

RANDY ROBERTS • JAMES S. OLSON

American Experiences

READINGS IN AMERICAN HISTORY



Volume II From 1877

Sixth Edition



Randy Roberts

Purdue University



James S. Olson

Sam Houston State University



New York San Francisco Boston
London Toronto Sydney Tokyo Singapore Madrid
Mexico City Munich Paris Cape Town Hong Kong Montreal

Vice President and Publisher: Priscilla McGeehon
Executive Marketing Manager: Sue Westmoreland
Production Manager: Denise Phillip
Project Coordination, Text Design, and Electronic Page Makeup: Shepherd Incorporated
Cover Design Manager: John Callahan
Cover Designer: John Callahan
Cover Image: Michael Staats
Photo Researcher: Photosearch, Inc.
Senior Manufacturing Buyer: Alfred C. Dorsey
Cover Printer: Phoenix Color Corporation

For permission to use copyrighted material, grateful acknowledgment is made to the copyright holders on p.353, which are hereby made part of this copyright page

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Constructing the American past : a source book of a people's history / [edited by] Elliott J. Gorn, Randy Roberts, Terry D. Bilhartz.—5th ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 0-321-21642-3 (v. 1)—ISBN 0-321-21641-5 (v. 2)

1. United States—History—Sources. I. Gorn, Elliott J., 1951– II. Roberts, Randy, 1951– III. Bilhartz, Terry D.

E173.C69 2004

973—dc22

2004052998

Copyright © 2005 by Pearson Education, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. Printed in the United States.

Please visit our website at <http://www.ablongman.com>

ISBN 0-321-21643-1

4 5 6 7 8 9 10

07 06

To Our Families

Preface



American History instructors enjoy talking about the grand sweep of the American past. Many note the development of unique traditions such as the American political tradition and the American diplomatic tradition. They employ the article *the* so often that they depict history as a seamless garment and Americans as all cut from the same fabric. Nothing could be further from the truth. America is a diverse country, and its population is the most ethnically varied in the world—white and black, Indian and Chicano, rich and poor, male and female. No single tradition can encompass this variety. *American Experiences* shows the complexity and richness of the nation's past by focusing on the people—how they coped with, adjusted to, or rebelled against America. The readings examine Americans as they worked and played, fought and made love, lived and died.

We designed *American Experiences* as a supplement to the standard textbooks used in college survey classes in American history. Unlike other readers, it covers ground not usually found in textbooks. For example, instead of a discussion of the political impact of the Populist movement, we explore *The Wizard of Oz* as a Populist parable. In short, *American Experiences* presents different slants on standard and not-so-standard topics.

We have tested each essay in classrooms so that *American Experiences* reflects not only our interest in social history but also student interests in American history in general. We have selected essays that are readable, interesting, and help illuminate important aspects of America's past. For example, to show the nature of the class system in the South and to introduce the topic of southern values, we selected one essay on gambling and horse racing in the Old South and another on gouging matches in the southern backcountry. As an introduction to the conventional and medical view of women in the late nineteenth century, we selected an essay about Lizzie Borden. Each essay, then, serves at least two purposes: to tell a particular story well and to help illustrate the social or political landscape of America.

This reader presents a balanced picture of the experiences of Americans. The characters in these volumes are not exclusively white males from the Northeast, whose eyes are continually focused on Boston, New York, and Washington. Although their stories are certainly important, so too are the stories of blacks adjusting with dignity to a barbarous labor system, Chicanos coming to terms with Anglo society, and women striving for increased opportunities in a gender-restricted society. We have looked at all of these stories and, in doing so, we have assumed that Americans express themselves in a variety of ways: through work, sex, and games, as well as politics and diplomacy.

Changes to the New Edition

During the past three years, we have solicited a variety of opinions from colleagues and students about the selections for Volume II of *American Experiences*. Based on that feedback, we have made a number of changes in the sixth edition, always with the intent of selecting articles that undergraduate students will find interesting and informative. The new articles for the second volume of this edition follow:

- Allen W. Trelease, "Knights of the Rising Sun"
- Robert A. Caro, "The Sad Irons"
- David Welky, "Superman in Depression and War"
- E. B. Sledge, "Okinawa: Of Mud and Maggots"
- Regina Markell Morantz, "The Scientist as Sex Crusader: Alfred C. Kinsey and American Culture"
- Susan J. Douglas, "Why the Shirelles Mattered"
- Randy Roberts and David Welky, "Oliver Stone and Vietnam"
- Peter Braunstein, "Ms. America: Jane Fonda"

American Experiences is divided into standard chronological and topical parts. Each part is introduced by a brief discussion of the major themes of the period or topic. In turn, each selection is preceded by a short discussion of how it fits into the part's general theme. We employed this method to give students some guidance through the complexity of the American experience. At the conclusion of each selection is a series of study questions and a brief bibliographic essay. These are intended to further the usefulness of *American Experiences* for students as well as teachers.

We would like to acknowledge the help of our reviewers and thank them for their efforts: Anna Bates, Aquinas College; Paul E. Doutrich, York College of Pennsylvania; Steve Goodson, State University of West Georgia; Cheryl T. Kalny, St. Norbert College; Dennis Lythgoe, University of Utah; Timothy R. Mahoney, University of Nebraska; Marc Maltby, Owensboro Community and Technical College; Constance M. McGovern, Frostburg State University; Johnny S. Moore, Radford University; Susan E. Myers-Shirk, Middle Tennessee State University; Richard Pate, Danville Area Community College.

Randy Roberts
James S. Olson

Contents



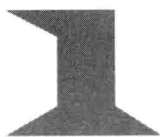
| | |
|---|-----------|
| <i>Preface</i> | <i>xi</i> |
| | |
| PART I ★ Reconstruction and the West | 2 |
| | |
| 1 ALLEN W. TRELEASE Knights of the Rising Sun | 4 |
| | |
| 2 LARRY McMURTRY A Road They Did Not Know | 14 |
| | |
| PART II ★ The Gilded Age | 24 |
| | |
| 3 JAMES W. CLARKE American Assassin: Charles J. Guiteau | 26 |
| | |
| 4 HENRY M. LITTLEFIELD The Wizard of Oz: Parable on Populism | 39 |
| | |
| 5 KATHRYN ALLAMONG JACOB She Couldn't Have Done It, Even If She Did | 48 |
| | |
| 6 PETER STEVENS and MARIAN EIDE The First Chapter of Children's Rights | 58 |
| | |
| PART III ★ War and Peace in a New Century | 68 |
| | |
| 7 ROBERT J. MADDOX Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders | 70 |

| | | |
|--|---|----------------|
| 8 | UPTON SINCLAIR Living and Dying in Packingtown, Chicago from <i>The Jungle</i> | 78 |
| 9 | BONNIE MITELMAN Rose Schneiderman and the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire | 89 |
| 10 | RANDY ROBERTS Jack Johnson Wins the Heavyweight Championship | 98 |
| 11 | PAUL FUSSELL The Trench Scene | 108 |
| PART IV ★ Heroes and Society in the 1920s | | 118 |
| 12 | RODERICK NASH The Mood of the People | 120 |
| 13 | DEAN SMITH The Black Sox Scandal | 132 |
| 14 | MARK HALLER Organized Crime in Urban Society: Chicago in the Twentieth Century | 141 |
| PART V ★ Depression and War | | 156 |
| 15 | ROBERT A. CARO The Sad Irons | 158 |
| 16 | DONALD WORSTER The Black Blizzards Roll In | 170 |
| 17 | EDWARD OXFORD Night of the Martians | 179 |
| 18 | DAVID WELKY Superman in Depression and War | 191 |
| 19 | E. B. SLEDGE Okinawa: Of Mud and Maggots | 206 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| PART VI ★ America in the Age of Anxiety: 1945-1960 | 220 |
| 20 ERNEST SHARPE, JR. The Man Who Changed His Skin | 222 |
| 21 REGINA MARKELL MORANTZ The Scientist as Sex Crusader: Alfred C. Kinsey and American Culture | 233 |
| 22 RICHARD S. TEDLOW Intellect on Television: The Quiz Show Scandals of the 1950s | 247 |
| 23 JAMES T. PATTERSON Smoking and Cancer | 257 |
| PART VII ★ Coming Apart: 1960-2000 | 270 |
| 24 SUSAN J. DOUGLAS Why the Shirelles Mattered | 272 |
| 25 RANDY ROBERTS and DAVID WELKY Oliver Stone and Vietnam | 283 |
| 26 PETER BRAUNSTEIN Ms. America: Jane Fonda | 302 |
| 27 MATTHEW DALLEK Liberalism Overthrown | 311 |
| 28 RANDY ROBERTS and JAMES S. OLSON Perfect Bodies, Eternal Youth: The Obsession of Modern America | 323 |
| 29 HAYNES JOHNSON O. J. Simpson: The Trial of the Century | 338 |
| <i>Photo Acknowledgments</i> | 353 |

American Experiences

PART



Reconstruction and the West

Although the Civil War did not begin as a crusade against slavery, it ended that way. The Emancipation Proclamation and Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution made human bondage in the United States illegal, and during Reconstruction Republicans worked diligently to extend full civil rights to southern blacks. Despite the concerted opposition of President Andrew Johnson, the Radical Republicans in Congress pushed through a strong legislative program. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution were all basically designed to bring the emancipated slaves into the political arena and build a respectable Republican party in the South. Both of these goals were stillborn, however, when Congress removed the troops from the last southern states. In 1877, the old planter elite resumed its control of southern politics. They disfranchised and relegated blacks to second-class citizenship, and the South became solidly Democratic. The South had indeed been brought back into the Union, but the grandiose hopes for a true reconstruction of southern life would not be realized for more than a century.

Genuine change in the southern social structure required more than most Northerners could accept. Confiscation and redistribution of the plantations among poor whites and former slaves was too brazen an assault on property rights; northern businessmen feared that someday their own workers might demand similar treatment. Nor were Northerners prepared for real social change. Advocating political rights for blacks was one thing; true social equality was quite another. Prejudice ran deep in the American psyche, too deep in the 1870s to allow for massive social change. Finally, most Americans were growing tired of the debate over civil rights and becoming preoccupied with business, money, and economic growth. Heavy industry in the East and vacant land in the West were absorbing their energies.



Just as Reconstruction was coming to an end, out west, ambitious farmers were rapidly settling the frontier, anxious to convert the land into an agricultural empire. Civilization was forever replacing a wilderness mentality with familiar political, economic, and social institutions. Already the "Old West" was becoming the stuff of which nostalgia is made. Normal, if somewhat eccentric, people were being transformed into larger-than-life heroes as American society tried to maintain its rural, individualistic roots. Back East, cities and factories were announcing a future of bureaucracies, interest groups, crowds, and enormous industrial production. America would never be the same again. The cult of Western heroes helped people forget the misery of the Civil War and vicariously preserve a disappearing way of life.

READING 1



Knights of the Rising Sun

Allen W. Trelease

Periodically, even today, Klu Klux Klansmen rally in America, burning crosses on the lawns of new black neighbors, painting swastikas on the walls of a Jewish synagogue, or marching on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday somewhere in small-town, southern America. They remain a dark legacy of the Civil War, which killed more than 600,000 Americans, and the institution of slavery. When the war ended, the South lay in ruins. For the next twelve years, northern Republicans tried to "reconstruct" the South in a chaotic crusade that mixed retribution, corruption, and genuine idealism. Intent on punishing white Southerners for their disloyalty while enfranchising millions of former slaves, the northern Republicans, especially the "Radicals," tried to extend full civil rights via the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, but for a variety of reasons the attempt failed. By 1877, political power in the South had reverted to the white elite.

A major factor in the failure of Radical Republicans to "reconstruct" the South was the rise of the Ku Klux Klan. Enraged at the very thought of black political power, Klansmen resorted to intimidation and violence, punishing southern blacks even suspected of sympathizing with Radical goals for the South. In "Knights of the Rising Sun," historian Allen Trelease describes Klan activities in Texas during the late 1860s. Isolated from the main theaters of the Civil War, much of Texas remained unreconstructed, and the old white elite, along with their Klan allies, succeeded in destroying every vestige of black political activity and in eliminating the Republican party from the state's political life.

Large parts of Texas remained close to anarchy through 1868. Much of this was politically inspired despite the fact that the state was not yet reconstructed and took no part in the national election. In theory the Army was freer to take a direct hand in maintaining order than was true in the states which had been readmitted, but the shortage of troops available for this duty considerably lessened that advantage. At least twenty counties were involved in the Ku Klux terror, from Houston north to the Red River. In Houston itself Klan activity was limited to the holding of monthly meetings in a gymnasium and posting notices on lampposts, but in other places there was considerable violence.

By mid-September disguised bands had committed several murders in Trinity County, where two lawyers and both justices of the peace in the town of Sumter were well known as Klansmen. Not only did the crimes go unpunished, but Conservatives used them to force a majority of the Negroes to swear allegiance to the Democratic party; in return they received the familiar protection papers supposedly guaranteeing them against further outrage. "Any one in this community opposed to the Grand Cyclops and his imps is in danger of his life," wrote a local Republican in November. In Washington County the Klan sent warning notices to Republicans and committed at least one murder. As late as January 1869 masked parties were active around Palestine, shaving heads, whipping, and shooting among the black population, as well as burning down their houses. The military arrested five or six men for these offenses, but the Klan continued to make the rounds of Negroes' and Union men's houses, confiscating both guns and money. Early in November General J. J. Reynolds, military commander in the state, declared in a widely quoted report that "civil law east of the Trinity river is almost a dead letter" by virtue of the activities of Ku Klux Klans and similar

organizations. Republicans had been publicly slated for assassination and forced to flee their homes, while the murder of Negroes was too common to keep track of. These lawless bands, he said, were "evidently countenanced, or at least not discouraged, by a majority of the white people in the counties where [they] are most numerous. They could not otherwise exist." These statements did not endear the general to Conservative Texans, but they were substantially true.

The worst region of all, as to both Klan activity and general banditry, remained northeast Texas. A correspondent of the Cincinnati *Commercial* wrote from Sulphur Springs early in January 1869:

Armed bands of banditti, thieves, cut-throats and assassins infest the country; they prowl around houses, they call men out and shoot or hang them, they attack travellers upon the road, they seem almost everywhere present, and are ever intent upon mischief. You cannot pick up a paper without reading of murders, assassinations and robbery. . . . And yet not the fourth part of the truth has been told; not one act in ten is reported. Go where you will, and you will hear of fresh murders and violence. . . . The civil authority is powerless—the military insufficient in number, while hell has transferred its capital from pandemonium to Jefferson, and the devil is holding high carnival in Gilmer, Tyler, Canton, Quitman, Boston, Marshall and other places in Texas.

Judge Hardin Hart wrote Governor Pease in September to say that on account of "a regularly organized band which has overrun the country" he could not hold court in Grayson, Fannin, and Hunt counties without a military escort.

Much of this difficulty was attributable to outlaw gangs like those of Ben Bickerstaff and Cullen Baker, but even their activities were often racially and politically inspired, with Negroes and Union men the chief sufferers. Army officers and soldiers reported that most of the population at Sulphur Springs was organized into Ku Klux clubs affiliated with the Democratic party and some of

"Texas: The Knights of the Rising Sun" from *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* by Allen W. Trelease. Copyright © 1971 by Allen W. Trelease. Reprinted by permission of the author.

the outlaws called themselves Ku Klux Rangers. At Clarksville a band of young men calling themselves Ku Klux broke up a Negro school and forced the teacher to flee the state.

White Conservatives around Paris at first took advantage of Klan depredations among Negroes by issuing protection papers to those who agreed to join the Democratic part. But the marauding reached such proportions that many freedmen fled their homes and jobs, leaving the crops untended. When a body of Klansmen came into town early in September, apparently to disarm more blacks, some of the leading citizens warned them to stop. The freedmen were not misbehaving, they said, and if they needed disarming at a later time the local people would take care of it themselves. Still the raiding continued, and after a sheriff's posse failed to catch the culprits the farmers in one neighborhood banded together to oppose them by force. (Since the Klan had become sacred among Democrats, these men claimed that the raiding was done by an unauthorized group using its name. They carefully denied any idea of opposing the Klan itself.) Even this tactic was ineffective so far as the county as a whole was concerned, and the terror continued at least into November. The Freedmen's Bureau agent, Colonel DeWitt C. Brown, was driven away from his own farm thirty miles from Paris and took refuge in town. There he was subjected to constant threats of assassination by Klansmen or their sympathizers. From where he stood the Klan seemed to be in almost total command.

The Bureau agent at Marshall (like his predecessor in the summer) suspected that the planters themselves were implicated in much of the terrorism. By driving Negroes from their homes just before harvest time the Klan enabled many landowners to collect the crop without having to pay the laborers' share.

Jefferson and Marion County remained the center of Ku Klux terrorism, as the Cincinnati reporter pointed out. A garrison of twenty-six men under Major James Curtis did little to deter violence. Bands of hooded men continued to make nocturnal depredations on Negroes in the sur-

rounding countryside during September and October as they had for weeks past. "Whipping the freedmen, robbing them of their arms, driving them off plantations, and murdering whole families are of daily, and nightly occurrence," wrote the local Bureau agent at the end of October, "all done by disguised parties whom no one can testify to. The civil authorities never budge an inch to try and discover these midnight marauders and apparently a perfect apathy exists throughout the whole community regarding the general state of society. Nothing but martial law can save this section as it is at present. . . ." Inside town, Republicans hardly dared go outdoors at night, and for several weeks the county judge, who was afraid to go home even in the daytime, slept at the Army post. The local Democratic newspapers, including the *Ultra Ku Klux*, encouraged the terror by vying with one another in the ferocity of their denunciations of Republicans.

Major Curtis confirmed this state of affairs in a report to General Reynolds:

Since my arrival at the Post. . . [in mid-September] I have carefully observed the temper of the people and studied their intentions. I am constrained to say that neither are pacific. The amount of unblushing fraud and outrage perpetrated upon the negroes is hardly to be believed unless witnessed. Citizens who are esteemed respectable do not hesitate to take every unfair advantage. My office is daily visited by large numbers of unfortunates who have had money owing them, which they have been unable to obtain. The moral sense of the community appears blunted and gray headed apologists for such men as Baker and Bickerstaff can be met on all the street corners. . . . The right of franchise in this section is a farce. Numbers of negroes have been killed for daring to be Radicals, and their houses have so often been broken into by their Ku Klux neighbors in search of arms that they are now pretty well defenceless. The civil officers cannot and will not punish these outrages. Calvary armed with double barrelled shotguns would

soon scour the country and these desperadoes be met on their own ground. They do not fear the arms that the troops now have, for they shoot from behind hedges and fences or at night and then run. No more notice is taken here of the death of a Radical negro than of a mad dog. A democratic negro however, who was shot the other day by another of his stripe, was followed to his grave through the streets of this city by a long procession in carriages, on horseback, and on foot. I saw some of the most aristocratic and respectable white men in this city in the procession.

On the same night that Curtis wrote, the new Grand Officers of the Knights of the Rising Sun were installed in the presence of a crowd of 1,200 or 1,500 persons. "The town was beautifully illuminated," a newspaper reported, "and the Seymour Knights and the Lone Star Club turned out in full uniform, with transparencies and burners, in honor of the occasion." Sworn in as Grand Commander for the ensuing twelve months was Colonel William P. Saufley, who doubled as chairman of the Marion County Democratic executive committee. Following the installation "able and patriotic speeches" were delivered by several notables, including a Democratic Negro.

As usual, the most hated Republican was the one who had the greatest Negro following. This was Captain George W. Smith, a young Union army veteran from New York who had settled in Jefferson as a merchant at the end of the war. His business failed, but the advent of Radical Reconstruction opened the prospect of a successful political career; at the age of twenty-four Smith was elected to the state constitutional convention by the suffrage of the Negro majority around Jefferson. At the convention, according to a perhaps overflattering posthumous account, he was recognized as one of the abler members. "In his daily life he was correct, almost austere. He never drank, smoked, chewed, nor used profane language." However, "he was odious as a negro leader, as a radical, as a man who could not be cowed, nor scared away." Smith may also have

alienated his fellow townspeople by the strenuous efforts he made to collect debts they owed him. Even a few native Republicans like Judge Charles Caldwell, who was scarcely more popular with Conservatives, refused to speak from the same platform with him. As his admirer pointed out, Smith "was ostracized and his life often threatened. But he refused to be scared. He sued some of his debtors and went to live with colored people." One day, as he returned from a session of the convention, his carpetbag—perhaps symbolically—was stolen, its contents rifled, and a list of them published in a local newspaper.

The beginning of the end for Smith came on the night of October 3, after he and Anderson Wright, a Negro, had spoken at a Republican meeting. As he opened the door of a Negro cabin to enter, Smith was fired upon by four men outside including Colonel Richard P. Crump, one of Jefferson's leading gentry. Smith drew his revolver and returned the fire, wounding two of the assailants and driving them away. He then went to Major Curtis at the Army post. Here Crump, with the chief of police and others, soon arrived bearing a warrant for his arrest on a charge of assault. The attackers' original intention to kill Smith now assumed greater urgency because he and several Negroes present had recognized their assailants. Smith objected strenuously to their efforts to get custody of him, protesting that it was equivalent to signing his death warrant. Nevertheless Curtis turned him over to the civil authorities on their assurance of his safety. Smith was taken off to jail and a small civilian guard was posted around it. The major was uneasy, however, and requested reinforcements from his superior, but they were refused.

The next day there were signs in Jefferson of an assembling of the Knights of the Rising Sun. Hoping to head off a lynching, Curtis dispatched sixteen soldiers (the greater part of his command) to help guard the jail. At 9 p.m., finally, a signal was sounded—a series—of strokes on a bell at the place where the Knights held their meetings. About seventy members now mobilized under the command of Colonel Saufley and proceeded

to march in formation toward the jail; they were in disguise and many carried torches. The jail building lay in an enclosed yard where at that time four black men were confined for a variety of petty offenses. One of the prisoners was Anderson Wright, and apparently the real reason for their being there was that they had witnessed the previous night's attempt to murder Smith; they may even have been fellow targets at that time. When the Knights reached this enclosure they burst through it with a shout and overpowered the guard, commanded by a young Army lieutenant. The invaders then turned to the Negro prisoners and dragged them into some adjoining woods. Wright and a second man, Cornelius Turner, managed to escape from them, although Wright was wounded; the other two prisoners were shot nearly to pieces. As soon as Major Curtis heard the shooting and firing he came running with his remaining soldiers; but they too were quickly overpowered. Repeatedly the major himself tried to prevent the mob from entering the jail building in which Smith was confined, only to be dragged away from the door each time. They had no trouble unlocking the door, for city marshal Silas Nance, who possessed the key, was one of the conspirators.

At first Smith tried to hold the door shut against their entry. Eventually failing at this, he caught the foremost man, pulled him into the room, and somehow killed him. "It is common talk in Jefferson now," wrote a former Bureau agent some months later, "that Capt. Smith killed the first man who entered—that the Knights of the Rising Sun afterward buried him secretly with their funeral rites, and it was hushed up, he being a man from a distance. It is an established fact that one Gray, a strong man, who ventured into the open door, was so beaten by Capt. Smith that he cried, 'Pull me out! He's killing me!' and he was dragged out backward by the leg." All this took place in such darkness that the Knights could not see their victim. Some of them now went outside and held torches up to the small barred window of Smith's cell. By this light they were able to shoot him four times. "The door was burst open



By 1868 the Ku Klux Klan had become a full fledged terrorist organization involving community members of all classes and ranks, many of whom were veterans of the Confederate army.

and the crowd surged in upon him as he fell, and then, man after man, as they filed around fired into the dying body. This refinement of barbarity was continued while he writhed and after his limbs had ceased to quiver, that each one might participate in the triumph."

Once the mob had finished its work at the jail it broke up into squads which began patrolling the town and searching for other Republican leaders. County Judge Campbell had anticipated trouble earlier in the evening and taken refuge as usual at Major Curtis' headquarters. Judge Caldwell was hated second only to Smith after his