

Frank Freidel & Alan Brinkley

AMERICA
★ IN THE ★
TWENTIETH
CENTURY



Fifth Edition



AMERICA ★ IN THE ★ TWENTIETH CENTURY

★ Fifth Edition ★

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America In The Twentieth Century

Fifth Edition

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To the Memory of
William Best Hesseltine
1902-1963

Preface

More than two decades have passed since the first edition of *America in the Twentieth Century* appeared in 1960. Those years have not only produced a history of their own; they have changed the way Americans look at the entire reach of their national past. This fifth edition, therefore, is in many respects an entirely different book from the four editions that have preceded it. We have continued to give careful and thorough attention to the political and diplomatic events of twentieth-century America. But we have added major new coverage of the social, economic, and cultural phenomena that form the context for the public history of the era. In particular, we have introduced new material on the history of women; on the experience of blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and other minorities; on the rise of mass culture; and on the changing structure of the American economy. And we have, finally, thoroughly reorganized and rewritten the full text and included new photographs, maps, charts, and bibliographies.

We are deeply grateful to Richard N. Current for his advice and assistance in the preparation of this edition, as well as to the anonymous scholars and teachers who have reviewed the manuscript and offered corrections and suggestions. We wish to acknowledge as well the careful editorial work of the publishing staff. David Follmer, the acquiring editor; Irene Pavitt, the project editor; Evelyn Katrak, the copy editor; Lynn Goldberg, the photo editor; and the many others who have contributed to the preparation of this new edition.

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October 1981 vii

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One

The New Century and the Old

The American people entered the twentieth century on the heels of an unusually turbulent era. In little more than three decades, the United States had transformed itself from a predominantly rural, agrarian society into a highly industrialized, urbanized one. It had moved from a position of relative unimportance in world affairs to that of a major international power. It had changed from a fragmented, largely provincial society into an increasingly centralized and consolidated one. It had become a modern nation.

It had also become a nation with a sharply divided vision of itself and its future. On the one hand, Americans took pride in their country's remarkable economic growth, in its great technological advances, in its enhanced world power. At the same time, however, they looked with alarm at the wrenching social dislocations that rapid growth and change had created: crowded cities, oppressed minorities, concentrations of power, disparities of wealth, political corruption, general instability. Modernization, they realized, had brought not only progress but chaos and injustice. The American people greeted the new century, therefore, with both optimism and foreboding.

THE PROMISE OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

The reasons for optimism were obvious. America was by 1900 the leading industrial nation on earth, and the potential of its economy seemed to be virtually unlimited. Its natural resources were plentiful. Its labor supply was large and growing. Its technological and administrative capabilities were becoming increasingly sophisticated. The United States was, its people sensed, on the eve of an era of unbounded prosperity.