

American Social & Cultural History, 1607-186

Outline of Course

- The Characteristics and Contributions of the Four Cultures that Settled America
 - The England They Left Behind
- How These 4 Cultures Became the United States
- From the Revolution to the Civil War
 - Major Trends & Developments that transformed both the nation as a whole and its four constituent cultures

Third Class

- Finish Discussion of Frontier Culture
- Describe the U.S. in 1800
- Discuss How Four Cultures Became Two Sections
 - Westward Movement
 - Democratization

The Frontier

- Clothing
 - Women normally wore homespun linsey-woolsey
 - Men wore shirts of linen in the summer and deerskin in the winter with loose flowing trousers or breeches
 - Many of the elements of “western dress” derive from the backcountry, although modified by Mexican elements in the 19th century and Hollywood in the 20th.

The Frontier

- Diet
 - Often consisted of curdled or thickened sour milk, butter, bacon, cornbread, and potatoes
 - Griddle cakes and pancakes were very popular. So were grits (made from cornmeal mush) which replaced the oats popular in the British borderlands.
 - The British taste for lamb and mutton yielded to pork, which was either boiled or fried.
 - Backcountry cooking ran more to boiling than to roasting or baking
 - Soups, porridges, and stews were common

The Frontier

- Drink
 - The distinctive backcountry beverage was whiskey.
 - Common table drink even for children (when sweetened with a little sugar)
 - A taste for liquor distilled from grain was uncommon in the south and east of England, but common in north Britain, Scotland, and Ulster
 - In the backcountry, Scotch whiskey (distilled from barley) yielded to Bourbon whiskey (distilled from corn and rye)

The Frontier

- Sports
 - Individual competitions in running, jumping, leaping, and throwing things (axes, spears, sledge hammers & cannon balls)
 - The Scots introduced the Caledonian Games which featured the above events in its competitions
 - Shot put, hammer throw, running broad jump, high jump, pole vaulting, hop-step-and-jump, hurdles, sack races, wheelbarrow races, & three-legged races
 - In the 19th century, athletic clubs, schools, and colleges began to sponsor many of the above events.
 - This eventually led to modern track & field

The Frontier

- Notes on Order
 - While there were official sheriffs, order-keeping was often done by ad hoc groups of self-appointed vigilantes
 - This was less a product of the frontier environment and more the tradition of retributive folk justice that was carried from the British borderlands to the American backcountry
 - Of 326 vigilante movements, 211 occurred in the southern highlands and the southern rim. Most of the remainder were on the fringes of that region

The Frontier

- Key Cultural Concepts
 - In the absence of any strong sense of order as unity, hierarchy, or social peace, the backsettlers saw order as a system of retributive justice
 - Strong libertarianism

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- Once established in America, these regional cultures:
 - Adapted their European origin culture to American conditions
 - Created characteristic institutions and cultural values
 - Experienced a pattern of cultural evolution
 - Puritans became Yankees
 - Virginia Royalist became Whigs
 - Backcountry settlers became frontiersmen
 - Quakers become a minority in the Middle Colonies

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- From their beginnings to the 1760s, England had largely left the American colonies on their own. This reflected:
 - English Crown's fiscal poverty
 - Proprietary colonies
 - Colonies left to defend themselves
 - Political turmoil in 17th century England as crown battled parliament for supremacy
 - England's involvement in a succession of 18th century wars with France

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- Between 1660 and 1760, England's elite created a set of new institutions which still dominate English life
 - A Royal Navy that dominated the seas
 - The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts
 - Bank of England
 - The regimental tradition of the British Army
 - The concept of the king-in-parliament and the institution of the prime minister
 - Whitehall bureaucracy

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- Despite England's military buildup, the colonies were still left to fend for themselves since
 - British military strategy was focused on protecting England and Ireland from French invasion and supporting European allies on the Continent
 - In so far as resources were diverted to the Western Hemisphere, they went to protect the sugar-producing islands of the West Indies

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- In the 17th century when the English economy and state were weak, the Crown had encouraged emigration to reduce unemployment and discontent at home and to exile dissidents from political influence
- In the 18th century, the Crown began to discourage emigration from England so that, in conjunction with the English manufacturers demand for cheap labor, emigration from England declined.
- Thus in the 17th century, 350,000 English emigrated to the colonies; in the 18th century, only 80,000 English emigration, of which 50,000 were convicts

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- While wishing to curtail English emigration, colonial officials still wished to encourage emigration to the colonies
 - In 1740, Parliament passed the Plantation Act which enabled foreign-born colonists to win British citizenship by residing for 7 years in any colony, swearing allegiance to the king, paying a 2-shilling fee, and taking communion in any Protestant church
 - This invented the notion of America as an asylum from religious persecution and political oppression in Europe
 - It also led to the emigration to America of about 100,000 Germans, about 75% of which landed in Philadelphia, with most settling in rural Pennsylvania and some in western Maryland and Virginia

Breaking Away from Britain

- The First Great Awakening
 - Period of Revivalism
 - Revivalism was the consequence of a shift away from the Calvinist concept of grace to a new concept
 - Calvinism – Grace was necessary for salvation, but it could not be earned by man. It was given only to the elect.
 - Revivalism – Grace was necessary for salvation, but it was available to all who freely chose to accept it.
 - Created the itinerant revivalist preacher who seeks to win souls, often via ‘hellfire & brimstone’ sermons – Jonathon Edwards, George Whitfield, John Wesley

Breaking Away from Britain

- The First Great Awakening - 2
 - Led to a split in Congregationalism between the Old Lights and the New Lights
 - Led to the birth of the Methodists
 - Led to the rise of the Baptists (and the Methodists) from fringe religious groups to major denominations
 - Broke up the religious monopoly of the Congregationalists in New England and the Anglicans in the Tidewater South
 - Enhanced the religious pluralism of the Middle Colonies

The Great Awakening

- The First Great Awakening – 3
 - Crossed all religious and sectarian boundaries and turned European-style churches into American ones characterized by:
 - Evangelical and moral rigor
 - A tendency to downplay the clergy in favor of the preacher
 - Little stress on liturgical correctness or parish boundaries
 - An emphasis on individual experience
 - A downplaying of theology and doctrinal orthodoxy
 - An emphasis on eschatology
 - » Key text: “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21:5)

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- The British Victory in the Seven Years War which ended in 1763
 - Permitted the large colonial population to break through the Appalachian Mountains into the vast Mississippi River Valley watershed
 - This led to major Indian wars – one with the Cherokees in the South and the other with the Indians of the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes
 - To mollify the Indians, the British barred settlement west of the Appalachians

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- The conquest of Canada deprived the colonists and the British of a common enemy that had united them in the past
 - This victory encouraged the British to restructure the Empire and make the colonists pay a greater share of the costs
 - The victory emboldened the colonists to defy the British because they no longer needed protection from the French

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- The Seven Year War brought about 25,000 British troops to the colonies -- the first time that British troops had conducted military operations on the American mainland.
 - English officers were appalled to discover that the colonists routinely ignored imperial regulations, such as the 1733 Molasses Act
 - New Englanders were shocked by the irreligion, swearing, gambling, whoring, and Sabbath-breaking of British troops

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- The Seven Years War brought American soldiers from different colonies together in various campaigns
 - The soldiers from different colonies saw that they were more alike than different and that they were all different from the British

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- The Seven Years War doubled the British national debt from a prewar £73 million to a postwar £137 million, with interest payments consuming more than 60% of the annual budget.
 - In addition, the crown decided to maintain a 10,000 man garrison in the colonies, primarily in Canada and the Great Lakes
- This led Parliament to begin taxing the colonies

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- The colonial leaders saw the new permanent army in North America as a threat rather than as a source of protection
 - The troops provided a pretext for new taxes and the means for enforcing them
 - After making peace with the Indians, British troops were seen as protecting the Indians from the settlers rather than enabling the settlers to dispossess the Indians

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- The Colonists balked at new taxes, detecting a dangerous precedent that threatened their prosperity and liberties:
 - The colonists saw liberty as rooted in the notion that a free man paid no tax unless levied by his own representatives. Without such a protection from arbitrary taxation, people gradually but inevitably became enslaved by domineering rulers

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- The Seven Year War and the postwar years had marked the first time that large numbers of British troops had been stationed in America. This fact and the increasingly rancorous constitutional debate with Parliament revealed to both British and Americans the divergent development of their societies

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- In Britain, most common men were dependents, either tenants of an aristocratic landlord or landless laborers dependent upon an employer
- In America, most adult free men were landowning 'independent' farmers
- To British eyes, a land of so many independent men and chattel slaves seemed threatening to proper order
 - Insubordinate common people who did not understand deference to their betters
 - Vulgar leaders grown too arrogant from dominating slaves

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- American leaders feared that small new taxes would set precedents for increasing levies that would enrich an official elite around the royal governors while impoverishing common taxpayers and limiting social mobility
 - Colonists defended property rights since property alone made men truly independent and free
 - Colonists defended their traditional liberties as a means to protect their property

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- The Stamp Act taxes fell most heavily on newsprint and legal documents
 - this offended four groups capable of causing serious trouble for the British – newspaper printers, lawyers, merchants, & college students
 - These groups constituted the opinion makers of the colonies
 - It politicized the press by making it a forum for discussion and protest, turning protest into a coherent opposition movement
 - It fostered Americanization by creating an awareness of all the colonies being in the same situation and by fostering inter-colonial cooperation

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- Besides taxing the colonies, England tried to bring the American colonies into line with English practices
 - In 1758, the Archbishop of Canterbury tried to create a uniform Anglican religious establishment in the American colonies
 - In 1774, Governor Bernard of Massachusetts proposed the creation of an American peerage similar to that of the Irish peerage
- These constituted additional causes of colonial fear and resentment

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- British policies after 1763 threatened all four American cultures
- Result: the four cultures forgot their differences and joined together in the movement that led to the American Revolution

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- The Revolutionary War Went through three phases, each phase waged by one of the regional cultures
 - New England (1775-76)
 - Middle Colonies (1776-78)
 - South
 - Backcountry (1779-81)
 - Coastal South (1779-81)

Breaking Away from Great Britain

- The loyalists who opposed the Revolution tended to be groups outside the major regional cultures
 - The imperial elites in the colonial capitals
 - Ethnic groups who lived on the margins of the major cultures – the polyglot population of lower New York, the Highland Scots of Carolina, and the African slaves
- The Delaware Valley with its pacifist Quaker and German Pietist populations was largely neutral

Creating the Constitution

- After independence, the four regional cultures found themselves in conflict
- The Constitution of 1787 was an attempt to write institutional rules of engagement that would allow the four regional cultures to peacefully coexist
- The compromises that made the Constitution and its ratification possible involved regional compromises between 3 of the 4 cultures with the Frontier largely unrepresented

Creating the Constitution

- The Great Compromise was less a compromise between large and small states than a compromise between different political cultures
 - Infrequent elections (Virginia) vs Frequent elections (New England)
 - Taxation
 - Economic Policy
 - Slavery
 - First Amendment

Creating the Constitution

- The supporters of the Constitution were mainly a coalition of elites from New England, Virginia, and the Delaware Valley.
- The opponents consisted largely of the frontier backcountry and dissenting minorities in the various regions
- The Bill of Rights was designed to protect the various regional cultures
 - It restricted the Federal Government, not the states
 - The First Amendment was designed to protect both religious freedom in Pennsylvania and Virginia and the religious establishments in New England

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- Major Trends
 - Westward Movement
 - Democratization
 - Regions evolve into Sections
 - Westward Movement
 - Diverging Economies
 - Cotton & Slavery
 - Industrialization
 - Transportation & Communication Revolutions

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- The U.S. at the beginning of the 19th Century
 - In many respects, little had changed since the 17th century
 - The hearth and fireplace were central to the home
 - Most consumer items still manufactured at home or in the local community
 - Farm and family obligations were sufficiently encompassing as to leave little leisure time
 - Transport was slow and expensive, especially on land. Few people traveled except merchants, traders, seamen, and members of elites
 - Communication was slow and expensive. People knew little of what went on outside their local community

From the Revolution to the Civil War

– A Note About Cities and Towns -- 1

- Most Americans lived in rural hamlets and villages or on isolated farms
- Cities and large towns were largely commercial and shipping or political centers located on major rivers or ocean harbors
 - They were congested since everything had to be within walking distance
 - » Work and living spaces were often integrated with members of the family and apprentices living above or behind the workshop

From the Revolution to the Civil War

– A Note About Cities and Towns -- 2

- There was a clear distinction between city and country. There were no suburbs
 - Except for waterfront housing, there was no zoning nor neighborhoods exclusively devoted to commercial, office, governmental, entertainment, or residential functions.
 - » Public buildings, churches, hotels, warehouses, shops, and homes were normally interspersed, and often located in the same buildings
 - No factories. Production took place in the shops of artisans
 - The fashionable addresses were located close to the center of town. The lower classes and the more objectionable businesses were on the outskirts
 - City streets were narrow and often winding to follow land contours. There were no street addresses

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- A Note About Cities and Towns – 3
 - Not until late in the 19th century did cities supply water to urban residents
 - People dug wells in their backyards. Often well water was contaminated with outhouse filth
 - 1830s saw horse-drawn omnibuses
 - Increased the large amounts of horse-generated manure also produced by delivery wagons, taxis, and carriages
 - Garbage collection consisted of pigs and geese scavenging
 - Due to the increasing use of coal as stoves replaced fireplaces, air pollution was becoming a problem

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- A Note About Cities and Towns – 4
 - Death rates were high – higher than in the countryside and also higher than the urban birthrate
 - Only increasing migration to the cities kept urban populations from falling
 - Life expectancy of babies born in New York City – 24 years - was 6 years less than that of newborn slaves

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- A Note About Cities and Towns – 5
 - People went to cities because:
 - The jobs & markets were there
 - Jobs in the city were higher paying and less arduous than those on the farm
 - City provided amenities and activities not available on the farm
 - Theaters & cultural institutions
 - Parades & processions
 - City provided access to groups of like-minded people

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- Despite the Growth of Cities and Towns
 - Agriculture still provided the livelihood for the overwhelming majority
 - People in other occupations often farmed as well
 - Most white Americans lived on family farms
 - Operating a farm household required an adult man and woman
 - Since children were an economic asset on the farm, farm families were large

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- Daily Life on the Farm
 - Almost all of life's activities – production, consumption, birth, child rearing, care of the sick and elderly, and early childhood education – took place in the household setting
 - 2/3rds of all clothing and linens were produced in the household
 - People owned few changes of clothes
 - People bathed very infrequently
 - Outdoor privies were the norm
 - A single fireplace provided the cooking and heating
 - In winter, everyone slept in the room with the fireplace

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- Widespread Ownership of Land:
 - Was psychologically significant
 - Nurtured a pride comparable to that of European gentlemen
 - Led people to see themselves as citizens rather than subjects
 - Promoted a republican ideology that celebrated the ‘common man’, white egalitarianism, free enterprise, self-employment, and low taxes

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- Of the 7,230,000 listed in the 1810 census, only 1 million lived west of the Appalachians
- Westward migration was a constant
 - Limited productivity of land without fertilizer
 - Population Growth
- Travel was slow, especially overland

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- Westward Movement
 - Surplus rural population migrated in search of farms and livelihood
 - The new demand for short-staple cotton prompted movement to the Old Southwest
 - This led to the expansion of the Virginia/Tidewater South culture and the Frontier culture and their eventual merger into a Southern culture
 - Converted semi-subsistence farmers from the Piedmont into cotton producers

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- Westward Movement – 2
 - The Old Northwest developed differently
 - Slavery was prohibited under the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 & it was too cold for cotton
 - The settlement pattern also differed from that of the Old Southwest
 - The southern parts of Ohio, Indiana & Illinois were largely settled by southerners and became corn & hog country
 - The northern areas of those same states plus Michigan, Wisconsin, & Minnesota were largely settled by New Englanders who grew wheat, cattle, and orchard fruit
 - In between the Yankees and the southerners were settlers from the Middle Atlantic states. Cincinnati was a Middle State enclave in an Upland South area

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- Westward Movement – 3
 - Constituted the spreading of the four founding cultures
 - To some extent, it mingled two or more of the founding cultures
 - Each culture brought to its new westward environment its own characteristic values, lifestyles, settlement patterns, religious affiliations, and even their housing & cooking

Democratization

- Most of the colonies had established either a property or taxpaying qualification for voting
 - Actual enfranchisement, however, was fairly high.
- During and soon after the Revolution, two factors extended the franchise
 - The shift in a number of states from a property qualification to a taxpaying qualification
 - Inflation which imposed ‘bracket creep’ on statutory qualifications

Democratization

- States also enacted other reforms in the 1780s and 1790s which increased the number of voters
 - Increasing the number of polling places – one in each township as opposed as few as one in each county.
 - More frequent elections
 - More offices being elective rather than appointive
 - Governor, Lieutenant Governor, state senators, and U.S. congressmen were all newly elective offices

Democratization

- In the 1820s, the states:
 - Abolished the remaining property qualifications for voting
 - Massachusetts in 1820 and New York in 1821 took the lead in this by revising their state constitutions
 - No state admitted to the Union after 1815 had a property requirement for voting
 - Provided that presidential electors should be chosen by the voters rather than by state legislators

Democratization

- Voter in colonial Virginia and New England
 - Political leaders are personally known to the voter and members of locally prominent and well-established families

Democratization

- Voting in the 19th Century
 - Political leaders, except for some local offices, are not personally known by the voter. You vote for a candidate because you support his political party
 - Elections are the culmination of a months' long campaign involving banners, torchlight parades, and election hoopla
 - The voter's connection to a party is based less on its stand on public policies and more on a strong sense of partisan loyalty
 - The act of voting is an act of solidarity

Democratization

- The change from the 18th century to the 19th century represented:
 - A shift from the concept that property qualifications were necessary to ensure that the voter possessed the economic independence necessary to exercise independent political judgment to the concept that voting was a right of all adult white males
 - A shift from the personal authority of gentlemen to the impersonal authority of party
 - From personal knowledge of the candidate to a knowledge of the opinions of the party and its most active partisans

Democratization

- The Democrats appealed to those who favored limited government, free trade, and white supremacy
 - These people saw themselves as ‘outsiders’ suspicious that an activist government would favor ‘insiders’ and infringe on their lifestyles
 - Inhabitants of areas bypassed by canals, rivers, and railroads
 - Large cotton and tobacco planters
 - Immigrants
 - Persons committed to white supremacy and the expansion of slavery

Democratization

- The Whigs, Know Nothings, and later the Republicans appealed to those who supported internal improvements and government support of moral reform
 - Businessmen
 - New England and areas settled by New Englanders
 - Persons committed to various “reform” causes
 - Nativists

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- The Second Great Awakening
 - Two Main Strands of evangelism that at first were separate but later intertwined
 - One began in Kentucky & Tennessee by circuit-riding preachers who led camp meetings at which conversions took place
 - The other originated at Yale, and spread west with the New England diaspora
 - Religious Innovation – the creation of new denominations

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- The Second Great Awakening – 2
 - Besides Lyman Beecher, another key evangelist was Charles Grandison Finney who:
 - Saw revivals as man-made events designed to bring sinners to God – complete with ‘hell-fire’ sermons, music, and spectacle
 - Paved the way for such future preachers as Dwight Moody, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham, and the modern televangelists.
 - Saw the converted sinner as free from sin [Perfectionism] and morally obligated to improve society
 - Result was the formation of a host of reform groups aimed at wiping out such social evils as intemperance, prostitution, and slavery

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- The Second Great Awakening – 3
 - Finney's perfectionism, revivalism, and social reformism invigorated and disrupted American Protestantism
 - Led to schisms between the Old Light Calvinist Presbyterians and the New Light Revivalist Presbyterians

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- The Second Great Awakening – 4
 - The revivalistic fervor of the camp meeting preachers – largely Methodist and to some extent Baptist – made the Methodists America’s largest denomination by 1850 and the Baptists the next largest Protestant denomination
 - Methodists went from 3% of the religiously-affiliated population to 34%.

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- The Second Great Awakening – 5
 - Another outgrowth of the religious fervor of the Second Great Awakening was the creation of new religious denominations
 - The Mormons
 - The Seventh Day Adventists
 - The Disciples of Christ

From the Revolution to the Civil War

- Impact of the Second Great Awakening
 - Fostered a wide variety of church-related benevolent associations
 - Led women to take an active role in the churches and church-related benevolent associations.
 - This in turn fostered such reform movements as women's suffrage, abolition, prison reform & temperance
 - Sunday School movement, which not only provided religious education but also taught basic literacy
 - Provided a framework for the creation of a whole host of civic, educational, fraternal, and business organizations on both a national and even international level
 - Pooling of capital
 - Civic responsibility
 - Founding of colleges