

CHAPTER 3 Section 5 (pages 152–157)

Reforming American Society

BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you learned about changes in the American economy.

In this section, you will read about reform movements in 19th-century America.

AS YOU READ

Use the chart below to take notes on the aims of the religious and reform movements of the early 19th century.

TOPIC	AIMS
<i>Second Great Awakening</i>	<i>bring more people to God</i>
<i>Unitarianism</i>	
<i>Transcendentalism</i>	
<i>Abolition</i>	
<i>Women's rights</i>	

TERMS AND NAMES

Second Great Awakening

Widespread spiritual movement

Unitarians Religious movement that emphasized reason

Ralph Waldo Emerson Leading philosopher of the era

transcendentalism Philosophy that emphasized the truth to be found in nature and intuition

William Lloyd Garrison Abolitionist leader

Frederick Douglass Escaped slave who became a noted abolitionist leader

Nat Turner Leader of a violent slave rebellion

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Leader in the abolitionist and women's rights movements

Seneca Falls convention Convention held in 1848 to argue for women's rights

Sojourner Truth Former slave who became an abolitionist and women's rights activist

A Spiritual Awakening Inspires Reform

(pages 152–153)

What was the Second Great Awakening?

The **Second Great Awakening** was a religious movement that relied on emotional sermons in revival meetings to awaken religious feelings. It stressed individual conversion to religion.

Preachers such as Charles Grandison Finney gave exciting sermons to get emotional responses from their audiences. These preachers gave their sermons at events called revival meetings.

The **Unitarian** movement was a spiritual movement that appealed to reason, not emotion. It started in New England. It attracted wealthy and educated people.

Transcendentalism attracted people who

wanted to reform society. It was founded by New England minister, writer, and philosopher **Ralph Waldo Emerson**. According to transcendentalism, people could find truth by looking at nature and within themselves. Transcendentalists believed in the dignity of the individual.

Many enslaved African Americans had become Christians. Many saw the Christian message as a promise of freedom. In the East, free blacks formed their own churches. These churches became political, educational, and social centers for African Americans.

1. How did the Second Great Awakening emphasize the importance of the individual?

Slavery and Abolition (pages 153–155)

Why did abolitionists oppose slavery?

During the 1830s, more and more whites began to speak out against slavery. One extreme *abolitionist* was **William Lloyd Garrison**. In his newspaper, *The Liberator*, Garrison called for immediate emancipation, or freeing of the slaves. Many people in both the North and the South thought that Garrison's ideas were too extreme.

Another important abolitionist was **Frederick Douglass**. He learned a trade while he was still enslaved. He also learned to read. Later, he escaped from slavery.

Douglass wrote and spoke powerfully in favor of freeing the slaves without violence. He founded an antislavery newspaper called *The North Star*.

By 1830 slavery was part of the Southern way of life. Most slaves worked hard under cruel conditions for wealthy plantation owners. Most white farmers were poor and did not have much better living conditions than some slaves.

White males and a few free blacks did, however, have freedom and the chance to improve themselves. Slaves were denied education and the most basic *civil rights*.

In 1831, a Virginia slave named **Nat Turner** led a violent slave rebellion. The rebels were captured and executed. The Turner rebellion frightened

white Southerners. They made restrictions on slaves even tighter. Some Southerners also began to defend slavery as a good thing.

2. Describe how three people fought against slavery in the 1830s.

Women and Reform (pages 156–157)

What did women reformers do?

Women were active in the 19th-century reform movements. Many women worked for abolition. Women also played key roles in the temperance movement, the effort to ban the drinking of alcohol.

Until 1820, American girls had little chance for education. Some female reformers opened schools of higher learning for girls. Emma Willard founded a secondary school in New York, and Mary Lyon started Mount Holyoke, which later became a college.

Some women addressed the issue of women's rights. **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** and Lucretia Mott had been abolitionists. In 1848, they organized a women's rights convention. The **Seneca Falls convention** supported many reforms. The most controversial one was women's suffrage, or the right to vote.

For the most part, African American women did not have a voice at that time. **Sojourner Truth**, however, made her voice heard. A former slave, Truth became famous for speaking out for both abolition and women's rights.

3. How did women work for reform in the 19th century?

Answer Key

Chapter 3: The Growth of a Young Nation (pages 116–161)

(pages 152–157)

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