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The ninth edition of *America Past and Present* strives to achieve the shared goal of the previous editions: to present a clear, relevant, and balanced history of the United States as an unfolding story of national development, from the days of the earliest inhabitants to the present. We emphasize the story because we strongly believe in the value of historical narrative in providing a vivid sense of the past. In each chapter, we seek to blend the excitement and drama of the American experience with insights about the social, economic, and cultural issues that underlie it.

**What’s New to This Edition**

In this edition, we have reviewed each chapter carefully to take account of recent scholarly work, to offer new perspectives, and to sharpen the analysis and the prose. In many cases, we have adopted the suggestions offered by those who used the previous editions in their classrooms.

Throughout this edition, as in previous editions, we pay particular attention to the roles that women and minority groups have played in the development of American society and the American nation. These people appear throughout the text, not as witnesses to the historical narrative but as principal actors in its evolution. New and expanded material in this edition includes the following:

- Chapter 9 has a new section on urbanization.
- Chapter 13 includes streamlined discussions and coverage of expansionism and foreign policy.
- Chapter 32 has been extended to include events of George W. Bush’s second term, notably developments in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the global financial crisis that began in 2007, and the 2008 election of Barack Obama.

*America Past and Present* is fully integrated with MyHistoryLab, Pearson’s premium website for U.S. history. This edition features icons in the margins throughout the book to identify documents, images, maps, and other resources that relate directly to the chapter content and themes. For more information, or to view a demonstration, please see www.myhistorylab.com.

**Approach and Themes**

As its title suggests, our book is a blend of the traditional and the new. The strong narrative emphasis and chronological organization are traditional; the incorporation of the many fresh insights that historians have gained from social sciences in the past quarter century is new. We have used significant incidents and episodes to reflect the dilemmas, the choices, and the decisions made by the people as well as by their leaders. After discussion of the colonial period, most of the chapters examine shorter time periods, usually about a decade, permitting us to view major political and public events as points of reference and orientation around which social themes are integrated. This approach gives unity and direction to the text.

In recounting the story of the American past, we see a nation in flux. The early Africans and Europeans developed complex agrarian folkways that blended Old World customs and New World experiences; as cultural identities evolved, the idea of political independence became more acceptable. People who had been subjects of the British Crown created a system of government that challenged later Americans to work out the full implications of theories of social and economic equality.

The growing sectional rift between the North and South, revolving around divergent models of economic growth and conflicting social values, culminated in civil war. In the post-Civil War period, the development of a more industrialized economy severely tested the values of an agrarian society, engendering a populist reform movement. In the early twentieth century, progressive reformers sought to infuse the industrial order with social justice. World War I demonstrated the extent of American power in the world. The Great Depression and World War II tested the resiliency of the maturing American nation. The Cold War ushered in an era of crises, foreign and domestic, that revealed both the strengths and the weaknesses of modern America. Although the Cold War ended with the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, new threats to world peace in Africa, the Balkans, and the Middle East, as well as attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, led to a general war on terrorism, and specific wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, rather than to a new era of peace and tranquility. The global financial crisis that began in 2007 shook the American economy to its foundations, causing many Americans, upon the 2008 election of Barack Obama, to look to the historic example of Franklin D. Roosevelt for guidance.

Our story of American history goes beyond the major events that have helped to shape the nation—the wars fought, the presidents elected, the legislation enacted, the treaties signed. The impact of change on human lives adds a vital dimension to our understanding of history. How did the American Revolution affect the lives of ordinary citizens? What was it like for both blacks and whites to live in a plantation society? How did the shift from an agrarian to an industrial economy affect both men and women? What impact did technology, in the form of the automobile and
Preface

the computer, have on patterns of life in the twenty-first century? Our narrative explores these issues as well.

Our commitment is not to any particular ideology or point of view; rather, we hope to challenge our readers to rediscover the fascination of the American past and reach their own conclusions about its significance in their lives. At the same time, we have not avoided controversial issues; instead, we have tried to offer reasoned judgments on such morally charged subjects as the nature of slavery and the advent of nuclear weapons. We believe that while history rarely repeats itself, the story of the American past is relevant to the problems and dilemmas facing the nation today, and we have therefore sought to emphasize themes and ideas that continue to shape our national culture.

Structure and Features

The structure and features of the book are intended to stimulate student interest and to reinforce learning. Each chapter begins with a vignette that introduces the chapter themes and previews the topics to be discussed. The chapter chronology serves as a summary of the key events covered in the chapter. The recommended readings and suggested websites are sources students can consult for further information on many topics and have been moved to MyHistoryLab.com for easier reference. The feature essay in each chapter offers an examination of a high-interest topic related to the chapter’s themes and topics. Key terms, highlighted in boldface type in the chapter text, are defined in context and in the end-of-text glossary.

Feature Essays

There are six entirely new Feature Essays in the ninth edition, as well as four additional Feature Essays that have been refocused to emphasize aspects of environmental history. The new essays are as follows:

- Chapter 4, "Conquest By Other Means: The Pennsylvania Walking Purchase"
- Chapter 10, "Racial Identity in a White Man’s Democracy"
- Chapter 12, "The War Against ‘Demon Drink’"
- Chapter 22, "The Triangle Fire"
- Chapter 28, "America Enters the Middle East"
- Chapter 32, "The Battle of Seattle"

Each Feature Essay includes Questions for Discussion to spark class discussion or to prompt writing assignments.

Law and Society Essays

Eight Law and Society essays appear in the text. New to this edition is "Aaron Burr: The Vice-President Tried for Treason" in Chapter 8. Each of these essays focuses on a significant legal case or legal problem in American history and includes a discussion of the background of the case, excerpts from the trial transcript or other relevant primary source material, and coverage of the case in the news media of the period. The introductory section establishes the context for the case and the concluding paragraphs of each essay invite students to explore the legal contest from the perspective of social and cultural historians. Discussion questions are included to spark class discussion.

Past and Present Essays

Eight Past and Present essays appear in the text. Each of these brief essays explores connections between an event, phenomenon, or trend in its time period and a similar or related event or phenomenon in a later period. These features explore contrasts as well as similarities as they illuminate connections between the past and the present. These brief essays examine topics including immigration, religious discrimination, communication and travel technology, philanthropy, government policy, and war strategy.

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The full-color map program has been completely redesigned, making this edition richer and more vibrant. The illustration program, bearing directly on the narrative, advances and expands the themes, provides elaboration and contrast, tells more of the story, and generally adds another dimension of learning.

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**Author Responsibility**

Although this book is a joint effort, each author took primary responsibility for writing one section. T. H. Breen contributed the first eight chapters, going from the earliest Native American period to the second decade of the nineteenth century. Ariela J. Gross worked on Chapters 9 through 16, carrying the narrative through the Reconstruction era. R. Hal Williams was responsible for Chapters 17 through 24, focusing on the industrial transformation, urbanization, and the events culminating in World War I. The final eight chapters, bringing the story through the Great Depression, World War II, the Cold War and its aftermath, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and culminating in the historic election of Barack Obama, were the work of H. W. Brands. Each contributor reviewed and revised the work of his or her colleagues and helped shape the material into its final form.