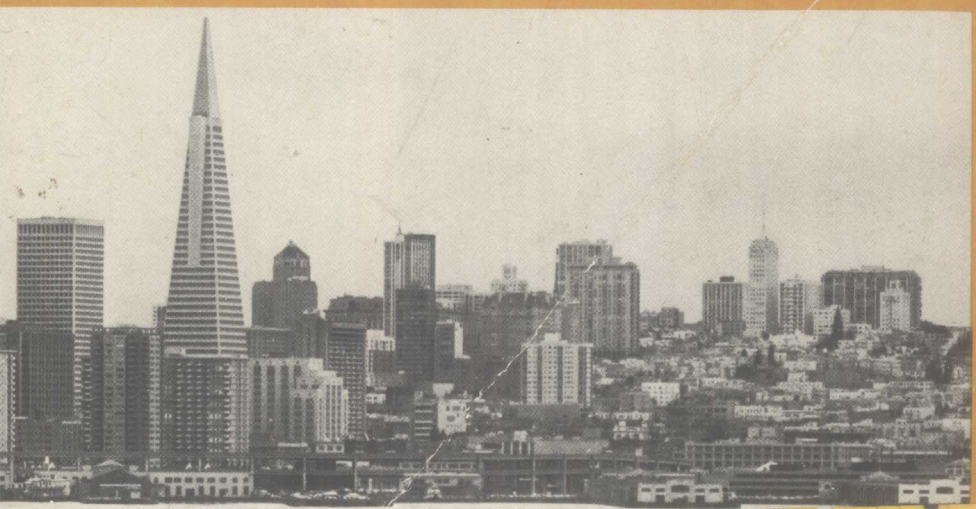
A More Perfect Union

DOCUMENTS IN U.S. HISTORY

VOLUME II: since 1865

Paul F. Boller, Jr.

Ronald Story



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A More Perfect Union

To Martin and Eliza

Preface

The selections in these volumes represent what the authors believe to be an attractive blend of social and political history, suitable for introductory courses in American history. Three considerations guided our selection of items. First, we looked for famous documents with a lustrous place in the American tradition, regardless of their actual importance. These—the Mayflower Compact, for example, or the Gettysburg Address, or Franklin Roosevelt's first inaugural address—we chose for their great mythic quality, as expressions of fundamental ideals with which students should be familiar. Second, we searched out writings of genuine importance in the sense that they had immediate impact and caused something to happen. Examples from this very large group include the Virginia slave statutes, Tom Paine's *The Crisis,* the Emancipation Proclamation, and Earl Warren's decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*—all famous pieces, to be sure, but influential as well. Finally, we included documents that seemed to reflect important attitudes or developments. Into this group fall Thomas Hart Benton's racial views as well as the writings of Upton Sinclair on industrial Chicago and Martin Luther King, Jr., on Vietnam. Here, where the need for selectivity was most apparent, we looked especially for reflective pieces with a measure of fame and influence to carry them. Dorothea Dix's memorial on asylums reflected common attitudes; it also caused something to happen and is by now a well-known statement of reformist compassion.

Familiar documents are intermixed with unexpected ones (Andrew Jackson, say, with T. S. Arthur or Woodrow Wilson with Margaret Sanger). In addition, we did not hesitate to edit severely when the selection seemed too long; this consideration impinged most obviously on book-length works but also on pieces such as John Peter Zenger's account of his trial for libel or Joseph McCarthy's speech on Communist subversion. In some cases, particularly with writings from the colonial era, we have modernized spelling and punctuation. Each document has a lengthy headnote that summarizes the relevant trends of the era, provides a specific setting for the document, and sketches the life of the author. The headnotes are followed by study questions to guide students through the prose and

suggest ways of thinking about the selections. The headnotes, and especially the study questions, contain many cross-references to other documents in the collection to provide perspective and encourage comparative analysis.

Each chapter concludes with a Counterpoint, a group of two to five statistical tables dealing with some aspect of American society that is relevant to the era and theme of that chapter's documents. Generally the work of distinguished modern historians, often "classic" studies in their own right, the Counterpoints touch upon issues raised in different ways by the documents—such as the Jacksonian assault on privilege, or difficulties faced by blacks and immigrants in industrial America. They expose the student to statistical as well as documentary or strictly rhetorical evidence. They also add a further flavor of social history to what, given our concern with the famous and influential, is still a predominantly political, constitutional, and diplomatic collection. All Counterpoints have the same type of headnotes, cross-references, and study questions as the main documents. The Statistical Appendix, comprising statistics on population, government, and the economy over the whole life of the nation, is offered in the same spirit—as an alternative way, or in some instances perhaps the only way, of seeing important long-term historical trends. The documents are the creations of particular moments; the Counterpoints provide close-ups of particular eras; the Appendix offers, in its fashion, the whole sweep of American history. The Statistical Appendix thus supplies a foundation over which documents and Counterpoints alike may ultimately be laid.

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Paul F. Boller, Jr.
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A Statistical Appendix

List of Appendix Tables

A.1 U.S. Population and Selected State Populations, 1790–1970

A.2 U.S. Population and Breakdown by Urban Population Sizes, 1790–1970

A.3 U.S. Immigrant Population by Origin, Occupation, Sex, and Age, 1820–1970

A.4 U.S. Workers by Economic Sectors (Agriculture, Manufacturing, Construction, and Trade), 1810–1970

A.5 Growth of U.S. Transportation (Ship, Railroad, Airplane, and Automobile), 1790–1970

A.6 U.S. Production of Selected Commodities, 1870–1970

A.7 Growth of U.S. Commercial Banks and U.S. Bank Assets, 1790–1970

A.8 U.S. Consumer Price Index and Average Daily Wages of Construction, Manufacturing, and Unskilled Laborers, 1790–1970

A.9 Selected Religious Affiliations of the U.S. Population (Methodist, Presbyterian, Southern Baptist, Episcopalian, and Roman Catholic), 1790–1970

A.10 U.S. School Enrollments of School-Age Populations by Race and Sex, 1850–1970

A.11 U.S. Federal Civilian Employees (Total) and Numbers Employed by the U.S. Postal Service and the Department of Defense, 1816–1970

A.12 U.S. Federal Expenditures (Total) and Selected Expenditure Categories (National Defense, Interest on the Public Debt, U.S. Postal Service, Veterans' Benefits, and Income Security Including General Retirement—Social Security and Medicare—and Public Assistance), 1791–1970

All the information in the appendix tables comes from *U.S. Historical Statistics from Colonial Times to 1970,* published by the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1975. In the tables a dash (—) means zero; the small letters *na* mean that figures are *not available.*

TABLE A.1 U.S. Population and Selected State Populations, 1790–1970

The population of the United States has grown steadily since the nation's founding, just as observers like Gottlieb Mittelberger (Vol. 1, Document 9) and James Madison (Vol. 1, Document 14) thought it would. It has grown faster in some periods than in others, however, and faster in some regions than in others, as shown by the figures for the six states below. Stemming chiefly from economics, immigration, and climate, this regional divergence has had profound political and social consequences—the early prominence of Massachusetts and Virginia statesmen, for example, and the election of two Californians and a Texan to the presidency since 1960.

	Population (in millions)						
Year	Mass.	N.Y.	Va.	Ill.	Tex.	Cal.	Total
1790	.4	.3	.7	—	—	—	3.9
1810	.5	1.0	.9	.01	—	—	7.2
1830	.6	1.9	1.0	.2	—	—	12.9
1850	1.0	3.1	1.1	.9	.2	.1	23.2
1870	1.5	4.4	1.2	2.5	.8	.6	39.8
1890	2.2	6.0	1.7	3.8	2.2	1.2	62.9
1910	3.4	9.1	2.1	5.6	3.9	2.4	91.9
1930	4.3	12.6	2.4	7.6	5.8	5.7	122.8
1950	4.7	14.8	3.3	8.7	7.7	10.6	150.7
1970	5.7	18.2	4.6	11.1	11.2	19.9	203.2

TABLE A.2 U.S. Population and Breakdown by Urban Population Sizes, 1790–1970

The population of the United States grew rapidly from the start. But as the following figures show, towns and cities grew faster than rural areas even in the early decades of agricultural and frontier expansion. America seems to have been destined to be an urbanized society, which of course it largely was by the twentieth century.

Recently, almost all growth has been urban. But rapid urbanization has not always meant that big cities set the pace. For instance, the population in cities from 25,000–250,000 almost doubled from 27.2 million in 1950 to 48.8 million in 1970, while that in cities over 250,000 only went from 34.8 million to 42.2 million. During the same period, all towns of 2,500 and over grew from 96.5 million to 149.3 million in population. Cities of 250,000 and over grew most rapidly in population during 1850-1910, a period of great industrial growth.

	Population (in millions)				
Year	2,500 and over	2,500–25,000	25,000–250,000	250,000 and over	Total
1790	.2	.14	.06	—	3.9
1810	.5	.3	.2	—	7.2
1830	1.1	.6	.5	—	12.9
1850	3.5	1.3	1.6	.6	23.2
1870	9.9	4.2	2.6	3.1	39.8
1890	22.1	8.1	7.1	6.9	62.9
1910	42.0	13.6	13.0	15.4	91.9
1930	68.9	20.7	20.4	27.8	122.8
1950	96.5	34.5	27.2	34.8	150.7
1970	149.3	58.3	48.8	42.2	203.2

TABLE A.3 U.S. Immigrant Population by Origin, Occupation, Sex, and Age, 1820–1970

The United States has been called a nation of immigrants, and surely few nations were so influenced by newcomers as this one. Immigration, clearly a force behind the great surge in national population, also contributed to the development of cities, social classes, and ethnic and cultural diversity. The make-up of the immigrants themselves changed over time as well, not only in numbers but in nationality, occupational status, and even family structure (as suggested by the shifting proportions of males and of children). For example, in 1910 during industrial expansion, about 70 percent of the immigrants came from the eastern and southern European countries, with about 60 percent being laborers or servants. In 1970, the same area provided only 20 percent of the immigrants, while over 40 percent came from the Americas and about 25 percent from Asia; the occupational skills had also shifted, with only 10 percent in the laborer and servant categories, and over 30 percent being professionals or skilled workers.

Thus, not only do the totals below ebb and flow according to the coming of war or peace, prosperity or depression, tolerance or persecution, in both the country of origin and the United States, but later immigrants seldom possessed the same characteristics as their counterparts who came one, two, or three generations earlier. Here one may find, among other things, a context for James T. Farrell's portrait in the excerpt from *Studs Lonigan* (Vol. 2, Document 10), the Chinese Exclusion Act (Vol. 2, Document 6), and the current debate over further immigration restriction.

	1820	1850	1880	1910	1940	1970
Total*	10,311	324,098	457,257	1,041,570	70,756	373,326
Northern Europe†	7,467	307,044	310,213	202,198	37,520	35,375
Eastern and southern Europe	224	1,279	38,478	724,083	11,976	75,278
Asia	5	7	5,839	23,533	2,050	90,215
The Americas	387	15,768	101,692	89,534	17,822	161,727
Professional-commercial	1,038	7,318	9,699	36,639	18,578	68,497
Skilled workers and farmers	1,964	69,242	97,133	133,640	6,557	50,461
Laborers	334	46,640	105,012	505,654	2,372	18,480
Servants	139	3,203	18,580	105,735	3,940	19,751
None	6,836	188,931	217,446	260,002	39,409	216,137
Males	7,197	196,138	287,623	736,038	33,460	176,990
Under age 15	1,313	62,543	87,154	120,509	9,602	104,880

* Includes immigrants from Africa, Australasia, France, and the Low Countries as well as areas of origin listed below.

† Great Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia, and Germany.

TABLE A.4 U.S. Workers by Economic Sectors (Agriculture, Manufacturing, Construction, and Trade), 1810–1970

This table sorts American workers into four basic sectors of the economy. Here we see evidence of (among other things) the decline of farming after 1919, the growth of manufacturing before 1900 and its preeminence by 1950, the strong showing of construction for a hundred years and its subsequent flattening out to the same low level as agriculture, and the steady advance of the trade and finance sector to a place almost equal to manufacturing. We thus pass from the "farmer's age" to the "workshop of the world" to, at last, the "service economy." Observe how the rise of manufacturing and trade parallels the growth of cities (Table A.2) and how decline in agriculture and construction shows up in the occupations of the immigrants (Table A.3).

	Workers (in millions)				
Year	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Trade/finance	Total
1810	1.9	.08	na	na	2.3
1830	2.9	na	na	na	4.2
1850	4.5	1.2	.4	.5	8.3
1870	6.8	2.5	.8	1.3	12.9
1890	10.0	4.4	1.5	2.9	23.3
1910	11.8	8.3	1.9	5.3	37.5
1930	10.6	9.9	2.0	8.1	48.8
1950	7.9	15.7	3.0	12.2	65.5
1970	3.7	19.4	3.4	18.6	85.9

TABLE A.5 Growth of U.S. Transportation (Ship, Railroad, Airplane, and Automobile), 1790–1970

The following figures illustrate the evolution of transportation in the United States. Each new type of transportation has represented a technological advance—steam power, the internal combustion engine, heavier-than-air flight—and thus mirrors the progress of the Industrial Revolution. Each type has also coincided with a phase of national development: post-Revolutionary foreign trade, the winning of the West, suburbanization, and the modern aerospace era. The hugeness of the transportation system as a whole suggests both the size of the country and the frequency and speed with which Americans have tended to move themselves and their commodities. The individual columns show when each part of the system really took off—or, as in ship tonnage in the age of the supertanker, when it took off anew.

Year	Ship tonnage into U.S. ports (in millions)	Railroad track miles (in thousands)	Motor-vehicle registration (in millions)	Scheduled commercial air routes (in thousands of miles)
1790	.6	—	—	—
1810	1.0	—	—	—
1830	1.1	—	—	—
1850	3.7	9	—	—
1870	9.2	53	—	—
1890	18.1	200	—	—
1910	40.2	352	.5	—
1930	81.3	430	22.1	30
1950	86.6	396	49.2	77
1970	254.2	350	108.4	172

TABLE A.6 U.S. Production of Selected Commodities, 1870–1970

Whether industrialization advanced in a spurt after the Civil War, as Terence Powderly (Vol. 2, Document 12) and Upton Sinclair (Vol. 2, Document 15) believed, or steadily throughout the nineteenth century, as the occupational and transportation data in Tables A.4 and A.5 hint, there is no doubt that the process was very far along by the early twentieth century. The figures below show American gains in the production of a number of important commodities. All of them have gone up sharply over the past century. Yet the listing of the items in pairs highlights divergent growth rates of some interest. Production of sugar in 1970 is twenty times the amount produced in 1870, while that of flour is only three times what was produced a century ago. The rates of growth of rayon and cigarettes are extraordinarily high when compared with those for cotton and cigars. The number of pairs of shoes produced for women was less than that for men in 1910, but in 1970, women's shoes were more than double the number made for men. In most cases the difference in growth rates comes at a particular point in time rather than steadily. What causes the various differences? What does it say about American society that industry begins to produce typewriters and light bulbs? Does the speeding up or slowing down of production growth rates have to do more with technological change or with shifts in consumption habits?

	Production (in millions)					
Commodity	1870	1890	1910	1930	1950	1970
Flour (barrels)	48	83	107	120	115	129
Sugar (lbs.)	1.2	3.2	7.3	12	14.7	20.8
Bricks*	2.8	8	9.9	5.1	6.3	6.7
Steel (tons)	.08	4.8	28.3	44.6	96.8	131.5
Beer (barrels)	7	28	59.5	3.7	88.8	134.7
Liquor (gals.)	72	111	164	—	194	355
Cotton (bales)	3	8.6	11.6	13.9	10	10.2
Rayon (lbs.)	—	—	2	118	957	699
Cigars	1	4.2	6.8	5.9	5.5	8.0
Cigarettes	.02	2.5	9.8	124.2	392	562
Men's shoes (pairs)	na	na	98	77	103	100
Women's shoes (pairs)	na	na	87	112	195	230
Typewriters	—	na	.2	.9	1.4	1.4
Light bulbs	—	na	70	350	1,200	1,582

* Billions.

TABLE A.7 Growth of U.S. Commercial Banks and U.S. Bank Assets, 1790–1970

The increase in the number of banks and in bank assets provides one measure of American economic growth, especially of growth as related to credit and money transactions—exactly the sort of thing that concerned Benjamin Franklin (Vol. 1, Document 10) and Andrew Jackson (Vol. 1, Document 20). Comparison of the two columns in the table below shows, too, that while bank assets grew steadily from 1790 to 1970, the number of banks shot up all through the era of territorial expansion (1830-1890) and early urbanization (1850-1910), then fell off after 1910 and especially after 1930. This of course reflects the ravages of the Great Depression, when so many banks failed that President Franklin Roosevelt declared a bank holiday. But the reduced number of banks in 1970 reflects a trend that this table does not fully encompass: a pattern of consolidation, takeover, and merger whereby fewer firms dominate *many* important sectors of the American economy.

Year	Number of commercial banks	Bank assets (in millions of dollars)
1790	na	na
1810	80	na
1830	330	350
1850	824	532
1870	1,937	1,781
1890	8,201	6,358
1910	25,151	22,922
1930	24,273	74,290
1950	14,676	179,165
1970	14,187	611,305

TABLE A.8 U.S. Consumer Price Index and Average Daily Wages of Construction, Manufacturing, and Unskilled Laborers, 1790–1970

The figures here provide a rough view of how ordinary laboring people fared under capitalism from 1790 to 1970. Although wages did not rise quickly for any group until well into the twentieth century, prices also remained fairly steady before that time, and therefore workers may have done better than first appears. The table shows the comparative advantage enjoyed by construction workers over other workers, and the smaller advantage of those in manufacturing over the unskilled. Observe that periods of steady or falling wages usually coincided with periods of heavy immigration (see Table A.3). Table A.8 does not reveal how the work day grew gradually shorter, particularly after 1890. But shown very clearly is the sharp wage rise after 1930, the handiwork in part of labor organizers such as John L. Lewis (Vol. 2, Document 19), whose successes were all the more important because of the tremendous recent growth of the manufacturing sector of the economy.

All the money figures, of course, must be viewed in light of changes in the cost of living over the decades. The consumer price index, which is based on the arbitrary assignment of the value 100 to 1967 prices, provides a rough measure of this cost-of-living change. Construction wages fell in the years from 1830 to 1850, for example. But the cost of living fell even more. Construction workers, therefore, fared better than might appear at first glance. Manufacturing workers made twice as much in 1930 as in 1910. But prices almost doubled, too, so that workers' gains were actually slight.

		Daily wage (in current dollars)*		
Year	**Price index†**	Construction	Manufacturing	Unskilled labor
1790	na	1.00	na	.50
1810	47	1.70	na	1.00
1830	32	1.75	na	1.00
1850	25	1.50	na	.90
1870	38	2.50	na	1.75
1890	27	3.00	2.00	1.50
1910	28	4.00	2.40	2.00
1930	50	5.00	5.50	na
1950	72	16.00	12.00	na
1970	116	42.00	27.00	na

* Wages for 1790–1830 are from the Philadelphia area, for 1850–1870 from the Erie Canal area, and for 1890–1970 from the entire nation. "Current dollars" means the actual wage, *not* adjusted for cost-of-living changes over the years.

† A price index assigns a base year (in this case 1967) a value of 100 to represent the price of important commodities (rent, food, clothing, and so forth), then assigns values to other years that relate to 100 as the prices of the same commodities in those years relate to prices in the base year. A glance at the index tells us instantly, therefore, that it cost approximately half as much to live in 1850 as it had in 1810, but about twice as much in 1970 as in 1930.

TABLE A.9 Selected Religious Affiliations of the U.S. Population (Methodist, Presbyterian, Southern Baptist, Episcopalian, and Roman Catholic), 1790–1970

Religious diversity became a hallmark of American society, just as Roger Williams (Vol. 1, Document 3) hoped it would. But the United States remained a broadly Christian land despite its diversity, and a heavily Protestant one despite its broad Christianity. The figures here show the growth of four important Protestant denominations and also of the Roman Catholic church.

Methodism and Presbyterianism, both intimately intertwined with the great reform movements of the nineteenth century, have grown steadily over the decades. Methodism tripled from 1850 to 1890 and tripled again from 1890 to 1970; the Presbyterians in this latter period quadrupled their numbers. The Southern Baptists, born partly in reaction to Northern anti-slavery agitation before the Civil War, tripled its membership from 1930 to 1970. Episcopalianism, initially prominent in the South and later attractive to wealthy industrialists, managed by contrast only a 50 percent increase after 1930.

Membership in the Roman Catholic church tripled from 1890 to 1930, but only doubled from 1930 to 1970. The great Catholic tide thus coincided with the great tide of immigration. Within a quarter-century, Catholics, though still a minority in the country, outnumbered the combined membership of all the four large Protestant denominations listed in Table A.9. Comparison with the totals for the United States population in Table A.1 will reveal, however, that all but one of these Protestant denominations grew at a pace faster than the population for the period from 1930 to 1970—perhaps a surprising development in what has often been called an age of materialism.

	Number of members (in thousands)				
Year	Methodist	Presbyterian	Southern Baptist	Episcopalian	Roman Catholic
1790	58	na	—	na	na
1810	175	na	—	na	na
1830	478	173	—	na	na
1850	1,186	207	400*	na	na
1870	1,822	445	na	na	na
1890	3,442	761	1,236	na	8,000*
1910	5,073	1,315	2,332	na	14,347
1930	7,319	1,937	3,850	1,939	20,204
1950	8,936	2,364	7,080	2,541	27,766
1970	10,672	3,096	11,629	3,475	47,872

* Estimate.