

# Reform Movements in America

## How can citizens of a country affect change for the common good?

The French commentator on American society in the 1830s, Alexis de Toqueville, observed that Americans are very quick to join together to promote whatever causes they favor. There was certainly evidence around him. Reforms on many issues — temperance, abolition, prison reform, women’s rights, missionary work in the West — fomented groups dedicated to social improvements.

Often these efforts had their roots in Protestant churches. In addition to their efforts to convert new members based on their religious beliefs, several denominations were willing to turn to the government to make the entire population comply with their version of morality. Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists were among the most prominent in the reform movements. Often advocates called for conventions to draft resolutions to present to government officials and followed up with letter writing campaigns. They formed local societies that wrote letters to newspapers and sponsored speakers to try to broaden support for the cause. While it was usually not women’s place to speak in public at the time, reform movements frequently called on women who could set aside social customs when it was in a good cause.

### Reform Movements in America

The abolition of slavery was one of the most powerful reform movements. Quakers and many churches in New England saw slavery as an evil that must be abolished from society. They targeted slave owners who profited off of enslaved people’s labor. Harriet Tubman, who helped people escape, and Frederick Douglass, a self-educated and forceful orator and writer, proved to be powerful speakers. Abolitionists came to the defense of African Americans accused of running from their masters when law officials threatened to return them. Abolitionism was anathema to Southerners and not popular in many areas of the North, but they moved slavery to a central focus in American political life.

The temperance crusade also had its roots in American Protestant churches, often in tandem with abolition. In slavery, the slave owners oppressed their human property. In the temperance perspective, saloon owners took advantage of human weakness (primarily men’s weakness) to profit off customers’ inability to avoid strong drink. Alcohol ruined families and bred crime, especially in the growing urban centers of the East. Drinking was sinful, and it was the government’s responsibility to remove this temptation, in the view of the temperance advocates. They ran candidates on the Prohibition Party in elections, who were rarely successful, and pressured elected officials to make the manufacture and sale of alcohol illegal. In Iowa, temperance was one of the major issues dividing the two parties from the Civil War through the early 20th century. The state almost passed an amendment enshrining temperance into the constitution. The 18th amendment to the U.S. Constitution imposed temperance standards across the nation, but slightly more than a decade later, the 21st amendment repealed it. Enforcement had become too great a burden on law enforcement, and too many people objected to this restriction.

Other reforms attracted similar attention, though never to the degree of prohibition and abolition. Some groups advocated for better treatment of the insane and more humane prisons. Advocates for women’s rights used tactics similar to the prohibition and abolition movements to demand the right to vote. In fact, many of the same people participated in several reform causes.

Reform movements bring issues into public discussion. One set of reformers will usually generate opposing groups who often use the same techniques to persuade public opinion and elected officials. Debates over abortion and same-sex marriage are modern equivalents of some 19th century reform movements and often employ the same tactics. Demands for reform inject energy and new ideas into political debate and can keep the landscape shifting.

## Supporting Questions

What factors motivated antebellum reformers to take action?

- [George Hosmer Address to the Erie County Common School Education Society, February 3, 1840 \(Document\)](#)
- ["I Tell What I Have Seen" — The Reports of Asylum Reformer Dorothea Dix, 1843 \(Document\)](#)
- ["The Drunkard's Progress," June 15, 1846 \(Political Cartoon\)](#)

What were the common strategies antebellum reformers used?

- ["Celebration of the Iowa Territorial Temperance Society," January 2, 1840 \(Document\)](#)
- ["The Prisoner's Friend" Advertisement, September 8, 1848 \(Document\)](#)
- [Excerpts from the Commissioners' Report of Recommendations for Iowa School Laws, 1856 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Lest We Forget - The Quaker Seedsmen of Long Ago" Article, April 21, 1909 \(Document\)](#)

What did antebellum reformers achieve?

- [Blueprint of Saint Elizabeths Hospital for the Mentally Ill, ca. 1853 \(Map\)](#)
- [Excerpts from Iowa Code about Education Reform, 1860 \(Document\)](#)
- ["The Amana Colony," October 14, 1869 \(Document\)](#)
- ["The Vanishing Shakers," January 18, 1917 \(Document\)](#)
- [18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, January 28, 1919 \(Document\)](#)
- [21st Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, December 5, 1933 \(Document\)](#)

## [\\*Printable Image and Document Guide](#)

## Additional Resources

### **"A Penitentiary for Iowa," *The Palimpsest***

This essay from *The Palimpsest*, which was a historical magazine published by the State Historical Society of Iowa beginning in 1920, looks at how the first legislative assembly of Iowa enacted to implement a criminal code in the territory. This included creating the first prisons in Iowa to hold offenders.

### **"Utopia at Communia," *The Palimpsest***

This scholarly article from *The Palimpsest* focuses on Iowa's utopian colonists, the sectarian Inspirationists of Amana and the secular French Icarians. The writing highlights the creation of the Clayton County town of Communia, approximately 50 miles northwest of Dubuque.

### **"The Ideology and Politics of Iowa Common School Reform," *The Annals of Iowa***

This essay, written in 1997, researches the origins of Iowa's public school ideology, and the reforms that took place to make public education institutional to the foundation of Iowa.

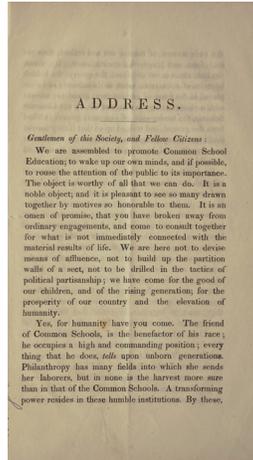
### **"Architecture Of An Asylum' Tracks History Of U.S. Treatment Of Mental Illness"**

The article from National Public Radio dives into the work of 19th century advocate Dorothea Dix to reform the mental health facilities and care around the country.

### **"The Mark of Horace Mann on Iowa Education," *The Palimpsest***

This article from *The Palimpsest* tracks the influence of Horace Mann in Iowa. Mann, who was often called the Father of the Common School, began his career as a lawyer and legislator. When he was elected to act as Secretary of the newly-created Massachusetts Board of Education in 1837, he used his position to enact major educational reform that would impact the entire country, including Iowa.

## George Hosmer Address to the Erie County Common School Education Society, February 3, 1840



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Hosmer, George Washington, "An address delivered before the Erie County Common School Education Society at Buffalo, N.Y.," 3 February 1840

### Description

The Erie County Common School Education Society met in Buffalo, New York, and heard this address in 1840 from George Washington Hosmer, an educator at Antioch College and noted preacher in the Unitarian church. The address highlights the benefits of the common schools, as public elementary schools were known at the time. The speaker uses this address to persuade his listeners that common schools will help the individual and society as a whole.

[Full Transcript of Excerpts from George Hosmer's Address to the Erie County Common School Education Society](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from George Hosmer's Address Excerpts to the Erie County Common School Education Society](#)

### Source-Dependent Questions

- What reason(s) does the speaker give for free education? Do you agree? Why or why not?
- What benefit will free education give to society as a whole, according to the speaker? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.
- How does the speaker feel free education will be paid for?
- Critique the speaker's persuasive techniques. In the 1840s, there were many reform movements throughout the United States, e.g. abolition, women's rights, temperance. How does the language the speaker uses make education reform seem more important than or just as important as other reform movements?

### Citation Information

Hosmer, George Washington, "An address delivered before the Erie County Common School Education Society at Buffalo, N.Y.," 3 February 1840. Courtesy of Library of Congress

# “I Tell What I Have Seen” — The Reports of Asylum Reformer Dorothea Dix, 1843

VOICES FROM THE PAST

## “I Tell What I Have Seen”—The Reports of Asylum Reformer Dorothea Dix

Excerpted from Dix, Dorothea. Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts. Boston: Moore & Francis, 1843.

### MEMORIAL TO THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

#### Contents.

I respectfully ask to present this Memorial before the House, which is entitled to be presented there in public council, and to report thereon to the Senate and to the Legislature of the next session. I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant, Dorothea Dix.

approach. The present memorial has been drawn up in conformity with the wishes of the Legislature, and is presented to you in the name of the people of Massachusetts. I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant, Dorothea Dix.

approach. It is respectfully requested that you will present this Memorial to the Legislature of the next session, and to report thereon to the Senate and to the Legislature of the next session. I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant, Dorothea Dix.

Courtesy of National Center for Biotechnology Information, Dix, Dorothea, “Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts,” *American Journal of Public Health*, pp. 622-625, 1843

## Description

Dorothea Dix was an activist in the antebellum period (after the War of 1812 and before the Civil War began in 1861) of the United States. She was a crusader for the reform of prisons and asylums throughout the country. She toured facilities and made reports, or memorials, to state legislatures, securing funding for institutions, specifically for those with mental disabilities. This report to the Massachusetts legislature is an example of what Dix did to earn her reputation as a successful reformer.

## Transcript of “I Tell What I Have Seen” — The Reports of Asylum Reformer Dorothea Dix”

## Source-Dependent Questions

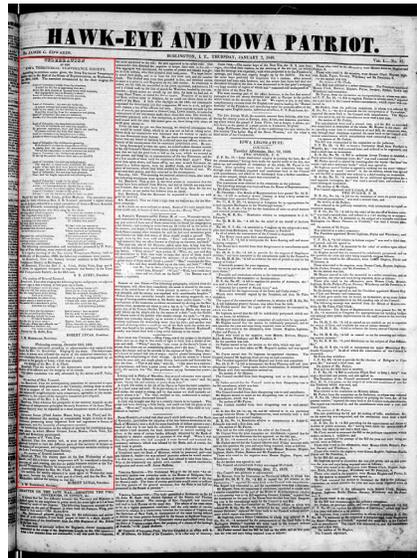
- Describe the method(s) Dorothea Dix used to find the information about prisons and asylums shared in her report?
- Summarize the conditions Dix found in the prisons and asylums she visited in two or three sentences.
- What can you infer about Dix’s feelings regarding the conditions she found in prisons and asylums? What reforms do you think she wanted? Cite evidence from the text.
- Dix says that her report is “unsolicited” meaning that the legislature did not ask her to give it. What do you think motivated her to submit it? Does the fact that she wasn’t asked to submit a report impact her reliability and/or credibility? Why or why not?
- What predictions can you make regarding Dix’s call for the legislature to “restore the outcast” and “defend the helpless?”
- In all but a few states, women in the United States were not allowed to vote in the 1800s. What methods of reform were open to them? How did Dorothea Dix make a difference even though she couldn’t vote in Massachusetts?

## Citation Information

Dix, Dorothea, “Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts,” *American Journal of Public Health*, pp. 622-625, 1843. Courtesy of National Center for Biotechnology Information



## “Celebration of the Iowa Territorial Temperance Society,” January 2, 1840



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “Celebration of the Iowa Territorial Temperance Society,” *The Hawk-eye and Iowa Patriot*, pp. 1, 2 January 1840

### Description

This newspaper article from 1840 was a report on the Iowa Territorial Temperance Society. The Society included high-profile members like Territorial Governor Robert Lucas. The minutes of this meeting show a highly-organized civic group that was connected to the national movement. Temperance reformers wanted to ban the use of alcohol because of its ill effects on individuals and on society.

[Transcript of “Celebration of the Iowa Territorial Temperance Society” Article](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Celebration of the Iowa Territorial Temperance Society” Article](#)

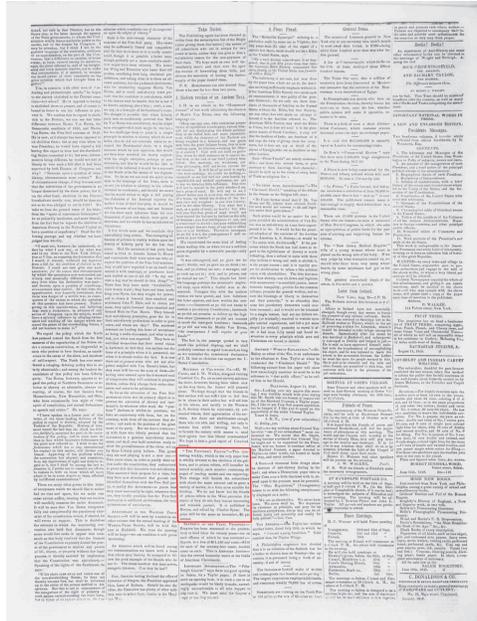
### Source-Dependent Questions

- Study the lyrics of the songs. What is the overall message they convey? How does that message support the idea of the temperance movement and its goal of persuading people to end the use of alcohol?
- Identify the strategies the Iowa Territorial Temperance Society used to spread their message. Compare their strategies to methods groups today use to get you to support them.
- Robert Lucas was the governor of the Iowa territory. How important do you think it was for the Iowa Territorial Temperance Society to have the governor as its president?

### Citation Information

“Celebration of the Iowa Territorial Temperance Society,” *The Hawk-eye and Iowa Patriot*, pp. 1, 2 January 1840.  
Courtesy of Library of Congress

## “The Prisoner’s Friend” Advertisement, September 8, 1848



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “The Prisoner’s Friend,” *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, pg. 3, 8 September 1848

### Description

The *Anti-Slavery Bugle* printed a short advertisement about a fellow reform-minded publication. The advertisement explains the hopes of the publication and the means by which they want to achieve prison reform.

### [Transcript of “The Prisoner’s Friend” Advertisement](#)

### [Printable Excerpt of “The Prisoner’s Friend” Advertisement](#)

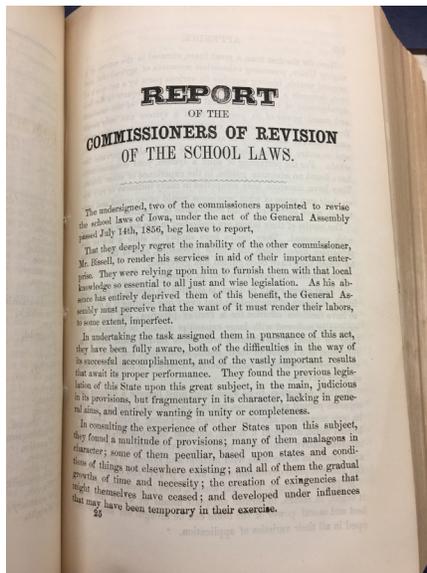
### Source-Dependent Questions

- What strategy is “The Prisoner’s Friend” using to make their publication known in this source? Why do you think they would use an anti-slavery publication?
- What persuasive strategies can you identify in this source? Compare them with advertisements you see on TV and the Internet today.

### Citation Information

“The Prisoner’s Friend,” *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, pp. 3, 8 September 1848. Courtesy of Library of Congress

## Excerpts from the Commissioners' Report of Recommendations for Iowa School Laws, 1856



Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa, 1856

### Description

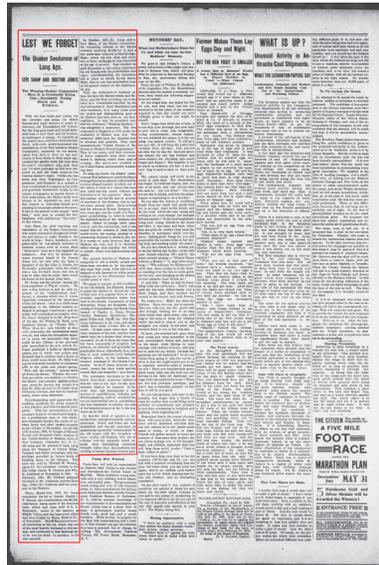
In 1856, the Iowa legislature determined that the school system in the state needed reform. To study Iowa's system and work toward improvement, they hired the most famous school reformer of the period, Horace Mann, and Amos Dean as commissioners to recommend measures for state improvement.

### [Transcript of Excerpts from the Commissioners' Report of Recommendations for Iowa School Laws](#)

### Source-Dependent Questions

- Why do you think the Iowa legislature would hire someone from Massachusetts (Horace Mann) to make recommendations about Iowa's schools? Consider that Horace Mann was one of the most influential educators of the antebellum period and he was well-known throughout the United States. Do you agree with their decision? Why or why not?
- How do the commissioners justify their recommendations? Cite evidence from the text.
- The commissioners compare the educational systems of New York and Massachusetts several times in their report. Why would this persuade Iowa?
- How did the commissioners propose to pay for Iowa's education system?
- On Page 198, the commissioners describe what today is known as professional development for teachers. How does the description from 1856 compare with what your teacher(s) experience today?

## “Lest We Forget - The Quaker Seedsmen of Long Ago” Article, April 21, 1909



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “Lest We Forget - The Quaker Seedsmen of Long Ago,” *The Citizen*, 21 April 1909

### Description

This newspaper article recounted the utopian society known as the Shakers. The Shakers were one of a number of utopian communities that formed throughout the country. They practiced communal living, where all property was shared. Shakers were pacifists who had advanced notions of gender and racial equality. The Shakers believed in opportunities for intellectual and artistic development within the Society. Simplicity in dress, speech and manner were encouraged, as was living in rural colonies away from the corrupting influences of the cities in order to form a more perfect society upon earth. In order to sustain their communities, these groups had to recruit members and convince them to buy into the philosophy of living promoted by the utopia.

[Full Transcript of “Lest We Forget - The Quaker Seedsmen of Long Ago” Article](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from “Lest We Forget - The Quaker Seedsmen of Long Ago” Article](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Lest We Forget - The Quaker Seedsmen of Long Ago” Article](#)

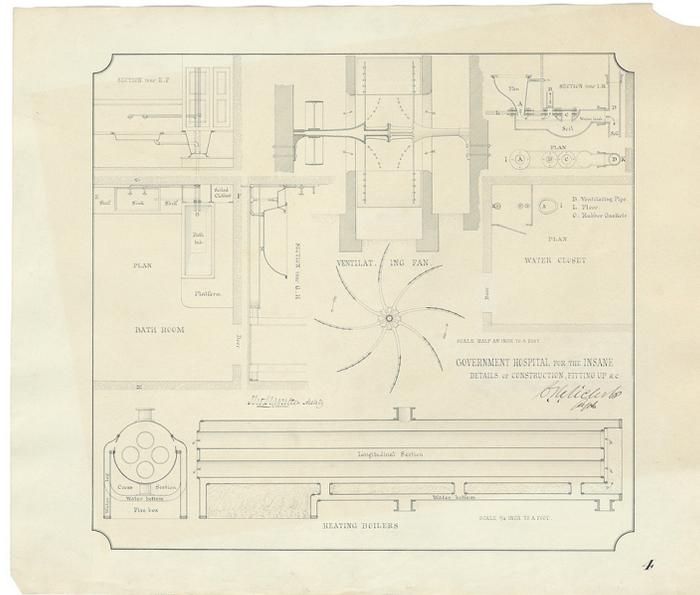
### Source-Dependent Questions

- Summarize the ways the Shakers recruited members from their surrounding communities.
- Based on your reading of this article, what was the goal of the Shakers? How did they define “utopia?”
- Based on the information in this article, what conclusion can you draw about the effectiveness of the methods used by the Shakers? Cite evidence from the text.

### Citation Information

“Lest We Forget - The Quaker Seedsmen of Long Ago,” *The Citizen*, 21 April 1909. Courtesy of Library of Congress

## Blueprint of Saint Elizabeths Hospital for the Mentally Ill, ca. 1853



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Walter, Thomas Ustick, "Government Hospital for the Insane (Saint Elizabeths Hospital), Washington, D.C. Boiler house. Heating boiler, ventilating fan, bathroom, and water closet. Plans, elevations, and sections," ca. 1853

### Description

Saint Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, D.C., was built specifically for the mentally ill. Efforts by reformer Dorothea Dix led to the appropriation of funds by Congress to build the hospital in 1853. Dix was part of the committee that designed the hospital. Before Dix's reforming crusade, those with mental health issues were imprisoned.

### Source-Dependent Questions

- [Dorothea Dix](#) lobbied Congress to create a hospital for the mentally ill. The result was Saint Elizabeths Hospital. Dix had a voice in the design of the hospital. Compare the design of Saint Elizabeth's to what Dix observed in her [memorial to the Massachusetts legislature](#). What do you see that shows her observations informed this design?
- What is your assessment of Dix's efforts to help the mentally ill? Did her strategy of visiting places and lobbying legislatures (both state and federal) work?

### Citation Information

Walter, Thomas Ustick, "Government Hospital for the Insane (Saint Elizabeths Hospital), Washington, D.C. Boiler house. Heating boiler, ventilating fan, bathroom, and water closet. Plans, elevations, and sections," ca. 1853. Courtesy of Library of Congress

## Excerpts from Iowa Code about Education Reform, 1860

342	STATE UNIVERSITY.	[TITLE 14.]
<p><b>TITLE XIV.</b> OF EDUCATION.</p> <hr/> <p><b>CHAPTER 84.</b> THE STATE UNIVERSITY. [Cobb—Chapter 65] ARTICLE I. An Act for the Government and Regulation of the State University of Iowa. <i>(Passed Dec. 25, 1858; Laws of Board of Education.)</i></p>		
<small>Object of state university.</small>	SECTION 1926. (1.)	<i>Be it enacted by the Board of Education of the State of Iowa,</i> That the object of the state university of Iowa, established by the constitution at Iowa City, shall be to provide the best and most efficient means of imparting to the youth of the state, of both sexes, upon equal terms, a thorough education and a perfect knowledge of the different branches of literature, the arts and sciences, with their various applications.
<small>College department.</small>	SEC. 1927. (2.)	There shall be attached to the university a collegiate department, in which, as soon as may be deemed expedient by the board of trustees hereinafter provided, regular college classes shall be formed or provided for, and a president and the necessary professors and tutors elected. There shall also be a normal department to the university, in which shall be taught the theory and practice of teaching, and everything which enters into it as an art, including all the most approved methods and processes now in use in all the varieties of teaching.
<small>Normal department.</small>	SEC. 1928. (3.)	The university shall be governed and managed by a board of trustees consisting of seven persons, to be elected at the first meeting of the board of education, three of whom shall hold their offices for one year, and four for three years, and whenever the terms of any trustees expire, their places shall be supplied by new elections.
<small>Board of trustees.</small>	SEC. 1929. (4.)	The members of the board of trustees shall each receive the same per diem during the time of their session, and mileage going to and returning therefrom, as members of the general assembly.
<small>Term of office.</small>	SEC. 1930. (5.)	The university shall never be under the exclusive control of any religious denomination whatever.
<small>Per diem and mileage.</small>	SEC. 1931. (6.)	In all cases where specimens of natural history, and geological and mineralogical specimens which are or may be hereafter collected by the state geologist of Iowa, or by any others appointed by the state to investigate its natural history and physical resources, are found, they shall belong to and be the property of the state university, and shall form a part of its cabinet of natural history.
<small>Control.</small>	SEC. 1932. (7.)	The board of trustees shall appoint a secretary, a treasurer and librarian, and a curator of the cabinet of natural history, who shall hold their respective offices during the pleasure of the board

Courtesy of Iowa Legislature, "Title XIV. Of Education," Iowa Code, 1860

## Description

The Iowa legislature passed the School Law of 1858 after studying the [recommendations of a commission](#) made up of education reformer Horace Mann and Amos Dean. The law incorporates a number of the commission's recommendations and is recorded in the Iowa Code.

## [Transcript of Selected Excerpts from Iowa Code about Education Reform](#)

## Source-Dependent Questions

- Create a T-chart comparing the [recommendations made by Horace Mann and Amos Dean](#) to the Iowa legislature and what aspects were made into law. Rate the success of the commissioners based on your chart.
- What step(s) had to be taken in order for Mann's reform efforts to take effect?
- In each source, what step was necessary for the reformers' ideas to actually take effect?

## Citation Information

"Title XIV. Of Education," Iowa Code, 1860. Courtesy of Iowa Legislature

## “The Amana Colony,” October 14, 1869



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “The Amana Colony,” *The Tipton Advertiser*, pp. 3, 14 October 1869

### Description

*The Tipton Advertiser* printed this article in an issue of its 1869 paper. It gives a brief history of the Amana Colony in Iowa and explains how the colony operated. The Amana Colony was a successful communal society longer than others that were formed in the antebellum period. The Amana Colony maintained their traditional form of living until 1933.

### [Transcript of “The Amana Colony” Newspaper Article](#)

### [Printable Excerpt of “The Amana Colony” Newspaper Article](#)

### Source-Dependent Questions

- Based on this short article, what can you infer about the success of the Amana Colony?
- What conditions did inhabitants of the Amana Colony have to live under? Why do you think this would entice people to join it?

### Citation Information

“The Amana Colony,” *The Tipton Advertiser*, pp. 3, 14 October 1869. Courtesy of Library of Congress

## “The Vanishing Shakers,” January 18, 1917



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “The Vanishing Shakers,” *The Central Record*, pp. 3, 18 January 1917

### Description

This newspaper article gives a report about the state of the Shakers, a utopian society that spawned communities across the country. This article discusses the failing of the utopia and the author hypothesizes why most of the attempts at utopian communities failed.

### [Transcript of “The Vanishing Shakers” Newspaper Article](#)

### [Printable Excerpt of “The Vanishing Shakers” Newspaper Article](#)

### Source-Dependent Questions

- What can you infer about the author’s opinion of the Shakers? Cite evidence from the text.
- Compare the Shakers with the [Amana Colony in Iowa](#). How are they similar? How are they different?
- Compare this article to the [Lest We Forget - The Quaker Seedsmen of Long Ago article](#). In what ways do these two articles help to illuminate the demise of the Shakers?

### Citation Information

“The Vanishing Shakers,” *The Central Record*, pp. 3, 18 January 1917. Courtesy of Library of Congress

# 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, January 28, 1919

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION, 1919.  
FRANK L. POLK,  
ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME,  
GREETING:

KNOW YE, that the Congress of the United States at the second session, sixty-fifth Congress begun at Washington on the third day of December in the year one thousand nine hundred and nineteen, passed a Resolution in the words and figures following to wit—

JOINT RESOLUTION  
Proposing an amendment to the  
Constitution of the United States.

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED (TWO-THIRDS OF EACH HOUSE CONCURRING THEREIN), That the following amendment to the Constitution be and lawfully be, proposed to the States, to become a part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of the several States as provided by the Constitution:

"ARTICLE —.

"Section 1. After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

"Sec. 2. The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

"Sec. 3. This article shall be operative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.

And, further, that it appears from official documents on file in this Department that the Amendment to the Constitution of the United States proposed as aforesaid has been ratified by the Legislatures of the States of Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, South Carolina, Utah, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

1919

Courtesy of Library of Congress, "18th Amendment to the Constitution," U.S. Congress, 28 January 1919

## Description

The 18th Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1919, banned the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages in the United States. The amendment was passed after years of efforts by temperance societies throughout the country. Various counties and states had passed temperance prohibitions throughout the previous century, but the 18th Amendment was the final effort to make prohibition nationwide.

## [Transcript of the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution](#)

## Source-Dependent Questions

- Summarize the 18th Amendment in your own words
- Consider the sources ["The Drunkard's Progress"](#) and ["Celebration of the Iowa Territorial Temperance Society."](#) Describe the success of the temperance movement, which started in the antebellum period, but did not become federal law until 1919.
- Is alcohol banned in the United States today? Pick a side and prove your point: Was the temperance movement successful?
- Consider the reform movements that were most successful. What government involvement was necessary? Did the strategies the reformers used lead to decisions by either state legislatures or Congress?

## Citation Information

"18th Amendment to the Constitution," U.S. Congress, 28 January 1919. Courtesy of Library of Congress

## 21st Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, December 5, 1933

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION, 1933  
WILLIAM PHILLIPS  
ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

To all to whom these presents shall come, greeting:  
Know Ye, That the Congress of the United States, at the second session, seventeenth Congress, begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the fifth day of December, in the year one thousand nine hundred and thirty-two, passed a Joint Resolution in the words and figures as follows: to-wit:—

JOINT RESOLUTION  
Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following article is hereby proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by conventions in three-fourths of the several States.

ARTICLE  
"SECTION 1. The eighteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States is hereby repealed."  
"SEC. 2. The transportation or importation into any State, Territory, or possession of the United States for delivery or use thereof of intoxicating liquors, in violation of the laws thereof, is hereby prohibited."  
"SEC. 3. This article shall be operative unless it shall have been ratified by conventions in the States by the Congress."  
And further, that it appears from official notices received at the Department of State that the Amendment to the Constitution of the United States proposed as aforesaid has been ratified by conventions in the States of Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

And further, that the States wherein conventions have so ratified the said proposed Amendment, constitute the requisite three-fourths of the whole number of States in the United States.

Courtesy of Library of Congress, "21st Amendment of the Constitution," U.S. Congress, 5 December 1933

### Description

The 21st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1933. It repealed the 18th Amendment, which banned the manufacture and sale of alcohol in the United States. The era of prohibition had a significant impact on American society.

### [Transcript of the 21st Amendment of the U.S. Constitution](#)

### Source-Dependent Questions

- How would you rate the success of the temperance movement? Review the [18th Amendment](#) in your answer.
- Refer to the ["Drunkard's Progress"](#) from 1846. Over 80 years passed between this source and the ratification of the 21st Amendment. What changed in society for temperance prohibitions to be nullified?

### Citation Information

"21st Amendment of the Constitution," U.S. Congress, 5 December 1933. Courtesy of Library of Congress