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Social Studies: American History I  
College Preparatory 10<sup>th</sup> Grade  
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## **Transcendentalism and Reform**

### **Abstract:**

American history is approached and taught in two separate years at Wayland High School starting at the sophomore level and finishing junior year. Beginning in the sophomore year American history is organized thematically. Transcendentalism and the social reform movements of the 1840's are taught in the "Industry and Reform Part I" unit. We begin in early industrialization during the Jeffersonian era and progress toward the rapid industrialization under the Jackson era. This unit is designed for the college preparatory or honors level sophomore American History I curriculum.

Mechanization and the loss of individuality spur the philosophy of transcendentalism and a movement toward self-reliance and away from modernizing forces that are destroying the landscape and social fabric. As Americans redefine themselves in the 1830's and 40's, transcendentalism sets a context for a much wider social reform movement in which we try to "fix" the perceived wrongs in America. This unit seeks to understand the tenets of transcendentalism, the influence of H.D. Thoreau on the movement, and the reform movement in and around New England and its impact on American social and political history.

### **Massachusetts State Frameworks**

USI. 34 Analyze the emergence of the transcendentalist movement through the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, including the contributions of Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

USI.32 Describe important religious trends that shaped antebellum America

USI. 30 Summarize the growth of the American education system and Horace Mann's campaign for free compulsory public education.

USI.31 Describe the formation of the abolitionist movement, the roles of various abolitionists, and the response of Southerners and Northerners to abolitionism.

USI.33 Analyze the goals and effects of the antebellum women's suffrage movement.

**Time Period:****Day 1 and 2:** Second Great Awakening and Transcendentalism

Activity: Henry D. Thoreau quotes and transcendentalism

PowerPoint: Slides 1-18

**Day 3:** Utopian movements, Reaction to industrialization

Activity: Create Your Own Utopia

PowerPoint: Slides 19-30

Homework: How Women Won the Right to Vote

**Day 4:** Women in Social Reform: Women's Rights Movement and Temperance

Activity: Women in Reform document analysis

PowerPoint: Slides 31-39

Homework: Transcendentalism in Action

**Day 5:** Transcendentalism in Action: Education, Abolitionism, Penitentiary Reform

Activity: Web-diagramming

PowerPoint: Slides 40-57

**Day 6-8:** Meet the Reformers- Culminating Project and Assessment**Unit Objectives:**

- Students will understand the basic tenets of transcendentalist philosophy and the contributions of H.D.Thoreau to this school of thought.
- Students will understand how the transcendentalist movement fostered the social reform movements of the antebellum period.
- Students will identify key reform movements and individual reformers in their goals, contributions and overall impact on society.
- Students will understand the interconnection between the transcendentalist philosophy and the larger social reforms occurring in antebellum America.
- Students will identify the importance of their own community as a channel for the transcendentalist movement and the larger social reforms generated from it.

## Lesson Details:

### Day 1 and 2:

**Essential Question: What is transcendentalism and how is it associated with the antebellum reform movements?**

1. Begin by reviewing the prior unit on Industrialization generally. Ask: What major changes are happening in America because of rapid industrialization? 5 minutes
2. Ask: What kinds of social problems may have arisen due to industrialization? Possible responses may include child labor, mill towns, poor working conditions, loss of individuality etc. List all responses on the board next to the changes that were happening. 5 minutes
3. Explain that we will be examining the major tenets of transcendentalism, a philosophy that developed largely in response to industrialization and loss of individuality and the altering of the natural landscape. Break students up into small groups and distribute **Transcendentalism: An Activity**. 40 minutes
5. **Day 2:** After students have had an opportunity to review the quotes and identify their major tenet of transcendentalism, allow them to report out to the larger class as everyone takes notes on their handout. Also allow them to share their favorite quote with the class. 20 minutes
6. Wrap-up. Address the essential question and create a diagram of the major tenets of transcendentalism on the board. Slide Show: Slides 1-18. 35 minutes

Homework Reading: "Utopias in America"

### Day 3:

**Essential Question: How do utopian movements and communities reflect transcendentalist philosophies?**

1. Warm-up: Review the major aspects of transcendentalism. What do transcendentalists believe? Who are they? Where are they? 5 minutes
2. Ask: What is meant by utopia? Possible responses include an ideal living community, Thomas Moore's book etc. List responses on the board. 5 minutes
3. Hand out the activity: **Create your own Utopia!** In small groups, allow them to complete the activity. 20 minutes

4. Each group should share their vision for an ideal community. Throughout presentation keep referring back to the essential question and the larger transcendentalist ideas of self-reliance, intuition, living deliberately etc. 15 minutes

5. Wrap-up. Share slides 19-30 with the class on the utopian movements of the day. 10 minutes

Homework Reading: "How Women Won the Right to Vote"

**Day 4:**

**Essential Question:**

**How did women find their voices during the antebellum reform era? What issues were most important to them and how did they strive to address them?**

1. Ask: What was the status of women during this era? Can you name any women reformers? What do you think their causes may have been? List all responses on the board. 10 minutes

2. Distribute document packet: **The Pursuit of Perfection- Women and the Antebellum Reform** to all students. Divide students into small groups and ask them to SOAPStone their assigned document. 20 minutes

S - What is the "subject" of the document?

O - What was the "occasion" upon which it was written?

A - Who is the "audience?"

P - What was the "purpose" in writing/speaking it?

S - Who is the "speaker" or writer?

Tone - What is the "tone" of the document? What reactions would it receive?

3. After students have analyzed their documents, create a web-diagram on the board with "Women and Antebellum Reform" in the center. As each student reports out, list the various reforms and the women associated with them fanning out from the center. If a woman is associated with more than one, link her to all of the reforms. A clear pattern emerges with the women's rights movement and abolitionism. 15 minutes

4. Slide Show: Review slides 31-39 and refer back to essential questions. 10 minutes

5. Homework Reading: "Transcendentalism in Action"

## **Day 5:**

### **Essential Question:**

- 1. Why was New England the center of a larger reform movement?**
- 2. To what extent was penitentiary and education reform needed?**
- 3. How does the Abolitionist movement reflect a growing sectional and political division in our country?**

1. Warm-up: Ask: What were some of the reforms that women advocated for? Why did they choose those issues? List these on the board from yesterday's lesson. 10 minutes
2. Write the word "transcendentalism" on the board and ask the students to connect reform movements to this philosophy. Ask: Is there anything missing? Are there any other problems that could be solved? Guide them to think of issues outside of the Northeast. 5 minutes
3. Slide Show: View slides 40-57 on abolition, penitentiary reform and educational reform. Ask students to add to their diagram as you discuss the slides. 15 minutes
4. Wrap-up: On large poster paper, ask small student groups to diagram all of the reform movements and utopian communities around central themes of transcendentalism and social reform. They should refer to their activities, readings and PowerPoint notes. Each web-diagram will look different, but should include all of the major reforms and reformers studied thus far. 25 minutes

## **Day 6-8: Cumulative Project and Assessment: Meet the Reformers**

### **Essential Questions:**

- 1. Can we really understand our history without understanding the people who shaped it?**
- 2. Can we really understand the people who have shaped our history without understanding the places where they lived and worked?**

**Objectives:** By the end of this lesson/project students will be able to:

1. Identify and research a person who lived in the Boston area and contributed to the social reform era from 1820-1860.
2. Analyze the motivations and efforts of this individual to effect change.
3. Evaluate the extent to which the individual advanced their chosen cause.
4. Recognize the importance of place in understanding history.
5. Observe and describe a place of significance associated with an American reformer during the antebellum period.
6. Discuss/analyze the value of visiting a place when learning about historical figures.

**Materials:**

1. **Meet the Reformers** project handouts

**Procedure: (Students to meet in the Media Center for this class period.)**

1. **Warm-Up:** Ask students to read the two quotes by Henry David Thoreau on the first page of the **Meet the Reformers** packet. Have students jot down their thoughts as to the meaning of each quote. Lead a class discussion as to the meaning of each quote, using student comments as a segue into introducing the project, including the introduction of the essential questions related to this project.(15 min.)
2. **Overview of the project and its requirements.** (25 min.)  
Teacher will go over the three parts of the project and requirements/due dates/helpful suggestions for each, answering student questions as they arise.
3. **Introduction of Media Center resources**  
School librarian will introduce students to a variety of print and electronic resources available to students for the purposes of this project. (10 min.)
4. **Students choose a reformer** (5 min.)
5. **Homework:** Begin your research!!
6. **Days 7 and 8:** Eulogies will be presented on these days (see handouts for project criteria) Students will present eulogies after having had sufficient time to research their reformers as well as conduct their personal field trips.

**Activities and Handouts:**

# Transcendentalism: An Activity

## Teacher Copy



**Objective:** By reading the works of Henry D. Thoreau, find the main tenets of Transcendentalism.

**Directions:** Each small group will be given a series of quotations from the writings of Thoreau. What is the central message of all of the quotations? In your group, come to a consensus on their meaning and be prepared to share your favorite quote and your analysis with the class.

### On Conscience, Social Responsibility and the Higher Law

- What is wanted is men of principle, who recognize a higher law than the decision of the majority. The marines and the militia whose bodies were used lately were not men of sense nor of principle; in a high moral sense they were not men at all. [Journal 9 June 1854]
- Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also in prison. ["Civil Disobedience"]
- It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. ["Civil Disobedience"]

### On Conservation

- Most men, it seems to me, do not care for Nature and would sell their share in all her beauty, as long as they may live, for a stated sum — many for a glass of rum. Thank God, men cannot as yet fly, and lay waste the sky as well as the earth! [Journal 3 January 1861]
- By avarice and selfishness, and a grovelling habit, from which none of us is free, of regarding the soil as property, or the means of acquiring

property chiefly, the landscape is deformed, husbandry is degraded with us, and the farmer leads the meanest of lives. He knows Nature but as a robber. [Walden "The Bean-Field"]

- As some give to Harvard College or another institution, why might not another give a forest or huckleberry-field to Concord? A town is an institution which deserves to be remembered. We boast of our system of education, but why stop at schoolmasters and schoolhouses? We are all schoolmasters, and our schoolhouse is the universe. To attend chiefly to the desk or schoolhouse while we neglect the scenery in which it is placed is absurd. If we do not look out we shall find our fine schoolhouse standing in a cow-yard at last. [Journal 15 October 1859]
- This earth was the most glorious musical instrument, and I was audience to its strains.
  - Journal, July 16, 1851
- I love nature, I love the landscape, because it is so sincere. It never cheats me. It never jests. It is cheerfully, musically earnest. I lie and relie on the earth.
  - Journal, November 16, 1850
- If a man walk in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen. As if a town had no interest in its forests but to cut them down!"

"Life Without Principle"  
(1863), ( p. 75)

### **On Education**

- Those things for which the most money is demanded are never the things which the student most wants. Tuition, for instance, is an important item in the term bill, while for the far more valuable education which he gets by associating with the most cultivated of his contemporaries no charge is made. [Walden "Economy"]



- What does education do? It makes a straight-cut ditch out of a free, meandering brook. [Journal 1850 ]
- We boast of our system of education, but why stop at schoolmasters and schoolhouses? We are all schoolmasters, and our schoolhouse is the universe. To attend chiefly to the desk or schoolhouse while we neglect the scenery in which it is placed is absurd. If we do not look out we shall find our find schoolhouse standing in a cow-yard at last. [Journal15 October 1859]

"The student who secures his coveted leisure and retirement by systematically shirking any labor necessary to man obtains but an ignoble and unprofitable leisure, defrauding himself of the experience which alone can make leisure fruitful. 'But,' says one, 'you do not mean that the students should go to work with their hands instead of their heads?' I do not mean that exactly, but I mean something which he might think a good deal like that; I mean that they should not play life, or study it merely, while the community supports them at this expensive game, but earnestly live it from beginning to end. How could youths better learn to live than by at once trying the experiment of living?

Walden, (pp. 39 - 40)

### **On Freedom**

- Do we call this the land of the free? What is it to be free from King George the Fourth and continue the slaves of prejudice? What is it to be born free and equal, and not to live? What is the value of any political freedom, but as a means to moral freedom? [Journal, 16 February 1851]
- Men talk of freedom! How many are free to think? Free from fear, from perturbation, from prejudice? Nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thousand are perfect slaves. [Journal, 6 May 1858]
- The mass of men are very easily imposed on. They have their runways in which they always travel, and are sure to fall into any pit or box-trap set therein. [Journal, 28 November 1860]
- I see young men, my townsmen, whose misfortune it is to have inherited farms, houses, barns, cattle, and farming tools; for thee are more easily acquired than got ride of. [Walden, pg. 3]

## On the Self and Self-Reliance

- What a man thinks of himself, that it is which determines, or rather indicates, his fate. [Walden "Economy"]
- If I am not I, who will be? [Journal 9 August 1841]
- In most books, the I, of first person, is omitted; in this it will be retained; that, in respect to egotism, is the main difference. [Walden]
- I should not talk so much about myself if there were anybody else whom I knew as well. [Walden]
- We commonly do not remember that it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking. [Walden]
- Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads. Walden, The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau, Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co, 1906.

## On Simplicity

- Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion. [Walden, "Where I Lived and What I Lived For"]]
- As for the complex ways of living, I love them not, however much I practice them. In as many places as possible, I will get my feet down to the earth. [Journal, 22 October 1853]
- Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. [Walden]

- Most of the luxuries, and many of the so called comforts of life, are not only no indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind. With respect to luxuries and comforts, the wisest have ever lived a more simple and meager life than the poor. [Walden pp. 12]

### **On Solitude**

- You think that I am impoverishing myself withdrawing from men, but in my solitude I have woven for myself a silken web or chrysalis, and, nymph-like, shall ere long burst forth a more perfect creature, fitted for a higher society. [Journal, 8 February 1857]
- It would be better if there were but one inhabitant to a square mile, as where I live. [Walden]
- I thrive best on solitude. If I have had a companion only one day in a week, unless it were one or two I could name, I find that the value of the week to me has been seriously affected. It dissipates my days, and often it takes me another week to get over it. [Journal, 28 December 1856]
- By my intimacy with nature I find myself withdrawn from man. My interest in the sun and the moon, in the morning and the evening, compels me to solitude. [Journal, 26 July 1851]
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### **ON LIVING DELIBERATLY**

- "I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pondside; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear, that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity."
- Walden, (p. 214)
- "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation" Walden, (p. 6)

- I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. [Walden, Economy]
- "One young man of my acquaintance, who has inherited some acres, told me that he thought he should live as I did, if he had the means. I would not have any one adopt my mode of living on any account; for, beside that before he has fairly learned it I may have found out another for myself, I desire that there be as many different persons in the world as possible; but I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue his own way, and not his father's or his mother's or his neighbor's instead. The youth may build or plant or sail, only let him not be hindered from doing that which he tells me he would like to do.
- Walden, (53)
- .It was a singular experience that long acquaintance which I cultivated with beans, what with planting, and hoeing, and harvesting, and threshing, and picking over and selling them, -- the last was the hardest of all, -- I might add eating, for I did taste. I was determined to know beans.
- Walden, (pp. 107 - 111)

## ON MATERIALISM

"No man ever stood the lower in my estimation for having a patch in his clothes; yet I am sure that there is greater anxiety, commonly, to have fashionable, or at least clean and unpatched clothes, than to have a sound conscience. . . Who could wear a patch, or two extra seams only, over the knee? Most behave as if they believed that their prospects for life would be ruined if they should do it. It would be easier for them to hobble to town with a broken leg than with a broken pantaloons. . . It is an interesting question how far men would retain their relative rank if they were divested of their clothes.

Walden, (pp. 19 - 20)

"We are often reminded that if there were bestowed on us the wealth of Croesus, our aims must still be the same,

and our means essentially the same. Moreover, if you are restricted in your range by poverty, if you cannot buy books and newspapers, for instance, you are but confined to the most significant and vital experiences; you are compelled to deal with the material which yields the most sugar and the most starch. It is life near the bone where it is ever on a lower level by magnanimity of a higher. Superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only. Money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul."

Walden, (p. 218)

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**9. THEME OF QUOTES AND MAIN TENET OF  
TRANSCENDENTALISM: \_\_\_\_\_**

"No man ever stood the lower in my estimation for having a patch in his clothes; yet I am sure that there is greater anxiety, commonly, to have fashionable, or at least clean and unpatched clothes, than to have a sound conscience. . . Who could wear a patch, or two extra seams only, over the knee? Most behave as if they believed that their prospects for life would be ruined if they should do it. It would be easier for them to hobble to town with a broken leg than with a broken pantaloons. . . It is an interesting question how far men would retain their relative rank if they were divested of their clothes.

Walden, (pp. 19 - 20)

"We are often reminded that if there were bestowed on us the wealth of Croesus, our aims must still be the same, and our means essentially the same. Moreover, if you are restricted in your range by poverty, if you cannot buy books and newspapers, for instance, you are but confined to the most significant and vital experiences; you are compelled to deal with the material which yields the most sugar and the most starch. It is life near the bone where it is ever on a lower level by magnanimity of a higher. Superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only. Money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul."

Walden, (p. 218)

Excerpted from **Utopias in America**

**National Register of Historic Places**

**United States Park Service, Department of the Interior**

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/>

There were hundreds of communal utopian experiments in the early United States, and the Shakers alone founded around 20 settlements. While great differences existed between the various utopian communities or colonies, each society shared a common bond in a vision of communal living in a utopian society. The definition of a utopian colony, according to Robert V. Hine, author of *California's Utopian Colonies*, "consists of a group of people who are attempting to establish a new social pattern based upon a vision of the ideal society and who have withdrawn themselves from the community at large to embody that vision in experimental form." These colonies can, by definition, be composed of either religious or secular members, the former stressing (in the western tradition) a community life inspired by religion while the latter may express the idealism of a utilitarian creed expedient to establishing human happiness, with a belief in the cooperative way of life.

It was not until the first half of the 19th century that a great expansion of communitarian experiments took place on American soil. Inexpensive and expansive land, unhampered by government regulations in a time when progress and optimism shaped people's beliefs, created a fertile milieu for the establishment of utopian societies. Europe, in the early 19th century, was emerging from a long history of religious and dynastic wars, and America, in contrast, became a location where people could start over, the "New Eden" that beckoned colonists across the Atlantic Ocean.

The Great Awakening, a series of religious revivals that affected every part of English America in the first half of the eighteenth century, prepared the American soil for numerous religious sects. In addition to the religious revivals, new ideas on government and man's role in society began with the Enlightenment, an 18th-century European philosophical movement characterized by rationalism and a strong skepticism and empiricism in social and political thought. These ideas found reception among the drafters of the American Constitution. Freedom of religion, guaranteed in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, attracted European groups who were persecuted in their own countries. Arriving in America, some of these colonists hoped to form Utopian societies, self-containing religious or secular communities, agrarian and largely communal in nature,



Sir Thomas More, lord chancellor of England under Henry VIII and author of "Utopia"  
Painting by Hans Holbein the Younger  
(1497?-1543): Sir Thomas More, Copyright  
Frick Collection, New York

far removed from the perceived vices found in the overcrowded cities. While numerous religious and secular utopian experiments dotted the American landscape, the Shakers, Rappites, the Perfectionists of the Oneida Community, the experiment at Brook Farm and the Amana Colony of the Inspirationists were among the most famous. Some exploration of their beliefs and history presents an example of how these utopian colonies functioned.



The 1827 Shaker Meetinghouse in Enfield Shakers Historic District, Enfield, Connecticut.  
*Photograph by B. Clouette, courtesy of Connecticut Historical Commission, National Register collection*

**The Shakers:** Formally known as the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming, the Shakers developed their own religious expression which included communal living, productive labor, celibacy, pacifism, the equality of the sexes, and a ritual noted for its dancing and shaking. A significant portion of Shakerism was founded by (Mother) Ann Lee, in England (for more information see [The Shakers](#)) in 1758. Ann Lee and some followers arrived in America in 1774. Ann Lee died in 1784, but Shaker colonies, spread to newer communities.

Containing 6,000 members before the Civil War, these communities maintained economic autonomy while making items for outside commercial distribution. Intellectually, the Shakers were dissenters from the dominant values of American society and were associated with many of the reform movements of the 19th century, including feminism, pacifism and abolitionism: an Enfield Shaker's diary, for example, records the visits of fugitive slaves, including Sojourner Truth. Their work was eventually redirected from agricultural production to handcrafts, including the making of chairs and furniture (for more information see [Shaker Style](#)). The [Enfield Shakers Historic District](#), in Enfield, Connecticut, and the [Hancock Shaker Village](#), in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, stand as two noteworthy examples of Shaker communities. The community at Enfield, which began in the 1780s, peaked from 1830 to 1860. In 1860 there were 146 Shakers in Enfield, living in same-sex housing, working in its garden-seed industry. The Enfield Shakers Historic District, containing 15 buildings, has been recognized by the National Register of Historic Places for its significance in reflecting the social values and communal lifestyle of the Shakers. The Hancock Shaker Village was considered the center of Shaker authority in America from 1787 until 1947, and is today designated as a National Historic Landmark. Four other Shaker Villages have also been designated as National Historic Landmarks: [Shakertown at Pleasant Hill Historic District](#) (Harrodsburg, Kentucky), [Canterbury Shaker Village](#) (Canterbury, New Hampshire), [Mount Lebanon Shaker Society](#) (New Lebanon, New York) and [Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village](#) (New Gloucester, Maine), the latter is the sole surviving Shaker community.

**Brook Farm:** Some of the secular utopian communities in the United States found inspiration from ideas and philosophies originating in Europe. Transcendentalism began as a term developed by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) embodying those aspects of man's nature transcending, or independent of, experience. Taking root in America, Transcendentalism created a cultural renaissance in New England during 1830-

45 and received its chief American expression in Ralph Waldo Emerson's individualistic doctrine of self-reliance. Some Transcendentalists decided to put their theories about "plain living" into practice. This experiment in communal living was established at West Roxbury, Massachusetts, on some 200 acres of land from 1841 to 1847. The Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education became better known than many other communal experiments

due to the distinguished literary and intellectual figures associated with it. The Brook Farm Institute was organized and directed by George Ripley, a former Unitarian minister and later literary critic for the New York Tribune. Others connected with the project were Charles A. Dana and Nathaniel Hawthorne (both shareholders), Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, William Henry Channing, John S. Dwight, and Sophia Dana Ripley, a woman of wide culture and academic experience. Brook Farm attracted not only intellectuals, but also carpenters, farmers,

shoemakers and printers. The community provided to all members, their children and family dependents, housing, fuel, wages, clothing and food. There was an infant school, a primary school and college preparatory course covering six years. The 1846 fire disaster which burned the newly financed Phalanstery building, combined with further financial troubles, including Hawthorne's suit against Ripley and Dana to recover his investment in the project, brought about the end of the Brook Farm community the following year. The Brook Farm site is now recognized as a National Historic Landmark although only a small cottage on the property is definitely known to have been occupied by the Brook Farm community. Nathaniel Hawthorne used his experiences at Brook Farm as the basis of his novel *The Blithedale Romance*. The Brook Farm experiment began with about 15 members and never contained more than 120 persons at one time.



The Margaret Fuller Cottage at Brook Farm, in Suffolk County, Massachusetts.  
Photograph by Polly M. Rettig, Landmark Review Project



View of Frederick Rapp House in Harmony Historic District in Butler County, Pennsylvania.  
Photograph by Stanley E. Whiting, Harmonist & Historical Memorial Association, Harmony, Pennsylvania, National Register collection

**The Rappites:** The Harmony Society, also called the Rappites, were similar to the Shakers in certain beliefs. Named after their founder, Johann Georg Rapp, the Rappites immigrated from Württemberg, Germany, to the United States in 1803, seeking religious freedom. Establishing a colony in Butler County, Pennsylvania, called Harmony, the Rappites held that the Bible was humanity's sole authority. They also advanced celibacy and lead a communal life without individual possessions, and believed that the harmony of male and female elements in humanity would be reestablished by their efforts. Under the

guidance of Frederick Rapp, George Rapp's adopted son, the economy of Harmony grew

from one of subsistence agriculture to gradual diversified manufacturing. By 1814 the Society boasted 700 members, a town of about 130 brick, frame, and log houses, and numerous factories and processing plants. Their manufactured products, particularly textiles and woolens, gained a widespread reputation for excellence, as did their wines and whisky. The Harmony Society soon outgrew its markets, and after selling all their holdings to a Mennonite group for \$100,000 they moved to a new location on the Wabash River in Indiana. Here again they built a prosperous community, New Harmony (now a National Historic Landmark), only to sell it to Robert Owen, a social reformer from New Lanark, Scotland, and his financial partner, William Maclure, in 1825. The Harmonists next returned to Pennsylvania and built their final home at Economy (now called Old Economy and recognized as a National Historic Landmark), in Ambridge on the Ohio River. The Harmonists reached their peak of prosperity in 1866, but the practice of celibacy and several schisms thinned the Society's ranks, and the community was finally dissolved in 1905. The surviving buildings of the first settlement in Harmony, with their sturdy, simple brick dwellings, the Great House with its arched wine cellar, and the imposing cemetery and original town plan are today a National Historic Landmark named the Harmony Historic District.

**The Oneida Community:** The founder and leader of the communal Oneida Community, John Humphreys Noyes, was born in Brattleboro, Vermont, in 1811. Noyes joined the Andover Theological Seminary in November, 1831. Transferring to Yale Theological College at New Haven, he became involved with the nascent abolitionist movement. In 1833 he founded the New Haven Anti-Slavery society and the New Haven Free Church, where he preached his radical belief which laid great emphasis on the ideal of perfection being attainable in this life.



Oneida Community Mansion House, Madison County, New York  
*Photograph courtesy of Oneida Ltd.*

His followers became known as Perfectionists. However, Noyes's belief in "complex marriage" alienated many of the townspeople in Putney, New York, where he was living, and he left in 1847. Perfectionists practicing "complex marriage" considered themselves married to the group, not a single partner. Noyes moved his community to the town of Oneida, in Madison County, New York. At Oneida, the group practiced "Bible Communism." The skills of the artisan members were channeled into broom manufacturing, shoe manufacturing, flour processing, lumber milling and trap manufacturing. The Perfectionists in Oneida held communal property, meals and arrangements for the rearing and education of children. They built the Oneida Community Mansion House, a rambling U-shaped, brick, Victorian building which began housing the community in the early 1850s. The Oneida Community Mansion House is now listed as a National Historic Landmark. In 1874 there were 270 members of the Oneida Community. Misunderstanding of the community, allied with traditional points of view, inspired a 1879 meeting of ministers in Syracuse, New York, to condemn the settlement. Eventual unrest hit Noyes' followers, and Noyes fled to Canada on June 29 1879. "Complex marriage" ended two days later. The experiment in their communal



utopia ended in January of 1881 when the Oneida community was reconstituted as a joint stock corporation.

**The Demise of the 19th-Century Utopian Colonies:** Numerous religious and social communal groups developed in the nineteenth century. By the end of the century even Theosophical colonies, based off Madame Blavatsky's merging of eastern and western mysticism, had cropped up in such places as Point Loma and Temple Home, near San Diego, California. Other groups included the Zoarites in Ohio, the Moravians of North Carolina, and the followers of German-born Wilhelm Keil, a Methodist minister heavily influenced by the pietist movement, who founded colonies in Bethel, Missouri, and Aurora, Oregon. Yet of all these utopian groups only the Amana Inspirationists developed and built a network of seven villages set in an agricultural region (see essays on Amana History). They managed to survive by modifying their system into two distinct organizations, one secular and one spiritual. The Inspirationists of Amana founded their communities with an agricultural basis as did other communal groups in the United States. Both men and women labored, although in Amana women's work did not include trades and the ministry as it did in the Shaker communities.



Amana's past and future meet at the Amana General Store in South Amana, now Fern Hill Gifts and Quilts  
*Photograph by Blanche H. Schroer, National Park Service*

While the 20th century witnessed further experiments in communal living, the great wave which founded the 19th-century religious and secular utopian communities had begun to subside. Some of the 19th-century groups were established and depended on the strength of their leaders, those which survived into the 20th century had to alter their way of life significantly, as traditional rural life evolved due to the industrial, economic and scientific progress in the larger society. General causes

relating to the demise of these utopian colonies have to be explained individually, as each utopian community faced different circumstances. Overall, the conflict that many of these agrarian or small craft communities faced in an increasingly industrialized world may have contributed to their demise, as did external hostility manifested in the larger, surrounding society, often seen in inflammatory newspaper articles attacking the utopian experiments. Generally, most analysts of utopian experiments, from Charles Nordhoff to Arthur Bestor, Jr., have found that religious utopian colonies possessed a longer life than their secular counterparts.

# Create your own Utopia!



As massive industrialization begins to settle into Northeastern America, transcendentalists as well as others begin to look for alternatives to the increasingly oppressive and mechanical lifestyle associated with factories and factory towns. In these "utopian communities," alternative lifestyles and communities were explored at varying degrees of success; some in your own backyard!

**Your task:** Please plan your perfect community, the place of your dreams. In doing so, please consider the following details of life:

**NAME OF YOUR COMMUNITY:** Across the top of your poster paper

What do people do for a living? Do they work in the community (if so, doing what?) or work outside?

Is the community located in the city, suburbs, or country?

How many people live there?

Can anyone join? How does one join?

Can people take everything they bought with them if they leave?

Do people live as conventional families? As isolated individuals? As a commune?

Do men and women live together?

Is there monogamy? Is there conventional marriage or some unconventional arrangement?

Are children raised by their birth parents or by the group, together?

What is the school like? How is it organized? What is taught? Is it the same as or different from Wayland?

What is a typical day like?

What kind of food is served?

What is the division of labor in the community? How is it determined, who does what? Are tasks different for men and women?

How is it determined who gets what pay? Are people to be paid equally? Does all money belong to the group?

Do young people date? What do teenagers do, up to the age of 18? What's their role?

Is there a common religion that binds the community together?

How is the community governed?

**OTHER ISSUES:**

What would the community look like from a helicopter? Draw this on your poster board.

Questions derived from Bill Schechter  
Lincoln-Sudbury Regional H.S.  
Sudbury, Mass.

## How Women Won the Right to Vote

**In 1848, a small group of visionaries started a movement to secure equal rights for women in the United States. But it took more than 70 years just to win the right for women to vote.**

After male organizers excluded women from attending an anti-slavery conference, American abolitionists **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** and **Lucretia Mott** decided to call the “First Woman’s Rights Convention.” Held over several days in July 1848 at Seneca Falls, New York, the convention brought together about 300 women and 40 men. Among them was Charlotte Woodward, a 19 year-old farm girl who longed to become a printer, a trade then reserved for males.

By the end of the meeting, convention delegates had approved a statement modeled after the Declaration of Independence. The Seneca Falls **Declaration of Sentiments** began with these words: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal . . . .”

The declaration then listed “repeated injuries” by men against women, claiming that men had imposed “an absolute tyranny” over women.” These “injuries” included forcing women to obey laws that they had no voice in passing. They included making married women “civilly dead” in the eyes of the law, without rights to property, earned wages, or the custody of their children in a divorce. The injuries included barring women from most “profitable employments” and colleges.

The convention also voted on a resolution that said, “it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right” to vote. This resolution provoked heated debate. It barely passed.

In the middle of the 19th century, most Americans, including most women, accepted the idea of “separate spheres” for males and females. Men worked and ran the government. Women stayed home and cared for the family. This notion was based on the widely held assumption that women were by nature delicate, childlike, emotional, and mentally inferior to men.

In the United States and in other democratic countries, the right to vote (also called the “elective franchise” or “suffrage”) remained exclusively within the men’s “sphere.” The Seneca Falls declaration promoted a radical vision of gender equality in all areas of American public life, including women’s suffrage. Women in most states did not gain the right to vote until 1919, after their role in American society had dramatically changed.

**Susan B. Anthony and the Women’s Suffrage Movement**

One of the main leaders of the women's suffrage movement was **Susan B. Anthony** (1820–1906). Brought up in a Quaker family, she was raised to be independent and think for herself. She joined the abolitionist movement to end slavery. Through her abolitionist efforts, she met Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1851. Anthony had not attended the Seneca Falls Convention, but she quickly joined with Stanton to lead the fight for women's suffrage in the United States.

The Civil War interrupted action to secure the vote for women. As a result of the war, however, the role of women in society began to change. Since many men were fighting, their wives and daughters often had to run the family farm, go to work in factories, or take up other jobs previously done by men.

After the war, Anthony, Stanton, and others hoped that because women had contributed to the war economy, they along with the ex-slaves would be guaranteed the right to vote. But most males disagreed.

The Republicans who controlled Congress wrote three new amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The **13th Amendment** abolished slavery. The **14th Amendment** awarded citizenship to all people born within the United States and granted every person "the equal protection of the laws." The **15th Amendment** dealt with voting. It stated: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." It failed to grant women the right to vote.

In 1869, Anthony and Stanton organized the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) to work for a federal constitutional amendment, guaranteeing all American women the right to vote. Some activists disagreed with this tactic. They believed the best way to get the vote for women was to persuade the legislatures of each state to grant women suffrage.

Ironically, the first place to allow American women to vote was neither the federal government nor a state. In 1869, the all-male legislature of the Territory of Wyoming passed a law that permitted every adult woman to "cast her vote . . . and hold office." In the West, pioneer women often worked shoulder-to-shoulder with men on farms and ranches and thus proved they were not weak or inferior.

Meanwhile, in Rochester, New York, Anthony conspired with sympathetic male voting registrars who allowed her and other women to cast ballots in the 1872 presidential election. The following year, she was put on trial for illegally voting, a criminal offense. The judge at Anthony's trial ruled that because she was a woman, she was incompetent to testify. The jury found her guilty and the judge ordered her to pay a fine of \$100. Anthony told the judge she would never pay it. She never did.

In 1875 in the case of **Minor v. Happersett**, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that women were citizens under the 14th Amendment. But the court went on to say that citizenship did not mean women automatically possessed the right to vote.

### **The "Anthony Amendment"**

In 1878, the NWSA succeeded in getting a constitutional amendment introduced in Congress. The proposed amendment stated, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." This became known as the "Anthony Amendment."

While NWSA lobbied Congress for the “Anthony Amendment,” another advocacy group, the American Woman Suffrage Association, concentrated on campaigning for women’s right to vote in states and territories. Before 1900, only a few of these efforts in the western territories succeeded.

When the Territory of Wyoming applied for statehood in 1889, Congress threatened to deny it admission because its laws allowed women to vote. In response, the territorial legislators wrote Congress, “We will remain out of the Union a hundred years rather than come in without the women.” The following year, Congress admitted Wyoming as a state, the first one with women’s suffrage. This set the trend for a few other Western states to pass women’s suffrage laws (Colorado, 1893; Utah, 1896; and Idaho, 1896).

In 1890, the two national women’s suffrage organizations merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) with Elizabeth Cady Stanton as the president. Susan B. Anthony took over in 1892 and remained president until she retired in 1900.

In the late 1800s, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was actually the largest national organization promoting women’s suffrage. The WCTU led a “Home Protection” movement aimed at prohibiting “strong drink” because of its damaging effects on men and their families. WCTU leaders realized that to increase its influence and affect lawmakers, women needed to be able to vote.

White and middle-class women dominated the WCTU, NAWSA, and most other national women’s groups. The groups usually rejected black women for fear of alienating white supporters in the racially segregated South. In addition, the groups rarely recruited immigrant women. The failure to include all women in the movement, while politically expedient, undermined the cause.

Toward the turn of the 20th century, Congress dropped its consideration of the Anthony Amendment, and in the states, most attempts to grant women the right to vote failed. Heavy opposition from traditionalists and liquor and brewing interests contributed to these defeats.

### **The Role of Women Continued to Change**

The concept of a new American woman emerged after 1900. Writers and commentators described the “new woman” as independent and well-educated. She wore loose-fitting clothing, played sports, drove an automobile, and even smoked in public. She supported charities and social reforms, including women’s suffrage. She often chose to work outside the home in offices, department stores, and professions such as journalism, law, and medicine that were just opening up to women. The image of the “new woman” also usually made her white, native born, and middle class.

By 1910, “feminist” was another term being used to describe the “new woman.” Feminism referred to a new spirit among a few middle-class women to liberate themselves from the old notion of “separate spheres.” An early feminist writer condemned this traditional view of the role of women since it prevented their full development and robbed the nation of their potential contribution.

Of course, working outside the home was nothing new for poor white, immigrant, and black women. They toiled as housekeepers, factory workers, and in other menial jobs in order to survive. Female factory workers earned only a quarter to a third of what men earned for the same job. There were no sick days or health

benefits. Women were known to have given birth on the floors of factories where they worked. Since they did not have the right to vote, they had little opportunity to pressure lawmakers to pass laws that would have improved their wages and working conditions.

### **The Final Push for Women's Suffrage**

Western states continued to lead way in granting women's suffrage. Washington state allowed women the right to vote in 1910. California followed in 1911. Arizona, Kansas, and Oregon passed laws the next year.

The presidential election of 1912 saw the two major parties, the Republicans and Democrats, opposing women's suffrage. But the 1912 election featured two major independent parties, the Progressives (led by former Republican President Theodore Roosevelt) and the Socialists (led by Eugene Debs). Both the Progressives and Socialists favored women's suffrage. And they received about one-third of the votes cast.

**Alice Paul** headed NAWSA's effort to lobby Congress to consider again the Anthony Amendment. Brought up as a Quaker, Paul (1885–1977) graduated from Swarthmore College and received postgraduate degrees in social work. Traveling to Great Britain, she encountered radical feminists demanding the right to vote. She joined them in hunger strikes and demonstrations. On returning to the United States, she joined NAWSA.

In 1913, 28-year-old Paul organized a massive parade in Washington, D.C. Hostile crowds of men attacked the marchers, who had to be protected by the National Guard.

Paul and the president of NAWSA, **Carrie Chapman Catt**, disagreed over using public demonstrations to promote women's suffrage. Catt (1859–1947) had grown up in the Midwest, graduated from Iowa State College, and gone on to work as a teacher, high school principal, and superintendent of a school district (one of the first women to hold such a job). She worked tirelessly for women's causes, and in 1900 she was elected to succeed Anthony as president of NAWSA.

Catt's tactics contrasted sharply with Paul's. She preferred to quietly lobby lawmakers in Congress and the state legislatures. Paul favored demonstrations. Both leaders, however, were dedicated to equal rights for women.

In the election of 1916, Catt supported Democratic President Woodrow Wilson. Wilson was running on the slogan, "He kept us out of war." Paul opposed Wilson. She parodied his slogan, saying, "Wilson kept us out of suffrage."

Paul broke with NAWSA and founded the National Woman's Party. Soon afterward, she organized daily picketing of the White House to pressure President Wilson to support the Anthony Amendment. After the United States entered World War I in 1917, Paul kept up the picketing. The women demonstrators silently carried signs with slogans like "Democracy Should Begin at Home" and "Kaiser Wilson." Onlookers assaulted the White House picketers, calling them traitors for insulting the wartime president.

In June 1917, police began arresting the picketers for obstructing the sidewalks. About 270 were arrested and almost 100 were jailed, including Paul. She and the others in jail went on hunger strikes. Guards force-

fed the women hunger strikers by jamming feeding tubes down their throats. The force-feeding was reported in all the major newspapers. Embarrassed by the publicity, President Wilson pardoned and released them.

Meanwhile, women replaced men by the thousands in war industries and many other types of jobs previously held by men. By 1920, women made up 25 percent of the entire labor force of the country.

President Wilson was disturbed that the push for women's suffrage was causing division during the war. He was also deeply impressed by Carrie Chapman Catt. In January 1918, he announced his support for the Anthony Amendment. By this time, 17 states as well as Great Britain had granted women the right to vote. Wilson's support helped build momentum for the amendment. In the summer of 1919, the House and Senate approved the **19th Amendment** by a margin well beyond the required two-thirds majority. Then the amendment had to be ratified by three-fourths of the states.

Those opposed to woman suffrage, the so-called "antis," assembled all their forces to stop ratification. The liquor and brewing industries, factory owners, railroads, banks, and big city political machines all feared women would vote for progressive reforms. Southern whites objected to more black voters. Some argued that the 19th Amendment invaded states' rights. Others claimed that it would undermine family unity. Besides, the "antis" said, wives were already represented at the ballot box by their husbands.

But state after state ratified the amendment. With one last state needed for ratification, the Tennessee legislature voted on the amendment. The outcome depended on the vote of the youngest man in the Tennessee state legislature. He voted for ratification, but only after receiving a letter from his mother, urging him to be a "good boy" and support women's suffrage. Thus, on August 18, 1920, half the adult population of the United States won the right to vote.

Women voted nationwide for the first time in the presidential election of 1920. Among the new voters was 91-year-old Charlotte Woodward, the only surviving member of the Seneca Falls Convention. In her lifetime, she had witnessed a revolution in the role of women in American society.

### **For Discussion and Writing**

1. In what ways did the role of women in American society change between 1848 and 1920?
2. Do you think Alice Paul or Carrie Chapman Catt had the best strategy for winning the right to vote for women? Why?
3. Why do you think women won the right to vote in 1920 after failing for more than 70 years?



## "The Pursuit of Perfection—Women & Antebellum Reform"

**Directions:** In small groups, SOAPStone your assigned document and choose a portion of the text that illustrates its central meaning. Be prepared to share with the class.

S - What is the "subject" of the document?

O - What was the "occasion" upon which it was written?

A - Who is the "audience?"

P - What was the "purpose" in writing/speaking it?

S - Who is the "speaker" or writer?

Tone - What is the "tone" of the document? What reactions would it receive?

### DOCUMENT 1

It cannot be denied that our country is most horribly scourged by intemperance. In the strong language of Scripture, it groaneth and travaileth in pain, to be delivered from the bondage of this corruption. Our country is free! with a great price obtained we this freedom. ...Yes, we are groaning under a most desolating bondage. The land is trodden down under its polluting foot. Out families are continually dishonored, ravaged, and bereaved; thousands annually slain, and hundreds of thousands carried away into a loathsome slavery, to be ground to powder under its burdens, or broken under the wheel of its tortures. ...Ask the history of the 200,000 paupers now burdening the hands of public charity, and you will find that two-thirds of them have been the victims, directly or indirectly, of Intemperance. Inquire at the gates of death, and you will learn that no less than 30,000 souls are annually passed for the judgment-bar of God, driven there by Intemperance. ...We ask not of salves to man, but to Intemperance, in comparison with whose bondage the yoke of the tyrant is freedom. They are estimated at 480,000! ...Another assertion is equally unquestionable. The time had come when a great effort must be made to exterminate this unequalled destroyer. It was high time this was done when the first drunkard entered eternity to receive the award of Him who has declared that no drunkards shall enter the kingdom of God. ...The whole country is enslaved; and the whole country must rise up at once, like an armed man, and determine to be free. Of what lasting avail would it be for one section of territory, here and there, to clear itself, while the surrounding regions should remain under the curse? The temperance reformation has no quarantine to fence out the infected.

**SOURCE:** Address to the Young Men of the United States, On Temperance, Rev. C.P. M'Ilvaine, D.D., 1839.

### DOCUMENT 2

**GENTLEMEN:** I come to present the strong claims of suffering humanity. I come to place before the Legislative of Massachusetts the condition of the miserable, the desolate, the outcast. I come as the advocate of helpless, forgotten, insane, and the idiotic men and

women; of being sunk to a condition from which the most unconcerned would start with really horror; of being wretched in our prisons and more wretched in our almshouses.

I proceed, gentlemen, briefly to call your attention to the present state of insane persons confined within this Commonwealth, in cages, closets, cellars, stalls, pens! Chained, naked, beaten with rods, and lashed into obedience.

I offered the following extracts in my notebook and journals...

Lincoln: A woman in a cage. Medford: One idiotic subject chained, and one in a close stall for seventeen years. Pepperell: One often doubly chained, hand in foot; another violent; peaceable now. Brookfield: One man caged, comfortable.

Besides the above, I have seen many who, part of the year, are chained or caged. The use of cages is all but universal...In traversing the state, I have found hundreds of insane persons in every variety of circumstance and condition, many whose situation could not and need not be improved; a less number, but that very large whose lives are the saddest pictures of human suffering and degradation description fades before reality.

Gentlemen, I commit you to the sacred cause. Your action upon this subject will affect the present and future condition of hundreds and of thousands. In this legislation, as in all things, may you exercise that "wisdom which is the breath of the power of God."

**SOURCE:** Dorothea Dix, *The Heritage of America*, 1841.

### **DOCUMENT 3**

Upton Lane 8/15/1829

My dear friend.

...I think that I engaged to give some little hints of my view of the state of your debt prison therefore I will endeavor to do it.

In the first place I consider the want of the separation of the sexes the most crying evil and a most unjustifiable exposure of the morals of both parties and that something should be done at once to remedy it at least the women's room should be locked up at night and they should have a bell that they could ring if they want anything in the night-...There should be a divine service at least once a week and a suitable place for it as it is wrong and hard that prisoners for debt should be excluded the privilege of attending a place of worship. Thus far I think...then I see that much may be done by benevolent ladies of gentlemen frequently visiting these poor creatures reading to them instructing them giving them books (as he has already done) and endeavoring to induce the poor prisoners to make such use of their times as may prove a blessing to them in afterlife also some attention might at times be paid to their families.

**SOURCE:** Letter of Elizabeth Fry to Sarah Smith, 1829.

### **DOCUMENT 4**

...From the man of highest mental cultivation to the most degraded wretch who staggers in the streets do we meet ridicule, and coarse jests, freely bestowed upon those who dare assert that woman stands by the side of man, his equal, placed here by her God, to enjoy with him the beautiful earth, which is her home as it is his, having the same sense of right and wrong, and looking to the same Being for guidance and support...

...Man's intellectual superiority cannot be a question until woman has had a fair trial. When we shall have had our freedom to find out our sphere, when we shall have had our colleges, our professions, our trades, for a century, a comparison then may be justly instituted...

...In my opinion, he is infinitely woman's inferior in every moral quality, not by nature, but made so by a false education...

...I would not have woman less pure, but I would have men more so. I would have the same code of morals for both...

...We are assembled to protest against a form of government, existing without the consent of the governed--to declare our right to be free as man is free, to be represented in the government which we are taxed to support, to have such disgraceful laws as give man the power to chastise and imprison his wife, to take the wages which she earns, the property which she inherits, and, in the case of separation, the children of her love; laws which make her the mere dependent on his bounty. It is to protest against such unjust laws as these that we are assembled today, and to have them, if possible, forever erased from our statute-books, deeming them a shame and a disgrace to a Christian republic in the nineteenth century...

...The world has never seen a truly great and virtuous nation, because in the degradation of woman the very fountains of life are poisoned at their source...

**SOURCE:** Elizabeth Cady Stanton's 1848 Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention Speech (abridged).

#### **DOCUMENT 5**

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the

women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled. The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

- He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.
- He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.
- He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men--both natives and foreigners.
- Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.
- He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.
- He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.
- He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master--the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.
- He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women--the law, in all cases, going upon a fake supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.
- After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single, and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.
- He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration. He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.
- He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her.
- He allows her in church, as well as state, but a subordinate position, claiming apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the church.
- He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated, but deemed of little account in man.
- He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her God.
- He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation--in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most

sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

**SOURCE:** Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Convention, 1848.

### **DOCUMENT 6**

....It is perfectly clear that whatsoever is morally right for a man to do, is morally right for a woman to do. The Lord Jesus defines the duties of his followers ... I follow him through all his precepts, and find him giving the same directions to women as to men, never even referring to the distinction now so strenuously insisted upon between masculine and feminine virtues: this is one of the anti-Christian "traditions of men" which are taught instead of the "commandments of God." Men and women were *CREATED EQUAL*; they are both moral and accountable beings, and whatever is right for a man to do, is right for a woman to do.

What then can woman do for the slave, when she herself is under the feet of man and shamed into silence.

**SOURCE:** Sarah and Angelina Grimké respectively, 1840.

### **DOCUMENT 7**

One of the most unique and interesting speeches of the Convention was made by Sojourner Truth, an emancipated slave. It is impossible to transfer it to paper, or convey any adequate idea of the effect it produced upon the audience. Those only can appreciate it who saw her powerful form, her whole-souled, earnest gesture, and listened to her strong and truthful tones. She came forward to the platform and addressing the President (Frances Gage) said with great simplicity:

May I say a few words? Receiving an affirmative answer, she proceeded; I want to say a few words about this matter. I am for woman's rights. I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man. I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that? I have heard much about the sexes being equal; I can carry as much as any man, and can eat as much too, if I can get it. I am as strong as any man that is now.

As for intellect, all I can say is, if woman have a pint and a man a quart -- why can't she have her little pint full? You need not be afraid to give us our rights for fear we will take too much -- for we won't take more than our pint will hold.

The poor men seem to be all in confusion and don't know what to do. Why children, if you have woman's rights give it to her and you will feel better. You will have your own rights, and there won't be so much trouble.

**SOURCE:** Reporting on Sojourner Truth, from the Anti-Slavery Bugle, Salem, Ohio, June 21, 1851.

## The Transcendentalists in Action

**In the 1830s, Ralph Waldo Emerson broke away from traditional religious thinking in New England. He founded a new religious, philosophical, and literary movement called Transcendentalism.**

In the late 1700s, a group of Christians split away from New England's Puritan Congregational Church. Calling themselves Unitarians, these religious reformers rejected the traditional Christian "trinity." This is the belief that there are three divine elements of God: the father, the son (Jesus), and the holy spirit. They also rejected the Puritan belief that God had already decided who was predestined for heaven and hell. The Unitarians believed that individuals had the free will to work for their salvation.

Three decades later, religious division erupted within the Unitarian Church of Boston. Different factions disagreed over the divinity of Jesus. Others disliked what they called the "corpse-cold" forms of worship. Some leading Unitarian ministers, like Ralph Waldo Emerson, finally left the church to seek a more meaningful religious experience.

After resigning his Boston ministry in 1832, Emerson moved to nearby Concord and began to lecture and write about religion and the individual. In 1836, he formed a discussion group with dissenting Unitarians and others. These men (and a few women) debated topics of the day. They often disagreed with one another, but seemed to accept Emerson's core idea that truth "transcends" (goes beyond) what people observe with their senses in the physical world.

Called the Transcendental Club, Emerson's group of Boston and Concord followers soon established a new religious, philosophical, and literary movement. At first focusing on the "inner self," many Transcendentalists eventually become deeply involved in social reform.

### **Emerson's "New Views"**

In 1838, Emerson delivered a shocking speech to new Unitarian ministers who were graduating from Harvard College. Emerson attacked the Unitarian Church for promoting a lifeless form of Christianity. He also questioned the miracles of Jesus, preferring to concentrate on Jesus' moral teachings. Emerson argued that individuals could discover truth and God within themselves without belonging to a church or holding a particular set of religious beliefs.

The Unitarian establishment in Boston reacted with horror and accused Emerson of blasphemy and atheism. Harvard banned him from making any more speeches to its students.

Emerson continued to expand his "New Views" through lectures, essays, and poetry. He incorporated ideas from European thinkers like Immanuel Kant as well as from Hindu, Persian, and Chinese writings. By 1840, he had developed the main ideas that defined Transcendentalism.

**Universal Spirit:** Emerson found divine energy in all living things. At different times, he called this energy the universal spirit, universal consciousness, over-soul, or God. In his way of thinking, this universal spirit gave all life meaning and purpose. From it came all truth, beauty, and goodness. In nature, Emerson said God appeared “in every moss and cobweb.” In humans, God dwelled in everyone: man and woman, rich and poor, free and slave.

**Self-Reliance:** Emerson counseled his followers to seek God by looking inward. “Through me, God acts; through me, He speaks,” Emerson wrote. Thus, individuals should rely on their own heart and moral “inner light” to guide their lives. To grasp the truth, he advised, “Trust your intuition,” since the source of this insight was God.

**Self and Society:** Emerson rejected the old Puritan doctrine that humans were born as sinful creatures. He held a much more optimistic view that all men and women possessed a natural capacity to do good and for society to progress. Emerson taught, however, that individuals would first have to reform themselves before they could change society. The Transcendentalists disagreed over this. Some argued that persons of conscience had an immediate moral duty to improve society and fight injustice. These were the Transcendentalist reformers.

### **Alcott and Education Reform**

Bronson Alcott was one of the first Transcendentalist reformers. (His daughter was the writer Louisa May Alcott.) A self-educated farmer’s son and schoolmaster, he believed all children had equal moral and intellectual potential.

In 1834, Alcott opened a school for 30 boys and girls in a Boston Masonic Temple. He designed his “Temple School” in ways to draw moral and spiritual truths from his students through their intuition and reasoning. He discarded memorization and appealed to the interests of children. He and his teachers read aloud stories and poems and discussed their meaning with the students.

Alcott involved the children themselves in maintaining classroom discipline and provided time for physical exercise. The Temple School lasted only a few years and closed after Boston ministers condemned Alcott for teaching Christianity from a Transcendentalist point of view.

### **Fuller and the “Women’s Sphere”**

Margaret Fuller, one of Alcott’s Temple School teachers and a member of the Transcendental Club, was also a writer, linguist, literary critic, and journalist. She believed women should discover themselves through learning and reflection.

Fuller called upon men to “remove arbitrary barriers,” like barring women from college, which prevented them from achieving their full potential. Her motto was, “What were we born to do? How shall we do it?”

Between 1839 and 1844, Fuller led seminars on the role of women in society and on other social reform topics. Meeting mainly in the Boston bookstore of a female friend, Fuller called her seminars

“Conversations.” Her purpose was not to teach, but to promote understanding through readings and discussions among the women (and occasionally a few men) who participated.

Fuller rejected the prevailing view of the “women’s sphere,” which limited the role of females to that of housewife and mother. She argued that women should be involved in any activity they were capable of performing. Above all, Fuller insisted, women should have ways to exercise their minds.

Margaret Fuller heavily influenced Emerson, who spoke at a women’s rights convention in 1855. He called for the full equality of women in education, employment, the professions, the ownership of property, and marriage. He also argued for women to have the right to vote and run for public office. If the government denied women these rights, he said, they should not have to pay any taxes. These were radical ideas.

### **Ripley and Brook Farm**

Like Emerson, George Ripley resigned his position as a Boston Unitarian minister. A year later, in 1841, he formed a company to finance a Transcendentalist utopian settlement a few miles from Boston. The goal of the Brook Farm Institute for Education and Agriculture was “to combine the thinker and the worker.”

For the first three years, the hundred or so members of Brook Farm lived in a relaxed cooperative community. They all labored on the farm, including author Nathaniel Hawthorne (who later wrote a novel, *The Blithedale Romance*, satirizing the experiment). The members set up schools for the children, ate in a communal dining hall, and participated in discussions on social reform.

The men, women, and children of Brook Farm also enjoyed a variety of entertainments, such as plays, dances, and games. Ripley tried to recruit Emerson, but he declined and later described the early carefree years at Brook Farm as a “Transcendental picnic.”

In 1844, Ripley suddenly reorganized Brook Farm to reflect the principles of the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier. Ripley organized all workers into numerous agricultural, domestic, and mechanical job groups.

Under the new system, workers chose the jobs for which they had a “passion.” This conformed with Fourier’s attempt to enable workers to labor according to their likes and abilities instead of becoming mere human cogs in an industrial machine. Fourier called his way of organizing work a “Phalanx.”

Ripley combined the separate family houses of old Brook Farm under one roof known as the “Phalanstery.” Unmarried men and women lived close together much like in a college dormitory today, which shocked Brook Farm’s Puritan neighbors. The Phalanstery also included rooms for dining, discussions, entertainment, and other communal activities.

Things ran smoothly for a while. But an influx of poorly educated workers led to social conflict with the more intellectual Transcendentalists. Even with new blood, Brook Farm never included more than 150 adults. Fourier had envisioned 2,000 people for his Phalanx. Finally, after the Phalanstery burned down in 1846, Ripley abandoned his Brook Farm experiment.



## Thoreau and “Civil Disobedience”

Henry David Thoreau, the son of a Concord pencil-maker, graduated from Harvard in 1837. He worked a short while as a schoolmaster, but then began writing poetry. He soon joined Emerson’s circle of Transcendentalist friends.

At first, Thoreau agreed with Emerson’s teaching that reform begins with the individual. In 1845, he built a hut at Walden Pond on property owned by Emerson. For the next few years, Thoreau lived simply off the land, meditated, and wrote about nature.

In 1846, the United States declared war against Mexico. Thoreau and other Northern critics of the war viewed it as a plot by Southerners to expand slavery into the Southwest. Thoreau had already stopped paying his taxes in protest against slavery. The local tax collector had ignored his tax evasion, but decided to act when Thoreau publicly condemned the U.S. invasion and occupation of Mexico.

In July 1846, the sheriff arrested and jailed Thoreau for his tax delinquency. Someone, probably a relative, anonymously paid Thoreau’s taxes after he had spent one night in jail. This incident prompted Thoreau to write his famous essay, “Civil Disobedience” (originally published in 1849 as “Resistance to Civil Government”).

Thoreau’s minor act of defiance caused him to conclude that it was not enough to be simply against slavery and the war. A person of conscience had to *act*. In “Civil Disobedience,” he proclaimed an activist manifesto:

In other words, when a sixth of the population of a nation, which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty, are slaves, and a whole country [Mexico] is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize.

Thoreau argued that the government must end its unjust actions to earn the right to collect taxes from its citizens. As long as the government commits unjust actions, he continued, conscientious individuals must choose whether to pay their taxes or to refuse to pay them and defy the government.

Thoreau declared that if the government required people to participate in injustice by obeying “unjust laws,” then people should “break the laws” even if they ended up in prison. “Under a government which imprisons any unjustly,” he asserted, “the true place for a just man is also a prison.”

By not paying his taxes, Thoreau explained, he was refusing his allegiance to the government. “In fact,” he wrote, “I quietly declare war with the State. . . .”

Unlike some later advocates of civil disobedience like Martin Luther King, Thoreau did not rule out using violence against an unjust government. In 1859, Thoreau defended John Brown’s bloody attack on the federal arsenal at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia, during his failed attempt to spark a slave revolt.

## Parker and Abolitionism

While Thoreau set an example for political action, the Fugitive Slave Act turned many Transcendentalists into active abolitionists. Passed by Congress, this act was part of the Compromise of 1850, which delayed the Civil War for a decade.

The Fugitive Slave Act exacted fines and imprisonment from anyone caught aiding escaped slaves. In effect, this law forced Northern states to enforce slavery by returning runaway slaves to their owners in the South. The law enraged many, including the Boston and Concord Transcendentalists. Even the inward-looking Emerson seemed to agree that civil disobedience was necessary to oppose the Fugitive Slave Act. "I will not obey it by God," he said.

During the 1850s, Northern social reformers viewed the abolition of slavery as their most important cause. Theodore Parker, a Boston Unitarian minister who had remained in the pulpit, was probably the most radical abolitionist among the Transcendentalists.

Bostonians called Parker "Rev. Thunder and Lightning" for his fiery sermons. He preached that, like all human beings, black slaves possessed the universal spirit. He thought that their enslavement was a monstrous violation of their God-given right to freedom and self-development.

Parker called for civil disobedience against the Fugitive Slave Act. He led the effort in Boston to hide escaped slaves and move them to Canada along the "Underground Railroad." He also helped raise money for John Brown's plot to ignite a slave revolt in the South. When the Civil War finally began in 1861, Parker and many other Transcendentalists viewed it as a great conflict between good and evil.

\* \* \* \* \*

As a movement, Transcendentalism had great influence. It deeply affected American literature. Writers as diverse as Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Herman Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Henry Miller explored themes and ideas first broached by the movement. For example, in *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman celebrated the power of self and its connection to the spirit driving America. And in Melville's *Moby Dick*, Captain Ahab's quest for the great white whale symbolized both the power and destructiveness of mankind's connection to nature.

But Transcendentalism's influence went beyond literature. After the Civil War, Ralph Waldo Emerson had secured his reputation as "The Sage of Concord." "Be an opener of doors to those who come after us," he advised his Transcendentalist followers.

Theodore Parker helped push open the door for abolitionism in the years leading up to the Civil War. After the war, Susan B. Anthony and others built upon the work of Margaret Fuller to lead a new women's rights movement, centering on the right to vote. New utopian communities drew inspiration from Ripley's Brook Farm. At the turn of the 20th century, John Dewey advocated "progressive education," borrowing ideas from Bronson Alcott's Temple School. In the 1960s, Martin Luther King and anti-Vietnam War protesters revived Thoreau's arguments for civil disobedience. Thus, the Transcendentalist reformers took Emerson's advice and opened doors for many others to discover their own paths to a better America.

### **For Discussion and Writing**

1. How did Emerson's Transcendentalist "New Views" differ from traditional religious thought in New England?
2. "Under a government which imprisons any[one] unjustly," Thoreau wrote, "the true place for a just man is also prison." What do you think he meant? Do you agree with him? Explain.
3. Which one of the Transcendentalists discussed in the article do you admire the most? Why?

## Meet the Reformers

### Transcendentalism

Ralph Waldo Emerson (Concord)  
Henry David Thoreau (Concord)  
Margaret Fuller (Concord, Boston)  
Bronson Alcott (Concord)

### Temperance

Lyman Beecher (Boston)

### Women's Rights

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (Boston)  
Louisa May Alcott (Concord)  
Margaret Fuller (Concord, Boston)  
Julia Ward Howe (Boston)

### Abolition

Reverend Lavius Hyde (Wayland)  
Lydia Maria Child (Wayland)  
Reverend Edmund Sears (Wayland)  
Reverend Jonas Scott (Wayland)  
Henry Stanton (Boston)  
Gerrit Smith (Boston)  
William Lloyd Garrison (Boston)  
Harriet Beecher Stowe (Andover)  
Lyman Beecher (Boston)  
Wendell Phillips (Boston)  
Frederick Douglass (Boston, New Bedford, Lynn)

### Education

Elizabeth Peabody (Boston)  
Horace Mann (Boston)  
Bronson Alcott (Concord)

### Mental and Physical Health

Dorothea Dix (Boston)  
Clara Barton (North Oxford)

### Utopian Communities

George Ripley (Boston)  
Bronson Alcott (Harvard, MA)

### Peace Movement

Julia Ward Howe (Boston)  
Elihu Burritt (Worcester)

## Meet the Reformers

It was a singular experience that long acquaintance which I cultivated with beans, what with planting, and hoeing, and harvesting, and threshing, and picking over and selling them,-- the last was the hardest of all, -- I might add eating, for I did taste. I was determined to know beans.

*Walden*, Henry David Thoreau

The death of friends should inspire us as much as their lives. If they are great and rich enough, they will leave consolation to the mountains before the expenses of the funerals. It will not be hard to part with any worth, because it is worthy. How can any good depart? It does not go and come, but we. Shall we wait for it? Is it slower than we?

*Journal*, 20 February 1842  
Henry David Thoreau

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### PART I: Getting to know your reformer

Just as Henry David Thoreau was determined to know beans, you should be determined to really know a reformer.

1. Choose a reformer from the list provided. Research their life and contributions to our nation's history. Write a moving eulogy to be read at our remembrance ceremony. (In addition to finding basic biographical information, use the questions below to guide your research.)

#### Questions to use in preparing eulogy:

- a. What criticisms of American society did your reformer have?
- b. What methods did they use to improve American life?

- c. What details of their life make them a particularly interesting figure?
- d. What lasting impact did their reforms have on American society?

2. Your eulogy must be typed, double spaced, and a minimum of 1-2 pages in length, 12 font. You will be asked to take two to three minutes to pay your respects, no shorter or longer. You will be graded on your knowledge of your reformer and on your delivery.

**Note:** If you are unsure how to structure your eulogy, there are MANY online resources to help you. Some sites even have templates for you to use as a writing guide.

**\*\*Your eulogy is due on \_\_\_\_\_**

**PartII:**

**A.) Field Study** - Find a place connected to the reformer you have chosen and go there! Next, explore the answers to the following questions:

- What is the name and the time period of this place?
- If you visited a historical house, what did you learn about your reformer and the time period? Why was your reformer there? Was the house homey? Were the people there people you would have wanted to visit with? What would you have talked to them about?
- If you visited a museum related to your person, what was the name of the exhibit related to your person? Why is the museum choosing to focus on your reformer? What historical information did you learn? What was your favorite part of the exhibit? What did the exhibit teach you about your chosen reformer?
- If you visited a monument, gravesite, park, historical marker or other non-house/museum place related to your reformer, describe the place. What is there? What information is given? Where is it located? Why is it there? What does it tell you about your reformer?
- **Take a photo of yourself visiting this place!**

**B.) Letter** - Write a letter to your teacher about your visit. Your letter should be about 500 words, 1.5

spaced. It should be written informally, but should include all the conventions of good grammar and spelling. Please attach a copy of the photo you took to your letter.

Your letter must address the following questions:

1. Some historians argue that going back in time is like going to a foreign country. What about your place made you realize you were in a different time period (or a foreign land)?
2. Some historians argue that there are universal aspects of human existence. What about your place did you recognize? What seemed familiar to you even though it was a different time period?
3. Is there a theme of history at this place like equality, freedom, reform, or justice, for example, and what did you learn about this theme? How does the place help to define the American identity?
4. Was your visit worthwhile? Did it help to deepen your understanding of your reformer? How? Would you recommend this place to a friend? Why or why not?
5. Finally, discuss the value of visiting a place in terms of its impact on understanding a particular person/time in history.

**\*\* Your letter is due on \_\_\_\_\_**

### **Part III: Reformers Remembrance Ceremony**

1. Wear black if you wish.
2. Bring food or drink. Let us celebrate all that is good in life as we remember those who have passed before us.
3. Print out the biggest picture/portrait of this person you can find and bring it to class.
4. Read your eulogy to the class. Who was your reformer and why does he/she deserve to be remembered? Where did you go to commemorate this person's life? How did that place make you connect with that person?
5. Be prepared to discuss the questions below after we have honored the dead.

6. To be answered in class:
  - a. List several evils that the reformers of the period 1820-1860 tried to eliminate.
  - b. What factors created a climate favorable to reform in the early nineteenth century?
  - c. To what extent did these reformers achieve success in the period from 1820-1860?

**Remembrance Ceremony to be held on \_\_\_\_\_**



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