

Nation Building in North and South America, 1789–1914



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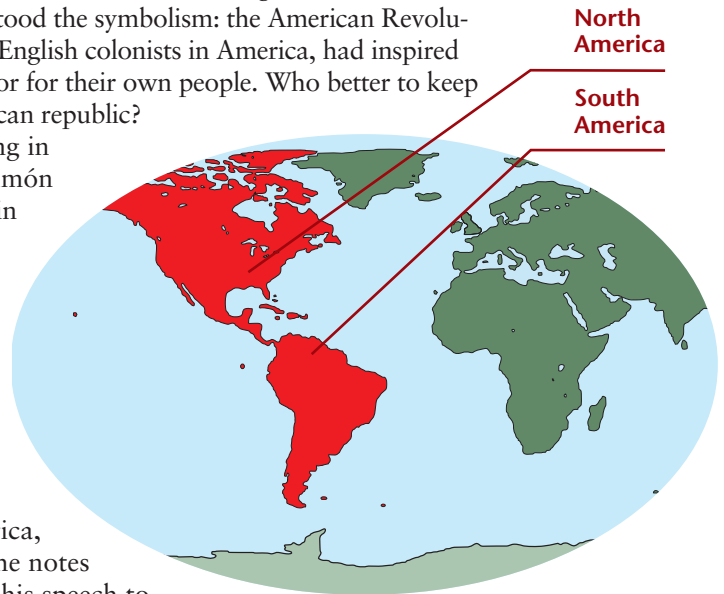
The Constitution Of The United States Of America

In 1787, the recently independent United States replaced its Articles of Confederation with a Constitution designed to strengthen the authority of the central government (page 700). This document, with its accompanying 27 amendments, proved to be not only an extraordinarily durable charter of authority, but an effective protector of the rights of the people against government intrusion in their lives.

In September 1789 George Washington, first president of the United States, received a curious gift from the Marquis de Lafayette, his French comrade-in-arms from the American Revolutionary War. Inside a box of polished hardwoods, lying on a red velvet lining, was a large, rusty key. This, it turned out, was the key to the Bastille, the notorious Paris prison and symbol of royal tyranny, destroyed the previous July 14 in one of the defining moments of the French Revolution. At once the president understood the symbolism: the American Revolution, which had unlocked the door of liberty for English colonists in America, had inspired Lafayette and others in France to unlock that door for their own people. Who better to keep the key than the first president of the new American republic?

Two decades later, on a warm April evening in 1810, a Spanish-American aristocrat named Simón Bolívar (*sī-MŌN bō-LĒ-vahr*) sat at his desk in Caracas, Venezuela. Most of Europe was controlled by Napoleon, Spain was occupied by French troops, and the Spanish Empire in America was hanging by a thread. Bolívar opened a worn, leather-lined portfolio. Inside were two copies of the same document, one in English and one in Spanish: the Constitution of the United States. Having found the inspiration that would help him deal with the massive problems confronting South America, Bolívar took up his pen and began to write. The notes he made that evening would form the basis of his speech to an open town meeting in Caracas a few weeks later, a speech that would launch his remarkable political and military career.

Inspired by ideals of liberty and constitutional governance, in the nineteenth century the peoples of the Americas, led by revolutionaries such as Bolívar, fought to achieve independence from European colonial powers and then labored to build new nations and modernized societies. They looked to ideals that originated in Europe, and to the experience of the United States, where independence from colonial control had produced a nation whose founding documents implemented those ideals. But in Latin America, the revolutions were regional. Independence came in different ways at different times, and nation building began in different places under different circumstances. The result was a series of new nations rather than a unified continent, or a federation like those of the United States and Canada. The degree of success that the new nations of North and South America achieved depended largely on their ability to overcome social and geographic divisions, establish effective economies, and build enduring political and social institutions. Generally, those nations that founded their futures on laws and institutions achieved considerable success; those controlled by forceful personalities proved less fortunate.

North
AmericaSouth
America

The Trials and Triumphs of The United States

In 1783, after the American Revolution, the United States of America was an assortment of 13 semi-independent states, connected by a weak central government under Articles of Confederation. Of its three million people, living mainly near the Atlantic

coast, about 20 percent were slaves, and most of the rest were of British ancestry. Amerinds, living mainly in the interior, belonged to their own nations, a status soon recognized by treaties. There was little industry: most Americans were farmers, and only about 5 percent of the population lived in cities.

By 1914, on the eve of World War I, the United States was a huge, prosperous nation, spanning the continent from Atlantic to Pacific, with a strong central government. Home to more than 100 million people, including many from southern and eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia, the country had become the world's industrial leader, with almost half its people living in cities. Slaves had been freed, and many Amerinds had been forced onto government-controlled reservations. America's remarkable transformation involved four major processes: unification, expansion, industrialization, and immigration.

Unification and Consolidation

The first step toward unification was adoption of a federal constitution. By the mid-1780s leaders of the new republic had recognized that the government created by the Articles of Confederation was too weak to deal with the nation's problems and enforce its laws. So in 1787, in Philadelphia, a constitutional convention met to create a new form of government. After extensive debate and several key compromises, it produced an impressive result. The United States Constitution (see page 698), which went into effect in 1789 while revolution raged in France, established a strong federal government with authority to conduct war and foreign relations, regulate trade, impose taxes, and enforce laws. It was led by a powerful official called the president, who served as head of state, chief executive, and commander-in-chief of the military forces.

The president's power was extensive but limited. It was shared with a two-house legislature called Congress, which was responsible for making laws, and an independent judiciary led by a Supreme Court to interpret those laws. Federal power was also restrained by substantial authority reserved to the states, and by a Bill of Rights, adopted in 1791 as the constitution's first ten amendments, which guaranteed specific liberties for all citizens and explicitly stated that all powers not delegated to the federal government belonged to the states themselves, or to the people. In practice, the constitution's division of powers between the authority of the federal government and the rights of the states created a tension between the two. It was not clear in the nation's early history whether it would develop into a single country with a strong federal union or into an association of autonomous states. After the southern states, which claimed the right to withdraw from the Union, lost the Civil War of 1861–1865, the issue was resolved in favor of a strong federal union. Tensions between states' rights and federal powers nonetheless continue to the present day.

Expansion and Social Division

The expansion of the United States began in 1803, when, unexpectedly, Napoleon Bonaparte offered to sell the Louisiana Territory to the young republic. He was eager for funds and flexibility to pursue his war against Britain and frustrated by French inability to crush the Haitian revolt (Chapter 26). Louisiana, recently obtained by France from Spain, was as large as the original United States, but its vast treeless plains, while vital to Amerinds for

The U.S. Constitution provides for strong executive power

food and other resources, were of dubious value to France. Only later, long after President Thomas Jefferson's government had purchased Louisiana from France for 15 million dollars, did it become apparent that the "Great American Desert," now called the Great Plains, contained some of the world's most productive farmland.

The Louisiana Purchase, which doubled the size of the United States, was only the beginning of American expansion (Map 28.1). In 1819, beset by rebellions throughout its Latin American empire, Spain gave in to American pressure and agreed to cede Florida and establish a clear boundary between U.S. and Spanish territory in the West.

In practice this boundary meant little to Americans. In the 1820s, settlers from the southern states began moving into Texas, a vast, sparsely populated part of the new nation of Mexico, which won independence from Spain in 1821. At first Mexicans welcomed the newcomers, who were attracted by cheap land good for growing cotton, but by the 1830s

FOUNDATION MAP 28.1 The Expansion of the United States, 1783–1853

The new American republic spread westward and southward throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, eventually connecting the center of the North American continent "from sea to shining sea." Notice that these acquisitions more than doubled the territory of the original United States. Although the newly acquired lands had once been claimed by European nations like Britain, France, Spain, and Russia, very few people of European descent lived in them. What challenges would this pose for territories seeking eventual admission as new states of the American Union?



these “Texicans” had proved neither loyal to Mexico nor interested in adopting Mexican ways. Led by Sam Houston, in 1836 they rose in rebellion, captured Mexico’s president in battle, and forced him to grant Texas independence. The new “Lone Star Republic” then requested annexation by the United States.

The United States expands under the principle of “manifest destiny”

At first the U.S. government was hesitant to take this step, knowing it might lead to war with Mexico; but in the 1840s an expansionist nationalism began to reshape American policy. Inspired by self-righteous optimism, many Americans had long seen themselves as God’s instruments in building a New World society free from the problems and corruption of the Old. Now they came to see it as their divine right, or **manifest destiny**, to expand and control the whole continent. In 1844, they chose James Polk, a committed expansionist, as president. The next year Congress approved the annexation of Texas.

The Mexican-American War adds extensive territories to the United States

Polk proceeded to fulfill his expansionist goals. In 1846 he settled a dispute over the Pacific Northwest (then called the Oregon territories) by agreeing to divide it with Britain along the 49th parallel, bringing the region south of that line under U.S. control. That same year the Mexican-American War began, driven both by American expansionism and Mexican resentment over the annexation of Texas. It ended two years later in American victory. By the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 the northern half of Mexico, from Texas to California, became the American Southwest. In less than half a century, the United States had almost quadrupled its size, and the federal republic now spanned the continent “from sea to shining sea.”

But expansion intensified two grave social rifts that already divided the nation. In acquiring Mexico’s land the United States acquired the Mexicans who lived there, and in expanding westward it claimed the homelands of numerous Amerind nations. Mexicans were subjected to vicious stereotypes and ethnic discrimination, often treated as aliens in their own ancestral lands. Amerinds were driven from their lands and slaughtered in wars or herded onto reservations. The brutal treatment of these people, victims of manifest destiny, contradicted the presumption that Americans were shaping a superior society unstained by the Old World’s sins.

Even more divisive was the issue of slavery, which had confounded the republic from its inception. By the time of the Mexican-American War, slavery had caused increasing bitterness and mistrust between North and South. The acquisition of vast new lands, and the question of whether slavery would be extended to them, helped transform this divisive dilemma into a violent conflict.

North Against South

Increasing disparities between North and South compounded the dispute over slavery. For decades, owing partly to regional differences and partly to Britain’s Industrial Revolution, the North and South had developed in different directions. The North was beginning to industrialize: factories and businesses helped cities grow. Northerners looked to the federal government for measures to support these new industries, such as tariffs to protect them against foreign competition. Nationalistic northerners increasingly took pride in the growth and strength of their nation, identifying less with their region or states than with the United States as a whole.

Sectional interests differentiate North and South

The South, meanwhile, as the main supplier of cotton for textile mills in Europe and New England, had remained an agrarian society based on plantations and slaves. Enormous

demand for cotton and the exploitation of slave labor provided southern planters with a healthy income to support their aristocratic lifestyle; they had little need for industry or interest in urbanization. Slaves manufactured what was needed on the plantations, and the South's cities were small, primarily ports from which cotton and other agricultural products were shipped. Southerners opposed tariffs because they increased the cost of imports, particularly manufactured goods from England and luxury items from France. They, too, were proud of their nation, but were even more attached to their states, promoting states' rights over the interests of the country as a whole.

Though they dominated southern politics, planters were but a small minority of southern males. In 1860, only 25 percent of southerners owned slaves, and most owned only two or three. The majority of the South's white people owned no slaves at all but supported the slave system because it was the foundation of the southern economy. In the South, slaves represented wealth, and many families who did not have them aspired to purchase them. Moreover, southern culture was patriarchal, and poorer men bowed to the wishes of the planters who dominated society. Farmers who opposed slaveholding would not be allowed to use the planter's dock for shipping goods downriver, or be able to call on the planter for help in time of drought or flood. Finally, planters and farmers may have been far apart in wealth and social standing, but their white skin gave them a common interest in keeping slaves in their place and in reinforcing racial barriers.

Increasingly, then, northern industrialism conflicted with southern agrarianism, while northern nationalism clashed with southern sectionalism. As the interests and cultures of North and South diverged, slavery became the flashpoint. In the first half of the nineteenth century, a worldwide antislavery movement had led to global prohibition of the slave trade, abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire, and the rise of a vocal abolitionist movement in the northern states. Southern whites, however, seeing their lifestyle as dependent on slavery, passionately defended this ancient institution.

Although the federal government lacked authority to outlaw slavery in the existing states, northern politicians tried to keep it from spreading to the western territories (Map 28.2). Southern slave states, fearful that their influence would decline as they became increasingly outnumbered by northern and western free states, resisted these efforts and began to think that they might be better off outside the union. An elaborate compromise in 1850 helped postpone the break (see "Four Perspectives on the American Union"). But in 1860 former Illinois Congressman Abraham Lincoln, running on a platform that opposed the expansion of slavery into the new territories, was elected president in a vote that divided along sectional lines. By the time he took office the next March, seven southern states had formally seceded, claiming the right to freely withdraw from the union, much as they had freely joined it seven decades earlier. When Lincoln, a dedicated unionist, asserted that the southern states were in rebellion and made clear his intent to crush this secession by force, four more states seceded, joining the other seven in a new Confederate States of America. The War Between the States had begun.

Since industrial technology helped decide its outcome, the U.S. Civil War (1861–1865) was in many ways the first truly modern war. It involved mass production of weapons, the use of railways to move supplies and troops, the sending of messages by telegraph, and the use of ironclad ships and early types of submarines, trench warfare,



An 1884 lithograph of a cotton plantation on the Mississippi River.

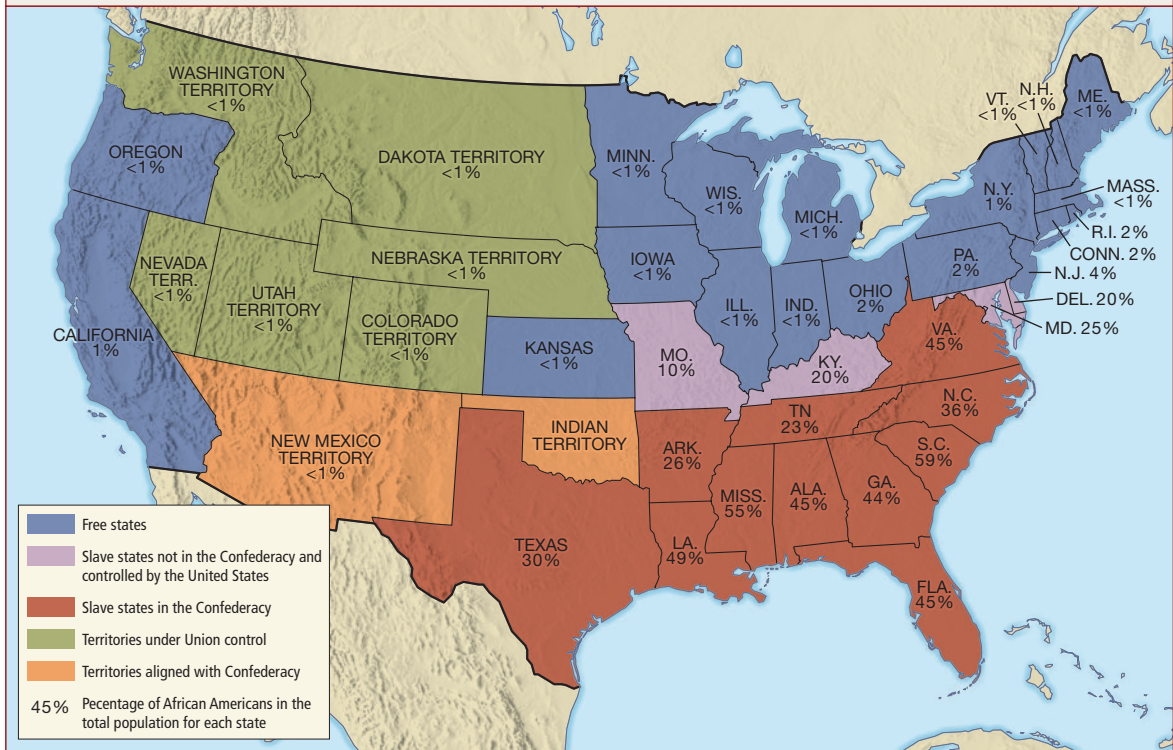
Slavery becomes the principal issue dividing North and South



An ironclad warship of the Union Navy during the American Civil War.

Map 28.2 Slavery and Civil War in the United States, 1820–1865

The enslavement of African Americans, taken for granted by the Constitution of 1787, eventually tore the young republic apart. Note the sharp geographic division between southern “slave states” and northern “free states.” Southern states, fearful that Congress would eventually contain a majority of free states and then would vote to outlaw slavery throughout the nation, insisted that for each free state admitted to the Union after 1815, one slave state must be admitted to balance voting in the Senate. This compromise broke down in the early 1850s and led quickly to civil war. Why did the compromise fail as the United States expanded westward?



repeating rifles, and early machine guns. Although the South had talented generals and brave soldiers, the North’s industrial wealth and power secured its victory.

The northern triumph in the Civil War had several crucial results. It preserved the union, establishing conclusively that the United States was a single nation, not an association of autonomous states. It ended slavery, provisionally through Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation issued during the war and permanently by the thirteenth constitutional amendment, ratified in 1865. By resolving the threat of disunity and ensuring the predominance of northern economic interests, the war also removed the last obstacles to the growth of American industry.

The Civil War did not, however, resolve the status of liberated slaves. Northern efforts at **Reconstruction**, designed to reintegrate the South into the union, deeply embittered southern whites, while providing southern blacks with little means to secure their

The Civil War affects the United States profoundly

Document 28.1 Four Perspectives on the American Union

In 1850 the Missouri Compromise, carefully crafted in 1820 to preserve the balance between free and slave states in the federal system of the United States, fell apart over the question of the disposition of the vast territories acquired in the Mexican-American War (the Mexican Cession). Did this mean that the American Union was headed for dissolution over the issue of slavery in the newly acquired territories? Four of the leading statesmen of the day offered these perspectives between 1850 and 1858.

In 1850 Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky, “the Great Compromiser,” offered yet another compromise designed to save the Union. His Compromise of 1850 tilted toward the South, admitting California as a free state at the expense of permitting the extension of slavery to New Mexico and Utah. Arguing for his proposal, Clay raised the specter of Southern secession:

Mr. President, I am directly opposed to any purpose of secession, of separation. I am for staying within the Union and fighting for my rights—if necessary, with the sword—within the bounds and under the safeguard of the Union . . . Here I am within it, and here I mean to stand and die . . . within it to protect myself . . . Will there not be more safety in fighting within the Union than without it? . . . The dissolution of the Union and war are identical and inseparable; they are convertible terms . . .

I conjure gentlemen, whether from the South of the North, by all they hold dear in this world, by all their love of liberty, by all their veneration for their ancestors, by all their regard for posterity, by all their gratitude to Him who has bestowed upon them such unnumbered blessings, by all the duties which they owe to mankind and all the duties they owe to themselves, by all these considerations I implore them to pause—solemnly to pause—at the edge of the precipice before the fearful and disastrous leap is taken in the yawning abyss below which will inevitably lead to certain and irretrievable destruction.

SOURCE: Henry Clay, “Compromise Resolutions,” 31st Congress, 1st Session, February 6, 1850.

Four weeks later, Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina responded to Clay’s appeal with a warning that the South would secede from the Union unless the North agreed to extend slavery to all the new territories, and to a constitutional amendment restoring the balance of power between North and South:

The prospect, then, is that the two sections in the Senate, should the efforts now made to exclude the South from the newly acquired territories succeed, will stand before the end of the decade twenty Northern states to twelve Southern (considering Delaware as neutral), and forty Northern senators to twenty-eight southern. This great increase of senators, added to the great increase of members of the House of Representatives and electoral college on the part of the North, which must take place over the next decade, will effectually and irretrievably destroy the equilibrium which existed when the government commenced . . . What was once a constitutional federal republic is now converted, in reality, into one as absolute as that of the Autocrat of Russia, and as despotic in its tendency as any absolute government that ever existed . . .

How can the Union be saved? . . . The North has only to will it to accomplish it: to do justice by conceding to the South an equal right in the acquired territory, and to do her duty by causing the stipulations relative to fugitive slaves to be faithfully fulfilled; to cease the agitation of the slave question; and to provide for the insertion of a provision in the Constitution, by an amendment, which will restore to the South in substance the power she possessed of protecting herself before the equilibrium between the sections was destroyed by the action of this government . . . At all events, the responsibility of saving the Union rests on the North and not on the South . . .

SOURCE: John C. Calhoun, “Either Slavery or Disunion,” 31st Congress, 1st Session, March 4, 1850.

(continued)

Document 28.1 *continued*

Three days after Calhoun's speech, Senator Daniel Webster of New Hampshire rose to answer him. His lengthy address, known to history as The Seventh of March Speech, confounded antislavery forces in New England by urging northerners to accept the Compromise of 1850:

Mr. President, I wish to speak today, not as a Massachusetts man, but as an American . . . I speak today for the preservation of the Union. Hear me for my cause . . .

But I will state these complaints, especially one complaint of the South, which has in my opinion just foundation: and that is that there has been found . . . among individuals and among the legislatures of the North, a disinclination to perform, fully, their constitutional duties in regard to the return of persons bound to service who have escaped into the free states. In that respect, it is my judgment that the South is right and the North is wrong . . .

I hear with distress and anguish the word "secession," especially when it falls from the lips of those who are patriotic, and known to the country, and known all over the world, for their political services. Secession! Peaceable secession! Sir, your eyes and mine are destined never to see that miracle. The dismemberment of this vast country without convulsion! . . . Who is so foolish, I beg everybody's pardon, as to expect to see any such thing? . . . No, Sir! No, Sir! I will not state what might produce the disruption of the Union; but, Sir, I see as plainly as I see the sun in heaven what that disruption itself must produce; I see that it must produce war . . .

Sir, I may express myself too strongly, perhaps, but there are impossibilities in the natural as well as in the physical world, and I hold the idea of a separation of these States, those that are free to form one government, and those that are slave-holding to form another, as such an impossibility. We could not separate the States by any such line, if we were to draw it. We could not sit down here today and draw a line of separation that would satisfy any five men in the country . . .

And now, Mr. President, instead of speaking of the possibility or utility of secession, instead of dwelling in those caverns of darkness, instead of groping with those ideas so full of all that is horrid and horrible, let us come out into the light of day; let us enjoy the fresh air of Liberty and Union . . . Never did there devolve on any generation of men higher trusts than now devolve upon us, for the preservation of this Constitution and the harmony and peace of all who are destined to live under it . . .

SOURCE: Daniel Webster, "The Seventh of March Speech," 31st Congress, 1st Session, March 7, 1850.

The Compromise of 1850 became law, but it did not end the debate over slavery and secession. As the decade moved along, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 repealed the Missouri Compromise and laid northern territories open to slavery, while the Supreme Court's 1857 ruling in the case of *Dred Scott v. Sandford* held that even free blacks were not entitled to citizenship, and that Congress had no power to prohibit the extension of slavery anywhere in the United States. Responding to the widening gulf between North and South over these matters, Abraham Lincoln, a candidate for a Senate seat in Illinois, spoke these prophetic words on June 16, 1858:

"A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become either all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, North as well as South . . .

SOURCE: Abraham Lincoln, "Speech to the Republican State Convention at Springfield, Illinois," June 16, 1858.

rights and welfare in the long run. Many former slaves, most of whom had no land and little money or education, eventually became **sharecroppers**, farming the lands of white landowners in return for half their harvest. Beginning in the 1880s and 1890s, once Reconstruction had ended, African Americans were systematically deprived of the vote and segregated in public places by notorious **Jim Crow laws** that institutionalized racial discrimination in the southern states.

Industry, Immigration, and Overseas Commitments

In the North, spurred by the immense wartime demand for manufactured goods, industry in the 1860s began growing at a phenomenal rate. Exploiting extensive natural resources—including coal, iron, cotton, timber, waterpower, minerals, and oil—and supported by a government clearly sympathetic to their needs, American capitalists and consumers created an industrial superpower over the next half century. America's numerous rivers and lakes, and especially its new railways, linked the nation. Food for the rapidly growing workforce was supplied by American farmers, some of whom transformed the Great Plains into wheat and corn fields that fed the nation.

Labor came from within the country, as Americans left farms to take new jobs in the cities, but especially from abroad, as millions of Europeans were drawn by America's promise of freedom and prosperity. Immigration soared in the 1840s with the failure of Ireland's potato crop, the sole source of sustenance for most of that island's population, and the resulting mass migration of a million starving people. By 1900 tens of thousands of people came each year from southern and eastern Europe. Between 1860 and 1914 almost 30 million immigrants arrived in the United States, a mass migration unprecedented in world history. Many immigrants took factory jobs, swelling the population of the great northern cities, while others worked in mines and built railways. Laboring long hours, often for low wages, these immigrant laborers helped transform the American nation into an industrial giant.

But immigrants were not always warmly welcomed. Many Americans resented the newcomers and their unfamiliar customs, beliefs, and languages. America's Protestant majority, alarmed by the numbers of incoming Irish, Italian, and Polish Catholics, as well as Russian Jews, often treated these new groups with hostility. Concerns that low-paid immigrant workers were taking jobs from Americans who had been in the country longer sparked ethnic conflicts in the industrial North and violent hostility to Chinese workers in the West. **Nativism**, as anti-immigrant sentiment was called, led to the enactment in the 1880s of a ban on immigrants from China, and in the 1920s of strict numerical limits on those from southern and eastern Europe.

The massive numbers of foreigners further complicated the nation's racial problems. Many new arrivals, themselves victims of nativist bigotry, sought to boost their status by adopting racist attitudes toward the former slaves, who remained at the bottom of the social and economic structure. At the same time, white supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, a secret, nativist, racist group first organized in the South, directed violent fury against Catholics and Jews as well as against African Americans.

Despite these tensions, the United States was becoming a world power. Although Americans traditionally avoided overseas commitments, some of them were eager to join the imperialist ventures that Western industrial nations engaged in toward the

U.S. economic expansion attracts a huge number of immigrants

Nativism develops as a reaction to massive immigration



U.S. anti-immigration poster: Laborers of many ethnic groups build a wall to keep out Chinese immigrants.

end of the nineteenth century. In 1898, aroused by Spanish efforts to crush a revolt in Cuba, one of the last colonies in Spain's once-great empire, the United States fought and won the Spanish-American War. Cuba gained independence from Spain but effectively became an American protectorate, while Puerto Rico and the Philippine Islands were transferred from Spain to the United States, essentially as colonies. Born of revolt against colonial control, America now had its own colonial empire.

The United States becomes a world power

By the early twentieth century, the United States was a unified, wealthy nation with the world's largest industrial economy, an abundant supply of resources and food, and a vast, diverse population marked by regional, racial, and ethnic tensions. Despite these concerns, it was on its way to becoming the planet's most powerful and influential nation.

The Consolidation and Expansion of Canada

North of the United States, during the nineteenth century, Canada also emerged as a vast new nation. Although its development in some ways paralleled that of the United States, Canada avoided violent upheavals. Yet it also experienced ethnic strife, the product of a colonial heritage that was both French and British.

French and British Colonization of Canada

In the seventeenth century, while England was establishing colonies along the Atlantic coast, French explorers, trappers, and traders were creating a huge empire to the North and West. Unlike the British to the South, however, the French did not come in large numbers, numbering no more than 90 thousand by the mid-1700s.

Britain takes Canada from France in 1763

The events of the Seven Years War (1756–1763), also called the French and Indian War in North America, were disastrous for France, depriving it of its North American empire, much of which was taken over by Britain. Later, the American Revolution (1775–1783) cost Britain its original colonies but left it in control of Canada, to which thousands of British loyalists fled from the new United States. These immigrants, anxious to remain British subjects, gave Canada for the first time a sizable English-speaking population.

Canada is divided into two colonies

Accustomed to British ways, the newcomers soon pressed for their own representative assembly, similar to those that had existed in their former colonies. Fearful of conflict between them and the French Canadians, in 1791 Britain's Parliament divided Canada into two colonies, giving each an elected assembly and an appointed governor. The French Catholic area (later called Quebec) became Lower Canada, since it lay in the lower valley of the Saint Lawrence River, while the English Protestant region (later called Ontario) became Upper Canada (Map 28.3). Unrecognized were Amerind nations, whose interests were dismissed by the British. Some, like the Inuit, lived in remote northern latitudes in which Europeans had no interest. Others, like the Huron, saw their claims pushed aside by British military power.

Dominion, Expansion, and Ethnic Anxieties

By 1837, however, severe tensions between the two colonies, and between the governor and assembly within each colony, produced violent revolts. Fearful that each might declare independence, or perhaps be annexed by the expansive American republic to the

Map 28.3 The Expansion of Canada, 1867–1873

Canada became a self-governing dominion of the British Empire in 1867. Suspecting that the United States might feel that its philosophy of “manifest destiny” entitled it to expand northward, Prime Minister John A. MacDonal purchased the largely empty Northwest Territories from the trading companies that owned them. Then Canada’s Parliament admitted Manitoba, British Columbia, and Prince Edward Island as additional provinces. Observe that MacDonal’s actions changed Canada from a small, Atlantic-oriented country to the second largest nation on earth, spanning the continent and exceeding the United States in size. What challenges might arise from such rapid expansion into largely empty lands?



South, the British sent the respected Lord Durham to examine the situation. His 1839 *Report on the Affairs of British North America* became the blueprint for **dominion government** in a number of British colonies. This “Durham Report” called for self-governance by cabinets and prime ministers accountable to elected assemblies, and for federation of adjacent colonies into larger and stronger dominions. In response to these recommendations, Parliament’s Canada Act of 1840 united the two colonies under a single two-house legislature. Although Britain retained control of trade and foreign policy, Canadians henceforth ran their own internal affairs.

Canada becomes a single colony in 1840

In the 1860s, two key Canadian leaders, appalled by the U.S. Civil War and anxious to prevent a similar conflict in Canada between people of French and British heritage, developed a compromise plan for nation building. One was George-Étienne Cartier (*zhorzh-Āt-YEN kart-YĀ*), committed to preserving French-Canadian culture; the other was John A. MacDonal, dedicated to fostering Canadian nationalism in a

unified nation. At several key conferences in 1864 they helped write a Canadian constitution that combined a British-style parliamentary government with a federal union like that of the United States. The constitution secured British political structures while allowing the French-speaking province of Quebec enough autonomy to protect its heritage. To reduce the potential for the kind of states' rights conflicts that had torn apart the United States, the Canadians agreed that any powers not listed in the constitution would belong to the federal government rather than to the provinces. In 1867, Britain's Parliament passed the British North America Act, which put this system into effect, creating the Dominion of Canada. It included not only Upper and Lower Canada, now called Ontario and Quebec, but also two former maritime colonies, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. In most respects an independent nation, Canada retained its allegiance to the British monarch, represented by a governor-general.

Prime Minister John A. MacDonald spearheads Canadian expansion

MacDonald, who served as prime minister for most of the period between 1867 and 1891, expanded the country with breathtaking speed (Map 28.3). In 1869 he negotiated with the British Hudson Bay Company to buy the Northwest Territories, an enormous expanse of wilderness and Amerind land stretching across the northern part of the continent. The province of Manitoba, established on some of this land, was added in 1870 to the federation. In 1871, MacDonald persuaded the large western colony of British Columbia to become a Canadian province; two years later he did the same with the small eastern colony of Prince Edward Island. By 1873 the Dominion of Canada, like the United States, extended from ocean to ocean.

MacDonald's great achievement, however, was not just to acquire vast tracts of land but also to link them into a unified nation. The key to unity was construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, completed in 1885, a magnificent engineering feat that not only connected the East with the West but also opened up the country's interior. In the years that followed, thousands came to Canada from central and northern Europe: some settled in eastern industrial cities such as Toronto and Montreal; others took westbound trains to Canada's plains, which became a fertile grain-producing region. The Canadian economy thrived, aided by the explosive growth of American industry and its need for the natural resources that Canada could provide.

As in the United States, however, expansion heightened tensions within Canada. As more and more English-speaking provinces were added to the dominion, French Canadians in Quebec came to feel increasingly alienated from the rest of the country and concerned that their political and economic influence was declining. In the twentieth century they sought to enhance their status, some by having large families to increase their numbers, and others by forming a separatist movement and threatening to secede. Despite its internal tensions and dual culture, however, Canada remained a united country.

The Revolutions of Latin America

Despite ethnic tensions and regional strife, in the nineteenth century the United States and Canada both secured national unity, territorial expansion, and economic growth. In the rest of the Americas, however, people were less fortunate. They revolted against Portugal and Spain, gained independence, and created a number of new nations that shared a Latin American cultural heritage. But many of these nations were ruled by **caudillos**,

strong and often unscrupulous personalities, and they failed to achieve either enduring institutional stability or sustained economic growth.

By the early 1800s, the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the western hemisphere had existed for more than three hundred years. They had endured many challenges and crises but had shown resilience in the face of changing times. Their sudden collapse, between 1808 and 1824, was set in motion by Napoleon's conquest of the Iberian Peninsula.

Preconditions for Revolution

The rebellions that erupted in Spanish America early in the nineteenth century were grounded in animosity between two kinds of Spaniards (Chapter 19). *Criollos*, Spaniards born in America, were distrusted by the Spanish kings, who had never met them and could not directly control them through their families and property. *Peninsulares*, Spaniards born in the Iberian peninsula, thus monopolized the highest offices in the Americas, but they had little interest in the Spanish Empire other than the wealth they could extract from it and take back with them to Spain. Of 170 viceroys in Spanish America, only four had been born there—all to high-ranking Spanish officials living temporarily in America. Most key positions in the military and the Church likewise went to *peninsulares*. *Criollos*, excluded from these posts by the place of their birth, resented the arrogance of the *peninsulares*. Similar prejudices irritated those born in Portuguese Brazil.

In the eighteenth century, these grievances were reinforced by the ideas of the French Enlightenment. Only a few Latin Americans could read pamphlets written by French *philosophes* such as Voltaire and Rousseau, but those who did came to consider their exclusion from high position not only unfair but irrational. Such ideas undermined the traditional acceptance of Iberian rule.

Enlightenment ideas had this subversive effect even under the governance of an enlightened absolutist. Carlos III, who ruled Spain from 1759 until 1788, was a modern king who considered himself a servant of his people. He instituted reforms in administration, financial management, and imperial commercial policies, aiming to modernize his empire and improve the lives of its citizens. Although these reforms succeeded in many respects, their tendency to centralize authority in Madrid alienated *criollos*, who were accustomed to considerable local autonomy. They responded by demanding more radical changes than Madrid was willing to permit. By the early nineteenth century, many Spanish Americans considered their government unresponsive to their needs and indifferent to their opinions.

Yet many more remained loyal to Spain. The benefits of Carlos III's reforms were real, and at the time of his death in 1788 the Spanish Empire had never been more effectively governed or more prosperous. The success of the American Revolution inspired a few radicals by proving that colonies could defeat their mother country, but potential rebels had little support prior to 1808. Spain and Portugal had ruled their American colonies for more than three centuries without professional military garrisons, except in a few areas where they were needed to guard against foreign invasion or Amerind raids. In all those years there was not a single uprising that suggested irreconcilable differences with Madrid or Lisbon.

There had, however, been uprisings. More than fifty Amerind revolts took place between 1740 and 1780, culminating in a large-scale rebellion between 1780 and 1783

Criollos resent discrimination by peninsulares

Despite occasional uprisings, Iberian America remains essentially content with colonial status

that claimed more than 100 thousand lives. Its leader, an Amerind who called himself Tupac Amaru II after the last Sapa Inca, called for specific reforms, including the removal of corrupt colonial officials, the end of forced labor service, and better working conditions in mines. But neither he nor his followers sought to challenge the legitimacy of Spanish colonial rule or to expel Spain from America, and Carlos III gave them no chance to change their minds. A Spanish army was quickly dispatched to Lima to put down the Tupac Amaru Rebellion.

Similarly, the 1781 *comunero* revolt in New Granada protested specific issues, in this case significant tax and price increases designed to raise funds to defend the region against possible British attack. Royal authorities deceived a rebel army of several thousand men by appearing to agree to reforms even as they assembled a loyal force. This army then caught the rebels by surprise and defeated them.

Neither the Amerind revolts nor the taxpayer rebellions were directed against Spanish rule. Spain's authority in America remained unquestioned, and few thought that open revolt would stand any chance of military success. In ruling a far-flung empire with a very small number of professional soldiers and considerable political skill, Spain enjoyed great success that might have lasted even longer had it not been for Napoleon Bonaparte.

Most Latin American nations owe their liberation to a chain of events set in motion by Napoleon. His armies invaded Portugal in November 1807 and Spain in March 1808 because those kingdoms had violated France's Continental System. When France removed King Carlos IV from the Spanish throne, *criollos* saw a startling opportunity: they could carry out conservative revolutions, breaking away from the puppet regime that Napoleon had established in Madrid while claiming loyalty to the true king of Spain. Since the Spanish American empire until recently had been the king's personal possession, rather than part of a centralized state, there was significant public sympathy for efforts to "defend" the deposed king's colonial possessions against a French conqueror.

In 1810 matters came to a head, as town meetings in major cities such as Caracas and Buenos Aires formally refused allegiance to the French puppet regime and appointed *juntas* (*HOON-tahs*), or provisional governments, to rule on behalf of imprisoned King Carlos. The *juntas*, however, did not gain the support of the few Spanish military units stationed in the Americas. These local garrisons usually made it clear that they would neither serve the French usurper nor support any moves toward independence. Yet these units were so small that they could not stifle all talk of revolution.

Regional Character of the Spanish American Revolutions

The 1810 uprisings against Spanish rule occurred within regional contexts that eventually helped shape the boundaries of the new nations. As of 1776, Spain's American empire was administered through four viceroalties—New Spain, Peru, New Granada, and La Plata (Map 28.4)—further subdivided into twelve *audiencias* located in major cities such as Mexico City, Lima, Caracas, Bogotá, and Buenos Aires. Viceroys attempted to ensure compliance with royal edicts throughout a viceroyalty, while *audiencias* could more easily supervise and execute laws on a regional level.

When revolutions broke out in 1810, some were spearheaded by local elites in major cities such as Caracas and Buenos Aires, while others were opposed by elites in similar

The Napoleonic Wars alter the relationship between Iberian kingdoms and their colonies

Revolutions in Iberian America occur regionally

Map 28.4 Iberian America in 1810

The Spanish American and Portuguese American Empires covered three-quarters of the land surface of the western hemisphere in 1810. Notice that nearly all of this territory was divided into five enormous viceroyalties, ruled by viceroys who were the personal representatives of their kings. When King João VI of Portugal was forced to flee to Brazil, and King Carlos IV of Spain was thrown into a dungeon by Napoleon Bonaparte, the viceroys lost much of their leverage over their colonists, and Spanish and Portuguese Americans began to talk seriously about independence. How did the overthrow of these kings help to stimulate the independence movements?



cities, such as Mexico City and Lima. In either case, initial fighting took place within the region controlled by that city, and not across Spanish America as a whole. Formidable topographical barriers, such as the Andes Mountains, the Atacama Desert, and the dense rain forests of Central America, worked to regionalize conflict further.

These conditions meant that the revolutions were fought and won in one region at a time, rather than as a general war for independence of the kind that took place in Britain's North American colonies. It also meant that newly independent governments would begin building new nations at different times, in different regions, under different circumstances, with populations that did not consider themselves "Latin Americans," but citizens of individual regions.



Simón Bolívar.

Bolívar and San Martín lead the independence movements

Independence Movements in South America

In northern South America, fighting focused on Venezuela. There a wealthy young *criollo* named Simón Bolívar became the improbable hero of Latin American liberation. Educated in Europe, Bolívar considered himself a child of the Enlightenment and an admirer of the reforms of the French Revolution. Both the 1812 Spanish Constitution of Cádiz and the 1787 Constitution of the United States inspired him with a vision of what a liberated Spanish America might look like, as the story at the beginning of this chapter indicates. Bolívar exploited that inspiration to dominate the movement for Spanish American independence.

An outstanding horseman although not a professional soldier, Bolívar had a shaky grasp of military strategy, but he was a bold leader who never knew when he was beaten. He lost most of his battles, but persevered, winning the *last* battles and thereby gaining final victory. Along the way he got vital support from the black cowboys of the Venezuelan backlands, superb fighters whose ruthless tactics destroyed the Spaniards. He marched his men across the Andes into what is today Colombia and won the battle of Boyacá in 1819, an astonishing feat still studied in military academies. He drafted laws, wrote constitutions for more than one Spanish American country, and created institutions of government. Bolívar did not win independence by himself, but like George Washington in British North America, he proved an indispensable leader (see "Excerpt from Simón Bolívar: The Jamaica Letter").

Farther south, the rebel junta in Buenos Aires found itself ignored by Madrid. Argentina is more than eight thousand miles from Spain, and the Spanish kings never appreciated its potential. So the junta, freed from having to defend itself, set out to export revolution to the surrounding Spanish colonies. Crucial to its efforts was an Argentine-born professional military officer, José de San Martín (*hō-SĀ dā sahn mahr-TĒN*), who in 1810 was serving with Spanish forces fighting Napoleon in Europe.

San Martín returned to Buenos Aires and embraced the revolutionary cause. He was convinced that the key to Spanish domination of the continent was the colony of Peru; rebel victory there, he believed, would guarantee independence for all of Spanish South America. San Martín asked the junta for a post in western Argentina, from which he raised an army and conquered Chile after a dangerous crossing of the Andes. Then he invaded Peru by sea, aided by a first-rate mercenary sailor, Thomas Lord Cochrane, an adventurous British aristocrat who hated authority and loved money and war. Together they gave revolutionary forces a foothold in Peru. Bolívar then used that position to complete the liberation of Spanish South America by 1824 (Map 28.5).

Document 28.2 Excerpt from Simón Bolívar: The Jamaica Letter

. . . It is a grandiose idea to think of consolidating the New World into a single nation, united by pacts into a single bond. It is reasoned that, as these parts have a common origin, language, customs, and religion, they ought to have a single government to permit the newly formed states to unite into a confederation. But this is not possible. Actually, America is separated by climatic differences, geographic diversity, conflicting interests, and dissimilar characteristics . . .

Among the popular and representative systems, I do not favor the federal system. It is over-perfect, and it demands political virtues and talents far superior to our own. For the same reason I reject a monarchy that is part aristocracy and part democracy, although with such a government England has achieved much fortune and splendor . . . Do not adopt the best

system of government, but the one that is most likely to succeed . . .

When success is not assured, when the state is weak, and when results are distantly seen, all men hesitate; opinion is divided, passions rage, and the enemy fans these passions in order to win an easy victory because of them. As soon as we are strong and under the guidance of a liberal nation which will lend us her protection, we will achieve accord in cultivating the virtues and talents that lead to glory. Then will we march majestically toward that great prosperity for which South America is destined . . .

SOURCE: Simon Bolivar, "The Jamaica Letter," in Vicente Lecuna and Harold A. Bierck, Jr., editors, *Selected Writings of Bolivar*, volume I (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951).

Failure and Eventual Success in Mexico

Spain's most valuable possession in the Americas was Mexico, called New Spain. Its *criollo* elite was just as resentful of peninsular domination as its counterparts in Caracas and Buenos Aires, and perhaps with greater reason, since *peninsulares* were more likely to settle in New Spain than in any other Spanish American colony. But when a radical priest, Father Miguel Hidalgo (*mih-GWEL hib-DAHL-gō*), organized a peasant and Amerind rebellion in the fall of 1810, he failed to gain *criollo* support. A revolt of the poor and the colored carried little attraction for the wealthy and white. Hidalgo was captured and executed by Spanish loyalist forces in 1811. His successor, another priest named José María Morelos (*mō-REH-lōs*), followed him to the firing squad four years later.

Mexican independence did not appear likely, but a liberal revolt in Spain in 1820, forcing the king to call a representative parliament, changed the situation dramatically. When this news reached New Spain, conservative *criollos* and *peninsulares*, both alarmed at the idea of a progressive government in Spain, united against Spanish rule. Important officers of Mexico's Spanish garrison joined the cause, led by Agustín de Iturbide (*ē-TUR-bē-dā*), who assured conservatives that the new nation would remain a Catholic monarchy (with Iturbide himself as emperor) and that there would be neither revenge nor discrimination against *peninsulares*. These reassurances ensured the revolution's success, and New Spain became independent Mexico in 1821.

Social revolutions fail in Mexico, but a conservative uprising succeeds

From Colony to Empire in Brazil

The final important new Latin American nation was Brazil, which had been ruled by Portugal, not Spain. In 1807, hours before Napoleon's occupation of Lisbon, the Portuguese prince regent and his court escaped to Brazil on British ships. Their arrival, which brought

Map 28.5 Independent Latin American Nations After 1825

Once independence was achieved, three of the five Spanish American vicerealties (Map 28.4) split into multiple individual states. Gran Colombia, the former Viceroyalty of New Granada, hung together until 1830, after which it divided into Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador. The Viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata split into the United Provinces (or Argentina), Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay. The Viceroyalty of New Spain became Mexico but lost its southern portion to the United Provinces of Central America, which later subdivided further. Note that the Viceroyalties of Peru and Brazil remained largely intact. What factors might account for the ability of these two regions to remain united?



European royalty to American shores for the first time, was not without its comic side. Society women of the colonial capital, Rio de Janeiro, flocked to dockside to welcome the court and observe the latest European fashions. The lengthy shipboard voyage, with insufficient fresh water for bathing, had led to infestations of lice, so the women on board had shaved their heads to get rid of the critters. When the ladies of the court disembarked, the colonial matrons, at first astonished, promptly went home to shave their heads, imitating what they assumed was fashionable among European royalty.

Humorous misunderstandings aside, the transfer of the monarchy to Brazil was a shocking event, as if King George III had decided in 1770 to run the British Empire from Boston. Prince Regent Jōao (*ZHWOW*), who became King Jōao VI in 1816, fell in love with Brazil, judging that its size and resources made it potentially much stronger than Portugal. When Napoleon's defeat restored Portugal's independence, Jōao stalled for years, but by 1821 he was forced to return or lose the throne. Before leaving for Portugal, he appointed his son Pedro regent of Brazil and told him not to return to Portugal to become king in his turn, but to declare Brazil independent, keeping both countries under the rule of the same royal family. When called to Portugal in 1822, Pedro obeyed his father, formally separating Brazil from Portugal. Resistance from Portuguese troops in Brazil was fierce but brief.

The Portuguese Court heads for exile in Brazil

Thus by 1825, all but a few tiny areas of Latin America were independent of Europe. The difficult task of nation building, already under way, aimed to construct strong and stable societies on the foundations laid during the independence period.

Mexico from Santa Anna to Díaz

Mexico was unfortunate. By the time it gained independence in 1821, 11 years of fighting had wrecked its mines, destroyed its businesses, and impoverished its peasants. More than 500 thousand of its 6 million people had perished. Its leader, Iturbide, was an unprincipled adventurer whose misrule as Emperor Agustín I ended in 1823. The next year he was executed, as various caudillos who had dominated the revolutionary years vied for power.

The victor was Antonio López de Santa Anna, who claimed to establish a republic but pushed Mexican political development in a strongly authoritarian direction. He worked hard to strengthen executive power in ways that would make it immune to elections, limits on terms of office, or the actions of other branches of government. When congress, for example, objected to his dictatorial rule, he dismissed it by force and replaced its elected legislators with men whose careers and salaries depended on his generosity. Santa Anna excelled during the revolution against Spain but later lost half his country to the United States in the Mexican-American War of 1846–1848. By the time he was overthrown in 1854, he had crippled Mexico's prospects for balanced government.

Mexico's early development emphasizes strong executive power

La Reforma

La Reforma, the revolutionary movement that overthrew Santa Anna's dictatorship, was in trouble from the outset. Composed of politicians and lawyers influenced by the Enlightenment and by nineteenth-century liberalism, it sought to reduce the privileges of the country's conservative churchmen, landowners, and military leaders. In 1857, when the

reformers instituted a liberal constitution, the military rebelled and the government was forced to flee Mexico City. The fugitive reform government, led by President Benito Juárez (*WAH-rez*), a lawyer and a Zapotec Indian, fought a three-year civil war—the War of the Reform—against the conservative forces.

Juárez established his rump government in Veracruz, a stronghold of liberalism and Mexico's main seaport. From there he could control shipping into and out of Mexico and secure the customs duties that formed the bulk of government revenues in a nation without income or property taxes. He then used the money to purchase weapons abroad while denying arms shipments to his enemies. Even more important for Mexico's future, Juárez issued the Reform Laws, which created an institutional framework on the foundation laid by the Constitution of 1857. Juárez offered a government of laws rather than one of privilege and force, and his vision and his economic stranglehold prevailed. By 1860 the war was over and he was back in Mexico City.

Then Juárez blundered, refusing to honor the debts his former opponents owed to foreign banks. His refusal was legally justified, but it provided French Emperor Napoleon III with an excuse for invading Mexico to collect the debts and installing a puppet regime under Maximilian von Habsburg. The Maximilian Affair provoked a five-year guerrilla war in a country already devastated by civil strife. Juárez and his government won again when France withdrew in 1867, but Mexico was bankrupt, and the formerly liberal Juárez found himself ruling as a dictator until his death in 1872 in a vain effort to rebuild his shattered nation.

Juárez wins a civil war and defeats French intervention

Social Structure and the Porfiriato

The dramatic events of Juárez's rule had little impact on Mexico's social structure. The country's governance systems and its mostly rural society remained colonial. Its native peoples lived in isolated villages called pueblos linked by dirt roads or by no roads at all, largely unchanged since the days of Cortés. Huts were constructed of adobe or split reeds, and usually shared among people, pigs, chickens, and dogs. Schools were nearly nonexistent, and most Amerinds could neither read nor speak Spanish.

By contrast the capital, Mexico City, had wide, well-swept, and well-lit streets and a population that by 1850 exceeded 170 thousand. Many schools and churches dotted its residential districts, and lovely public parks provided recreational opportunities for the well-to-do. Yet even in urban areas, desperate poverty existed side by side with the obvious wealth enjoyed by a privileged few.

Ladies of high social station led pampered lives, presiding over luxurious homes, discussing literature or the opera with friends, and attending balls and theatrical performances regularly. But most Mexican women were far less fortunate. In rural areas they kept house and worked long hours in the fields; in towns and cities they worked in textile mills, in restaurants, or in wealthy households as servants.

Mexicans' lives changed little until 1876, when Porfirio Díaz (*DĒ-ahz*), a general who had supported the constitutional forces, emerged as a military hero intent on saving his country from chaos. He ruled Mexico until 1911 in the **Porfiriato**, a period of political repression and rapid economic development. The massive foreign investment he attracted from England, Belgium, Germany, France, and the United States caused critics to accuse him of selling the nation's resources to foreign exploiters, while supporters

Poverty and prosperity coexist in Mexico

The Porfiriato begins to modernize Mexico

praised his modernization of a backward land. His government paved roads, extended power lines, laid railways, and developed water and sewage systems. His notorious “rural guards,” a ruthless government police force, stamped out banditry and crime with on-the-spot executions. Corpses of hanged men dangled from trees along country roads as a warning to would-be criminals.

None of these efforts, however, brought real help to the lower classes. Rural laborers continued to be plagued by poor nutrition, low wages, rates of infant mortality that approached 80 percent in some areas, and a life expectancy of 30 years. Most were tied to the farms through debts that kept them and their descendants virtually enslaved in menial jobs. In 1910, as Mexico approached the centenary of Hidalgo’s 1810 revolution, 50 percent of all the nation’s dwellings were classified as unfit for human habitation by Mexico’s admittedly lax standards. Only 20 percent of the population was defined as “literate,” and many of those could do little more than sign their names.

By then Díaz was in his 80s, but his reluctance even to discuss a successor helped create a liberal coalition dedicated to his overthrow. The coalition united behind Francisco Madero (*mah-DA-rō*), a wealthy landowner’s son, who believed that democracy could cure all of Mexico’s ills. His opportunity to test his belief came in 1911, when Díaz was forced to resign in the face of a bloody revolution. But that revolution was social as well as political, and Mexico’s problems were not easily solved.



Women in nineteenth-century Mexico making sacks for coffee.

Argentina and Chile: Contrasts in The Southern Cone

Two new nations dominated South America’s Southern Cone, so called because the continent’s southern portion is cone-shaped. Argentina endured decades of dictatorship before developing durable institutions and modernizing its economy and society. By 1914 it was reasonably prosperous. Chile, in contrast, enjoyed stable government for sixty years without being plagued by caudillos. But its deeply rooted social inequalities combined with its economic volatility to imperil its institutions in the Revolution of 1891.

Argentina from Rivadavia to Rosas

At the time of independence, Argentina was a sparsely populated agricultural land with a literate elite clustered in Buenos Aires, the nation’s principal seaport. The city’s residents, known as *porteños* (*pōr-TĀN-yōs*) or “port dwellers,” considered themselves superior to the illiterate *gauchos* (cowboys) of the backlands and the ranchers who dominated the country’s agrarian economy. Bernardino Rivadavia (*rē-vah-DAH-vē-ah*), a *porteño* who led the government in the 1820s, attempted to provide Argentina with such basic institutions as a parliament, postal service, national bank, budget office, and judiciary. But like Bolívar and Juárez, he was influenced by the Enlightenment, which had little impact on the uneducated majority of Argentines. He offended them with his policies of religious toleration, encouragement of immigration, and political centralization, and their rebellion in 1827 forced him into exile.

Rivadavia had institutionalized Argentina before its citizens were ready for modern government. His successor, Juan Manuel de Rosas (*RŌ-sahs*), was both a clever executive and a brutal gaucho, a man whose business and administrative skills were offset by

Porteños and gauchos dominate different portions of Argentina’s economy

Rosas reverses Rivadavia’s efforts at institutionalization

a tendency to use violence as a tool of governance. Unlike Mexico's Santa Anna, Rosas was a man of genuine ability; but like Santa Anna, he retarded his nation's political development by dismissing legislatures rather than working with them to create balanced government. His overthrow in 1852, led by a Brazilian-financed coalition of rivals, opened the path to modernization.

Modernization: Society, Women, and the Economy

After a decade of strife between Buenos Aires and rural backlands was settled by compromise, Argentina entered a period of dramatic change. Its newly stabilized government promoted public works and addressed issues such as the status of Amerinds and women, education, immigration, and economic expansion.

Under a succession of presidents of high ability, the country built railways and telegraph lines, installed a sewer system in Buenos Aires, and laid a transatlantic, suboceanic cable. Argentina's flatness made it ideal for railroads, and their rapid development opened the interior to settlement. The gaucho disappeared in the 1880s, replaced by immigrants who rode the new trains to previously remote regions of the country.

Once there, the new arrivals worked land previously belonging to Amerinds. As recently as 1876, an Amerind raid within sixty miles of Buenos Aires had carried off five hundred prisoners and 300 thousand head of cattle. In 1879, however, the Argentine army, which had grown significantly during a recent war with Paraguay, embarked on what was called the "conquest of the wilderness." Soldiers swept across western and south central Argentina, killing many Amerinds and confining the survivors to reservations. This campaign against the Amerinds was similar to those undertaken in the same years by Chile and the United States. Now Argentina's interior lands lay open to white development.

The cosmopolitan elite that encouraged the conquest of the wilderness also felt the country could not fully modernize until women learned to read and write. In Spanish America prior to 1810, women had been the preservers of traditional Spanish culture, passing on to their children European Catholic attitudes about religion, morality, and proper conduct. Now Argentina's leaders wanted modern, progressive attitudes instilled in the nation's youth. If women were going to transmit such attitudes, the men reasoned, they would have to be educated.

Schooling for women was a difficult struggle despite strong presidential leadership. Conservatives feared that educated women would become too independent and abandon their traditional roles of child rearing and homemaking. In fact middle-class women seemed to be doing just that, creating a feminist movement that in the late nineteenth century began agitating for equal access to higher education. By 1914 Argentina had the most advanced education for both men and women in Latin America, but opportunities for women remained limited. Educated in separate, single-sex schools, women studied a more limited curriculum and thus could not enter the male-dominated professions of law, medicine, and engineering. This educational situation did not improve significantly until the 1940s.

Meanwhile, agriculture remained the foundation of Argentine prosperity. The country's export economy had initially centered on sheep: in the 1850s the United States purchased huge quantities of Argentine wool, and by 1880 sheep outnumbered people in Argentina by 30 to one. Although wool exports declined after the U.S. Civil War, because of a high

The Argentine army subjugates native peoples

Argentina becomes a major agricultural exporter

protective tariff instituted in the United States in 1867, that decline coincided with an agricultural revolution that by 1890 made Argentina a principal world producer of wheat, corn, barley, and oats.

Then, after 1900, Argentine cattle ranching was revitalized by new technologies developed by Chicago meat-packing companies such as Armour and Swift. Chilling beef for transport rather than freezing it improved the texture and flavor, creating a huge new market in Europe. Chilled beef soon became Argentina's most profitable export, tying the nation's economic fortunes to its European markets. By 1914, Argentina's per capita income rivaled those of Germany, Belgium, and Holland, and its foreign trade exceeded Canada's.

Argentina's prosperity attracted a huge number of immigrants from Spain, Italy, and Germany, nearly six million between 1871 and 1914, more than half of whom became permanent residents. These immigrants almost overwhelmed a country whose population in 1869 had been only 1.8 million. One result was a dramatic increase in Argentina's literacy rate, from 22 percent in 1869 to 65 percent in 1914, since most European immigrants could read and write.

The booming economy, however, did not benefit all. Argentine landowners and commercial leaders remained extremely wealthy, while 80 percent of the workers (most of them foreign-born) lived with their families in one-room tenements or shacks. Because of the country's agricultural revolution, they enjoyed a more nutritious diet than did the laboring classes in Mexico and Chile, but the country's social structure perpetuated the economic and political subordination of the immigrant population. Even the immigrants who settled the interior did so not as landowners but as hired workers on the estates of the wealthy. Moreover, Argentina's political structure, in which most authority resided in the executive, was not designed to be responsive to the needs of an immigrant population.

Chilean Institutionalization

The executive dominance characterizing Argentine government was also present in Chile, Argentina's western neighbor. The remotest of Spain's former colonies, Chile in 1825 had a population of only half a million people, most living in rural areas. Mining was the basis of its economy, and most miners worked in dangerous conditions and lived in desperate poverty. Clearly Argentina had a more desirable location, but Chile quickly developed governmental institutions that achieved political stability following independence.

This was accomplished by Diego Portales (*pōr-TAH-lez*), a businessman-turned-politician who dominated Chilean politics in the 1830s. Portales considered it his duty to impose order on a disorganized and illiterate population, but he wanted a strong state to rest on stable institutions rather than personal loyalties. He succeeded so thoroughly that Chile avoided caudillismo altogether. The Constitution of 1833, which he wrote, provided for an indirectly elected president and congress, with suffrage limited to property-holding, literate males over age 25. This document furnished Chile with a highly centralized government in which municipal and provincial authorities were subject to direct control by the president.

Portales' successful institutionalization of Chile was envied throughout Latin America. Chile's first three presidents each served two complete five-year terms, but this stability was achieved by manipulating elections at all levels and retaining the loyalty of the military through pay raises and professional advancement. Then in 1857 the Conservative

Argentina's economic expansion attracts immigrants



Immigrant hotel, Buenos Aires.

Portales initiates Chilean institutionalization

Party, which had elected the first three presidents, split over the issue of religious toleration for non-Catholics, and the Liberals, who favored toleration, came to power in the election of 1861.

The Liberals took control at a time of significant change. Chilean wheat farmers had prospered greatly during the California gold rush of 1849, as Chile was the only wheat-producing country on the Americas' Pacific coast and sold enormous quantities of grain to feed California's booming population. Increased tax receipts financed gas lighting for Santiago, Chile's largest city, which grew to a population of 150 thousand by 1875. Chile also attracted British financiers, whose Pacific Steam Navigation Company dispatched passenger ships as far as Seattle and Liverpool, England. In 1874 the company's gross tonnage made it the equal of the entire U.S. Navy.

Prosperity also made possible Chile's national railway network. In a country shaped like a 3,200-mile-long shoestring, with an impassable desert in the North, dense forests in the South, the Andes Mountains in the East, and the Pacific Ocean in the West, oxcarts were inadequate for modern development. New railways, however, provided rapid, inexpensive transportation for agricultural products, mineral wealth, and manufactured goods. They fostered the creation of a national economy linking all parts of Chile. Following Chile's decisive victory over its northern neighbors in the War of the Pacific (1879–1883), its new national economy took off.

Social Stratification and Inequality

The source of conflict in the War of the Pacific was the nitrate-rich regions to the North of Chile, owned by Peru and Bolivia but developed primarily by Chileans. When Europeans began seeking nitrate for fertilizer and explosives, Peru and Bolivia became aware of the valuable resources they had formerly ignored. Their efforts to tax Chilean mines in violation of treaty agreements and to prevent Chile from seizing all the nitrate fields led to war. Chile's victory over its rivals made it the dominant military power on South America's western seaboard, deprived Bolivia of its seacoast, and launched a lengthy economic boom grounded in the lucrative nitrate fields.

Yet a booming economy did little to alter Chile's rigid social stratification. Plenty of jobs became available, but pay was low and working conditions horrible. The rich became richer, as mining companies and landowners profited from improved transportation systems. In some respects Chile was progressive: professional schools were opened to women in 1879, and Latin America's first female doctor and lawyer were both Chileans. But these high-profile advances obscured the lack of meaningful opportunity for women and men of modest means. Chile's population was less than 3 million in 1895, and most Chileans were impoverished.

Devastating public health conditions only made matters worse. Malnutrition and disease cut Chile's average life expectancy to 35 years in 1900. Only the wealthiest sections of Santiago and Valparaiso had clean water and sewage systems, while the working poor lived in squalor, with up to eight people in one unventilated 15-by-25-foot room. Typhoid fever raged unchecked through city slums, and in the early 1900s Chile's suicide rate was the highest on earth.

While the poor suffered, much of the country's newfound wealth went into the military. Previously small, the Chilean army grew tremendously during the War of the Pacific, and the government used it in 1883 to subjugate the Araucanian (*ar-ow-KAH-nē-uhn*) Amerinds

The War of the Pacific brings tremendous benefits to Chile

Chilean social inequality excludes many from nitrate-based prosperity

in the far South, who had retained their independence since the Spaniards arrived. Peruvian and Bolivian bitterness over the war's outcome led to border disputes that kept the Chilean military on alert. The army hired German officers to modernize Chilean military education, while the navy expanded using increased appropriations from a national budget flush with unprecedented surpluses.

One unanticipated effect of this military expansion was the Revolution of 1891, in which both parties to a political dispute called on armed support. President José Manuel Balmaceda (*bahl-mah-SĀ-dah*) alienated Conservatives by pushing an ambitious program of public works and social reform, at the same time antagonizing Liberals by increasing executive power at the expense of Congress. In 1890 Congress refused to pass Balmaceda's budget, but he announced that he would spend the money anyway. This action split the military: the army sided with Balmaceda, and the navy sided with Congress, which voted in January 1891 to depose the president.

An eight-month civil war followed, but given Chile's long coastline the outcome was never in doubt: a government opposed by the navy could not survive. The army's German supervisors went over to the navy's side, and Balmaceda committed suicide one day after his presidential term expired. The Revolution of 1891 ended any chance for the restoration of a strong presidency in Chile. Thereafter Congress dominated government in this most institutionally stable of all Latin American republics.



An Araucanian chief.

The Revolution of 1891 ensures legislative domination in Chile

Brazil's Experiment with Empire

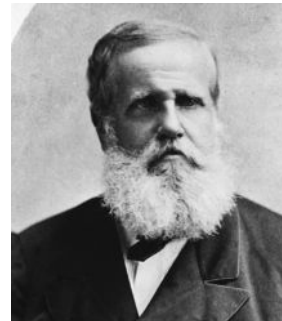
After independence, Brazil charted a course different from those of the other new nations of Latin America. In 1822, when Prince Regent Pedro declared independence from Portugal, he effectively established a European monarchy in the Americas. As Emperor Pedro I, however, he quickly ran into problems. Brazil was a constitutional monarchy, but Pedro was temperamentally autocratic. The country's *criollo* elite resented the peninsular-born Portuguese whom Pedro trusted and promoted to high office. Then Brazil lost an entire province (afterward known as independent Uruguay) in a disastrous war with Argentina (1825–1828). With that Pedro lost the confidence of his subjects, and in 1831 he abdicated in favor of his young son, who reigned nearly sixty years as Emperor Pedro II.

The Long Reign of Pedro II

Unlike his father, Pedro II had the right temperament to rule a nation like Brazil. Tall and rangy, with a long beard, domed forehead, and gentle manner, he was a well-read, contemplative man who considered himself an enlightened monarch. The Brazilian Constitution of 1824 provided for four branches of government: executive, legislature, judiciary, and *poder moderador* (moderative power), the last of these giving the emperor a veto over legislation, the right to dissolve Congress, and power to appoint governors, judges, and bishops. The moderative power was designed to give the emperor authority to reconcile disputes between branches and prevent extreme swings of the electorate in one direction or another. Pedro II exercised that power judiciously, balancing liberals with conservatives and steering a moderate political course. His conduct was largely responsible for the longevity of the Brazilian Empire.

Brazil's modernization began in the 1850s, facilitated by the development of banks and credit, and by an immense boom in coffee production as coffee drinking became popular

Brazil adopts a four-branch system of government



Pedro II.

in Europe and North America. Bankers raised capital for massive public works improvements, including telegraph lines, railways, and a transatlantic cable linking Brazil to Europe. By 1870 Rio de Janeiro was a thriving metropolis of 600 thousand, four times the size of Mexico City, with paved streets, gas lighting, and a vibrant social life.

Brazil's interior, however, remained mostly undeveloped, largely because its dense rain forests, steep mountain ranges, and turbulent rivers made travel there nearly impossible. When the transatlantic cable was completed in 1874, Pedro II could communicate with London almost immediately, while sending a letter from his palace in Rio to the upper Amazon could take months. Brazil's advantages of size and natural resources were thus offset by difficulties of access. Nevertheless, by 1876 the country was so successful, and Pedro so widely respected, that he was given the honor of helping to ring the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia on the centennial of the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

Slavery, Society, and Imperial Collapse

The future of Pedro's monarchy, however, was threatened by the question of slavery. After the United States ended slavery in 1865, Brazil was the world's last independent nation to permit it. The Atlantic slave trade had been suppressed, but Brazil's huge slave population did not need imports to sustain itself. Under international pressure for abolition, in 1871 the country enacted the Law of the Free Womb, freeing all children born of slave mothers on or after September 28, 1871. This was a gradual emancipation that would have ended slavery only over the course of decades, and even that limited intent was evaded. For years slave owners registered the birthday of slave babies as September 27, 1871.

Amid widespread moral outrage, culminating in the army's reluctance to pursue fugitive slaves, Pedro sailed for Europe to have surgery early in 1888. In his absence, his daughter, Princess Isabel, signed the Golden Law of May 13, 1888, emancipating all slaves in Brazil immediately and without compensation to landowners. In so doing, she brought Brazil into line with international expectations and basic human decency.

But she also signed the empire's death warrant. Emancipation without compensation alienated Brazilian landowners, as their bank loans, which had used slaves as collateral, were now jeopardized. Others too were disaffected. Pedro's dedication to religious toleration had already alienated the Catholic Church, and in Congress an active republican minority opposed his monarchy. Princess Isabel was widely unpopular, and the army turned against the regime when the high command's pay and benefits were reduced in 1889. As troops occupied the government buildings, no one stepped forward to defend the monarchy. Pedro II abdicated quietly and went into exile in Europe, where he died in 1891. This bloodless revolution ended the western hemisphere's only successful monarchy, initiating a transition to what seemed a stable republic.

To some extent, slavery and the empire had been undermined by economic and social changes, inspired by the coffee boom and increased immigration from Europe. Paid workers proved 50 percent more efficient than slaves in cultivating coffee, reducing the utility of slave labor. Moreover, as prosperity and warm weather attracted huge numbers of immigrants from Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Russia, Brazil was Europeanized. Immigrants brought European concepts, labor unions, and political parties—and a European love of soccer—and they overwhelmed the native and black populations. In 1890, 44 percent of Brazil's population was white; in 1940 the figure had risen to 63 percent.

Outrage over slavery undermines the Emperor's authority

European immigration changes Brazil

The shift resulted not only from European immigration but also from high mortality rates among black people.

Regrettably, with a flood of literate immigrants the government saw no need to educate the Brazilian-born lower classes; its failure to modernize primary education retarded social mobility throughout the twentieth century. A small but growing feminist movement—an outgrowth of the crisis over slavery in the 1870s—began working to secure basic rights for women, including education, voting rights, and access to professional careers. But their efforts often met resistance from many of the men who had worked with them to end slavery, continuing to delay meaningful advances for women and the poor.

Chapter Review

Putting It in Perspective

By 1820, most regions in the Americas had achieved independence from Europe's colonial powers, and by 1900, the new nations had diverged widely. The United States, with its durable constitution, abundant natural resources, and unprecedented immigration, succeeded in surmounting sectional strife to grow into a stable and prosperous industrial giant. Similarly, Canada, aided by Britain's desire to keep it from being annexed by its expansive southern neighbor, established enduring institutions and a thriving economy while expanding across the continent.

Mexico, once Spain's largest and wealthiest colony, experienced caudillismo, social strife, territorial loss, and foreign intervention, and failed to sustain either stability or prosperity. Argentina, after some initial turmoil, developed stable political institutions. Chile and Brazil enjoyed decades of stability, although military interventions at the end of the 1800s signaled upheavals ahead. Several smaller states, plagued by chronic instability and caudillismo, moved from government to government with little continuity.

Nonetheless, in the course of the nineteenth century, the Americas had undergone an incredible transformation. A host of new nations, large and small, had replaced the vast European empires that earlier ruled these lands. Although they separated themselves politically from Europe, these new nations adopted European ideas and welcomed millions of European immigrants. But despite their independence and innovations, the peoples of the western

hemisphere experienced uneven levels of prosperity and were often vexed by problems derived from their European heritage.

Reviewing Key Material

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ASK YOURSELF

1. How did the doctrine of manifest destiny affect the growth of both the United States and Canada?
2. How did the victory of the North in the Civil War facilitate the economic development of the United States?
3. Why did many Latin American revolutions have conservative roots? In what ways were they based on European ideas?

4. How did caudillismo rather than institutionalization affect the independent development of Mexico and Argentina?
5. How did immigration affect the national development of Argentina, Brazil, and the United States?

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Key Dates and Developments

1789 Adoption of the United States Constitution

1791 Canada Divided: Upper and Lower Canada

1803 U.S. purchases Louisiana Territory from France

1807–08 Napoleon invades Portugal and Spain
Portuguese Prince Regent João flees to Brazil

1810 Latin American revolutions begin

1818 Chile gains independence

1819 Bolívar wins the Battle of Boyacá

1820 San Martín lands in Peru

1821 Iturbide leads Mexico to independence

1821–27 Rivadavia tries to institutionalize Argentina

1822 Meeting between Bolívar and San Martín
in Ecuador
Pedro I proclaims Brazilian independence

1824 Bolívar completes liberation of Spanish America

1824–54 Santa Anna dominates Mexico

1831–89 Pedro II Reigns as Emperor of Brazil

1833 Chilean Constitution, drafted by Portales

1839 Durham Report on the Affairs of British
North America

1840 Canada Act unites Upper and Lower Canada

1846–48 Mexican-American War

1854–72 La Reforma in Mexico

1861–65 Civil War in the United States

1862–67 French Intervention in Mexico

1867 British North America Act creates Dominion
of Canada

1876–1911 The Porfiriato in Mexico

1879–83 War of the Pacific

1888 Abolition of slavery in Brazil

1889 Overthrow of the Brazilian empire

1898 Spanish-American War