Reform in American Culture
1820 - 1860

To change or not to change, that is the question
Second Great Awakening

• Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin were Deist
• Deists-rely on reason, instead of revelation, on science rather than the bible
• No original sin –denied Christ was divine
• A Supreme being created the universe and man has the capacity for good
Deism

• In the deist's view, the world is like a pocket watch, wound up at the beginning of time and running on its own.
American transcendentalists

- Rejected theory that knowledge comes to your mind from your senses
- Argued for the importance of human intuition and individualism—all knowledge comes from an inner light
- Nature as teacher, nurturer, discipline.
"Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, I become a transparent eye-ball. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God".

Ralph Waldo Emerson-1836
Second Great Awakening

- Reaction to the growing liberalism in religion-increase in Baptists and Methodists
- Belief in free will in combination with the doctrine of original sin
- Thousands of people (souls) converted
- Widespread belief that the second coming of Christ was near
Second Great Awakening

- Tended to split classes and regions
- Richer more educated tended to ignore revivals
Charles Grandison Finney

• Probably the greatest of all revival preachers was Charles Grandison Finney
• Led massive revivals
• No slavery or alcohol
• A Christian kingdom on Earth
• Feminization of religion, women have a spiritual worth, active role in “saving” men, pray in public
Burned-Over District

- Western New York-Hellfire and Damnation
- Joseph Smith-Received golden plates from an angel-becomes book of Mormon
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)
- Move to Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois
- Smith murdered
- Brigham Young takes over, leads Mormons to Salt Lake City, Utah
- Polygamy
Women and Education

• Women were thought to be superior to men in two areas:
  • 1. Moral sensibilities
  • 2. Artistic refinement
• Men were strong, but beasts
• “Cult of Domesticity” Women were keepers of Society’s conscience and teachers of the children to be good and productive citizens
Cult of Domesticity
Cult of Domesticity in the 20th century

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Women

• Women growing more conscious of themselves as individuals and as "sisters" as the male and female sex roles were becoming more increasingly divided.

• Still a man's world but women fared better in U.S. than in Europe esp. on the frontier where women were more scarce.
  – Increasing numbers of women avoided marriage; 10% by 1860
    • Women began working as schoolteachers and in domestic service.
    • 10% of white women working for pay outside own homes in 1850
    • 20% had been employed at some time prior to marriage.
Women

• Cult of True Womanhood
  – some equality for women, especially in religion and morals for the family and as companion for their husbands.
Seneca Falls Convention

• At Seneca Falls, New York, 1848
• Declaration of Sentiments: “all men and women are created equal”
• Voting rights for women
• Launched modern women’s rights movement
Education

Education was not for women
Hurt their brains
Make women sick
Make women unfit to be married
Education

• Tax supported education for the poor-stiff opposition
• Rich conservatives don’t want ignorant rabble that can vote
• Thomas Jefferson- A civilized nation that was both ignorant and free “never was and never will be”
Education

• Emma Willard
  – the first American woman publicly to support higher education for women

• Horace Mann
  – title of father of American public school education
  – to increase the availability and quality of free, nondenominational public schools
  --Teach morality and discipline
Education

• William H. McGuffey
  – A series of books designed to teach reading to schoolchildren.

• Noah Webster
  – An educator and author of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, best known for his *American Dictionary of the English Language*
Lesson VIII.

his this bite keep wants
can four play moon watch
cow kind sheep stands
how dark most chase shines

See how this dog stands on his feet.
He wants to play with John.
A dog has four feet. A dog and a cat can see in the dark.
Dogs keep watch at night, and bark.
They bark most when the moon shines.
A dog will chase a sheep, or a hog, or a cow, and bite it. If you are kind to the dog, he will not bite you.
Education

• Higher Education
  – 2nd Great Awakening -- creation of many small, denominational, liberal arts colleges, mostly in South and West.
  – Women's schools in secondary ed. gained some respectability in 1820s.
    • *Emma Willard* est. in 1821, the Troy (NY) Female Seminary.
    • *Oberlin College* open to both men and women in 1837; and African-Americans.
Immigration

• **British Isles (Ireland)**
  – Famine resulting from the failure of the potato crop
• **Northern Europe (Germany)**
• **Improvements in ship technology made the ocean voyage relatively cheap and fast**
• **The South attracted the least number of immigrants**
• Poorer immigrants lived in the cities while those with some money farmed in the West
• **Nativism (Anti Immigration)**
  – The formation of the Know Nothing party
  – Anti-Catholicism
Utopian Societies

- Wanted to perfect society
- New Harmony
  - Communitarian society founded the first American kindergarten, first free public school and the first free public library.
- Brook Farm - "plain living and high thinking"
  - Prospered until 1846 when new communal building burned down.
  - Nathaniel Hawthorne a resident (author of *A Scarlet Letter*)
Utopian Societies

• The Oneida Community
• “complex marriage”—free love
• Birth control—*coitus reservatus*
• believed it liberated women from the demands of male "lust" and traditional bonds of family
• eventually became a dominant manufacturer of silver
• Lasted about 30 years
Utopian Societies

- Fourier Phalanxes - Charles Fourier
  - ideal community where each phalanx is to include a balanced mix of workers, combining all the necessary skills.
  - A community of 1620 people is suggested as the ideal size
Utopian Societies

- **Shakers** -- United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing
  - Opposition to both marriage and free love led to their extinction.
  - Believed in celibacy, equal spiritual value of men and women, and simplicity of architecture and furnishings.
  - New members were adopted as orphans or recruited through conversion.
SHAKERS

• Lasted about 100 years--why
The Shakers used dancing as a worship practice. They often danced in concentric circles and sometimes in the style shown here.
Temperance vs Teetotalism

- Custom and a monotonous life led to drunkenness
- Temperance-resist alcohol
- Teetotalism-eliminate alcohol
- Dozen states pass prohibition laws
- Laws repealed or ignored
- But much less drinking by men and women
Temperance

- German and Irish immigrants often opposed the movement.
- By the 1850’s, the movement advocated the legal prohibition of alcohol.
- The early leaders of the movement were Protestant clergymen.
- It was the most popular of the Jacksonian era reform movements.
Temperance

• Neal Dow - Father of Prohibition"
  – Maine Law 1851
    • completely prohibiting the sale of alcohol
  – Illinois Quart Law 1851
    • banned the sale of alcohol in quantities less than a quart.

• T.S. Arthur
  – *Ten Nights In A Bar Room And What I Saw There*
  – Literature supporting temperance
Penal Institutions

• Dorthea Dix
  – Discovery of the confinement of the mentally ill in local jails
  – insane were often kept in chains.
  – the demented were not willfully strange but mentally ill.
  – 15 states created new hospitals and asylums as a result.
Curing insanity
Penal Institutions

• **Kirkbride Plan** (Thomas Kirkbride)
  – system of mental asylum design in Philadelphia
  – based on a philosophy of Moral Treatment.
  – The typical floor plan, with long rambling wings and rooms arranged "in echelon" (staggered, so each connected building still receives sunlight and air),
    • was meant to promote privacy and comfort for patients.
  – The building form itself was meant to have a curative effect, meant as "a special apparatus for the care of lunacy"
Kirkbride Plan
Abolitionist Movement

• Bringing the issue of slavery to the forefront of the reform movement
  – overshadow the others after 1830

• William Lloyd Garrison and the American Antislavery Society
  – Immediate emancipation of slaves with compensation to owners
  – The Liberator

• Harriet Beecher Stowe – Uncle Tom’s Cabin