Chapter 8
Social Movements

Social Movements in U.S. History

• What impact have social movements had on democratic institutions?
• The Framers never anticipated the impact of grass roots movements which ultimately shape public policy.
• In some of the colonies, like Massachusetts, the American Revolutions was a grass roots movement– in Virginia & the South it wasn’t.
• Though the Framers (another term for the Founders) knew they wanted a government independent of the whims of the English monarch (often referred to as only “The Crown”), they were not sure what form that government would take.
• Not only were they unsure as to what form that government might have, they were totally ignorant as to what impact political independence and freedom would have on a society and ultimately a culture.
• Though the impetus for independence from England had grass roots characteristics, particularly in New England and among the Scots-Irish, the true dynamics of grassroots politics was unknown to the Founders.
• There were a sufficient number of Loyalists (those who opposed breaking ties with England) among the Colonists to have spawned a civil war if both sides were sufficiently armed.
• It is believed that when one takes into account all thirteen colonies that the opinions among the colonists were equally divided among those who favored independence, those who opposed it, and those who were neutral.
• Many German-speaking immigrants cared little about English notions of individual rights. Most German-speaking colonists had immigrated to America to avoid the constant warfare in Europe.
• However, some German immigrants, particularly in Pennsylvania, had emigrated from Germany, and German-speaking regions of Switzerland, to avoid religious persecution. These people are still erroneously called “The Pennsylvania Dutch.”
• These people were not “Dutch” (that is, from Holland) but rather “Deutch” which is German for “German.”

The Abolitionists

• Never in the majority, their agitation started a war.
• They were organized, articulate, and passionate.
• Their cause was right and the populace of the North responded.
• They drew upon religious tradition and the language of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.
  • The Abolitionists were a classic grassroots movement.
  • The term referred to “the abolition of slavery.”
  • Possibly one of the first such political movements in American history.
  • America’s politicians did not have the political resolve to challenge slavery.
  • Abolitionism emerged largely from religious values, most of which was based in New England.
  • Though the Christian Old Testament and the Jewish Bible mentioned the owning of slaves, the Abolitionists believed the owning of other human beings to be prohibited by Christian tradition.
  • Central New York, including Fayetteville, Syracuse, and Auburn, were centers of Abolitionist activity.
  • The “Jerry Rescue” was a successful effort to free a runaway slave captured by bounty hunters who were permitted to roam the North looking for runaway slaves. Check this web site---http://www.nyhistory.com/gerritsmith/jerry.htm
  • A practical application of the Abolitionists’ philosophy was the operation of what was called “The Underground Railroad.”
  • The Underground Railroad was a series of houses, often with hidden rooms, where runaway slaves could travel by night and sleep and hide by day on their flight to Canada which did not allow Southern bounty hunters.

Women’s suffrage
• Emerges gradually from unrelated developments.
• Short on students colleges admit women.
• Women excel as students.
• Educated women become articulate advocates.
• Women’s success in school change some opinions
• The equality of frontier women.
  • Cultural practices, biblical references, and ignorance about basic psychology and physiology result in women being perceived as inferior.
  • Women will prove these anachronistic beliefs about them to be false.
  • America’s political and cultural breaks with Europe enable women to assume roles they would have been denied in other cultures.
  • The personal isolation of many of the American frontier settlers enable women to assume a “de-facto” equal status with males.
• Male vulnerability to common physiological conditions like heart disease, cancer and strokes, leaves many women without benefit of a spouse.
• Males killed in warfare, accidents and disease leave women as heads of households.

The American Woman

• Single mothers succeed in hostile environment
• Wives seen as equal participants in difficult life.
• The difficult life of the woman in America lead some to see that beliefs about women might be dated.
  • Frontier life was very difficult due to the isolation and the vulnerability to harm. Women were partners in the hard labor of frontier life.
• Women showed that they were the equal of men when they were given the opportunity by the harsh and isolated conditions of the American frontier.
• Western states where frontier life styles predominated will be the first states to grant women suffrage.
  • “The first extension of full voting rights to women came in 1869, in the Wyoming Territory. When Wyoming entered the Union as a state in 1890, it was also the first state to provide for women’s suffrage in its constitution. In 1893, Colorado extended the franchise to women, followed by Utah and Idaho in 1896. Fourteen years later, in 1910, the state of Washington also enfranchised women. One by one over the next eight years, states began to grant voting rights to women: California (1911); Arizona, Kansas, and Oregon (1912); the Alaska Territory (1913); Montana and Nevada (1914); New York (1917); Michigan, Oklahoma, and South Dakota (1918).” (1)
• (1) Source-- http://iaia.essortment.com/womenssuffrage_rcfa.htm

Isolationism

• Most immigrants had fled Europe’s politics.
• America is protected by vast oceans.
• Religious perceptions influence America.
• Descendants of dissenters.
• Many European wars were religiously based.
• Many European wars were instigated by royalty.
  • America has a long tradition of isolationism.
  • Most immigrants had come to America to avoid what was happening in Europe, both politically and culturally.
• George Washington had warned against foreign entanglements.
• Most wars were fought over petty matters by modern standards.
• Wars of succession.
• Territorial expansion.
• Personal grudges of royalty.
• Ethnic and cultural prejudices.
• Colonialism
• The Constitution was designed to limit foreign entanglements.
• The Constitution hoped to limit the president’s ability to wage war over trivial issues as had been done by the monarchs of Europe.
• America is tolerant of isolationists as long as they are right-wing isolationists.
• Anti-Vietnam protesters were essentially promoting isolationism and for that they were called traitors, something not done except during World War I when most opposed to the war were left wing.

**Regional character to isolationism.**

• South and West
• These regions don’t trade with Europe
• The Revolutionary Perspective- we threw off all components of Europe’s excesses with England.
• Isolationism was stronger in regions that were not dependent on trade with Europe, such as the South and the West.
• In regions were trade with Europe was important, like New England, the merchants there were often forced to choose sides.
• That is, to continue to trade with the combatant nation whose position was least culpable for the ongoing war and to cease trading with the aggressor nation.
• However, when the South wanted more land in which to expand slavery, such as the Mexican War of 1848, they were the region that wanted to deal aggressively with a foreign power.
• It is not commonly known that one of the main motivations for Texas independence from Mexico, and hence the battle known as the Alamo, was that the Texans wanted to permit slavery in their new province of Mexico and the Mexican government would not permit it.

**Labor rights and reform**

• Industrialism changes the working environment drastically.
• No specialized work; no craft.
• No personal relationship with employer
• Long hours don’t improve condition or wage.
• Labor agitation (strikes) result in reforms.
  • Labor, once guided by interpersonal and familial relationships, becomes totally impersonal with the emergence of industrialism.
  • Workers are seen as having no rights.
  • A worker injured on the job would be fired without any compensation for the injury.
• Children went to work at age 8.
• Work weeks were 60 hours long, having only Sundays off.
• Every improvement in labor conditions came from organized efforts by labor to force business owners to grant them rights.
  • Few, if any, reforms came from the industrialists themselves.
• In smaller enterprises, familial, communal, and interpersonal pressures allow some reforms to emerge.

**Prohibition**

• Evangelical Christians preach of the evil of alcohol.
• National per capita consumption in 19th Century 6X what today’s is.
• No television; 80% illiteracy
• Women gain influence with the right to vote.
• Women victimized by husband’s drinking.
  • Many Christians preach against the universal evils of alcohol as being scripturally based, yet Christ’s first public miracle was changing water into wine.
  • Alcohol abuse is a serious problem both in Europe and in America.
  • Isolation in the American frontier leads to more drinking.
  • The impersonal life of the city, combined with the drudgery of the industrial job lead to dramatic increases in alcohol consumption.
  • Religions were right to seek to remedy this social condition, they were not correct in claiming the prohibition was sanctioned by Christian interpretations of scripture.
• Many psychologists believe alcoholism for many people to be a symptom rather than a cause.
• Individuals with pathological depression or bi-polar disorder are known to “self-medicate” for this disease with alcohol and other drugs.
• Alcohol is the cause when a physiological dependence develops either from psychological or social pressures.
Alcohol and Bigotry

• Nativists suggest drinking problems enter with immigrants.
• England rationalizes 800 years of colonizing Ireland with “Drunken Irish” and “Fighting Irish” stereotypes.
• Mediterranean people drink wine with most meals because water was not safe.
  • Many American nativists state that alcohol abuse arrived with the Irish.
  • Germans consume more alcohol per capita than do the Irish (this is still true today, and applies to German-Americans and Irish-Americans likewise).
• Alcoholism is a problem among the Irish-American, and in Ireland. But it is a problem among a minority.
  • Presently, Ireland has the largest temperance (anti-alcohol) movement in Europe.
  • Irish alcoholism is similar to Native American alcoholism. That is, take away a peoples’ land, force them to live a marginalized life on the least fertile land, grant menial work only to the women, and the men will turn to alcohol as a diversion.
• One problem is that the Irish in America sought to take ownership of what had been a derogatory characterization.
  • The negative stereotype of the drunken Irish fighter is taken as a mascot by Irish priests that create the University of Notre Dame.
• Many Irish-Americans open bars with Irish themes.
• Even Guinness, an Irish brewery, has joined in the American practice of treating St. Patrick’s Day as a day for drinking.
• In Ireland, St. Patrick’s day is a holy day, that is, like a Sunday, in that Catholics in Ireland are required to go to church.
• Examples of anti-Irish bigotry.
  • “Hooligan”– an Irish last name is a word which means a boorish thug.
  • “Beyond the Pale”– the “Pale” was a small wall which surrounded Dublin. The English mostly lived in Dublin and the “uncivilized Irish” lived outside the wall. The term refers to outrageous or crass behavior.
  • “The Life of Riley”– An Irish last name is referred to someone who lives off some other persons’ labor or resources. Someone who believes they will have great luxury when they acquire wealth.
  • “Donnybrook”– A small town outside Dublin is a word which basically means the same thing as riot or large-scale fight.
  • “Luck of the Irish”– A phrase that no longer has a bigoted meaning had a bigoted origin. It was a phrase about how to make money, one would either have to engage in Protestant hard work or the luck of the Irish. Implies that the Irishman did not work hard for their money.
Confluence of Movements

- Two forces unite to end alcohol consumption.
- Imposition of minority religious practices joins forces with apparent social reform.
- Beer and liquor industries are divided, each trying to save their place in the market.
- The consumption of alcohol is made illegal.
- Women’s suffrage joins with Evangelical beliefs about the universal evil of alcohol to form a “critical mass.”
- Most studies show that about 20% of the population is more susceptible to alcohol addiction than the general population.
- Alcohol abuse during the 19th century was significant.
- Some studies based on tax records suggest that per capita alcohol consumption was as much as six times current standards.
- Psychology was in its infancy and therefore could not counter the claim by Evangelicals that alcoholism was primarily based in personal morality rather than psychological and physiological characteristics or conditions.

The Amendment is Repealed

- Most Americans do not hold the religious view that drinking in moderation is immoral.
- The absence of legal alcohol did not end the abuse of women.
- A majority of Americans break the law, even the president served cocktails from a private stockpile.
- Breaking the law becomes fashionable.
- Organized crime takes over big city liquor.
  - Organized crime thrives delivering illegal alcohol to large metropolitan areas.
  - The Mafia grows 10x once it has a product to market nationally.
  - Rural areas rely on either Canadian alcohol or locally-produced products.
  - Bars thrive in Oswego County and the North Country where Canadian alcohol is transported across Lake Ontario and through a border that only partially patrolled.
  - Normally law-abiding citizens frequent “speakeasies” which were merely unadvertised, clandestine bars.
  - The White House even served liquor during Prohibition, it had been saved from the time prior to the passing of the constitutional amendment.
Governor Franklin Roosevelt of New York runs for president promising to end Prohibition.

Civil Rights

- African-Americans participate in World War II
- Eleanor Roosevelt had advocated for civil right.
- President Truman integrates armed services.
- National recognition of injustices among a minority.
  - It had been almost 100 years since the Civil War was fought and constitutional amendments were passed which were intended to grant former slaves full citizenship.
  - Southern segregationists in the Democratic Party held many key chairmanships in Congress.
  - President Roosevelt did not want to jeopardize his social agenda with a civil rights program.
  - President Truman had lived in an integrated community, Kansas City, Missouri, and had daily interaction with African Americans.
  - Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady, advocated very vocally for the rights of African Americans.
  - Television allows Americans to see on a regular basis the treatment of African Americans in the South.

Self Advocacy

- Most important: Black colleges produce graduates who can effectively self advocate.
- Southern ministers establish organizational structure to which other advocates adhere.
- Men, women and children challenge racism a risk lives in doing so
- Grass roots movement gains national attention in electronic media.
  - Much of the progress by African Americans had been a product of their own labors and advocacy.
  - The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) follows the example of the Abolitionists and forms a movement to promote civil rights based on religious values.

Grass Roots & Electronic Media

- The Little Rock School integration had national attention.
- Martin Luther King, Jr.’s eloquent appeal
- Inherent worth of movement produces a national consensus.
- National consensus translates into legislation
- Progress damaged by the urban riots.
• Americans witness on television European Americans spitting at and verbally abusing African American elementary and high school students.
• The segregated schools of Little Rock, Arkansas were ordered integrated by a federal judge.
• President Eisenhower, not necessarily in favor of integration, but as a former general totally opposed to insubordination and the violation of court orders, sends federal troops to Little Rock to protect the handful of African American students attending integrated public schools there.
• The earliest sources of money donated to Paula Jones to pursue President Clinton in her lawsuit against him, which was dismissed due to lack of merit, came from one of Arkansas’ former segregationists.

**Anti-War Movement**

• Protestors never a majority of 18-25 age group.
• College students articulate, knowledgeable, and eventually organized.
• Institutions overreact.
• National media drawn to conflict.
• Constant presence when combined with images of death and injury change public opinion.
• Seeing the carnage of Vietnam on the daily news would impact upon the general American public.
• The draft force one to go to fight regardless of their views on fighting that specific war.
• World War I & II were both formally-declared wars with few Americans questioning the legitimacy of the cause being fought for.
• The Korean War and the Vietnam War were not based on formal declarations of war as required by the Constitution.
• Student protests are met with extreme force by police.
• It is not clear which side, the police or the students, escalated to a level of violence first. It might depend on each situation.
• Vietnam protestors were called unpatriotic.
• Many opposed to the Vietnam War were not pacifists, only questioned the legitimacy of a war which upon analysis looked like a civil war among two feuding Vietnamese groups.

**Equal rights for women**

• Seen as an outgrowth of women’s suffrage.
• Attempt to equate injustice to women with racial injustice.
American values were changed by the debate even though the Constitution was not change.

Like the civil rights movement, the equal rights movement sought to use the same tactics to promote complete legal parity among the sexes.

No more discrimination in employment, either in hiring or in pay, no discrimination in lending policies.

Conservative successfully block the constitutional amendment in the separate state legislatures.

Excessive rhetoric alienates the average American, though they agree with the underlying principles being promoted.

Gender war waged by the most extreme of the movement’s organizers.

Males respond at the ballot box to the excesses of accusations.

Females are reluctant to follow extremists.

The press focused on the most excessive advocates and ignored the strengths of the fundamental argument which Americans supported.

This is just a sampling of issues.

They lost the battle but nearly won the war.

Women still make much less than men for the same work.

Women are still discriminated against in hiring and promotion.

Women are granted credit on an equal status with men (a victory).

Women are granted equal access to educational institutions (a victory).

Women still encounter prejudice from educators and employers regarding their inherent ability in specific fields.

This is just a sampling of issues

Gay rights

Seeks to replicate the success of civil rights using the same approach.

Political efforts change some public perceptions but face resistance from some religious groups.

Sexual activity can be a values issue whereas skin color or gender are not.

Risky sex can be a characteristic of both heterosexual and homosexual activity.

On June 27, 1969 at a gay bar in New York's Greenwich Village known as the Stonewall Inn, police regularly raided the unlicensed facility as a form of harassing the gay clientele.

In 1969, soliciting for gay sex was a crime so gay men joined these private clubs where they could congregate away from police harassment.
The idea that a club could be raided for operating a bar without a license was legitimate, but there is evidence to suggest that gay bars were being denied licenses as a matter of policy.

The individuals in the bar responded to the raid and the heavy-handed treatment by responding aggressively enough that the event was called a riot.

This is considered by many the birth of the gay rights movement.

Environmentalism

• Most Americans favor protecting the environment.
• Opinions only partially translated into public policy
• Some corporations & Organized interest groups work against environmental policies
• What are reasonable steps to protect the environment?
• Large corporations have been successful in fighting environmental legislation or having regulations written that are toothless.
• A few environmental issues are overstated, that is, the risk is either exaggerated or unclear, but by and large the environment is in peril.
• In most instances profit, not the survival of the business, is what is at risk.
• Businesses are reluctant to spend money, i.e. reduce profits, to find a way to engage in commerce and manufacturing that both permits economic growth and protects the environment.

Abortion

• Strident nature of both sides leave most Americans out of the debate.
• Most Americans favor limited abortion rights.
• Many anti-abortion advocates use the same tactics used by anti-war activists in the 60’s
• Is protesting outside an abortion clinic like protesting outside a draft board?
• The pro-life movement says that life begins at conception.
• This is a religious view, not one necessarily based in science.
• What percentage of fertilized human eggs reach full gestation?
• If it is a human life from fertilization why do none of the religions that promote this view have funerals for miscarriages.
• The pro-choice says the woman is complete control of her body at all times.
• Does the father of the child have any say in whether the fetus is aborted?
• Do parents have a say in when a minor child is pregnant?
• Most Americans believe that a woman has a right to an abortion during the first trimester.
**International economic and labor reform**

- Is the globalization of the economy allowing tremendous economic injustices to thrive in pockets of undemocratic oppression?
- Are corporations exploiting (even nurturing) these pockets of economic & political oppression?
- Shouldn’t economic and social justice be globalized?
- Sending jobs now held by Americans to countries whose labor practices and wages are what America’s was in the 19th century, is that ethical?
- America outlawed child labor almost 100 years ago (there was actually a constitutional amendment which failed to get approval from all the states) but American businesses are sending work to companies that hire children and keep them out of school with all-day long work.

**Will New Anti-War Movement Arise Over Attack of Iraq?**

- How many Americans die
- What Americans die?
- Volunteers verses draftees
- Pilots verses soldiers.
- The cost of waging war
- The cost of gasoline
- This slide was written in January, 2003, before the war began.
- The short answer is “no.” Though a majority of Americans in early 2005 question the legitimacy of the war to some degree.
- The longer answer might be “not yet” depending on how successful America is in establishing a stable government in Iraq and then disengaging, that is, withdrawing from Iraq.
- How many Americans die?– At what number will Americans say “enough”?
- What Americans die?– Drafting college-educated men for Vietnam resulted in a political movement which contributed to the end of that war. These were men who knew how to organize a movement and offer an articulate argument.
- Volunteers verses draftees-- As long as there are no draftees, that is, those there involuntarily, there will not be the same outcry. However, the Bush administration is using National Guard units that are made up of young people who expected to serve only in national emergency or a declared war.
- Pilots verses soldiers.
The cost of waging war—Originally touted as costing only $2 billion to the American taxpayer because Iraqi oil would pay for the cost of reconstruction and administering Iraq, the cost has reached $200 billion with no end in sight.

The cost of gasoline—When will the cost of gasoline either cause Americans to question the war or result in harming the economy?