



ROMANTICISM

& THE NEW ENGLAND RENAISSANCE

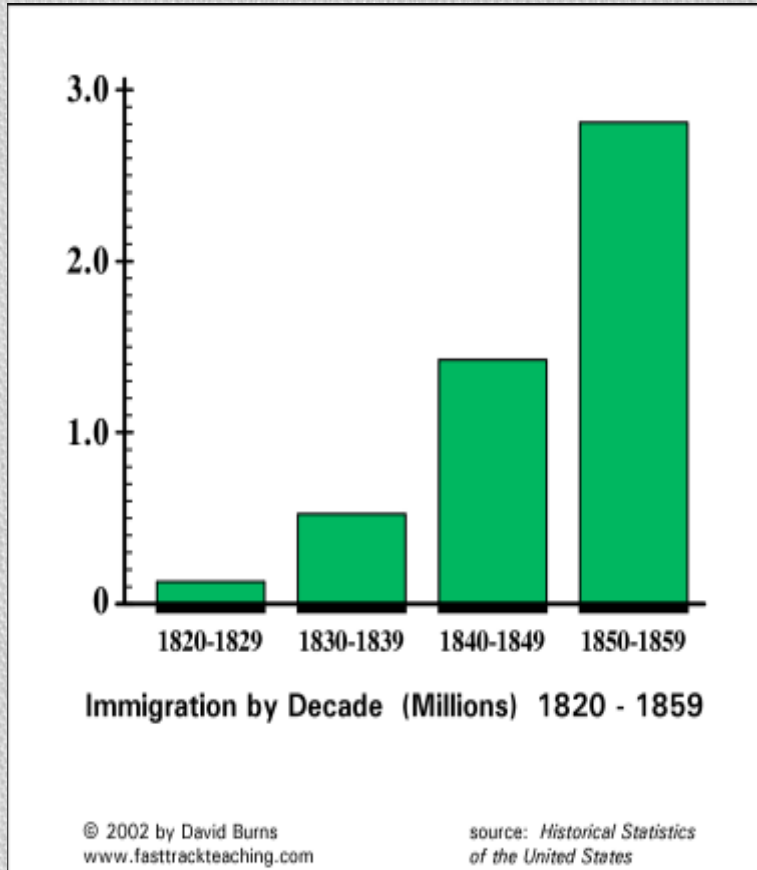
1800-1855

Social Scene

- 5 million in 1800
- 25 million by 1850



Social Scene



- Nationalism
 - Surge in national pride and identity
 - “Manifest Destiny”: destined by God to expand and spread democracy
- Diversity
 - “American Experience”
 - English, Irish, German, Belgian, French, Catholic, Protestant, Mormon
- Economic Stability
 - With stability comes leisure
 - With leisure comes creativity
 - New York and Boston become centers of commerce and culture

Political Scene

- 1801-1809: Jefferson president
- Westward Expansion and “Manifest Destiny”
 - 1803: Louisiana Purchase—doubles size of America
 - 1804-1805: Lewis and Clark—first to reach Pacific over land
 - 1812-1815: War
 - 1820: Missouri Compromise
 - 1830: Indian Removal Act
 - 1846-1848: Mexican-American War
 - 1848: Gold!
- “It is the manifest destiny of the United States to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us.”
 - *New York Morning News*

EXPANSION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1783–1867



Literary Scene

- For 200 years America has been dominated by European literature
- However, with greater leisure time and political stability, American literature now has time to grow beyond the practical and political
- Writing communities spring up around New England
- Writing becomes a profession for the first time
- Romanticism is born
- Romanticism has nothing to do with love
- Romanticism emphasizes emotion, imagination, the supernatural, and at times the darker, melancholy aspects of nature and man

Features of Romanticism

1. Imagination over Reason
 2. Intuition over Facts
 3. Individual above Society
 4. Nature as Wild and Chaotic—but Fascinating
- Romanticism is a reaction *against* the Enlightenment
 - Instead of emphasizing reason and logic, Romantics explore imagination and intuition
 - Instead of emphasizing scientific observation, Romantics explore the beauty of mystery
 - Above all, Romantics are fascinated by the relationship between nature and the inner self