. 252).

Banking and Credit To finance their ventures, Oliver, Astor, and other merchants needed capital, from either their own savings or loans. Before the Revolution, farmers relied on government-sponsored land banks for loans, while merchants arranged partnerships or obtained credit from British suppliers. Then, in 1781, Philadelphia merchants persuaded the Confederation Congress to charter the Bank of North America, and traders in Boston and New York soon founded similar institutions that raised funds and lent them out. “Our monied capital has so much increased from the Introduction of Banks, & the Circulation of the Funds,” Philadelphia merchant William Bingham boasted in 1791, “that the Necessity of Soliciting Credits from England will no longer exist.”

That same year, Federalists in Congress chartered the Bank of the United States to issue notes and make commercial loans (Chapter 7, p. 218). By 1805, the bank had branches in eight seaport cities, profits that averaged a handsome 8 percent annually, and clients



A Cloth Merchant, 1789

Originally a prosperous storekeeper in New Milford, Connecticut, Elijah Boardman (1760–1832) eventually became a U.S. senator. Like other American traders during the 1780s, he imported huge quantities of cloth from Britain. When the wars of the 1790s cut off trade, some merchants financed the domestic production of textiles. Others, including Boardman, turned to land speculation. In 1795, he joined the Connecticut Land Company and bought huge tracts in Connecticut’s Western Reserve, including the present towns of Medina, Palmyra, and Boardman, Ohio. Ralph Earl painted this portrait in 1789.

© The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image Source: Art Resource/NY.

with easy access to capital. As trader Jesse Atwater noted, “the foundations of our [merchant] houses are laid in bank paper.”

However, Jeffersonians attacked the bank as an unconstitutional expansion of federal power. Moreover, they claimed it promoted “a consolidated, energetic government supported by public creditors, speculators, and other insidious men.” When the bank’s twenty-year charter expired in 1811, the Jeffersonian Republican-dominated Congress refused to renew it.



The China Trade

Following the Revolution, New England merchants traded actively with the major Asian manufacturing centers of China and India. In this painting by George Chinnery (1774–1852), the American flag flies prominently, alongside other national banners, in front of the warehouse district in Canton (modern Guangzhou). There, merchants exchanged bundles of American furs for cargoes of Chinese tea, silks, and porcelain plates, cups, and serving dishes. © Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts, USA/The Bridgeman Art Library.

Merchants, artisans, and farmers quickly persuaded state legislatures to charter banks—in Pennsylvania, no fewer than 41. By 1816, when Congress (now run by National Republicans) chartered a new national bank (known as the Second Bank of the United States), there were 246 state-chartered banks with tens of thousands of stockholders and \$68 million in banknotes in circulation. These state banks were often shady operations that issued notes without adequate specie reserves, made loans to insiders, and lent generously to farmers buying overpriced land.

Dubious banking policies helped bring on the **Panic of 1819** (just as they caused the financial crisis of 2008), but broader forces were equally important. As the Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815, Americans sharply increased their consumption of English woolen and cotton goods. However, in 1818, farmers and planters faced an abrupt 30 percent drop in world agricultural

prices. The price of raw cotton in South Carolina fell from 34 to 15 cents a pound, and as Britain closed the West Indies to American trade, wheat prices plummeted as well. As farmers' income declined, they could not pay debts owed to stores and banks, many of which went bankrupt. "A deep shadow has passed over our land," lamented one New Yorker, as land prices dropped by 50 percent. The panic gave Americans their first taste of a business cycle, the periodic boom and bust inherent to an unregulated market economy.

Rural Manufacturing The Panic of 1819 devastated artisans and farmers who sold goods in regional or national markets. Before 1800, many artisans worked part-time and bartered their handicrafts locally. A French traveler in Massachusetts found many "men who are both cultivators and artisans," while in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, clockmaker John Hoff exchanged



The Entrepreneur and the Community

Americans of the early republic believed that with hard work and virtue, even the lowliest of white men might rise to economic and political respectability, if not prominence. In the Revolutionary generation, Benjamin Franklin, born into a large and impoverished Boston family, had become a successful businessman and an international celebrity. Franklin's success reflected the optimism that laboring men felt when contemplating the new nation's seemingly boundless opportunity.

1. **Banner of the Society of Pewterers of the City of New York, carried in the Federal Procession, July 23, 1788, celebrating the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.** *The ribbon at top right reads "The Federal Plan Most Solid & Secure/Americans Their Freedom Will Endure/All Art Shall Flourish in Columbia's Land/And All her Sons Join as One Social Band."*



Source: © Collection of the New York Historical Society, USA/The Bridgeman Art Library.

2. **John Jacob Astor quoted in Elbert Hubbard, *Little Journeys to the Homes of Great Business Men*, 1909.** *John Jacob Astor's (1763–1848) story is a parable of American entrepreneurial triumph. Arriving in America in 1783 from Germany, Astor worked in the fur industry treating pelts and, with capital borrowed from his brother, started up a musical instrument shop and fur business in 1786. Over the next three decades, Astor's American Fur Company prospered by trading furs in China, making Astor America's first millionaire. Apparently influenced by Benjamin*

Franklin's aphorism "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy wealthy and wise," Astor wrote:

The man who makes it the habit of his life to go to bed at nine o'clock, usually gets rich and is always reliable. Of course, going to bed does not make him rich — I merely mean that such a man will in all probability be up early in the morning and do a big day's work . . . good habits in America make any man rich.

3. **Anonymous, "A Working Man's Recollections of America," *Knight's Penny Magazine*, 1846.** *A cabinetmaker penned this account after returning to England following an unsuccessful stint seeking success in New York.*

I was a cabinet-maker by trade, and one of the many who, between the years 1825–35, expatriated themselves in countless thousands, drawn by the promise of fair wages for faithful work, and driven by the scanty remuneration offered to unceasing toil at home. . . . On landing in New York I made up my mind to lose none of the advantages it uttered by want of diligence on my part. During the first two years I took but one holiday. . . . In summer we began work at six; at eight took half an hour for breakfast, and then worked till twelve, when one an hour for dinner; after which we kept on till six, seven, or eight. . . . A relative who arrived from England held out to me bright prospects of advantages to be realized by the employment of a little capital, combined with a removal to some inland town. I sold off nearly the whole of our moveables . . . [and committed all my savings to this enterprise. However,] our scheme . . . completely failed, and I had no resources but my industry and chest of tools to meet the impending difficulties.

4. **Diary entry by Philip Hone, March 29, 1848.** *Philip Hone (1780–1851), a conservative Whig, was a successful merchant and entrepreneur and mayor of New York City from 1826 to 1827.*

Hone's marvelous diary (1828–1851) records the changing character of New York City, as well as his contempt for Jacksonian Democracy and its Irish immigrant supporters.

John Jacob Astor died this morning, at nine o'clock, in the eighty-fifth year of his age . . . and left reluctantly his unbounded wealth. His property is estimated at \$20,000,000, some judicious persons say \$30,000,000; but, at any rate, he was the richest man in the United States in productive and valuable property; and this immense, gigantic fortune was the fruit of his own labor, unerring sagacity, and far-seeing penetration. He came to this country at twenty years of age; penniless, friendless, without inheritance, without education . . . but with a determination to be rich, and ability to carry it into effect. His capital consisted of a few trifling musical instruments, which he got from his brother, George Astor, in London, a dealer in music. . . . The fur trade was the philosopher's stone of this modern Croesus; beaver-skins and musk-rats furnished the oil for the supply of Aladdin's lamp. His traffic was the shipment of furs to China, where they brought immense prices, for he monopolized the business; and the return cargoes of teas, silks, and rich productions of China brought further large profits. . . . My brother and I found in Mr. Astor a valuable customer. . . . All he touched turned to gold.

5. Editorial in the *New York Herald*, April 5, 1848.

John Jacob Astor's will included a bequest of \$400,000 for the establishment of what became the New York Public Library. This editorial questioned whether this relatively meager bequest adequately repaid residents.

If we had been an associate of John Jacob Astor the first idea that we should have put into his head would have been that one-half of his immense property — ten million at least — belonged to the people of the city of New York. During the last fifty years of the life of John Jacob Astor, his property has been augmented and increased in the value by the aggregate intelligence, industry, enterprise and commerce of New York, fully to the amount of one-half its value. The farms and lots of ground which he

bought forty, twenty and ten and five years ago, have all increased in value entirely by the industry of the citizens of New York . . . half of his immense estate, in its actual value, has accrued to him by the industry of the community.

Sources: (2) Elbert Hubbard, *Little Journeys to the Homes of Great Business Men* (New York: Wm. H. Wise & Co., 1916), 201; (3) *Knight's Penny Magazine*, Vol. 1 (London: Charles Knight & Co., 1846), 97, 107, 108; (4) Philip Hone, *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828–1851*, Vol. 2 (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1889), 347–348; (5) Gustavus Myers, *History of the Great American Fortunes*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1910), 199–200.

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. What does the Pewterer's Banner (source 1) suggest about personal and by extension national success in the post-Revolutionary era? What can you infer about artisan entrepreneurs in the new republic from this source?
2. According to John Jacob Astor (source 2) and the cabinetmaker (source 3), what traits are important in work? Based on the sources included here, do you agree with Astor that good habits make any man rich? Why or why not?
3. Sources 2, 4, and 5 all deal with John Jacob Astor. What do these sources suggest about the road to wealth in America?
4. Compare and contrast Hone's view of Astor (source 4) with that of the *Herald's* editorial (source 5). Then apply the *Herald's* critique to contemporary entrepreneurs such as Bill Gates of Microsoft or Steve Jobs of Apple. Are their fortunes also the product, in part, of "the industry of the community"?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

John Jacob Astor initially made money by trading furs in local and then in international markets. Next, he speculated in land in booming cities. Finally, he became a *rentier*, crafting long-term property leases that guaranteed wealth to future generations of his family. Using the material in Chapter 8, explain how a pewterer or a cabinetmaker might follow a somewhat similar path to wealth in the market economy of nineteenth-century America. Noting also the statement "All her Sons Join as One Social Band" (source 1), explain why other Americans were critical of the rise of such ambitious capitalist entrepreneurs.

his clocks for a dining table, a bedstead, and labor on his small farm. Then various artisans — shipbuilders in seacoast towns, ironworkers in Pennsylvania and Maryland, clockmakers in Connecticut, and shoemakers in Massachusetts — expanded their output and sold their products in wider markets.

American entrepreneurs drove this expansion of rural manufacturing. Beginning in the 1790s, enter-

prising merchants bought raw materials, hired farm families to process them, and distributed the finished manufactures. “Straw hats and Bonnets are manufactured by many families,” a Maine census-taker noted in the 1810s. Merchants shipped rural manufactures — shoes, brooms, and palm-leaf hats as well as cups,

baking pans, and other tin utensils—to stores in seaport cities. New England peddlers, who quickly

acquired reputé as hard-bargaining “Yankees,” sold them throughout the rural South.

New technology initially played only a minor role in producing this boom in consumer goods. Take the case of textile production. During the 1780s, New England and Middle Atlantic merchants built water-powered mills to run machines that combed wool—and later cotton — into long strands. However, until the 1810s, they used the household-based outwork system for the next steps: farm women and children spun the machine-combed strands into thread and yarn on foot-driven spinning wheels, and men in other households used foot-powered looms to weave the yarn into cloth. In 1820, more than 12,000 household workers labored full-time weaving woolen cloth, which water-powered fulling mills then pounded flat, giving the cloth a smooth finish. By then, the transfer of textile production to factories was gaining speed; the number of water-driven cotton spindles soared from 8,000 in 1809 to 333,000 in 1817.

TRACE CHANGE OVER TIME

How did governments, banks, and merchants expand American commerce and manufacturing between 1780 and 1820?



The Yankee Peddler, c. 1830

Even in 1830, many Americans lived too far from a market town to go there regularly to buy goods. Instead, they purchased their tinware, clocks, textiles, and other manufactures from peddlers, often from New England, who traveled far and wide in small horse-drawn vans like the one visible through the doorway. Collection IBM Corporation, Armonk, New York.

The growth of manufacturing offered farm families new opportunities—and new risks. Ambitious New England farmers switched from subsistence crops of wheat and potatoes to raising livestock. They sold meat, butter, and cheese to city markets and cattle hides to the booming shoe industry. “Along the whole road from Boston, we saw women engaged in making cheese,” a Polish traveler reported. Other families raised sheep and sold raw wool to textile manufacturers. Processing these raw materials brought new jobs and income to stagnating farming towns. In 1792, Concord, Massachusetts, had one slaughterhouse and five small tanneries; a decade later, the town boasted eleven slaughterhouses and six large tanneries.

As the rural economy churned out more goods, it altered the environment. Foul odors from stockyards and tanning pits wafted over Concord and other leather-producing towns. Nor was that all. Tanners cut down thousands of acres of hemlock trees, using the bark to process stiff cow hides into pliable leather. More trees fell to the ax to create pasturelands for huge herds of livestock—dairy cows, cattle, and especially sheep. By 1850, most of the ancient forests in southern New England and eastern New York were gone: “The hills had been stripped of their timber,” New York’s *Catskill Messenger* reported, “so as to present their huge, rocky projections.” Moreover, scores of textile milldams dotted New England’s rivers, altering their flow and preventing fish—already severely depleted from decades of overfishing—from reaching upriver spawning grounds. Even as the income of farmers rose, the quality of their natural environment declined.

In the new capitalist-driven market economy, rural parents and their children worked longer and harder. They made yarn, hats, and brooms during the winter and returned to their regular farming chores during the warmer seasons. More important, these farm families now depended on their wage labor or market sales to purchase the textiles, shoes, and hats they had once made for themselves. The new productive system made families and communities more efficient and prosperous—and more dependent on a market they could not control.

New Transportation Systems The expansion of the market depended on improvements in transportation, where governments also played a crucial role. Between 1793 and 1812, the Massachusetts legislature granted charters to more than one hundred private turnpike corporations. These charters gave the companies special legal status and often included monopoly rights to a transportation route. Pennsylvania issued fifty-five charters, including one to the Lancaster

Turnpike Company, which built a 65-mile graded and graveled toll road to Philadelphia. The road quickly boosted the regional economy. Although turnpike investors received only about “three percent annually,” Henry Clay estimated, society as a whole “actually reap[ed] fifteen or twenty percent.” A farm woman agreed: “The turnpike is finished and we can now go to town at all times and in all weather.” New turnpikes soon connected dozens of inland market centers to seaport cities.

Water transport was even quicker and cheaper, so state governments and private entrepreneurs dredged shallow rivers and constructed canals to bypass waterfalls and rapids. For their part, farmers in Kentucky and Tennessee and in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois settled near the Ohio River and its many tributaries, so they could easily get goods to market. Similarly, speculators hoping to capitalize on the expansion of commerce bought up property in the cities along the banks of major rivers: Cincinnati, Louisville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis. Farmers and merchants built barges to carry cotton, grain, and meat downstream to New Orleans, which by 1815 was exporting about \$5 million in agricultural products yearly.

Public Enterprise: The Commonwealth System

Legislative charters for banks, turnpikes, and canal companies reflected the ideology of mercantilism: government-assisted economic development. Just as Parliament had used the Navigation Acts to spur British prosperity, so American legislatures enacted laws “of great public utility” to increase the “commonwealth.” These statutes generally took the form of special charters that bestowed legal privileges, such as the power of eminent domain, that allowed turnpike, bridge, and canal corporations to force the sale of privately owned land along their routes. State legislatures also aided capital-intensive flour millers and textile manufacturers, who flooded adjacent farmland as they built dams to power their water-driven machinery. In Massachusetts, the Mill Dam Act of 1795 deprived farmers of their traditional common-law right to stop the flooding and forced them to accept “fair compensation” for their lost acreage. Judges approved this state-ordered shift in property rights. “The establishment of a great mill-power for manufacturing purposes,” Justice Lemuel Shaw intoned, was “one of the great industrial pursuits of the commonwealth.”

UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW

Did state mercantilism (the grant of privileges and charters) embody republican ideology or violate it?



View of Cincinnati, by John Caspar Wild, c. 1835

Thanks to its location on the Ohio River (a tributary of the Mississippi), Cincinnati quickly became one of the major processing centers for grain and hogs in the trans-Appalachian west. By the 1820s, passenger steamboats and freight barges connected the city with Pittsburgh to the north and the ocean port of New Orleans far to the south. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, M. and M. Karolik Collection.

Critics condemned the legal privileges given to private enterprises as “Scheme[s] of an evident anti-republican tendency,” as some “freeholder citizens” in Putney, Vermont, put it. Such grants to business corporations, they argued, violated the “equal rights” of citizens and infringed on the sovereignty of the governments. “Whatever power is given to a corporation, is just so much power taken from the State,” argued a Pennsylvanian. Nonetheless, judges in state courts, following the lead of John Marshall’s Supreme Court (Chapter 7), consistently upheld corporate charters and grants of eminent domain to private transportation companies. “The opening of good and easy internal communications is one of the highest duties of government,” declared a New Jersey judge.

State mercantilism soon spread beyond transportation. Following Jefferson’s embargo of 1807, which cut off goods and credit from Europe, the New England

states awarded charters to two hundred iron-mining, textile-manufacturing, and banking companies, while Pennsylvania granted more than eleven hundred. By 1820, state governments had created a republican political economy: a **Commonwealth System** that funneled state aid to private businesses whose projects would improve the general welfare.

Toward a Democratic Republican Culture

After independence, many Americans in the northern states embraced a democratic republicanism that celebrated political equality and social mobility. These citizens, primarily members of the emerging middle class, redefined the nature of the family and of education by

seeking egalitarian marriages and affectionate ways of rearing their children.

Opportunity and Equality— for White Men

Between 1780 and 1820, hundreds of well-educated visitors agreed that the American social order was different from that of Europe. In his famous *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), French-born essayist J. Hector St. Jean de Crèvecoeur wrote that European society was composed “of great lords who possess everything, and of a herd of people who have nothing.” By contrast, the United States had “no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops.”

The absence of a hereditary aristocracy encouraged Americans to condemn inherited social privilege and to extol legal equality. “The law is the same for everyone,” noted one European traveler. Yet citizens of the new republic willingly accepted social divisions that reflected personal achievement, a phenomenon that astounded many Europeans. “In Europe to say of someone that he rose from nothing is a disgrace and a

reproach,” remarked a Polish aristocrat. “It is the opposite here. To be the architect of your own fortune is honorable. It is the highest recommendation.”

Some Americans from long-distinguished families felt threatened by the ideology of wealth-driven social mobility. “Man is estimated by dollars,” complained Nathaniel Booth, whose high-status family had once dominated the small Hudson River port town of Kingston, New York. However, for most white men, a merit-based system meant the chance to better themselves (Map 8.1).

Old cultural rules—and new laws—denied such chances to most women and African American men. When women and free blacks asked for voting rights, male legislators wrote explicit race and gender restrictions into the law. In 1802, Ohio disenfranchised African Americans, and the New York constitution of 1821 imposed a property-holding requirement on black voters. A striking case of sexual discrimination occurred in New Jersey, where the state constitution of 1776 had granted the voting franchise to all property

IDENTIFY CAUSES

What factors encouraged—and inhibited—equality and democracy in early-nineteenth-century American life?



MAP 8.1

The Expansion of Voting Rights for White Men, 1800 and 1830

Between 1800 and 1830, the United States moved steadily toward political equality for white men. Many existing states revised their constitutions and replaced a property qualification for voting with less restrictive criteria, such as paying taxes or serving in the militia. Some new states in the West extended the suffrage to all adult white men. As parties sought votes from a broader electorate, the tone of politics became more open and competitive—swayed by the interests and values of ordinary people.

holders. As Federalists and Republicans competed for power, they ignored customary gender rules and urged property-owning single women and widows to vote. Sensing a threat to men's monopoly on politics, the New Jersey legislature in 1807 invoked both biology and custom to limit voting to men only: "Women, generally, are neither by nature, nor habit, nor education, nor by their necessary condition in society fitted to perform this duty with credit to themselves or advantage to the public."

Toward Republican Families

The controversy over women's political rights mirrored a debate over authority within the household. British and American husbands had long claimed patriarchal power and legal control of the family's property. However, as John Adams lamented in 1776, the republican principle of equality had "spread where it was not intended," encouraging his wife and other women to demand legal and financial rights. Patriot author and historian Mercy Otis Warren argued that patriarchy was not a "natural" rule but a social contrivance and could be justified only "for the sake of order in families."



To see a longer excerpt of the Mercy Otis Warren document, along with other primary sources from this period, see *Sources for America's History*.

Republican Marriages Economic and cultural changes also eroded customary paternal authority. In colonial America, most property-owning parents had arranged their children's marriages. They looked for a morally upright son- or daughter-in-law with financial resources; physical attraction and emotional compatibility between the young people were secondary considerations. As landholdings shrank in long-settled communities, many yeomen fathers had less control over their children's marriages because they had fewer resources to give them.

Increasingly, young men and women chose their own partners, influenced by a new cultural attitude: **sentimentalism**. Sentimentalism originated in Europe as part of the Romantic movement and, after 1800, spread quickly through all classes of American society. Rejecting the Enlightenment's emphasis on rational thought, sentimentalism celebrated the importance of "feeling" — a physical, sensuous appreciation of God, nature, and fellow humans. This new emphasis on deeply felt emotions pervaded literary works, popular theatrical melodramas, and the passionate rhetoric of revivalist preachers.

As the passions of the heart overwhelmed the logic of the mind, magazines praised **companionate marriages**: marriages "contracted from motives of affection, rather than of interest." Many young people looked for a relationship based on intimacy and a spouse who was, as Eliza Southgate of Maine put it, "calculated to promote my happiness." As young people "fell in love" and married, many fathers changed from authoritarian patriarchs to watchful paternalists. To guard against free-spending sons-in-law, wealthy fathers often placed their daughters' inheritance in a legal trust. One Virginia planter told his lawyer "to see the property settlement properly drawn before the marriage, for I by no means consent that Polly shall be left to the Vicissitudes of Life."

As voluntary contracts between individuals, love marriages conformed more closely to republican principles than did arranged matches. In theory, such marriages would be companionate, giving wives and husbands "true equality," as one Boston man suggested. In practice, husbands dominated most marriages, because male authority was deeply ingrained in cultural mores and because American common law gave husbands control of the family's property. Moreover, the new love-based marriage system discouraged parents from protecting young wives, and governments refused to prevent domestic tyranny. The marriage contract "is so much more important in its consequences to females than to males," a young man at the Litchfield Law School in Connecticut astutely observed in 1820, for "they subject themselves to his authority. He is their all — their only relative — their only hope" (*American Voices*, p. 260).

Young adults who chose partners unwisely were severely disappointed when their spouses failed as providers or faithful companions. Before 1800, unhappy wives and husbands could do little; officials granted divorces infrequently and then only in cases of neglect, abandonment, or adultery — serious offenses against the moral order of society. After 1800, most divorce petitions cited emotional issues. One woman complained that her husband had "ceased to cherish her," while a man grieved that his wife had "almost broke his heart." Responding to changing cultural values, several states expanded the legal grounds for divorce to include drunkenness and personal cruelty.

Republican Motherhood Traditionally, most American women had spent their active adult years working as farmwives and bearing and nurturing children. However, after 1800, the birthrate in the northern states dropped significantly. In the farming village of



The Wedding, 1805

Bride and groom stare intently into each other's eyes as they exchange vows, suggesting that their union was a love match, not an arranged marriage based on economic calculation. The plain costumes of the guests and the sparse furnishings of the room suggest that the unknown artist may have provided us with a picture of a rural Quaker wedding. The Granger Collection, NYC.

Sturbridge in central Massachusetts, women now bore an average of six children; their grandmothers had usually given birth to eight or nine. In the growing sea-port cities, native-born white women now bore an average of only four children.

The United States was among the first nations to experience this sharp decline in the birthrate—what historians call the **demographic transition**. There were several causes. Beginning in the 1790s, thousands of young men migrated to the trans-Appalachian west, which increased the number of never-married women in the East and delayed marriage for many more. Women who married in their late twenties had fewer children. In addition, white urban middle-class couples deliberately limited the size of their families. Fathers wanted to leave children an adequate inheritance, while mothers, influenced by new ideas of individualism and self-achievement, refused to spend their entire adulthood rearing children. After having four or five children, these couples used birth control or abstained from sexual intercourse.

Even as women bore fewer children, they accepted greater responsibility for the welfare of the family. In his *Thoughts on Female Education* (1787), Philadelphia

physician Benjamin Rush argued that young women should ensure their husbands' "perseverance in the paths of rectitude" and called for loyal "republican mothers" who would instruct "their sons in the principles of liberty and government."



To see a longer excerpt of *Thoughts on Female Education*, along with other primary sources from this period, see *Sources for America's History*.

Christian ministers readily embraced this idea of **republican motherhood**. "Preserving virtue and instructing the young are not the fancied, but the real 'Rights of Women,'" the Reverend Thomas Bernard told the Female Charitable Society of Salem, Massachusetts. He urged his audience to dismiss public roles for women, such as voting or serving on juries, that English feminist Mary Wollstonecraft had advocated in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Instead, women should care for their children, a responsibility that gave

IDENTIFY CAUSES

How did republican ideals, new economic circumstances, and changing cultural values affect marriage practices?



The Trials of Married Life

As the text explains, the ideal American marriage of the early nineteenth century was republican (a contract between equals) and romantic (a match in which mutual love was foremost). Were these ideals attainable, given the social authority of men and the volatility of human passions? Letters, memoirs, and diaries are excellent sources for answering these questions. These selections from the personal writings of a variety of American women offer insights into the new system of marriage and how changes in cultural values intersected with individual lives.

Emma Hart Willard

The Danger of High Expectations

Born in Connecticut in 1787, Emma Hart married John Willard in 1809. An early proponent of advanced education for women, she founded female academies in Middlebury, Vermont (1814), and Waterford and Troy, New York (1821). She wrote this letter to her sister, Almira Hart, in 1815.

You think it strange that I should consider a period of happiness as more likely than any other to produce future misery. I know I did not sufficiently explain myself. Those tender and delicious sensations which accompany successful love, while they soothe and soften the mind, diminish its strength to bear or to conquer difficulties. It is the luxury of the soul; and luxury always enervates. . . . This life is a life of vicissitude. . . .

[Suppose] you are secured to each other for life. It will be natural that, at first, he should be much devoted to you; but, after a while, his business must occupy his attention. While absorbed in that he will perhaps neglect some of those little tokens of affection which have become necessary to your happiness. His affairs will sometimes go wrong, . . . and he may sometimes hastily give you a harsh word or a frown.

But where is the use, say you, of diminishing my present enjoyment by such gloomy apprehensions? Its use is this, that, if you enter the marriage state believing such things to be absolutely impossible, if you should meet them, they would come upon you with double force.

Caroline Howard Gilman

Female Submission in Marriage

Born in Boston in 1794, Caroline Howard married in 1819 and moved to Charleston, South Carolina, with her husband, Samuel Gilman, a Unitarian minister. A novelist, she published *Recollections of a Housekeeper* (1835), a portrait of domestic life in New England, and *Recollections*

of a Southern Matron (1838), a fictional account that includes this selection.

The planter's bride, who leaves a numerous and cheerful family in her paternal home, little imagines the change which awaits her in her own retired residence. She dreams of an independent sway over her household, devoted love and unbroken intercourse with her husband, and indeed longs to be released from the eyes of others, that she may dwell only beneath the sunbeam of his. And so it was with me. . . .

There we were together, asking for nothing but each other's presence and love. At length it was necessary for him to tear himself away to superintend his interests. . . . But the period of absence was gradually protracted; then a friend sometimes came home with him, and their talk was of crops and politics, draining the fields and draining the revenue. . . . A growing discomfort began to work upon my mind. I had undefined forebodings; I mused about past days; my views of life became slowly disorganized; my physical powers enfeebled; a nervous excitement followed: I nursed a moody discontent. . . .

If the reign of romance was really waning, I resolved not to chill his noble confidence, but to make a steadier light rise on his affections. . . . This task of self-government was not easy. To repress a harsh answer, to confess a fault . . . in gentle submission, sometimes requires a struggle like life and death; but these . . . efforts are the golden threads with which domestic happiness is woven. . . . How clear is it, then, that woman loses by petulance and recrimination! Her first study must be self-control, almost to hypocrisy. A good wife must smile amid a thousand perplexities.

Martha Hunter Hitchcock

Isolation, Unmentionable Sorrows, and Suffering

Martha Hunter Hitchcock married a doctor in the U.S. Army. These excerpts from letters, in the Virginia Historical

Society, to her cousins Martha and Sarah Hunter describe her emotional dependence on her husband and her unhappy life.

To Martha Hunter, 1840:

If I had never married how much of pain, and dissatisfaction, should I have escaped — at all events I should never have known what jealousy is. You must not betray me, dear cousin, for despite all my good resolutions, I find it impossible always to struggle against my nature — the school of indulgence, in which I was educated, was little calculated to teach me, those lessons of forbearance, which I have had to practice so frequently, since my marriage — it is ungrateful in me to murmur, if perchance a little bitter is mingled in my cup of life.

To Sarah Hunter, 1841:

I have lived so long among strangers since my marriage, that when I contrast it with the old warm affection, in which I was nurtured, the contrast is so terrible, that I cannot refrain from weeping at the thought of it — I hope my dear cousin, that yours, will be a happier destiny than mine, in that respect — only think of it! Nearly a year and a half have passed away, since I have seen, a single relation!

To Martha Hunter, 1845:

Uneasiness about [my daughter] Lillie, and very great sorrows of my own, which I cannot commit to paper, have almost weighed me down to the grave; and indeed, without any affectation, I look forward to that, as the only real rest, I shall ever know.

To Martha Hunter, 1846:

Lillie had the scarlet fever, during our visit to Alabama, and she has never recovered from the effects of it — My life is a constant vigil — and there is nothing which wearies mind, and body, so much, as watching a sickly child. . . . All this I have to endure, and may have to suffer more for I know not, what Fate may have in store for me.

Elizabeth Scott Neblett

My Seasons of Gloom and Despondency

Elizabeth Scott Neblett lived with her husband and children in Navarro County, Texas. In 1860, she reflected in her diary on her bouts of depression and the difficulties of

wives and husbands in understanding each other's inner lives.

It has now been almost eight years since I became a married woman. Eight years of checkered good and ill, and yet thro' all it seems the most of the ill has fallen to my lot, until now my poor weak cowardly heart sighs only for its final resting place, where sorrow grief nor pain can never reach it more.

I feel that I have faithfully discharged my duty towards you and my children, but for this I know that I deserve no credit nor aspire to none; my affection has been my prompter, and the task has proven a labor of love. You have not rightly understood me at all times, and being naturally very hopeful you could in no measure sympathize with me during my seasons of gloom and despondency. . . . But marriage is a lottery and that your draw proved an unfortunate one on your part is not less a subject of regret with me than you. . . .

It is useless to say that during these eight years I have suffered ten times more than you have and ten times more than I can begin to make you conceive of, but of course you can not help the past, nor by knowing my suffering relieve it, but it might induce you to look with more kindness upon [my] faults. . . . The 17th of this month I was 27 years old and I think my face looks older than that, perhaps I'll never see an other birth day and I don't grieve at the idea.

Source: These selections are abridged versions of materials in Anya Jabour, ed., *Major Problems in the History of American Families and Children* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 108–113.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What problems do these women share? How might their problems reflect larger social and economic issues in nineteenth-century America?
2. How would you characterize the unhappiness of these women? In what ways is it related to their expectations about love-based marriage?
3. What was Caroline Gilman's advice to wives? How does it apply to the other women in this section?
4. Do these selections suggest that most American women had unfulfilled marriages? Or were these isolated cases? Would you expect to find more records of happy or unhappy marriages?

them “an extensive power over the fortunes of man in every generation.”

Raising Republican Children

Republican values changed assumptions about inheritance and child rearing. English common law encouraged primogeniture, the bequest of the family’s property to the eldest son (Chapter 1). After the Revolution, most state legislatures enacted statutes specifying equal division of the estate among all children, when there was no will. Most American parents applauded these statutes because they were already treating their children equally and with respect.

Two Modes of Parenting Indeed, many European visitors believed that republican parents gave their children too much respect and freedom. Because of the “general ideas of Liberty and Equality engraved on their hearts,” a Polish aristocrat suggested around 1800, American children had “scant respect” for their parents. Several decades later, a British traveler stood dumbfounded when an American father excused his son’s “resolute disobedience” with a smile and the remark, “A sturdy republican, sir.” The traveler

speculated that American parents encouraged such independence to prepare youth to “go their own way” in the world.

Permissive child rearing was not universal. Foreign visitors interacted primarily with well-to-do Episcopalians and Presbyterians who held an Enlightenment conception of children. This outlook, transmitted by religious authors influenced by John Locke, viewed children as “rational creatures” best trained by means of advice and praise. The parents’ role was to develop their child’s conscience, self-discipline, and sense of responsibility. Families in the rapidly expanding middle class widely adopted this rationalist method of child rearing.

By contrast, many yeomen and tenant farmers, influenced by the Second Great Awakening, raised their children in an authoritarian fashion. Evangelical Baptist and Methodist writers insisted that children were “full of the stains and pollution of sin” and needed strict rules and harsh discipline. Fear was a “useful and necessary principle in family government,” minister John Abbott advised parents; a child “should submit to your authority, not to your arguments or persuasions.” Abbott told parents to instill humility in children and to teach them to subordinate their personal desires to God’s will.



The Battle over Education

Here an unknown artist pokes fun at a tyrannical schoolmaster and, indirectly, at the strict approach to child rearing taken by evangelical authors, parents, and teachers. The students’ faces reflect the artist’s own rationalist outlook. One Enlightenment-minded minister suggested that we see in young children’s eyes “the first dawn of reason, beaming forth its immortal rays.” Copyright The Frick Collection, New York City.



Women's Education

Even in education-conscious New England, before 1800 few girls attended free public primary schools for more than a few years. Subsequently, as this detail from *Scenes from a Seminary for Young Ladies* (c. 1810–1820) indicates, some girls stayed in school into their teenage years and studied a wide variety of subjects, including geography. Many graduates of these female academies became teachers, a new field of employment for women. The St. Louis Art Museum, Missouri, USA/The Bridgeman Art Library.

Debates over Education Although families provided most moral and intellectual training, republican ideology encouraged publicly supported schooling. Bostonian Caleb Bingham, an influential textbook author, called for “an equal distribution of knowledge to make us emphatically a ‘republic of letters.’” Both Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Rush proposed ambitious schemes for a comprehensive system of primary and secondary schooling, followed by college training for bright young men. They also envisioned a university in which distinguished scholars would lecture on law, medicine, theology, and political economy.

To ordinary citizens, whose teenage children had to labor in the fields or workshops, talk of secondary and college education smacked of elitism. Farmers, artisans, and laborers wanted elementary schools that would instruct their children in the “three Rs”—reading, writing, and arithmetic—and make them literate enough to read the Bible. In New England, locally funded public schools offered basic instruction to most boys and some girls. In other regions, there were few publicly supported schools, and only 25 percent of the boys and perhaps 10 percent of the girls attended private institutions or had personal tutors. Even in New England, only a few young men and almost no young women went on to grammar school (high school), and less than 1 percent of men attended college. “Let anybody show what advantage the poor man receives from colleges,” an anonymous “Old Soldier” wrote to the *Maryland Gazette*. “Why should they support them, unless it is to serve those who are in affluent circumstances, whose children can be spared from labor, and receive the benefits?”

Although many state constitutions encouraged support for education, few legislatures acted until the 1820s. Then a new generation of educational

reformers, influenced by merchants and manufacturers, raised standards by certifying qualified teachers and appointing statewide superintendents of schools. To encourage students, the reformers chose textbooks such as Parson Mason Weems’s *The Life of George Washington* (c. 1800), which praised honesty and hard work and condemned gambling, drinking, and laziness. To bolster patriotism and shared cultural ideals, reformers required the study of American history. As a New Hampshire schoolboy, Thomas Low recalled: “We were taught every day and in every way that ours was the freest, the happiest, and soon to be the greatest and most powerful country of the world.”

Promoting Cultural Independence Like Caleb Bingham, writer Noah Webster wanted to raise the nation’s intellectual prowess. Asserting that “America must be as independent in literature as she is in politics,” he called on his fellow citizens to free themselves “from the dependence on foreign opinions and manners, which is fatal to the efforts of genius in this country.” Webster’s *Dissertation on the English Language* (1789) celebrated language as a marker of national identity by defining words according to American usage. With less success, it proposed that words be spelled as they were pronounced, that *labour* (British spelling), for example, be spelled *labor*. Still, Webster’s famous “blue-back speller,” a compact textbook first published in 1783, sold 60 million copies over the next half century and served the needs of Americans of all backgrounds. “None of us was ’lowed to see a book,” an enslaved African American recalled, “but we gits hold

UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW

Which form of child rearing—the rationalist or the authoritarian—was the most compatible with republican values and why?

of that Webster’s old blue-back speller and we . . . studies [it].”

Despite Webster’s efforts, a republican literary culture developed slowly. Ironically, the most successful writer in the new republic was Washington Irving, an elitist-minded Federalist. His whimsical essay and story collections—which included the tales of “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”—sold well in America and won praise abroad. Frustrated by the immaturity of American cultural life, Irving lived for seventeen years in Europe, reveling in its aristocratic culture and intense intellectuality.

Apart from Irving, no American author was well known in Europe or, indeed, in the United States. “Literature is not yet a distinct profession with us,” Thomas Jefferson told an English friend. “Now and then a strong mind arises, and at its intervals from business emits a flash of light. But the first object of young societies is bread and covering.” Not until the 1830s and 1840s would American authors achieve a professional identity and make a significant contribution to Western literature (Chapter 11).

Aristocratic Republicanism and Slavery

Republicanism in the South differed significantly from that in the North. Enslaved Africans constituted one-third of the South’s population; their bondage contradicted the new nation’s professed ideology of freedom and equality. “How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of Negroes?” British author Samuel Johnson had chided the American rebels in 1775, a point that some Patriots took to heart. “I wish most sincerely there was not a Slave in the province,” Abigail Adams confessed to her husband, John. “It always appeared a most iniquitous Scheme to me—to fight ourselves for what we are daily robbing and plundering from those who have as good a right to freedom as we have.”

The Revolution and Slavery, 1776–1800

In fact, the whites’ struggle for independence had raised the prospect of freedom for blacks. As the Revolutionary War began, a black preacher in Georgia told his fellow slaves that King George III “came up with the Book [the Bible], and was about to alter the World, and set the Negroes free.” Similar rumors, probably

prompted by Royal Governor Lord Dunmore’s proclamation of 1775 (Chapter 5), circulated among slaves in Virginia and the Carolinas, prompting thousands of African Americans to flee behind British lines. Two neighbors of Virginia Patriot Richard Henry Lee lost “every slave they had in the world,” as did many other planters. In 1781, when the British army evacuated Charleston, more than 6,000 former slaves went with them; another 4,000 left from Savannah. All told, 30,000 blacks may have fled their owners. Hundreds of freed black Loyalists settled permanently in Canada. More than 1,000 others, poorly treated in British Nova Scotia, sought a better life in Sierra Leone, West



Republican Families . . . and Servants

Around 1828, an unidentified artist painted this York, Pennsylvania, family with an African American servant. The artist gives equal emphasis to the wife and the husband, suggesting they enjoyed a companionate-style marriage. Reflecting the outlook of republican motherhood, the mother takes the leading role in educating the children. The family, probably of upper-middle-class status given their attire and furnishings, employs an African American woman as a domestic servant and nanny—common occupations among free black women of the time. The Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri, USA/The Bridgeman Art Library.

Africa, a settlement founded by English antislavery organizations.

Manumission and Gradual Emancipation Yet thousands of African Americans supported the Patriot cause. Eager to raise their social status, free blacks in New England volunteered for military service in the First Rhode Island Company and the Massachusetts “Bucks.” In Maryland, some slaves took up arms for the rebels in return for the promise of freedom. Enslaved Virginians struck informal bargains with their Patriot owners, trading loyalty in wartime for the hope of liberty. Following the Virginia legislature’s passage of a **manumission** act in 1782, allowing owners to free their slaves, 10,000 slaves won their freedom.

Two other developments — one religious, the other intellectual — encouraged manumission. Beginning in the 1750s, Quaker evangelist John Woolman urged Friends to free their slaves, and many did so. Rapidly growing evangelical churches, especially Methodists and Baptists, initially advocated slave emancipation; in 1784, a conference of Virginia Methodists declared

that slavery was “contrary to the Golden Law of God on which hang all the Law and Prophets.”

Meanwhile, Enlightenment philosophy challenged the widespread belief among whites that Africans were inherently inferior to Europeans. According to John Locke, ideas were not innate but stemmed from a person’s experiences in the world. Pointing out the obvious — “A state of slavery has a mighty tendency to shrink and contract the minds of men” — Enlightenment-influenced Americans suggested that the debased condition of blacks reflected their oppressive captivity. Quaker philanthropist Anthony Benezet declared that African Americans were “as capable of improvement as White People” and funded a Philadelphia school for their education.

Swept along by these religious and intellectual currents, legislators in northern states enacted gradual emancipation statutes (Map 8.2). These laws recognized white property rights by requiring slaves to buy their freedom by years — even decades — of additional

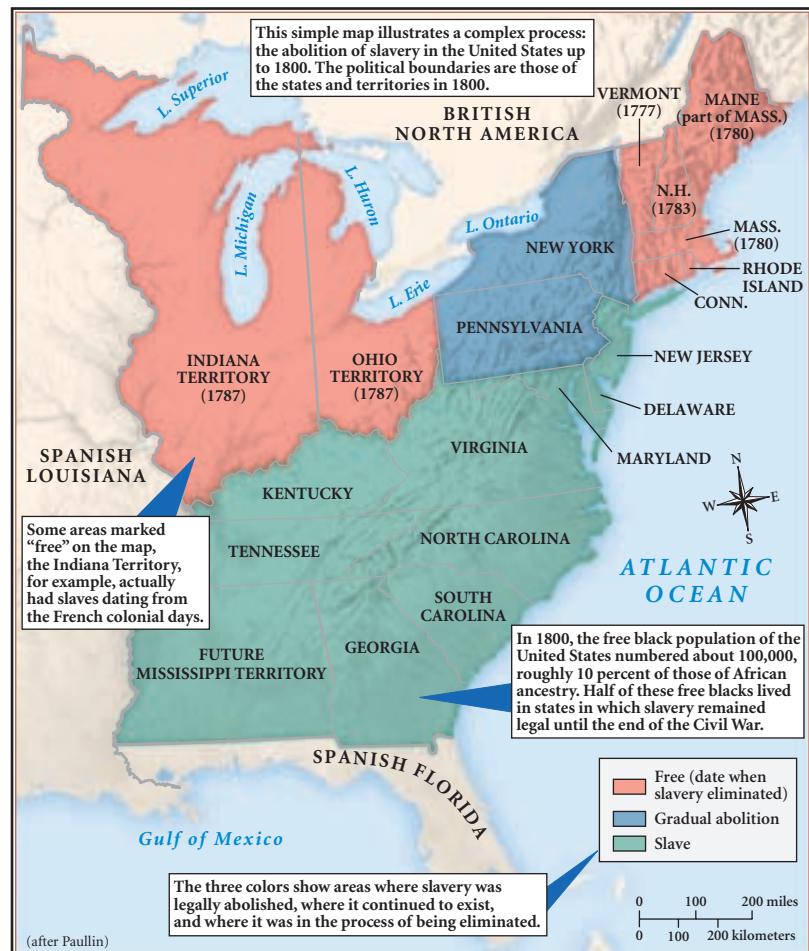
IDENTIFY CAUSES

Why did aristocratic republicanism develop in the South, and what were its defining features?

MAP 8.2

The Status of Slavery, 1800

In 1775, racial slavery was legal in all of the British colonies in North America. By the time the confederated states achieved their independence in 1783, the New England region was mostly free of slavery. By 1800, all of the states north of Maryland had provided for the gradual abolition of slavery, but the process of gradual emancipation dragged on until the 1830s. Some slave owners in the Chesapeake region manumitted a number of their slaves, leaving only the whites of the Lower South firmly committed to racial bondage.



labor. For example, the New York Emancipation Act of 1799 allowed slavery to continue until 1828 and freed slave children only at the age of twenty-five. Consequently, as late as 1810, almost 30,000 blacks in the northern states—nearly one-fourth of the African Americans living there—were still enslaved. Freed blacks faced severe prejudice from whites who feared job competition and racial melding. When Massachusetts judges abolished slavery through case law in 1784, the legislature reenacted an old statute that prohibited whites from marrying blacks, mulattos, or Indians. For African Americans in the North, freedom meant second-class citizenship.

Slavery Defended The southern states faced the most glaring contradiction between liberty and property rights, because enslaved blacks represented a huge financial investment. Some Chesapeake tobacco planters, moved by evangelical religion or an oversupply of workers, manumitted their slaves or allowed them to buy their freedom by working as artisans or laborers. Such measures gradually brought freedom to one-third of the African Americans in Maryland.

Farther south, slavery remained ascendant. Fearing total emancipation, hundreds of slave owners petitioned the Virginia legislature to repeal the manumission act. Heeding this demand to protect “the most valuable and indispensable Article of our Property, our Slaves,” legislators forbade further manumissions in 1792. Following the lead of Thomas Jefferson, who owned more than a hundred slaves, political leaders now argued that slavery was a “necessary evil” required to maintain white supremacy and the luxurious planter lifestyle. In North Carolina, legislators condemned private Quaker manumissions as “highly criminal and reprehensible.” Moreover, the slave-hungry rice-growing states of South Carolina and Georgia reopened the Atlantic slave trade. Between 1790 and 1808, merchants in Charleston and Savannah imported about 115,000 Africans, selling thousands to French and American sugar planters in Louisiana.

Debate in the South over emancipation ended in 1800, when Virginia authorities thwarted an uprising planned by Gabriel Prosser, an enslaved artisan, and hanged him and thirty of his followers. “Liberty and equality have brought the evil upon us,” a letter to the *Virginia Herald* proclaimed, denouncing such doctrines as “dangerous and extremely wicked.” To preserve their privileged social position, southern leaders redefined republicanism. They restricted individual liberty and legal equality to whites, creating what historians call a *herrenvolk* (“master race”) **republic**.

The North and South Grow Apart

European visitors to the United States agreed that North and South had distinct characters. A British observer labeled New England the home to religious “fanaticism” but added that “the lower orders of citizens” there had “a better education, [and were] more intelligent” than those he met in the South. “The state of poverty in which a great number of white people live in Virginia” surprised the Marquis de Chastellux. Other visitors to the South likewise commented on the rude manners, heavy drinking, and weak work ethic of its residents. White tenants and smallholding farmers seemed only to have a “passion for gaming at the billiard table, a cock-fight or cards,” and rich planters squandered their wealth on extravagant lifestyles while their slaves endured bitter poverty.

Some southerners worried that human bondage had corrupted white society. “Where there are Negroes a White Man despises to work,” one South Carolina merchant commented. Moreover, well-to-do planters, able to hire tutors for their own children, did little to provide other whites with elementary schooling. In 1800, elected officials in Essex County, Virginia, spent about 25 cents per person for local government, including schools, while their counterparts in Acton, Massachusetts, allocated about \$1 per person. This difference in support for education mattered: by the 1820s, nearly all native-born men and women in New England could read and write, while more than one-third of white southerners could not.

Slavery and National Politics As the northern states ended human bondage, the South’s commitment to slavery became a political issue. At the Philadelphia convention in 1787, northern delegates had reluctantly accepted clauses allowing slave imports for twenty years and guaranteeing the return of fugitive slaves (Chapter 6). Seeking even more protection for their “peculiar institution,” southerners in the new national legislature won approval of James Madison’s resolution that “Congress have no authority to interfere in the emancipation of slaves, or in the treatment of them within any of the States.”

Nonetheless, slavery remained a contested issue. The black slave revolt in Haiti brought 6,000 white and mulatto planters and their slaves to the United States in 1793, and stories of Haitian atrocities frightened American slave owners (Chapter 7). Meanwhile, northern politicians assailed the British impressment of American sailors as just “as oppressive and tyrannical as the slave trade” and demanded the end of both.

Aristocratic Republicanism in South Carolina

The money that paid for Drayton Hall came originally from raising cattle in South Carolina for sale in the West Indies. At his death in 1717, Thomas Drayton left an estate that included 1,300 cattle and 46 slaves (both Native American and African). His third son, John (1715–1779), used his inheritance to buy slaves and to create a rice-growing plantation along the Ashley River. The home he erected on the site, Drayton Hall (built 1738–1742), reflected the designs of Andrea Palladio, the Italian Renaissance architect who celebrated the concepts of classical Roman proportion and decoration in his widely read *The Four Books of Architecture* (1516). Photo courtesy of Drayton Hall.



When Congress outlawed the Atlantic slave trade in 1808, some northern representatives demanded an end to the trade in slaves between states. Southern leaders responded with a forceful defense of their labor system. “A large majority of people in the Southern states do not consider slavery as even an evil,” declared one congressman. The South’s political clout—its domination of the presidency and the Senate—ensured that the national government would protect slavery. American diplomats vigorously demanded compensation for slaves freed by British troops during the War of 1812, and Congress enacted legislation upholding slavery in the District of Columbia.

African Americans Speak Out Heartened by the end of the Atlantic slave trade, black abolitionists spoke out. In speeches and pamphlets, Henry Sipkins and Henry Johnson pointed out that slavery—“relentless tyranny,” they called it—was a central legacy of America’s colonial history. For inspiration, they looked to the Haitian Revolution; for collective support, they joined in secret societies, such as Prince Hall’s African Lodge of Freemasons in Boston. Initially, black (and white) antislavery advocates hoped that slavery would die out naturally as the tobacco economy declined. However, a boom in cotton planting dramatically increased the demand for slaves, and Louisiana (1812), Mississippi (1817), and Alabama (1819) joined the Union with state constitutions permitting slavery.

As some Americans redefined slavery as a problem rather than a centuries-old social condition, a group of prominent citizens founded the **American Colonization**

Society in 1817. According to Henry Clay—a society member, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and a slave owner—racial bondage hindered economic progress. It had placed his state of Kentucky “in the rear of our neighbors . . . in the state of agriculture, the progress of manufactures, the advance of improvement, and the general prosperity of society.” Clay and other colonizationists argued that slaves had to be freed and then resettled, in Africa or elsewhere; emancipation without removal would lead to chaos—“a civil war that would end in the extermination or subjugation of the one race or the other.” Given the cotton boom, few planters responded to the society’s plea. It resettled only about 6,000 African Americans in Liberia, its colony on the west coast of Africa.

Most free blacks strongly opposed such colonization schemes because they saw themselves as Americans. As Bishop Richard Allen of the African Methodist Episcopal Church put it, “[T]his land which we have watered with our tears and our blood is now our mother country.” Allen spoke from experience. Born into slavery in Philadelphia in 1760 and sold to a farmer in Delaware, Allen grew up in bondage. In 1777, Freeborn Garretson, an itinerant preacher, converted Allen to Methodism and convinced Allen’s owner that on Judgment Day, slaveholders would be “weighted in the balance, and . . . found wanting.” Allowed to buy his freedom, Allen enlisted in the Methodist cause, becoming a “licensed exhorter” and then a regular minister in

EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

Why did the colonization movement of the 1810s fail?



The Reverend Richard Allen and the African Methodist Episcopal Church

One of the best-known African Americans in the early republic, Richard Allen founded a separate congregation for Philadelphia's black Methodists, the Bethel Church. Working with other ministers in 1816, he created the first independent black religious domination in the United States—the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church—and became its first bishop. Library of Congress / Picture Research Consultants & Archives.

Philadelphia. In 1795, Allen formed a separate black congregation, the Bethel Church; in 1816, he became the first bishop of a new denomination: the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Two years later, 3,000 African Americans met in Allen's church to condemn colonization and to claim American citizenship. Sounding the principles of democratic republicanism, they vowed to defy racial prejudice and advance in American society using "those opportunities . . . which the Constitution and the laws allow to all."

The Missouri Crisis, 1819–1821

The abject failure of colonization set the stage for a major battle over slavery. In 1818, Congressman Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina warned that radical members of the "bible and peace societies" intended to place "the question of emancipation" on the national political agenda. When Missouri applied for admission to the Union in 1819, Congressman James Tallmadge of New York did so: he would support statehood for Missouri only if its constitution banned the entry of new slaves and provided for the emancipation of existing bonds-people. Missouri whites rejected Tallmadge's proposals, and the northern majority in the House of Representatives blocked the territory's admission.

White southerners were horrified. "It is believed by some, & feared by others," Alabama senator John

Walker reported from Washington, that Tallmadge's amendment was "merely the entering wedge and that it points already to a total emancipation of the blacks." Mississippi congressman Christopher Rankin accused his northern colleagues of brinkmanship: "You conduct us to an awful precipice, and hold us over it." Underlining their commitment to slavery, southerners used their power in the Senate—where they held half the seats—to withhold statehood from Maine, which was seeking to separate itself from Massachusetts.

Constitutional Issues In the ensuing debate, southerners advanced three constitutional arguments. First, they invoked the principle of "equal rights," arguing that Congress could not impose conditions on Missouri that it had not imposed on other territories. Second, they maintained that the Constitution guaranteed a state's sovereignty with respect to its internal affairs and domestic institutions, such as slavery and marriage. Finally, they insisted that Congress had no authority to infringe on the property rights of individual slaveholders. Beyond those arguments, southern leaders defended human bondage. Downplaying the proposition that slavery was a "necessary evil," they now justified slavery on religious grounds. "Christ himself gave a sanction to slavery," declared Senator William Smith of South Carolina. "If it be offensive and sinful to own slaves," a prominent Mississippi Methodist added, "I

wish someone would just put his finger on the place in Holy Writ.”

Controversy raged in Congress and the press for two years before Henry Clay devised a series of political agreements known collectively as the **Missouri Compromise**. Faced with unwavering southern opposition to Tallmadge’s amendment, a group of northern congressmen deserted the antislavery coalition. They accepted a deal that allowed Maine to enter the Union as a free state in 1820 and Missouri to follow as a slave state in 1821. This bargain preserved a balance in the Senate between North and South and set a precedent for future admissions to the Union. For their part, southern senators accepted the prohibition of slavery in most of the Louisiana Purchase, all the lands north of latitude 36°30’ except for the state of Missouri (Map 8.3).

As they had in the Philadelphia convention of 1787, white politicians preserved the Union by compromising over slavery. However, the delegates in Philadelphia had resolved their sectional differences in two months; it took Congress two years to work out the Missouri Compromise, which even then did not command universal support. “[B]eware,” the *Richmond Enquirer* protested sharply as southern representatives agreed to exclude slavery from most of the Louisiana Purchase: “What is a territorial restriction to-day becomes a state restriction tomorrow.” The fate of the western lands,

enslaved blacks, and the Union itself were now intertwined, raising the specter of civil war and the end of the American republican experiment. As the aging Thomas Jefferson exclaimed during the Missouri crisis, “This momentous question, like a fire-bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror.”

PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT

What compromises over slavery did Congress make to settle the Missouri crisis?

Protestant Christianity as a Social Force

Throughout the colonial era, religion played a significant role in American life but not an overwhelming one. Then, beginning around 1790, religious revivals planted the values of Protestant Christianity deep in the national character and gave a spiritual dimension to American republicanism. These revivals especially changed the lives of blacks and of women. Thousands of African Americans became Baptists and Methodists and created a powerful institution: the black Christian Church. Evangelical Christianity also gave rise to new public roles for white women, especially in the North, and set in motion long-lasting movements for social reform.

MAP 8.3

The Missouri Compromise, 1820–1821

The Missouri Compromise resolved for a generation the issue of slavery in the lands of the Louisiana Purchase. The agreement prohibited slavery north of the Missouri Compromise line (36°30’ north latitude), with the exception of the state of Missouri. To maintain an equal number of senators from free and slave states in the U.S. Congress, the compromise provided for the nearly simultaneous admission to the Union of Missouri and Maine.



A Republican Religious Order

The republican revolution of 1776 forced American lawmakers to devise new relationships between church and state. Previously, only the Quaker- and Baptist-controlled governments of Pennsylvania and Rhode Island had rejected a legally established church that claimed everyone as a member and collected compulsory religious taxes. Then, a convergence of factors—Enlightenment principles, wartime needs, and Baptist ideology—eliminated most state support for religion and allowed voluntary church membership.

Religious Freedom Events in Virginia revealed the dynamics of change. In 1776, James Madison and George Mason advanced Enlightenment ideas of religious toleration as they persuaded the state’s constitutional convention to guarantee all Christians the “free exercise of religion.” This measure, which ended the privileged legal status of the Anglican Church, won Presbyterian and Baptist support for the independence struggle. Baptists, who also opposed public support of religion, convinced lawmakers to reject a tax bill (supported by George Washington and Patrick Henry) that would have funded all Christian churches. Instead, in 1786, the Virginia legislature enacted Thomas Jefferson’s bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, which made all churches equal in the eyes of the law and granted direct financial support to none.

Elsewhere, the old order of a single **established church** crumbled away. In New York and New Jersey, the sheer number of denominations—Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, and Quaker, among others—prevented lawmakers from agreeing on an established church or compulsory religious taxes. Congregationalism remained the official church in the New England states until the 1830s, but members of other denominations could now pay taxes to their own churches.

Church-State Relations Few influential Americans wanted a complete separation of church and state because they believed that religious institutions promoted morality and governmental authority. “Pure religion and civil liberty are inseparable companions,” a group of North Carolinians advised their minister. “It is your particular duty to enlighten mankind with the unerring principles of truth and justice, the main props of all civil government.” Accepting this premise, most state

governments indirectly supported churches by exempting their property and ministers from taxation.

Freedom of conscience also came with sharp cultural limits. In Virginia, Jefferson’s Religious Freedom act prohibited religious requirements for holding public office, but other states discriminated against those who were not Protestant Christians. The North Carolina Constitution of 1776 disqualified from public office any citizen “who shall deny the being of God, or the Truth of the Protestant Religion, or the Divine Authority of the Old or New Testament.” New Hampshire’s constitution contained a similar provision until 1868.

Americans influenced by Enlightenment deism and by evangelical Protestantism condemned these religious restrictions. Jefferson, Franklin, and other American intellectuals maintained that God had given humans the power of reason so that they could determine moral truths for themselves. To protect society from “ecclesiastical tyranny,” they demanded complete freedom of conscience. The “truth is great and will prevail if left to herself,” Jefferson declared; “religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God.” Many evangelical Protestants likewise demanded religious liberty to protect their churches from an oppressive government. Isaac Backus, a New England minister, warned Baptists not to incorporate their churches or accept public funds because that might lead to state control. In Connecticut, a devout Congregationalist welcomed “**voluntarism**,” the funding of churches by their members; it allowed the laity to control the clergy, he said, while also supporting self-government and “the principles of republicanism.”

Republican Church Institutions Following independence, Americans embraced churches that preached spiritual equality and governed themselves democratically while ignoring those with hierarchical and authoritarian institutions. Preferring Luther’s doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, few citizens accepted the authority claimed by Roman Catholic priests and bishops. Likewise, few Americans joined the Protestant Episcopal Church, the successor to the Church of England, because wealthy lay members dominated many congregations and it, too, had a hierarchy of bishops (Figure 8.1). The Presbyterian Church attracted more adherents, in part because its churches elected lay members to synods, the congresses that determined doctrine and practice.

Evangelical Methodist and Baptist churches were by far the most successful institutions in attracting new members, especially from the “**unchurched**”—the

UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW

What were the main principles of the new republican religious regime?

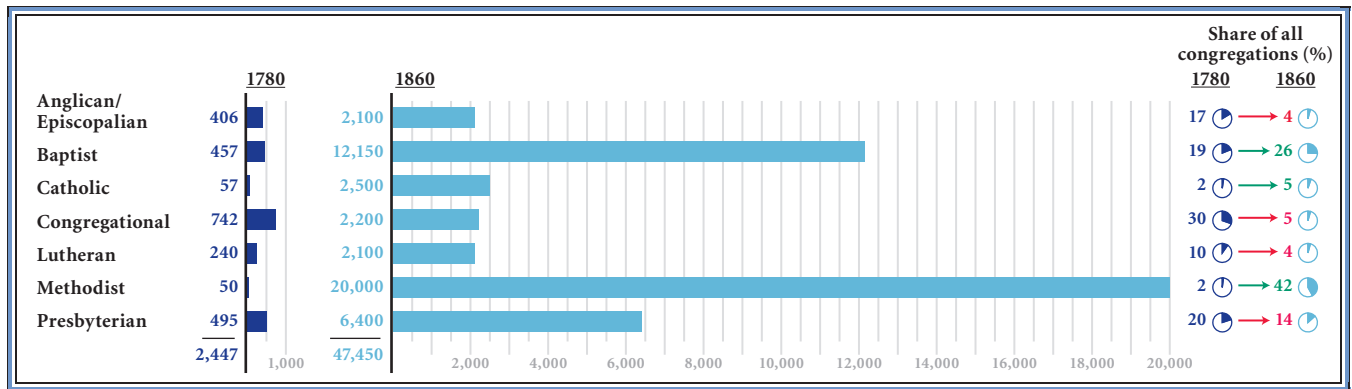


FIGURE 8.1
Number of Church Congregations by Denomination, 1780 and 1860

The growth of evangelical churches, Methodist and Baptist, transformed American Christianity during the first half of the nineteenth century. Also noteworthy was the surge in the number of Roman Catholic congregations, the result of Catholic immigration from Ireland and Germany after 1830.

great number of irreligious Americans. The Baptists boasted a thoroughly republican church organization, with self-governing congregations. Also, Baptists (and Methodists as well) developed an egalitarian religious culture marked by communal singing and emotional services. These denominations formed a dynamic new force in American religion.

The Second Great Awakening

As Americans adopted new religious principles, a decades-long series of religious revivals—the **Second Great Awakening**—made the United States a genuinely Christian society. Evangelical denominations began the revival in the 1790s, as they spread their message in seacoast cities and the backcountry of New England. A new sect of Universalists, who repudiated Calvinism and preached universal salvation, also gained tens of thousands of converts, especially in Massachusetts and northern New England. After 1800, enthusiastic camp meetings swept the frontier regions of South Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio, and Kentucky. The largest gathering, at Cane Ridge in Kentucky in 1801, lasted for nine electrifying days and nights and attracted almost 20,000 people (Map 8.4). With these revivals, Baptist and Methodist preachers reshaped the spiritual landscape throughout the South. Offering a powerful emotional message and the promise of religious fellowship, revivalists attracted both unchurched individuals and pious families searching for social ties as they migrated to new communities (America Compared, p. 272).

A New Religious Landscape The Second Great Awakening transformed the denominational makeup of American religion. The main colonial-period churches—the Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Quakers—grew slowly through natural increase, while Methodist and Baptist churches expanded spectacularly by winning converts. In rural areas, their preachers followed a regular circuit, “riding a hardy pony or horse” with their “Bible, hymn-book, and Discipline” to visit existing congregations. They began new churches by searching out devout families, bringing them together for worship, and then appointing lay elders to lead the congregation and enforce moral discipline. Soon, Baptists and Methodists were the largest denominations.

To attract converts, evangelical ministers copied the “practical preaching” techniques of George Whitefield and other eighteenth-century revivalists (Chapter 4). They spoke from memory in plain language, raised their voice to make important points, and punctuated their words with theatrical gestures. “Preach without papers,” advised one minister. “[S]eem earnest & serious; & you will be listened to with Patience, & Wonder.”

In the South, evangelical religion was initially a disruptive force because many ministers spoke of spiritual equality and criticized slavery. Husbands and planters grew angry when their wives became more assertive and when blacks joined evangelical congregations. To retain white men in their churches, Methodist and Baptist preachers gradually adapted their religious



Frances Trollope

American Camp Meetings and English Church Hierarchies

Frances Trollope, a successful English author and the mother of novelist Anthony Trollope, lived for a time in Cincinnati. She won great acclaim as the author of a critical-minded study, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), a best-seller in Europe and the United States.

I found the opportunity I had long wished for, of attending a camp-meeting, . . . in a wild district on the confines of Indiana. . . .

One of the preachers began in a low nasal tone, and, like all other Methodist preachers, assured us of the enormous depravity of man as he comes from the hands of his Maker, and of his perfect sanctification after he had wrestled sufficiently with the Lord. . . . The admiration of the crowd was evinced by almost constant cries of “Amen! Amen!” “Jesus! Jesus!” “Glory! Glory!” and the like. . . . [T]he preacher told them that “this night was the time fixed upon for anxious sinners to wrestle with the Lord” . . . and that such as needed their help were to come forward. . . .

[A]bove a hundred persons, nearly all females, came forward, uttering howlings and groans, so terrible that I shall never cease to shudder when I recall them. They appeared to drag each other forward, and on the word being given, “let us pray,” they all fell on their knees; but this posture was soon changed for others that permitted greater scope for the convulsive movements of their limbs. . . .

Many of these wretched creatures were beautiful young females. The preachers moved about among them, at once exciting and soothing their agonies. . . . I watched their tormentors breathing into their ears consolations that tinged the pale cheek with red. Had I been a man, I am sure I should have been guilty of some rash act of interference; nor do I believe that such a scene could have been acted in the presence of Englishmen, without instant punishment being inflicted . . . to check so turbulent and vicious a scene.

* * * * *

The critics who have from time to time reproached me with undue severity in my strictures on the domestic manners of the Americans have said that a candid examination of matters at home would have shown me that what I reprobated might be found in England, as well as in the United States. In most cases I have felt that this might be rebutted . . . by showing that what I complained of in the Union as indicative of imperfect civilisation, [whereas] if existing at all with us, could only be met with among persons in a much lower station of life. . . .

But on the subject treated in the present chapter, justice compels me to avow that no such pleading can avail me. That such fearful profanation of the holy name of religion has rapidly increased among us since the year 1827, in which I quitted England for America, is most sadly certain. . . . [Yet, the bishops of the Church of England protect us from many excesses, while in America the lack of an established] national church, and of that guardian protection which its episcopal authority seems to promise against its desecration by the ever-varying innovations of sectarian licence, appeared to account for all the profanations I witnessed.

Source: Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (London: Whittaker, Treacher, 1832), 139, 142–144; the material following the asterisks comes from *ibid.*, 5th ed. (London: R. Bentley, 1839), chapter 8.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Trollope, what accounts for the frequency of “profane” religious services in America and their relative absence in England?
2. How does Trollope use “social class” to analyze the differences between England and America?

message to justify the authority of yeomen patriarchs and slave-owning planters. Man was naturally at “the head of the woman,” declared one Baptist minister, while a Methodist conference told Christian slaves to be “submissive, faithful, and obedient.”

Black Christianity Other evangelists persuaded planters to spread Protestant Christianity among their African American slaves. During the eighteenth century, most blacks had maintained the religious practices of their African homelands, giving homage to

MAP 8.4 The Second Great Awakening, 1790–1860

The Second Great Awakening lasted for decades and invigorated churches in every part of the nation. The revivals in Kentucky and New York State were particularly influential. As thousands of farm families migrated to the West, they carried with them the religious excitement generated by the Cane Ridge revival in Kentucky in 1801. And, between 1825 and 1835, the area along the Erie Canal in New York witnessed such fervor that it came to be known as the Burned-over District.



African gods and spirits or practicing Islam. “At the time I first went to Carolina,” remembered former slave Charles Ball, “there were a great many African slaves in the country. . . . Many of them believed there were several gods [and] I knew several . . . Mohamedans.” Beginning in the mid-1780s, Baptist and Methodist preachers converted hundreds of African Americans along the James River in Virginia and throughout the Chesapeake and the Carolinas.

Subsequently, black Christians adapted Protestant teachings to their own needs. They generally ignored the doctrines of original sin and Calvinist predestination as well as biblical passages that prescribed unthinking obedience to authority. Some African American converts envisioned the Christian God as a warrior who had liberated the Jews. Their own “cause was similar to the Israelites,” preacher Martin Prosser told his fellow slaves as he and his brother Gabriel plotted rebellion in Virginia in 1800. “I have read in my Bible where God says, if we worship him, . . . five of you shall conquer a hundred and a hundred of you a hundred thousand of our enemies.” Confident of a special relationship with God, Christian slaves prepared

themselves spiritually for emancipation, the first step in their journey to the Promised Land.

Religion and Reform

Many whites also rejected the Calvinists’ emphasis on human depravity and weakness; instead, they celebrated human reason and free will. In New England, educated Congregationalists discarded the mysterious concept of the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — and, taking the name *Unitarians*, worshipped a “united” God and promoted rational thought. “The ultimate reliance of a human being is, and must be, on his own mind,” argued William Ellery Channing, a famous Unitarian minister. A children’s catechism conveyed the denomination’s optimistic message: “If I am good, God will love me, and make me happy.”

Other New England Congregationalists softened Calvinist doctrines. Lyman Beecher, the preeminent Congregationalist clergyman, accepted the traditional Christian belief that people had a natural tendency to

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

How did evangelical and African American churches differ from other Protestant denominations?



Women in the Awakening

The Second Great Awakening was a pivotal moment in the history of American women. In this detail from *Religious Camp Meeting*, painted by J. Maze Burbank in 1839, male preachers inspire religious frenzy, mostly among young women. In fact, most women embraced evangelical Christianity in a calm and measured manner, becoming dedicated workers, teachers, and morality-minded mothers. When tens of thousands of these women also joined movements for temperance, abolition, and women's rights, they spurred a great wave of social reform. Old Dartmouth Historical Society/New Bedford Whaling Museum.

sin; but, rejecting predestination, he affirmed the capacity of all men and women to choose God. By embracing the doctrine of free will, Beecher — along with “Free Will” Baptists — testified to the growing belief that people could shape their destiny.

Reflecting this optimism, the Reverend Samuel Hopkins linked individual salvation to religious benevolence — the practice of disinterested virtue. As the Presbyterian minister John Rodgers explained, fortunate individuals who had received God's grace or bounty had a duty “to dole out charity to their poorer brothers and sisters.” Heeding this message, pious

merchants in New York City founded the Humane Society and other charitable organizations. Devout women aided their ministers by holding prayer meetings and distributing charity. By the 1820s, so many Protestant men and women had embraced benevolent reform that conservative church leaders warned them not to neglect spiritual matters. Still, improving society was a key element of the new religious sensibility. The mark of a true church, declared the devout Christian social reformer Lydia Maria Child, is when members’ “heads and hearts unite in working for the welfare of the human-race.”

By the 1820s, many Protestant Christians had embraced that goal. Unlike the First Great Awakening, which split churches into warring factions, the Second Great Awakening fostered cooperation among denominations. Religious leaders founded five interdenominational societies: the American Education Society (1815), the Bible Society (1816), the Sunday School Union (1824), the Tract Society (1825), and the Home Missionary Society (1826). Based in eastern cities—New York, Boston, and Philadelphia—these societies dispatched hundreds of missionaries to the West and distributed thousands of religious pamphlets.

Increasingly, American Protestants saw themselves as a movement that could change the course of history. “I want to see our state evangelized,” declared a churchgoer near the Erie Canal: “Suppose the great State of New York in all its physical, political, moral, commercial, and pecuniary resources should come over to the Lord’s side. Why it would turn the scale and could convert the world. I shall have no rest until it is done.”

Because the Second Great Awakening aroused such enthusiasm, religion became an important new force in political life. On July 4, 1827, the Reverend Ezra Stiles Ely called on the Philadelphia Presbyterians to begin a “Christian party in politics.” Ely’s sermon, “The Duty of Christian Freemen to Elect Christian Rulers,” proclaimed a religious agenda for the American republic that Thomas Jefferson and John Adams would have found strange and troubling. The two founders had gone to their graves the previous year believing that America’s mission was to spread political republicanism. In contrast, Ely urged the United States to become an evangelical Christian nation dedicated to religious conversion at home and abroad: “All our rulers ought in their official capacity to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.” Evangelical Christians would issue similar calls during the Third (1880–1900) and Fourth (1970–present) Great Awakenings.

Women’s New Religious Roles

The upsurge in religious enthusiasm allowed women to demonstrate their piety and even to found new sects. Mother Ann Lee organized the Shakers in Britain and in 1774 migrated to America, where she attracted numerous recruits; by the 1820s, Shaker communities dotted the American countryside from New Hampshire to Indiana. Jemima Wilkinson, a young Quaker woman in Rhode Island, found inspiration by reading George Whitefield’s sermons. After experiencing a vision that

she had died and been reincarnated as Christ, Wilkinson declared herself the “Publick Universal Friend,” dressed in masculine attire, and preached a new gospel. Her teachings blended the Calvinist warning of “a lost and guilty, gossiping, dying World” with Quaker-inspired plain dress, pacifism, and abolitionism. Wilkinson’s charisma initially won scores of converts, but her radical lifestyle and ambiguous gender aroused hostility, and her sect dwindled away.

A Growing Public Presence Female-led sects had far less impact than thousands of women in mainstream churches. For example, women in New Hampshire churches managed more than fifty local

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

How was the Second Great Awakening similar to, and different from, the First Great Awakening of the 1740s (Chapter 4)?



Mrs. Juliann Jane Tillman, 1844

In 1837, Mrs. Tillman explained in a newspaper article that she “was strangely wrought upon” and “went to God” for help. Soon, “what seemed to be an angel made his sudden appearance, and in his hand was a roll . . . on which was written, ‘Thee I have chosen to preach my gospel without delay.’” After much anguish and more supernatural visitations, Mrs. Tillman overcame strong personal doubts—and the equally strong opposition of male ministers and laity—and began to preach in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Library of Congress.

“cent” societies to raise funds for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, New York City women founded the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows, and young Quaker women in Philadelphia ran the Society for the Free Instruction of African Females.

Women took charge of religious and charitable enterprises because of their exclusion from other public roles and because of their numbers. After 1800, more than 70 percent of the members of New England Congregational churches were women. The predominance of women prompted Congregational ministers to end traditional gender-segregated prayer meetings, and evangelical Methodist and Baptist preachers actively promoted mixed-sex praying. “Our prayer meetings have been one of the greatest means of the conversion of souls,” a minister in central New York reported in the 1820s, “especially those in which brothers and sisters have prayed together.”

Far from leading to sexual promiscuity, as critics feared, mixing men and women in religious activities promoted greater self-discipline. Believing in female

virtue, young women and the men who courted them postponed sexual intercourse until after marriage—previously a much rarer form of self-restraint.

In Hingham, Massachusetts, and many other New England towns,

more than 30 percent of the women who married between 1750 and 1800 bore a child within eight months of their wedding day; by the 1820s, the rate had dropped to 15 percent.

As women claimed spiritual authority, men tried to curb their power. In both the North and the South, evangelical Baptist churches that had once advocated spiritual equality now prevented women from voting on church matters or offering public testimonies of faith. Testimonies by women, one layman declared, were “directly opposite to the apostolic command in [Corinthians] xiv, 34, 35, ‘Let your women learn to keep silence in the churches.’” Another man claimed, “Women have a different calling. That they be chaste, keepers at home is the Apostle’s direction.” Such injunctions merely changed the focus of women’s religious activism. Embracing the idea of republican motherhood, Christian women throughout the United States founded maternal associations to encourage proper child rearing. By the 1820s, *Mother’s Magazine* and other newsletters, widely read in hundreds of small

towns and villages, were giving women a sense of shared identity and purpose.

Religious activism also advanced female education, as churches sponsored academies where girls from the middling classes received intellectual and moral instruction. Emma Willard, the first American advocate of higher education for women, opened the Middlebury Female Seminary in Vermont in 1814 and later founded girls’ academies in Waterford and Troy, New York. Beginning in the 1820s, women educated in these seminaries and academies displaced men as public-school teachers, in part because they accepted lower pay than men would. Female schoolteachers earned from \$12 to \$14 a month with room and board—less than a farm laborer. However, as schoolteachers, women had an acknowledged place in public life—a status that previously had been beyond their reach. Just as the ideology of democratic republicanism had expanded voting rights and the political influence of ordinary white men in the North, so the values of Christian republicanism had bolstered the public authority of middling women.

The Second Great Awakening made Americans a fervently Protestant people. Along with the values of republicanism and capitalism, this religious impulse formed the core of an emerging national identity.

IDENTIFY CAUSES

Why did Protestant Christianity and Protestant women emerge as forces for social change?

SUMMARY

Like all important ideologies, republicanism has many facets. We have explored three of them in this chapter. We saw how state legislatures used government-granted charters and monopolies to support private businesses, with the goal of enhancing the commonwealth of society. This republican-inspired “commonwealth” policy of state mercantilism remained dominant until the 1840s, when classical liberal doctrines partially replaced it.

We also saw how republicanism influenced social and family values. The principle of legal equality encouraged social mobility among white men and prompted men and women to seek companionate marriages. Republicanism likewise encouraged parents to provide their children with equal inheritances and to allow them to choose their marriage partners. In the South, republican doctrines of liberty and equality coexisted uneasily with racial slavery and class divisions, and ultimately they benefitted only a minority of the white population.

Finally, we observed the complex interaction of republicanism and religion. Stirred by republican principles, many citizens joined democratic and egalitarian denominations, particularly Methodist and Baptist churches. Inspired by “benevolent” ideas and the enthusiastic preachers of the Second Great Awakening,

many women devoted their energies to religious purposes and social reform organizations. The result of all these initiatives — in economic policy, social relations, and religious institutions — was the creation of a distinctive American republican culture.

CHAPTER REVIEW

MAKE IT STICK Go to **LearningCurve** to retain what you’ve read.



TERMS TO KNOW Identify and explain the significance of each term below.

Key Concepts and Events

“neomercantilist” (p. 250)

Panic of 1819 (p. 251)

Commonwealth System (p. 256)

sentimentalism (p. 258)

companionate marriages (p. 258)

demographic transition (p. 259)

republican motherhood (p. 259)

manumission (p. 265)

herrenvolk republic (p. 266)

American Colonization Society
(p. 267)

Missouri Compromise (p. 269)

established church (p. 270)

voluntarism (p. 270)

“unchurched” (p. 270)

Second Great Awakening (p. 271)

Key People

John Jacob Astor (p. 250)

Benjamin Rush (p. 259)

Henry Clay (p. 267)

Richard Allen (p. 267)

Lyman Beecher (p. 273)

Emma Willard (p. 276)

REVIEW QUESTIONS Answer these questions to demonstrate your understanding of the chapter’s main ideas.

- How important were the regional differences in the social aspects of republicanism, given the national scope of other republican-inspired developments such as state mercantilism and religious revivalism?
- Trace the relationship between America’s republican culture and the surge of evangelism called the Second Great Awakening. In what ways are the goals of the two movements similar? How are they different?
- In what ways did women’s private and public lives change during the years between 1790 and 1820, and what were the motive forces behind those changes?
- THEMATIC UNDERSTANDING** Review the events listed under “Work, Exchange, and Technology,” “Ideas, Beliefs, and Culture,” and “Identity” on the thematic timeline on page 149. How did the emerging economic and social order of early-nineteenth-century America represent an advance upon, or a retreat from, the republican ideology articulated during the decades of the independence struggle?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Recognize the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters by answering these questions.

- 1. ACROSS TIME AND PLACE** The text argues that a distinct American identity had begun to emerge by 1820. How would you describe this identity, and how did it differ from the sense of identity in the American mainland colonies in 1750 (Chapter 4)? What forces might account for the changes?
- 2. VISUAL EVIDENCE** The painting of “Republican Families . . . and Servants” (p. 264) addresses many of the themes of this chapter. What are those themes, and what position does the artist take in presenting them?

MORE TO EXPLORE

Start here to learn more about the events discussed in this chapter.

Nancy Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (2000). Analyzes the cultural and legal aspects of marriage.

Jan Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness* (1983). Discusses the paternalistic slave-owning gentry of the Upper South.

Jeffrey L. Pasley et al., eds., *Beyond the Founders* (2004). Shows how ordinary citizens promoted a democratic polity.

Randolph Ferguson Scully, *Religion and the Making of Nat Turner’s Virginia* (2008). Links the rise of evangelical Christianity in the South to the slave revolt led by Nat Turner.

Bernard Weisberger, *They Gathered at the River* (1958). A classic study of the revivalists who led America’s Great Awakenings.

Rosemarie Zagari, *Revolutionary Backlash* (2007). Demonstrates the limited inclusion of women in politics.

TIMELINE Ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates and then identify the links among related events.

1782	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Jean de Crèvecoeur publishes <i>Letters from an American Farmer</i> • Virginia manumission law (repealed 1792)
1783	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noah Webster publishes his “blue-back speller”
1784	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slavery ends in Massachusetts • Northern states begin gradual emancipation
1787	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benjamin Rush writes <i>Thoughts on Female Education</i>
1790s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States grant corporations charters and special privileges • Private companies build roads and canals to facilitate trade • Merchants expand rural outwork system • Chesapeake blacks adopt Protestant beliefs • Parents limit family size as farms shrink • Second Great Awakening expands church membership
1791	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress charters first Bank of the United States
1792	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Wollstonecraft publishes <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i>
1795	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massachusetts Mill Dam Act
1800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gabriel Prosser plots slave rebellion in Virginia
1800s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rise of sentimentalism and of companionate marriages • Women’s religious activism • Founding of female academies • Religious benevolence sparks social reform
1801	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cane Ridge revival in Kentucky
1816	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress charters Second Bank of the United States
1817	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent whites create American Colonization Society
1819	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plummeting agricultural prices set off financial panic
1819–1821	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missouri Compromise
1820s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States reform education • Women become schoolteachers

KEY TURNING POINTS: The timeline mentions books by four authors (Crèvecoeur, Webster, Rush, and Wollstonecraft) and two other entries relating to education. Based on the materials in Chapter 8, what might account for this blossoming of American literary and educational life?