
CHAPTER 19

INTELLECTUAL AND

CULTURAL TRENDS

The American Nation:
A History of the United States, 13th edition
Carnes/Garraty

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- 1878–1898: Number of colleges increased from 350 to 500 and student body tripled
 - Less than 2% of college age population attended college but more parents had the financial ability to send their children
- Curricula and atmosphere changed
 - State universities proliferated after 1870
 - Wealthy philanthropists poured fortunes into old institutions and created new ones
 - Educators introduced new courses and adopted new teaching methods
 - Professional schools of law, medicine, education, journalism, and other specialties increased in number



COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- 1869: Harvard led transformation under new president Charles Eliot
 - Introduced elective system
 - Eliminated required courses
 - Expanded offerings in modern languages, economics, and laboratory sciences
 - Students were allowed to borrow books from the library
 - Encouraged faculty to experiment with new teaching methods
 - Brought in new professors with original minds and new ideas



HARVARD GATE, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, 1899
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Detroit
Publishing Company Collection

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- 1876: Johns Hopkins was founded and guided by president Daniel Coit Gilman
 - Modeled school on German universities where research and freedom of inquiry were guiding principles
 - Sought scholars of highest reputation and offered them high salaries
 - School specialized in graduate education



JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, 1899
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Detroit
Publishing Company Collection

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- 1880s: more than 2,000 American students still went to German universities
- As Hopkins' graduates spread, true graduate education became possible in United States
- Wealthy individuals funded other universities
 - 1889: Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, founded by Jonas Clark
 - 1892: University of Chicago founded by John D. Rockefeller
 - Used Rockefeller money to raid other institutions for professors by offering high salaries
 - Offered first class graduate and undergraduate education
 - Academic freedom was the rule

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- State and federal aid to higher education expanded rapidly
- Morrill Act provided funding for a number of universities including Illinois, Michigan State, and Ohio State
 - Land-grant colleges offered a variety of subjects
 - Received additional state funds
 - Co-educational from the start
 - Most developed professional schools and experimented with extension work and summer programs

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- Beginning with Vassar College (began with 300 students in 1865) opportunity for young women to pursue academics increased
- Eventually had the Seven Sisters which included Vassar and
 - Wellesley and Smith (both 1875)
 - Mount Holyoke (already established)
 - Bryn Mawr (1885)
 - Barnard (1889)
 - Radcliffe (1893)
- Only real careers available to women were nursing, teaching, and social work
- Graduates of these schools provided most of the leaders of the early 20th century drive for equal rights



ROCKEFELLER HALL, VASSAR COLLEGE, 1904
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division,
Detroit Publishing Company Collection

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Problems

- Elective system led to superficiality
- Intensive graduate work often produced narrowness of outlook and monographs on trivial subjects
- Attempts to apply scientific methods to fields such as history and economics often led to smug (and erroneous) claims of objectivity and definitiveness
- Gifts of rich industrialists sometimes came with strings
- College boards of trustees often dominated by businessmen who sometimes sought to impose their own social and economic beliefs on faculty members
- At state colleges, politicians often interfered in academic affairs

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- Size became an end in itself and practical values of education tended to be elevated above the humanistic
- As institutions became larger so did bureaucracy and the prestige of administrators
- Professors often came to be seen as mere employees of the governing boards
- As the number of college graduates increased, so did the influence of alumni
- Campus social activities also became more important
 - Fraternities proliferated
 - Interest in organized sports grew—which had problems

REVOLUTION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

- Academics were often motivated by the issues of their age
- Social scientists were impressed by the progress being made in the physical and biological sciences and eagerly applied the scientific method to their own specialties in search of objective truths

REVOLUTION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Economists underwent revolution in 1880s

- **Classical School:** maintained immutable natural laws governed all human behavior and used Darwinian principles to justify unrestrained competition and laissez-faire
- **Institutionalist School:** argued that the state was an educational and ethical agency whose positive aid was necessary for human progress and that economic problems were moral ones whose solution required combined efforts of Church, state, and science
 - Also said the only way to study problems was by analyzing conditions not merely applying abstract laws or principles

REVOLUTION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

- Prevailing opinion in Sociology (heavily influenced by Herbert Spencer) rejected government interference with the organization of society, which was seen as only affected by forces of evolution
- 1871: Lewis Henry Morgan, an anthropologist, developed a theory of social evolution and showed how kinship relations reflected and affected tribal institutions

REVOLUTION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

- Change in Political Science
 - Founding Fathers had thought of political system as an impersonal set of institutions and principles
 - Nineteenth-century thinkers had concerned themselves with abstractions and ignored extralegal aspects of politics
 - In 1880s, political scientists such as Woodrow Wilson concluded that the real locus of authority lay in the institutions such as committees of Congress, which had no constitutional basis at all
- Politics came to be seen as a dynamic process with, potentially, no limits for state power

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

- Traditionally, teachers had emphasized the three “R”s and relied on strict discipline and rote learning
- But new German theories said teachers could best arouse interest in students by relating new information to what they already knew
- Good teaching required
 - Professional training
 - Psychological insight
 - Enthusiasm
 - Imagination
- Evolutionists were pushing for education that would help children to “survive” by adapting to the demands of their environment



CLASSROOM INTERIOR WITH STUDENTS AND BLACKBOARD, 1910-1930

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

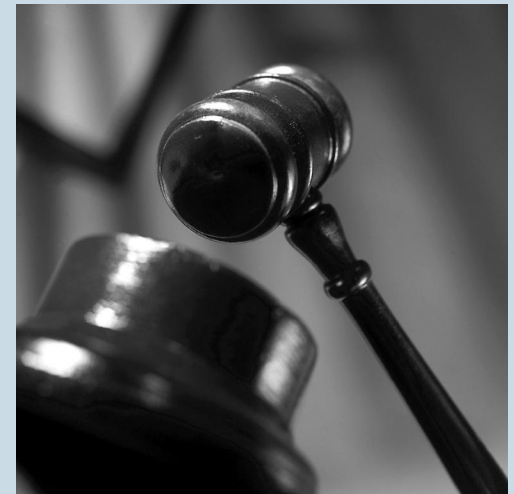
- Settlement house workers discovered slum children needed training in handicrafts, good citizenship, and personal hygiene
 - Appalled by filth, overcrowding, and rickety construction of local schools
 - Disliked that machine politicians doled out teaching positions to party hacks and other untrained people
 - Argued school playgrounds, nurseries, kindergartens, and adult education programs were vital to the community

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

- John Dewey, a professor at University of Chicago, gave direction to these complaints
 - He was concerned with the implications of evolution for education
- Insisted education was the fundamental method of social progress and reform especially as family, in an industrial society, no longer fulfilled its educational function
 - School should be an embryonic community where education focused on the child and new information was related to what the child already knew
 - Schools should also be a locus for social reform
 - Education should build character and teach good citizenship

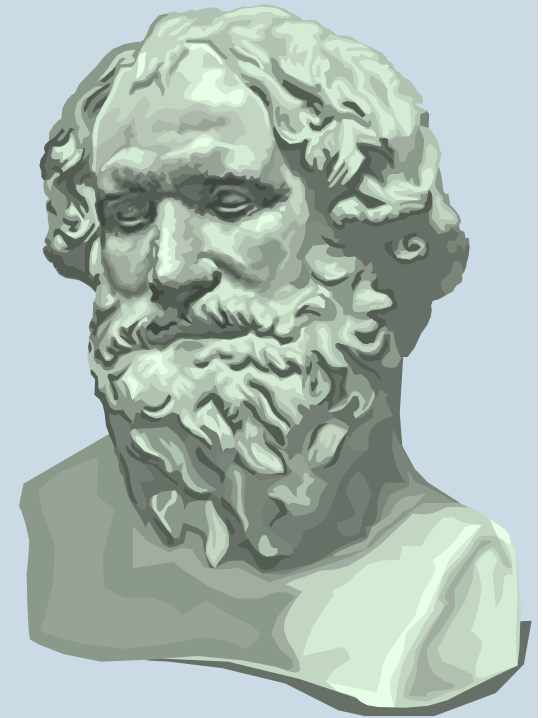
LAW AND HISTORY

- 1881: Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. published *The Common Law* in which he rejected the idea that judges should limit themselves to the mechanical explication of statutes and that law consisted only of what was written in books
- Instead he argued that the “felt necessities of the time” rather than precedent should determine the rules by which people are governed



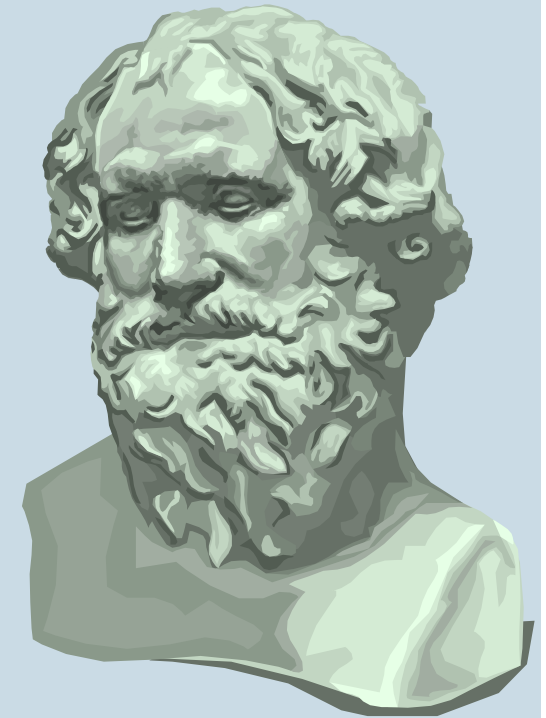
LAW AND HISTORY

- Historians in graduate schools became interested in studying the origins and evolution of political institutions
 - Concluded roots of democracy were to be found in customs of the ancient tribes of northern Europe (theory has since been thoroughly discredited)
 - Unfortunately, provided ammunition for those who claimed blacks were inferior beings and immigration should be restricted



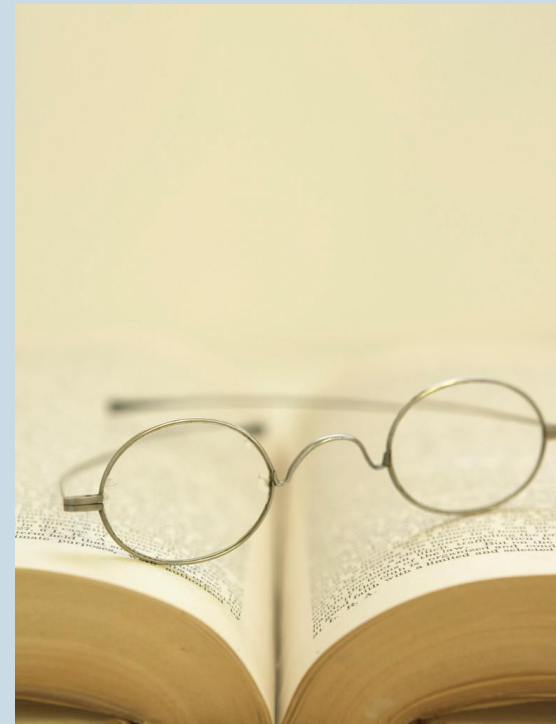
LAW AND HISTORY

- Frederick Jackson Turner in “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (1893) argued that the frontier experience had affected the thinking of the people and helped shape American institutions
 - Isolation of frontier and the need to create civilization anew with each advance of the frontier accounted for the individualism of Americans and the democratic character of their society
- Insistence of new historians on thoroughness, exactitude and impartiality did much to raise professional standards



REALISM IN LITERATURE

- At the beginning of the Gilded Age, literature was dominated by the romantic mood
 - Romanticism, though, had lost its creative force
 - Most writing after 1865 was overly sentimental; pandering to the preconceptions of middle class readers
 - Fair ladies worshipped from afar by stainless heroes
 - Women coping selflessly with drunken husbands
 - Poor but honest youths rising through various combinations of virtue and diligence to positions of wealth and influence



REALISM IN LITERATURE

- Reaction and change gave rise to Age of Realism
 - Industrialism, with its associated complexities and social problems
 - The theory of evolution which made people more aware of the force of environment and basic conflicts of existence
 - New science, which taught dispassionate, empirical observation
- Novelists undertook the examination of social problems
 - Slum life
 - Conflict between labor and capital
 - Political corruption

REALISM IN LITERATURE

- Writers created multi-dimensional characters, depicted persons of every social class, used dialect and slang to capture the flavor of particular types, and fashioned painstaking descriptions of the surroundings in which they placed their characters
- While romanticism did not disappear, realism became the main form of expression



MARK TWAIN

- The first great American realist was Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens, b.1835)
- Became writer for *Territorial Enterprise* after going to Nevada in 1861
- Story that brought him national recognition was “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” (1865)
- *Innocents Abroad* (1869), written after a tour of Europe and the Holy Land, made him famous

MARK TWAIN

- Twain's greatness came from keen reportorial eye and ear, his eagerness to live life to the fullest, his marvelous sense of humor, and his ability to be at once in society and outside it, to love humanity but to be repelled by human vanity and perversity
- Epitomized zest, adaptability and materialism of his age but died a dark pessimist

MARK TWAIN

- Books

- *Gilded Age* (1873)
- *Tom Sawyer* (1876)
- *Life on the Mississippi* (1883)
- *Huckleberry Finn* (1884)
- *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889)

- Books were essentially autobiographies that reflected clash between Twain's recognition of the pretentiousness and meanness of human beings and his wish to be accepted by society

- He never dealt effectively with sexual love

- Often contrived to end his tales on absurdly optimistic notes that rang false

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

- William Dean Howell's realism was more self-conscious than Twain's
 - Born 1837
 - Became reporter for *Ohio State Journal*
 - After the Civil War worked for *The Nation* then moved to Boston where he became editor of *Atlantic Monthly*
 - 1886: returned to New York as editor of *Harper's*
- Realism to him meant concern for complexities of individual personalities and faithful description of the genteel, middle-class world he knew best
- Had a sharp eye, open mind and real social conscience

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

- *Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885): dealt with some of the ethical problems faced by businessmen in competitive society
- Moved left after the Haymarket bombings
- *Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890): attempted to portray the whole range of metropolitan life
- Most influential critic of his time and brought a number of famous foreign writers to U.S. as well as encouraging young American novelists

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

- Naturalist writers believed that the human being was essentially an animal, a helpless creature whose fate was determined by the environment
 - World was mindless without mercy or justice
- Stephen Crane:
 - *Maggie Girl of the Streets* (1893)—seduction, degradation and suicide of a young woman
 - *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895)
- Frank Norris: *McTeague* (1899)—story of brutal, dull witted dentist who murdered his greed crazed wife with his bare fists
- Theodore Dreiser: *Sister Carrie* (1900)—treated sex so forthrightly that it was withdrawn after publication

HENRY JAMES

- Very different than naturalists
 - Born to wealth
 - Reared in cosmopolitan atmosphere
 - Twisted in some strange way as a child and unable to achieve satisfactory relationships with women
 - Spent most of adult life in Europe writing novels, short stories, plays, and volumes of criticism
 - Preeminently, though, a realist despite his rarified, overly subtle manner of writing
- His major theme was the clash of American and European cultures
 - Primary interest was the close-up examination of wealthy, sensitive, yet corrupt persons
- Dealt with social issues such as feminism and the difficulties faced by artists in the modern world, though, in the end, characters always came first

HENRY JAMES

Books

- *The American* (1877): story of the love of a wealthy American in Paris for a French noblewoman who rejected him because her family disapproved of his commercial background
- *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881): described the disillusionment of an intelligent woman married to a charming but morally bankrupt man and her eventual decision to remain with him anyway
- *The Bostonians* (1886): complicated and psychologically sensitive study of the varieties of female behavior in a seemingly uniform social situation

REALISM IN ART

- Despite new concern for realism, romantic tradition retained its vitality
- **Thomas Eakins:** born in Philadelphia (1844), studied in Europe in late 1860s, returned to U.S. in 1870 to spend rest of life in Philadelphia teaching and painting
 - Mastered human anatomy—*Gross Clinic* (1875)
 - Early experimenter with motion pictures
 - Gloried in the ordinary and refused to touch up portraits
 - *Swimming Hole* is stark portrayal of nakedness

REALISM IN ART

- **Winslow Homer:** Boston-born painter known for his watercolors, had no formal training but had intense concern for accuracy
 - Worked as artist-reporter for *Harper's Weekly* during the Civil War
 - After war continued to do magazine illustrations
 - Roamed U.S. painting scenes of southern farm life, Adirondack campers, and (after 1880) magnificent seascapes and studies of fishermen and sailors

REALISM IN ART

- At least two major American painters abandoned U.S. for Europe—James McNeill Whistler and Mary Cassatt
- James McNeill Whistler left in 1855 and spent most of life in Paris and London
 - Portraits were triumphs of realism
 - Misty studies of London waterfront were thoroughly romantic
 - *Whistler's Mother* (Whistler called it *Arrangement in Grey and Black*) spare and muted in tone, more interested in precise arrangements of color and space

REALISM IN ART

- Mary Cassatt was the daughter of a wealthy Pittsburgh banker and sister of the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad
 - Went to Paris and got caught up in impressionist movement
 - Work was little appreciated in U.S. prior to WWI



THE STUDENT, Irving Ramsey, 1900
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division,
Detroit Publishing Company Collection

THE PRAGMATIC APPROACH

- Evolution and Religion
 - Bitter controversy which was won, among intellectuals if not the general populace, by evolution
 - The Bible remained a source of inspiration and wisdom
- Evolution and Philosophy
 - Moved away from fixed systems and eternal truths toward specific applications and practical effects
 - PRAGMATISM: logic requires us to accept the impermanence of even scientific laws

THE PRAGMATIC APPROACH

William James

- *Principles of Psychology* (1890) established that discipline as a modern science
- *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) treated the subject from both psychological and philosophical points of view and helped readers reconcile their religious faith with increasing knowledge of psychology and physical universe
- Most influential philosopher of his time

THE PRAGMATIC APPROACH

- Beliefs
 - Free will
 - Desire to survive existed independently of surrounding circumstance
 - Truth was relative: did not exist in the abstract but *happened* under particular circumstances
 - What a person thought helped make that thought occur
- Pragmatism inspired much of reform spirit of late 19th and especially early 20th century
- James undercut laissez-faire extremism of Herbert Spencer

THE PRAGMATIC APPROACH

- “Great Men and Their Environment” (1880): James argued that social changes were brought about by the actions of geniuses whom society had selected and raised to power rather than by impersonal forces of the environment
 - Fitted preconceptions of rugged individualists
 - Encouraged those dissatisfied with society to work for change
- Relativism made Americans optimistic but bred insecurity
- Pragmatism seemed to suggest end justified means, what worked was more important than what ought to be

THE KNOWLEDGE REVOLUTION

Chautauqua Movement

- Illustrative of desire for new information
- Founded by John H. Vincent and Lewis Miller in 1874
- Began as two week summer course for high school teachers
- Expanded into open air offerings of all sorts with a variety of famous speakers and even a series of correspondence courses that led, over four years, to a degree
- Books were written specifically for the program
- Published a monthly magazine

THE KNOWLEDGE REVOLUTION

- By 1900 there were 200 Chautauqua style organizations
 - Often standards were low
 - Entertainment was as important as education
 - Reflected prevailing American tastes: diverse, uncritical, enthusiastic, and shallow

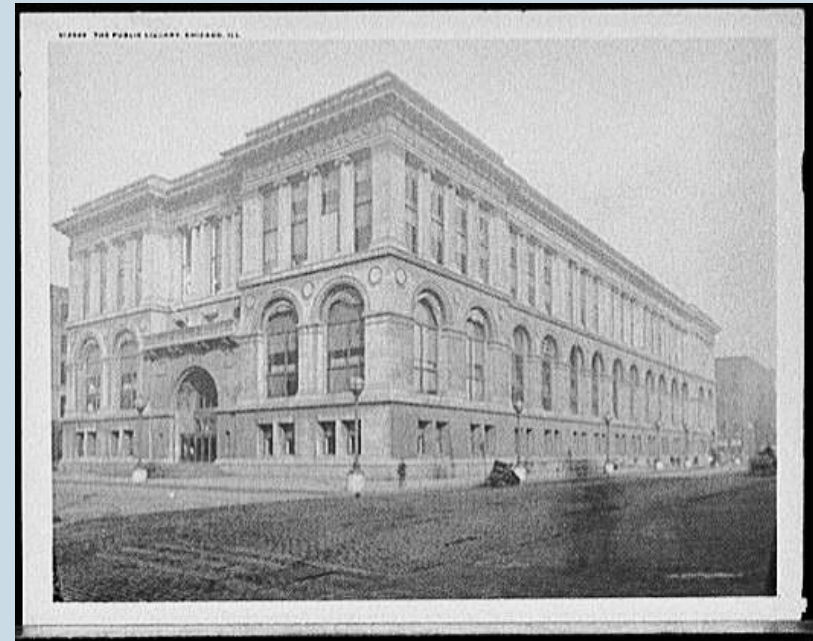


HALL OF PHILOSOPHY, CHAUTAUQUA, 1898

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division,
Detroit Publishing Company Collection

THE KNOWLEDGE REVOLUTION

- Public libraries proliferated
 - By end of the century nearly all states supported libraries
 - Private donors contributed millions to the cause
 - 1900: over 1,700 libraries in U.S. had collections of more than 5,000 volumes



CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY, c.1900
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division,
Detroit Publishing Company Collection

THE KNOWLEDGE REVOLUTION

- Newspapers were even more important for disseminating information and educating the masses
- Technological innovations
 - 1871: Richard Hoe and Stephen Tucker developed the web press, which printed simultaneously on both sides of the paper
 - 1886: Ottmar Mergenthaler's linotype machine cast rows of type directly from molten metal, cutting costs considerably
 - Machines for making paper out of wood pulp reduced cost of newsprint to a quarter of 1860s price
 - By 1895: machines were printing, cutting, and folding 32-page newspapers at a rate of 24,000 per hour

THE KNOWLEDGE REVOLUTION

- Gathering of news was transformed by the telegraph and transoceanic cables
 - Press associations such as New York Associated Press flourished
 - Syndicated articles appeared
- Publishers tended to be conservative, but reaching masses meant lowering intellectual and cultural standards, appealing to emotions, and adopting popular, sometimes radical, causes
 - Cheap mass circulation papers had appeared before Civil War but never had more than 50,000 in circulation
 - After the war, Joseph Pulitzer started with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, then bought the *New York World* in 1883 and was selling more than 1 million a year by the late 1890s



REPORTERS OF *NEWS TRIBUNE (DETROIT NEWS)* 1899

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection

THE KNOWLEDGE REVOLUTION

- Magazines
 - 1865: 700 magazines in the country
 - Turn of century: 5,000 magazines
- Until mid-1880s, a handful of serious periodicals dominated the field (*Atlantic Monthly, Harper's, The Century*)
 - Staid in tone and conservative in political cast
 - Aimed at upper-middle-class audience, which limited their circulation size

THE KNOWLEDGE REVOLUTION

- Frank Leslie was the leading publisher in the 1860s and 1870s of magazines directed at the average person
 - Specialized in illustrations of current events, cheap romantic fiction, old-fashioned poetry, jokes, and advice columns
 - Some sold as many as 300,000 copies per issue



CATS DECORATING CHRISTMAS TREE, by Louis Wain for *Leslie's Weekly* 1906

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection

THE KNOWLEDGE REVOLUTION

Vast changes after 1885

- *Forum* (1886) and *Arena* (1889) emphasized hard hitting articles on controversial subjects by leading experts
- 1889: Edward Bok became editor of *Ladies Home Journal*
 - offered advice columns, articles on childcare, gardening, and interior decorating
 - Commissioned public figures to discuss important questions
 - Printed colored reproductions of art masterpieces—made possible by the invention of cheap photoengraving process
 - Crusaded for women's suffrage, conservation, and other reforms
- Bok not only catered to public tastes, he created new ones
- Reached millions of readers and interested rich and poor
- Publishers of these mass circulation magazines, such as Bok, utilized new printing technology to cut costs and depended on advertising revenues which allowed them to sell magazines for 10 or 15 cents a copy and still make fortunes

MILESTONES

- 1862 Morrill Act establishes land-grant colleges
- 1865 Vassar College is founded for women
- 1869 Charles W. Eliot becomes Harvard's president, undertakes transformation of college by introducing elective system and expanding offerings
- 1876 Johns Hopkins University is founded to specialize in graduate education
- 1883 Joseph Pulitzer purchases *New York World*
- 1884 Mark Twain publishes *Huckleberry Finn*
- 1886 Ottmar Mergenthaler invents linotype machine
William Dean Howells becomes editor of *Harper's*
- 1890 William James publishes *Principles of Psychology*
- 1893 Frederick Jackson Turner publishes "Significance of the Frontier in American History"
- 1895 William Randolph Hearst purchases the *New York Journal*
- 1899 John Dewey publishes *The School and Society*

WEBSITES

- Touring Turn-of-the-Century America: Photographs from the Detroit Publishing Company, 1880-1920

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/detroit/dethome.html>

- American Authors

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/hypertext.html>

- I Hear America Singing

<http://www.thirteen.org/cgi-bin/ihas.cgi>

- National Geographic and the *Titanic*

<http://www.nationageographic.com/society/ngo/explorer/titanic/movie.html>