

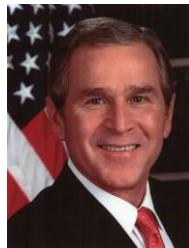


## The New Century

- A. America  
 Confronts the Post  
 Cold War Era, 1992-  
 2004 (AP Ch. 41)  
 (CP Ch. 26)
- B. The American  
 People Face a New  
 Century  
 AP Ch. 42) (CP Ch.  
 26, 27)

### CHAPTER THEMES

- Elected as the first baby-boom president, Bill Clinton tried to turn the Democratic party in a more centrist direction. Ideological conflicts and sharp partisan battles in the 1990s were partly overshadowed by a booming economy, a balanced federal budget, and America's search to define its role in the increasingly global economy and system of international relations.
- The 2000 election and subsequent events that followed it would deeply divide the nation and alienate the United States from traditional allies in the world community.
- The United States underwent drastic economic and social change in the final decades of the twentieth century. The economic transformation from an "industrial age" to an "information age" produced new economic advances as well as a rapidly increasing gap between the wealthy and the poor. Changes in women's roles, the family, and the arrival of new immigrant groups substantially altered the ways Americans live and work.
- Despite the weakness of television and problems in U.S. education, American culture, literature, and art remained the most dynamic and influential in the world. The new diversity of gender, ethnic, and racial voices contributed to vital energy that made American democracy not simply a political system but an ever-changing source of fresh ideas and popular images.



### Chapter Summaries

In 1992, the Democrats chose Bill Clinton as their candidate (despite accusations of womanizing, drug use, and draft evasion) and Albert Gore, Jr. as his running mate.

The Democrats tried a new approach, promoting growth, strong defense, and anticrime policies while campaigning to stimulate the economy.

The Republicans dwelt on "family values" and selected Bush for another round and J. Danforth Quayle as his running mate. They claimed that "character matters" and so Clinton and his baggage should not be elected.

Third party candidate Ross Perot added color to the election by getting 19,742,267 votes in the election (no electoral votes, though), but Clinton won, 370 to 168 in the Electoral College.

Democrats also got control of both the House and the Senate. Congress and the presidential cabinet were filled with minorities and more women, including the first female attorney general ever, Janet Reno, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg in the Supreme Court

#### A False Start for Reform

Upon entering office, Clinton called for accepting homosexuals in the armed forces, but finally had to settle for a "don't ask, don't tell" policy that unofficially accepted gays and lesbians.

Clinton also appointed his wife, Hillary, to revamp the nation's health and medical care system, and when it was revealed in October 1993, critics blasted it as cumbersome, confusing, and unpractical, thus suddenly making Hillary Rodham Clinton a liability whereas before, she had been a full, equal political partner of her husband.

By 1996, Clinton had shrunk the federal deficit to its lowest level in a decade, and in 1993, he passed a gun-control law called the Brady Bill, named after presidential aide James Brady who had been wounded in President Reagan's attempted assassination.

In July 1994, Clinton persuaded Congress to pass a \$30 billion anticrime bill. During the decade, a radical Muslim group bombed the World Trade Center in New York, killing six. An American terrorist, Timothy McVeigh, bombed the federal building in Oklahoma in 1995, taking 169 lives. And a fiery standoff at Waco, Texas, between the government and the Branch Davidian religious cult ended in a huge fire that killed men, women, and children.

By this time, few Americans trusted the government, the reverse of the WWII generation.

#### The Politics of Distrust

In 1994, Newt Gingrich led Republicans on a sweeping attack of Clinton's liberal failures with a conservative "Contract with America," and that year, Republicans won all incumbent seats as well as eight more seats in the Senate and 53 more seats in the House. Gingrich became the new Speaker of the House.

However, the Republicans went too far, imposing federal laws that put new obligations on state and local governments without providing new revenues and forcing Clinton to sign a welfare-reform bill that made deep cuts in welfare grants. Clinton tried to fight back, but gradually, the American public grew tired of Republican conservatism, such as Gingrich's suggestion of sending children of welfare families to orphanages, and of its incompetence, such as the 1995 shut down of Congress due to a lack of a sufficient budget package.

In 1996, Clinton ran against Republican Bob Dole and won, 379 to 159, and Ross Perot again finished a sorry third.

#### Clinton Again

Clinton became the first Democrat to be re-elected since FDR. He put conservatives on the defensive by claiming the middle ground. He embraced the Welfare Reform Bill. He balanced affirmative action (preferential treatment for minorities). When voters and courts began to move away from affirmative action, Clinton spoke against the direction away from affirmative action, but stopped short of any action.

Mostly, Clinton enjoyed the popularity of a president during an economic good time. He supported the controversial NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) which cut tariffs and trade barriers between Mexico—U.S.—Canada.

Similarly, he supported the start of the WTO (World Trade Agreement) to lower trade barriers internationally.

#### Problems Abroad

Clinton sent troops to Somalia (where some were killed), withdrew them, and also meddled in Northern Ireland to no good effect. But after denouncing China's abuses of human rights and threatening to punish China before he became president, Clinton as president discovered that trade with China was too important to throw away over human rights.

Clinton committed American troops to NATO to keep the peace in the former Yugoslavia, and he sent 20,000 troops to return Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power in Haiti.

He resolutely supported the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that made a free-trade zone surrounding Mexico, Canada, and the U.S., then helped form the World Trade Organization (WTO), the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and also provided \$20 billion to Mexico in 1995 to help its faltering economy.

Clinton also presided over an historic reconciliation meeting in 1993 between Israel's Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian Yasir Arafat at the White House, but two years later, Rabin was assassinated, thus ending hopes for peace in the Middle East.

#### Scandal & Impeachment

The end of the Cold War left the U.S. groping for a diplomatic formula to replace anti-Communism and revealed misconduct by the CIA and the FBI.

Political reporter Joe Klein wrote *Primary Colors*, mirroring some of Clinton's personal life/womanizing. Meanwhile Clinton also ran into trouble with his failed real estate investment in the Whitewater Land Corporation.

In 1993, Vincent Foster, Jr. apparently committed suicide, perhaps overstressed at having to (perhaps immorally) manage Clinton's legal and financial affairs.

As Clinton began his second term, the first by a Democratic president since FDR, he had Republican majorities in both houses of Congress going against him.

Oddly for a president who seemed obsessed with making a place for himself in history, his place likely was made with the infamous Monica Lewinski sex scandal. In it, Clinton had oral sex in the White House Oval Office with the intern Lewinski. Then he denied, under oath, that he had done so, figuring that oral sex was not actually sex.

For his "little white lie," Clinton was impeached by the House (only the 2nd president to be impeached, behind Andrew Johnson right after the Civil War).

However, Republicans were unable to get the necessary 2/3 super-majority vote in the Senate to kick Clinton from the White House. So, Clinton fulfilled his final years as president, but did so with a tarnished image and his place in history assured. His actions saw Americans lean toward the realization that character indeed must really matter after all.

#### Clinton's Legacy

In his last several months as president, Clinton tried to secure a non-Monica legacy.

He named tracts of land as preservations. He initiated a "patients' bill of rights."

He hired more teachers and police officers.

On the good side, Clinton proved to be a largely moderate Democrat. The economy was strong, the budget was balanced, and he cautioned people from expected big-government from being the do-all and give-all to everyone.

On the bad side, the Monica Lewinski situation created great cynicism in politics, he negotiated a deal with the Lewinski prosecutor where he'd gave immunity in exchange for a fine and law license suspension, and his last-minute executive pardons gave the appearance of rewarding political donors.

#### The Bush-Gore Presidential Battle

The 2000 election began to shape up as a colorful one.

Democrats chose Vice President Albert Gore. He had to balance aligned with Clinton's prosperity and against his scandals.

The Green Party (consisting mostly of liberals and environmentalists) chose consumer advocate Ralph Nader.

Republicans chose Texas governor George W. Bush (son of George H. W. Bush and known simply as "W" or, in Texas, as "Dub-ya").

A budget surplus beckoned the question, "What to do with the extra money?" Bush said to make big cut taxes for all. Gore said to make smaller tax cuts to the middle class only, then use the rest to shore up the debt, Social Security, and Medicare. Nader, in reality, was little more than a sideshow.

#### The Controversial Election of 2000

A close finish was expected, but not to the degree to which it actually happened. The confused finish was reminiscent of the Hayes-Tilden standoff of 1876.

Controversy surrounded Florida. Having the nation's 4th most electoral votes, Florida was the swing-state.

Florida effectively had a tie, with Bush ahead by the slightest of margins.

State law required a recount. The recount upheld Bush's narrow win. Democrats charged there were irregularities in key counties (notably Palm Beach county that had a large Jewish populace and therefore would figure to be highly Democratic in support of Gore's V.P. candidate Joseph Lieberman, the 1st Jewish candidate for president or V.P.).

At heart of the matter was the infamous "butterfly ballot" which supposedly confused the easily-confounded elderly of Palm Beach county—supposedly to Bush's advantage.

As the confusion wore on and America needed a president A.S.A.P., Florida eventually validated the Bush vote.

Additionally, George W.'s brother Jeb Bush was the Florida governor; and, the Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris, who officially validated the Bush-vote, had been appointed by Jeb.

For conspiracy theorists, it was like a field-day on Christmas morning.

One irony of the election was the role of Ralph Nader. He energized the liberalist liberals (and therefore those who disliked Bush the most). The irony: Green votes for Nader stole votes that would've gone to Gore and ostensibly gave the election to Bush.

Drama aside, Bush won. Gore actually got more popular votes (50,999,897 to Bush's 50,456,002), but lost the critical electoral vote (266 to Bush's 271).

## Bush Begins

Bush took office talking up his Texas upbringing (true) and talking down his family's Back-East privilege (also true).

Bush took on hot topics and fired up both sides of the political spectrum.

He withdrew U.S. support from international programs that okayed abortion.

He advocated faith-based social welfare programs.

He opposed stem-cell research, which had great medical possibilities, on the grounds that the embryo in reality was a small person and doing tests on it was nothing other than abortion.

He angered environmentalists with his policies.

He even worried conservatives by cutting taxes \$1.3 trillion. The budget surpluses of the 90s turned into a \$400 billion deficit by 2004.

## Terrorism Comes to America

On September 11, 2001, America's centuries-old enjoyment of being on "our side of the pond" ended when militant Muslim radicals attacked America. The radicals hijacked passenger planes and used the planes, and hostages, as guided missiles.

Two planes slammed into the World Trade Center towers in New York City. The towers caught fire, then came down.

A third plane slammed into the Pentagon. A fourth plane was aiming for the White House, but heroic passengers took back the plane before it crashed in a Pennsylvania field. America was stunned, to say the least.

President Bush's leadership after the attacks was solemn and many began to forget the disputed election of 2000.

He identified the culprits as Al Qaeda, a religious militant terrorist group, led by Osama Bin Laden.

Bin Laden's hatred toward America revolved around resent of America's economic, military, and cultural power.

Texas-style, Bush called for Bin Laden's head. Afghanistan refused to hand him over so Bush ordered the military to go on the offensive and hunt him down. The hunt proved to be difficult and Bin Laden proved elusive.

At the same time, the American economy turned for the worse, and a few Americans died after receiving anthrax-laden letters. Coupled with fear of another attack, anxiety loomed.

Terrorism launched a "new kind of war" or a "war on terror" that required tactics beyond the conventional battlefield. Congress responded in turn.

The Patriot Act gave the government extended surveillance rights. Critics charged this was a Big Brother-like infringement of rights—a reversal of the freedoms that Americans were fighting for.

The Department of Homeland Security was established as the newest cabinet department. It's goal was to secure America.

## Bush Takes the Offensive Against Iraq

Saddam Hussein had been a long time menace to many people. With Bush, his time had run out. Bush stated he'd not tolerate Hussein's defiance of the U.N.'s weapons inspectors.

At heart of problems: intelligence at the time suggested that Hussein had and was actively making weapons of mass destruction ("WMDs"). Hussein continually thumbed his nose at the weapon's inspectors who tried to validate or disprove the threat.

Bush decided it was time for action. Bush sought the U.N.'s approval for taking military action, but some nations, notably France with its Security Council veto, had cold feet.

So, Bush decided to go it alone. Heavy majorities of Congress in October of 2002 approved armed force against Iraq.

The U.N. tried one last time to inspect, Hussein blocked the inspectors again. The U.N. and inspectors asked for more time still.

For Bush, time was up. He launched an attack and Baghdad fell within a month. Saddam went on the run, then was found nine months later hiding in a hole in the ground.

Taking Iraq, though not easy, was swift and successful; securing and rebuilding Iraq would prove tougher.

## Owning Iraq

Most Iraqi people welcomed the Americans, but certainly not all. Factions broke out. Iraqi insurgents attacked American G.I.'s and casualties mounted to nearly 1,200 by 2004. Americans soon began to wonder, "How long will we be there?"

The new goals were to (1) establish security in Iraq, hopefully by Iraqi troops, and (2) create and turn over control to a new democratically elected Iraqi government.

Training Iraqi troops proved pitifully slow. A new government was created and limited power handed over on June 28, 2004.

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Iraq became a divisive issue in America. Conservatives generally supported the war and post-war efforts. Liberals charged that Bush was on some ego-tripping battle charge to hunt down phantom weapons of mass destruction.

## A Country in Conflict

Other issues divided America: Democrats continually grumbled about the "stolen" 2000 election. Civil libertarians fumed over the Patriot Act.

Pacifists said the WMD reasoning was made up from the get-go to start a war.

Big business (like Enron and WorldCom that monkeyed with their books) supposedly fattened the rich and gleaned the poor. Social warfare continued over abortion and homosexuality.

Affirmative action still boiled, and the Supreme Court came up with mathematical formulae for minority admittance to undergrads. The Court also stated that in 25 years racial preferences would likely be unnecessary.

## Reelecting George W. Bush

Republicans put Bush up for reelection in the 2004 Democrats selected Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts. Despite the usual litany of issues (education, health care, etc.) the key issue of the 2004 election was national security.

At the heart of the security issue, was the question of the war in Iraq.

Bush said to "stay the course"; Kerry took an anti-war position. However, Kerry's position and image was somewhat confounding: Kerry was a Vietnam war hero, but then a Vietnam war protestor Kerry voted for military action in Iraq, but then voted against a bill for military spending for the war.

Kerry gained much support by criticizing Bush's management (or mismanagement) of the Iraq situation. Kerry charged that Bush had no plan for Iraq after the initial take-over. However, Kerry focused only on Bush's failure and failed to effectively present voters with his own alternative course of action.

In the election, and despite polls to the contrary, Bush won with a surprisingly strong showing (a popular vote of 60,639,281 to Kerry's 57,355,978) of 286 electoral votes to Kerry's 252.

## Economic Revolutions

As heavy industry waned, the information age kicked into high gear. Microsoft Corp. and the internet brought about the communications revolution. Entrepreneurs led the way to making the Internet a 21st century mall, library, and shopping center. Speed and efficiency of new communications tools threatened to wipe out other jobs.

White-collar jobs in financial services and high-tech engineering were being outsourced to other countries like Ireland and India.

Employees could thus help keep the company's global circuits working 24 hrs. a day. Many discovered that the new high-tech economy was also prone to boom or bust, just like the old economy.

In the Spring of 2000, the stock market began its biggest slide since WWII. By 2003, the market had lost \$6 trillion in value. American's pension plans shrank to 1/3 or more.

Recent retirees scrambled to get jobs and offset their pension losses which were tied to the stock market.

This showed that Americans were still scarcely immune to risk, error, scandal, and the ups-and-downs of the business cycle.

Scientific research propelled the economy. Researchers unlocked the secrets of molecular genetics (1950s). They developed new strains of high yielding, pest/weather resistant crops.

They sought to cure hereditary diseases. The movement started to fix genetic mutations. The "Human Genome Project" established the DNA sequence of the 30 thousand human genes, helping create radical new medical therapies.

Breakthroughs in cloning animals raised questions about the legitimacy of cloning technology in human reproduction.

Stem Cell Research, where zygotes or fertilized human eggs, offered possible cures for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

The Bush administration, and many religious groups, believed that this research was killing people in the form of a human fetus. Bush said a fetus is still a human life, despite its small size, and experimenting and destroying it is therefore wrong. For this reason, he limited government funding for stem cell research.

## Affluence and Inequality

U.S. standard of living was high compared to the rest of human-kind Median household income in 2002 = \$42,400

Americans, however, weren't the world's wealthiest people. Rich still got richer while the poor got poorer. The richest 20% in 2001 raked in nearly half the nation's income while the poorest 20% got a mere 4%.

The Welfare Reform Bill (1996) restricted access to social services and required able-bodied welfare recipients to find work. This further weakened the financial footing of many impoverished families.

Widening inequality could be measured in different ways as well. Chief executives roughly earned 245 times as much as the average worker. In 2004, over 40 million people had no medical insurance. 34 million (12% of population) were impoverished.

Causes of the widening income gap were: the tax and fiscal policies of the Reagan and both Bush presidencies; intensifying global economic competition; shrinkage of high-paying manufacturing jobs for semiskilled/unskilled workers; the decline of unions; the economic rewards to those of higher education; the growth of part time and temporary work; the increase of low-skilled immigrants; the tendency of educated, working men and woman marriages, creating households w/ high incomes; educational opportunities also had a way of perpetuating inequality; under funding of many schools in poor urban areas.

## The Feminist Revolution

Women were greatly affected by the great economic changes of the late 20th Century. Over 5 decades, women steadily increased their presence in the work place. By 1990s, nearly half of all workers were women. Most surprising was the upsurge of employment in mothers. By 1990s, a majority of women with kids as young as one were working. Many universities opened their doors to women (1960s): Yale, Princeton, West Point, The Citadel and Virginia Military Institute (VMI).

Despite these gains, many feminists remained frustrated. Women still got lower wages and were concentrated in few low-prestige, low-paying occupations. For example, in 2002, on 29 % of women were lawyers or judges and 25% physicians. This is likely due to women would interrupt their careers to bear and raise kids and even took a less demanding job to fulfill the traditional family roles.

Discrimination and a focus on kids also helped account for the "gender-gap" in elections. Women still voted for Democrats more than men. They seemed to be more willing to favor gov't support for health and childcare, education, and job equality, as well as more vigilant in protecting abortion rights—thus, Democratic voters.

Men's lives changed in the 2000s as well. Some employers gave maternity leave as well as paternity leave in recognition of shared obligations of the two worker household. More men shared the traditional female responsibilities of cooking, laundry, and child care.

In 1993, congress passed the Family Leave Bill, mandating job protection for working fathers as well as mothers who needed to take time off from work for family reasons.

## New Families and Old

The nuclear family suffered heavy blows in modern America. By 1990s, one out of every two marriages ended in divorce. 7x more children were affected by divorce compared to the beginning of the decade. Kids who commuted between parents was common ground.

Traditional families weren't just falling apart at an alarming rate, but were also increasingly slow to form in the first place. The proportion of adults living alone tripled in the 4 decades after 1950s. In 1990s, 1/3 of women age 25 - 29 had never married. Every fourth child in US was growing up in a household that lacked two parents.

The reason for this was the pauperization of many women and children (single parent income = HARD). Single parent hood was the #1 cause for the reason behind poverty.

Child raising, the reason behind a family, was being pawned off to day-care centers, school, or TV (electronic babysitter).

Viable families now assumed a variety of different forms. Kids in households were raised by a single parent, stepparent, or grandparent, and even kids with gay parents encountered a degree of acceptance that would have been unimaginable a century earlier.

Gay marriage and teenage pregnancy was on a decline after the mid-1900s. Families weren't evaporating, but were altering into much different forms.

## The Aging of America

Old age was expected, due to the fact that Americans were living longer than ever before. People born in 2000 could anticipate living to an average 70 years. Miraculous medical advances lengthened and strengthened lives. Longer lives = more older people. American in 8 was over 65 years of age in 2000. This aging of population raised a slew of economic, social, and political questions.

Old people formed a potent electoral bloc that aggressively lobbied for gov't favors and achieved real gains for senior citizens. The share of GNP spent on health care for people over 65 more than doubled. The more payments to healthcare, hurt education, thus making social and economic problems further down the road.

The old are getting helped, but the young are being punished for it. These triumphs for senior citizens brought fiscal strains, like on Social Security.

At the beginning of the creation of Social Security, a small majority depended on it. But by now, it has increased, and now workers' Social Security is actually being funded to the senior citizens. WHY? The ratio of active workers to retirees had dropped so low, that drastic adjustments were necessary.

This worsened further when Medicare for seniors rose out of their price range. As WW2 baby boomers began to retire the Unfunded Liability (the difference between what the gov't promised to pay to the elderly and the taxes it expected to take in) was about \$7 trillion, a number that might destroy US if new reforms weren't adopted.

Pressures mounted to persuade older Americans to work longer, invest the current Social Security surplus in equities and bonds to meet future obligations, and privatize a portion of the Social Security to younger people who wanted to invest some of their pay-roll taxes into individual retirement accounts.

## The New Immigration

Newcomers continued to flow into Modern America. Nearly 1 million per year from 1980s up to 2000s. Contradicting history, Europe provided few compared to Asia/Latin America

What prompted new immigration to the US? New immigrants came from many of the same reasons as the old. They left countries where population was increasing rapidly and where agricultural/industrial revolutions were shaking people loose of old habits of life.

They came in search of jobs and economic opportunities. Some came with skills and even professional degrees and found their way into middle-class jobs. However, most came with fewer skills/less education, seeking work as janitors, nannies, farm laborers, lawn cutters, or restraint workers.

The southwest felt immigration the hardest, since Mexican migrants came heavily from there. By the turn of the century, Latinos made up nearly 1/3 of the population in California, Arizona, and Texas, and nearly 40% in New Mexico. Latinos succeeded in making the southwest a bi-cultural region by holding onto to their culture by strength in numbers, compared to most immigrants who had to conform. Plus, it did help to have their "mothering country" right next door.

Some "old-stock" Americans feared about the modern America's capacity to absorb all these immigrants. The Immigration Reform and Control Act (1986) attempted to choke off illegal entry by penalizing employers of the undocumented aliens and by granting amnesty of those already here.

Anti-immigrant sentiment flared (a lot in CA) in the wake of economic recession in the early 1990s. CA voters approved a ballot initiative that attempted to deny benefits, including education, to illegal immigrants (later struck down by courts). State then passed another law in 1998 which put an end to bilingual teaching in state schools. The fact was, that only 11.5% of foreign-born people accounted for the US population. Evidence, nonetheless, still showed that US welcomed and needed immigrants.

Immigrants took jobs that Americans didn't want. Infusion of young immigrants and their offspring counter-balanced the overwhelming rate of an aging population.

## Beyond the Melting Pot

Thanks to their increasing immigration and high birthrate Latinos were becoming an increasingly important minority. By 2003, the US was home to about 39 million of them: 26 million Chicanos, Mexican American; 3 million Puerto Ricans, 1 million Cubans

Flexing political powers, Latinos elected mayors of Miami, Denver, and San Antonio. After many years of struggle, the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC), headed by Cesar Chavez, succeeded in making working conditions better for Chicano "stoop laborers" who followed the planting cycle of the American West. Latino influence seemed likely to grow. Latinos, well organized, became the nation's largest ethnic minority.

Asian Americans also made great strides. By the 1980s, they were America's fastest-growing minority and their numbers reached about 12 million by 2003. Citizens of Asian ancestry were now counted among the most prosperous. In 2003, the average Asian household was 25% better off than that of the average white household.

Indians, the original Americans, numbered some 2.4 million in 2000 census. Half had left their reservations to live in cities. Unemployment and alcoholism had blighted reservation life. Many tribes took advantage of their special legal status of independence by opening up casinos on reservations to the public. However, discrimination and poverty proved hard to break.

## Cities and Suburbs

Cities grew less safe, crime was the great scourge of urban life. The rate of violent crimes rised to its peak in the drop infested 80s, but then leveled out in the 90s. The number of violent crimes substantially dropped in many areas after 1995. None-the-less, murders, robberies and rapes remained common in cities and rural areas and the suburbs.

In mid-1990s, a swift and massive transition took place from cities to suburbs, making jobs "suburbanized." The nation's brief "urban age" lasted for only a little less than 7 decades and with it, Americans noticed a new form of isolationism. Some affluent suburban neighborhoods stayed secluded, by staying locked in "gated communities"

By the first decade of the 21st century, big suburban rings around cities like NY, Chicago, Houston, and Washington DC had become more racially and ethnically diverse. Suburbs grew faster in the West and Southwest Builders of roads, watermain, and schools could barely keep up with the new towns sprouting up across the landscapes.

Newcomers came from nearby cities and from across the nation. A huge shift of US population was underway from East to West. The Great Plains hurt from the 60% decline of all counties. However, some cities showed signs of renewal. Commercial redevelopment gained ground in many cities.

## Minority America

Racial and ethnic tensions also exacerbated the problems of American Cities.

## E Pluribus Plures

Contravertual issues of color and culture also pervaded the realm of ideas in the late 20<sup>th</sup>.

## The Life of the Mind

Despite the mind-sapping chatter of the "boob tube," Americans in the early 21st century read more, listened to more music, and were better educated than ever before.

## XII. The American Prospect

American spirit pulsed with vitality in the early 21st century, but problems continued.