

# **Chapter Summaries American Pageant 12th edition**

## **Chapters 21-42**

### **Chapter 21- The Furnace of Civil War**

The Union defeat at Bull Run ended Northern complacency about a quick victory. George McClellan and other early Union generals proved unable to defeat the tactically brilliant Confederate armies under Lee. The Union naval blockade put a slow but devastating economic noose around the South.

The political and diplomatic dimensions of the war quickly became critical. In order to retain the border states, Lincoln first de-emphasized any intention to destroy slavery. But the Battle of Antietam in 1862 enabled Lincoln to prevent foreign intervention and turn the struggle into a war against slavery. Blacks and abolitionists joined enthusiastically in a war for emancipation, but white resentment in part of the North created political problems for Lincoln.

The Union victories at Vicksburg in the West and Gettysburg in the East finally turned the military tide against the South. Southern resistance remained strong, but the Union victories at Atlanta and Mobile assured Lincoln's success in the election of 1864 and ended the last Confederate hopes. The war ended the issues of disunion and slavery, but at a tremendous cost to both North and South.

### **Chapter 22 - The Ordeal of Reconstruction**

With the Civil War over, the nation faced the difficult problems of rebuilding the South, assisting the freed slaves, reintegrating the Southern states into the Union, and deciding who would direct the Reconstruction process.

The South was economically devastated and socially revolutionized by emancipation. As slaveowners reluctantly confronted the end of slave labor, blacks took their first steps in freedom. Black churches and freedmen's schools helped the former slaves begin to shape their own destiny.

The new President Andrew Johnson was politically inept and personally contentious. His attempt to implement a moderate plan of Reconstruction, along the lines originally suggested by Lincoln, fell victim to Southern whites' severe treatment of blacks and his own political blunders.

Republicans imposed harsh military Reconstruction on the South after their gains in the 1866 congressional elections: The Southern states reentered the Union with new radical governments, which rested partly on the newly enfranchised blacks, but also had support from some sectors of southern society. These regimes were sometimes corrupt but also implemented important

reforms. The divisions between moderate and radical Republicans meant that Reconstruction's aims were often limited and confused, despite the important Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

Embittered whites hated the radical governments and mobilized reactionary terrorist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan to restore white supremacy. Congress impeached Johnson but failed narrowly to convict him. In the end, the poorly conceived Reconstruction policy failed disastrously.

## **Chapter 23 - Political Paralysis in the Gilded Age**

After the soaring ideals and tremendous sacrifices of the Civil War, the post-Civil War era was generally one of disillusionment. Politicians from the White House to the courthouse were often surrounded by corruption and scandal, while the actual problems afflicting industrializing America festered beneath the surface.

The popular war hero Grant was a poor politician and his administration was rife with corruption. Despite occasional futile reform efforts, politics in the Gilded Age was monopolized by the two patronage-fattened parties, which competed vigorously for spoils while essentially agreeing on most national policies. Cultural differences, different constituencies, and deeply felt local issues fueled intense party competition and unprecedented voter participation. Periodic complaints by "Mugwump" reformers and "soft-money" advocates failed to make much of a dent on politics.

The deadlocked contested 1876 election led to the sectional Compromise of 1877, which put an end to Reconstruction. An oppressive system of tenant farming and racial supremacy and segregation was thereafter fastened on the South, enforced by sometimes lethal violence. Racial prejudice against Chinese immigrants was also linked with labor unrest in the 1870s and 1880s.

Garfield's assassination by a disappointed office seeker spurred the beginnings of civil-service reform, which made politics more dependent on big business. Cleveland, the first Democratic president since the Civil War, made a lower tariff the first real issue in national politics for some time. But his mild reform efforts were eclipsed by a major economic depression that began in 1893, a crisis that deepened the growing outcry from suffering farmers and workers against a government and economic system that seemed biased toward big business and the wealthy.

## **Chapter 24 - Industry Comes of Age**

Aided by government subsidies and loans, the first transcontinental rail line was completed in 1869, soon followed by others. This rail network opened vast new markets and prompted industrial growth. The power and corruption of the railroads led to public demands for regulation, which was only minimally begun. .

New technology and forms of business organization led to the growth of huge corporate trusts. Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller led the way in the steel and oil industries. Initially, the oil industry supplied kerosene for lamps; it eventually expanded by providing gasoline to fuel automobiles. Cheap steel transformed industries from construction to rail building, and the powerful railroads dominated the economy and reshaped American society.

The benefits of industrialization were unevenly distributed. The South remained in underdeveloped dependence, while the industrial working class struggled at the bottom of the growing class divisions of American society. Increasingly transformed from independent producers and farmers to dependent wage earners, America's workers became vulnerable to illness, industrial accidents, and unemployment.

Workers' attempts at labor organization were generally ineffective. The Knights of Labor disappeared after the Haymarket bombing. Gompers founded the AF of L to organize skilled craft laborers but ignored most industrial workers, women, and blacks.

## **Chapter 25 - America Moves to the City**

The United States moved from the country to the city in the post-Civil War decades. Mushrooming urban development was exciting but also created severe social problems, including overcrowding and slums.

After the 1880s the cities were flooded with the New Immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. With their strange customs and non-Protestant religions, the newcomers sometimes met with nativist hostility and discrimination.

Religion had to adjust to social and cultural changes. Roman Catholicism and Judaism gained strength, while conflicts over evolution and biblical interpretation divided Protestant churches.

American education expanded rapidly, especially at the secondary and graduate levels. Blacks and immigrants tried, with limited success, to use education as a path to upward mobility.

Significant conflicts over moral values, especially relating to sexuality and the role of women, began to appear. The new urban environment provided expanded opportunities for women but also created difficulties for the family. Families grew more isolated from society, the divorce rate rose, and average family size shrank.

American literature and art reflected a new realism, while popular amusement became a big business.

## **Chapter 26 - The Great West and the Agricultural Revolution**

At the close of the Civil War, the Great Plains and Mountain West were still occupied by Indians who hunted buffalo on horseback and fiercely resisted white encroachment on their land and way of life. But the whites' railroads, mining, and livestock broke up Indian territory, while diseases undercut their strength and numbers. A cycle of environmental destruction and intertribal warfare eventually overcame Indian resistance and soon threatened Native Americans' very existence. The federal government combined a misconceived "treaty" program with intermittent warfare to force the Indians onto largely barren reservations.

Attempting to coerce Indians into adopting white ways, the government passed the Dawes Act, which eliminated tribal ownership of land, while often insensitive "humanitarians" created a network of Indian boarding schools that further assaulted traditional culture. .

The mining and cattle frontiers created colorful chapters in western history. Farmers carried out the final phase of settlement, lured by free homesteads, railroads, and irrigation. The census declared the end of the frontier in 1890, concluding a formative phase of American history. The frontier was less of a "safety valve" than many believed, but the growth of cities actually made the West the most urbanized region of the United States by the 1890s.

Beginning in the 1870s, farmers began pushing into the treeless prairies beyond the 100th meridian, using techniques of dry farming that gradually contributed to soil loss. Irrigation projects, later financed by the federal government, allowed specialized farming in many areas of the arid West, including California. The "closing" of the frontier in 1890 signified the end of traditional westward expansion, but the Great West remained a unique social and environmental region.

As the farmers opened vast new lands, agriculture was becoming a mechanized business dependent on specialized production and international markets. Once declining prices and other woes doomed the farmers to permanent debt and dependency, they began to protest their lot, first through the Grange and then through the Farmers' Alliances, the prelude to the People's (Populist) party.

The major depression of the 1890s accelerated farmer and labor strikes and unrest, leading to a growing sense of class conflict. In 1896 pro-silverite William Jennings Bryan captured the Democratic Party's nomination, and led a fervent campaign against the "goldbug" Republicans and their candidate William McKinley. McKinley's success in winning urban workers away from Bryan proved a turning point in American politics, signaling the triumph of the city, the middle class, and a new party system that turned away from monetary issues and put the Republicans in the political driver's seat for two generations.

## **Chapter 27 - The Path of Empire**

Various developments provoked the previously isolated United States to turn its attention overseas in the 1890s. Among the stimuli for the new imperialism were the desire for new

economic markets, the sensationalistic appeals of the "yellow press," missionary fervor, Darwinist ideology, great-power rivalry, and naval competition.

Strong American intervention in the Venezuelan boundary dispute of 1895-1896 demonstrated an aggressive new assertion of the Monroe Doctrine and led to a new British willingness to accept American domination in the Western Hemisphere. Longtime American involvement in Hawaii climaxed in 1893 in a revolution against native rule by white American planters. President Cleveland temporarily refused to annex the islands, but the question of incorporating Hawaii into the United States triggered the first full-fledged imperialistic debate in American history.

The "splendid little" Spanish-American War began in 1898 over American outrage about Spanish oppression of Cuba. American support for the Cuban rebellion had been whipped up into intense popular fervor by the "yellow press." After the mysterious Maine explosion in February 1898, this public passion pushed a reluctant President McKinley into war, even though Spain was ready to concede on the major issues.

An astounding first development of the war was Admiral Dewey's naval victory in May 1898 in the rich Spanish islands of the Philippines in East Asia. Then in August, American troops, assisted by Filipino rebels, captured the Philippine city of Manila in another dramatic victory. Despite mass confusion, American forces also easily and quickly overwhelmed the Spanish in Cuba and Puerto Rico.

0 After a long and bitter national debate over the wisdom and justice of American imperialism, which ended in a narrow pro-imperialist victory in the Senate, the United States took over the Philippines and Puerto Rico as colonial possessions. Regardless of serious doubts about imperialism, the United States had strongly asserted itself as a proud new international power.

## **Chapter 28 - America on the World Stage**

America's decision to take the Philippines aroused violent resistance from the Filipinos, who had expected independence. The brutal war that ensued was longer and costlier than the Spanish-American conflict.

Imperialistic competition in China deepened American involvement in Asia. Hay's Open Door policy helped prevent the great powers from dismembering China. The United States joined the international expedition to suppress the Boxer Rebellion.

Theodore Roosevelt brought a new energy and assertiveness to American foreign policy. When his plans to build a canal in Panama were frustrated by the Colombian Senate, he helped promote a Panamanian independence movement that enabled the canal to be built. He also altered the Monroe Doctrine by adding a "Roosevelt Corollary" that declared an American right to intervene in South America.

Roosevelt negotiated an end to the Russo-Japanese War but angered both parties in the process. Several incidents showed that the United States and Japan were now competitors in East Asia.

## **Chapter 29 - Progressivism and the Republican Roosevelt**

The progressive movement of the early twentieth century became the greatest reform crusade since abolitionism. Inaugurated by Populists, socialists, social gospelers, female reformers, and muckraking journalists, progressivism attempted to use governmental power to correct the many social and economic problems associated with industrialization.

Progressivism began at the city and state level, and first focused on political reforms before turning to correct a host of social and economic evils. Women played a particularly important role in galvanizing progressive social concern. Seeing involvement in such issues as reforming child labor, poor tenement housing, and consumer causes as a wider extension of their traditional roles as wives and mothers, female activists brought significant changes in both law and public attitudes in these areas.

At the national level, Roosevelt's Square Deal used the federal government as an agent of the public interest in the conflicts between labor and the corporate trusts. Rooseveltian progressivism also acted on behalf of consumer and environmental concerns. Conservatism became an important public crusade under Roosevelt, although sharp disagreements divided "preservationists" from those who favored the "multiple use" of nature. The federal emphasis on "rational use" of public resources generally worked to benefit large enterprises, and to inhibit action by the smaller users.

Roosevelt personally selected Taft as his political successor, expecting him to carry out "my policies." But Taft proved to be a poor politician who was captured by the conservative Republican Old Guard and rapidly lost public support. The conflict between Taft and pro-Roosevelt progressives finally split the Republican Party, with Roosevelt leading a third-party crusade in the 1912 election.

## **Chapter 30 - Wilsonian Progressivism at Home and Abroad**

Wilson and his New Freedom defeated Roosevelt and his New Nationalism in a contest over alternative forms of progressivism. Eloquent, idealistic former professor Wilson successfully carried out a broad progressive economic reform of the tariff, finances, and the trusts. He also achieved some social reforms that benefited the working classes, but not blacks.

Wilson's attempt to implement progressive moral goals in foreign policy was less successful, as he stumbled into military involvements in the Caribbean and revolutionary Mexico. The outbreak of World War I in Europe also brought the threat of American involvement, especially from German submarine warfare.

Wilson temporarily avoided war by extracting the precarious Sussex pledge from Germany. His antiwar campaign of 1916 narrowly won him reelection over the still-quarreling Republicans.

## **Chapter 31 - The War to End War**

Germany's declaration of unlimited submarine warfare, supplemented by the Zimmerman note proposing an alliance with Mexico, finally caused the United States to declare war. Wilson aroused the country to patriotic heights by making the war an idealistic crusade for democracy and permanent peace based on his Fourteen Points.

Wartime propaganda stirred voluntary commitment to the war effort, but at the cost of suppressing dissent. Voluntary efforts also worked wonders in organizing industry, producing food, and financing the war. Labor, including women, made substantial wartime gains. The beginnings of black migration to northern cities led to racial tensions and riots.

America's soldiers took nearly a year to arrive in Europe, and they fought in only two major battles at the end of the war. America's main contribution to the Allied victory was to provide supplies, personnel, and improved morale. Wilson's immense prestige created high expectations for an idealistic peace, but his own political blunders and the stubborn opposition of European statesmen forced him to compromise his lofty aims.

As Lodge stalled the treaty, Wilson tried to rouse the country on behalf of his cherished League, but his own physical collapse and refusal to compromise killed the treaty and the League. Republican isolationists effectively turned Harding's victory in 1920 into a death sentence for the League.

## **Chapter 32 - American Life in the "Roaring Twenties"**

After the crusading idealism of World War I, America turned inward and became hostile to anything foreign or different. Radicals were targeted in the red scare and the Sacco-Vanzetti case, while the resurgent Ku Klux Klan joined other forces in bringing about pronounced restrictions on further immigration. Sharp cultural conflicts occurred over the prohibition experiment and evolution.

A new mass-consumption economy fueled the spectacular prosperity of the 1920s. The automobile industry, led by Henry Ford, transformed the economy and altered American lifestyles.

The pervasive media of radio and film altered popular culture and values. Birth control and Freudian psychology overturned traditional sexual standards, especially for women. Young literary rebels, many originally from the Midwest, scorned genteel New England and small-town

culture and searched for new values as far away as Europe. The stock-market boom symbolized the free-wheeling spirit of the decade.

### **Chapter 33 - The Politics of Boom and Bust**

The Republican governments of the 1920s carried out active, probusiness policies while undermining much of the progressive legacy by neglect. The Washington Naval Conference indicated America's desire to withdraw from international involvements. Sky-high tariffs protected America's booming industry but caused severe economic troubles elsewhere in the world.

As the Harding scandals broke, the puritanical Calvin Coolidge replaced his morally easygoing predecessor. Feuding Democrats and La Follette progressives fell easy victims to Republican prosperity.

American demands for strict repayment of war debts created international economic difficulties. The Dawes plan provided temporary relief, but the Hawley-Smoot Tariff proved devastating to international trade.

The stock-market crash of 1929 brought a sudden end to prosperity and plunged America into a horrible depression. Herbert Hoover's reputation collapsed as he failed to relieve national suffering, although he did make unprecedented but limited efforts to revive the economy through federal assistance.

### **Chapter 34 - The Great Depression and the New Deal**

Confident, aristocratic Roosevelt swept into office with an urgent mandate to cope with the depression emergency. His bank holiday and frantic Hundred Days lifted spirits and created a host of new agencies to provide for relief to the unemployed, economic recovery, and permanent reform of the system.

Roosevelt's programs put millions of the unemployed back on the job through federal action. As popular demagogues like Huey Long and Father Charles Coughlin increased their appeal to the suffering population, Roosevelt developed sweeping programs to reorganize and reform American history, labor, and agriculture. The TVA, Social Security, and the Wagner Act brought far-reaching changes that especially benefited the economically disadvantaged.

Conservatives furiously denounced the New Deal, but Roosevelt formed a powerful coalition of urbanites, labor, "new immigrants," blacks, and the South that swept him to victory in 1936.

Roosevelt's Court-packing plan failed, but the Court finally began approving New Deal legislation. The later New Deal encountered mounting conservative opposition and the stubborn



persistence of unemployment. Although the New Deal was highly controversial, it saved America from extreme rightwing or left-wing dictatorship.

## **Chapter 35 - Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Shadow of War**

Roosevelt's early foreign policies, such as wrecking the London economic conference and establishing the Good Neighbor policy in Latin America, were governed by concern for domestic recovery and reflected America's desire for a less active role in the world. America virtually withdrew from all European affairs, and promised independence to the Philippines as an attempt to avoid Asian commitments.

Depression-spawned chaos in Europe and Asia strengthened the isolationist impulse, as Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts designed to prevent America from being drawn into foreign wars. The United States adhered to the policy for a time, despite the aggression of Italy, Germany, and Japan. But after the outbreak of World War II in Europe, Roosevelt began to provide some aid to the Allies.

After the fall of France, Roosevelt gave greater assistance to desperate Britain in the destroyers-forbases deal and in lend-lease. Still-powerful isolationists protested these measures, but Wendell Willkie refrained from attacking Roosevelt's foreign policy in the 1940 campaign.

Roosevelt and Winston Churchill issued the Atlantic Charter, and by the summer of 1941, the United States was fighting an undeclared naval war with Germany in the North Atlantic. After negotiations with Japan failed, the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor plunged the United States into World War II.

## **Chapter 36 - America in World War II**

America was wounded but roused to national unity by Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt settled on a fundamental strategy of dealing with Hitler first, while doing just enough in the Pacific to block the Japanese advance.

With the ugly exception of the Japanese-American concentration camps, World War II proceeded in the United States without the fanaticism and violations of civil liberties that occurred in World War I. The economy was effectively mobilized, using new sources of labor such as women and Mexican braceros. Numerous African-Americans and Indians also left their traditional rural homelands and migrated to war-industry jobs in the cities of the North and West. The war brought full employment and prosperity, as well as enduring social changes, as millions of Americans were uprooted and thrown together in the military and in new communities across the country. Unlike European and Asian nations, however the United-States experienced relatively little economic and social devastation from the war.

The tide of Japanese conquest was stemmed at the Battles of Midway and the Coral Sea, and American forces then began a slow strategy of "island hopping" toward Tokyo. Allied troops first invaded North Africa and Italy in 1942-1943, providing a small, compromise "second front" that attempted to appease the badly weakened Soviet Union as well as the anxious British. The real second front came in June 1944 with the D-Day invasion of France. The Allies moved rapidly across France, but faced a setback in the Battle of the Bulge in the Low Countries.

Meanwhile, American capture of the Marianas Islands established the basis for extensive bombing of the Japanese home islands. Roosevelt won a fourth term as Allied troops entered Germany and finally met the Russians, bringing an end to Hitler's rule in May 1945. After a last round of brutal warfare on Okinawa and Iwo Jima, the dropping of two atomic bombs ended the war against Japan in August 1945.

## **Chapter 37 - The Cold War Begins**

In the immediate postwar years there were widespread fears of a return to depression. But fueled by cheap energy, increased worker productivity, and government programs like the GI Bill of Rights, the economy began a spectacular expansion that lasted from 1950 to 1970. This burst of affluence transformed American industry and society, and particularly drew more women into the workforce.

Footloose Americans migrated to the Sunbelts of the South and West, and to the growing suburbs, leaving the northeastern cities with poorer populations. Families grew rapidly, as the "baby boom" created a population bulge that would last for decades.

The Yalta agreement near the end of World War II left major issues undecided and created controversy over postwar relations with the Soviet Union. With feisty Truman in the White House, the two new superpowers soon found themselves at odds over Eastern Europe, Germany, and the Middle East.

The Truman Doctrine announced military aid and an ideological crusade against international communism. The Marshall Plan provided economic assistance to starving and communist-threatened Europe, which soon joined the United States in the NATO military alliance.

The Cold War and revelations of spying aroused deep fears of communist subversion at home that culminated in McCarthy's witch-hunting. Fear of communist advances abroad and social change at home generated national and local assaults on many people perceived to be "different." Issues of the Cold War and civil rights fractured the Democratic Party three ways in 1948, but a gutsy Truman campaign overcame the divisions to win a triumphant underdog victory.

The Communist Chinese won a civil war against the Nationalists. North Korea invaded South Korea, and the Americans and Chinese joined in fighting the seesaw war to a bloody stalemate. MacArthur's insubordination and threats to expand the war to China led Truman to fire him.

## **Chapter 38 - The Eisenhower Era**

Using the new medium of television to enhance his great popularity, grandfatherly "Ike" was ideally suited to soothe an America badly shaken by the Cold War and Korea. Eisenhower was slow to go after Joseph McCarthy, but the demagogue's bubble finally burst. Eisenhower also reacted cautiously to the beginnings of the civil rights movement but sent troops to Little Rock to enforce court orders. While his domestic policies were moderately conservative, they left most of the New Deal in place.

Despite John Dulles's tough talk, Eisenhower's foreign policies were also generally cautious. He avoided military involvement in Vietnam, although aiding Diem, and pressured Britain, France, and Israel to resolve the Suez crisis. .

He also refused to intervene in the Hungarian revolt and sought negotiations to thaw the frigid Cold War. Dealing with Nikita Khrushchev proved difficult, as Sputnik, the Berlin Crisis, the U-2 incident, and Fidel Castro's Cuban revolution all kept Cold War tensions high. In a tight election, Senator John Kennedy defeated Eisenhower's vice president, Richard Nixon, by calling for the country to "get moving again" by more vigorously countering the Soviets.

American society grew ever more prosperous in the Eisenhower era, as science, technology, and the Cold War fueled burgeoning new industries like electronics and aviation. Women joined the movement into the increasingly white-collar workforce, and chafed at widespread restrictions they faced.

A new consumer culture, centered around television, fostered a new ethic of leisure and enjoyment, including more open expressions of sexuality in popular entertainment. Intellectuals and artists' criticized the focus on private affluence rather than the public good. Jewish, African-American, and southern writers had a striking new impact on American culture.

## **Chapter 39 - The Stormy Sixties**

Kennedy's New Frontier initiatives bogged down in congressional stalemate. Cold War confrontations over Berlin and Russian missiles in Cuba created threats of war. Countering Third World communism through flexible response led the administration into dangerous involvement in Vietnam and elsewhere.

Johnson succeeded Kennedy and overwhelmingly defeated Goldwater. The black movement for integration and voting rights won great victories. Johnson used his huge congressional majorities to push through a mass of liberal Great Society legislation. Northern black ghettos erupted in violence amid calls for black power.

Johnson escalated military involvement in the Dominican Republic and Vietnam. As the number of troops and casualties grew without producing military success, dovish protests against the war gained strength. Political opposition forced Johnson not to seek reelection, and the deep Democratic divisions over the war allowed Nixon to win the White House.

## **Chapter 40 - The Stalemated Seventies**

Nixon's "Vietnamization" policy reduced American ground participation in the war, but his Cambodia invasion sparked massive protest. Nixon's journeys to Communist Moscow and Beijing (Peking) established a new rapprochement with these powers. In domestic policy, Nixon and the Supreme Court promoted affirmative action and environmental protection.

The 1972 election victory and the cease-fire in Vietnam were negated when Nixon became bogged down in the Watergate scandal and congressional protest over the secret bombing of Cambodia, which led to the War Powers Act. The Middle East War of 1973 and the Arab oil embargo created energy and economic difficulties that lasted through the decade. Americans gradually awoke to their costly and dangerous dependence on Middle Eastern oil, and began to take tentative steps toward conservation and alternative energy sources.

Nonelected Gerald Ford took over after Watergate forced Nixon to resign. The Communist Vietnamese finally overran the South Vietnamese government in 1975. The defeat in Vietnam added to a general sense of disillusionment with society and a new sense of limits on American power. The civil rights movement fractured, and divisive issues of busing and affirmative action enhanced racial tensions. The most successful social movement was feminism, which achieved widespread social breakthroughs though failing to pass the Equal Rights Amendment.

Campaigning against Washington and Watergate, outsider Jimmy Carter proved unable to master Congress or the economy once he took office. The Camp David agreement brought peace between Egypt and Israel, but the Iranian revolution led to new energy troubles. The invasion of Afghanistan and the holding of American hostages in Iran added to Carter's woes.

## **Chapter 41 - The Resurgence of Conservatism**

Reagan led Republicans to sweeping victories in 1980 and 1984 over divided and demoralized Democrats. Riding a conservative national tide, Reagan pushed both his "supply-side" economic program of lower taxes and the "new-right" social policies, especially opposition to affirmative action, abortion, and drugs. These policies brought economic recovery and lower inflation, as well as record budget deficits that severely restricted "big government." The Supreme Court under Reagan and his successor, George Bush, became increasingly conservative, while the confirmation hearings of Justice Clarence Thomas highlighted issues of sexual harassment.

Reagan revived the Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union, and engaged the United States in assertive military support for anti-leftist forces in Latin America and elsewhere. The ratcheting up of military spending, along with the attempted reforms led by Mikhail Gorbachev, contributed to the unraveling of Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in 1989-1991. With America as the only remaining superpower, George Bush led an international coalition to victory in the Persian Gulf War, but the Middle East remained a dangerous tinderbox despite new efforts to resolve the Israel-Arab conflict.

The dynamic young "baby-boomer" Bill Clinton defeated Bush in 1992, and promoted an ambitious reform agenda within the context of his centrist "new Democrat" ideology. Clinton's stumbles over health care reform and foreign policy opened the door to aggressive conservative Republicans, who gained control of Congress in 1994 for the first time in fifty years advocating a "contract with America."

But the Newt Gingrich-led Republicans' over-reaching enabled Clinton to revive and win a second term in 1996.

In his second term, Clinton downplayed reform and successfully claimed the political middle ground on issues like welfare reform, affirmative action, smoking, and gun control. A booming economy created budget surpluses, and encouraged Clinton's efforts toward ending international trade barriers. Conflicts in the Middle East and the Balkans led to American diplomatic and military involvements, with mixed results. A series of scandals, culminating in the Monica Lewinsky affair, led to Clinton's impeachment and acquittal in 1999. Texas Governor George Walker Bush defeated Clinton's vice president, Al Gore, in a contested cliffhanging election that was finally decided by a Supreme Court decision.

## **Chapter 42 - The American People Face a New Century**

In the 1980s and 1990s, the American culture and economy underwent dynamic changes from an age of heavy industry to an age of computerized information and mass culture. Science and education increasingly drove the new forms of wealth, and growth of new media and the Internet helped fuel a new economy linked with the rest of the world. The benefits of the new wealth did not reach everyone, however, as the gaps between those with education and those without contributed to an increasingly severe inequality in Americans' wealth and income.

The decades-long movement into the workforce of women, including mothers of young children, opened ever-wider doors of opportunity, and contributed to changes in men's roles as well as in family life. Women's concern for issues of health and child created a persistent political "gender gap" between Democrats and Republicans in national elections. With fewer families being formed, and fewer children being born to native-born Americans, the population began to age and the elderly became a potent lobbying force.

A vast new wave of immigration, especially from Asia and Latin America, brought newcomers seeking economic opportunity and liberties unavailable in their homelands. Hispanics, Asians,

and Indians all asserted their own identity and pride, and made areas like the American Southwest a "bicultural zone."

The problems of poverty, increasingly concentrated in inner cities ringed by affluent suburbs, remained stubborn and frustrating to millions of Americans, including many minorities. The African American community made great strides in education, politics, and other areas, but there was a growing gap between the upwardly mobile and those left behind. America's cities were plagued by problems of drugs and crime, but the soaring crime rates of the 1980s were reversed and turned downward in the 1990s. In the same decade many cities began to show signs of renewal.

American culture remained incredibly dynamic and inventive, both in "high culture" and "pop culture." The new voices of westerners, women, African-Americans, Asians, and others were increasingly influential and popular, contributing to the variety, energy, and humor of US society. Beginning with the postwar "abstract expressionist" movement in New York City, American visual arts and architecture also led worldwide revolutions in taste and transformed the nature of urban life.

America was born a revolutionary force in the world. In the twentieth century it became more conservative in a world swept by global change. Yet the powerful values of American democracy presented persistent challenges to Americans to live up to their high ideals as "the last, best hope on earth."