

American Renaissance:

The American Renaissance was a period of time where American inventions, writing, and the arts thrived. This American progression took place mostly in the mid-1800s in New England (Boston, Concord, New York, etc.). This was mainly a literary movement where writers such as James Fenimore Cooper and Edgar Allen Poe became household names in America and Europe. The work of authors such as Nathaniel Hawthorne showed the hypocrisy of Puritan New England. Ralph Waldo Emerson, another essayist, preached individualism and self-reliance. Poets such as Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson also thrived. The American Renaissance took off because people at this time were able to purchase books. The Hudson River School also took place during this time. This movement was in response to the Industrial Revolution's effect on nature and the moving and fighting of Native Americans. Their paintings focused on landscape, nature, and Native Americans. Their fight to preserve images of a dying America symbolized the changes witnessed in America. The American Renaissance is important because it signified our final social break and independence from Europe and showed that we could achieve literary greatness just like Europe could. It made people such as Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, and Poe household names.

Minstrel Shows:

Minstrel shows were popular forms of entertainment for the masses that became especially popular in the mid-1800s. They originated in New York but soon spread across America, with the first minstrel shows being linked to individuals such as Thomas Dartmouth "Daddy" Rice. In minstrel shows, white men would blacken their faces and perform routines that commonly included singing, dancing, and racist "comedy." These shows normally painted a negative image of blacks- labeling them as inappropriate, lazy, or unintelligent. Common names in these shows include Jim Crow, Zip Coon, and Mr. Tambo. Popular minstrel shows included the Virginia Minstrels, Christy Minstrels, and Bryant's Minstrels (led by Daniel Bryant). These shows were important because of their popularity and negative and untrue portrayal of blacks. They intensified political conflicts over race as well, and led to Jim Crow laws later on.

Henry Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*:

Civil Disobedience was written in the mid-1800s by Henry Thoreau. Thoreau refused to pay a poll tax because the revenue was being used to fund the Mexican-American War. Thoreau viewed this as a southern conspiracy to extend slavery (which the Massachusetts-born Thoreau disliked). He was jailed, and this event prompted him to write *Civil Disobedience*. This essay defended his right to disobey unjust or unfair laws. He believed that the federal government should not overrule their consciences and people should not obey unfair laws. This, however, had to be done peacefully. *Civil Disobedience* is important because it claimed that people should disobey unjust laws peacefully, and this led to future nonviolent protests, including those by leaders in the Civil Rights era. It also emphasized that people should be more independent and think for themselves and was uniquely American.

Transcendentalism:

Transcendentalism was an American literary and philosophical movement beginning in the northeast in the early 1800s, and was centered around Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. It emphasized truth in nature and the importance of imagination, as well as the living of a simple life. Transcendentalism, an ideology present during the Romantic Movement, was important because it influenced others in America and Europe and was an instance where American culture was not derived from Europe.

Nat Turner's Rebellion:

Nat Turner's Rebellion (aka the Southampton Insurrection) was a slave rebellion that happened in Southampton County, Virginia in 1831. This rebellion, led by Nathaniel Turner, had the highest number of fatalities compared to any other slave uprising in the American South with 55 whites killed. Nat Turner, a very religious man, had visions that told him slaves were meant to rule. He was known by other slaves as "the Prophet" and after a solar eclipse (which he saw as a sign from God) he led the rebellion. Turner assembled a militia of sorts and began to kill whites. The rebellion ended after a significantly larger white militia caught up with them. Nat Turner's Rebellion is important because it led to more fear, distrust, and hatred of blacks as well as harsher slave codes. People were drawn to the issue of slavery and this event was proof to northern abolitionists that slaves in the South were not happy being slaves.

Seneca Falls Convention:

The Seneca Falls Convention was a women's rights convention that took place in the mid-1800s in Seneca Falls, New York. Women planned the event upon the arrival of Philadelphia Quaker Lucretia Mott. Mott was unique for her time because women were not supposed to speak out in public. Elizabeth Cady Stanton also helped organize the convention. Stanton was a non-Quaker who wrote the Declaration of Sentiments. The Declaration of Sentiments was a document based on the Declaration of Independence and it demanded that women got equal rights. Stanton worked with and was mentored by Mott. The two women and the Seneca Falls Convention are important because they demanded equal rights for all and it was the first women's rights convention in America. They later helped with the women's suffrage movement and influenced other women, including Susan B. Anthony.