

VOLUME 2 FROM RECONSTRUCTION

BECOMING AMERICA

A HISTORY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

DAVID HENKIN
REBECCA McLENNAN

THE WAY WE ONCE LEARNED HISTORY IS

NOW HISTORY

Developed for students and instructors of the twenty-first century, *Becoming America* excites learners by connecting history to their experience of contemporary life. You can't travel back in time, but you can be transported, and *Becoming America* does so by expanding the traditional core of the U.S survey to include the most current scholarship on cultural, technological, and environmental transformations. At the same time, the program transforms the student learning experience through innovative technology that is at the forefront of the digital revolution. As a result, the *Becoming America* program makes it easier for students to grasp both the distinctiveness and the familiarity of bygone eras and to think in a historically focused way about the urgent questions of our times.



BECOMING AMERICA IS A 21ST-CENTURY APPROACH TO LEARNING HISTORY



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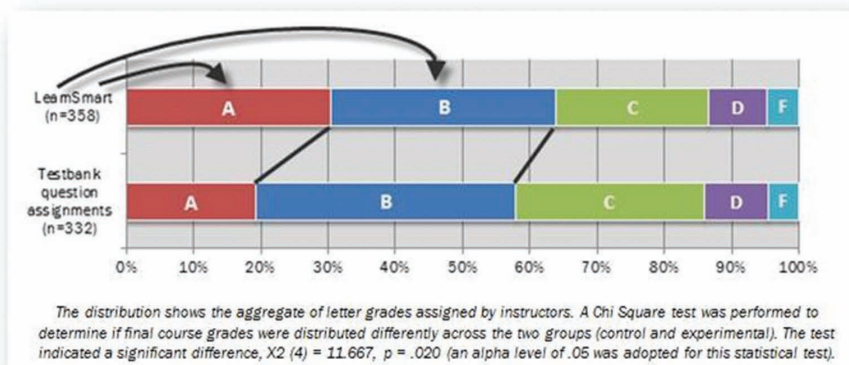
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The premier learning system, LearnSmart is designed to effectively assess a student's knowledge of course content through a series of adaptive questions. LearnSmart intelligently pinpoints concepts the student does not understand and maps out a personalized study plan for success. LearnSmart prepares students for class, thereby allowing instructors to focus on higher-level learning.

Which of the following statements best describes the Freedmen's Bureau?

- It was an agency created by southern states to help provide jobs for emancipated African Americans.
- It was a federal agency charged with helping former slaves make the transition to freedom.
- It was a charity established by northern churches to help former slaves.
- It was an agency created by southern states to monitor working conditions on former plantations.

Click one of the buttons below.



THINK CRITICALLY WITH CRITICAL MISSIONS

Critical Missions immerse students as active participants in a series of transformative moments in history. As advisors to key historical figures, students read and analyze sources, interpret maps and timelines, and write recommendations. In the process, students learn to think like a historian, conducting a retrospective analysis from a contemporary perspective.

Critical Mission | Experience History | Truman and the Atomic Bomb

learn about your mission

I have been president for only a few months, assuming the position of Commander-in-Chief for a nation involved a long, global war. New technology has provided me with an atomic bomb—the world's first nuclear weapon—which could forever change the face of warfare. Now, I must decide whether to use this devastating new weapon to end the war with Japan. One group of advisors, including my chief advisor and long-time mentor, Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, is encouraging me to approve the plan. Another group, including the Under-Secretary of State and expert on atomic energy, General Leslie R. Groves, advises against it. Here is my decision:

- Review the information pages—the timeline, the map, and the video.
- Identify important themes and issues that your advisors have considered and their opinions.
- Write your recommendation. Your recommendation should use the atomic bomb and explain the themes and evidence that led to your conclusion.

This is a decision that will shape the future of the world. Consider it well!

President Harry S. Truman

analyze the map

Use the timeline to view changes over time and explore all the information that the map has to offer.

WWII Territorial Changes and Battle Casualties

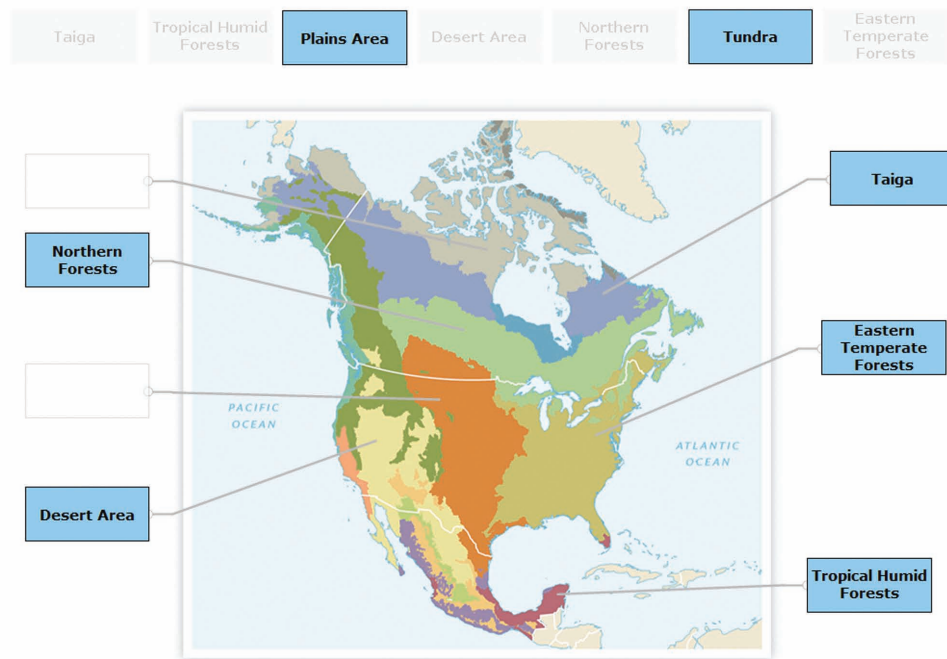
1942

- Occupied by Allies
- Occupied by Soviet Union
- Occupied by Axis powers
- Japanese naval power
- Neutral or noncombatant

- Battle Points
- = 1000 Allied soldiers killed
- = 1000 Axis soldiers killed

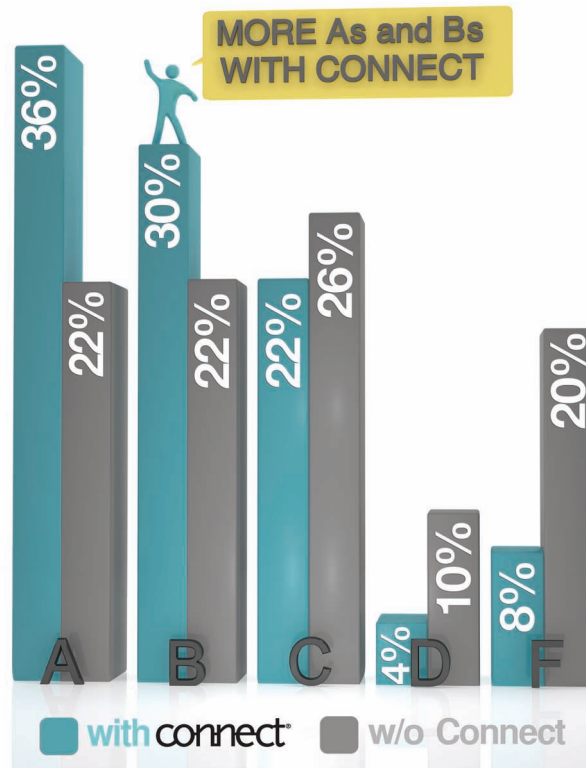
SUCCEED FASTER WITH CONNECT HISTORY

Connect History strengthens the links among faculty, students, and coursework. Innovative, adaptive technology aligns the goals of students and faculty, allowing them to work together to accomplish more in less time. Connect History engages students in the course content so they are better prepared, take a more active part in discussions, and achieve better course performance.



EASY ACCESS WITH MHCAMPUS

Becoming America integrates into school learning management systems, providing single sign-on access for students and a comprehensive grade book for instructors. With MHCampus, instructors can track students' progress, monitor and remediate on challenging topics, and ensure that students master the learning outcomes and core objectives of their U.S. history course.



PRAISE FOR BECOMING AMERICA

“At last! An American history for the 21st century that surpasses older texts in its appreciation of the latest trends in American history without sacrificing traditional approaches. The authors have wonderfully innovative means of illuminating the lives of both ordinary and extraordinary Americans and America’s evolving society and culture.”
— Howard P. Segal, *University of Maine*

“[*Becoming America*] is able to combine all that you want your students to cover in economic, political, and foreign policy with a great connection between social history of the past and current themes in society.” — Manfred Silva, *El Paso Community College*

“This is an innovative text that offers a coherent, intelligent, and manageable survey of U.S. history. I think students will love it.” — Katherine Hajar, *California State University, San Marcos*

“The use of various media to explore history is its greatest strength.” — Roger Rawlings, *Savannah College of Art and Design*

“The authors’ approach is to think outside the box: *Becoming America* is written not for other historians but rather for students, in a way that shows them how to think as historians think.” — Stephen F. Lopez, *San Jacinto College*

“This is a well-written history that uses popular culture of the time periods to engage the student and tell the story of the United States. It is a narrative that students will *want* to read rather than *have* to read.” — Carole N. Lester, *University of Texas, Dallas*

“By bringing in aspects of daily life, the book shows students the connections between seemingly mundane ‘things’ and the broad interpretive framework of American history.”
— Steven Noll, *University of Florida*

“*Becoming America* enthusiastically recounts the political, economic, military, and social history of the United States and has the ability to draw in students who may claim to have never enjoyed history. This might change their minds.”
— Wyatt Moulds, *Jones County Junior College*

“I think the authors did a fantastic job bringing together current scholarship, finding so many fascinating anecdotes and stories, and accurately explaining the broad scope of American history.... My older colleagues who like political history will not be disappointed, but the younger and women professors will be pleased with the focus on culture.”
— Mike Young, *Trinity Valley Community College*

“The authors are able to tell the story of men and women who shaped and led this nation and the millions of ordinary people who collectively created the American character.”
— Walter Miszczenko, *College of Western Idaho*

“In its goals, I’d definitely rate *Becoming America* at the top of the heap.” — Devan Bissonette, *Northern Arizona University*

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A HISTORY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

DAVID HENKIN

REBECCA McLENNAN

The University of California, Berkeley

**Mc
Graw
Hill**
Education



BECOMING AMERICA: A HISTORY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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Since David Henkin joined the history faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1997, he has taught and written about the sorts of subjects that rarely make it into traditional textbooks. He has offered entire courses on baseball, Broadway, consumption, time, leisure, newspapers, world cities, and urban literature, while publishing books and essays about street signs, paper money, junk mail, and intimate correspondence in the nineteenth century. The task of integrating that kind of material into the traditional narrative of the American past has been the singular challenge of his professional life. David holds a BA from Yale University and a PhD from U.C. Berkeley, and he was awarded Berkeley's Distinguished Teaching Award in the Social Sciences. Beyond the Berkeley campus, David teaches classes on the Bible, plays cards, eats lots of fish and berries, roots passionately for the St. Louis Cardinals, and accumulates frequent-flyer miles at a frenetic pace. Raised in New York, where his family still lives, he makes his home with friends and community in San Francisco.



REBECCA McLENNAN

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DEDICATION

*To Mr. Hand, U.S. history teacher at Ridgemont High School, for his faith in
our generation.*

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INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHORS

Rebecca McLennan and David Henkin

Q. Why a new U.S. history survey—and why now?

A. We wrote *Becoming America* in and for a new century, inspired by recent shifts in historical scholarship and the interests and learning styles of a new generation of students. Today's students live in a world where cultural, technological, and environmental transformation are palpably experienced and keenly debated. Paralleling this reorientation, the topics of environmental change, religious ritual, mass communications, technological innovation, and popular entertainment have become central and compelling subjects of historians' research and teaching. *Becoming America* seamlessly weaves these fascinating dimensions of the past into the core narrative of American history to produce an account that we believe students will find exciting, memorable, and relevant.

Q. What's different about your approach?

A. Key to our approach is an appreciation for how much the study of the past entails learning about the beliefs, attitudes, and mentalities of historical actors and about the worlds of communication and information exchange within which historical events acquired meaning. When we study a war, for example, we need to know more than its political causes and practical course; we also need to understand how different groups of participants, observers, and victims experienced the conflict. How long did it take military leaders in one part of the world to receive messages from civilian authorities in another? How did soldiers experience and make sense of war and demobilization? Did city dwellers read war news in newspapers reporting telegraphed messages from the front? Did voters watch live broadcasts of artillery fire while sitting in their living rooms? How were the dead commemorated? And in what ways did war and the memory of war change American culture, politics, and the economy?

Q. Where does the incorporation of the history of culture, media, technology, and the environment leave the political, social, and economic narrative that is essential to understanding the American past?

A. We have neither thrown out political, social, and economic history nor simply tacked on new subjects. Instead, we have innovated in a way that respects the need for chronology, narrative unity, social inclusiveness, and canonical coverage. For instance, the evolution of the British colonies after the

Stuart Restoration, which many surveys identify narrowly as a project of imperial regulation or a pattern of demographic movement, emerges in these pages through broader shifts in folkways, foodways, sexual ethics, consumption, home design, and religious outlook (Chapter 4). Instead of isolating southern plantation slavery in a single chapter on the Old South spanning multiple periods, we spread the discussion of slavery across several chapters, showing how human bondage infused and influenced economic, political, and cultural developments in multiple regions through many different eras. We broaden the conventional treatment of southern Reconstruction as the story of political and economic struggle by exploring the parades, conventions, and "grapevine telegraphs" through which African Americans formulated and relayed their demands for full and meaningful freedom (Chapter 16). Our discussion of the political functions of saloons, urban machines, and women's clubs enlivens the story of Gilded Age government and helps students understand the roots and significance of mass politics (Chapter 19). And rather than painting a picture of the affluent 1950s solely as a period of conservative consensus punctuated by an increasingly assertive civil rights movement, we also explore the cultural and intellectual ferment that preceded and primed the upheavals of the 1960s (Chapter 27). Every chapter weaves new scholarship of this nature into the narrative.

Q. How does integrating old and new approaches enhance students' learning experience?

A. The new synthesis offers distinct advantages. First, students are excited by history that connects to their experience of contemporary life. Mass media, popular entertainment, technological innovation, religious ritual, material culture, and environmental change all capture their imagination, and consequently they come to class engaged and ready to learn more. *Becoming America* shows them how those subjects have developed over time and how earlier patterns of living have informed or differed from the pleasures, frustrations, dangers, and mysteries that students encounter in their own worlds.

Second, our updated survey of the American past helps students relate imaginatively to this rich history by actively drawing upon their interests, passions, and skills as both readers and creators of contemporary culture. We show for instance how nineteenth-century Americans experienced new kinds of connection through the postal service, cheaper newspapers, telegraph wires, sales catalogs, networks of religious instruction, and commercial entertainment. We encourage readers to grasp

the historical significance of slang, fashion trends, marketing strategies, spectator sports, and news scandals. Throughout the narrative, our visual program asks students to analyze the way in which engravers, photographers, cartoonists, advertisers, and other visual artists in both early and later eras created, affirmed, or disrupted public perceptions.

Finally, our approach teaches students to understand and ask questions about the cultural, political, and economic circumstances under which certain new media and technologies find—or fail to find—traction. Why did printing play such a prominent role in the politics of the American Revolution? Why, in the 1920s, did radio quite suddenly become a mass medium after years of relative obscurity? By demonstrating how to analyze these phenomena as historians do, we give students new critical tools with which to recognize and analyze the deep connections that bound—and still bind—culture, politics, and economics. Questions probing these connections are included in our Connect History program.

Q. History is more than a grand narrative. How do you incorporate fine-grained details of the sort that enliven the story for students?

A. Boxed essays throughout the text show students in detail how historians analyze the past, while also creating a vivid image of different periods in American history. Every chapter includes features entitled *Hot Commodities* and *Singular Lives*, as well as either a *States of Emergency* or a *Spaces and Places* selection. A set of questions encouraging students to analyze and contextualize the selection rounds out each essay. In addition, the Hot Commodities feature is included in Connect History as a gradable exercise. Descriptions of these learning features appear in the visual walk-through of the text that follows this interview.

Q. These features take the narrative deeper, but how do you guide students through the process of interpreting and analyzing primary sources?

A. Each chapter offers students the opportunity to examine historical evidence through an *Interpreting the Sources* selection. The primary sources in these boxed features include public and private documents, visual sources, material artifacts, and transcripts of oral traditions and stories. A headnote puts the source in context, and a series of questions after the source challenges students to think deeply and analytically about its significance. The *Interpreting the Sources* feature is included in our Connect History program; students can complete the exercise and submit it online for grading.

Q. What will students take away from *Becoming America*?

A. For all of our readers, whether *Becoming America* is their gateway to further studies in history or the only account they will read on the subject, our goals are the same. Our attention to the connections and discontinuities between past and present make it easier for students to grasp both the distinctiveness and the familiarity of bygone eras and to recognize themselves and our own time in the great sweep of American history. Students should come away with a contextualized understanding of the deep cultural changes that have characterized the American past; an appreciation for the interconnections among culture, technology, society, politics, economics, and the environment; and the analytical skills associated with rigorous interpretation of diverse sources. We want them to look with different eyes at the design of their own homes and neighborhoods, to actively interpret the meaning of mass spectacle and social media, and to think in a historically informed way about the urgent questions of our times. We hope that both our narrative and its lessons in critical thinking will help students participate fully and creatively in our diverse and culturally vital democracy.

Q: Is *Becoming America* available as an e-book?

A. Yes, in fact, it's available as a Smartbook, which means that students not only can read it online but can quiz themselves after every section. The Smartbook then adapts to their response, highlighting areas in the narrative that they need to study more.

BECOMING AMERICA:

A new way to learn U.S. history

Becoming America weaves the latest research on culture, technology, and the environment into the traditional core of the U.S. history survey.

HOT COMMODITIES offers a detailed study of consumer goods, food, paintings, recordings, and performances that were tellingly popular at a given point in time. These boxes—with topics ranging from beavers and Bibles to cigarettes and garbage—reinforce the importance of material artifacts to the study of the past. The point is that consumption patterns are not new phenomena (though they have changed radically) and that they offer valuable insight into past societies, much as they do in the present day.

HOT COMMODITIES

Whiskey



Early National Grain Surplus. George Washington's whiskey distillery, reconstructed at Mount Vernon.

In an effort to raise revenues, Congress acted in 1791 on Hamilton's plan to tax whiskey and other spirits. Unlike tariffs, which could be collected by customs officials at the ports, the whiskey tax applied to a range of distilleries, large and small, across the country. When government officials tried to collect the tax in 1794, from farmers in western Pennsylvania, an area chronically short on currency and generally hostile to taxation, they met stiff resistance. Whiskey rebels intimidated tax collectors, mobilized their militias, and invoked the spirit of the tax protests against Britain that had launched the revolutionary struggle. As many as seven thousand rebels gathered outside Pittsburgh, but took no immediate action. Still, the Whiskey Rebellion was the first major act of resistance to federal authority under the Constitution. Eager to make a show of strength for the new national government, Hamilton and Washington personally rode out with thirteen thousand militiamen, and the rebellion crumbled without a fight.

Behind this famous political crisis lurked a larger development in American life: an explosive growth in the production and consumption of whiskey. Congress might have targeted distilled spirits as luxurious vices, but whiskey drinking was becoming deeply ingrained in the daily habits of Americans across the socioeconomic spectrum. The late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries marked a high point in alcohol consumption generally, and whiskey drinking in particular. The best evidence suggests that during the first third of the nineteenth century the typical American drank more alcohol than at any time before or after. In 1810, American distilleries were producing more than three gallons of distilled liquors—whiskey, rum, gin, and brandy, typically about 90 proof—for every man, woman, and child, and that figure does not include beer, wine, or cider. Overall, Americans consumed about twice as much alcohol per person in 1810 as they do now. Consumption levels would peak in the 1830s and then drop precipitously (see Chapter 12).

Whiskey flowed freely throughout American society during the early decades of the nineteenth century, though certain portions of the population drank more heavily. Women drank less frequently than men and tended to prefer sweetened rum, hard cider, or alcohol-heavy patent medicines. In the South, blacks drank less than whites. Whereas in white homes a jug before breakfast and whiskey at all meals was quite common, slaves (who in some places faced legal obstacles to buying liquor) typically restricted their serious drinking to special occasions and their everyday intake to a shot of whiskey during the cold season. Despite these variations, alcohol was a basic feature of everyday life in this period. Even religious folk drank heartily by later standards. A southern planter who wished to join the Methodist Church had to restrict his intake within the acceptable daily quota of a quart of peach brandy. Aspiring ministers at the prestigious New England Andover Seminary would regularly and unabashedly down brandy toddies at the local tavern. Drinking was an important social activity, an indispensable form of hospitality and camaraderie. To refuse a drink was to refuse to enter a world of equality and solidarity.

Historians have offered several explanations for the rise of drinking around the turn of the century, but the most important factor was the growth of whiskey production, which made liquor cheap and plentiful. American farmers were producing large surpluses of grain, especially corn, and for those living in the western part of the country, whiskey was an especially efficient way to deliver corn to distant markets. A horse could carry six times the volume of corn in whiskey form, which was easier to store and far less likely to rot. Shipping grain in this form became even more profitable with technological improvements in the distilling process. Between 1802 and 1810, the federal government issued over one hundred patents for new devices to distill whiskey, which encouraged more farmers to become distillers. Once the Republicans repealed Hamilton's whiskey tax in 1802, the price dropped further. The result was a widespread drinking habit that would form a major part of American economy and culture.

Think About It

1. What does the Whiskey Rebellion suggest about federal power under the new Constitution? How did its outcome compare to that of Shay's Rebellion?
2. How did technological innovations affect whiskey consumption?
3. How have attitudes toward alcoholic beverages changed in the United States since the era of the early republic?

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SINGULAR LIVES

Erich Weiss (Harry Houdini), Escape Artist



For talented new immigrants, the vaudeville stage provided a rare opportunity to gain security and prosperity in their new home. For Erich Weiss, born a Hungarian Jew in Budapest in 1874, it was the launch pad for a career as Harry Houdini, the most famous escape artist of all time.

Weiss's family immigrated to the United States in 1896, first living in Wisconsin, where Erich Weiss (as Houdini) would later claim to have been born. In 1897 when Erich was thirteen, his father, a rabbi, moved the family to New York and became a garment worker. At seventeen, Erich began doing magic shows at Coney Island, and a couple of years later he and his younger brother, Theo, performed at the 1895 World Exposition in Chicago. The duo achieved some renown as part of a magic act dubbed "the Brothers Houdini," a name that evoked the great French illusionist Jean Eugène Robert Houdini. From there, "Harry Houdini," as Erich now called himself, started appearing in cheap New York theaters and then in more respectable vaudeville houses, perfecting an act that featured needle-swallowing tricks, handcuff escapes, and other remarkable displays of strength, ingenuity, or deception that captivated audiences. Houdini toured the country, generating publicity for his act by announcing in each new town that he could escape from any handcuffs provided by the local police. Then, at the beginning of the new century, Harry Houdini and his stage partner (and wife) Bess took their show abroad. America's great escape artist quickly became an international celebrity.

Houdini's act had several appeals. For some spectators, his ability to free himself from handcuffs or a straitjacket was truly supernatural, suggesting some link with mysterious powers and unseen worlds. (Houdini went on, in the 1920s, to debunk psychics and spiritualism, but much of his audience continued to believe that he himself had supernatural power.) Others may have been drawn by the challenge of uncovering his secrets, which often involved tools or keys hidden on his person, the athleticism of his acrobatic maneuvers, or the sheer spectacle of his neatly tailored body. For Weiss, the role of Houdini the escape artist fit the experience of an immigrant who had left his home, discarded the religious tradition of his father, and made his own way in a new land, without having to endure the constraints of factory labor or office work.

Think About It

1. What traditional values did Houdini's act flaunt? What did his performances celebrate?
2. How would you explain the name Harry Houdini? Why would a Jew from Hungary have taken a name that sounded neither Jewish nor Hungarian?

SINGULAR LIVES spotlights unusual women and men whose experience, perspective, or mythological status captures some broader point about the period. These case studies reinforce the notion that individuals as well as larger social forces shape history.

Each chapter offers students the opportunity to examine historical evidence through an **INTERPRETING THE SOURCES** selection. The primary sources in these boxed features include public and private documents, visual sources, material artifacts, and transcripts of oral traditions and stories. A headnote puts the source in context, and a series of questions after the source challenges students to think deeply and analytically about its significance.



INTERPRETING THE SOURCES
Federalist and Republican Plans for a National Capital



Along with the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, the design of the capital city ranks among the nation's founding documents. In creating a new capital from scratch, leaders of the early republic were able to imprint their visions of the United States onto paper and potentially onto public space. Republican Thomas Jefferson and Federalist Pierre L'Enfant offered contrasting plans for the city that would both house and represent the new national government.

Jefferson envisioned a small city with a simple grid of streets, with the main government building arrayed in a row across the capital's main street. The dots around the small city indicate the possibility of expanding the city along the same grid pattern, should the need arise. By contrast, L'Enfant's map called for a much larger city. Instead of setting aside space for future growth, L'Enfant boldly anticipated that growth. And instead of adopting the repeating grid plan associated with Philadelphia (see Chapter 4), he drew on models of European imperial capitals, such as Versailles, France, which included diagonals, ovals, and circles. In L'Enfant's plan, different street grids are connected by diagonal avenues that traverse the city in multiple directions. Each avenue would be named for a different state and lined with statues of national heroes. L'Enfant's plan also divided the city into three separate centers of settlement, corresponding with the three branches of government.

George Washington opted for the more ambitious plan, though in revised form. And while the slow growth of the capital prevented many features of L'Enfant's imagined city from materializing, Washington, D.C.'s landscape of broad diagonal arteries, grand squares, and sweeping sight lines continues to distinguish it from other American cities built in the early nineteenth century.

Jefferson's Plan, 1791. Jefferson anticipated a simpler, more functional federal capital, though he left room in his plan for future growth.



L'Enfant's Plan, 1792. Federalist visions of the new capital emphasized grandeur and aesthetic appeal.

Explore the Sources

1. How does Jefferson's plan reflect the ideology of the Republicans?
2. Why might Washington and L'Enfant have favored a city map that was so much bigger than the immediate needs of the national capital?
3. Which features of L'Enfant's plan represent orderliness and practicality? Which features do you think connote urban grandeur?
4. Jefferson complained that L'Enfant's plan "glowed with an iconography of federal supremacy." What does that mean and what features of L'Enfant's plan might have triggered that reaction?



STATES OF EMERGENCY
The New York City Blackout of 1977



Through much of the twentieth century, New York City's bright electric lights distinguished nighttime in the United States' largest city, enhancing the city's claims to metropolitan grandeur and captivating the national imagination. On the evening of July 13, 1977, however, the city went suddenly and frighteningly dark. This was not the first time the lights went out in New York. Twelve years earlier, a regional blackout had shut down power through much of the Northeast. But the 1977 blackout was limited to New York City, and it struck during an economic downturn, at the end of a scorching summer day, when New Yorkers were reeling from the unsolved and ongoing crimes of a notorious serial killer. Unlike the 1965 blackout, whose occurrence at dusk gave residents some daylight time to prepare for the night ahead, the 1977 outage had an immediate visual impact.

The blackout was triggered by lightning strikes that tripped breakers and downed transmission lines at the plants of Con Edison, New York's power provider. Defective equipment and inadequate responses by the power company exacerbated the situation, and by 6:37 p.m. almost the entire city was without electricity, which was not restored until late the next day. What caused the crime spree that ensued is harder to determine. Looting erupted in thirty-one different neighborhoods throughout the city but Brooklyn, New York's most populous borough, felt the heaviest impact. In Brooklyn's Bushwick neighborhood, fires consumed whole blocks. Bushwick had been a middle-class area in the 1950s, but while flight, the decline of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and the rising of single-family housing to make room for new housing projects had turned it into one of the city's poorest districts. By 1977, 80 percent of Bushwick residents were unemployed and the neighborhood had the highest infant mortality rate in the city. With the power down and police and firefighting services strained, desperate and angry residents found both an opportunity to steal and an outlet for their rage.

When the lights finally came back on, New Yorkers tallied up the heavy toll: stores destroyed, buildings burned to the ground, 4,500 individuals arrested (most of them in a single mass sweep), and more than \$300 million in damage. City officials blamed Con Edison officials, who in turn called the outage an act of God and blamed the city for the poverty that lay at the root of the rioting. New York voters rejected incumbent mayor Abe Beame four months later, electing tough-on-crime candidate Ed Koch. To the rest of the country, viewing defuncted skylines and burning houses on the evening news, the events of July 13–14, 1977, seemed to confirm what so many had drawn, television shows, and movies had suggested: The great metropolises had declined.

Think About It

1. Why might a power outage have encouraged angry residents to riot and loot?
2. How did the fact that the 1977 blackout affected New York alone, rather than the larger region, contribute to the meaning of the event?

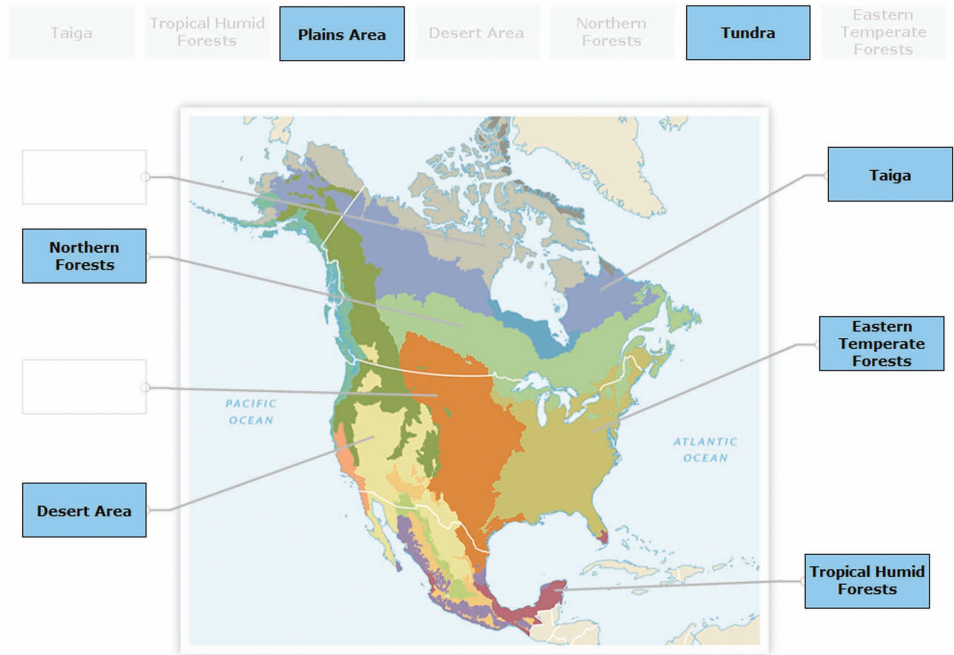
STATES OF EMERGENCY dramatizes scenes and moments of destruction, violence, epidemic, and natural disaster, from the Stono Rebellion and the New Madrid Earthquake to the Great Chicago Fire and the New York blackout of 1977. These extraordinary events often had far-reaching social and political consequences for the story we tell in the main narrative, but they also gripped the popular imagination and became the focus of fears and fantasies that help us understand larger historical forces.

BECOMING AMERICA

is a Program for the 21st Century

The Connect History digital program that accompanies *Becoming America* includes

- map activities using key maps from the text
- image analysis activities that ask students to examine artifacts and images
- primary source activities built around the documents in *Becoming America*
- key terms quizzes
- multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions



SPACES & PLACES

Cahokia, Hub City

Long before Europeans settled the region, a great city stood on a stretch of bottomland on the eastern side of the Mississippi River. For several centuries (longer than the United States has been a nation), the place historians call Cahokia was North America's largest city and the center of an extensive political and cultural empire. A thousand years ago, all roads led to Cahokia. And then it seems to have vanished.

After the urban settlement dispersed around the 1300s, the only traces of this once-mighty civilization were about two hundred pyramids of packed earth, spread out over 3,000 acres. In later centuries, French, Spanish, English, and eventually American travelers encountered these mound-like structures, but they did not see them as evidence of an American Indian city. Nineteenth-century Americans proposed theories of a lost race of pre-Indian moundbuilders, and in the early twentieth century, leading geologists regarded the mounds as natural phenomena. While Americans studied the scrolls, paintings, and hieroglyphs of distant civilizations, they had no idea that a major city had stood on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River.

The history of that forgotten city lay buried deep in the ground, beneath layers of human activity. Even the mysterious earthen mounds themselves had begun to disappear. By the time of the Civil War many of the great mounds had been leveled. Since the 1960s, however, archaeologists have excavated evidence of a large housing development from the eleventh century. They reconstructed a circle of upright posts that were the basis of a large astronomical observatory. They found burial pits used to honor the city's great chiefs. They identified artifacts, such as distinctive chunky stones (see p. 9), that established the city's central place in a far-flung culture. And they established a map of the city's earthworks projects, which included a central plaza the size of thirty-five football fields--the biggest planned public space built up to that point in the lands that would become the United States.

Prior to Cahokia's rediscovery, French and then American settlers had established a city, St. Louis, in the same area. As the St. Louis metropolitan region grew, many traces of the ancient ruins were destroyed. By the second half of the twentieth century, rental subdivisions in the Illinois suburbs of St. Louis covered the Grand Plaza where Mississippians had once regularly gathered to observe the stars and pay homage to the forces that controlled the universe. Ironically, however, the fact that St. Louis became a bustling U.S. transportation hub may have helped preserve Cahokia's history. In the late 1950s, when the federal government introduced a new interstate highway system, St. Louis was chosen as a gateway city. Once again all roads led to Cahokia, as five different interstate highway routes ribboned through the site that several archaeologists had recently begun to excavate. The possibility that the final remains of the mounds would be leveled to make room for off-ramps galvanized the archaeological community, and the fact that the land now passed into public control prompted a massive study of the site's history. By 1965, as construction began on St. Louis's Gateway Arch monument, scholars placed together a picture of a forgotten Indian city just across the river.

Cahokia Today: Monk's Mound, Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site. Monk's Mound, shown here in aerial view, is flanked by two small strands of the vast network of paved roads streaming in and out of St. Louis, Cahokia's modern counterpart.

Think About It

1. Why might Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been reluctant to believe that the enormous earthen mounds were once part of an American Indian city?
2. How would you explain the fact that a large city emerged on this location, so close to where St. Louis would be built many centuries later?

SPACES & PLACES features buildings, landscapes, monuments, and virtual spaces as sources for exploring the country's built and natural environments. U.S. history is partly a story of how human beings have continually reshaped and reimagined the landscapes that we now take for granted. With rich pictorial detail, we show how the spaces and places in which history unfolds have transformed over time.

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