Life in Pre-Civil War America 1790-1840

Cynthia W. Resor
HEART Grant
Spring 2017
Cover art

“The Country Wedding” 1820
By John Lewis Krimmel (1786-1821) immigrated to America from Germany in 1809. His genre paintings depicted rural life and public gatherings.

• Genre paintings and prints from the past provide a glimpse into manners and lives before the invention of the camera, but these works of art are a combination of realistic, romanticized, imagined, and symbolic elements.

• Genre-painting is one of the five main types of painting
  • history painting, portraiture, genre painting, landscape and still life
  • a painting of scenes depicting average people engaged in daily life as it really happened.
    • Ordinary people are depicted inside their homes or in places where people gather such as markets, inns, taverns, or fairs, usually engaged in common, daily activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>PRESIDENT</th>
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<th>VICE PRESIDENT</th>
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<td>Abigail Adams</td>
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<td>James K. Polk</td>
<td>Sarah Childress Polk</td>
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Main sources for this presentation

• *The Reshaping of Everyday Life 1790-1840*
  • By Jack Larkin (1988)
Life in the Pre-industrial Era

• Imagine you live in the 1500s.
• Imagine
  • Your family
  • How you make a living
  • Your food
  • Your home and daily activities in the home
  • Leisure time
  • Transportation
Bundling

• In 1811, an English dictionary described “bundling” as “a man and woman sleeping in the same bed, he with his small clothes, and she with her petticoats on; an expedient practised in America on a scarcity of beds, where, on such an occasion, husbands and parents frequently permitted travellers to bundle with their wives and daughters. This custom is now abolished.”

• In the late 1700s pregnancy before marriage was frequent. The number of pregnant brides had been rising in America since the late 1600s and peaked in the decades during and after the Revolution. In the 1780s and 1790s, nearly one-third of rural New England brides were pregnant.
Did bundling, as pictured in the movie “The Patriot” (2000) really happen in colonial America? Yes! In 1811, an English dictionary described “bundling” as “a man and woman sleeping in the same bed, he with his small clothes, and she with her petticoats on; an expedient practised in America on a scarcity of beds, where, on such an occasion, husbands and parents frequently permitted travel...
The Pre-Industrial Household

- An economic unit AND a family unit
  - kin and non-kin people;
  - houses, other buildings, and land;
  - the power structure of the family and the roles of each person in the family;
  - the work or business that supported the family.

- Most engaged in agriculture or supported by agriculture

- Roles within the household
  - *Husbandry* and *housewifery*
    - Male and female economic partners

*The Harvesters* (1565) by Pieter Brueghel the Elder (1526/1530–1569)
For most people in early America:

- Little control of:
  - weather and seasons - heat and cold
  - Health and sickness
  - Birth, marriage, death
- Lack of artificial lights at night
  - Houses small and poorly lit
- People dirty, insect-ridden
- Smells
  - Barnyard & stable, tannery and tavern, house and hearth, privy and chamber pot,
- Food & Drink
  - Monotonous
  - Heavy Drinking
  - “rude” or course manners
- Hard physical labor for most
- Violence was common
- Life in early 1800s was local, small-scale and face-to-face
  - Households, neighborhoods and church communities were central to social life
    - Few national institutions or organization to join in early 1800s

Shooting for the Beef, c. 1850 by George Caleb Bingham
1790-1840 – Shifts in American Life

• **Politics**: From patrician leadership of Washington to “log cabin and hard cider” campaign of W. H. Harrison
  - Created political party system
  - Culture of more democratic politics

• **Population**: quadrupled in 50 years

• **Transportation**: National system of roads, rivers, canals before railroad

• **Economy**:
  - In North
    - Industrial / mass production developed
    - First stages of mechanization
  - In South
    - Expansion of Slavery
    - Increasing gap between rich and poor
1790-1840 - Everyday life was changing

• By 1840
  • Changing patterns of childbirth, marriage, death
  • Methods and tools of daily work changing
  • Manners shifting
  • People were eating, dressing and furnishing their house better
  • Washing and bathing more common

• Shift from communal, public life to private life

• More national organizations to join

*The City and the Country Beaux (1840) by Francis William Edmonds (1806 –1863)*
1790-1840 - Changes in American Culture

• Religion & Behavior:
  • Second Great Awakening
    • Evangelical Protestant piety
  • “spirit of reform” to:
    • End slavery
    • Reduce alcohol consumption
    • Change schooling, childrearing
    • Dietary and sexual habits
    • Role of women
    • Care of criminals and insane
  • “Age of Association” - Voluntary associations increased
    • Clubs, Masonic lodges, etc

Entire text at -
http://archive.org/stream/americanantislay1836chil#page/n1/mode/2up
What caused these changes?

Barroom Dancing (c. 1820), John Lewis Krimmel
American People: 1790-1840

• Approx. 4 million in 1790
  • Approx. 17 million in 1840
• Diverse
  • even before great waves of immigration that started in mid-1840s
  • European descent
  • African descent
  • Native Americans
• Mostly were rural
  • 1790 – 1 in 25 lived in place with more than 2,500 people
  • 1840 – 1 in 9 lived in place with more than 2,500 people
• 5 largest cities (all seaport cities) in 1840:
  • Over 90,000 people
  • New York, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Baltimore, Boston
    • For comparison:
      • Richmond KY - population in 2010 - 31,364
      • Lexington KY population in 2010 - 295,803

Election Day in Philadelphia 1815 by John Lewis Krimmel
American Family 1790-1840

• Today:
  • **Family** means people bound by kinship and marriage
  • **Household** means group living together

• In early 1800s:
  • **Family** and **Household** were merged
  • Example – a ‘family” might be married couple, children and employees (journeymen, apprentices, hired girls) that lived and took meals together
  • Family was a unit of kinship
    • AND an economic unit to organize work

*Horace Rockwell (American painter, 1811-1877) Lewis G. Thompson Family 1842-5*
Birthrates 1790-1840

- Households of free Americans crammed with children
  - THEN: average household – 6 people in USA
  - 2 out of 5 people lived in household with 8, 9, 10 or more members
    - 2 or more married couples rarely lived together
    - The “extra” people were lodgers, workers or other kin
      - (widowed parents, unmarried siblings, orphaned children that were kin)
  - Living alone was difficult
    - Too much work for one person
    - Person living alone considered eccentric or crazy
  - In Europe in 1801 – under 5 people
  - NOW: For comparison – 2016
    - average household size: 2.53
    - 28% households are just one person

Historic American Buildings Survey - Creel Cabin, Hodgenville, Larue County, KY
Schooling 1790-1840

- In 1800 – most white children between 5 – 15 spent a few weeks up to a couple of months in school each year
  - Approx. ¾ of white men could read
    - A slightly smaller number could write
    - Fewer women had these skills
  - But most did not read well
    - Houses dark; books expensive
    - Most common books
      - Bibles, hymn books, almanacs, simple school books (primers, math, spelling)
  - School attendance was NOT compulsory
  - New England – schools paid for by local taxes
  - Rest of the nation – paid for by different mixes of private, local government and church money

- 1830s – School reform movement
  - More children went to school (especially more girls) in North
  - Publishing was cheaper – more textbooks for students
  - BUT urban children, southern children, slaves still NOT well educated

printed and sold by
Benjamin Franklin, 1764
Changes in Manners
Etiquette manuals

- Widely printed starting in 1830s
  - 28 etiquette manuals in 1830s
  - 36 new ones in 1840s
  - 38 more in 1850s

- Examples advertised in 1883 newspaper:
  - Martine’s Hand-book of Etiquette
  - Guide to True Politeness
  - The Standard Book of Politeness
  - Genteel Behavior
  - Young American’s Letter Writer
  - Prof Baron’s Complete Instructor in All the Society Dances of America

- Middle-class advisers helped to establish new codes of civility

- New ideas of
  - Individual privacy
  - Personal space
  - Social deference

Richard Allestree’s *Ladies Calling* (1673) published in twelve editions by 1727, and another eight editions by 1737 when republished as *The Whole Duty of a Woman*
Newspapers & National Publications

• ½ of content was advertising
  • Printed state, national, international news
  • Printed speeches by members of Congress
    • Congress did not begin to do this itself until 1824
• Newspapers were partisan
  • represented a political party or faction
• Made representative government meaningful
  • Americans felt likes citizens of a wider nation, not just a local outlook
• By 1830s – prices dropped due to new technology – circulations grew
  • By 1836 – New York dailies selling 60,000 copies a day
• Types of national publications
  • Religious and missionary Bibles, tracts, newspapers, magazines
  • Agriculture journals
  • Literary or scientific magazines
• Book publishing grew also
It is required of each Postmaster to keep an account of Newspapers and Pamphlets received, according to the following form, and to forward it to the Department with his other transcripts as a part of his quarterly account. No account need be kept of Newspapers and Pamphlets Sent; but the account of Newspapers and Pamphlets Received must be kept with great care and accuracy.

**Account of Newspapers and Pamphlets received at the Post Office at Lexington, County of Fayette in the State of Kentucky, from April 1, to July 1, 1829.**

**Note.**—The postage of Newspapers is required to be paid in advance at the commencement of each quarter; and the whole number for the quarter must be entered when the first number in the quarter is received, the same as if all were received at that time.

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Advice on EVERYTHING . . . . . 2 examples

• William Andrus Alcott (1798 -1859)
  • an American educator, educational reformer, physician, and author of 108 books
  • Neighbor and friend of Bronson Alcott
    • Confessions of a School Master 1839
    • The Young Man’s Guide 1834
    • The Young Woman's Guide
    • The Use of Tobacco: Its Physical, Intellectual, and Moral Effects on The Human System 1836[18]
    • Vegetable Diet: As Sanctioned by Medical Men, and by Experience in All Ages 1838
    • Tea And Coffee 1839
    • Art of Good Behavior 1848
    • The Young Housekeeper 1842
    • The Young Mother Or Management Of Children In Regard To Health
    • The Young Mother
    • Familiar letters to young men on various subjects.: Designed as a companion to The young man's guide.[22]
    • Lectures on Life and Health, Or, The Laws and Means of Physical Culture 1853
    • The House I Live In The first Anatomy book for the general public.
    • Forty Years in the Wilderness of Pills and Powders 1859

• Lydia Maria Child (1802 –1880)
  • an American abolitionist, women's rights activist, opponent of American expansionism, Indian rights activist, novelist, journalist and Unitarian.
    • The American Frugal Housewife, a book of kitchen, economy and directions (1829; 33rd edition 1855)
      • Entire text - http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13493/13493-h/13493-h.htm
    • The Mother's Book, an early American instructional book on child rearing, republished in England and Germany (1831)
Before 1800s - “rank-ordered society”

• Before - “rank-ordered society”
  • Hierarchical framework
  • Every level of society had a role, a place
    • Each level had recognizable clothing, deportment, words, gestures, houses, furnishings, food and drink

• Pre-industrial economy prevented movement among social ranks in most cases

• Example – writers in 1800s assumed that refinement varied according to rank
  • Expected people below them to act a particular way
  • Disgusted when people tried to imitate someone above their rank
1800s – Market-oriented class society

- Changes in economy enabled people to move above their traditional rank
- BUT needed to learn the manners of the new rank
- Books, magazines, newspapers:
  - Advised people on the manners of respectable gentility
  - Underlying message – proper manners and social respectability could be purchased and learned
Right: Bad Manners at the Table
The room is meanly furnished and the diners are casually dressed
1. Tips chair
2. Eats with mouth full
3. Feeds a dog
4. Holds knife improperly
5. Engages in violent argument
6. Lounges on the table
7. Brings a cross child to the table
8. Drinks from a saucer
9. Sits in shirt sleeves and puts his feet beside his chair
10. picks teeth with fingers
11. Scratches her head and arises unnecessarily

Left: Gentility in the Dining Room from Hill’s Manual of Social and Business Forms.
Caption: “Ladies and gentlemen dress fashionably and sit in a room of refined furnishings. They are attended by a servant.
From Rudeness and Civility (1990) by John Kasson
“A strong local accent marks you as underbred.”

Approved alternatives were frequently Latinate rather than Anglo-Saxon, abstract rather than sensual and vivid (c. 1883)

“incorrect phrases” are listed 1st below

All-fired, for great or enormous.
Draw the wool over the eyes, for deceive.
Fork over, for pay.
Give in, for yield.
Go through the mill, for acquire experience.
Go under, for succumb or perish.
Goner, for one who is lost.
Hang around, for loiter.
Hard case, for worthless person.
Hopping mad, for very angry
Which way should you say it? “incorrect words” are listed 1st below

Hush up, for be silent.
Kick up a rose, for create a disturbance.
Odd stick, for eccentric person.
Poke fun, for joke or ridicule.
Raise a racket, for make a noise.
Reckon, for think
Run into the ground, for carry to excess.
Scoop in, for inveigle.
Soft solder, for flattery.

Sound on the goose for staunch or true.
Spread eagle, for bombastic.
Stropped, for out of money,
Swap, or exchange.
Take the rag off, for surpass.
Take on, for grieve.
Throw in, for contribute.
Tuckered out, for fatigued.
Wake up the wrong passenger, for make a mistake as to an individual.

• From 1883 manual
• Printed in Rudeness and Civility (1990) by John Kasson
What do you think?

• “established codes of behavior have often served in unacknowledged ways as checks against a fully democratic order and in support of special interests, institutions of privilege, and structures of domination.”

Etiquette Rule?
or Contempt for Other Groups of People?

• “Bite not they bread, but break it; but not with slo[en]ly fingers”
  • 1786 edition of Eleazar Moody’s *School of Good Manners* popular in colonial America

• Ron Clark’s Essential 55 Rules for Classrooms (2004)
  • Rule 29
    • “There are several manners dealing with food that you must follow: I call these my ABC’s of Etiquette.
      • Bread - Always tear off a bite-sized piece to eat. If you are going to use butter, never butter the whole piece of bread; butter the piece you tore off, and eat that before tearing another piece.
Learn more about manners and etiquette . . .

Shameless self promotion
"View on the Erie Canal" by John William Hill, 1830-1832. Watercolor
Who were the “workers” in URBAN Colonial America?
• Over ½ of adult males were **mechanics** – worked with their hands (artisans or laborers)

• usually a small workshop in a city or town (also his home) along with one or 2 journeyman, apprentices, indentured servants or slaves **OR** owned tools but worked for wages

• Difference in working for a wage and working for self
• Difference in an employer and a laborer

• Usually not called “workers” because that usually means they worked for a wage (hourly wage)

• Remember – no large factories or corporations in colonial America
• Small workshops employing 3 or 4 were most common but some were larger
  • Smaller shops often made shoes, furniture, shoe horses, manufactured soap or candles, cooper, other services

• Examples of larger workshops:
  • A New York City printer employed 16
  • Shipyards and ropewalks had 5 – 12 workers
  • Breweries, soap and candle manufacturers, leather tanning, hat making – larger scale
Involuntary laborers

- Indentured servant – served 5 – 7 years
  - 50 – 65% of all white immigrants in American before 1776 were indentured servants
  - 50,000 were convicts

- Slaves
  - By 1770, 500,000 black slaves in colonies
  - approximately 20% of colonial population
  - Some slaves were also artisans / mechanics
Apprentices

• Master craftsman provided a technical education, room, clothing, board for children “bound out” by parents or Overseers of the Poor
• apprentice had to obey master and behave properly
• Usually lasted 7 years; parents could sue to be released if master did not fulfill agreement
• belonged to the master, some ran away
• at end, got “freedom dues” – new suit of clothing, sometimes some of the tools of the trade
• apprenticed girls usually house maids (not taught a trade)
“independence” for the worker

• GOAL of a free, skilled worker was “independence” – the status of master craftsman (owned the business)
  • not hard to achieve in colonial America but got harder around 1760
• Small scale of business made it easy to enter with a small capital
• BUT – hard to acquire great wealth because:
  • many products made within colonial households, not purchased
  • many British imports to compete with
  • shortage of money, high interest rates
  • cheap land drew people out of cities
Work - 1790-1840

- Shift AWAY from the household as the workplace
- Trend TOWARD factories / workplaces away from the home
- Work began to be mechanized
- More cash money in circulation
  - Could be used to buy more goods (and factory goods)
Farm work was changing

• Work on farms was still done by the family/household unit, but oriented toward commerce, profitable crops grown for specific markets
• Many in New England and Middle States moved away from farms to cities and villages
  • Farmland crowded – farms split between many children
• Growing cities demanded farm products
  • Urban population grew 8-fold between 1790 and 1840
  • Farms close to cities became market-driven; grew/sold what cities needed
  • wheat, cheese butter, vegetables livestock for slaughterhouses, hay for horse fodder were needed
  • Farm women made straw & palm-leaf hats for city consumers
  • Farm men made shoes, brooms for city markets
• New mechanized farm implements were invented
  • Horse-powered threshing machines
• “Until 1880s – American farmhouses were a machine for working in” - John R. Stilgoe, landscape historian

Kentucky Farmhouse with ell & outbuildings
William Guyn House, Mundy’s Landing & Pauls Mill Roads, Troy vicinity, Woodford County, KY
Work changed for women

• Farm women quit spinning and weaving when they could purchase factory-made cloth

• By late 1830’s – cook stoves used in middling and Northern villages
  • Better than cooking on hearth/fireplace
  • Stove-top heating surface at waist-height
    • Less bending/lifting
  • More fuel-efficient
    • less firewood chopping and carrying

• 50 cookbooks appeared between 1796 – 1840
  • Kentucky Housewife by Lettice Bryan. 1839
  • American Frugal Housewife by Maria Child, 1838
Mechanized textile production

• After 1790 – Americans adopted and modified English textile factory technologies

• 1793 - cotton gin invented by Eli Whitney

• By 1830s – 100s of large and small water-powered factories for picking, carding, spinning, weaving (mostly in New England)

• 1850's - Sewing machines began to be mass produced (for home use)
  • Made from combination of inventions by Isaac Singer Vs Elias Howe
**cotton gin** (cotton engine): a machine that quickly and easily separates cotton fibers from their seeds, a job formerly performed by hand. The first modern industrial gin, invented by Eli Whitney in 1793.

"First cotton gin" from Harpers Weekly. 1869 illustration depicting event of some 70 years earlier. [http://memory.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3c00000/3c03000/3c03800/3c03801v.jpg](http://memory.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3c00000/3c03000/3c03800/3c03801v.jpg)
Lowell, Mass. Textile Factories

• "Lowell Mill Girls" - female textile workers in Lowell, Massachusetts, in the 19th century.

• Up to ¾ of the workforce in the Lowell textile mills was female.

• 1850s and 1860s - New England textile industry was expanding and unable to recruit enough Yankee women to fill the jobs
  • Many Irish and French Canadian immigrants moved to Lowell to work in the textile mills BUT Yankee women still dominated the workforce until the mid-1880s
  • textile managers recruited Irish workers fleeing Great Irish Famine
  • During the Civil War, many of Lowell's cotton mills closed, unable to acquire bales of raw cotton from the South
  • After war, the textile mills reopened, recruiting French Canadian men and women.
http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/21boott/21boott.htm
The Boott Cotton Mills complex contains mills built from the mid-1830s to the early 20th century, reflecting the early use of waterpower, steam power, and finally electric power.

Photos from visit to Lowell National Park
http://www.nps.gov/lowe/index.htm
BELOW – the mills today
Work - 1840

• By 1840 – work was not easier, hours were not shorter
  • But people worked more calculatingly and less socially
  • Women’s work not lightened, just different
• Factory work
  • Faster work
  • longer hours
  • governed by a clock not the seasons
• Manufacturing and commerce
  • Raised standard of living of some
  • More items for material comfort could be purchased
  • BUT
  • More property-less workers in city and countryside
  • Gap between rich and poor grew
Housing
1790 - 1840

http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1998018518/PP/
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ky0205.photos.071045p/
Log cabin or Log home?

- **Log cabin** - timbers were left round
  - Quicker to build
  - Spaces between the logs had to be filled or “chinked” with clay or other material, a difficult task between round logs.
  - Cabins generally had only one room and were considered temporary shelters.

- **Log home** - the logs were hand-hewn into a square shape and then placed one on top of another to make a solid wooden wall.
  - Came from early Germanic settlers that first settled in the heavily wooded areas of Pennsylvania.
    - As Germans moved west, this building tradition was adopted by Scotch-Irish and English pioneers.
  - Generally had two rooms, side by side, with either a central chimney, a chimney at one or both ends.
  - Some incorporated a center hall, often called a dogtrot.
  - Most were one story with an attic or loft space.
  - Families often built and lived in long houses for two generations or more.

- The distinction between log cabin and log houses is often lost in modern texts
  - Was often not recognized by contemporaries unfamiliar with the frontier.
Materials

• In the 1700s, as pioneer families in Kentucky used solid logs.

• After dwellings were constructed, the settlers quickly turned to clearing land so that crops could be planted.

• A hard worker, with an ax, might clear three acres of land during a winter for farming.

• Often trees were “girdled” and left to die
  • **Girdling** removing a strip of bark around the trunk of a tree, causing the tree to die. As the leaves fell from the dead tree, sunlight allowed crops to be planted below them. Over the years, roots and stumps were removed.
“Until 1880s – American farmhouses were a machine for working in”

John R. Stilgoe
Functions of homes in past

• “hall” used for
  • Eating
  • indoor work
  • sitting
  • sleeping for children and visitors
  • cooking if no separate kitchen

• “parlor” or “chamber” - the “best” room
  • Parents’ bed
  • Entertaining of formal occasions
  • Kept best belongings here

• By 1840
  • More “bedrooms”; less communal sleeping
  • More factory-made goods
    • Factory-made chairs, upholstered furniture, carpets, and textiles for curtains, printed pictures for the walls, clocks, and dishes
    • More rooms for just one purpose
      • Dining room, separate storage rooms, bathrooms

The Pension Claim Agent by Eastman Johnson 1867
Functions of the modern HOME

• Home & Garden TV
  – Dream house
  – Spa-like, Retreat
  – Home office
  – Family activities
  – Relax, home theatre, game room
  – Entertainment, entertaining
  – “man cave”, space for hobbies
  – Luxury – granite countertops, stainless steel appliances
  – Multiple bathrooms
  – Dream house
  – More space, STORAGE
  – Landscaping, outdoor rooms, outdoor kitchens, pools
  – Garages
The function of “home” has changed

**Pre-Industrial Home**
- Fewer rooms with multiple purposes
- Where work of family took place
- “Vernacular” housing
  - Traditional styles fit to local climate/needs
  - Often built by owner
  - Used local materials

**Modern Home**
- More rooms with special purpose
- Where family “relaxes”
- Nationwide styles
  - Similar styles nation-wide
  - Built by professional
  - Materials from all over world
Virginia Hall and Parlor

- Traditional style from England
- One story
  - or one story with attic
- As small as 16 X 20 ft
- Often had 2 front doors
- A shed, porch or ell might be added
- Very common in southeastern US
- Easy to make from logs
I - house

- Traditional style from England
- 2 stories
- Often had 2 front doors
  - Shaker used this style at Pleasant Hill, KY
- A shed, porch or ell might be added
- More common in deep South
New forms of housing in KY

- late 1700s/early 1800s in KY - shift from hewn log homes to framed and wood lumber sheathed housed

- Why?
  - availability of nails
    - Log construction required few nails, an expensive manufactured product in newly settled areas
    - 1788 - Nails began to be manufactured in Kentucky
  - availability of finished lumber produced by sawmills
    - By 1820 in Kentucky, sawmills had been built and began to produce finished board lumber.
kitchen wing – “ell”

- By 1860 – often larger than main house
- Light and air on 3 sides
- 1st kitchen, then
  - Pantry
  - Wood room
  - Washroom with stove / boiler
    - washing & dying
    - butchering
  - Chicken houses, pigsty, other buildings near

George Judy Farm, House, County Route 9, Rough Run vicinity, Grant County, WV
Craft Farm, House, 1912 North Brown Road, Lawrenceville, Gwinnett County, GA
William Guyn House, Mundy's Landing & Pauls Mill Roads, Troy vicinity, Woodford County, KY
Mid 1800s – shift in housing styles

• Why the shift?
  • Balloon Framing
  • Railroad
  • Mass printing technology
New system – “Balloon framing”

- Old System – Post and Beam
  - massive timbers limited home builders to simple square floor plans.

- Balloon framing first appeared in the 1830s in Chicago and quickly spread
  - made possible only by mass-produced, cheap iron nails and affordable standardized lumber produced by sawmills.
  - Lightweight 2x4” inch boards from sawmills can quickly be nailed together by one or two carpenters to form the frame of the house.
  - The walls are then covered with sawmill finished planks.

- wide variety of architectural features that imitated the styles of much more expensive mansions possible
  - Dormers, bays, wings & oddly shaped front porches could be added

- essentially the same method that is used for most homebuilding today
New ideas for housing before the Civil War

• Carpenter’s Handbooks
• Style or “pattern” books
• Mail-order building plans

From Cottage Residences, 1842 by Andrew Jackson Downing
https://archive.org/details/cottageresidence00downrich
Impact of Railroad

• Before the railroad, home builders had to depend upon local materials.
  • By 1900, the traditional forms for building using local materials survived only in areas isolated from rail service.
  • Vernacular homes - log, sod or heavy hewn timbers were quickly abandoned

• railroad transported:
  • standardized building supplies
    • lumber and nails
    • catalog ordered fixtures and fittings
    • mass produced house plan publications across the nation
    • Even WHOLE house kits

• 1851 - first railroad in Kentucky, running from Lexington to Frankfort to Louisville
  • By 1860, Kentucky about nearly 600 miles of track

Stephenson’s Rocket 1829 (English)
Railroad also changed the geography of a town.
New printing technology

- lowered the prices of printed materials
- After Civil War, mass-printed home pattern books and catalogs of house plans that could be ordered by mail
- Late 1800s, mass-circulation magazines, such as *Ladies Home Journal*, featured homes and offered to sell blueprints by mail.

- By early 20th century - entire home kit to be assembled anywhere served by a railroad.
  - The best-known suppliers of mail order homes were the Sears, Roebuck and Company and Montgomery Ward & Company.
  - Sears sold more than 41,2000 catalog homes between 1908 and 1929
Mass Publishing Technology

- Carpenter’s Handbooks
- Style or “pattern” books
- Mail-order building plans
- Prefabricated home catalogs

- Teacher Resource - Dover Publications – reprints of “pattern” books
Stylish Housing for Everyone – Mail Order Houses – 1900-1930

- Catalysts:
  - Rural Free Delivery Act, 1896 – catalogues
  - Population boom - 50% increase from 1890 – 1910
  - Better tools / factories to make houses
  - Railroad delivery
  - Loans for building homes, owning homes

Sears Model 125 – 1908 – 1917

6 bedrooms
No bathroom
The Travel Revolution
1790-1840

Jolly Flatboatmen, 1846,
George Caleb Bingham
Americans were very mobile

• In cities, fewer than ½ of households stayed in same place from 1 census to the next

• Thousands moved west

• Itinerants
  • Peddlers, showmen, tinkers (tinsmith, who mended household utensils), preachers (especially Methodists)
  • Teamsters - wagon drivers and Stage-drivers
  • Drovers - collected and herded livestock to market
  • Singing masters dancing teachers, portrait painters, handwriting instructors, silhouette cutters, phrenologists
  • Traveling shows: circuses, exhibitions
    • P. T. Barnum began his itinerant showman career in 1836
    • I recommend one of the BEST PBS American Experience episodes
      • Barnum's Big Top

• Entire chapter about everyday realities of travel in *The Reshaping of Everyday Life 1790-1840* by Jack Larkin
New Technology

• Road -building
• Canals
• Steamboat
• Railroad

• Boston to New York (215 miles)
  • 1786 – 4-5 days, depending on weather
  • 1830 – stagecoach lines made trip in 1 ½ days
  • 1840 – journey by railroad took ½ day
  • 2011 – can drive in car in 4 ½ hours
American Notes: Travels in America, 1750-1920

- American Notes: Travels in America, 1750-1920 comprises 253 published narratives by Americans and foreign visitors recounting their travels in the colonies and the United States and their observations and opinions about American peoples, places, and society from about 1750 to 1920. Also included is the thirty-two-volume set of manuscript sources entitled Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, published between 1904 and 1907 after diligent compilation by the distinguished historian and secretary of the Wisconsin Historical Society Reuben Gold Thwaites. Although many of the authors represented in American Notes are not widely known, the collection includes works by major figures such as Matthew Arnold, Fredrika Bremer, William Cullen Bryant, François-René de Chateaubriand, William Cobbett, James Fenimore Cooper, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Charles Dickens, Washington Irving, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, Sir Charles Lyell, William Lyon Mackenzie, André Michaux, Thomas Nuttall, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Robert Louis Stevenson. The narratives in American Notes therefore range from the unjustly neglected to the justly famous, and from classics of the genre to undiscovered gems. Together, they build a mosaic portrait of a young nation.

- http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/lhtnhtml/
New methods of quicker, faster travel led to “vacations”

Read more about the history of vacation in this book . . . .

Shameless self promotion
Age of Voluntary Associations
Evangelical Benevolent Associations

• Interdenominational
• Women could participate
• Examples:
  • American Bible Society
  • American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
  • American Home Missionary Society
  • Peace Society
  • American Sunday School Union
  • Tract Society
  • Society for the Promotion of Theological Education at the Wet
  • Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor
  • American Seamen’s Friend Society
  • Protestant Half Orphan Society
  • Ladies’ Association for the Benefit of Gentlewomen of Good Family
  • Addressed problem of Prostitution
    • The Seventh Commandment Society (do not commit adultery)
    • Society for Returning Young Women to Their Friends in the Country

From Story of the American Bible Society, 1920
by American Bible Society
https://archive.org/details/storyofamericanb00amer
“Evangelical United Front”

• Also called “the Benevolent Empire”
• Inspired by religious revivalism
  • Embraced by all Protestant groups
    • Against Catholics and Unitarians
• “Reform the world by example, you act generously and wisely”
  • Personal discipline could lead people to religious redemption
• Causes:
  • Abolition, temperance, missionary work
  • Reform all sorts of fallen people, places
• Unique in this period because of their national (and international) scale
  • Larger, more money involved than largest gov. bureaucracy- the Post Office
Temperance

- 1825 - average American (over 15) drank 7 gallons of alcohol a year
  - Mostly whiskey and hard cider

- The Temperance Crusade begins
  - Leader in the movement - Lyman Beecher
    - Father of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Catherine Beecher
  - Sermons
  - Reformed alcoholics on national speaking tours
  - Published temperance tracts
  - Temperance plays
  - Drove “water wagons” through town
  - Total abstinence became more popular
    - Beecher endorsed abstinence in series of sermons 1825
    - “teetotaler” – T after name if person pledged total abstinence

- American Temperance Society – founded in 1826 in Boston
  - One of many new national organization
  - In 5 years - 2,220 local chapters in the U.S. with 170,000 members who had taken a pledge to abstain from drinking distilled beverages.
  - In 10 years - over 8,000 local groups and more than 1,500,000 members who had taken the pledge.

- After 1830 – drinking rates begin to decline
- By late 1840s - average American (over 15) drank 1.8 gallons of alcohol a year
• 2011 - Americans have one of the lowest rates of drinking in the developed world
  • 2011 – Americans drink less than 2 gallons per year
    • Mostly beer and wine
    • 61.2 % of American adults currently drink alcohol
    • 24.6 % are lifetime abstainers
    • 14.3 % of Americans call themselves former drinkers (2005-2007)
• Higher income people drink more
  • Alcohol consumption increased steadily alongside education, with holders of masters, doctorate, or medical degrees far more likely to drink (73.9%) than individuals who did not graduate from high school (44.3 %).
  • The richest Americans also were much more likely to drink than those living below poverty level.
• Common Place - On-line journal of everyday life
  • http://www.common-place.org/previous.shtml
  • For scholars, museum curators, teachers, hobbyists, and just about anyone interested in American history before 1900