AMERICA IN THE 1830s—
CHANGING SO FAST,
IT SEEMS TO BE FLYING APART.
GUSTAV BEAUMONT
AND ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE
ARE AMONG THE MANY
VISITING EUROPEANS
FASCINATED BY THE COUNTRY.
TOCQUEVILLE COMES TO AMERICA.
HE CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT.
HE SAYS, "A RELIGIOUS INSANITY
IS PREVALENT IN THE UNITED STATES."
RELIGIOUS REVIVALS HELP AMERICANS FEEL
THE CHAOS OF CHANGE.
AT THE ESSENCE OF IT IS THIS NOTION
THAT MAN IS A FREE MORAL AGENT.
THINK ABOUT THAT.
YOU KNOW, YOU MOVE AWAY FROM THE CONCEPT
OF PREDESTINATION;
YOU MOVE AWAY FROM THE CONCEPT THAT IT HAS ALL BEEN DETERMINED;
ALL HAS BEEN DECIDED;
INTO... FREE MORAL AGENCY, INDIVIDUALISM.
THAT YOU CAN BECOME WHAT YOU NEED TO BECOME
YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR HEART, YOU CAN DETERMINE YOUR OWN FATE.
THAT'S A POWERFUL CATALYTIC FACTOR FOR THE REFORM MOVEMENT
THE SENSE OF INDIVIDUAL SALVATION.
I THINK IT'S PRETTY CLEAR, RIGHT
THAT WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND THEM WITHOUT IT.
TODAY, "THE REFORM IMPULSE" ON A BIOGRAPHY OF AMERICA.
Captioning sponsored by ANNENBERG/CPB
IN THE SPRING OF 1831 ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE AND GUSTAV BEAUMONT ARRIVED IN NEW YORK AFTER A PASSAGE OF 38 DAYS.
The French bureaucrats had come to inspect...
THE PENITENTIARY SYSTEM OF AMERICA.

THE VOYAGE, TOCQUEVILLE SAID, LEFT HIM SICK AND DEPRESSED BUT HIS COMPANION FELT WELL AND CHEERFUL.

THE TWO WERE PART OF A STREAM OF FOREIGN VISITORS COMING TO AMERICA TO CHECK ON THE PULSE OF THIS NEW NATION.

TO EXAMINE THIS EXPERIMENT IN A NOVEL FORM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH NO ONE THOUGHT WOULD ENDURE.

THEY ARRIVED AT A TIME OF MOMENTOUS SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CHANGES IN AMERICA.

THE COUNTRY WAS SUFFERING FROM GROWTH PAINS.

THE POPULATION OF THE MAJOR CITIES ALONG THE EASTERN SEABOARD HAD TRIPLED AND QUADRUPLED WITHIN DECADES.

NEW YORK ALONE WENT FROM 60,000 IN 1800 TO OVER A MILLION BY THE 1850s.

IMMIGRATION HELPED FUEL MUCH OF THIS GROWTH.

TOCQUEVILLE AND BEAUMONT ARRIVED AT THE MOMENT IMMIGRATION BEGAN TO SOAR.

THE PROPORTION OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE POPULATION ROSE NEARLY SIX-FOLD BY 1860.

THESE NEW IMMIGRANTS CAME MAINLY FROM IRELAND AND THE GERMAN STATES WHERE THE POTATO BLIGHT HAD DESTROYED THE FOOD SUPPLY.

AND ECONOMIC CHANGES CREATED A SURPLUS POPULATION.

THESE IMMIGRANTS WERE POOR AND THE VAST MAJORITY OF THEM WERE CATHOLIC.

THEY TRIGGERED THE ANXIETIES OF AMERICANS WHO COMPETED FOR JOBS AND WHO IMAGINED A SECRET CATHOLIC CONSPIRACY TO OVERTHROW THE PROTESTANT REPUBLIC.

AS A RESULT, THE CITIES OFTEN ERUPTED IN ETHNIC AND RACIAL VIOLENCE.
THE SOCIETY ALSO SEEMED TO BE IN MOTION.
THE PUSH WEST INTO UNSETTLED LANDS BEGAN FROM ALMOST THE MOMENT EUROPEANS TOUCHED AMERICAN SHORES.
THE EXPLOSION IN TURNPIKE CANAL AND RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION REDUCED TRAVEL TIMES AND MADE MILLIONS OF ACRES OF LAND AVAILABLE TO MIGRANTS.
"AMERICANS," ONE COMMENTATOR THOUGHT "HAD MANAGED NOTHING LESS THAT TO OBLITERATE TIME AND SPACE."
TO BE SURE, AMERICANS WERE ON THE MOVE BUT NOT EVERYONE AGREED ON THE DIRECTION OF THE NATION AND THE ROLE THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PLAY IN ITS DEVELOPMENT.
TWO MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES EMERGED AND THEY CAME INTO CONFLICT WITH ONE ANOTHER ADDING TO THE GENERAL SENSE OF CHAOS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY.
THE DEMOCRATS WERE LED BY ANDREW JACKSON OF TENNESSEE. HE WAS THE FIRST PRESIDENT OUTSIDE OF MASSACHUSETTS OR VIRGINIA, THE FIRST OUTSIDE OF THE ORIGINAL 13 STATES.
DESCIBED BY HIS OPPONENTS AS A ROARING, ROLLICKING GAMECOCKING, HORSE RACING, CARD PLAYING, MISCHIEVOUS FELLOW HE USHERED IN A DEMOCRATIC AGE OF POLITICS ADDING TO THE GENERAL SENSE OF CHAOS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY.
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AN AGE THAT WAS CHARACTERIZED BY MASS MEETINGS TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES.
BY CONVENTIONS TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES.
THE DISINTERESTED STATESMEN

OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA

BUT THEY WERE MEN WITH INTERESTS IN PURSUIT OF POWER.

THE DEMOCRATS HELD AN AGRICULTURAL VISION

OF A LAND-HOLDING REPUBLIC OF INDEPENDENT FARMERS.

THE NEED WAS FOR TERRITORIAL EXPANSION TO SUSTAIN SUCH A VISION.

IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE THAT JEFFERSON, A DEMOCRAT

ENGINEERED THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE

OR THAT ANOTHER DEMOCRAT, JOHN L. O'SULLIVAN

GAVE THE NAME "MANIFEST DESTINY" TO THE WESTWARD MOVEMENT.

HERE WAS A VISION OF PREORDAINED MISSION THAT WOULD LEAD THOUSANDS WEST AND CREATE THE CONDITIONS

FOR SECTIONAL CONFLICT.

THE HUNGER FOR LAND BECAME SO RAVENOUS THAT STATE GOVERNMENTS

COMPELLED THE REMOVAL OF THE SOUTHEASTERN INDIAN TRIBES--


FROM THEIR LONG-ESTABLISHED HOMELANDS

IN GEORGIA AND ALABAMA.

ON THE TRAIL OF TEARS WEST, THOUSANDS OF INDIANS

WOULD DIE OF COLD, HUNGER AND DISEASE.

EVEN THE SUPREME COURT, WHICH RULED IN THEIR FAVOR

COULDN'T SAVE THEM.

WITH MANIFEST DESTINY AS A GUIDING PHILOSOPHY

WOULD NOT BE THEIRS FOR LONG.

THE DEMOCRATS GENERALLY ADHERED TO THE DICTUM

"THAT GOVERNMENT IS BEST WHICH GOVERNS LEAST"

AND SOME URGED THE PREEMINENCE OF LOCAL STATE GOVERNMENT

OVER NATIONAL FEDERAL AUTHORITY IN ALL CASES WHATSOEVER.

IT WAS JACKSON'S VERY OWN VICE-PRESIDENT, JOHN C. CALHOUN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA, WHO ADVANCED THE DOCTRINE OF NULLIFICATION
THAT THE STATES POSSESS THE POWER TO NULLIFY ANY ACT OF CONGRESS IT BELIEVED TO BE UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

AS TOCQUEVILLE AND BEAUMONT TRAVELED AROUND AMERICA IN 1831 AND 1832 THEY HEARD THAT SOUTHERN STATES WOULD NULLIFY THE TARIFF OF 1828 REFUSE TO PAY TAXES ON IMPORTS AND IF FORCED TO COMPLY WOULD LEAVE THE UNION.

THE CRISIS ABATED ONLY WHEN JACKSON REFUSED TO BACK DOWN AND THREATENED TO HANG THE SOUTH CAROLINA NULLIFIERS. "THIS UNION," HE SAID, "WAS TREASON." BUT HE ALSO QUIETLY NEGOTIATED A REDUCTION IN FEES ON IMPORTS SO AS TO APPEASE THE SOUTH CAROLINIANS.

THIS ISSUE, THIS ISSUE OF NATIONAL VERSUS STATE POWER WOULD REMAIN A VOLATILE ONE THROUGHOUT THE ERA. WELL, IF DEMOCRATS FAVORED WESTERN EXPANSION AND STATES' RIGHTS, THE WHIGS, THEIR OPPONENTS PROMOTED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND BELIEVED IN USING FEDERAL AUTHORITY TO ADVANCE NATIONAL GROWTH.

HENRY CLAY, A KENTUCKY SLAVEHOLDER, AND DANIEL WEBSTER, A MASSACHUSETTS LAWYER, WERE AMONG THE WHIGS WHO LED THE OPPOSITION TO JACKSON. AND WEBSTER WAS THE PREEMINENT ORATOR OF THE AGE. IN HIS DEBATE WITH ROBERT HAIN OF SOUTH CAROLINA IN 1830 HE GLORIFIED "LIBERTY AND UNION

"NOW AND FOREVER, ONE AND INSEPARABLE."

HERE WERE THE ROOTS OF A BELIEF IN A PERPETUAL, INDIVISIBLE UNION THAT ABRAHAM LINCOLN-- WHO BEGAN AS A WHIG-- WOULD BURNISH INTO THE NATIONAL SOUL.

WITH EXPLOSIVE GROWTH, FRENETIC EXPANSION AND POLITICAL CONFLICT,
IT WAS NO SURPRISE
156 01:08:26:14 01:08:29:25 THAT MANY AMERICANS TREMBLED
FOR THE FATE OF THEIR NATION.
157 01:08:29:27 01:08:31:26 ONE MINISTER
EVEN LISTED THE EVILS
158 01:08:31:28 01:08:34:07 THAT HE THOUGHT
THREATENED THE NATION.
159 01:08:34:09 01:08:36:23 HE POINTED TO
THE VAST EXTENT OF TERRITORY
160 01:08:36:25 01:08:39:06 A NUMEROUS
AND INCREASING POPULATION
161 01:08:39:08 01:08:43:04 THE DIVERSITY OF LOCAL INTEREST,
THE POWER OF SELFISHNESS
162 01:08:43:06 01:08:46:13 AND THE FURY
OF SECTIONAL JEALOUSY AND HATE.
163 01:08:46:15 01:08:49:26 TOCQUEVILLE TOO RECOGNIZED
THE POTENTIALLY FATAL PROBLEM
164 01:08:49:28 01:08:51:25 EMBEDDED
IN THE AMERICAN CHARACTER.
165 01:08:51:27 01:08:54:13 HE ADMIRE AMERICAN
INDEPENDENCE AND MOBILITY.
166 01:08:54:15 01:08:56:24 HE MARVELED AT
THE AMERICANS’ LOVE OF TRADE
167 01:08:56:26 01:08:58:23 AND THEIR PASSION
FOR MAKING MONEY.
168 01:08:58:25 01:09:00:12 HE EVEN COINED A WORD
TO DESCRIBE
169 01:09:00:14 01:09:02:12 THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTIC
HE WITNESSED:
170 01:09:05:14 01:09:09:02 BUT WHAT HAPPENED WHEN SELF-
INTEREST TURNED TO SELFISHNESS
171 01:09:09:04 01:09:12:16 AND MOBILITY RESULTED IN
ROOTLESSNESS AND RESTLESSNESS?
172 01:09:12:18 01:09:15:29 WHAT WOULD SAVE AMERICANS
FROM THEMSELVES?
173 01:09:16:01 01:09:19:15 THE ANSWER, HE THOUGHT,
WAS VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS
174 01:09:19:17 01:09:21:10 AND REFORM ORGANIZATIONS.
175 01:09:21:12 01:09:25:26 INDIVIDUALISM, TO BE SURE, COULD
LEAD TO ISOLATION AND SOLITUDE.
176 01:09:25:28 01:09:28:08 AND THESE ASSOCIATIONS
CREATED INSTEAD
177 01:09:28:10 01:09:30:15 A SENSE OF COMMUNITY
AND BELONGING.
178 01:09:30:17 01:09:34:00 AMERICA WAS A NATION OF JOINERS
WHERE INDIVIDUALS BONDED
179 01:09:34:02 01:09:37:01 AND BANDED TOGETHER
FOR ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING.
180 01:09:37:03 01:09:39:28 THERE WERE TRADE GROUPS
AND LITERARY GATHERINGS
181 01:09:40:00 01:09:42:12 POLITICAL MEETINGS
AND RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES.
182 01:09:42:14 01:09:45:01 THE POWER OF ASSOCIATION,
TOCQUEVILLE THOUGHT
183 01:09:45:03 01:09:49:05 OFFSET THE DISMEMBERING EFFECTS
OF A NATION OF INDIVIDUALS
AND IT ALLOWED AMERICANS TO ACCOMPLISH GREAT WORKS.

THERE WERE AN ENDLESS NUMBER OF MORAL REFORM AND BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATIONS--

THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY

THE AMERICAN FEMALE MORAL REFORM SOCIETY--

ALL OF WHICH EXTENDED THE MISSIONARY IMPULSE

TO THE DOMESTIC FRONT.

OTHER CAUSES AS WELL, WON THEIR ADHERENCE:

THE AMERICAN TEMPERANCE SOCIETY, THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY

FOR THE PREVENTION OF PAUPERISM.

INDEED, THERE WERE SO MANY GROUPS BEING ORGANIZED THAT SOMEONE EVEN CREATED AN ASSOCIATION FOR THOSE WHO WERE OPPOSED TO REFORM ASSOCIATIONS.

NAME A SOCIAL EVIL-- CRIME, POVERTY, PROSTITUTION, INTEMPERANCE, IGNORANCE--

AND AMERICANS TRIED TO COMBAT IT WITH SOME ORGANIZED EFFORT.

HERE WAS A PARTICULAR VISION OF A SOCIAL ORDER IN WHICH AMERICANS WERE EXPECTED TO INTERNALIZE A SET OF MIDDLE-CLASS VALUES THAT FIT WITH THE NEW ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE:

SOBERIETY, INDUSTRY, SELF-DISCIPLINE, MORAL ORDER.

THEY NOT ONLY CREATED SOCIETIES IN ORDER TO PROMOTE THESE VALUES BUT DESIGNED NEW INSTITUTIONS ALL OF WHICH HAD THE GOAL BEHIND THEM OF CREATING CITIZENS WHO ADHERED TO THE NEW MORAL ORDER.

PENITENTIARIES, THE INSTITUTIONS THAT TOCQUEVILLE AND BEAUMONT HADCOME TO VISIT IN THE FIRST PLACE WERE CREATED IN THIS PERIOD.

INMATES WERE PLACED IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AND FORCED TO WORK IN SILENCE.

HERE WAS A SHIFT IN PENAL REGIMES FROM THE PUBLIC, EXTERNAL,
PHYSICAL WORLD OF PUNISHMENTS

217  01:11:23:26  01:11:26:11  THAT CHARACTERIZED
THE 18th CENTURY

218  01:11:26:13  01:11:29:20  TO PRIVATE, INTERNAL
AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MODES

219  01:11:29:22  01:11:30:23  OF DISCIPLINE.

220  01:11:30:25  01:11:32:29  THE INSTITUTION EMBODIED
THE BELIEF

221  01:11:33:01  01:11:35:10  THAT THE ENVIRONMENT
SHAPED BEHAVIOR

222  01:11:35:12  01:11:37:16  AND THAT AMERICANS
NEED NOT SUFFER

223  01:11:37:18  01:11:41:11  FROM THE DISORDERING EFFECTS
OF A SOCIETY ON THE MOVE.

224  01:11:41:13  01:11:44:06  THE MIDDLE-CLASS VISION OF
SOCIAL AND MORAL ORDER

225  01:11:44:08  01:11:47:19  CAN BE SEEN MOST CLEARLY IN A
POPULAR LITHOGRAPH OF THE TIME


227  01:11:49:11  01:11:52:02  BEFORE THE THREE GREAT
INSTITUTIONS OF SOCIETY

228  01:11:52:04  01:11:54:18  THE HOME, THE CHURCH
AND THE SCHOOL

229  01:11:54:20  01:11:57:07  CITIZENS EMBARK
ON ONE OF TWO PATHS.

230  01:11:57:09  01:12:00:28  OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS AND
TEACHERS LEADS THROUGH EDUCATION

231  01:12:01:00  01:12:04:08  AND RELIGION TO PURITY,
SALVATION AND ETERNAL LIFE.

232  01:12:04:10  01:12:07:26  THE OTHER PATH, WHICH BEGINS
WITH DISOBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITIES

233  01:12:07:28  01:12:09:26  LEADS TO DRINKING,
LYING, FIGHTING

234  01:12:09:28  01:12:11:17  AND THE COMMISSIONS OF CRIMES

235  01:12:11:19  01:12:13:20  THAT ENDS
WITH EVERLASTING DAMNATION

236  01:12:13:22  01:12:15:23  AND ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

237  01:12:15:25  01:12:18:02  TEMPERANCE
WAS ONE OF THE KEY OBJECTIVES

238  01:12:18:04  01:12:19:29  OF THE MORAL REFORM ENTERPRISE.

239  01:12:20:01  01:12:23:03  DRINKING WAS A CRITICAL PART
OF AMERICAN CULTURE.

240  01:12:23:05  01:12:26:07  AND THE CONSUMPTION OF WHISKY,
RUM AND HARD CIDER

241  01:12:26:09  01:12:29:10  EXCEEDED SIX GALLONS
PER PERSON, PER YEAR.

242  01:12:29:12  01:12:32:07  BUT THE NEW WORKPLACE
DEMANDED SOBRIETY

243  01:12:32:09  01:12:36:15  AND ALCOHOL WAS CONDEMNED
AS AN EVIL THAT DESTROYED MORALS

244  01:12:36:17  01:12:38:03  AND WRECKED HOMES.

245  01:12:38:05  01:12:42:12  THE AMERICAN TEMPERANCE SOCIETY
HAD MORE THAN 200,000 MEMBERS

246  01:12:42:14  01:12:46:20  BY THE 1830s, AND ALCOHOL
CONSUMPTION FELL DRAMATICALLY.

247  01:12:46:22  01:12:48:09  IN ADDITION TO TEMPERANCE
ACTIVISTS PROMOTED CHANGES IN EDUCATION. REFORMERS SUCH AS HORACE MANN, A LEGISLATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS WHO OVERSAW THE FIRST BOARD OF EDUCATION IN THE NATION WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN REORGANIZING THE NATURE OF EDUCATION IN SOCIETY. CHILDREN BEGAN TO BE GROUPED BY AGE AND CURRICULUMS WERE DEVELOPED. BELL'S NOW RANG TO INDICATE WHEN CLASS SHOULD BEGIN AND WHEN IT SHOULD END. STATES PASSED COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAWS REQUIRING CHILDREN TO GO TO SCHOOL. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT REFORMS SUCH AS TEMPERANCE AND EDUCATION WERE NOT CULTURALLY NEUTRAL. THE NEW IMMIGRANTS BROUGHT TRADITIONS AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS THAT VIOLATED THE NORMS OF THE PROTESTANT TEMPERANCE ETHOS. SOME WORKING-CLASS AMERICANS RESISTED THE USE OF THE CLASSROOM TO IMPOSE NEW STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR ON THEIR CHILDREN. THEY ASKED FOR THE EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY AND THEY WANTED THE TAX LAWS REWRITTEN. WOMEN, TOO, BEGAN TO ORGANIZE AND AGITATE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS. HERE THEY SOUGHT TO BREAK FREE FROM THE DOMESTIC IDEAL.
AS A HALLOWED PLACE
AND DICTATED THE ROLE
OF MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS
AS THE KEEPERS OF VIRTUE
AND MORALITY.
THE PUBLIC WORLD OF COMMERCE
OCCUPIED BY MEN
WAS SEEN AS DISORDERING
AND CORRUPTING
THEREFORE THE PRIVATE SPHERE
GOVERNED BY WOMEN
WAS HELD UP AS A SANCTUARY.
SOME WOMEN EMERGED FROM
THAT PRIVATE MORAL SPHERE
INTO THE PUBLIC,
POLITICAL REALM.
A WOMEN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION HELD
AT SENECAL FALLS IN JULY 1848
WAS ORGANIZED BY
ELIZABETH CADY STANTON
AND LUCRETIA MOTT.
THEY ISSUED A DECLARATION
OF SENTIMENTS
WHICH PRONOUNCED THAT...
WOMEN BEGIN TO FIGHT
FOR CHANGES IN LAWS
REGARDING PROPERTY, MARRIAGE.
THEY WANT EDUCATIONAL AND
PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
THEMSELVES.
AND LIKE ALL MORAL
AND SOCIAL REFORMERS
THEY WERE DRIVEN BY
A RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT
TO THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD
AND TO INDIVIDUAL SALVATION.
RELIGIOUS REVIVALISM FUELED
THE MORAL AND SOCIAL REFORMS
OF THE FIRST HALF
OF THE 19th CENTURY.
TOCQUEVILLE AND BEAUMONT
APPEARED ON THE SCENE
AT THE HEIGHT OF THE SECOND
GREAT AWAKENING
THE MOST EXTENDED RELIGIOUS REVIVAL IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

In 1800, one in 15 belonged to a church.

By 1850, it was one in seven.

The leading evangelist of the age was Charles Grandison Finney, born in Western New York, a region known as the "burned-over district" because it was immolated with the fires of evangelical enthusiasm.

He had prepared to study law but he had a conversion experience and decided instead to plead the cause of God.

He mesmerized his audience with his clear, shrill voice penetrating the congregation. His blue eyes seemingly fixed on every sinner.

He often told the parable about Niagara Falls, the story of a man in a daydream drifting toward the precipice unaware of the danger. He is about to plunge when an observer cries out "STOP!" and the shout awakens the man from his reverie and saves his life.

Here was the answer to the question "What must I do to be saved?" The sinner must respond immediately to the voice of the preacher.

The sinner was free to choose salvation over damnation. Here was the concept of individual free will.

Of course, Finney's liberal theology repudiated the Calvinist ideas of innate depravity, predestination and everlasting punishment. Of one of the most important concepts of the age.

Of course, Finney's liberal theology repudiated the Calvinist ideas of innate depravity, predestination and everlasting punishment. Of one of the most important concepts of the age.

In America.
MAN WAS FREE TO CHOOSE HIS ETERNAL FATE.

BEHAVIOR IN THE TEMPORAL WORLD PREDICTED FATE IN THE ETERNAL.

THE EVANGELICAL MESSAGE FIT WITH THE INDIVIDUALISTIC ETHOS OF THE AGE.

AND SO, TOO, DID THE TECHNIQUES USED TO PROMOTE CONVERSION.

KNOWN AS THE NEW MEASURES MINISTERS EMPHASIZED EMOTION OVER REASON.

THEMSELVES SELF-TAUGHT AND ITINERANT TRAVELING AROUND LOOKING FOR SINNERS.

THEM THEY CONDUCTED CAMP MEETINGS THAT OFTEN LASTED SEVERAL DAYS.

AND THEY USED THE TECHNIQUE KNOWN AS THE "ANXIOUS BENCH"

A SEAT IN THE FRONT OF THE CONGREGATION FOR THOSE MOST LIKELY TO SUCCUMB TO THE PRAYERS OF THE MINISTER.

THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING HAD A SPECIAL IMPACT ON WOMEN WHO COMPRISED THE VAST MAJORITY OF CONVERTS.

"I MADE RELIGION THE PRINCIPLE BUSINESS OF MY LIFE"

PROCLAIMED ONE WOMAN.

SERVING AS MORAL GUARDIANS WAS NOT THE SAME THING AS PLAYING A PUBLIC ROLE OR WINNING POLITICAL RIGHTS.

BUT WOMEN USED THEIR POSITION GRANTED BY EVANGELICALISM

AS A PLATFORM FROM WHICH TO EMERGE FROM THE HOME AND CHALLENGE THE MORAL EVILS OF SOCIETY.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY WAS ONE MANIFESTATION FOR A SPIRITUAL SOLUTION

TO SOCIAL WOES.

A NUMBER OF UTOPIAN COMMUNITIES WERE CREATED AT THE TIME

PLACES SUCH AS ONEIDA IN NEW YORK, NEW HARMONY IN INDIANA AND BROOK FARM IN MASSACHUSETTS

ALL OF WHICH SOUGHT TO OFFER AN ESCAPE FROM THE JARRING DEMANDS

OF AN INDIVIDUALISTIC CAPITALIST SOCIETY.
IF SOME SOUGHT SALVATION IN CREATING COOPERATIVE COMMUNITIES

OTHERS SOUGHT A DEEPER EMBRACE OF INDIVIDUALISM.

MANY FEARED FOR THE FATE OF THE NATION

NONE MORE SO THAN RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

HE HAD STARTED AS A UNITARIAN MINISTER

BUT LIKE SO MANY OTHERS HE, TOO, REJECTED ORGANIZED RELIGION AS "CORPSE COLD."

AMERICANS, HE THOUGHT, MUST TURN AWAY FROM EXTERNAL TRIUMPHS

FINANCIAL REWARDS, PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

AS A MEASURE OF ACHIEVEMENT.

THEM NEEDED TO EMBRACE NATURE AND SOLITUDE.

EMERSON, CALLING HIMSELF A SEEING EYE, NOT A HELPING HAND

CHOSE TO REMAIN BEHIND THE SCENES.

BUT OTHERS CAME FORWARD TO FIGHT FOR THE TRIUMPH OF PRINCIPLES.

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

A 26-YEAR-OLD EDITOR FROM NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLISHED THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE LIBERATOR.

IT WAS A NEWSPAPER THAT CHANGED FOREVER THE TERMS OF THE ANTISLAVERY DEBATE.

PRIOR TO THEN, AMERICANS WHO WERE OPPOSED TO SLAVERY BELIEVED IN GRADUALISM.

THEM BELIEVED IN PASSING LAWS THAT WOULD ELIMINATE SLAVERY AT SOME FUTURE DATE OR IN PURCHASING THE SLAVES AND RELOCATING THEM TO AFRICA.

THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY FORMED IN 1817 SUPPORTED BY LEADING STATESMEN FROM JAMES MONROE AND HENRY CLAY TO JOHN MARSHAL AND ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

GARRISON DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO OPPOSING SLAVERY AND THE USE OF ANY GRADUAL MEANS TO EFFECT ITS ABOLITION.

"ONE WOULD NOT GRADUALLY RESCUE
A CHILD FROM A FIRE

HE EXCLAIMED.

SLAVERY WAS A RAGING INFERNO.

IT WAS A HORRIBLE VIOLATION
AND IT HAD TO BE ENDED.

GARRISON DECLARED WAR
UPON THE INSTITUTION.

"I WILL BE AS HARSH AS TRUTH
AND AS UNCOMPROMISING
AS JUSTICE," HE WARNED.

"URGE ME NOT TO USE MODERATION
IN A CAUSE LIKE THE PRESENT.

I WILL NOT EQUIVOCATE
"I WILL NOT EXCUSE
I WILL NOT RETREAT A SINGLE
INCH, AND I WILL BE HEARD."

GARRISON'S CALL FOR
THE IMMEDIATE

 AND UNCONDITIONAL ABOLITION
OF SLAVERY

DREW UPON THE EVANGELICAL
INJUNCTION

TO RENOUNCE SIN IMMEDIATELY.

SLAVEHOLDERS HAD CHOICE,
AND SLAVEHOLDING WAS A SIN.

SLAVEHOLDERS MUST
EMANCIPATE THEIR SLAVES

NOT LATER, NOT TOMORROW,
BUT NOW, IMMEDIATELY

AND TO PROMOTE THE CAUSE
OF IMMEDIATE

GARRISON HELPED FORM

THE AMERICAN
ANTISLAVERY SOCIETY.

BY 1836, THERE WERE MORE THAN
500 ABOLITIONIST ORGANIZATIONS

IN THE NORTH.

HE ALSO LABORED
FOR THE EQUAL RIGHTS

OF FREE BLACKS
AND WOMEN AS WELL.

HIS ORATORY WAS AS INFLAMMATORY
AS ANY MINISTER'S.

SOME NORTHERN MERCHANTS

NERVOUS THAT ABOLITION WOULD
HURT THEIR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS

OFTEN RIOTED AND THREATENED
THE ABOLITIONIST'S LIFE.

ONCE HE WAS DRAGGED THROUGH
THE STREETS OF BOSTON

WITH A NOOSE AROUND HIS NECK.

BY THE 1840s

GARRISON DECLARED THAT
THE NORTH SHOULD REFUSE
TO REMAIN IN A UNION WITH
THE SLAVEHOLDING SOUTH.
"NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS"
BECAME THE MOTTO OF THE AMERICAN
ANTISLAVERY SOCIETY.
HE CAME TO SEE THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE UNITED STATES
AS A PRO-SLAVERY DOCUMENT
CALLING IT A COVENANT WITH DEATH
AND AN AGREEMENT WITH HELL.
AT A JULY 4th CELEBRATION,
HE PUT A MATCH TO THE DOCUMENT.
THE ONLY WAY TO DESTROY
THE SLAVE POWER IN AMERICA
HE THOUGHT, WAS THROUGH
A DISSOLUTION
OF THE EXISTING AMERICAN UNION.
ONE DAY BEFORE A LARGE AUDIENCE
GARRISON DISPLAYED A MAP
OF THE UNITED STATES
AND WITH A SCISSORS HE CUT
OUT THE SLAVEHOLDING REGION.
ALL WATCHED IN SILENCE
AS THE SOUTHERN PORTION
OF THE UNION FELL TO THE GROUND.
POLITICAL CARTOONS CIRCULATED
WIDELY DURING THIS PERIOD
AND HELPED SHAPE
POPULAR ATTITUDES
TOWARDS ANDREW JACKSON'S
PRESIDENCY.
JACKSON'S ADMINISTRATION
FACED A MAJOR CRISIS IN 1831
WHEN HIS CABINET RESIGNED.
THE YOUNG PHILADELPHIA ARTIST
DEPICTED THE EVENT
AND MADE HIS REPUTATION
WITH THE PRINT
 THAT SOLD AT THE RATE
OF 2,000 COPIES A DAY.
CABINET MEMBERS APPEARING LIKE
RATS, FLEE IN ALL DIRECTIONS.
TO THE LEFT, VICE-PRESIDENT
REACHES FOR THE LADDER
THAT LEADS TO THE PRESIDENCY
BUT JOHN C. CALHOUN, THE
TERRIER, IS THERE TO STOP HIM.
DANIEL WEBSTER AND HENRY CLAY
STAND AT THE WINDOW AND JOKE
THAT JACKSON HAS NULLIFIED
THE WHOLE CONCERN.
ANOTHER ANTI-JACKSON LITHOGRAPH
SHOWS
The political antagonists of the day playing cards. At stake is the presidency. An aged and decrepit Jackson holds a hand of three kings labeled intrigue, corruption and imbecility. William Wort, a third-party candidate threatens to leave while Calhoun hides his hand of nullification. William Wort, a third-party candidate threatens to leave while Calhoun hides his hand of nullification. William Wort, a third-party candidate threatens to leave while Calhoun hides his hand of nullification. William Wort, a third-party candidate threatens to leave while Calhoun hides his hand of nullification. William Wort, a third-party candidate threatens to leave while Calhoun hides his hand of nullification. Jackson holds the order calling for the removal of all bank deposits. The institution crumbles as the director who is portrayed as a demon flees and the evidence of corruption is left strewn about. Edward Clay blamed Jackson for the hardships. In a visual pun, he places Jackson in the sky. In numerous cartoons gives "HURRAH" to the president, in words colored by racism. Jackson's opponents denounced him as a tyrannical monarch. They depicted him as King Andrew I. In 1837, a severe financial panic struck the nation. In a print, entitled "The Times", Edward Clay blamed Jackson for the hardships. In a visual pun, he places Jackson in the sky. In the foreground, a family is destroyed by alcoholism. A mother and child beg for money and unemployed shoeless workers stand by idly. In the background, citizens line up at a pawn broker's shop.
AND SWARM A BANK THAT ANNOUNCES NO HARD MONEY IS AVAILABLE.

ON THE 61st ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE

THE SON OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC HAS BEEN SHORN AT THIS QUARRY.

[Captioned by The Caption Center WGBH Educational Foundation]