

# Sorting the Past, Gaining Proper Perspective on the Present

***The Ledger* – Summer 2013**

Sorting out the past can be difficult, but gaining a proper perspective on the present is next to impossible. Maybe that's because the past makes fewer immediate demands. It usually waits for us to go looking for it.

The present is far less reticent. It grabs us by the lapels and forces us to take notice, leaving little opportunity to consider what preceded it or what might come after. For example, when movers, shakers, and opinion makers talk about the "fiscal cliff" or "unsustainable levels of debt," it's easy to forget that federal spending and the level of federal debt have been sources of controversy for more than 200 years. In fact, many of the "crises" that now absorb our attention are variations on longstanding themes.

This issue of *The Ledger* looks at three current narratives and traces some of the threads that connect them to the past:



**Main Street vs.  
Wall Street:  
How Big Is Too Big  
and How Much is Too  
Much?**



**Economic Growth vs.  
Environmental  
Protection:  
Do We Have to  
Choose Between  
Them?**



**Immigration:  
How Wide Should We  
Open "The Golden  
Door"?**

Each of the three has strong economic overtones, and all have been very much in the news as of late, but they are not new concerns. Americans have been grappling with them, in one form or another, for generations.

That's not to say everything is the same as it always was. Each generation alters the narrative to a certain extent. But the inherent themes and tensions have changed remarkably little in 200-plus years, and in all probability they will be part of our national conversation for years to come.

**Note:** We are trying something a little different in this issue. Since *The Ledger* is now all-electronic, and because many people seem less inclined to read lots of on-screen text, we decided to let images carry much of the story this time. Many of the images are from the digital archives of the Library of Congress, which is a genuine treasure trove of photos and prints. If ever you need to be reassured that public institutions are deserving of your support, visit the Library of Congress web site: <http://www.loc.gov>

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## Story One

### Main Street vs. Wall Street: How big is too big, and how much is too much?

The Main Street vs. Wall Street narrative is as old as the Republic. At its heart is concern over the power and influence of centralized wealth. That concern has played out along various lines: agrarians vs. industrialists, urban vs. rural, north vs. south, east vs. west, labor vs. capital, free traders vs. protectionists, and more. Yet the main points of contention have almost always been the same:

- 1) How should Americans divide the economic pie, and
- 2) How far should government go in protecting the public interest?



#### Trying to decide the best course for the country (1787)

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-1722

This 1787 image depicts what we now refer to as “gridlock.” Two rival factions – “the Federalists” and the “Anti-federalists” – cannot reach agreement on trade, the acceptability of paper money, military pensions,

taxes, and the limits of federal power. The wagon at the center of the image is being pulled in two different directions by rival factions. In the upper right are threatening storm clouds. Sound familiar?

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**Daniel Shays (left) and Job Shattuck (right) were key figures in the farmers' rebellion that came to be known as Shays' Rebellion. (1787)**

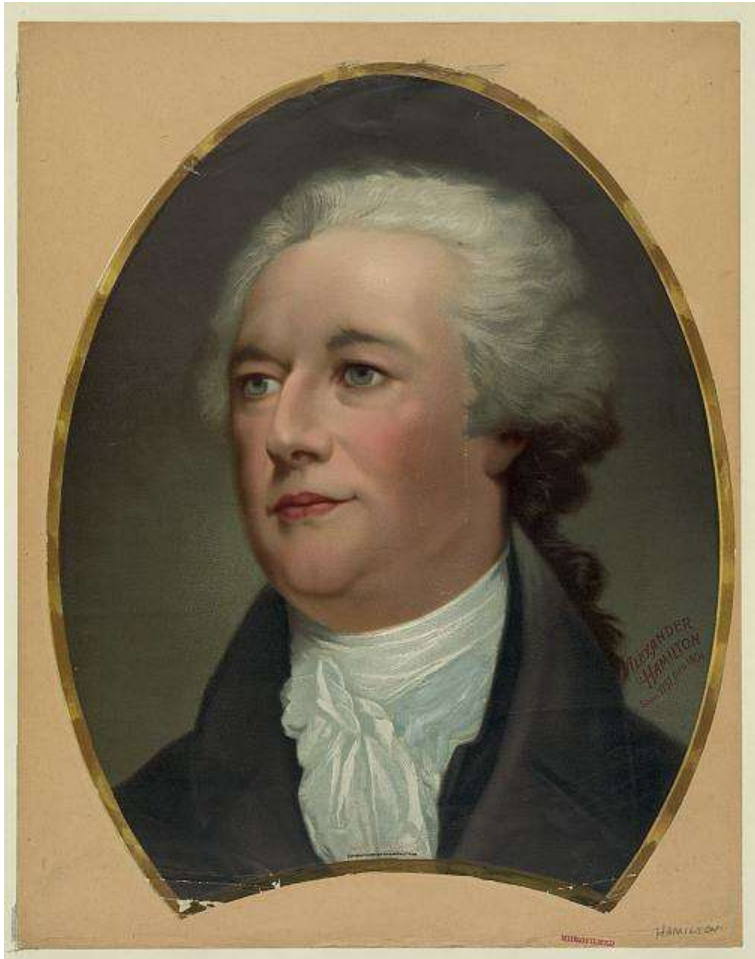
Image Source: Wikimedia Commons

Shays' Rebellion was a 1780s version of the 21<sup>st</sup> century "Foreclosure Crisis." Farmers and Revolutionary War veterans faced the loss of their land because they owed a lot of money to bankers, merchants, and other wealthy debt holders. The main point of contention: Debt holders insisted on being repaid fully in hard currency – gold for the most part – which the farmers did not have.

Thousands of debt-ridden farmers rose in rebellion, shutting down courts and government offices. And in January of 1787, some 1,500 armed rebels, many under the leadership of Daniel Shays, marched on the federal armory at Springfield, Massachusetts. Although the attack failed and the rebellion died, the Massachusetts legislature ultimately cut taxes and approved a debt moratorium.

In a sense, Shays' Rebellion was only the beginning chapter of a long-running story. Over the years, Americans have continued to grapple with the question of how to balance competing economic interests. And, of course, we're still arguing over debt and taxes.

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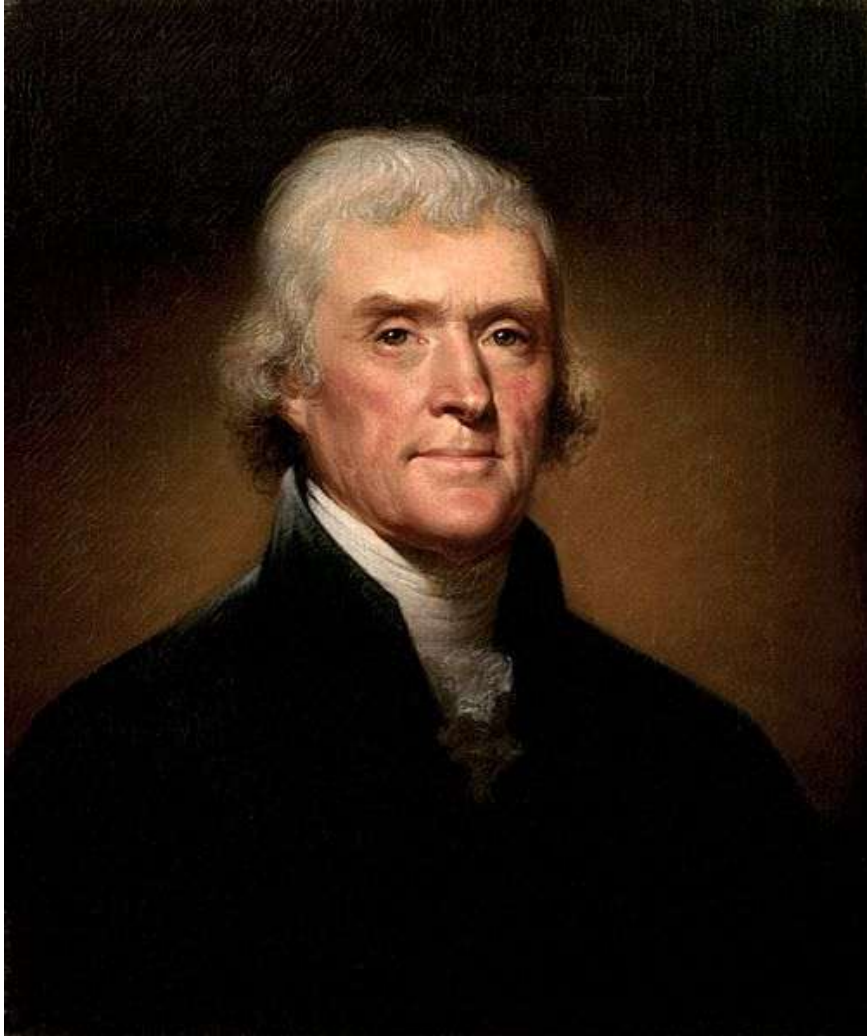


**Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the United States Treasury**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-17523

As the first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton favored a strong central government and economic policies that encouraged the growth of banking, commerce, and manufacturing. He developed plans to shore up the new government's finances by creating reliable sources of tax revenue and repaying debts incurred during the Revolutionary War. In an effort to make all this happen he pushed hard for the creation of a central bank –the First Bank of the United States – which held the federal government's deposits. This put him at odds with another powerful figure: Thomas Jefferson.

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**Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States**

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons/White House Historical Association

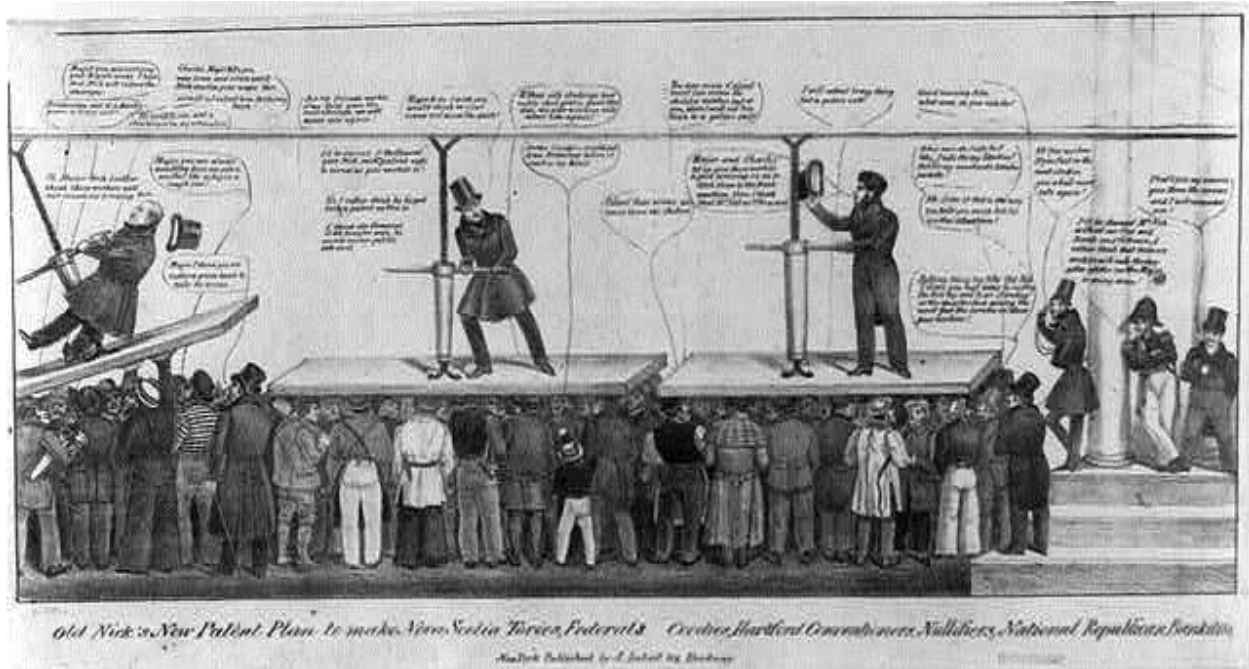
Thomas Jefferson was wary of strong centralized power. He championed states' rights over a strong federal government, and he envisioned an agrarian society built around the interests of independent small farmers. He was particularly opposed to the First Bank of the United States, which he believed was an instrument of concentrated wealth and power.

Hamilton's vision ultimately won out, but vestiges of the clash between Hamilton and Jefferson still influence the present-day American debates over economics, politics, and the role of government.

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Congress created the First Bank of the United States in 1791. At the time it was the largest bank – and the largest corporation – in America. Headquartered in Philadelphia, with branches in other major cities, it held the federal government’s funds, issued bank notes, made loans, and purchased securities – all of which made it a powerful institution. But that concentration of power worried many Americans, particularly in rural areas, and when the Bank’s 20-year charter expired in 1811 Congress declined to renew it. A Second Bank, chartered in 1816, met the same fate when its charter expired in 1836.

This editorial cartoon depicts an attempt by Nicholas Biddle, President of the Second Bank, to create support for the Bank by engineering a credit crisis. The image shows Biddle and two accomplices tightening credit by turning screw presses that bear down on the backs of sailors, masons, laborers, and other members of the working class.

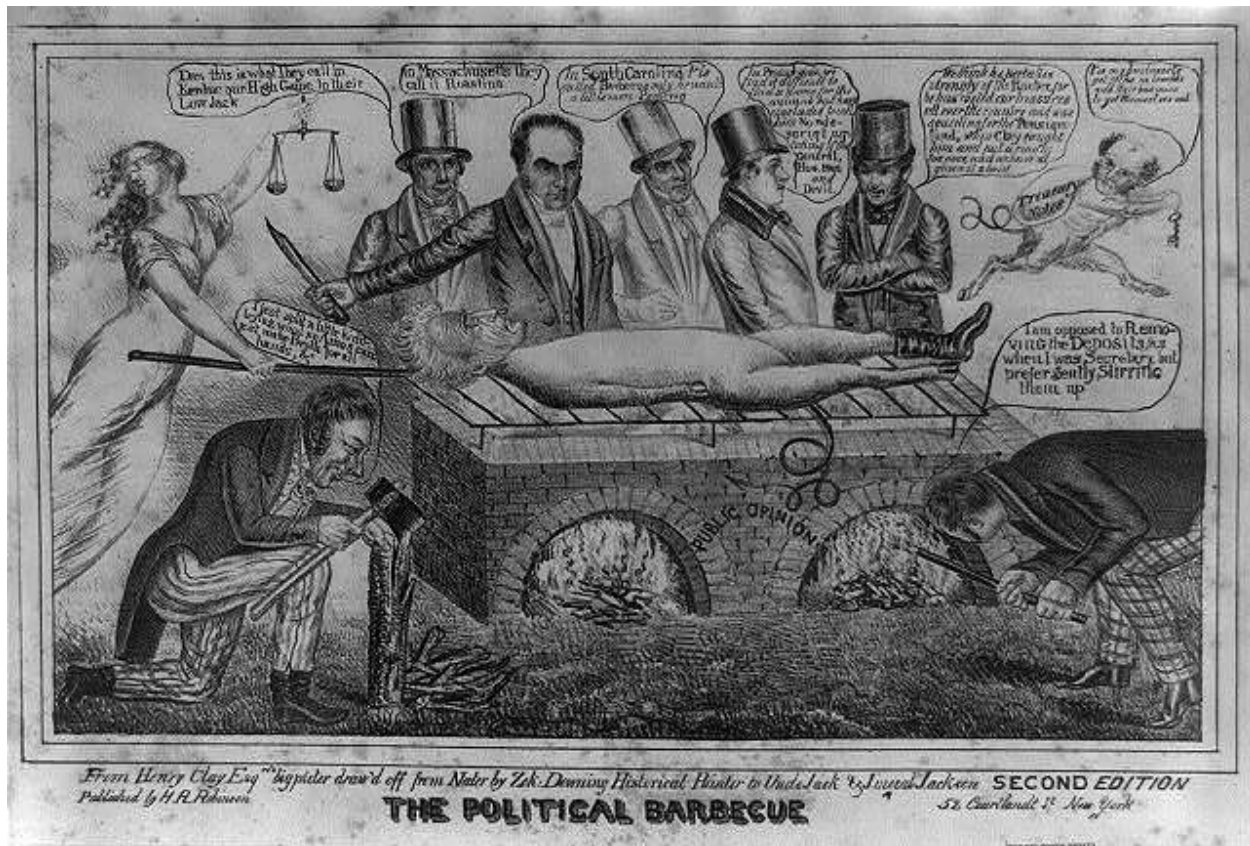


### “Putting the Squeeze on the Working Class” (1834)

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-87372



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### "The Political Barbecue" (1834)

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-9647

The country fell into financial turmoil after the First Bank closed, so in 1816 Congress created the Second Bank of the United States. Fear of the Bank's power triggered yet another strong backlash that helped to unite an opposing coalition of citizens, politicians, and business interests.

But the Second Bank also had powerful supporters. This image shows President Andrew Jackson, the Bank's most powerful opponent, being roasted over the fires of "Public Opinion." Blind Justice presides over the roasting, while Kentucky Senator Henry Clay, Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster, and Second Bank President Nicholas Biddle look on approvingly.

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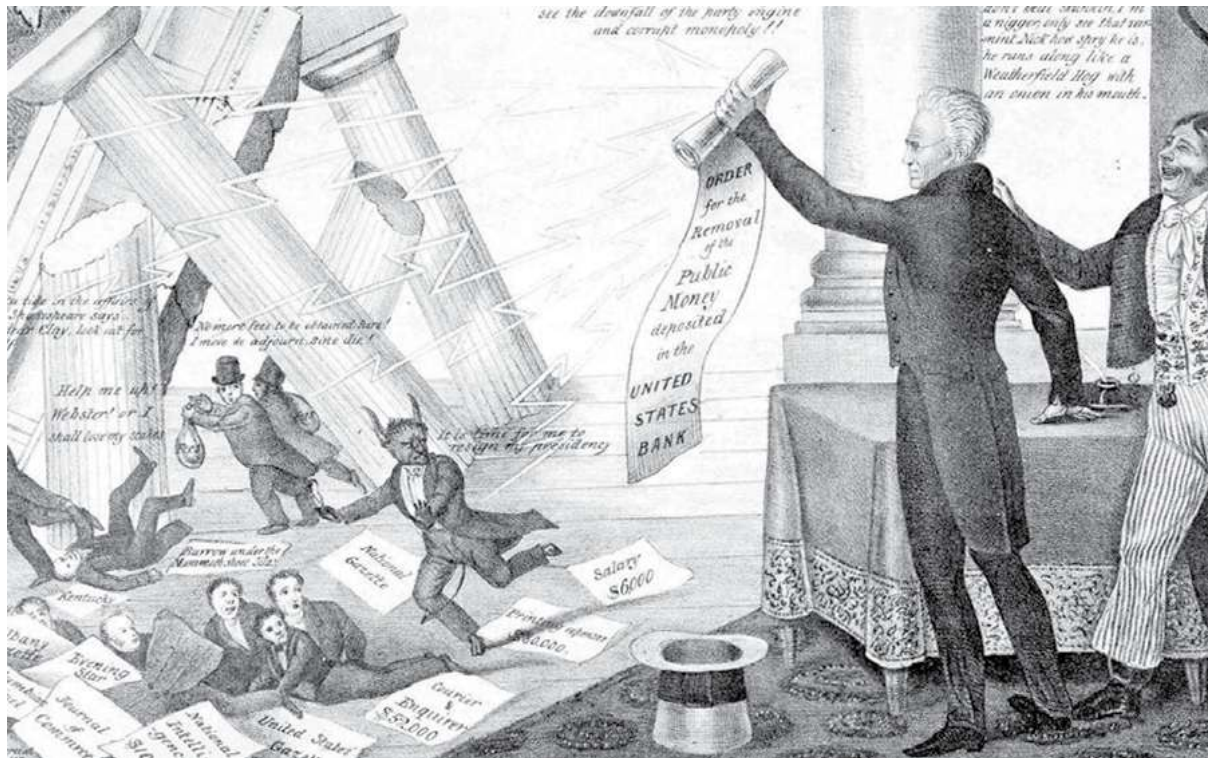


**“General Jackson Slaying the Many Headed Monster” (1836)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-1575

In 1832, President Andrew Jackson withdrew federal deposits from the Second Bank and vetoed a bill to renew its charter. In this image, Jackson does battle with the “many headed monster” otherwise known as the Second Bank of the United States. The upraised cane in Jackson’s hand is labeled “Veto,” and the dialogue bubble above his head reads: “Biddle thou Monster Avaunt!! Avaunt I say! Or by the Great Eternal, I’ll cleave thee to the earth, aye thee and thy four and twenty satellites.” The Biddle in question is Nicholas Biddle, head of the Second Bank.

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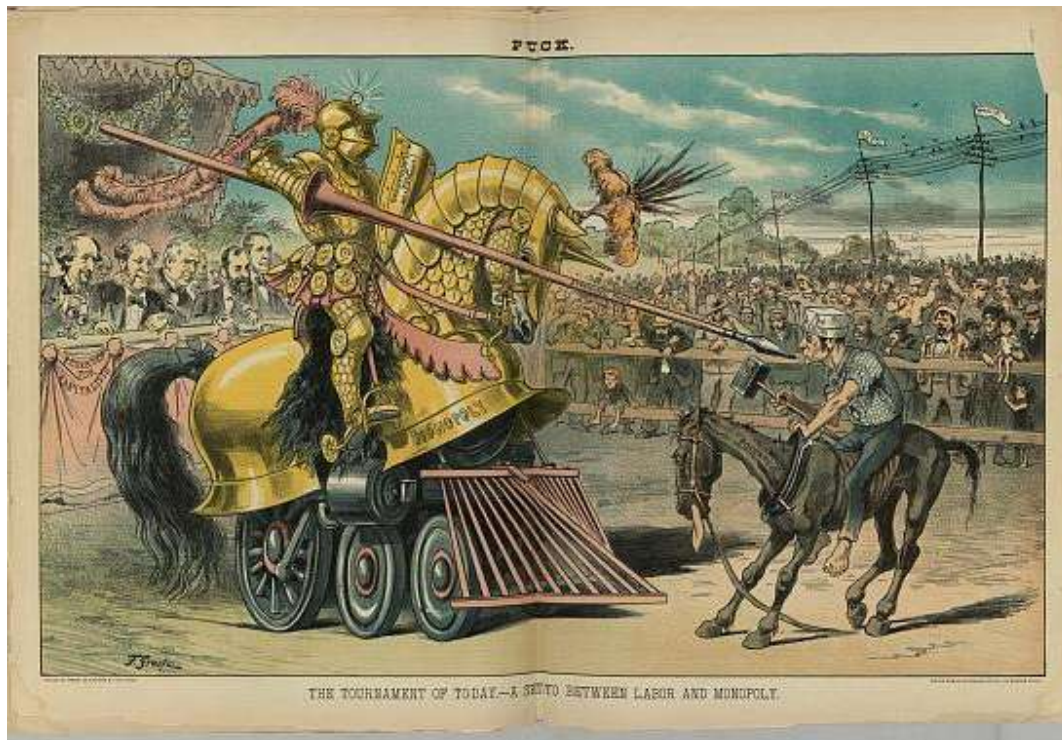


### "The Downfall of Mother Bank"

Image Source: New York Historical Society

Finally, in 1836, after four years of acrimonious debate, the Second Bank of the United States met the same fate as the First. The United States would be without a central bank until Congress passed the Federal Reserve Act in late 1913.

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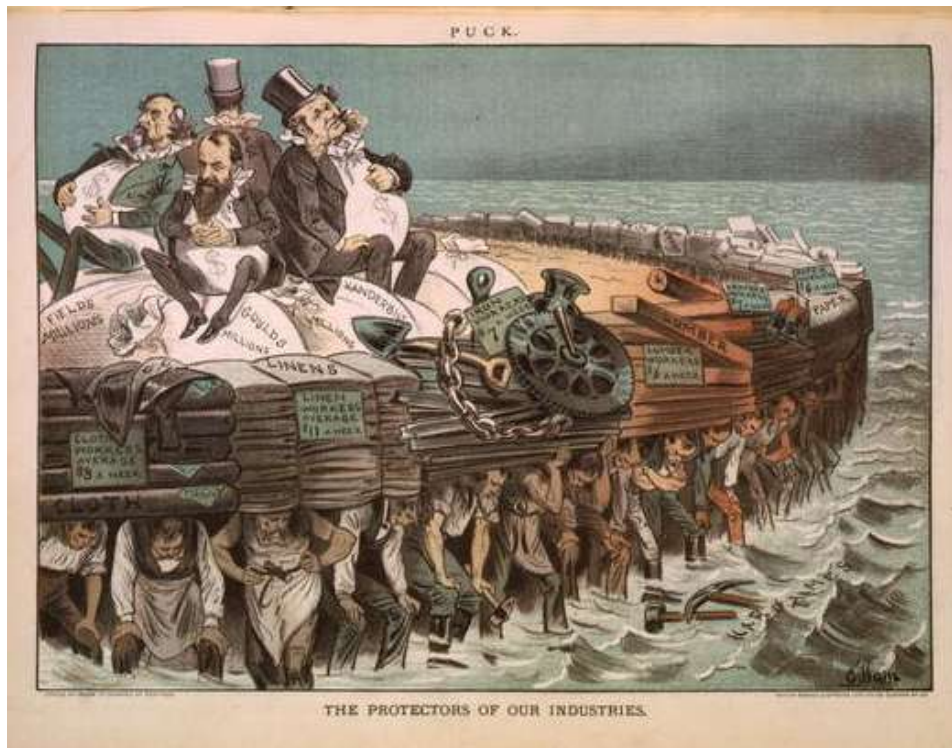


**“The Tournament of Today – A Set-to between Labor and Monopoly” (1883)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-28412

The Wall Street vs. Main Street narrative, particularly during the years between 1870 and 1970, often played out as a struggle between moneyed interests and the interests of wage-earners. In this image, the moneyed interests seem to have all the advantages – an oversized knight riding a locomotive labeled “Monopoly” holds a shield labeled “Corruption of the Legislature” and a lance labeled “Subsidized Press” – while labor, armed with a sledgehammer labeled “Strike,” sits precariously atop a horse that appears underfed and ready for the glue factory. Wealthy financiers and titans of industry look on from a private box labeled “Reserved for Capitalists.”

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### The “One Percent” in 1883

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-3108

In this 1883 image, wealthy (and rotund) industrialists and financiers – Cyrus Field, Jay Gould, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and Russell Sage – sit atop a raft and recline on bags filled with millions. The raft is borne on the backs of low-wage workers standing in a sea of "Hard Times." Signs attached to the side of the raft list the average weekly salaries for workers in various industries: Clothing workers \$9, linen workers \$11, iron workers \$7, lumber workers \$6, leather workers \$7, paper workers \$6.

A little heavy-handed? Perhaps, but income inequality, wage stagnation, and alarm over the power of concentrated wealth are still very much on our minds today. Except that these days most of the workers would be employed in service industries, women would be standing shoulder to shoulder with men underneath the raft, and the wealthy would look a lot less rotund (thanks to private gyms and personal fitness trainers).

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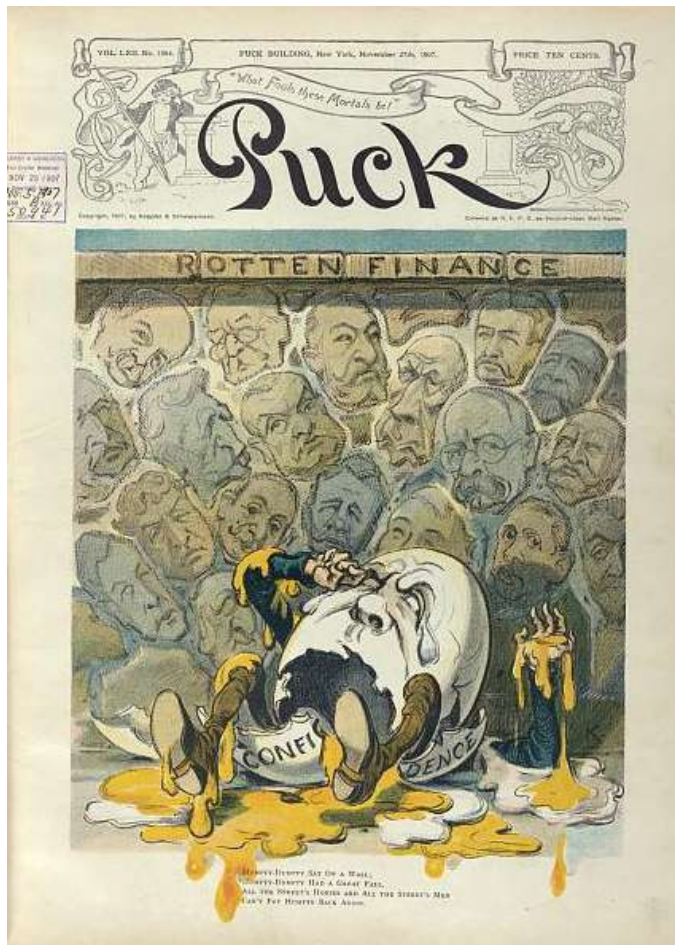
### Sharing the Loot (1906)

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-26032

Oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller, Jr. is one of the “pirates” gathered around an overflowing treasure chest that’s surrounded by bags of gold coins. The oil-and-treasure narrative persists to this day.

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The financial crisis of 2008 raised concerns about questionable financial practices – concerns that were equally strong during the early 1900s.



**“Rotten Finance” (1907)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-26222

[Slide 13]



**“Gulliver Cleveland and the Wall Street Brobdingnagians”**

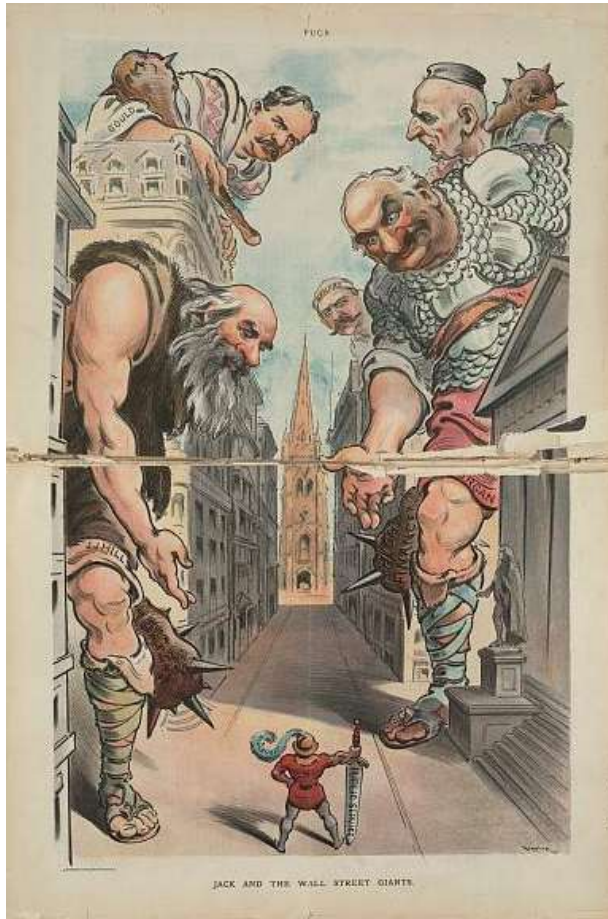
Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-26028

Doubts over the government’s ability and willingness to protect the public interest is nothing new. The “Brobdingnagians” depicted in this early 20<sup>th</sup> century image – Thomas F. Ryan, J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, and E.H. Harriman – don’t seem overly threatened by the diminutive government official shaking a stick at them.



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Imbalance between opposing interests can trigger a strong public reaction and a demand for change. That was the case in the early 1900s, when concern arose over the amount of wealth, power, and influence concentrated in the hands of a relative few.



**“Jack and the Wall Street Giants” (1904)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-25813

Standing in the middle of Wall Street and holding a sword labeled “Public Service,” President Theodore Roosevelt prepares to do battle with the Wall Street “ogres.” Among the ogres are the familiar figures of John D. Rockefeller and J.P. Morgan.

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**“Elisha Roosevelt Sicketh the Bears upon the Bad Boys of Wall Street”**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-26165

In this biblically-themed image, President Theodore Roosevelt and two bears labeled “Interstate Commerce Commission” and “Federal Courts” strike terror in the hearts of the Wall Street crowd.

Roosevelt was never timid about using the power of the federal government to protect the public interest ...

*“I regard this contest as one to determine who shall rule this free country—the people through their governmental agents, or a few ruthless and domineering men whose wealth makes them peculiarly formidable because they hide behind the breastworks of corporate organization.”*

Excerpt from a speech delivered by President Theodore Roosevelt  
At Pilgrim Memorial Monument, Provincetown, Massachusetts  
August 20, 1907 (in the aftermath of the financial panic of 1907)

[Slide 16]

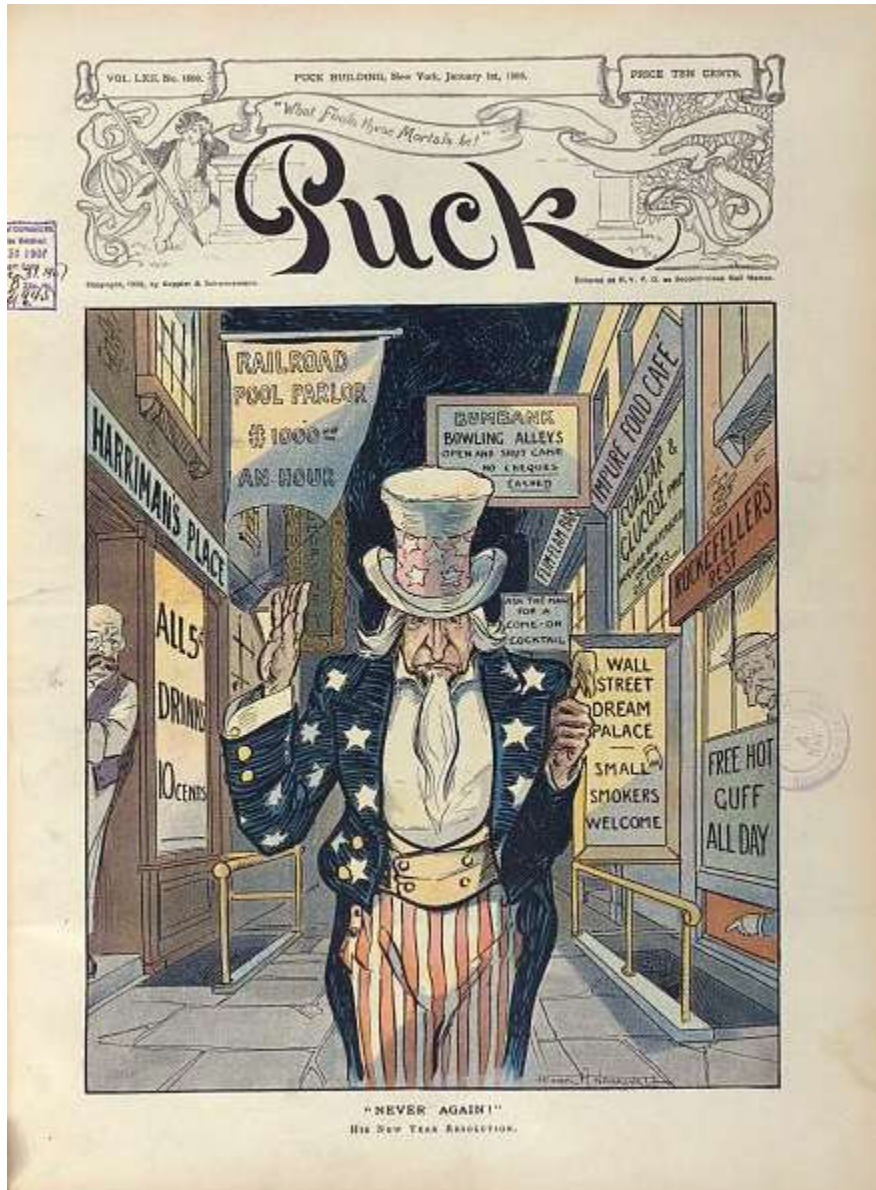


**“You Dirty Boy!”**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-26198

President Theodore Roosevelt, dressed as a washer-woman, scrubs a boy labeled “Flim Flam Finance” with soapy water from a tub labeled “Honesty Soap.” Note the faces of E.H. Harriman and John D. Rockefeller visible in the puddles of water on the floor.

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### **"Never Again!"**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-26232

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial meltdown, politicians and the public resolved to find ways of preventing future crises. But as this 1908 illustration shows, such resolutions were not without precedent. Note the signs that read: "Wall Street Dream Palace" and "All 5 Cent Drinks 10 Cents."

[Slide 18]

During the 2008 elections there was considerable mention of “socialism,” “the middle class,” and “small business” — none of which were new themes.

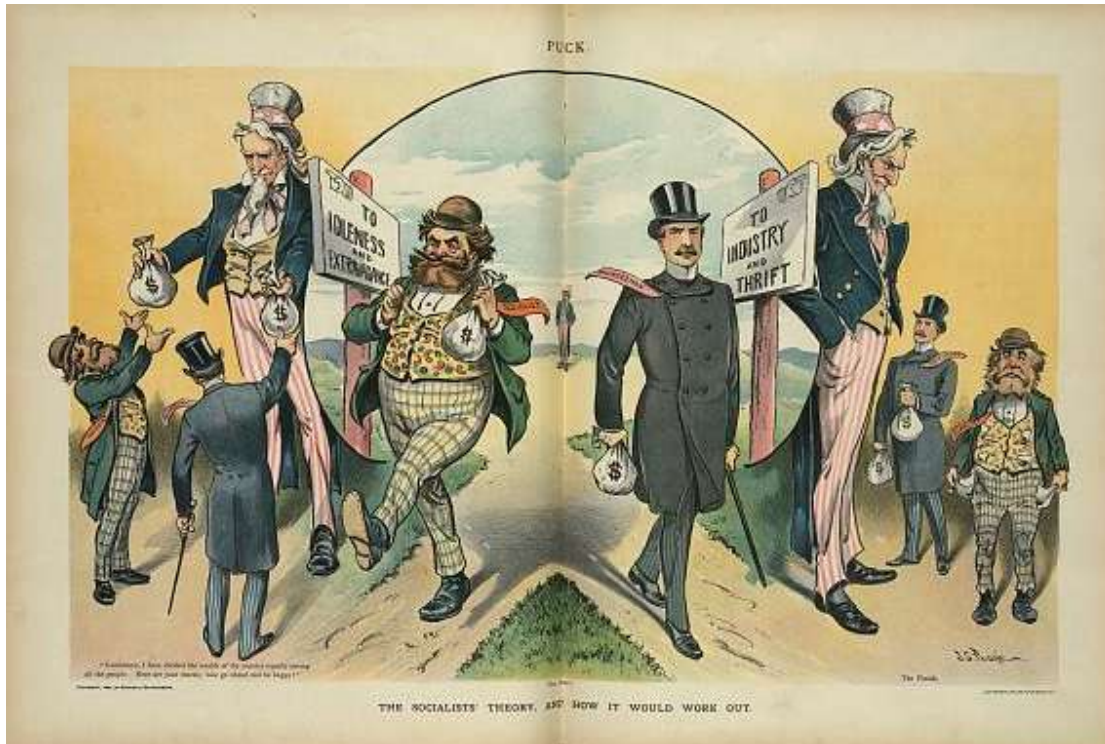


### “The Old Story” 1883

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-12999

Even in 1883, the Big Bad Wolf wore a top hat labeled “Socialism.”

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### “The Socialist Theory and How It Would Work Out” 1899

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-28604

In this 1899 print, Uncle Sam hands a bag of money to a man labeled “Socialist” and a bag of money to a man labeled “Businessman” before sending them on their way with these words: “Gentlemen, I have divided the wealth of the country equally among all the people. Here are your shares, now go ahead and be happy!” The socialist takes the path “To Idleness and Extravagance” while the businessman takes the path to “Industry and Thrift.”

**Spoiler Alert:** At the “Finish” the businessman has TWO bags of money and the socialist has empty pockets.

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### **The Monopoly Gang Defies the New Policeman on the Beat (1883)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-28408

Even in 1883, the health of small business was a concern.

The new policeman, labeled “New Chicago Anti-Monopoly Party,” appears to be no match for the gang of monopolists, most of whom are hostile to the interests of small business. A flag reads, “No Thoroughfare for Small Business Men,” and the injured or dead man lying in the middle of the street is identified as a “Small Business Man.”

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### **Middle class in peril (1906)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-26066

As for the imperiled middle class ... If this 1906 image is any guide, middle class Americans were in dire straits even back then. According to the Library of Congress summary that accompanies it, the image depicts "a man, woman, and infant wearing ragged clothing labeled 'The American Middle Class' sitting on a rock labeled 'Opportunity' above the rising waters of 'Centralized Wealth' in which sharks are circling."



[Slide 22]

During the Depression years of the 1930s, when unemployment approached 25 percent, falling out of the middle class was all too common.



**Unemployed men sitting on the sunny side of the San Francisco Public Library, still trying to keep up middle class appearances (1937)**

Photo by Dorothea Lange Image Source: FSA Collection, Library of Congress, LC-USF34-T01-016147-C

Many of the government programs instituted during the Depression years of the 1930s – federal deposit insurance, farm relief, the Civilian Conservation Corps, Social Security, unemployment insurance – were intended to have a direct and beneficial impact on Main Street. Other pieces of 1930s legislation were intended to rein in Wall Street and strengthen the financial system.

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### **Home Improvement in Suburbia (1960s)**

Image Source: Federal Reserve Archives

Politics, public opinion, and the economy go through cycles. Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as memories of Depression-era hardships faded and the middle class prospered, legislative efforts began to focus more on deregulating the financial industry. But in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008, also known as the Great Recession, public opinion seemed to swing back towards increased regulation.

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**Tents Belonging to Members of the Occupy Movement in Boston, Massachusetts (2011)**

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons

Shays' Rebellion, the opposing views of Hamilton and Jefferson, concern over corporate power and concentrated wealth, the perils facing small business and the middle class, government's role in protecting the public interest, debate over government's role in the economy ... Standing among the "Occupy Boston" tents in 2011, reading the protest signs, it would not have been difficult to follow the strands back through the past 200 years.

[Slide 1]

## Story Two

### Immigration: How wide should we open “The Golden Door”?

“Undocumented” ... “Path to citizenship” ... “Dream Act” ... The language is different than it was 100 years ago, but the national debate over immigration is no more contentious today than it was in the past.



**Statue of Liberty**, Photograph by Carol M. Highsmith

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-HS503-1206

[Slide 2]

### The New Colossus

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

Emma Lazarus, 1883

More than a century has passed since Emma Lazarus penned her tribute to the Statue of Liberty, yet Americans still can't agree on how wide to open "the golden door." Each new group of immigrants has changed America, and America has changed them, but the process hasn't always been easy or pleasant.

[Slide 3]



**Italian Immigrant Family Looking for Lost Baggage (1905)**, Photograph by Lewis W. Hine  
Image Source: George Eastman House

The story is a familiar one:

- 1) New immigrants arrive with high hopes and little else.
- 2) They get the cold shoulder from groups that came before them, yet they manage to carve out a place for themselves.
- 3) Then, with a few notable exceptions, they and their children turn around and treat new immigrants exactly as they themselves were treated.

[Slide 4]

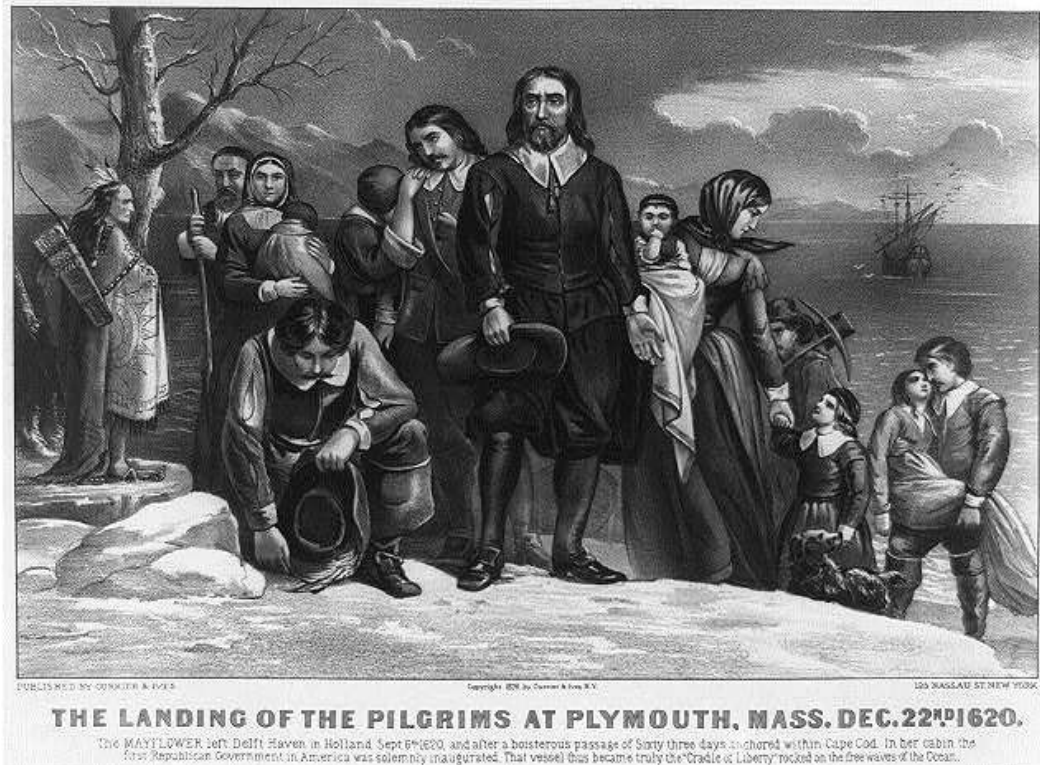


Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-3461

The pattern goes all the way back to the Pilgrims, who referred to themselves as the "Saints" and all others as "Strangers." Their goal was to create a community of like-minded souls, and they had little tolerance for those who did not share their beliefs. Although they tried their best to keep outsiders at arm's length, the realities of commerce ultimately forced the Saints to deal with the Strangers. And so it has always been, in every American community that's ever experienced a sizable influx of immigrants.

[Slide 5]



**“The immigrant: Is he an acquisition or a detriment?” (1903)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-3659

Even after 400 years, we still can't quite decide if we're "a nation of immigrants" or "a nation overrun by immigrants." But maybe that shouldn't come as a surprise, given that immigration is so intertwined with issues of economic anxiety and national identity.



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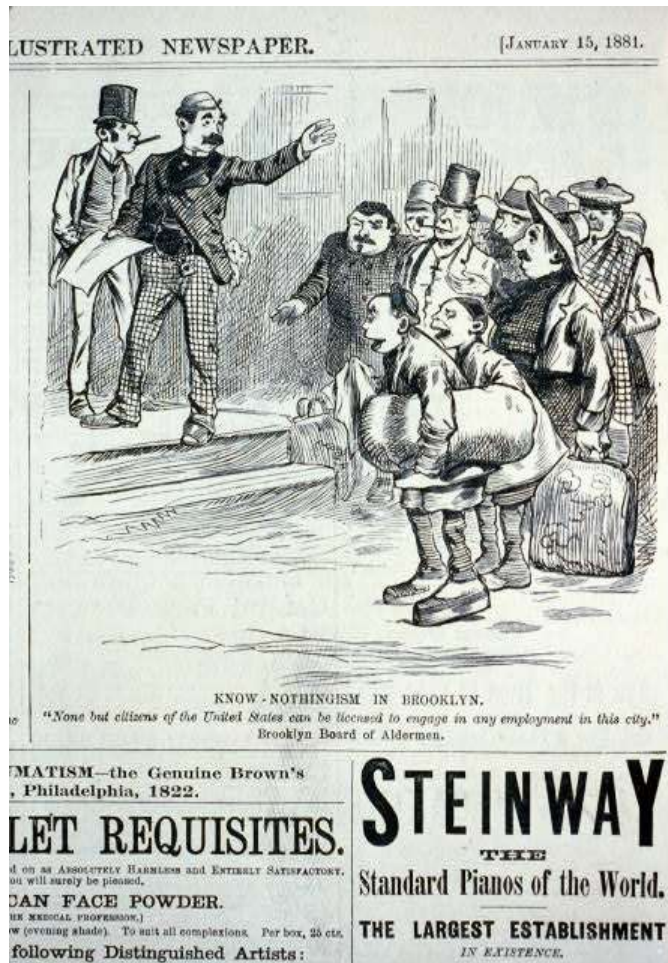


### **“Uncle Sam’s Lodging House” (1882)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-12317

The Library of Congress description that accompanies this image describes it as showing “an Irishman confronting Uncle Sam in a boarding house filled with laborers, immigrants from several countries who are attempting to sleep; the ‘Frenchman, Japanese, Negro, Russian, Italian, and German’ sleep peacefully. The ‘Irishman’ kicks up a row. He has thrown such bricks as ‘The Chinese must go,’ and ... ‘Irish independence’ at Uncle Sam and the female figure of liberty standing on the left. He disturbs a ‘Chinese’ man and an ‘Englishman,’ who are in the berths next to him.”

[Slide 7]



**"None but citizens of the United States can be licensed to engage in any employment in this city."**  
(1881), Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC2-761

This editorial cartoon shows the Brooklyn Board of Aldermen telling immigrants, "None but citizens of the United States can be licensed to engage in any employment in this city."

The tension between economics and ideology continues to play itself out in America's long-running debate over immigration. Every time a new ethnic group enters the mix, the points of conflict are broadly the same:

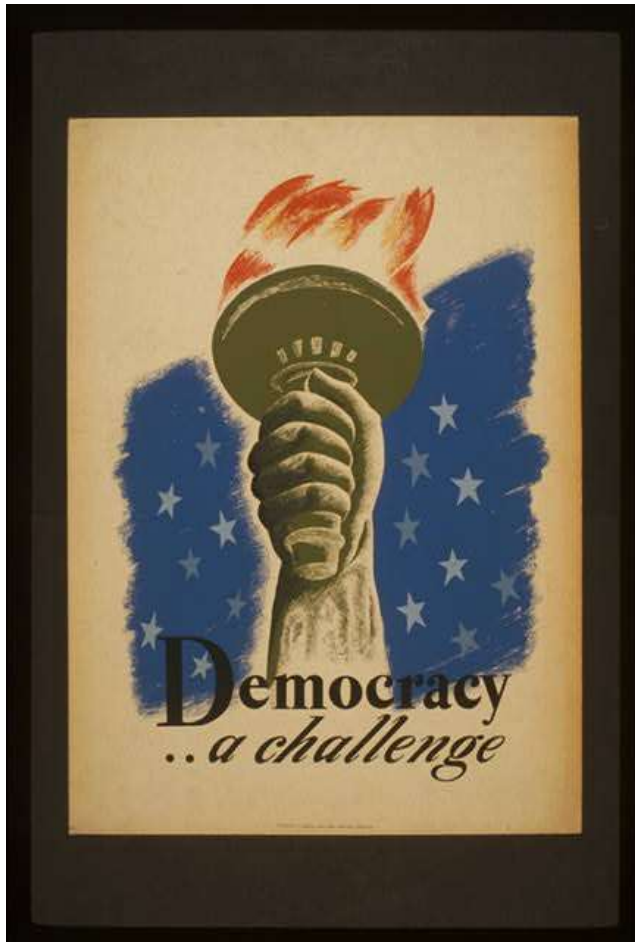
**Pro:** "Let them in! We need their labor."

**Con:** "Not so fast! They'll work for less and take our jobs"

**Pro:** "But they'll bring new energy and ideas!"

**Con:** "Maybe. But if we let too many of them in, they'll change our culture."

[Slide 8]



**Illinois WPA Art Project Poster (1930s)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC2-5571

The difficult task of formulating U.S. immigration rests with the voters and their elected representatives in Congress.

[Slide 9]



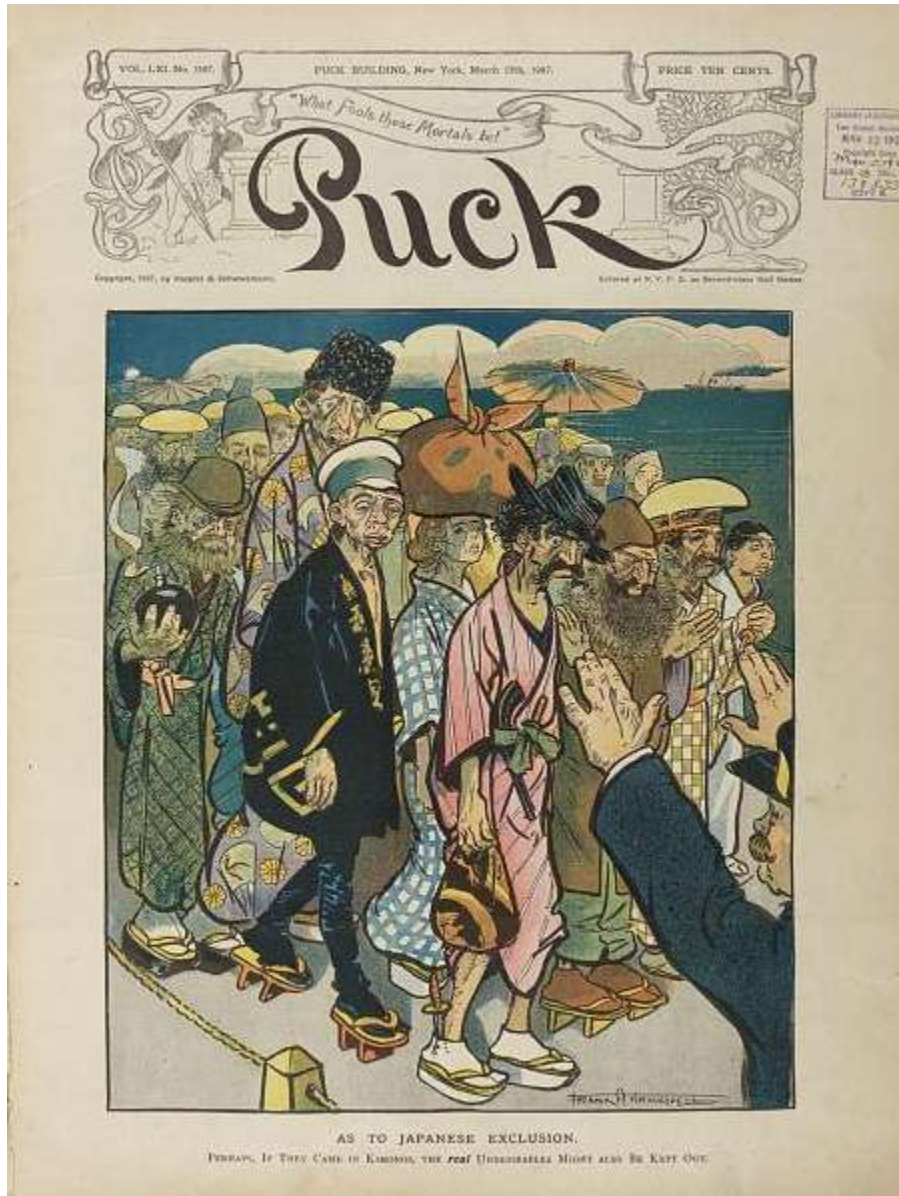
### **"Where would we be?" (1898)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-28687

Over the years, there have been many legislative attempts at immigration reform.

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (labeled "A.D. 1620") cowers before a Native American who is about to hit him with a club wrapped in papers that read "An Act to Prevent the Country from being Overrun by Foreigners."

[Slide 10]

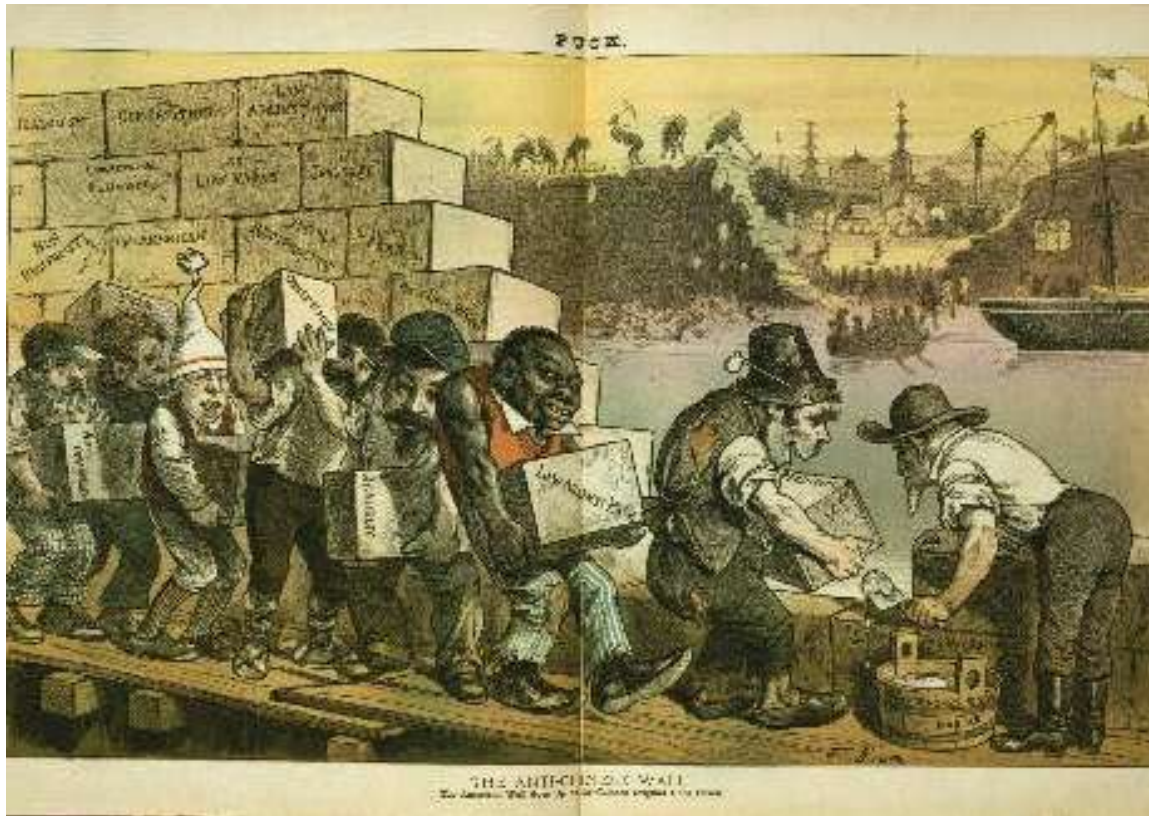


**“Perhaps, if they came in kimonos the *real* undesirables might be kept out.” (1907)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-26148

Legislation sometimes set racial and ethnic quotas. The Immigration Act of 1924, for example, completely excluded immigrants from Asia. This image depicts “a group of ragged anarchists dressed in kimonos, pretending to be Japanese immigrants” being stopped at the border by U.S. immigration officials. It suggests that the “real undesirables” – anarchists – would be kept out of the country if they looked like Asians.

[Slide 11]



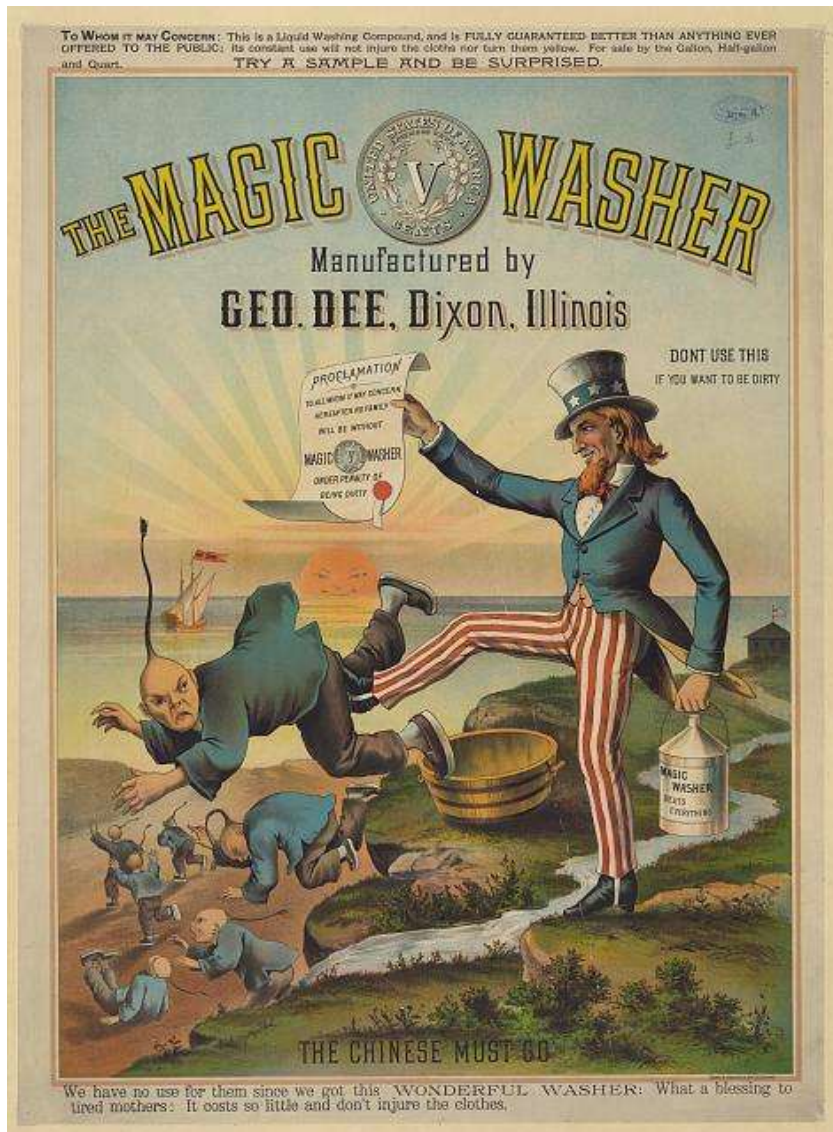
**“The anti-Chinese wall – The American wall goes up as the Chinese original goes down.” (1882)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-4138

Beefed up barriers along the U.S. border with Mexico may be a fairly recent measure, but the idea of raising barriers to control immigration goes back well over a century.

According to the accompanying Library of Congress description, this image depicts “laborers, among whom are Irishmen, an African American, a Civil War veteran, Italian, Frenchman, and a Jew, building a wall against the Chinese. Congressional mortar is used to mount blocks of prejudice, non-reciprocity, laws against race, fear, etc. Across the sea, a ship flying the American flag enters China, as the Chinese knock down their own wall and permit trade of such goods as rice, tea, and silk.”

[Slide 12]



### Using Anti-Immigrant Prejudice to Sell Laundry Soap (1886)

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-2045

Anti-immigrant prejudice exists today, but it is nothing new. In this 1886 advertisement for laundry soap, Uncle Sam, holding a proclamation and a can of "Magic Washer," is kicking several Chinese out of the United States. The caption reads: "We have no use for them since we got this WONDERFUL WASHER. What a blessing to tired mothers. It costs so little and don't [sic] injure the clothes."

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### **“Captains Courageous” (1903)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-25756

Despite the prevalence of anti-immigrant prejudice, in the end, what Lincoln referred to as “the better angels of our nature” have usually won out.

This image shows President Theodore Roosevelt firing a lifeline to a ship in distress on rough seas. The lifeline spells out the word "Tolerance." Dark clouds labeled "Prejudice" are overhead, but the word "Liberty" embedded in the rainbow to the left suggests that the storm may be clearing.



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**"Welcome to All!" (1880)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-954

Uncle Sam welcomes immigrants aboard the "U.S. Ark of Refuge."

[Slide 15]



Although 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans still grapple with the complexities of immigration, “the golden door” is now open to a broader range of people. The law no longer sets quotas based on race or national origin.

[Slide 1]

## Story Three

### Economic Growth vs. Environmental Protection: Do We Have to Choose Between Them?

There's no shortage of contentious environmental issues in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century: Keystone Pipeline ... "fracking" ... "Drill, Baby, Drill!" ... the mere mention of "climate change." But these are just the latest flare-ups in the longstanding tension between environmental protection and economic development. In one form or another, the debate has been going on since Christopher Columbus first set foot in the New World.

When Europeans first laid eyes on the New World they saw a verdant place brimming with opportunity. In their view, the natural world was a place to be tamed and exploited with little regard for future consequences. Wealth, after all, was scarce, and the land seemed inexhaustible.



#### “Columbus Taking Possession of the New Country”

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC2-1687

[Slide 2]



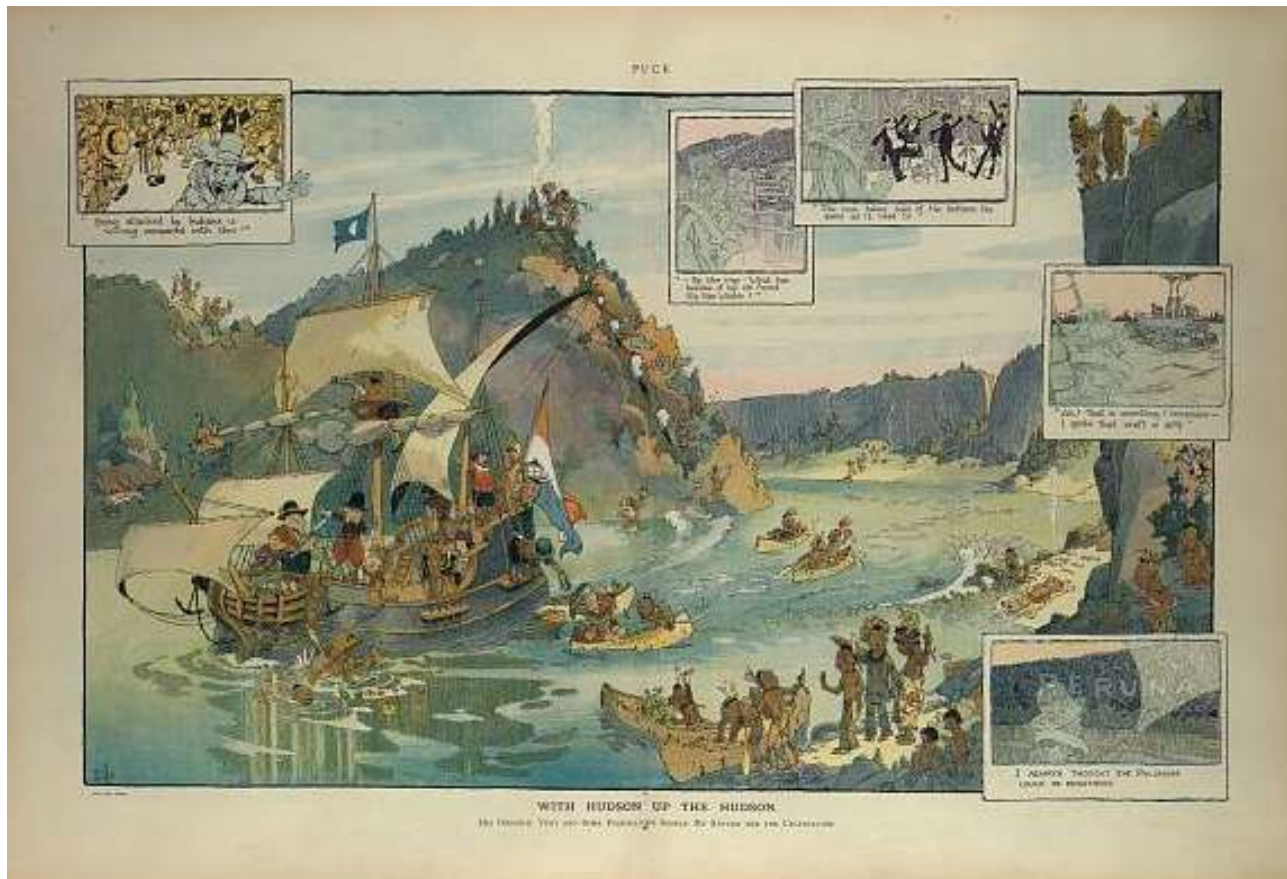
Artist: Charles De Wolf Brownell, 1862

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons

*“It is hard now to imagine, but it is a matter of record that a mid-eighteenth-century mariner approaching the American strand could detect the fragrance of the pine trees about 60 leagues, or 180 nautical miles, from land.”*

Richard Hofstadter  
*America at 1750*

[Slide 3]



### “With Hudson up the Hudson”

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-26414

In this 1909 illustration, Henry Hudson and the crew of the *Half Moon* are sailing up the Hudson River and trading with Native Americans along the way. It also depicts scenes of what Hudson might have witnessed if he had returned 300 years later for the Hudson-Fulton Celebration.

*“Most of the big shore places were closed now and there were hardly any lights except the shadowy, moving glow of a ferryboat across the Sound. And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors’ eyes — a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby’s house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.”*

F. Scott Fitzgerald,  
*The Great Gatsby*

[Slide 4]

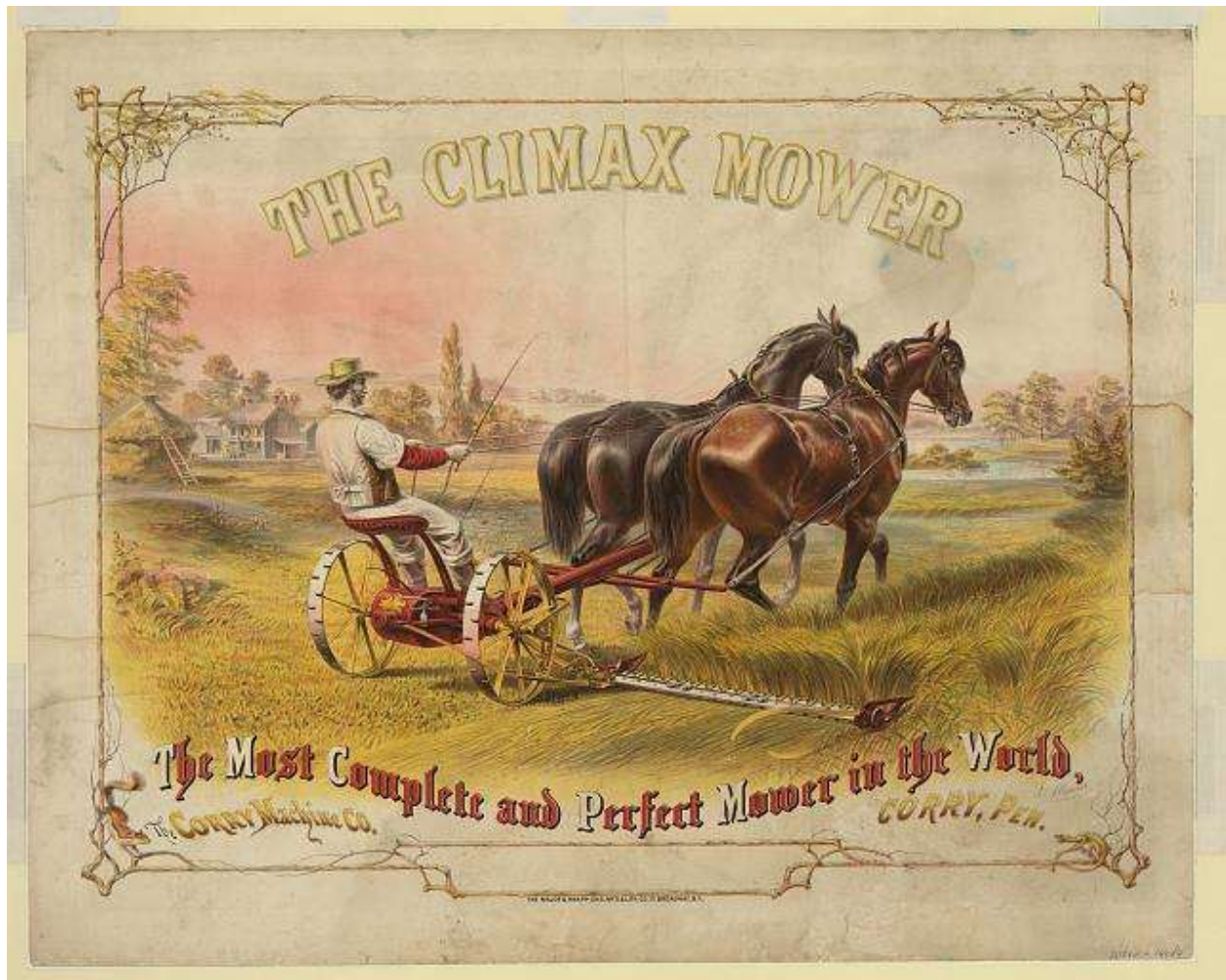
In its early years, the United States was a sparsely populated, rural nation. According to the U.S. Census of 1800, almost 94 percent of Americans resided in places with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants. Many lived on small farms, grew their own food, built their own shelter, made their own clothes, and sometimes earned extra income by producing textiles or handicrafts. But for most there was no such thing as a "steady income." Even in the best of times, cash was scarce and life was hard.



**The Family Farm (1786)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-31153

[Slide 5]



**Advertisement for Corry Machine Company's "Most Complete and Perfect Mower in the World"**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-2340

Life changed quickly and drastically when the Industrial Revolution crossed the Atlantic and arrived in North America during the early 1800s. With machinery and scientific techniques, farmers were able to produce greater yields with less labor. Farming was on its way to becoming a more industrial endeavor.

[Slide 6]

At the same time, production of goods shifted from households and small workshops to large mills and factories, where labor-saving machinery and new ways of organizing work made it possible to produce things in greater quantities and at a lower cost.



**Shoemakers crafting shoes and boots by hand**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-95355



**Lower Mills Village, MA: Large Mill Buildings Situated to Harness the Power of Swiftly Flowing Water**

Image Source: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lower Mills MA.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lower_Mills_MA.jpg)



[Slide 7]

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century and much of the 20<sup>th</sup>, smoke from factory stacks was a sign of prosperity rather than pollution. There were no environmental regulations and few zoning laws. Factory owners and factory workers all lived under the plumes and saw little or no harm in doing so.



**Needham Heights, Massachusetts (1887)**

Image Credit: Library of Congress Panoramic Map Collection

[Slide 8]

Human activity – hunting, farming, logging, and industrial development – altered the landscape. By the mid-1800s, 60 to 80 percent of New England had been cleared for farmland or firewood.



Pre-Settlement Forest – New England, 1700



An Early Settler Clears a Homestead – New England, 1740



Cleared New England Farmland – New England, 1830



Abandoned New England Farm – 1850

Image Source: Harvard Forest, Fisher Museum

[Slide 9]

Until the mid-1800s, Americans gave little thought to conserving resources or preserving the environment. Their main concerns were providing for the basic needs of daily life and accumulating wealth when the opportunity presented itself. The notion of protecting “endangered species” would have been inconceivable to most.



Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC2-3482

[Slide 10]

In the minds of most 19<sup>th</sup> century Americans, the beauty of trees lay in their potential for profit.



Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-67624

[Slide 11]

Most 19<sup>th</sup> century Americans saw a limitless continent, blessed with inexhaustible resources. New opportunities always lay just over the next horizon. Or so it seemed.

**PRODUCTS WILL PAY FOR LAND AND IMPROVEMENTS!**

# MILLIONS OF ACRES

View on the Big Bluff, between Cambria and Crest, representing Valley and Rolling Prairie Land in Nebraska.

**IOWA AND NEBRASKA**

## LANDS

FOR SALE ON **10 YEARS CREDIT**  
BY THE  
**Burlington & Missouri River R.R. Co.**

**AT 6 PER CT. INTEREST AND LOW PRICES.**  
Only One-Seventh of Principal Due Annually, beginning Four Years after purchase.  
20 PER CENT. DEDUCTED FROM 10 YEARS PRICE, FOR CASH.

**LAND EXPLORING TICKETS SOLD**  
and Cost allowed in First Interest paid, on Land bought in 90 days from date of ticket.  
*Those our Land Buyers GET A FREE PASS in the State where the Land bought is located.*  
*Those TAKE MORE BETTER at \$2, than to pre-empt United States Land at \$2.50 per Acre.*  
EXTRAORDINARY INDUCEMENTS on FREIGHT and PASSAGE are AFFORDED TO PURCHASERS and THEIR FAMILIES.

Address **GEO. S. HARRIS, LAND COMMISSIONER,**  
or **T. H. LEAVITT, Ass't Land Comm'r,** Burlington, Iowa.

Or apply to

FREE ROOMS for buyers to board themselves are provided at Burlington and Lincoln.

CIRCULARS are supplied GRATIS for distribution in ORGANIZING COLONIES and to induce individuals to emigrate WEST.

A SECTIONAL MAP, showing exact location of our IOWA LANDS is sent for 20 Cents, and of NEBRASKA LANDS for 30 Cents.

Image Source: Library of Congress, Portfolio 134, Folder 13

[Slide 12]

But by the mid-1800s, divergent voices were starting to question the prevailing relationship between humans and nature. Some saw the natural world as a place of refuge, with value that went beyond the potential to generate wealth.

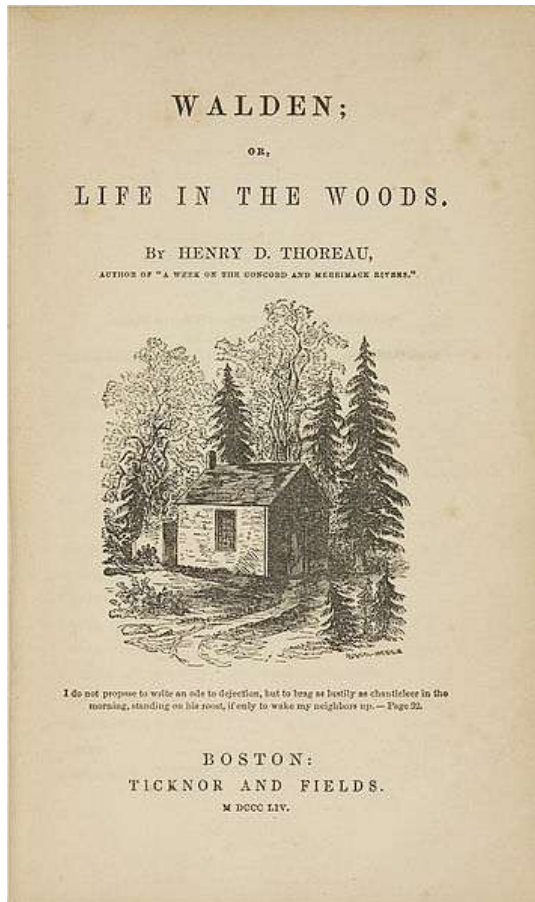


Image Source: Wikimedia Commons and [www.walden.org](http://www.walden.org)

*"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion."*

Henry David Thoreau  
*Walden* (1854)

[Slide 13]



**Buffalo Hunter, 1897**

Image Source: Library of Congress

Other 19<sup>th</sup> century voices expressed a sense that something had been lost in the headlong rush to tame nature. ...

*"The buffalo is gone, and of all his millions nothing is left but bones. Tame cattle and fences of barbed wire have supplanted his vast herds and boundless grazing grounds. Those discordant serenaders, the wolves that howled at evening about the traveller's camp-fire, have succumbed to arsenic and hushed their savage music. ... The rattlesnakes have grown bashful and retiring. The mountain lion shrinks from the face of man, and even grim "Old Ephraim," the grizzly bear, seeks the seclusion of his dens and caverns."*

Francis Parkman, *Oregon Trail*  
Preface to the illustrated edition, 1894  
(Originally published in 1849)



[Slide 14]

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a fully formed conservation movement had taken shape in America. Its members worked to protect public lands and establish national parks.



**Sunset in Yellowstone Park, 1897**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-90713

[Slide 15]

City dwellers began to recognize the benefits of urban parks and green space.



**Boston Public Garden, circa 1930-1945 (established 1837)**

Image Source: Boston Public Library [http://www.flickr.com/photos/boston\\_public\\_library/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/boston_public_library/)

[Slide 16]

The conservation movement carried over into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but when Americans faced a choice between conservation and development, more often than not they chose development. One epic clash pitted conservationist John Muir against the City of San Francisco and the federal government in a fight to decide whether the water needs of an urban population would prevail over the desire to preserve a scenic wonder. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake and fire of 1906, San Francisco's city government was seeking to create a more reliable water source by damming the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park. John Muir, who had fought so hard to establish the park, vehemently opposed the project, but in 1913 Congress gave the needed approval to build a dam on federal land.



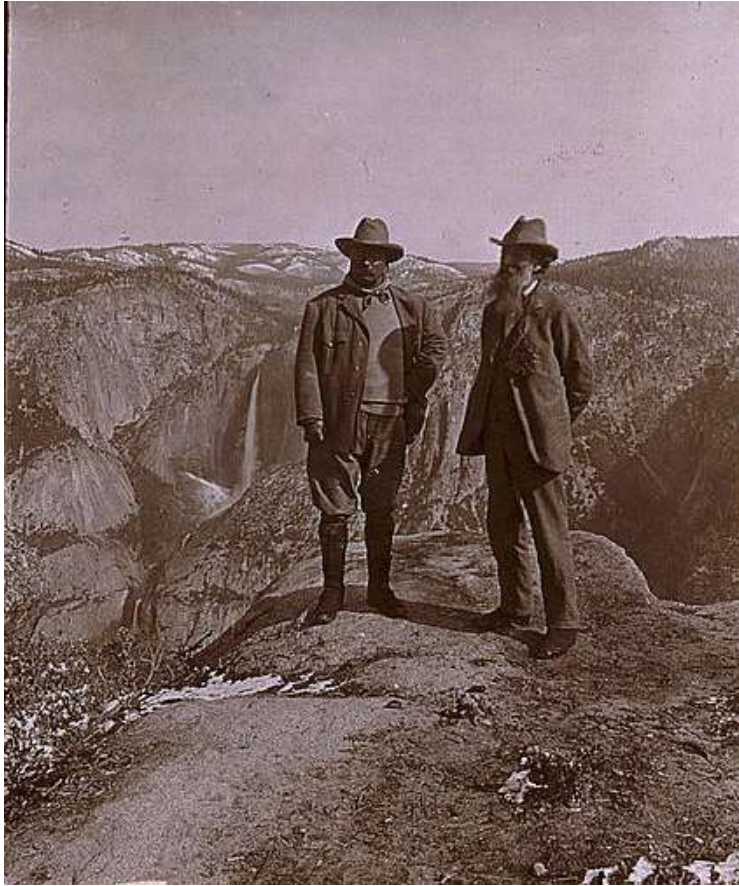
**Hetch Hetchy Valley before the dam was built ...**



**And a view from the same vantage point, after the dam was built.**

Image Source for both: Wikimedia Commons [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hetch\\_Hetchy\\_Valley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hetch_Hetchy_Valley)

[Slide 17]



**President Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir on Glacier Point, Yosemite Valley (1903)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-4698

*“That anyone would try to destroy [Hetch Hetchy] seems; incredible; but sad experience shows that there are people good enough and bad enough for anything. The proponents of the dam scheme bring forward a lot of bad arguments to prove that the only righteous thing to do with the people’s parks is to destroy them bit by bit as they are able. Their arguments are curiously like those of the devil, devised for the destruction of the first garden. . . .”*

*“These temple destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism, seem to have a perfect contempt for Nature, and, instead of lifting their eyes to the God of the mountains, lift them to the Almighty Dollar. “*

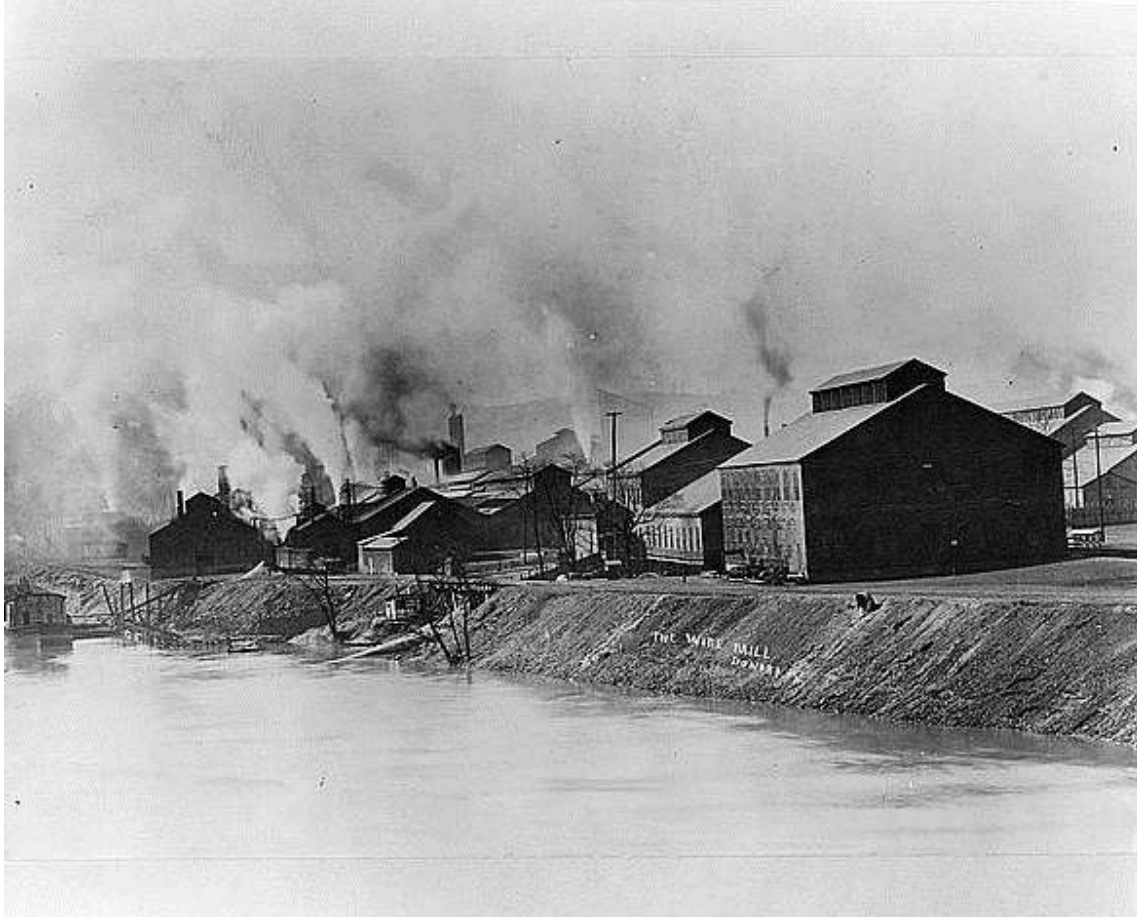
*“Dam Hetch Hetchy! As well dam for water-tanks the people’s cathedrals and churches, for no holier temple has ever been consecrated by the heart of man.”*

John Muir  
*The Yosemite* (1912)

Credit: History Matters <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5720/>

[Slide 18]

Industrial growth accelerated during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with an attendant increase in air and water pollution.



**Donora, PA (1910)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-131258

[Slide 19]



**Carnegie Furnaces, Braddock, PA (1905)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-D401-18671

[Slide 20]



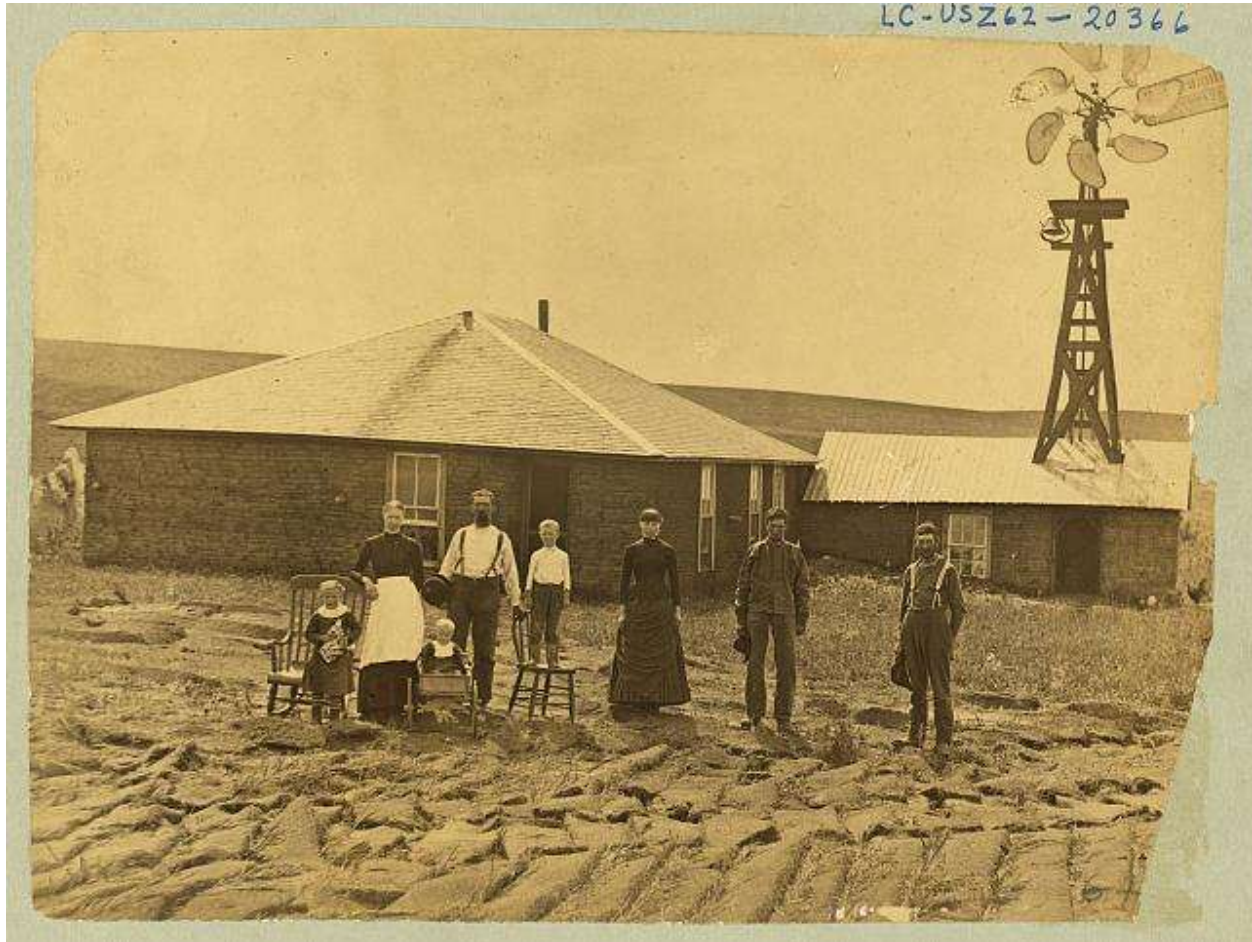
**Edgar Thomson Works, Braddock, PA (1908)**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-D4-15584

Notice how close the houses are to the steelworks.

[Slide 21]

Rural America was subject to its own set of environmental stresses. Farmers moved into the Plains states, broke the sod, and plowed under the tall grasses. Disaster followed a few decades later when severe drought triggered choking dust storms.



**Farm Family Standing in Front of Their Sod House, Nebraska, 1880s**

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-20366



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**Dust Bowl, 1936**, Photo by Arthur Rothstein  
Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USF34-004051-E

[Slide 23]



**Dust Bowl Child, 1936**, Photo by Arthur Rothstein  
Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USF34-004046-E

[Slide 24]



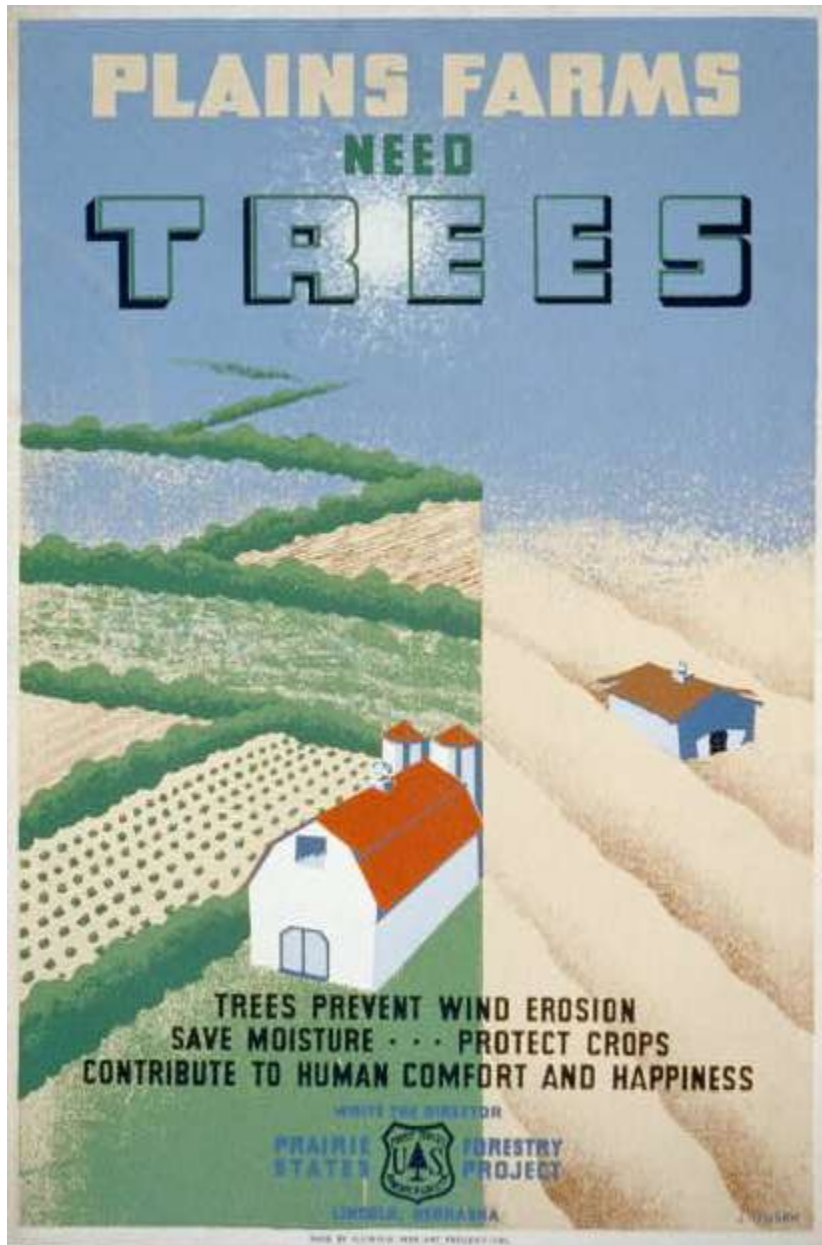
**"Drought Refugees from Oklahoma Working in the Pea Fields of California," 1935**

Photo by Dorothea Lange

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USF344-001608-ZB

[Slide 25]

During the 1930s, the federal government encouraged conservation programs intended to reverse environmental damage. Those programs enjoyed fairly broad public support.



**"Plains Farms Need Trees"** (Illinois WPA Art Project Poster)

Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZC2-815

[Slide 26]

Another set of environmental concerns arose during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Air pollution, worsened in urban areas, largely because of the sharp increase in car ownership,



**New York City Smog, 1953** Photo by Walter Albertin  
Image Source: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-114346

[Slide 27]



**Rush Hour, 1970s**

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons

[Slide 28]

Water pollution, a serious problem even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, intensified during the 20<sup>th</sup>, made worse by the increased discharge of industrial waste, toxic chemicals, and untreated sewage.



### 19<sup>th</sup> Century Water Pollution

Image Source: iStockphoto



### Chemical Plant Discharges Wastewater into Ohio's Cuyahoga River (1973)

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons

[Slide 29]

The transition from “conservation” to “environmentalism” might well have begun with the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, which drew public attention to the misuse and potential long-term hazards of synthetic pesticides such as DDT. In the ten years following the publication of Ms. Carson’s book, Congress approved:

- The Clean Air Act (1963)
- The Water Quality Act (1965)
- The Endangered Species Act (1967)
- The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968)
- The National Environmental Policy Act (1970)
- The Clean Water Act (1972)

In 1970, President Nixon and the Congress worked together to establish the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and in 1972, the EPA banned DDT use in the United States.



**Discarded Pesticide Containers**

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons



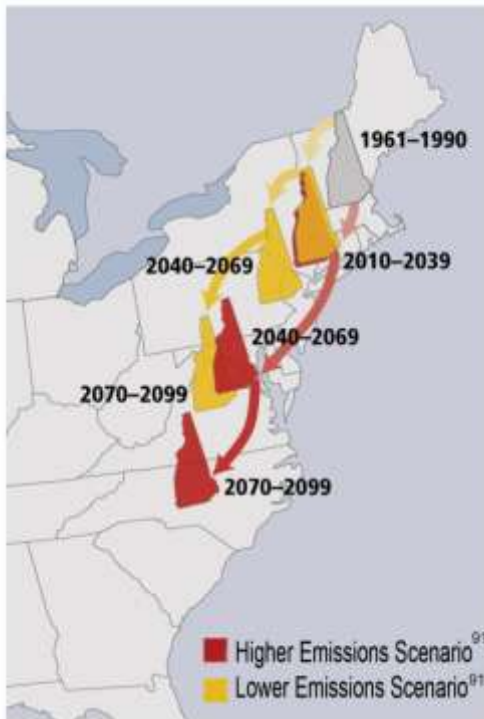
[Slide 30]



Image Source: Wikimedia Commons

[Slide 31]

Disagreement over the appropriate level of environmental legislation and regulation continues and, if anything, seems to have intensified since the 1970s. On the issue of climate change, for example, there's little Congressional consensus and no comprehensive federal legislation.



### Migrating State Climate

“Changes in average summer heat index—a measure of how hot it actually feels, given temperature and humidity—could strongly affect quality of life in the future for residents of the Granite State. Red arrows track what summers could feel like in New Hampshire over the course of the century under the higher emissions scenario. Yellow arrows track what summers in New Hampshire could feel like under the lower emissions scenario.”

Image and excerpt from: [Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast](#), Union of Concerned Scientists, 2006

[Slide 32]



**Suspension Bridge – New Portland, Maine**

Image Source: Library of Congress, HAER ME, 13-NEWPO, 1—15 (CT)

The inherent tension between environmental protection and economic development is nothing new. But what may be new is that both sides have shown signs of greater willingness to bridge the gap between them when their interests coincide – particularly at the local and state level.

In northern Maine, for example, the Maine Woods Initiative has brought together the Appalachian Mountain Club (America’s oldest outdoor recreation and conservation association) and local groups that represent economic development interests in Maine’s 100-Mile Wilderness region. Their aim is to address “regional ecological and economic needs through outdoor recreation, resource protection, sustainable forestry, and community partnerships,” and by most accounts they’re succeeding.

## Find Out More ...

### Story One

#### **Main Street vs. Wall Street: How big is too big and how much is too much?**

An American Rebellion, Sparked by Tough Times, NPR, 2011

<http://www.npr.org/2011/08/28/139946992/an-american-rebellion-sparked-by-tough-times>

The “Horrid and Unnatural Rebellion” Of Daniel Shays, [www.americanheritage.com](http://www.americanheritage.com), 1966

<http://www.americanheritage.com/content/%E2%80%9Chorrid-and-unnatural-rebellion%E2%80%9D-daniel-shays>

*Alexander Hamilton*, American Experience, PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/hamilton/>

*Thomas Jefferson*, a film by Ken Burns, PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/jefferson/>

*Historical Beginnings*, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

<http://www.bostonfed.org/about/pubs/historical-beginnings/index.htm>

*Plutocrats Then and Now*, Moyers and Company, PBS

<http://billmoyers.com/content/plutocrats-then-now/>

*The Theodore Roosevelt Web Book*, the Theodore Roosevelt Association

[http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/TR%20Web%20Book/TR\\_CD\\_to\\_HTML01.html](http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/TR%20Web%20Book/TR_CD_to_HTML01.html)

Great Depression Curriculum Unit, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

[http://www.stlouisfed.org/education\\_resources/great-depression-curriculum-unit/](http://www.stlouisfed.org/education_resources/great-depression-curriculum-unit/)

*Middle class at a crossroads, not for the first time*, Marketplace, American Public Media

<http://www.marketplace.org/topics/wealth-poverty/middle-class-photo-project/middle-class-crossroads-not-first-time>

### Story Two

#### **Immigration: How wide should we open “The Golden Door”?**

*Becoming American: The Chinese Experience*, Bill Moyers, PBS, <http://www.pbs.org/becomingamerican/>

Citizen Challenge, American Challenge, PBS  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/hamilton/sfeature/test.html>

*Destination America*, PBS, 2005 <http://www.pbs.org/destinationamerica/>  
Foreign Born Population in the United States, 2010, United States Census Bureau, May 2012  
<http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/acs-19.pdf>

*Immigration to the United States, 1789-1930*, Harvard University Library Open Collections Program  
<http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/immigration/>

The Immigration Act of 1924, Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State  
<http://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/ImmigrationAct>

## Story Three

### Economic Growth vs. Environmental Protection: Do We Have to Choose Between Them?

The Walden Woods Project  
<http://www.walden.org/thoreau>

Panoramic Maps, 1847-1929, Library of Congress  
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/pmhtml/panhome.html>

American Landscape and Architectural Design 1850-1920  
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/landscape/olmsted.html>

*The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, a film by Ken Burns, PBS  
<http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/>

John Muir  
<http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/people/historical/muir/>

Theodore Roosevelt  
<http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/people/historical/roosevelt/>

*The Dust Bowl*, a film by Ken Burns, PBS  
<http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/dustbowl/>

Rachel Carson  
<http://rachelcarson.org/>

Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day: The Making of the Modern Environmental Movement

<http://nelsearthday.net/>

EPA History, the Environmental Protection Agency

<http://www2.epa.gov/aboutepa/epa-history>

The Maine Woods Initiative, Appalachian Mountain Club

<http://www.outdoors.org/conservation/wherewework/maine/index.cfm>