American History in Depth

General Editor: A. J. Badger

Advisory Editor: Howell Harris

Published

The New Deal

A. J. Badger

The American Revolution

Colin Bonwick

American Foreign Policy: Carter to Clinton

John Dumbrell

McCarthy's Americans

M. J. Heale

Women in the United States, 1830–1945

S. J. Kleinberg

FORTHCOMING

Big Business in America

Philip Cullis

*Through Slavery to Freedom: Slavery and Emancipation
in the United States, 1600–1880*

Susan-Mary Grant

Americans and the Wars of the Twentieth Century

Jenel Virden

Women in the United States, 1830–1945

S. J. Kleinberg

*Professor of American Studies and History
Brunel University*

© S. J. Kleinberg, 1999

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0LP.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted her right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 1999 by
MACMILLAN PRESS LTD
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS
and London
Companies and representatives
throughout the world

ISBN 978-0-333-61098-5 ISBN 978-1-349-27698-1 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-27698-1

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library.

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and
made from fully managed and sustained forest sources

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
08	07	06	05	04	03	02	01	00	99

To Frances and Morris Kleinberg
with love

Table of Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
Introduction	1

Part I Ante-Bellum America

1	Economic Activity in Ante-Bellum America	11
	Subsistence agriculture	12
	Urban and rural crafts and trades	15
	Commercial agriculture	19
	Slavery	21
	Industrialization	26
	Labor unrest	28
2	Family and Migration in the Era of Domesticity	34
	Demographic changes	35
	Domesticity defined	37
	Exceptions to domesticity as the dominant paradigm	41
	Race and domesticity	43
	Native American women	49
	The westward migration	51
	Domesticity in the West	54
3	Education and Culture in Ante-Bellum America	58
	The expansion of education	59
	Race, region, and education	65
	Higher education	67
	Women's art and writing	69
	The uses of literacy	70
	Slave narratives and African-American women's writing	75
	Literary protests over industrialization	77

4	Religion, Reform, and Politics in the Ante-Bellum Era	80
	The Second Great Awakening and women's activism	81
	Women in utopian communities	85
	Cultural and legal protest	87
	Women and abolitionism	88
	Women and politics	92
	Women in the Civil War	97

Part II The Industrial Era

5	Women's Employment, 1865–1920	105
	The location of women's work	106
	Age, marital status, race, and employment	107
	The changing nature of women's employment	111
	Manual labor	114
	World War I and women's employment	118
	Labor unions and labor reform	119
6	Family, Migration, and Social Values in the Industrial Era	128
	The gendering of immigration	129
	Migration	133
	The family in the industrial era	139
	Motherhood and housekeeping	146
7	Education and Culture, 1865–1920	152
	Education	152
	Higher education and the professions	156
	Women as club members	162
	Women's cultural contributions	166
	Popular and high culture	170
8	Women and Reform in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era	176
	Temperance activism	178
	Rural women's activism	181
	Urban women's activism	184
	Progressive reform and the settlement house movement	188
	Civic rights	191

Part III From the Vote to World War II

9 Economic Activity during Boom, Bust, and War	207
The differential labor market	207
Female occupations in the 1920s and 1930s	209
Racial and ethnic employment	212
Labor unions and women	214
The Great Depression	217
Women and New Deal work programs	220
The armed forces	226
Women in the wartime labor force	228
10 Family and Migration, 1920–1945	233
The family in the inter-war years	234
Housewifery, domestic technology, and domestic advice	237
Changing gender roles in the 1920s and 1930s	242
Migration in boom, bust, and wartime	244
Married women’s roles during the Depression	246
Gender and assistance	248
Families during World War II	250
11 Education and Culture, 1920–1945	257
Education	257
Women’s writing	263
Fine arts	268
Drama, music, and sports	268
Radio	274
Cinema	276
12 Reform and Politics, 1920–1945	282
The nature of women’s political participation	283
Gendered citizenship	287
National Woman’s Party and the Equal Rights Amendment	289
Government reforms and the status of women	291
Women, politics, and reform during the New Deal	296
Women’s war and its aftermath	304
Epilogue – The Feminine Mystique	309
<i>Bibliography</i>	317
<i>Index</i>	353

Tables

1.1	The occupations of free women, 1850	16
5.1	Proportion of women in the labor force, 1870–1920	105
5.2	Women’s employment by age, 1890–1920	108
5.3	Percentage of women of each marital status in the labor force, 1890–1920	109
5.4	Racial groups in the labor force, 1900–1930	110
5.5	Percentage of women from each age and racial/nativity group in the labor force, 1900 and 1920	111
5.6	Women’s non-agricultural employment, 1870–1920	112
9.1	Gainfully employed women by race, nativity, and marital status for women aged 15 and over	208
9.2	Occupational distribution of women workers, 1920–1940	211
9.3	Women’s employment by race and occupation, 1930	213

Acknowledgements

One of the nicest aspects of writing a book is thanking the people who have helped one along the way. My first thanks are to Tony Badger who suggested this as a project and whose careful comments have guided the revisions. Members of the American Studies community in Britain have been encouraging and supportive. I am very grateful to Vivien Hart for her critique of an earlier draft of the manuscript. The annual conference of the British Association for American Studies has been a source of scholarly interchange and ideas and the opportunity to present papers has been most welcome.

My deepest intellectual debts in this project are to Anne Firor Scott and Gerda Lerner. These doyennes of women's history have established the highest standards of scholarship as they expanded historians' efforts to write women back into the past. Their researches have given historians an inclusive model for writing history, by race, class, gender, and region, and their books and articles have inspired a generation of women's historians.

Brunel University has supported this project in many ways, not least through reduced teaching loads and added research assistance. I have been especially fortunate to have the help of researchers Charlotte Keeble, Cheryl Hudson, and Dave Ryden, who always responded with alacrity to my requests to find yet another article or book. Cheryl helped cut the original manuscript down to size through ruthless suggestions about what to delete. Charlotte made valuable suggestions on the final draft. Dave's help with the index, bibliography, and internet is much appreciated. The office staff in the Department of American Studies and History at Brunel have been invaluable friends and allies over the years. My thanks to Janet MacPhail and Margaret Lester, whose unfailing good humor and common sense have sustained this project throughout the years.

Paul Jay has provided computer assistance through a series of technological disasters as one piece of hardware after another crashed around my desk. His ability to kickstart computers and trans-

fer files kept this project going at times when a quill pen would have been a technological innovation.

No one writes a book without the aid – or at least the forbearance – of family and friends. My husband Nic Flemming has read drafts, given tactful advice, and kept the home fires burning throughout this undertaking as with all others. Kinnie and Peter have turned down all my offers to let them read a chapter, but have otherwise treated my long spells at my desk with remarkable tolerance. The neighbors at Sheets Heath have provided the most supportive community imaginable. They have pitched in and helped out through the various crises that seem to punctuate our lives.

My last thanks are to my parents, Frances and Morris Kleinberg, to whom this book is dedicated. They lived through some of the changes described here and illuminated the past through their own stories. My mother's queries about when the book was finally going to appear have kept me about my task. My thanks and gratitude are as immeasurable as the support I have received.