
History 1301
U.S. to 1877

Unit 3 - Lecture 3

~

Antebellum Culture &
Reform

Antebellum Culture:

- *Expansion* key to America 1820 – 1860
 - Geography
 - Economic complexity
 - Major divisions between Slave and Free Labor Capitalism
 -
 -
 -
- Desire for “good old days” vs. Opportunity of future
- Two basic premises prevailed:
 - Optimism and the inevitable triumph of Man
 - Man is perfectible
 - Time, effort, guidance will allow the inner spirit to curb the inner vice
 - Modern society erodes traditional social and personal virtues
 - Traditional mores and institutions and order must be reestablished
 - New institutions, rules and regulations needed to re-integrate traditional social values

Romanticism:

- Romanticism – Liberation of the human spirit
 - Held in contempt by intellectuals
 - Painting – spectacular landscapes
 -
 - Literature – The Quest of Liberation
 - James Fennimore Cooper Last of the Mohicans 1826
 -
 - independent spirit and innate goodness
 - Walt Whitman Leaves of Grass -1855
 -
 -
 -
 - Transcendentalists – nature to inspire, not develop / Reason and Understanding
 - All for the good of society yet free from the confines of society
 - Nathaniel Hawthorne – against Ego and community
 - Henry David Thoreau
 - independence from materialism and group – individual morality
 - Utopias - social arrangements – belief in the prospect of human perfectibility
 -
 - Brook Farm – 1841 – communal living – self realization
 -
 - Oneida – 1848 – Perfectionists – free love or freedom from male lust
 - Shakers – 1840s Midwest – complete celibacy
 - Mormons – Joseph Smith 1830 – Communal ties

Reforming Society:

- Revivalism 1820 – 1840 “Betterment of Society”
 -
 -
 -
- Revival of morality and order:
 -
 - Perfectibility of the individual – every person capable of salvation / improvement
 - Evangelical Protestantism – against social vice
 - - 1840 Temperance became a major focus in US
 - Maine becomes dry in 1846
 - Public health and medical science
 - Cholera
 - Small pox
 - Ether in 1844
 - Hand Washing
 - Education - 1850s Universal public education
 - 72% in North enrolled
 - by 1860 – 94 North were literate / 83 of whites in South
 - Rehabilitation – people are fixable
 - Benevolent Empire institutions for handicapped and broken
 - Modern jails and penitentiaries – free from laxness
 - Asylums for the insane
 - Indian Reservations

Feminism and Anti-Slavery:

- Feminism was an outgrowth of work in reform movement – resent social and legal restrictions and barriers
 - Pressed the boundaries of acceptable feminine behavior
 - 1848 – Declaration of Rights and Sentiments by Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Stanton and Lucretia Mott – after rejection from World Antislavery Convention
 -
 -
- Anti-Slavery
 - 1817 – American Colonization Society – buy Blacks and ship them elsewhere for freedom – 1830 established Liberia
- William Lloyd Garrison 1831 – Liberator newspaper
 -
 - 1832 American Antislavery Society – immediate action
 -
 - Frederick Douglass – escaped and antislavery speaker in 1838, purchased his freedom in 1847
 -
 - Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass 1845 which damned slavery
 - Increasingly rejecting gradualism

Anti-Slavery – II:

- Moderates and American and Foreign Anti - Slavery Society 1840:
 - Theodore Weld - split by increasing radicalism of Garrison
 -
 - Long, patient, peaceful struggle
 -
 -
 -
 -
 - Northern states personal liberty laws – against aiding recapture of runaways
 - 1840 Liberty “free soil” party – no slavery in territories
 - Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin – 1852 – gave slavery a face - 300K copies in first year Anti-Abolitionism:
- Anti-Abolitionists:
 - Majority in North and South
 - Idealism vs “the present state of affairs”
 - What to do with them when they’re free?
 - Pro-slavery arguments of south
 - US Constitution / States Rights