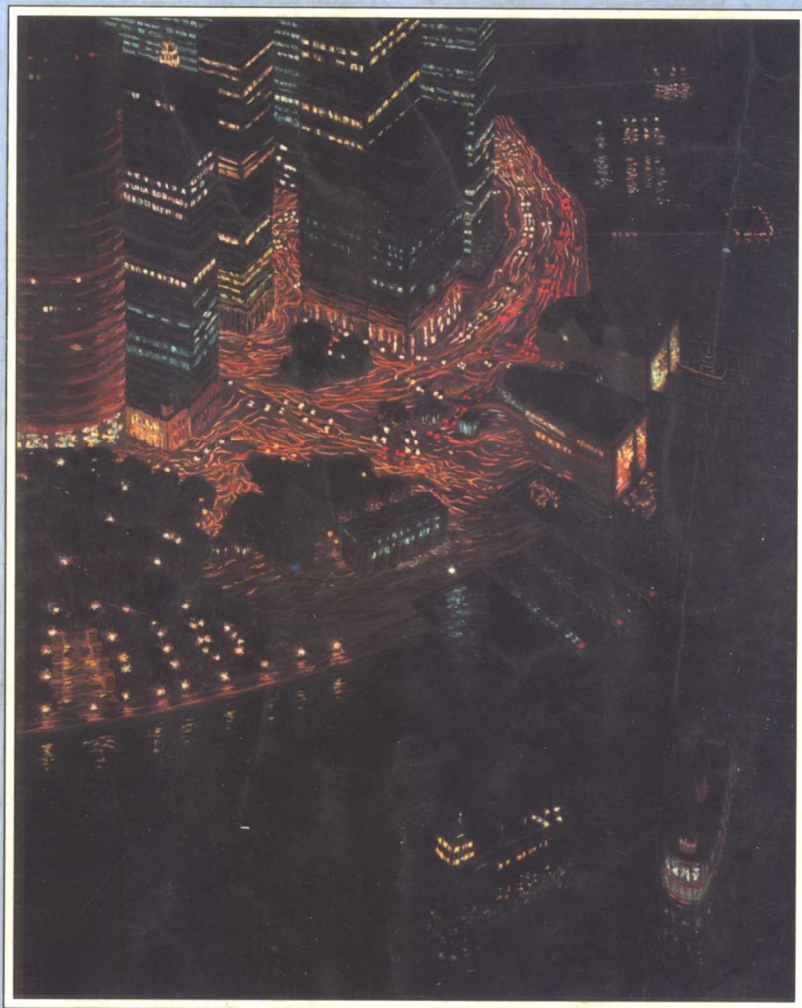


# AMERICA



Tindall • Shi

BRIEF THIRD EDITION • VOLUME TWO

# AMERICA

A N A R R A T I V E  
H I S T O R Y

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B R I E F T H I R D E D I T I O N



VOLUME II

GEORGE BROWN TINDALL

DAVID E. SHI



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AMERICA

**FOR BRUCE AND BLAIR**

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**FOR  
JASON AND JESSICA**

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## PREFACE

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The warm reception instructors have accorded the Brief Second edition of *America: A Narrative History* suggests that the book's purpose remains valid: to offer a succinct introductory narrative history of America—a narrative alive with character, augmented with analysis and social texture, and propelled by the energy of great events. The format continues to be unique in its field: *America* is designed to be read. Its single-column page remains uncluttered by distracting inserts, portfolios, or other interruptions to the story. It also remains the only text that students can purchase without breaking the bank and carry around without breaking the back.

Why a brief edition? We hope it meets the needs of those instructors who must cover the American past from its pre-Columbian roots to the present in one semester or less. It is also intended for those professors who prefer to assign students a brief text and rely more heavily on supplementary readings.

Smaller by one-third than the full Third Edition, the Brief *America* retains the character and appearance of its parent volume. The narrative is still strewn with colorful personalities and illuminating anecdotes, but its detail has been pared back throughout. Almost all the major subjects discussed in the full edition remain here, but most have been reduced in length and several sections have been reorganized.

The most salient theme of this new edition is embodied in a question posed over two hundred years ago by J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, a transplanted French farmer: "What then is the American, this new man?" Crèvecoeur, who arrived in the colonies in 1759, married an American woman, and settled on a New York farm, went on to explain in *Letters from an American Farmer* that in America "individuals of all nations are melted into a new

race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world." Fifty years later the transcendental philosopher-poet Ralph Waldo Emerson addressed the same point when he wrote in his journal that in America, this "asylum of all nations, the energy of Irish, Germans, Swedes, Poles and Cossacks, and all the European tribes—of the Africans and of the Polynesians, will construct a new race . . . as vigorous as the new Europe which came out of the smelting pot of the Dark Ages."

These statements express a shared truth: from its inception America has been an ambitious effort to create a pluralist society. The United States has welcomed more people from other places than any other country in history, and the process of absorbing such a multicultural population has given American life its roiling energy. The lofty social aim of American civilization is expressed in the official motto of the United States, *e pluribus unum*—"one out of many."

Yet the national motto has rarely described the reality. Americans have prided themselves on their ability to fashion what one New York mayor called a "gorgeous mosaic," an integration of different ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds. But in fact the United States has never become the mythic "melting pot" envisioned by Crèvecoeur, Emerson, and others. Instead, peoples from the four corners of the globe have converged to form a richly diverse—and often fractious, too often violent—society held tenuously together by a shared commitment to democratic principles, economic opportunity, religious freedom, and the rule of law.

From the Revolutionary era to the 1990s, the nation's politicians, preachers, and pundits have debated the effects of America's quest for unity through diversity. This quest forms a prominent thread running through the pages of this edition. It surfaces in discussions of the backgrounds and folkways of the colonists, in accounts of the waves of "new" immigration in the late nineteenth and late twentieth centuries and the nativist prejudices they aroused, in descriptions of the tangled skein of legislation affecting immigrants and refugees, and in data detailing recent trends in immigration and ethnic diversity. Few students, we suspect, realize that immigrants were responsible for one-third of the population growth of the United States in the 1980s, or that fully 80 percent of the newcomers were from Asia and Latin America.

To describe the remarkable "peopling of America," this edition of *America* highlights biography. From Anne Hutchinson and John Winthrop through Sojourner Truth, Mary Elizabeth

Lease, Amelia Earhart and Martin Luther King, Jr., brief biographies integrated throughout the narrative give students a more textured feel for the character and personality of key figures. And in fresh treatments of female slaves, women workers at the Lowell mills, women on the frontier and on the social fronts of foreign wars, this Brief Third Edition of *America* offers enhanced discussions of women's lives and their contributions to American history.

By its very nature a brief survey can neither exhaust the facts of history nor treat every fashion of theory or interpretation, whether old or new. It instead offers a tour of the house of history, so to speak, pointing out many doors, stopping to open a few, stepping inside some of them, and all the while hoping that readers will be enticed to explore further what is behind those doors and others.

Our collaboration on the Brief Third Edition and its parent version benefited greatly from the insights and suggestions of many people. The following scholars provided close readings of the full manuscript at various stages: Albert Broussard (Texas A & M University), Janet Coryell (Auburn University), Charles Eagles (University of Mississippi), Peter R. Knights (York University), Phillip L. Osborne (United States Air Force Academy), David Parker (Southwest Missouri State University), Malcolm Rohrbough (University of Iowa), and Daniel B. Thorp (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University). Copyeditors Debra Makay and Margie Brassil polished the manuscript. Kristin Prevaillet showed remarkable energy in gathering material for illustrations, and Bonnie Hall helped with innumerable details. Linda Sellars (University of North Carolina) updated the bibliographies originally prepared by Gary Freeze (Erskine College) and revised for the second edition by David Parker. Steve Forman, our steadfast editor at W. W. Norton, remains a pillar of insight and patience. An accomplished wordsmith with a certain historical flourish himself, he pruned our prose without bruising our pride and in the process gave enhanced meaning to the term discretion. We are confident that this edition of *America* is the better for the assistance provided by all of these people.

—George B. Tindall  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

—David E. Shi  
Davidson, North Carolina



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# 17

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## RECONSTRUCTION: NORTH AND SOUTH

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### THE BATTLE OVER RECONSTRUCTION

In the spring of 1865 the wearying war was over. At the frightful cost of 620,000 lives and the destruction of the southern economy and much of its landscape, American nationalism emerged triumphant, and some 4 million slaves emerged free. But peace had come only on the battlefields. "Cannon conquer," recognized a northern editor, "but they do not necessarily convert." Now the North faced the imposing task of "reconstructing" a ravaged and resentful South. A few northerners thought the task relatively simple. The poet and professor James Russell Lowell wrote a friend in April 1865: "I worry a little about reconstruction, but am inclined to think that matters will very much settle themselves." He was wrong. A tangle of difficult issues confronted northern politicians. Should the Confederate leaders be tried for treason? How were new governments to be formed? How and at whose expense was the South's economy to be rebuilt? What was to be done with the freed slaves? Were they to be given land? social equality? education? voting rights? Such complex questions required careful planning, but policy-makers did not have the luxury of time or the benefits of consensus.

**LINCOLN'S PLAN AND CONGRESS'S RESPONSE** The problem of reconstruction arose early in the Civil War, as Union forces advanced into the South and were forced to create new local governments. Lincoln in 1862 named military governors for Tennessee, Ar-

kansas, and Louisiana, and by the end of the following year he had formulated a plan for regular civilian governments in those states and any others that might be liberated from the Confederacy.

Acting under his pardon power, President Lincoln issued in December 1863 a Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction under which any Rebel state could form a Union government whenever a number equal to 10 percent of those who had voted in 1860 took an oath of allegiance to the Constitution and Union and received a presidential pardon. Participants also had to swear support for laws and proclamations dealing with emancipation. Excluded from the pardon, however, were certain groups: civil, diplomatic, and high military officers of the Confederacy; judges, congressmen, and military officers of the United States who had left their posts to aid the rebellion; and those accused of failure to treat captured Negro soldiers and their officers as prisoners of war.

Under this plan loyal governments appeared in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana, but Congress refused to recognize them. In the absence of any specific provisions for reconstruction in the Constitution, politicians disagreed as to where authority properly rested. Lincoln claimed the right to direct reconstruction under the presidential pardon power, and also under the Constitutional obligation to guarantee each state a republican form of government.

A few conservative and most moderate Republicans supported Lincoln's program of immediate restoration. A small but influential group known as Radical Republicans, however, desired to see a sweeping transformation of southern society that would include making the freedmen full-fledged citizens. The Radicals were talented, earnest, and frequently colorful men who maintained that Congress, not the president, should supervise the reconstruction program. To this end they helped pass in 1864 the Wade-Davis Bill, sponsored by Senator Benjamin Wade of Ohio and Representative Winter Davis of Maryland, which proposed much more stringent requirements than Lincoln had. In contrast to Lincoln's 10 percent plan, the Wade-Davis Bill required that a majority of white male citizens declare their allegiance and that only those who swore an "ironclad" oath that they had always remained loyal to the Union could vote or serve in the state constitutional conventions. The conventions, moreover, would have to abolish slavery, deny political rights to high-ranking civil and military officers of the Confederacy, and repudiate war debts. Passed during the closing days of the 1864

session, the bill went unsigned by Lincoln, and this "pocket veto" provoked the bill's sponsors to issue the Wade-Davis Manifesto, a blistering statement that accused the president of usurping power and attempting to use readmitted states to ensure his reelection.

By early 1865 Lincoln and the Radical Republicans were embroiled in an increasingly heated debate about the direction of reconstruction policy. A few Radicals argued that what the freedmen needed most was land. But the several proposals for land confiscation and distribution never materialized. Even most dedicated abolitionists shrank from the measures of land reform that might have given the freedmen more self-support and independence. Citizenship and legal rights were one thing, wholesale confiscation quite another. Instead of land or material help the freedmen more often received age-old advice: work hard and lead sober, honest, and frugal lives. Frederick Douglass, the black abolitionist, suggested that after the war the former slave was left "free from the individual master but a slave of society. He had neither money, property, nor friends. He was free from the old plantation, but he had nothing but the dusty road under his feet. . . . He was turned loose, naked, hungry, and destitute to the open sky." According to a former Confederate general, recently freed blacks had "nothing but freedom."

In March 1865 Congress did establish within the War Department the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, to provide "such issues of provisions, clothing, and fuel" as might be needed to relieve "destitute and suffering refugees and freedmen and their wives and children." The Freedmen's Bureau would also take over abandoned and confiscated land for rental in forty-acre tracts to "loyal refugees and freedmen," who might buy the land at a fair price within three years. But such lands were limited, and by the end of 1865 all confiscated lands were returned to the original owners. Bureau agents were also entrusted with negotiating labor contracts (something new for both freedmen and planters), providing medical care, and setting up schools.

This was as far as Congress would go. Beyond such temporary measures of relief, no program of reconstruction ever incorporated much more than basic constitutional and legal rights for freedmen. These were important in themselves, of course, but their scope was uncertain, to be settled more by the course of events than by any clear-cut commitment to equality.

Lincoln issued his final statement on reconstruction in his last public address, on April 11, 1865. Speaking from the White



House balcony, he dismissed the theoretical question of whether the Confederate states had technically remained in the Union as "good for nothing at all—a mere pernicious abstraction." These states were simply "out of their proper practical relation with the Union," and the object was to get them "into their proper practical relation" as quickly as possible. At a cabinet meeting on April 14, Lincoln proposed to get state governments in operation before Congress met in December. He worried that Congress might push through a harsher reconstruction program. Lincoln wanted "no persecution, no bloody work," no dramatic restructuring of southern social and economic life.

That evening Lincoln went to Ford's Theater and his rendezvous with death. Shot in the head by John Wilkes Booth, a crazed actor and Confederate zealot, the president died the next morning. Pursued into Virginia, Booth was trapped and shot in a burning barn. His last words were: "Tell mother I die for my country. I thought I did for the best." Three collaborators were tried and hanged, along with Mrs. Mary Surratt, at whose boarding house they had plotted. Three others received life sentences, including a Maryland doctor who set the leg Booth had broken when he jumped from Lincoln's box onto the stage. The doctor achieved lasting fame by making common a once obscure expression. His name was Mudd.

**JOHNSON'S PLAN** Lincoln's death suddenly elevated to the White House Andrew Johnson of Tennessee, a man whose state remained in legal limbo and whose party affiliation was unclear. He was a War Democrat who had been put on the Union ticket in 1864 as a gesture of unity. Of humble origins like Lincoln, Johnson had moved as a youth from his birthplace in Raleigh, North Carolina, to Greenville, Tennessee, where he became proprietor of a tailor shop. Self-educated with the help of his wife, he had made himself into an effective, salty orator, and he won election as mayor, congressman, governor, and senator, then as military governor of Tennessee before he became vice-president. In the process Johnson had become an advocate of the small farmers against the large planters. He also shared the racial attitudes of most white yeomen. "Damn the negroes," he exclaimed to a friend during the war, "I am fighting those traitorous aristocrats, their masters." Scrupulously honest but often tactless, Johnson was tenacious and unyielding in defending his principles. After visiting the White House, the English writer Charles Dickens noted that the stern Johnson displayed great commitment but no "genial sunlight."