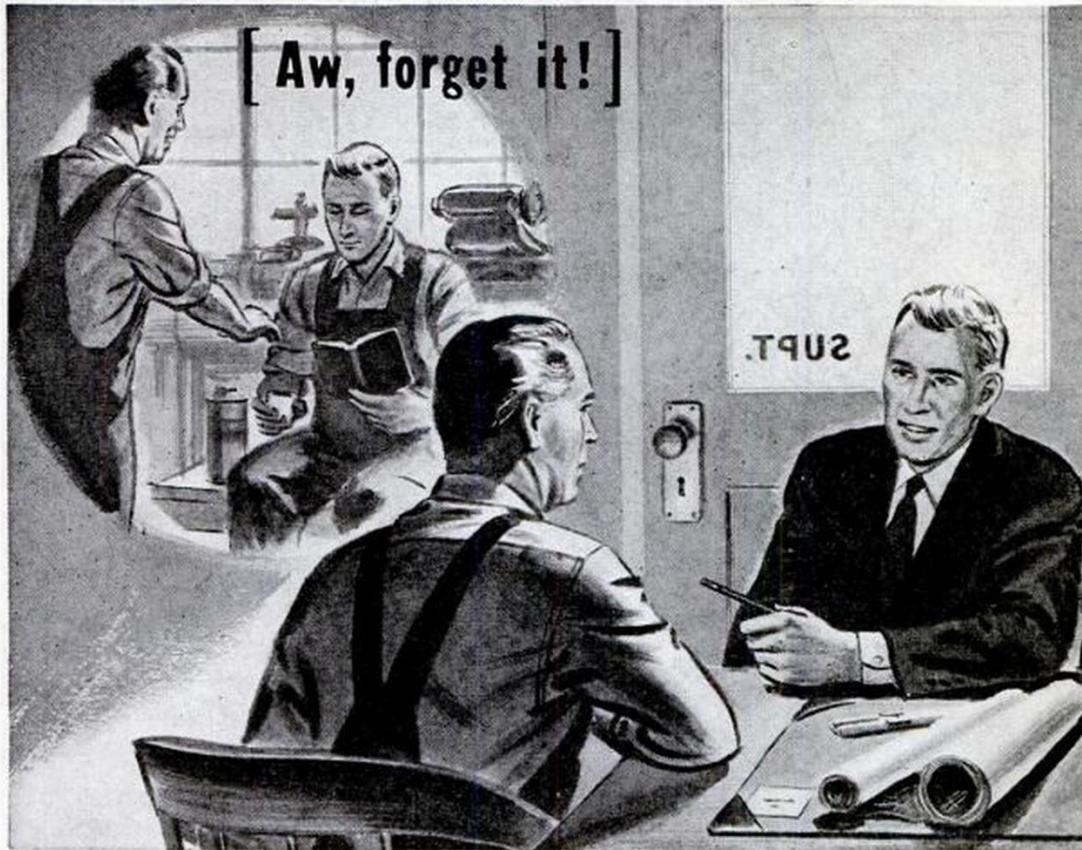


# A Brief History of the American Dream

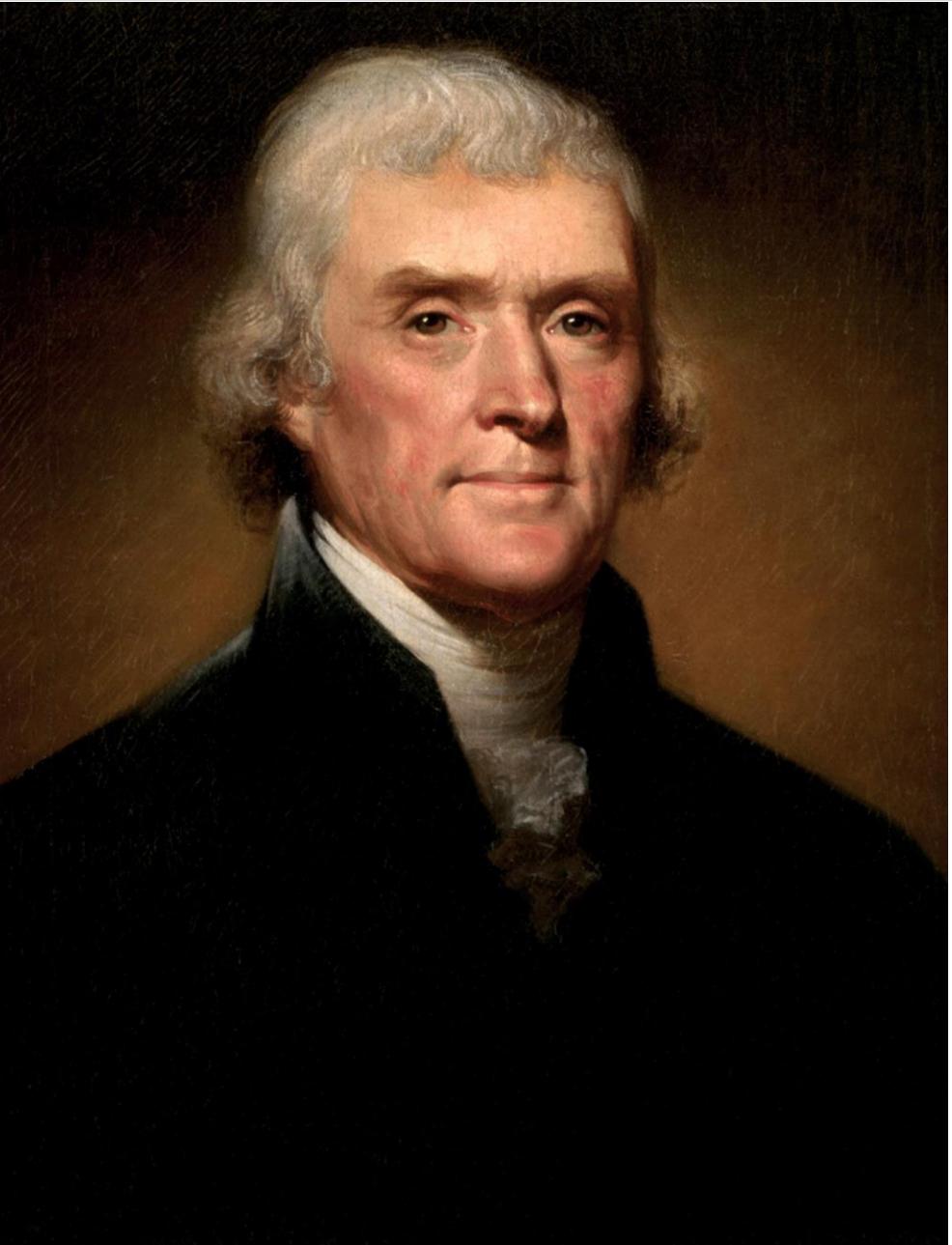


**"Don't tell me you never had a chance!"**

# The Jeffersonian Dream: A Nation of Independent Producers



Edward Hicks, The  
Cornell Farm, 1848

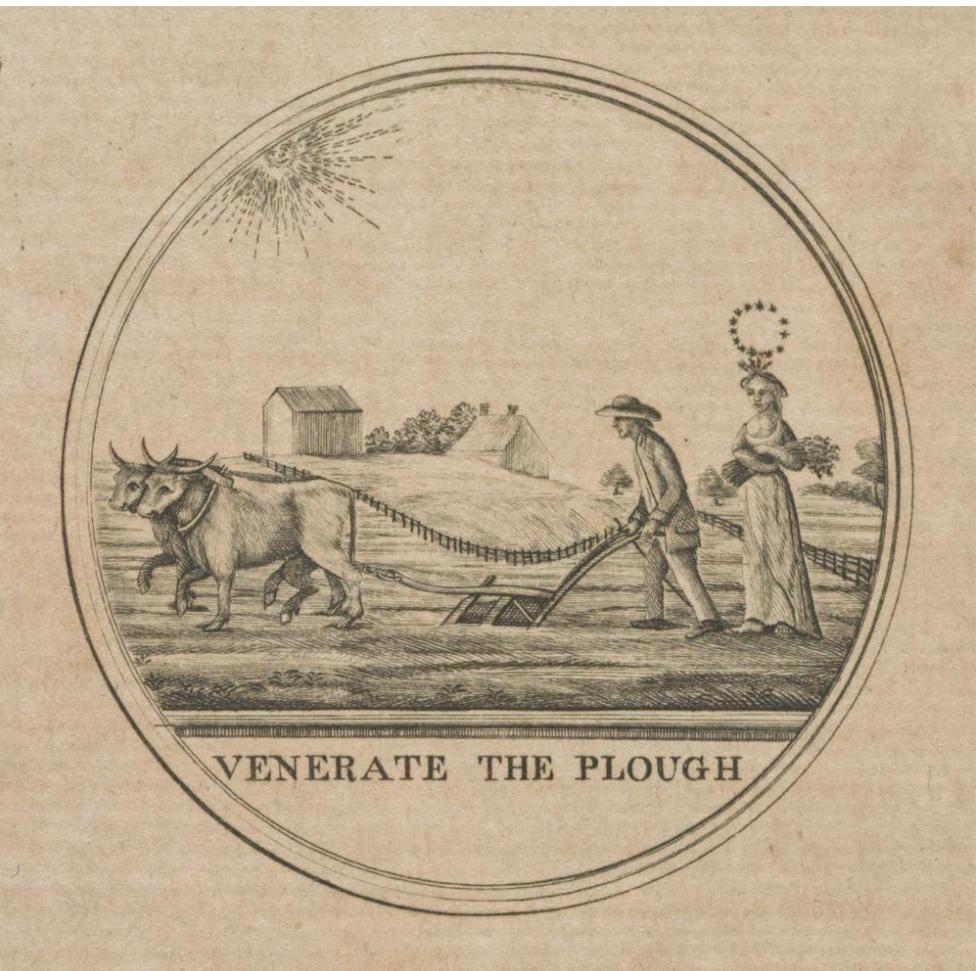
A portrait painting of George Washington, the first President of the United States. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark green military-style coat over a white cravat and a white waistcoat. His hair is powdered and powdered white. He has a serious, slightly stern expression. The background is a mottled green and brown.

**From *Notes on the State of Virginia, 1787*, p. 175**

Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which he keeps alive that sacred fire, which otherwise might escape from the face of the earth. Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phænomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example. It is the mark set on those, who not looking up to heaven, to their own soil and industry, as does the husbandman, for their subsistence, depend for it on the casualties and caprice of customers. Dependance begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition. This, the natural progress and consequence of the arts, has sometimes perhaps been retarded by accidental circumstances: but, generally speaking, the proportion which the aggregate of the other classes of citizens bears in any state to that of its husbandmen, is the proportion of its unfound to its healthy parts, and is a good-enough barometer whereby to measure its degree of corruption. While we have land to labour then, let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a work-bench, or twirling a distaff. Carpenters, masons, smiths, are wanting in husbandry: but, for the general operations of manufacture, let our work-shops remain in Europe. It is better to carry provisions and materials to workmen there, than bring them to the provisions and materials, and with them their manners and principles. The loss by the transportation of commodities across the Atlantic will be made up in happiness and permanence of government. The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body. It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigour. A degeneracy in these is a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution.



The Yeoman Farmer – the  
republic's backbone



John Neagle, Pat Lyon at the Forge, 1829





Abraham Lincoln, 1860: When one starts poor, as most do in the race of life, free society is such that he knows he can better his condition; he knows that there is no fixed condition of labor, for his whole life. I am not ashamed to confess that twenty-five years ago I was a hired laborer, mauling rails, at work on a flat-boat -- just what might happen to any poor man's son! [Applause.] . . . That is the true system.



But....

Junius Brutus Stearns, *Washington as a Farmer at Mount Vernon*, 1851

# African American as the Antithesis of Whiteness



MR. T. RICH  
THE ORIGINAL JIM CROW  
New York Pubd by E. HILLEY, No. 29 Chatham St.

Sheet music, 1832





Emancipation might have offered African Americans some sense of inclusion....

**WEB DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1935*:** The most magnificent drama in the last thousand years of human history is the transportation of ten million human beings out of the dark beauty of their mother continent into the new-found Eldorado of the West. They descended into Hell; and in the third century they arose from the dead, in the finest effort to achieve democracy for the working millions which this world had ever seen. It was a tragedy that beggared the Greek; it was an upheaval of humanity like the Reformation and the French Revolution. Yet we are blind and led by the blind. We discern in it no part of our labor movement; no part of our industrial triumph; no part of our religious experience. Before the dumb eyes of ten generations of ten million children, it is made mockery of and spit upon; a degradation of the eternal mother; a sneer at human effort; with aspiration and art deliberately and elaborately distorted. And why? Because in a day when the human mind aspired to a science of human action, a history and psychology of the mighty effort of the mightiest century, we fell under the leadership of those who would compromise with truth in the past in order to make peace in the present and guide policy in the future.

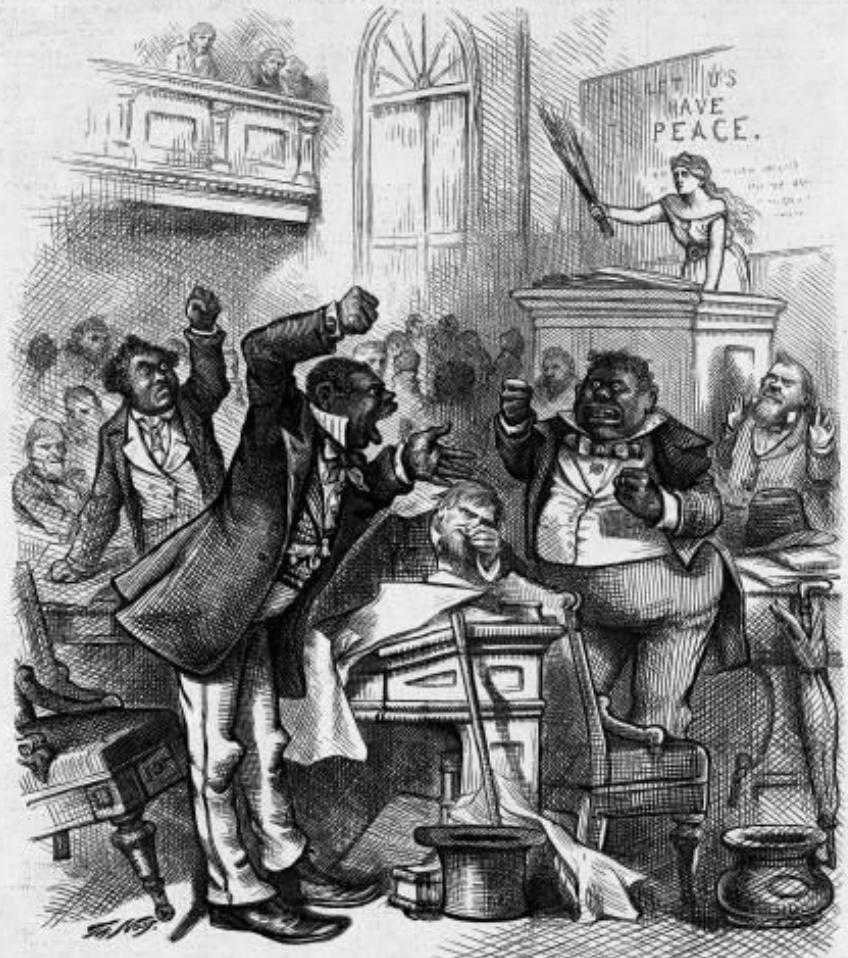


# HARPER'S WEEKLY

A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION

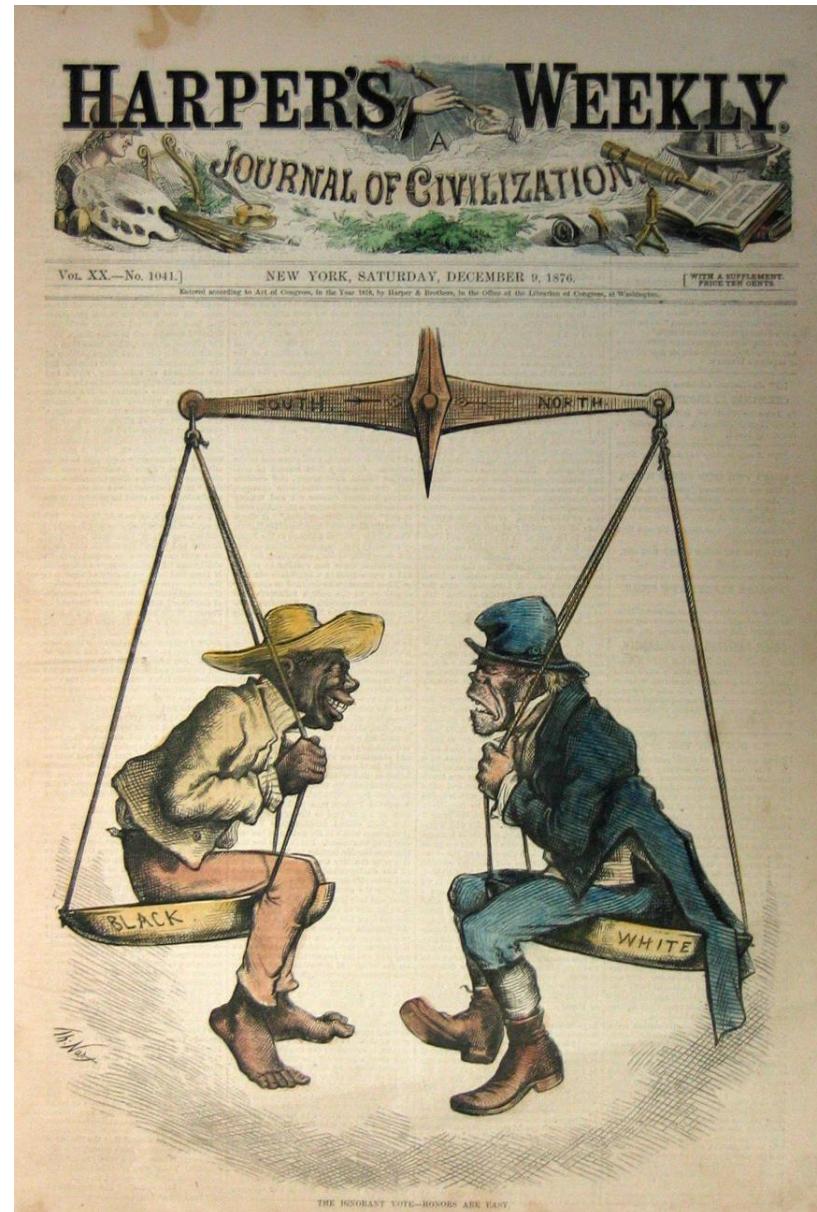
Vol. XVIII.—No. 806.] NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 1874.

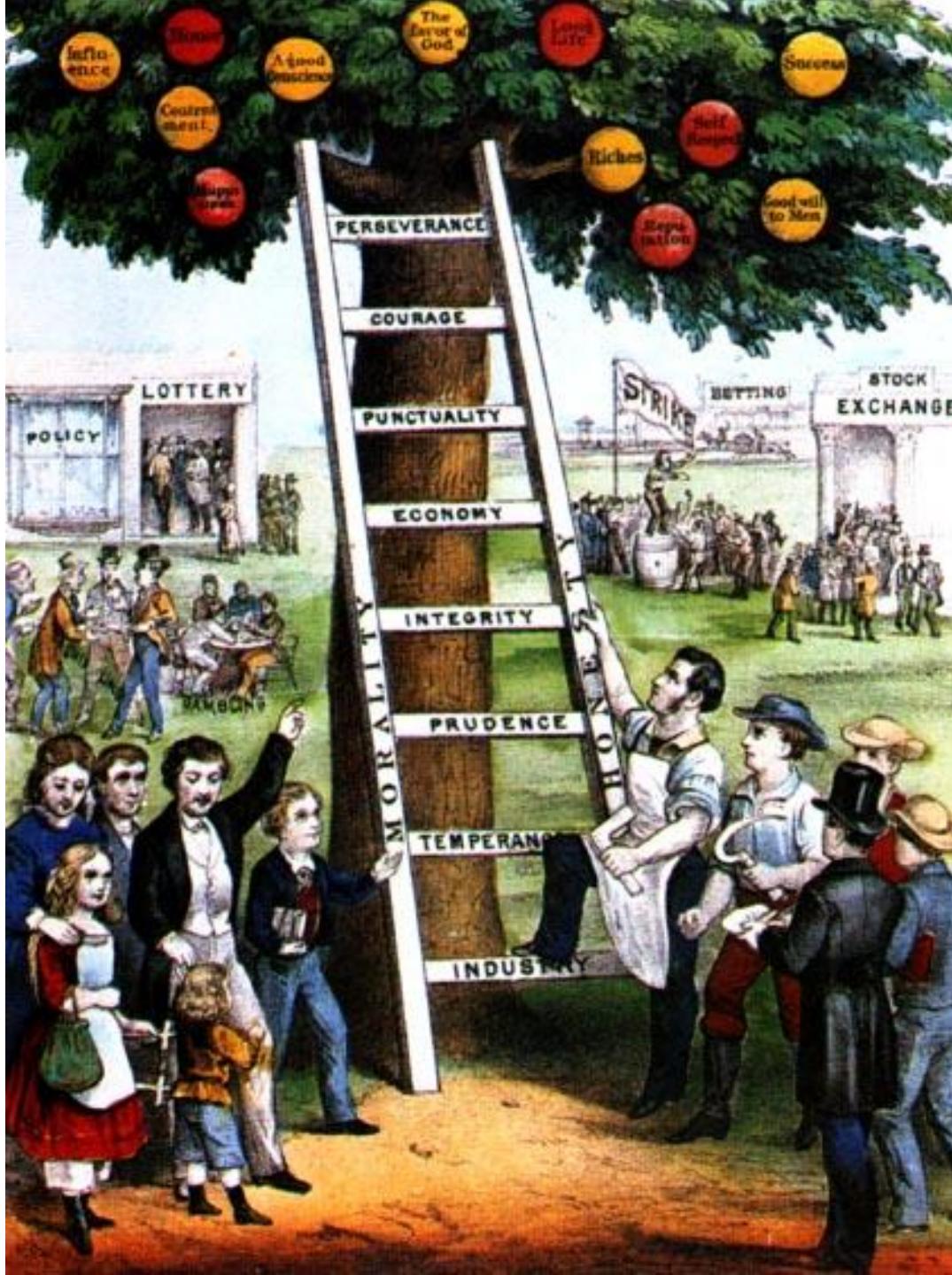
[WITH A SUPPLEMENT  
PRICE TEN CENTS.



Thomas Nast cartoons reflect white America's hardening racism towards African Americans in the years after the Civil War.

...and immigrants





Meanwhile..

Victorians Redefined the Jeffersonian Creed for New Urban Realities

Currier and Ives lithograph, 1877

And added something new:  
The Domestic Ideal



# Gendered Expectations



# Native Americans



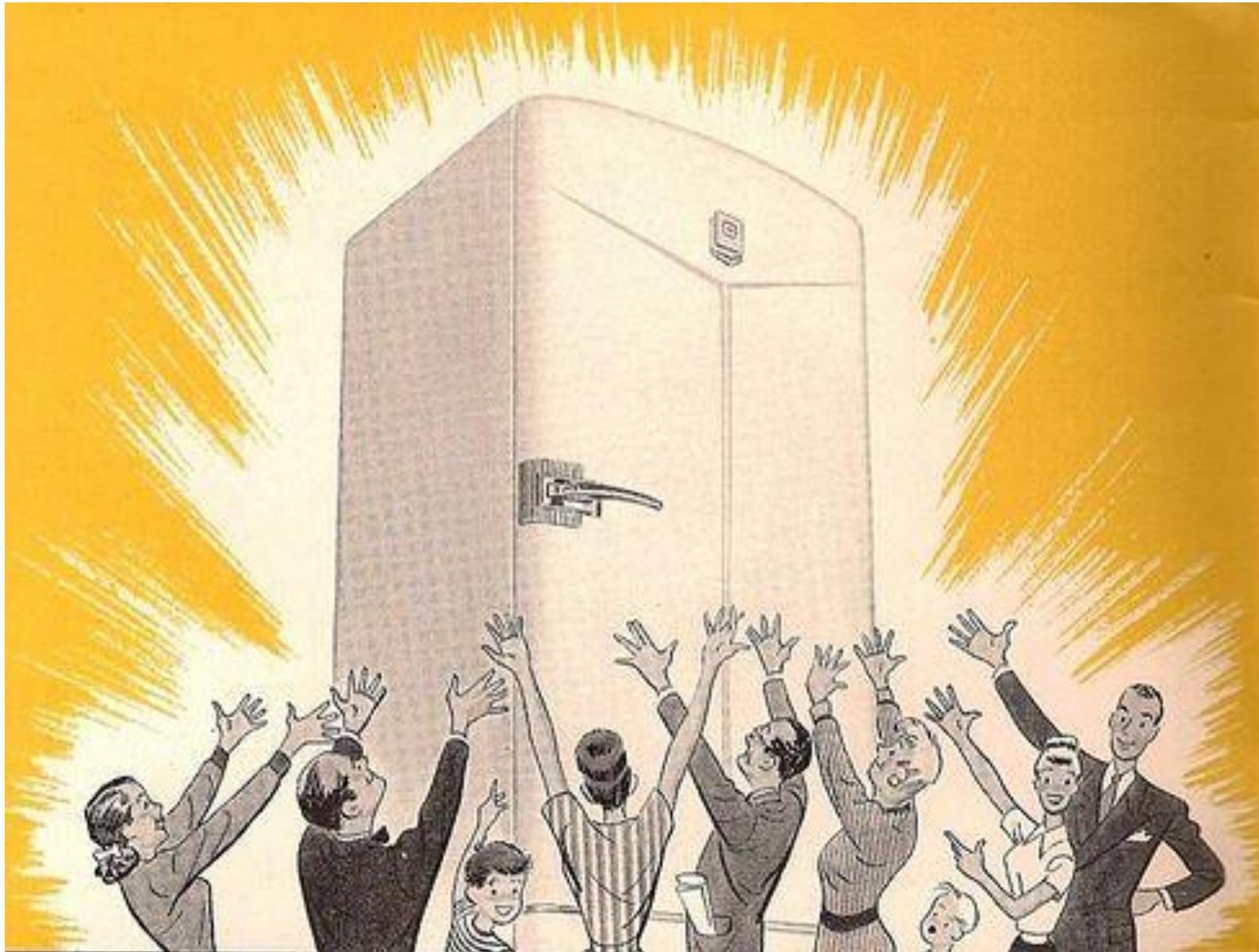
John Gast,  
*American Progress*, 1872



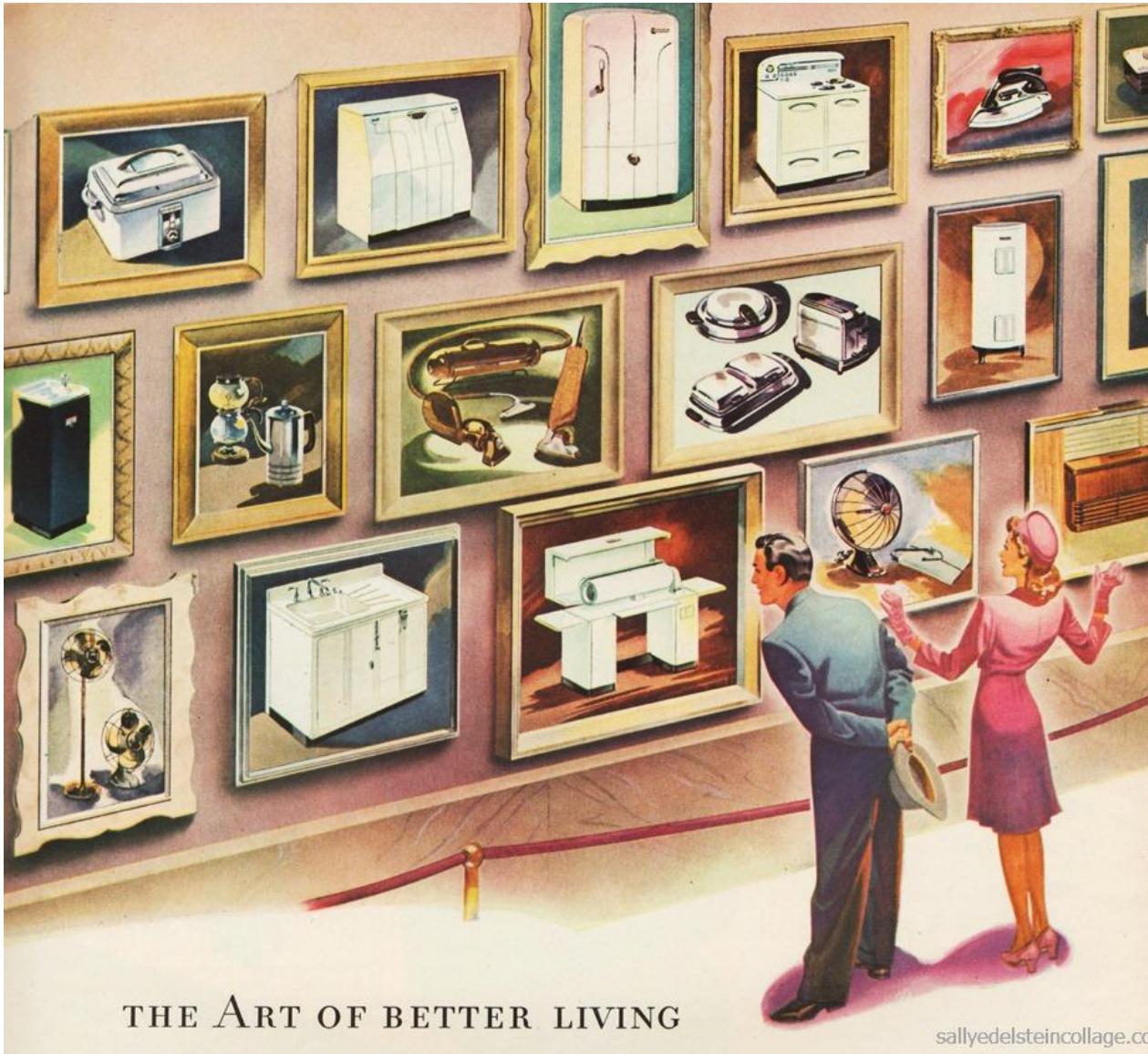
Wounded Knee Massacre,  
1890

Close to 300 indigenous men, women, and children were killed in the last major military action of the Plains Wars.

# The American Dream in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century



How did we get here – to this point in which material possessions largely define our self worth?



# The Advertising Revolution of the 1920s

“The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. ...We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. This is a logical result of the way in which our democratic society is organized. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society. ...In almost every act of our daily lives, whether in the sphere of politics or business, in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons...who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires which control the public mind.”

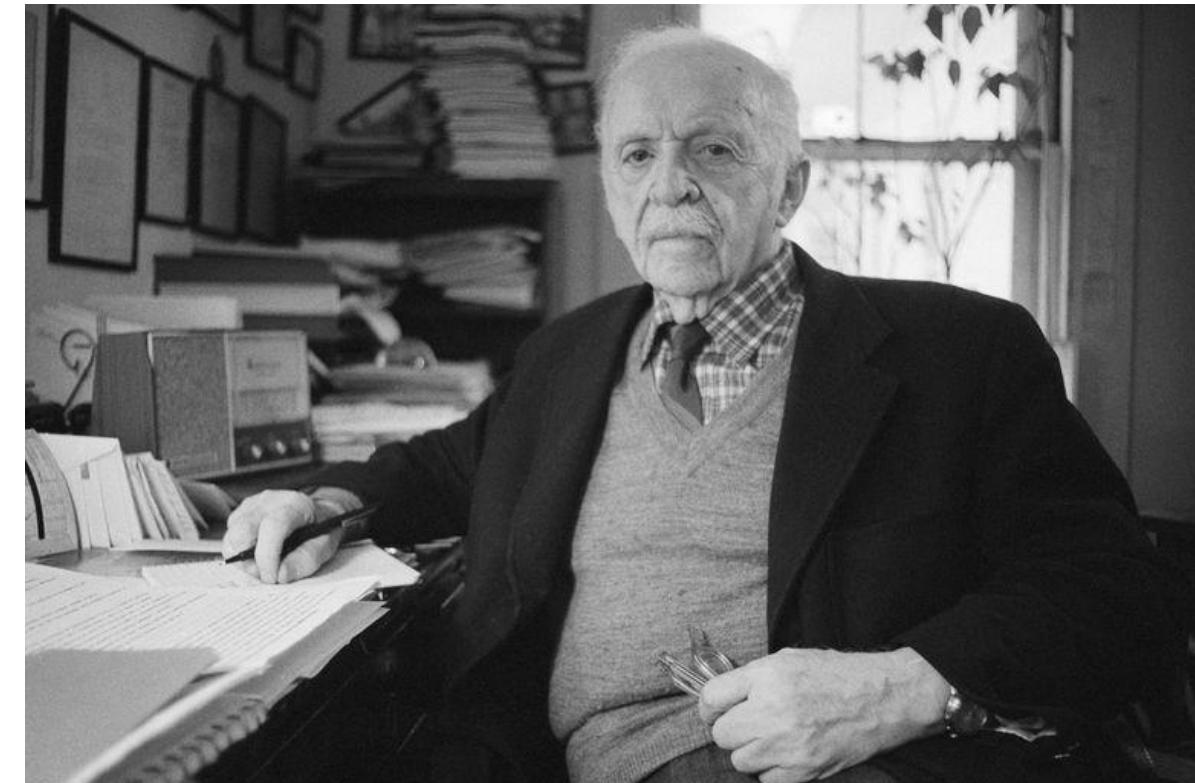
— Edward L. Bernays, *Propaganda*



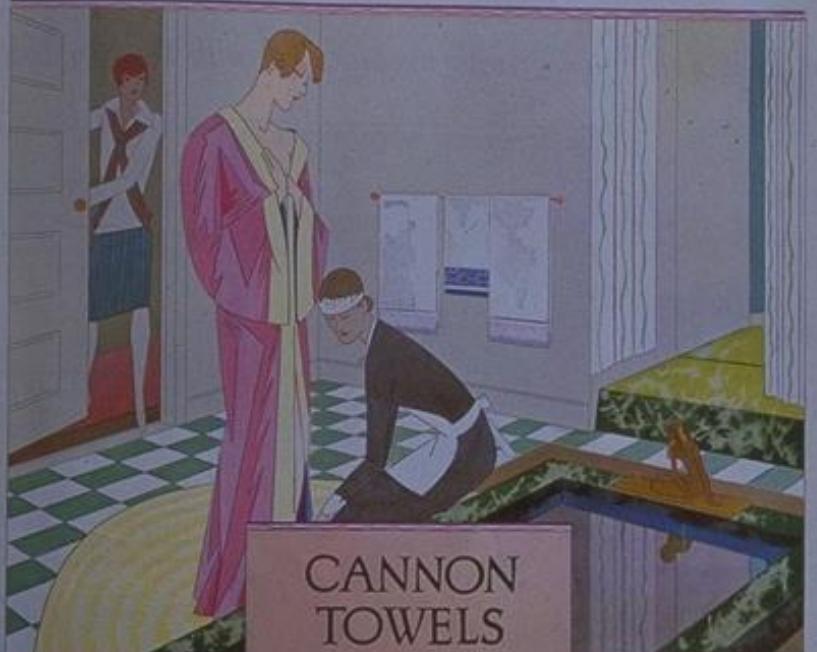
**Edward Bernays**, father of  
“Public Relations,” his  
euphemism for propaganda;  
author of *Propaganda*, 1928

“Universal literacy was supposed to educate the common man to control his environment. Once he could read and write he would have a mind fit to rule. So ran the democratic doctrine. But instead of a mind, universal literacy has given him rubber stamps, rubber stamps inked with advertising slogans, with editorials, with published scientific data, with the trivialities of the tabloids and the platitudes of history, but quite innocent of original thought. Each man's rubber stamps are the duplicates of millions of others, so that when those millions are exposed to the same stimuli, all receive identical imprints. It may seem an exaggeration to say that the American public gets most of its ideas in this wholesale fashion. The mechanism by which ideas are disseminated on a large scale is propaganda, in the broad sense of an organized effort to spread a particular belief or doctrine.”

## More Bernays



AND ALSO IN THIS COUNTRY HOUSE  
with its tradition  
of lavish hospitality



People these days know how to live a leisurely, gracious life in the country. Fine estates in the Berkshires and at Newport, in the Adirondacks and Maine, many delightful places everywhere, testify to a keen appreciation and enjoyment of sports, congenial company, and comfort.

The masters of a really well-equipped modern country house are concerned with every particular of entertaining. And most important among the luxurious details to which she gives careful attention are bath salts, soaps, toilet waters, face cloths, towels and bath mats for the splendid bathrooms of her country residence. Cannon towels and bath mats have the air of belonging in sumptuous, decorative bathrooms. Women scrutinized in the finest household linens choose them instinctively. With the sensible economy of the well-to-do, they are glad to find high quality at most reasonable prices.

Other housekeepers on a grand scale, many of the famous hotels of America, appreciate the merits of Cannon towels. They know that the good looks and the luxuriousness of these

excellent towels are in keeping with the finest appointments. Their shrewd business sense tells them that in every sense Cannon towels are a good investment. . . . The original cost price is less than for any other towels of equal quality. The service is eminently satisfactory—they wear wonderfully well and withstand constant laundering.

Ask to see a selection of Cannon towels appropriate for "cottages" and camps. Great marvelous bath towels, with whales and dolphins to add a picturesque touch to the daily swim! Handy little huck towels and small sized bathish towels too. Big bath mats. Capacious bath sheets. Whatever colors suit your fancy. All white, plain stripes or unusual designs—as you prefer. . . . Cannon towels and bath mats are on sale in good stores everywhere, priced from 25c to \$1.50. Cannon Mills, Inc., 70 Worth Street, New York City.



NOTE: All colors in Cannon towels and bath mats are guaranteed absolutely colorfast.

# The Art of the Sell: Modern Advertising Defines the Dream

**Advertiser Bruce Barton preaches a consumer ethic of instant gratification:**

Consumers should discard "the old-fashioned notion that the chief end in life is a steadily growing savings account, and that one must eliminate all pleasures from the vigorous years for possible want in old ages....Life is meant to live and enjoy as you go along...If self-denial is necessary, I'll practice some of it when I'm old and not try to do all of it now. For who knows? I may never be old."



# Conspicuous Consumption

Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899:

The basis on which good repute in any highly organized industrial community ultimately rests is pecuniary strength; and the means of showing pecuniary strength, and so of gaining or retaining a good name, are leisure and a conspicuous consumption of goods.

Advertising defines the Dream...but also offers new nightmares



# For Women.....

Often a bridesmaid  
EDNA'S case was really a pathetic one. Like every  
of the girls of her set, her primary ambition was to marry. Most  
not one possessed more grace or charm or loveliness than  
she. And as her birthdays crept gradually toward that tragic  
mark, marriage seemed farther and farther away. Yet  
she often a bridesmaid but never a bride.

That's the insidious thing about it. You rarely know when you have it. And it's a slow killer.

HER OWN HUSBAND, who hadn't known for years whether a gown was worn the first or twentieth time, staring at her a hard, appraising stare that hurt.

"What's the matter with your face?" I asked in the kindly way of husbands. "Look rough. Your face and neck used to be smooth and young as your shoulders."

interested—why other women were no longer envious?

Many a woman keeps up a joyous front when in reality she's terribly dismayed about this first break in her youthful looks. Her face, which has always been so dewy fresh, is beginning to look parched—actually coarse in spots. "Why is it?" she thinks worriedly. "And what can I do about it?"

When you come right down to it—why does the face grow old so much earlier than the shoulders? Because it's exposed. It weathers! The texture of the skin on the protected part of your body is exquisitely smooth and soft, isn't it? Compared with it, your unprotected face and hands and neck look years older. Weathering has made that difference. Weathering ages everything.

*Suncorch is a violent form of weathering*  
At this time of year the skin is exposed to the sun. Sunshine in moderation is good—but violent sunburn parches the skin of its natural moisture. Dries it of its lustrous youth. Makes it harsh and old-looking.

When your skin gets sunscorched, smooth on Hinds Honey & Almond Cream. It takes out the heat. Makes the skin soft and fresh once more.

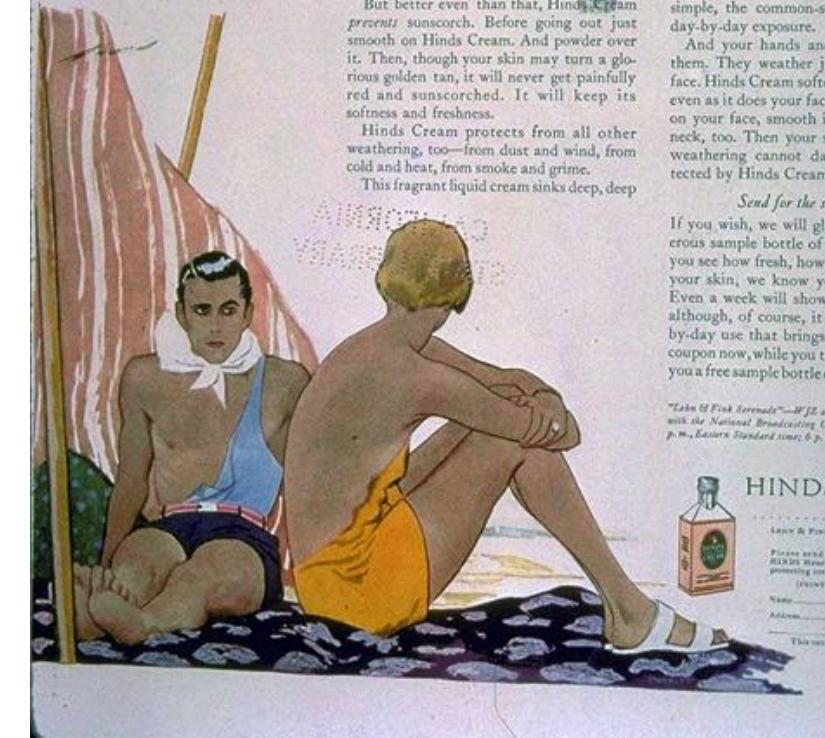
But better even than that, Hinds Cream prevents sunscorch. Before going out just smooth on Hinds Cream. And powder over it. Then, though your skin may turn a glorious golden tan, it will never get painfully red and sunscorched. It will keep its softness and freshness.

Hinds Cream protects from all other weathering, too—from dust and wind, from cold and heat, from smoke and grime.

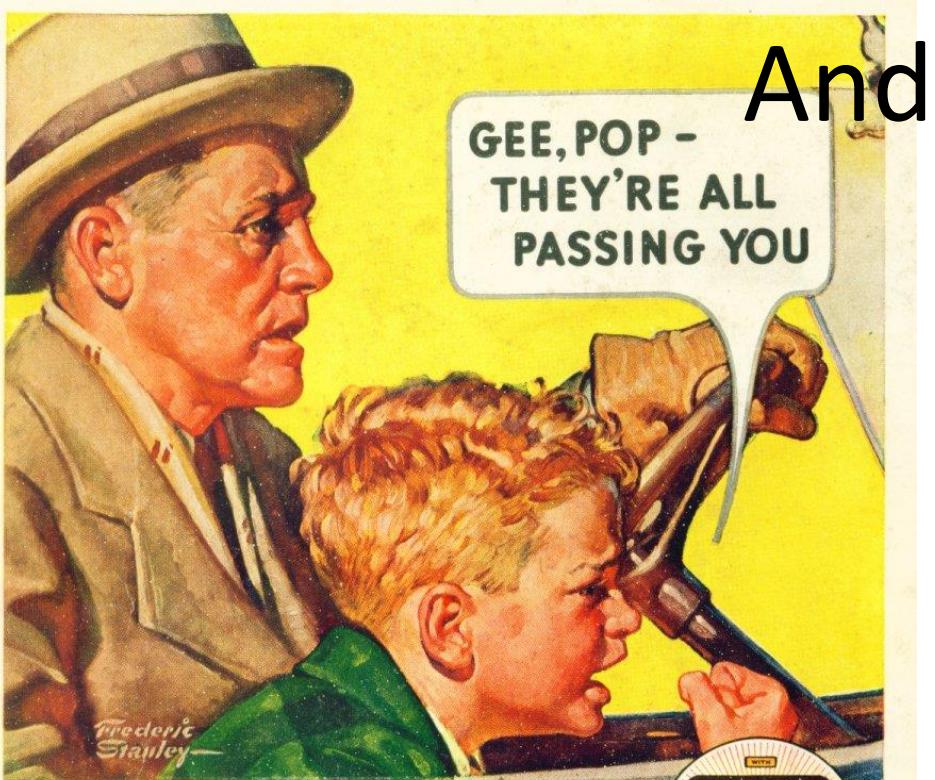
This fragrant liquid cream sinks deep, deep

*Send for the sample bottle.*  
If you wish, we will gladly send you a  
splendid sample bottle of Hinds Cream.  
You see how fresh, how sweetly  
odoriferous it is. You see how  
it penetrates your skin, we know you will be  
pleased. Even a week will show some improvement,  
although, of course, it is the con-  
tinuous day-by-day use that brings real results.  
Send for the sample bottle and a  
full-size bottle of Hinds Cream  
now, while you think of it. It  
will be a great help to you.

"John & Fisk Serenades"—WJSZ and 14 other stations with the National Broadcasting Company—every Saturday, 8 p.m., Eastern Standard time; 6 p.m., Central Standard time.



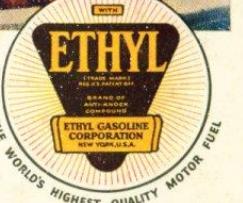
# And for men...



THEY didn't pass you when your car was bright and new—and you still don't like to be left behind. So just remember this: *The next best thing to a brand new car is your present car with Ethyl.*

If you buy a new high-compression car, you'll of course use Ethyl. But if you must make your old car do, give it Ethyl and feel lost youth and power come back as harmful knock and sluggishness disappear.

These days, when we have to do without so many things, we can at least make the most of our cars. And even if you don't measure the fun of driving in dollars and cents, you'll find that Ethyl makes real money savings in lessened repair bills. Ethyl Gasoline Corporation, New York.



#### BEWARE OF IMITATIONS

All Ethyl Gasoline is red, but not all red gasolines contain Ethyl fluid. The color is for identification only and adds nothing to performance. Look for this Ethyl emblem on the pump (or its globe).

The all-round quality of Ethyl fluid is tested\* at the time of its mixing and through inspection of samples taken from pumps. Ethyl's margin of anti-knock quality over regular gasoline is greater today than ever before.



NEXT TIME STOP AT THE **ETHYL** PUMP



He had to fight himself so hard...  
*he didn't put it over.*

YES, he was his own worst enemy. His appearance was against him and he knew it. Oh, who had he neglected the bath that morning, the shave, the change of linen? Under the other fellow's gaze it was hard to forget that cheap feeling. There's self-respect in soap and water. The clean-cut chap can look any man in the face and tell him the facts—like when you're clean, your appearance fights for you.

*There's self-respect in SOAP & WATER*

REUNION BY THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN SOAP AND GLYCERINE PRODUCERS, INC., TO AID THE WORK OF CLEANSING INSTITUTE

# Post World War II Abundance



We feel the effects of all this as we try to define the American Dream for ourselves

<sup>1.</sup> Success Has Become Supersized



# THE GULP SCALE



6.5 oz.



Coke can: 12 US fl oz.

The Big Gulp: 32 US fl oz.

Super Big Gulp: 44 US fl oz.

Double Gulp: 64 US fl oz.

Extreme Gulp: 54 US fl oz.

Team Gulp (not shown): 128 US fl oz.

The average adult stomach can hold approximately 32 oz. of fluid at one time

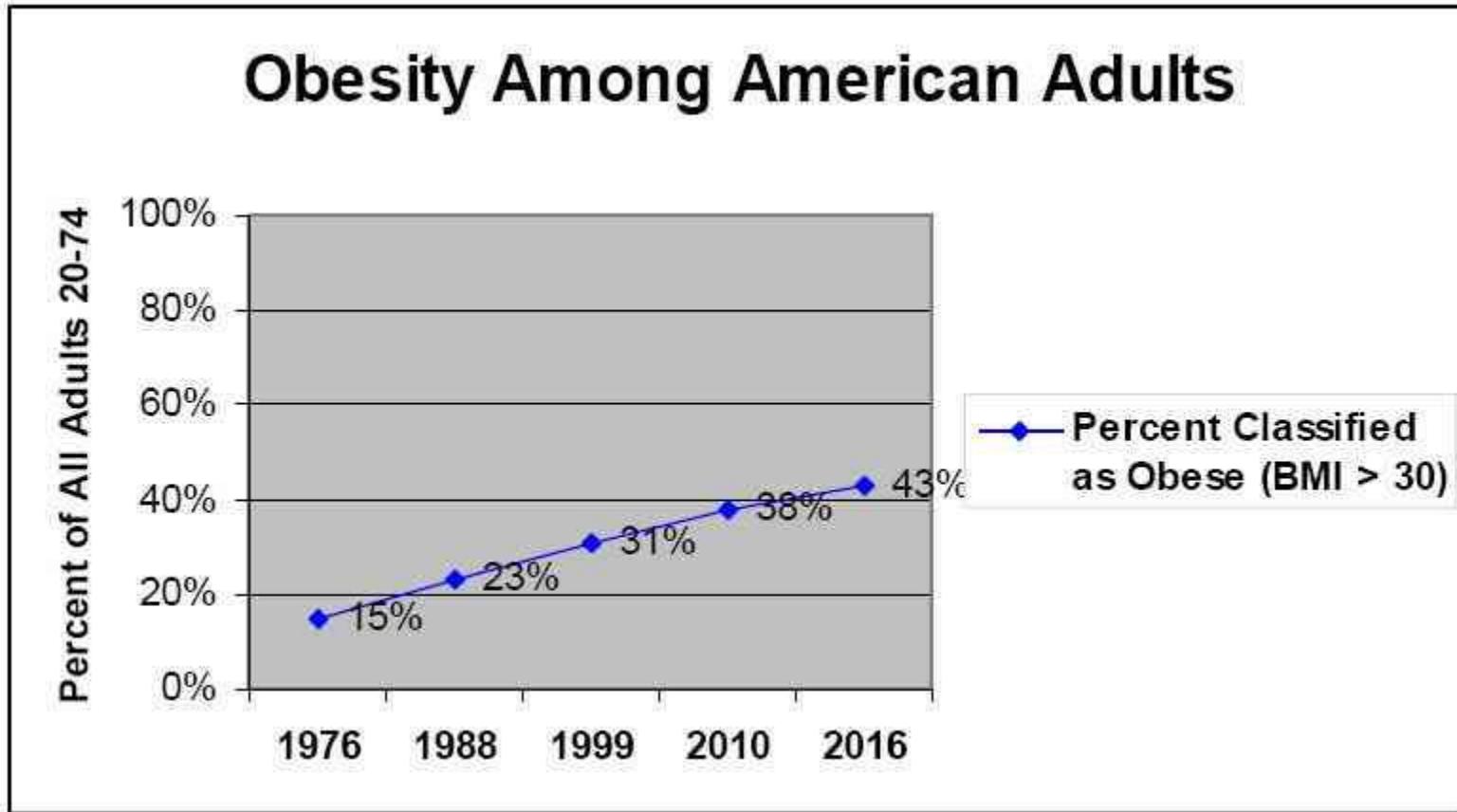


<b>Fifth Third Burger</b>	
<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size: Huge	
Servings 1	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 4889	
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
Total Fat 299.5g	460%
Saturated Fat 119.2g	597%
Cholesterol 744.6g	248%
Sodium 10887.9mg	454%
Total Carbs 354.9g	118%
Fiber 17.9g	72%
Sugars 37.3g	
Protein 198.7g	397%
<b>Total Flavor</b>	1000%
<small>*Percent Daily Value based on a 2,000 calorie diet.</small>	

# Fenton's Ice Creamery: Oakland, California



# Super-sized Adults







# The Shrinking Family v. The Growing Home Size

Year	# in HH	Sq Ft	Sq Ft/Person
1950	3.38	1,000	296
1960	3.29	1,200	365
1970	3.11	1,400	450
1980	2.75	1,570	571
1990	2.63	2,080	791
2000	2.59	2,200	849
2007	2.55	2,400	941

Source: Census Bureau

## Average Size of a New U.S. Home





McMansions – Palm Springs



Holton-Hooker Center at Grand Valley State University circa 1968



The dorm is being replaced by the living center.

Niemeyer Living Center, GVSU





My ancestral home



Transformed into a McMansion

# Oprah Winfrey's Estate



# Toys For the Rich: c. 1990



*The Kingdom 5KR* (formerly *The Trump Princess*) is 282 feet long, cost \$100-million to build, and was once owned by Donald Trump. When it was delivered it had five decks, a disco, a cinema with seats for 12 and 2 double beds, 11 opulent suites, a helipad on top (its smoke stacks are sloped outward to avoid interference with the helicopters), a pool with a water jet on top in front of the heliport, 2 Riva tenders, a crew of 48, a top speed of 20 knots, and cruising speed of 17.5 knots

# Toys For the Rich: Now



590 feet long

Cost: \$600 million

Rumored to have a 6,000 square foot lounge, 50 suites, a submarine, and a missile defense system.

Owner: the president of the United Arab Emirates

To avoid taxation, the yacht is listed as a charter yacht, though it is not available for charter.

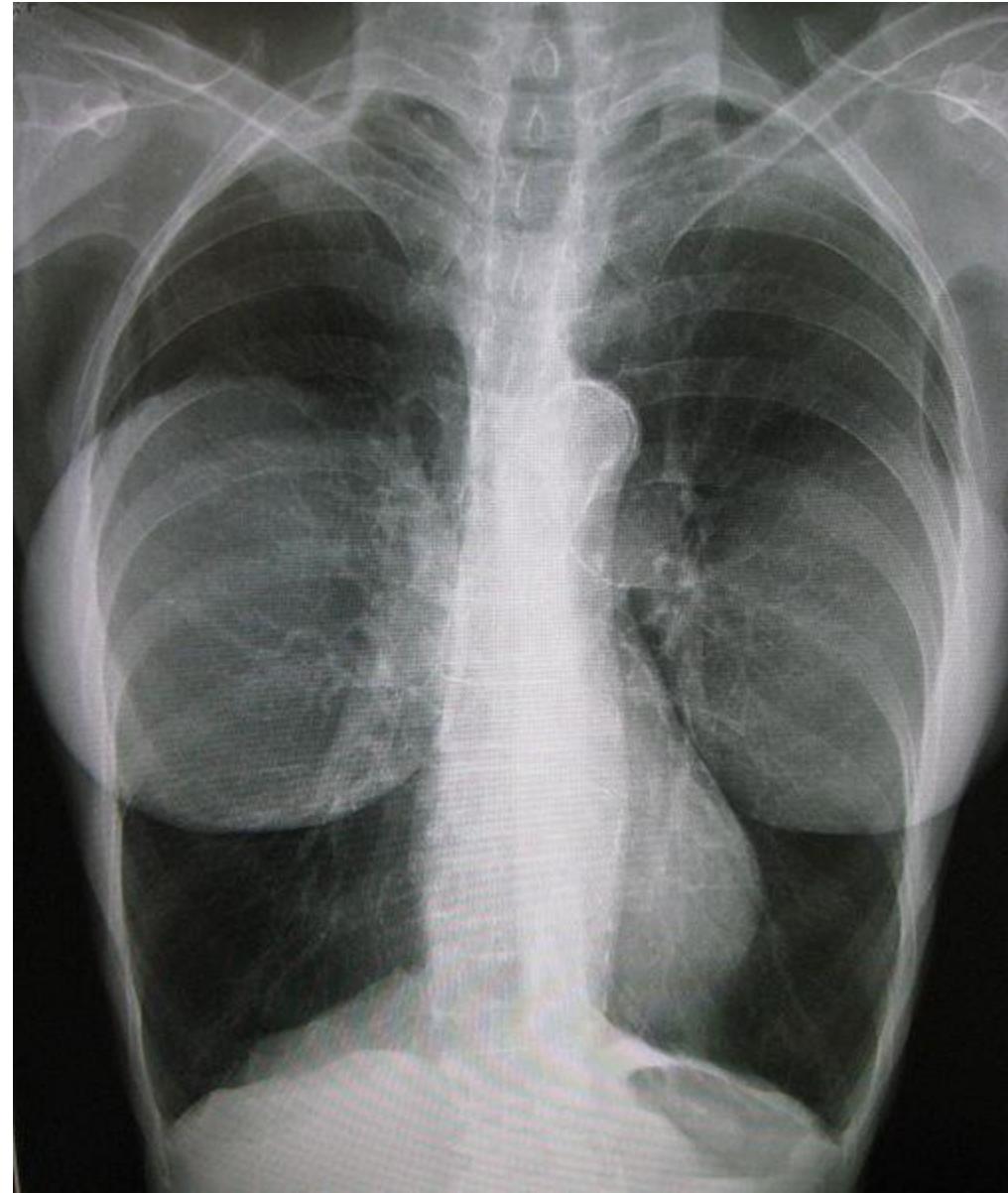


Gulfstream 700: The largest and most expensive private jet in the world.  
Cost: "75 million

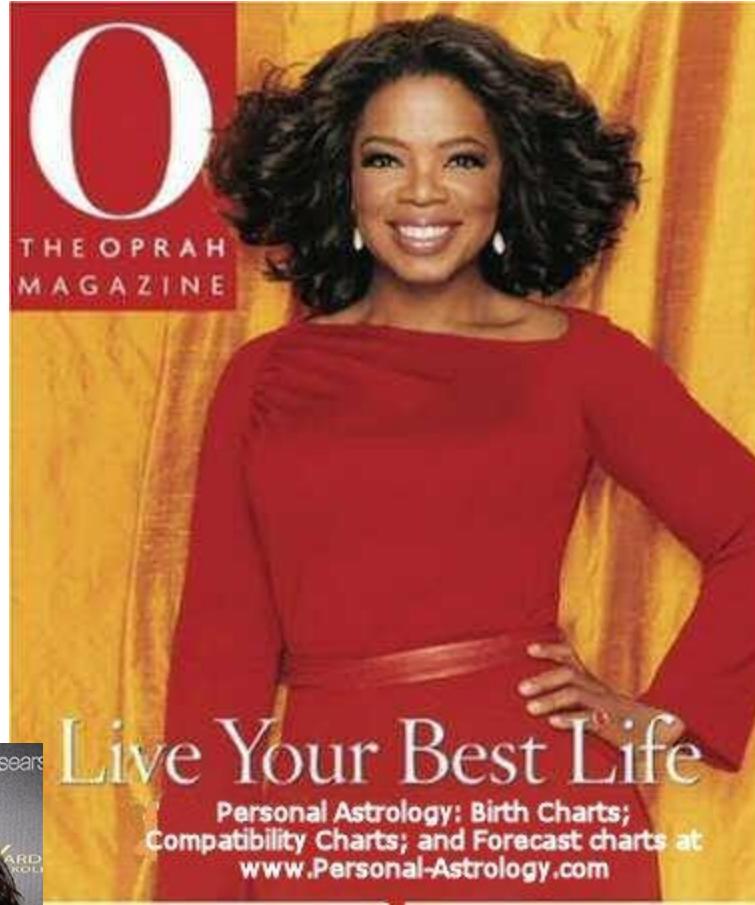
Betsy DeVos family owns 12 private jets: 1 Boeing Business Jet, 5 Gulfstream G550's, 1 Gulfstream G450, 2 Bombardier Challenger 350's, 3 Cessna Citation CJ4's.

The family also owns 4 helicopters and ten yachts. All the yachts are registered in the Cayman Islands to avoid taxes.





# Super-Sized Egos?



# What does it all mean?

- Inequality and exclusion have been basic features of the American Dream from the nation's outset
- BUT at least the American Dream was once connected to and helped bolster basic notions of American republicanism.
- American Dream once encapsulated values of character and altruism as much as material reward
- Materialism has become the centerpiece of the Dream, at least in much of our popular culture.
- We accept gross inequalities – inequalities that run counter to our basic values of fairness and justice – for the sake of the Dream. As such, pursuit of the Dream may actually harm the republic
- Time to reformulate the Dream?