

Terms and People

- **social reform** – organized attempts to improve conditions of life
- **predestination** – the idea that God decided the fate of a person's soul even before birth
- **Charles Finney** – a preacher of the Second Great Awakening who held many revivals
- **revival** – a huge outdoor religious meeting
- **temperance movement** – an organized effort to end alcohol abuse and the problems created by it

Terms and People

- **prohibition** – a total ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol
- **Dorothea Dixon** – a teacher who worked for prison reform and the creation of separate institutions to treat those with mental illnesses
- **public schools** – free schools supported by taxes
- **Horace Mann** – a leader in education reform who believed that public financing of education was essential for democracy to work

Religion and Reform Movements



Objectives

- Discuss what led many Americans to try to improve society in the 1800s.
- Identify the social problems that reformers tried to solve.
- Summarize the improvements in public education in the 1800s.



How did key people bring about reform in education and society?

The democratic spirit of the Age of Jackson, combined with religious ideas, inspired people to improve American society.



Americans worked to convince others to worship God, to broaden legal rights, to reform public education and prisons, and to end alcohol abuse.

In the 1830s, many Americans became interested in social reform.

The expansion of democracy in the Age of Jackson encouraged reform.



Most states dropped property requirements for voting, so more white American men were able to vote.

The Growing Electorate, 1824–1840

Presidential Election	Total Popular Vote
1824	350,671
1828	1,155,350
1832	1,318,406
1836	1,500,802
1840	2,404,118

SOURCE: Encyclopædia Britannica

In the spirit of Jacksonian democracy, some people worked to make the political system even fairer.

- Some reformers supported the idea that all men should be able to vote and hold office.
- Others supported greater legal rights for women.
- Others spoke out against slavery.

In colonial days, many American Protestants believed in predestination.



In the early 1800s, a movement called the Second Great Awakening began.

During the Second Great Awakening, ministers preached the “doctrine of free will.”

The most important of this new generation of preachers was **Charles Finney**, who held the first of many religious **revivals** in 1826.



Finney and other ministers of different faiths hoped that the emotion of revivals would touch everyone who attended.



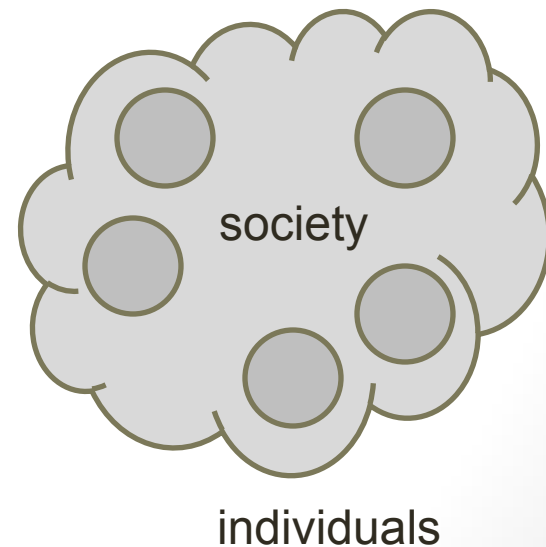
They tried to convert sinners and urged people to reform their lives.

The “doctrine of free will” insisted that there were two paths a person could take—one leading to heaven and one to hell.

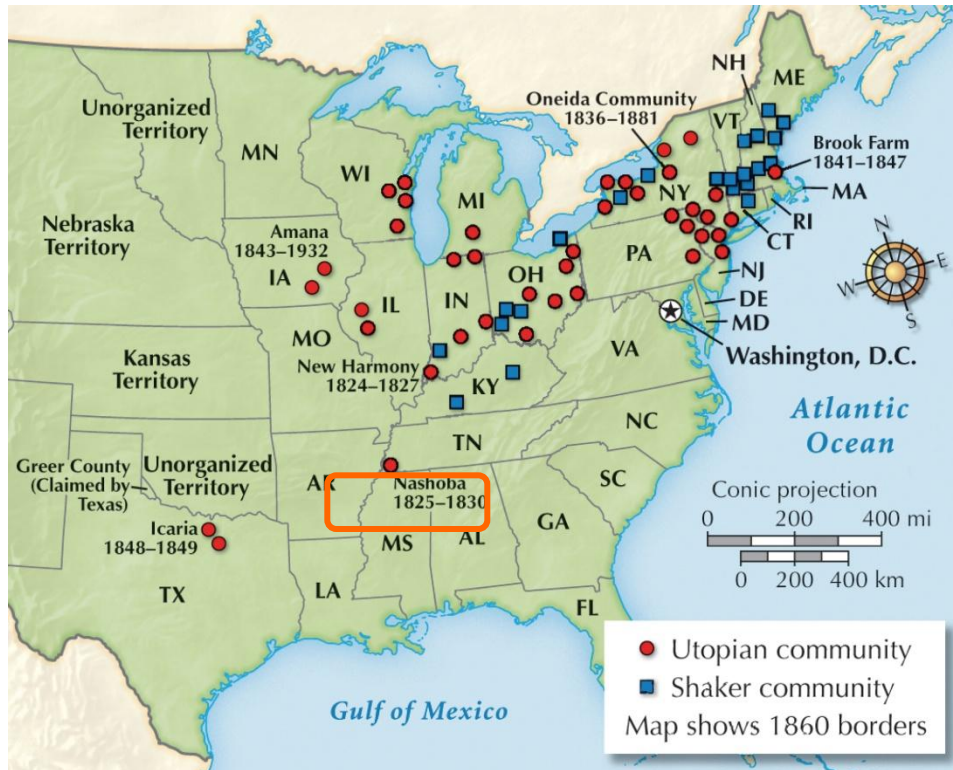
The doctrine of free will encouraged reform in America.

People came to believe that if they could improve themselves . . .

. . . they could improve society as well.



The desire to create a more perfect society spurred some reformers to found utopian communities.



In roughly 1824, Robert Owen founded a utopian community called New Harmony in Indiana.

Like other utopian communities, it did not last long.

During this time, alcohol was widely used in the United States, and alcohol abuse reached epidemic proportions.



Many reformers, especially women, supported the **temperance movement**.

They pointed out that many women and children suffered at the hands of husbands and fathers who drank too much.

Most reformers favored temperance, or moderation in drinking.

Others called for **prohibition**, a total ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol.



During the 1850s, nine states passed laws banning the sale of alcohol, but the movement was interrupted by the Civil War.

Other reformers sought to improve the nation's harsh, abusive prison system.

Many people in U.S. prisons were debtors, not criminals, and they had to stay imprisoned until they could pay off their debts.

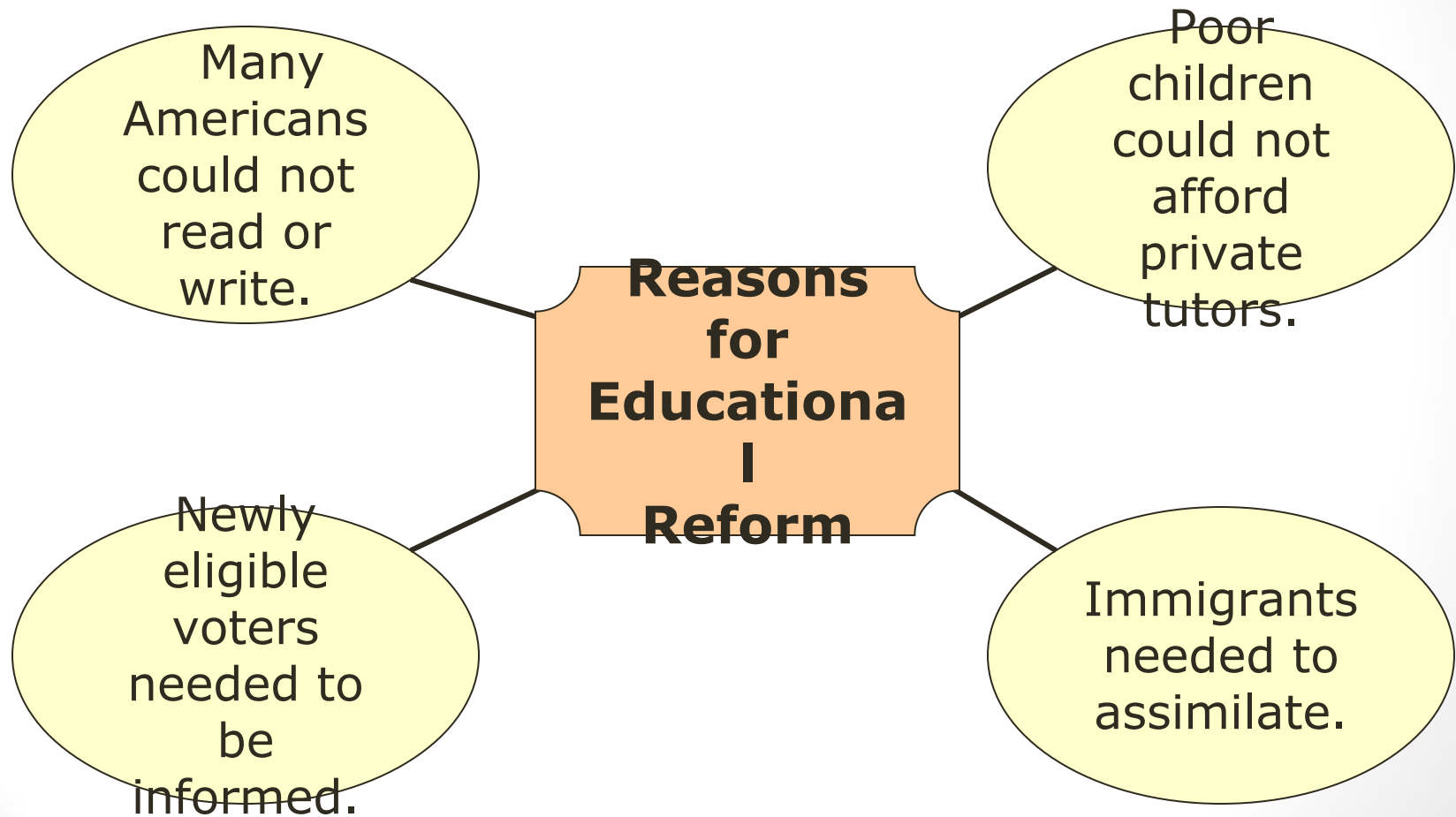
Social reformers, including **Dorothea Dixon**, began investigating conditions in jails.



Dixon worked to:

- convince state legislatures to build new, clean, more humane prisons.
- change the law so debtors were no longer sent to prison.
- convince state legislatures to open new institutions to treat people with mental illnesses instead of sending them to prison.

The educational system also attracted reformers during this period.



African Americans faced additional challenges in pursuing an education.

- Southern states prohibited teaching African Americans to read.
- Northern states seldom admitted African American children to white schools.

Horace Mann of Massachusetts argued for public financing of education.



Mann, who headed the state board of education in 1837, convinced the state to:

- create colleges to train teachers.
- raise the salary of teachers.
- lengthen the school year.

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Southern
and western states
lagged behind.

**It wasn't until 1918 that every state in the
Union passed compulsory education laws.**

Some opportunities for African American students also arose.

- In major northern cities, African Americans opened their own schools.
- Some African Americans attended private colleges, such as Harvard and Oberlin.
- In 1854, Pennsylvania opened Ashmun Institute (later called Lincoln University), a college for African American men.

Quiz

1. Members of the _____ wanted people to reduce consumption of alcoholic beverages.

2. A _____ is a huge outdoor religious meeting.

3. _____ worked hard to reform public schools.

4. _____ worked to reform conditions for prisoners and the mentally ill.

5. A spirit of reform developed because of the expansion of democracy under Thomas Jefferson.

6. The Second Great Awakening encouraged people to reform themselves and society.

7. *Utopia* refers to a fictional town in Indiana.

8. In the early 1800s, reformers were concerned that the education system was not keeping up with the expansion of democracy.

9. Why did Horace Mann believe that reforming the educational system was important to the future of the United States?

a. Prohibition

b. Revival

c. Temperance movement

d. Charles Finney

e. Dorothea Dixon

f. Horace Mann