

Chapter 15: The Ferment of Reform and Culture (1790-1860)

Reviving Religion

- Religiosity was still strong in America but was getting weaker
 - ¾ of population (~18 million) still attended church
 - Orthodox Calvinism was starting to fade as people became less fervent about religion
 - Calvinism was a form of Protestantism that involved pre-destination (predetermined fate) and human depravity, which was gloomy and not appealing to many people
 - Thomas Paine's book *The Age of Reason* (1794) debased religion with logic, claiming that religion was "set up to terrify and enslave mankind" — supported Deism
- Some people, especially Founding Fathers, turned to Deism belief
 - Deism was based on science and logic rather than revelation and the Bible
 - Believed that Christ was not ideal, but there was some divine spirit that made Man able to think logically and morally
 - Deism looked at the pros of mankind instead of its cons, made God loving instead of stern and punishing — much more positive outlook
 - Was picked up readily by newer Protestant denominations ("Methodist, Baptist, and Unitarian") as well as older ones ("Presbyterian and Congregationalist")
- New revival of religious zeal culminated in the Second Great Awakening
 - An evangelical revivalist movement that converted even more people than the First Great Awakening and therefore was even more influential
 - Had many camp meetings in which thousands of people (up to 25,000) gathered and were preached to
 - Many religious zealots even made missions to convert people from other continents (Africa, Asia, etc.)
 - Peter Cartwright was a Methodist "circuit-rider," meaning that he traveled around the frontier region and converted thousands of people to his religion
 - Also used physical force in fights to try and convert people
 - Charles Grandison Finney was the greatest preacher of the Second Great Awakening, made large movements in New York and converted over half a million people
 - Also made innovations in religion, such as the "anxious bench" for sinners
 - Also served as president of the new and very liberal Oberlin College, in which he worked towards revivalist religiosity and also abolition
 - Women formed a large part of the Second Great Awakening
 - Preaching included women as well as men to contribute to revivalism
 - Middle-class women were among the first and most eager converts to the new concepts of Deism
 - New sense of righteousness in women caused them to essentially lead every reform movement in America

Culture and Society: The Second Great Awakening and the associated revivals were strong cultural reforms in the U.S. Similar to the First Great Awakening, the latter converted millions of Americans to new and

vitalized religion, which in turn brought an increased sense of self-worth and righteousness of society. This in turn led all of the new reform of this era, because people felt optimistic for change and felt the need to right society. There was the doctrine of equality and spiritual revival for *all* people, including women and blacks in society; these minority groups felt especially empowered to fight for their rights. Women ended up being the quickest converts to these new ideals and the leaders of most reforms. In addition, like the First Great Awakening, the Second Great Awakening was grown out of passion rather than reason, of feelings rather than logic, and this allowed it to strike a familiar chord with many Americans. As a result, culture was deeply moved by this movement, religion was greatly affected, and the moral beliefs behind this new religiosity led to social and political change towards a moral society.

Denominational Diversity

- Second Great Awakening had left behind the Burned-Over District (western NY)
 - So-called because there was no-one left to convert (to “burn” into new religious role)
- William Miller led the Millerites (Adventists) to believe that Christ would materialize on Earth again on 10/22/44
 - Disappointed but not totally ruined when Christ did not show up
- Second Great Awakening left clearly-defined class lines between religious groups, widened the socioeconomic gap between them
 - “Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Unitarians” that were wealthier and more urbanized continued to grow in wealth
 - “Methodists, Baptists, and the members of new sects” stayed with mostly uneducated members
- Churches were divided by the issue of slavery (like states)
 - Baptists and Methodists split into two (1844-5)
 - Presbyterians split into North and South (1857)
 - Foreshadowed the split of political parties and the Union

A Desert Zion in Utah

- Joseph Smith had revelation, created the Mormons by compiling revelation into Book of Mormon (the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints)
 - Mormons were a new, totally American religion
 - Had a religious oligarchy
 - This was opposed by regular Americans, who liked their individual freedoms (rather than having an oligarchy be imposed over them) and liked free enterprise (rather than a religious structure ruling them)
 - Mormons angered Americans by voting together and raising a militia
 - Mormons were criticized for polygamist practices
- Joseph Smith was killed in 1844, Brigham Young took over as Mormon leader
 - In 1846-7, Young moved the Mormons away from persecution from the Americans by moving them out West to Utah
 - Utah Mormon society became “a prosperous frontier theocracy and a cooperative commonwealth”
 - Many immigrants from Europe flooded this area as well

- Brigham became governor of the Utah territory in 1850, U.S. government worried about his hierarchical power system
 - Army raised by federal government in 1857, pitted against the Mormons
 - Fight was stopped before major conflict broke out
- Mormon's polygamist practices (which were illegal against antipolygamy laws of 1862 and 1882) slowed down the creation of the state of Utah until 1896

Politics and Power: After the Second Great Awakening, different religious denominations became increasingly separated based on their different beliefs and composition. For example, the wealthier Christian groups, such as the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Unitarians became wealthier, while the poorer ones, such as the Methodists and Baptists, became poorer. Geographically, religions were separated based on their beliefs, sometimes even internally: The Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians all split within themselves, usually longitudinally, forming a “North” and “South” of each section with their respective views on slavery. The Mormons, with their very different religious practices such as polygamy, were forced to separate from the other religions in order to escape persecution; as a result, they ended up moving far west to Utah. In summary, political decisions and beliefs shaped the sectional divisions and movements of the different religions.

Free Schools for a Free People

- Many people were originally against the idea of free education that was funded by taxes
 - People thought that it would only educate and benefit the poor
- Some conservative and wealthier Americans saw the benefit of public education as promoting a society of well-educated citizens
 - These citizens made up the democratic society, and since a democracy derives its power from the people, these people and their votes make a difference in American government — it was important that their votes are well-informed, and this could be done through education
 - Hard-working laborers wanted a better future for their children, including by giving them a better education
 - Between 1825 and 1850, people started voting for free education
- The “little red schoolhouse—with one room, one stove, one teacher, and often eight grades” became a common sight in America, but early schools were not of the highest quality
 - Most early schools were only open for a few months
 - Most teachers were poorly-paid and poorly-trained men
 - Teachers more bent on discipline than academic education sometimes
- Horace Mann greatly reformed the new public education system
 - Petitioned the MA Board of Education for “more and better schoolhouses, longer school terms, higher pay for teachers, and an expanded curriculum”
 - His changes in MA were reproduced in other states
- Education was still not a free luxury for everyone
 - Only about 100 secondary schools by 1860, many people remained illiterate
 - Slaves were forbidden to be instructed, free blacks of North usually excluded from school system as well

- Noah Webster (“Schoolmaster of the Republic”) advanced school curriculum
 - Created improved textbooks for American children
 - Textbooks not only taught, but established patriotism in students
 - Created the Webster dictionary that standardized the English language
- William H. McGuffey wrote the *McGuffey’s Readers* for elementary school students
 - Sold 122 million copies in the next few decades

Higher Goals for Higher Learning

- Many new small colleges sprung up, but their curriculum was narrow, and boring
- State universities begun to be created, first with North Carolina in 1795
 - Money from federal land grant helped university grow
 - University of Virginia in 1819, largely influenced by Thomas Jefferson, dedicated to “freedom from religious or political shackles, and modern languages and the sciences received unusual emphasis” — epitome of teaching modern curriculum (math and the sciences) as well as democratic ideals (freedom)
- Higher education for women was negligible but starting to improve
 - Women were supposed to live in their “cult of domesticity,” limited to their sphere of power in the home — higher education was deemed unnecessary for them
 - Emma Willard helped secondary schools gain attention in 1820s
 - Created the Troy Female Seminary (1821)
 - Oberlin College soon followed by allowing women in the school (1837)
 - Mary Lyon created the Mount Holyoke Seminary/College
- Higher education beyond college could be achieved with private libraries or peddlers
 - Lessons from the “Lyceum lecture associations” were spread through traveling lecturers
 - 3,000 of these traveling lecturers by 1835, such as Emerson
- Some educational magazines flourished
 - The *North American Review* (1815) lasted the longest, *Godey’s Lady’s Book* (1830-1898) was influential, reached a large audience, and lasted fairly long

American and National Identity: America became more educated as public education came along and gave schooling to a greater percentage of the people. This changed from a view that public education would only benefit the poor, a view that resulted in the domination of education by private schools that was only for the wealthy. With public education passed, and because “books are power,” the greater knowledge of the average person gave him or her greater importance to the American government, which exists based on a voting system. Because the people were better informed in the elections, the representative leaders and the President would likely be better chosen, resulting in a better democracy in general. This was especially important after President Jackson gave all white men votes (“universal white male suffrage”) and therefore introduced the poorer, landless laborers that made up a large part of the population into the democratic process of voting. American identity became better educated and more democratic in this process.

An Age of Reform

- Reform greatly prompted by the Second Great Awakening's sense of good and righteousness, from which stemmed the obligation for the individual to help the society
 - Women were especially prevalent with reform, especially with women's suffrage rights; they offered the women an opportunity to participate in society outside of their limited realm of the home
 - People fought for issues such as "cruelty, war, intoxicating drink, discrimination, and ... slavery"
- There were many people imprisoned, and treatment of prisoners was very harsh
 - Debt imprisonment was very common and sometimes unjust (prison for even a dollar in debt sometimes)
 - Debt imprisonment later abolished by influence of laborers
 - People reduced the number of capital punishment cases and other harsh punishments
 - Started looking more to reform than solely punishment, hence "reformatories," "houses of correction," and "penitentiaries"
 - Dorothea Dix saw that many prisoners were being treated very inhumanely
 - Petitioned to MA government in 1843 to improve prisoner conditions
 - When MA changed prison conditions, some other states followed suit as well
- William Ladd led reform movement against war
 - Idea was supported by Europe
 - Did not really go into effect: Crimean War and Civil War followed shortly afterwards

Demon Rum—The "Old Deluder"

- Drinking was a common problem that had many negative consequences
 - Caused by "Custom, combined with a hard and monotonous life"
 - Women, religious members, and legislative members all drunk — not just vice of average laboring white men
 - Drinking "decreased the efficiency of labor, ... foued the sanctity of the family, threatening the spiritual welfare—and physical safety—of women and children"
- American Temperance Society (Boston, 1826) created to try to decrease drinking problem
 - Many local branches of this sprung into existence shortly afterwards
 - Temperance movement popularized by book, *Ten Nights in a Barroom and What I Saw There* (1854) that detailed the horrors of drinking
 - Didn't ask for teetotalism (total alcoholic abstinence), but simply temperance
- Neal S. Dow of Maine helped pass the Maine Law of 1851 that banned manufacture and sale of alcoholic drinks
 - Some other states followed Maine, but laws were often called unconstitutional and nullified by citizens
 - Although these laws could not be enforced because of unconstitutionality, women did end up drinking a lot less and people on average drank less alcohol

Culture and Society: Debt imprisonment, temperance, prisoners' rights, international peace, education—these were all reform movements overshadowed by the two major movements of abolition and women's rights that also occurred in this time period. Nonetheless, each one called for greater rights or the

betterment of the individual, which followed both the original Enlightenment values of democracy (human rights) and the new wave of Romanticism (individualism). Because each one of these movements were built on the same principles, the success of one helped the cause of the others; as a result, society became one of reform in general, not any one in particular. For example, temperance helped improve women's rights (protecting wives from abusive husbands) and prevented excessive jailing (which would involve inhuman treatment). Better education would likely make a person wiser and avoid all of these problems. Society was looking to better itself as a whole, not just one piece at a time.

Women in Revolt

- Women were greatly suppressed
 - Idea of “cult of domesticity,” essentially limiting women to the home. The only place they had influence over men
 - Women could not vote and could be beaten by husband
 - Women had limited property rights when married
- Some laws did favor the protection of women; for example, the punishment for rape was very harsh
- Industrial age with distinct economic roles separated men and women into their respective roles
 - Women considered weak and emotionally weak but artistic and moral
 - Also had the responsibility of raising children to be moral citizens of society
 - Men considered stronger and smarter but more likely to be morally unstable
- Women's rights advocates began to achieve prominence in society
 - Many promoted ideas greater than simply women's rights— also wanted reform for abolition and temperance, general reform movements of this age
 - Catharine Beecher, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony were important women's rights advocates of this time period
 - Beecher supported women's roles outside of home (as teachers)
 - Stanton supported women's suffrage
 - Anthony advocated for women's rights in general
- Women began to accomplish what men could
 - Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell was first woman to go to medical college; doctors previously were all male
 - Sarah and Angelica Grimké were abolitionists
 - Amelia Bloomer wore men's pants to revolt against stereotypes of women's clothing
- Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls was the first meeting for women's rights
 - Stanton read “Declaration of Sentiments” — mimicked style and ideas of the Declaration of Independence
- Women's legal rights slowly were improving
 - Mississippi allowed women to own property even when marriage in 1839

Culture and Society: While men tried to force women into limited spheres of power in the home, women rose to prominence in society, outside the home. The “cult of domesticity,” in which mothers were supposed to practice “Republican motherhood” and foster democratic values in their children, was the prevailing view of women at the time. However, women started to take men's roles in society (e.g., Dr.

Elizabeth Blackwell) and promote women's suffrage (e.g., at the Seneca Falls Convention) and create protests (e.g., Bloomer wore men's clothes to protest stereotypes of women's attire). As was evident by the *Declaration of Sentiments* that was orated during the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, the rights advocated by women were the same as those desired by men during the Revolutionary era. In other words, women were simply trying to extend the Enlightenment-Age thinking of natural rights and equality to women as well as men, to hold on to the ideals that formed the beginning of the democracy of the U.S. The essential ideals of society did not change, but rather the advocates for change: it was now the women instead of the men who cried out in protest.

Wilderness Utopias

- Many reform movements also prompted societal experiments; this could create a new, idealistic society instead of reforming the current system
 - Robert Owen, a Scottish textile manufacturer, created the New Harmony (IN, 1825) society
 - Meant to be a communistic society, with everything shared between the people, such as children, money, and possessions
 - Quickly fell apart due to confusion — too radical, and the ordinary citizens that comprised it could not comprehend it correctly
- Brook Farm (MA, 1841) was another utopian society based on transcendentalism
 - 200 acres of “brotherly and sisterly cooperation of about twenty intellectuals”
 - Debt stopped them — society was too impractical
- Oneida Community (NY, 1848) “practiced free love (‘complex marriage’), birth control (through ‘male continence,’ or coitus reservatus), and the eugenic selection of parents to produce superior offspring”
 - Emphasized on artificially arranging marriage and families — too radical
 - Only survived because of its profitable production of steel traps
- Shakers (1774 in America) were one of the oldest sects in America
 - Died out because it “prohibited both marriage and sexual relations” — cannot reproduce, only increases by new recruits

Culture and Society: The rise of multiple utopian societies demonstrated the extreme optimism of the Romanticist ideals. New Harmony, Brook Farm, Oneida Community, and the Shakers all depended on the high morality of mankind that Romanticism portrayed with its theme of human perfection; unfortunately, this was not to be. Human perfection was impractical, and all of these societies failed, mainly due to economic concerns. While they were not successful, they were important thought experiments and they showed how optimistic the Americans were with these new principles; they just had to figure out a more practical way to implement them into the existing. Thus, culture was taught the lesson of economic impracticality of the high spirits of Romanticized beliefs.

The Dawn of Scientific Achievement

- Most early scientific advancements in America based solely on technological needs — “promoted safety, speed, and economy”
 - Jefferson created a plow

- Nathaniel Bowditch worked to create practical navigation
- Matthew F. Maury studied ocean parameters
- There was a lot of scientific talent
 - Professor Benjamin Silliman at Yale was chemist and geologist
 - Professor Louis Agassiz taught at Harvard, taught biology
 - Professor Asa Gray of Harvard wrote many scientific papers (“over 350 books, monographs, and papers”)
 - John J. Audubon wrote *Birds of America*, studied bird behavior and physiology
- Medicine was not very advanced in America
 - People still used unscientific method of bleeding
 - Smallpox and yellow fever still had occasional epidemics / plagues
 - Corpse-wagon drivers were a profession
 - Most people had improper diet that led to being sick, or doing other actions incorrectly (“hurried eating, perspiring and cooling off too rapidly, and ignorance of germs and sanitation”)
 - Some doctors created self-patented medicines that were ludicrous and untested
 - Dr. Oliver Holmes claimed that people would be better off without all of these medicines, because they harm people more than they help
 - Anesthetics during surgery limited to whiskey at first, laughing gas or ether used later

American and National Identity: The scope of scientific advancements during this time period showed that the American Identity was still very practical and plain; the people worked towards simple technological productivity rather than reinventing society through technology (as often happens nowadays, such as by the introduction of smartphones or Google). Improved plows, navigation, and maritime knowledge were the most important changes of this time period. Basic chemistry, geology, and biology were studied. Medicine was barely advanced, with the unscientific medieval practice of bleeding still continued, and anesthetics were improved only with the introduction of laughing gas and ether (which were not too effective either). This limited scientific development showed that, during this time showed the greater importance of Romantic ideals to America, based more on passion and emotion than logic and science—hence the great religious revivals and advancements on a scale far surpassing the improvements of the sciences.

Artistic Achievements

- Americans wanted to have their own distinct culture (“cultural autonomy”), included valuable art
- America had unique architectural styles
 - Federal Style used for most national buildings
 - Federal Style involved classical Greek or Roman examples that “emphasized symmetry, balance, and restraint”
 - Also symbolized political connection to republican ideas from Greek and Romans
 - U.S. Capitol and the White House are examples of this
 - In 1820s-1850s, architecture was rocked by a new Greek Revival movement
 - Inspired by Greek resistance against Turks in the 1820s

- Emphasized “medieval Gothic forms, with their ... pointed arches, sloped roofs, and large, stained-glass windows”
 - Jefferson was a very talented architect
 - Designed his own plantation mansion, Monticello, as well as Richmond’s capitol
- American painting also began to develop unique styles
 - Most paintings were about the life of the average American (“provincial culture with a civilizing veneer”)
 - This kind of painting was hard because society was very quick-moving, and weren’t many wealthy patrons who wanted portraits or other conventional images
 - Easier to find work in Great Britain, where there was better art education and more willing patrons
 - Some people thought art was worthless, opposed painting simply because of its impracticality
 - Good painters still emerged, despite difficulties: Stuart Gilbert, Charles Willson Peale, and John Trumbull were major painters of the time
 - American nationalism after the War of 1812 prompted people to look to nature and the landscape of America as a focus for painting
 - The Hudson River School was created, and it focused on romantic, scenic art
 - Major artists Thomas Cole and Asher Durand went to this school
 - Painting faced competition from daguerreotype, a crude form of photograph
- Musical culture of America also became more unique to America
 - Previously Puritans had disapproved of nonreligious songs, but these began to emerge during this time period
 - Music became “rhythmic and nostalgic ‘darky’ tunes”
 - Minstrel shows, in which Americans acted as members of a plantation (including black slaves)
 - “Dixie” (battle song of the Confederates), written during this time period
 - Stephen C. Foster wrote classic tunes such as “Camptown Races,” “Oh! Susanna,” “Old Folks at Home”

The Blossoming of a National Literature

- Most of American literature was copied from Britain, no distinct American writing at first
- During the Revolution, most distinctly American writing was political and practical
 - *The Federalist* (1787-8) by Hamilton, Jay, and Madison
 - *Common Sense* (1776) by Thomas Paine
 - *Autobiography* (1818) by Benjamin Franklin
- After War of 1812, romanticism became popular in the U.S.
 - Romanticism movement originated in Europe
 - Stressed “imagination over reason, nature over civilization, intuition over calculation, and the self over society. Emotion, expression, and experimentation were core values”
 - This was in direct contrast to the Enlightenment, which was focused mostly on reason and was what governed the Revolutionary ideals

- Three main writers rose to prominence: Washington Irving (author of *Knickerbocker's History of New York*, *The Sketch Book*) James Fenimore Cooper (author of *The Spy*, the *Leatherstocking Tales*, *The last of the Mohicans*), and William Cullen Bryant (poet of "Thanatopsis" and editor of the *New York Evening Post*)

Culture and Society: Rather than basing its art and literature on past models of Europe, America decided that it would make a distinctly American one, especially with a masterful knowledge of art that could rival that of Europe. Architecture, painting, music, and literature (essentially all of the humanities) greatly improved to match the talent of Europe, with various artists pioneering the way and even schools dedicated to the arts (such as the Hudson River School). Architecture assimilated the Federalist and Greek Revivalist styles, painting was romanticized and focused on beautiful American scenery, music melded with the unique experiences of American plantations (with the "minstrel shows"), and literature greatly diversified in style. This again shows emphasis of American society on Romanticism, the cultural shift towards more human perfection (as through the *humanities* or the arts). This is in contrast to the scientific achievements (see above section), which were relatively limited in the same time period.

Trumpeters of Transcendentalism

- New movement, transcendentalism (1830s), spread across America
 - Resulted from loosening of Puritan strictness of religion, German romanticism, and Asian religions (which were probably more loose)
 - Believed that truth surpasses the senses: "it cannot be found by observation alone"; God was reachable through an innate religious light
 - Against Enlightenment thoughts such as John Locke's philosophy that all truth and knowledge can be obtained by the senses through observation
 - Came with strengthened sense of "individualism, ... self-reliance, self-culture, and self-discipline"
 - Led to greater rebellious attitude towards authority (wanted to be more politically independent) and fostered hostility between them
 - Led to new "array of humanitarian reforms" because all men were believed to be dignified, a romantic view of Man
 - Ralph Waldo Emerson was the most well-known transcendentalist
 - Was a writer and orator that was originally a Unitarian minister
 - Wrote "The American Scholar" (1837, Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard University) that discussed American ideals of political sovereignty (analogous to individualism)
 - "Stressed self-reliance, self-improvement, self-confidence, optimism, and freedom ... was an outspoken critic of slavery"
 - Henry David Thoreau was associate of Emerson's and another important transcendentalist
 - Wrote *Walden: Or Life in the Woods* (1854) that talked about simple living "so as to gain time to pursue truth through study and meditation"
 - His writing inspired Gandhi and MLK to have nonviolent protests because of his writing's peaceful and simplistic content

- Margaret Fuller was friend of Emerson and another transcendentalist
 - Editor of *The Dial*, wrote a series of “Conversations,” and wrote *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*
 - Most of her writing promoted feminist beliefs and called for women’s rights
 - Also tried to help turn Italy into a republic
- Walt Whitman was another transcendentalist author that was very creative
 - Wrote poem *Leaves of Grass*, “Song of Myself”
 - Was very open and took risky literary choices

Glowing Literary Lights

- Professor Henry Wadsworth Longfellow of Harvard College was popular poet that had vast knowledge of European and American culture and traditions — gave him a wide range of themes to write about
- John Greenleaf Whittier was an anti-slavery poet; not as gifted as a poet but much more influential in the anti-slavery movement
- Professor James Russell Lowell of Harvard College (same position as longfellow) was another poet, “essayist, literary critic, and diplomat, as well as editor”
 - Good writer and also wrote in the *Biglow Papers* (1846-8) opposing the Mexican-American war and opposing slavery
- Louisa May Alcott had to write for a living
- Emily Dickinson was a creative poet who “explored universal themes of nature, love, death, and immortality”
 - Was a recluse that created an imaginative world in 2000 poems
- Gilmore Simms was one of few prominent Southern writers
 - Wrote many books, was very popular for a while, promoted other Southern literature
 - Became unpopular amongst northerners because he supported slavery and secession

Politics and Power: Transcendentalism, which acted almost like a more practical Romantic influence on society and politics. Prominent transcendentalists, such as Emerson and Whitman, promoted strongly American ideals through their romanticized prose: the former wrote directly about American individualism and sovereignty in his essay “The American Scholar,” and the latter wrote influential pieces that exemplified the American freedom of speech with his liberal imagination. Dickinson, another transcendentalist writer, used this movement to aid her claim with women’s rights, and Whittier and Lowell argued against slavery in their transcendentalist claims. Combining passion with politics, these transcendentalist writers were arguably the most persuasive advocates of political reform because of their Romanticized prose.

Literary Individualists and Dissenters

- Against the optimistic transcendentalists were a new class of pessimistic writers who wrote about “the darker realms of human experience, exploring pain, fear and grief, along with the supernatural and the subconscious”
- Edgar Allen Poe was famous poet who wrote like this
 - Was often sickly and misfortunate in terms of family

- Wrote many poems and short stories artfully
- Wrote about his own alcoholism and detective stories (including murders), “fascinated by the ghostly and ghastly [and] romantic antiheroes on the verge of mental disintegration”
- Died by overdose of alcohol
- Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote like strict-minded earlier Puritans
 - Wrote *The Scarlet Letter* that talked about psychological regret and *The Marble Faun* about a murder; themes of evil common in his pieces
- Herman Melville wrote *Moby Dick*, which was a complex story that was not immediately popular (only popular in the 1900s)
 - Story was too convoluted for people to follow along, and therefore was not well accepted by the public

American and National Identity: With American diversity and freedom of expression, it was inevitable that a contrast to the highly optimistic views of the religious, cultural, and political reforms (i.e., in Diesm, Romanticism, and Transcendentalism, respectively). This manifested itself in another class of great authors, albeit in a different sense: artists such as Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville wrote also to political extents, but in less straightforward ways. The themes of Man’s flaws and allegories of good and evil are exemplified in their work: this grounds mankind and prevents it from flying too high in the jubilation of the new ideas of the era. While their writings were in the forms of dramatic novels and artsy poems, they conveyed warnings of human nature that were also important to shaping society. Like opposite political parties, this difference in tone and content of writing helps to balance out the optimistic views of transcendentalist writers with a more practical one.

Portrayers of the Past

- George Bancroft (“Father of American History”) wrote a history of the united States in six volumes (1834-76)
 - First true American historian (for American history)
 - Was very patriotic
 - Consulted many sources, even from other continents (Europe, Africa)
- William H. Prescott and Francis Parkman were both visually-impaired historians
 - Former wrote about conquest of Mexico and Peru
 - Later wrote about conflict with British and French for mastery of North America during the colonial era
- Historians were mostly from New England at first because of large access to literature and historical records, especially in larger cities such as Boston

Culture and Society: It was felt that keeping a record of the past was an important task for society. Bancroft started by writing a full history of the United States. He consulted many different sources and took many years to compile a full history. Prescott and Parkman wrote partial biographies of America, focusing on certain conflicts. Like the improved public education system that was emerging around this time, the education of people on the history of the United States (now that the original revolutionary generation was starting to become senile) was necessary to preserve the values of America. Much like how we have classes to study American history (e.g., APUSH), these history books, combined with

general public education, helped to remind Americans of the cultural values that created America. This probably contributed to the women's suffrage and abolitionist movements, in which the Enlightenment-age ideals from the founding of America were strongly emphasized in the women's and slaves' claim to equality. Again, society was aiming to preserve its deepest fundamental values while progressing on the surface through new cultural movements such as Romanticism.