

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Historical Overview

Proud and patriotic, Americans are known as much for their passionate natures as for their short tempers. The American Independence, secured ever-so-slightly more than one hundred years previous in 1783 after years of war with their Mother Country, has started to become the stuff of local history and tall tales. Still, the scars burn fresh in the minds of all true Americans- young and old. The British assault on what would have been Colombia during the War of 1812 did nothing but reinforce the passionate disdain for the Crown. Britain has not forgiven, and America has not forgotten.

Initially constructing not just one, but two of the Byron Engines made all the difference in securing America's rightful place in history. The first Engine was established in Philadelphia, and the second, in Boston; these two cities became havens of progress and technology (as well as pollution and filth). The national capital in Philadelphia became an all important bastion of American pride.

America and Britain, each determined to be seen as the most progressive and independent of nations, became embroiled in a war of enlightenment: The Legislation War. Social changes that would otherwise have been deemed radical found themselves quickly, though not always easily, pushed through the democratic process on both sides on the ocean.

Even while embroiled in the Legislation War, some changes presented more difficulties for America than others. Southern states reacted to the abolition of slavery with a brief martial encounter known simply as the Civil Conflict. With both Byron Engines firmly on the northern side of the Conflict, this attempted military response from the South was put down nearly as quickly as it erupted into existence. Shrewd politicians sorted out their remaining issues within the democratic process, and military conflict was rapidly brought to an end with minimal loss of life.

By the end of The Legislation War, the North found itself saturated with eager workers. Women looking to make a name for themselves and former slaves all clamored to work in the boomtown factories that popped up around the Engines. Urban sprawl engulfed most of the Northeast by the late 1840's, creating an interconnected series of cities often referred to as the North Atlantic Sprawl, or N.A.S. for short. The N.A.S. crossed many states and stretched from Boston to New York City and all the way south to Philadelphia.

As technology spread like a web across the country's eastern coast so did pollution and disease. Major cities were known for technological masterpieces they funded and built, such as the first line of heavy Ironside ships. Factories with steam-powered assembly lines allowed artisans and laborers to complete month long projects in a matter of days. However, the power that fueled this increased efficiency took its toll on the environment throughout the sprawl.

Pollution spread nearly a hundred miles outside of the sprawl covering the land with soot covered and making it infertile. The water in this area, though potable, smelled oddly and was hazy as a result of the manufacturing that had propelled the country forward into history. Soon the north found itself without a means to sufficiently produce food for all of its workers.

As early as the beginning of the 1850's, the Southern States--comprised of the Carolinas, Virginia, Louisiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia--recognized the eventual need for the North Atlantic Sprawl to rely on their produce and lobbied the government to acknowledge this dependence. Congress recognized the need to establish the southern states as the primary source for crops and raw materials for the entire country in 1854. After years of pressing, Richmond, Virginia was chosen as the build location for a third, much smaller, Engine. By 1856, Richmond had been integrated into the N.A.S. which had expanded southwest from Philadelphia.

Using the Engine the South was able to efficiently calculate proper crop rotation and fairly accurately estimate weather patterns, allowing for the earliest planting and longer harvests. By the late 1850's the South was out of the deep depression that had consumed it as a result of the Legislation Wars of the 1830's. In the eyes of many who had promised that "the South would rise again" the time was now, as the livelihood of the North was held in the South's hands.

After the Hunger strike of 1859, during which a month's worth of progress was lost and several factories were burned, the Congress passed the Documentation and Transportation Act of 1859 which required all 'necessary' shipments (including finished goods en route to the Southern States and raw goods to be delivered to the North) be documented and confirmed two weeks prior to the delivery date and made it a felony to purposely interfere or delay shipments of this type. These checks and balances brought political closure to the Legislation War, by finally allowing the North and the South to work together for mutual benefit. The nation, now united in purpose, realized a booming period of exploration and expansion going into the 1860s.

Fiercely independent, hard-working and stubborn, the American patriots settled their sights on expanding west, and the past decades had seen them make significant progress in this regard. Though their lengthy (though mercifully non-aggressive) war with Britain had somewhat curtailed their efforts, by early in 1865 they had secured a wedge-shaped territory that had made it as far west as Fortress Laramie. While the Fortress saw some trade, it was mostly a military settlement when it was last in contact. Certainly, further expansion efforts to the south and west had been brought to a standstill by continual attacks by suspiciously well-armed and supplied natives in those lands.

The Treaty of Cardiff

While the nation rebuilt, exploration did not end. Convinced that the remainder of the United States was gone, ships focused their efforts across the broken Atlantic, and by some miracle found that Britain as well as Italy, which strangely now referred to itself as the Roman Ascendancy, had survived. Each nation shared their findings, all of which indicated that these three nations were the sole survivors of the Cataclysm.

Americans told stories of how much of their former once nation was lost to the event and how they mourned the loss of so many lives. The Byron Engines had calculated the probabilities of any survivors on the far side of the Gulf of the Americas at zero, however, they did not give up hope and continued to search.

Britain and the Romans told similar stories of how they were seemingly spared while their neighbors were simply gone. Europe was completely destroyed, as were Russia and other surrounding nations. The entirety of the European land mass was gone, leaving nothing but a great ocean that was just as treacherous to cross as the Broken Atlantic or the Gulf of the Americas.

The surviving nations agreed that warring amongst themselves was futile, and agreed to sign a nonaggression treaty with hopes to bolster trade and diplomacy between them. Queen Victoria, offered the port of Cardiff as a neutral location for the negotiations and on August 15, 1875 the Treaty of Cardiff was signed.

The Treaty of Cardiff itself was a simple agreement. In signing the Treaty, each of the Cardiff Nations agreed to recognize the sovereignty of the other nations, while also sharing all information about the known world and agreeing to never march national forces on neutral land. To allow for and to foster exploration, provisions within the Treaty, called for the formation of a unified force, the Cardiff Forces, to ensure that all nations were adhering to the Treaty. It was from this united force that the first expeditionary forces were formed and headed off to search all corners of the new world. Years passed and many of these explorer groups never returned. Finally, in 1881, news spread that a Brit by the name of Sir David Livingston had found land to the far west that was stable and fertile. Hope that other survivors could be found quickly spread throughout all of the Cardiff Nations and within the year the first Cardiff expedition set sail for the new world.

Exploring the New World

Taking nearly three years to complete their goal, the first Cardiff expedition was able to establish a foothold for future colonization in the new world. To accomplish this goal three heavily armed and heavily armored coastal towns were built to protect the Cardiff Nations' interest in the new world from the horrors and perils with which the new world seemed to be bristling.

Although many believed the reports to simply be complaints of men and women who lacked the grit to tough it out so far from home, it was hard to deny the fact that many patrol groups failed to return. It was even harder to deny when an entire patrol returned claiming they witnessed the same things; unnamed monsters, horrors never seen before by man, and savage men.

Those that had the grit to explore this new world quickly learned that the Cardiff Nations were not alone on this new continent. It seemed that three other groups survived. The first that were encountered were the Native American tribes, not ravenous natives as others had claimed, who had, that since the Rending, has unified much like Cardiff into a single band. Some of these natives immediately sought to help the Cardiff nations while others refused and even brought war down upon the exploring Cardiff forces. The second group was none other than America's lost child, Fortress Laramie. The westernmost vanguard of the United States of America at the time of the Cataclysm still stood strong. As reports filtered back to the coast then across the Gulf of the Americas hope and pride quickly spread throughout the United States. An American envoy was sent from one of the Cardiff towns under heavy guard to Laramie to discuss terms of the Fortress rejoining the nation; however, the unexpected happened - Laramie refused. When news found its way to the other Cardiff Nations, they argued that this effort was in direct violation of the Treaty of Cardiff and forced the United States of America to end this diplomatic pursuit. The last of these groups was the most surprising; a group of Chinese who claim to be from Lhasa. Preferring to be alone and to avoid contact with others, little is known about this group except for the stories told by the people of Laramie and the Native tribes, and how they ended up on this continent remains a mystery.

Having completed its goal and having discovered these new people the first Cardiff exploration was deemed a great success. Through this exploratory effort the Cardiff Nations completed their first task, to explore the new world, and set out on their second task, to colonize the new world. The second Cardiff expedition was scheduled to set sail twenty years after the Rending, in 1885.

Major Events

1830 - The United States humiliates the United Kingdom by unveiling it's own Difference Engines.

1831 - The Legislation Wars begin. By the end of this political volley both the United States and the United Kingdoms have abolished slavery, passed women suffrage, as well as instituting many social reforms such as welfare and a state-funded education system.

1856 - Third Byron Engine in Richmond, Virginia integrated into the N.A.S.

1859 - Tension between the North and South are at their peak. A botched delivery to the north from a southern supplier incites a deadly riot. As a result the Documentation and Transportation Act of 1859 was passed to establish checks and balances in an effort to avoid a similar event from happening in the future. (See Hunger Strike of 1859 for more details)

1865 - In response to the Rending, President Lincoln unites the nation under the sole purpose of survival and building. He addresses the nation promising that together they would rebuild and find out what happened to the rest of the country.

1875 - The Treaty of Cardiff is signed when the remaining countries of America, Britain and Rome meet in the city of Cardiff.

1880 - Commodore William Mervine upon the USS Independence makes landfall in what he believed to be the shattered western half of his beloved country. Unable to find habitable land, and convinced that none remains, he returns home to deliver the news.

1881 - A British explorer by the name of Livingston claims to have found habitable land in the American north-west. After evaluation of the evidence the Cardiff nations begin preparations for their first wave of colonization in the new world.

1884 - The second wave of colonization begins. A Cardiff training camp is established on the western coast of the United States as the Cardiff Nations prepare once again to cross the broken Gulf of the Americas.

Additional Events of Note

The Shattering of Columbia (Aug 24 - Aug 30th 1814) - During the War of 1812 an armed force of nearly 3,000 British soldiers took control of the fledgling capitol at Columbia and held it for over a week. Believed to be a political maneuver, the British set flame to the entirety of Columbia and watched it burn while hurricane winds did nothing but fuel the fires making them burn hotter. By the fifth day there was little left to the city but rubble; however, the British did not relent, holding the city for two additional days before leaving without any

contest. It is unknown as to why they held the city longer, or why they left so quietly, but stories speak of British soldiers going home to home, basement-to-basement looking for something and resulting in burning the entire city in hopes to find some unnamed treasure. Other stories simply called it a political act to demoralize the United States by utterly destroying the Capitol and then leaving once supplies were at a minimum needed to make the journey back across the Atlantic. Regardless of the reason this act did much to breed further hatred of the British into the American culture.

Hunger Strike of 1859 (Springfield Massachusetts) - In 1859 a petty squabble between a factory owner in Springfield, Massachusetts and a supplier in Henderson, North Carolina over a botched shipment and the factory owner refusing to pay for a future order lead to a month-long riot and hunger strike during which several factories in Springfield burned when the supplier delayed all his shipments to the city by a week. Written off as a poorly documented date it lead to the death of 13 factory workers who were trapped in the building when it was set ablaze. In response, after much heated debate and blame passing, the Congress passed, thanks to the lobbying of an up-and-coming Representative from Illinois by the name of Abraham Lincoln, the Documentation and Transportation Act of 1859 which established formal checks and balances to ensure that an event such as the Hunger Strike did not happen again.

The American Flag of 1867 - Having come to terms with the likelihood that the remainder of the country that has been out of contact no longer exists, the United States flag was officially modified in 1867 to recognize the great loss of life and to stand as a symbol of strength for the days and hardships to come. Looking to the past the United States mirrored a symbol from a time of great strength for the country. Arranging twelve stars in a circular formation the new flag, resembling the 13 star flag crafted by Betsy Ross, serves to remind the country of what its citizens can do when they stand united in a cause, and also to remind all that they must now work now harder than ever to overcome this newly forced solitude and independence.

Notable Leaders

Abraham Lincoln (President 1864-1872) - Starting out as a lawyer from Kentucky, Abraham Lincoln was best known for his efforts in moderating the tension between the North and the South. It was through his efforts that the Documentation and Transportation Act of 1859 was passed. The respect garnered as part of these negotiations with both northern and southern contingents lead to his decisive victory in the 1864 Presidential Election. It was by his direction and guidance that the nation united and rebuilt after the Rending resulting in his re-election in 1868.

Isabella Baumfree (President 1872-1876) - Isabella Baumfree was a woman of many firsts, two most notably were that she was the first person of color to be elected President of the United States and the first woman to do the same. Born a slave, Baumfree was not afraid to use her newfound freedoms. She quickly became a voice against social injustice and fought vehemently for fair pay for women and people of color throughout the nation. Eventually, as President in 1874, Isabella Baumfree was able to pass the American Equal Pay Act of 1874, which promised equal pay to all Americans regardless of sex, race, age or any factor other than merit. In 1875, Isabella Baumfree approved the signing of the Treaty of Cardiff, but her dedication to social reform resulted in limited exploration with the Cardiff forces.

John D. Rockefeller (President 1876-1884) - John D. Rockefeller was known as an industrial giant who cared about the American people and his beloved country. Revolutionizing the modern manufacturing process with steam power Rockefeller was able to increase his own factories output while minimizing risk to his workers as well as cost of production. In 1875, ten years after the Rending, Rockefeller began to use his political sway to ask why the American people didn't have any answers as to the cause of event. Running on a campaign promising to find these answers, John D. Rockefeller was elected President in 1876 and in the years to follow did just what he promised. Using his knowledge of manufacturing Rockefeller jumpstarted the efforts by personally investing his own capital into the process of making *Ironsides* ships. Over the next few years, especially after Livingston's discovery in the American north-west, Rockefeller was not able to find the answers that he sought, but gave the American people hope that they were close to finding them.

Rosetta Douglass (President 1884-Present) - Born as the eldest daughter of the famed orator Frederick Douglass in the years after the Legislation Wars, Rosetta Douglass took great pride in the privileges that were available to her growing up that her mother and father didn't have. Growing up in Massachusetts, Douglass was admitted to Harvard Law and was the first woman to ever graduate from the University. She was one of the strongest voices to support John D. Rockefeller when he ran for president in 1876, and remained a loyal supporter of his efforts joining him on the ballot as Vice President in 1880. In 1883, Douglass campaigned promising to find the answers that President Rockefeller has set the nation on the path to find. Still mostly untested in the global political landscape, Rosetta Douglass finds herself at the head of the American people as they step out into the unknown and explore the American north-west with the other Cardiff Nations.

William Mervine (US Navy) - Until the 1870's the highest rank in the US Navy was Commodore, and it was always assumed that William Mervine was the Commodore of rank as he lead his fleet from the deck of the USS Independence. However, upon his return from his mission to cross the Gulf of the America's in 1880, President Rockefeller recognized his efforts by naming him the first Admiral and affirmed his position as the ranking officer in the US Navy. He has since been tasked to train American and Cardiff captains in preparation for colonization efforts in newly rediscovered American north-west.

William Tecumseh Sherman - (US Army) - Known for his savage and unorthodox tactics and strategy William Tecumseh Sherman became second in command of the United States Army behind Ulysses S Grant due to his foreign efforts to hinder the United Kingdom's colonization efforts. Upon the loss of communication with Fortress Laramies after the Rending in 1865, President Abraham Lincoln recognized Sherman as the true Commanding General of the United States Army and in the years to follow he was tasked with the honor of training both American and Cardiff soldiers in preparation for both Cardiff Expeditions across the Gulf of the Americas.

Map

After the Rending, which is what most Americans called the event in 1865, the ravaged borders of America had changed drastically, as seen in the map below.



Geographical & Regional Descriptions

While the east coast, by some miracle, was left mostly unscathed, the Rending was not so gentle to the rest of the country. Earthquakes and tsunamis ravaged the coasts and reshaped lands. Being only a few feet above sea level as it were, Florida was swallowed completely by the first of the trans-Atlantic waves. Over night the Great Lakes were gone, leaving behind a new sea that stretched as far north as Canada had been, and south to the once Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf of the Americas was now the western coast of the United States of America. Many great inland cities were left as coastal ruins.

Under the careful and meticulous eye of President Lincoln, these cities were rebuilt and served as ports of departure for government funded exploration missions searching for answers as to the cause of the Rending, and the fate of the western half of the country.

Exploring the Gulf was not easy. Swirling Maelstroms and massive active volcanoes made it hellish and unforgiving. After many years, and at the cost of the lives of many brave patriots, landfall was finally made by Commodore William Mervine upon the USS Independence. With the land having been shifted during the Rending it was impossible to determine exactly where landfall was had, but Mervine estimated to likely be

former Oklahoma or Texas. Upon exploring the land, the Commodore and his crew found only arid and unstable land that would take extreme care and a well planned expedition to explore further. In the little exploration that they were able to do they found no survivors and no sign of previous inhabitation. With heavy heart, Mervine returned home to report his findings. It seemed likely that the rest of nation was destroyed and this simply confirmed the Byron Engines' calculations.

Determined not to be kept down by anything, the ever-hardy Patriots put their backs and shoulders into reconstruction. They have spent the last twenty years rebuilding their shattered and forever-scarred homeland. Showing that typical Yankee pride and determination, they endeavored to not simply rebuild, but to improve.

Philadelphia, Boston & Richmond: Seats of Engine Power

Philadelphia, once the second largest city in the British Empire, became America's largest and most bountiful metropolis after the American Independence was won. Though originally it had been intended for it to only be a temporary capital while a parcel of land down around the Potomac River was developed into such, the Shattering of Columbia and the placement of the Byron Engine in Philadelphia in 1827 made Madison and others who had advocated the Potomac Restoration efforts change their minds. Clearly, the Engine needed to be at the seat of government, they reasoned - and so Philadelphia remained the Capital of the United States of America. The sprawling metropolis has become a haven to those who embrace technology. Though they would never admit it, Philadelphians are fairly close culturally to the Brits who inhabit London: their art, science, and medicine are always on the forefront of discovery and pushing the boundaries of the possible.

Those from Boston, home of the second Engine, are a little more old-fashioned when it comes to such things. Call it their attachment to being seen as the traditional start of the Revolution and the Home of Independence, perhaps. While they are perfectly happy to use the Engine to improve life and daily living, they just seem to have more reverence for how things "Used To Be Done". Old family names still mean much to the average Bostonian, and where one lives in town might mean the difference between social acceptance or stigma. Old schools and old money continue to rule in Boston to this day. Given the nature of the construction of Boston, where most of the city sits on top of land reclamation, many in America were shocked to discover that it had not only survived the Rending, but had come out largely unscathed. What little damage was sustained was quickly fixed, using funding provided by the cities wealthiest patriots who could not bear to see Boston in anything less than perfect condition.

The placement of the third Byron Engine in Richmond, Virginia, was seen by some in the American South as a recognition of the importance of their place in American society; though by others the placement of the smaller and far less critical Engine was seen as further slight against the sovereignty of the South's ability to govern itself. No matter which side of the argument a person was on, however, none could argue that the connection of Richmond to the N.A.S. altered the political landscape. The South, via Richmond, now felt it had some bartering power in the American political climate. Those from Richmond tend to keep to the ideas of Southern hospitality, and they are quick to remind guests, especially those from the Northern states, that Richmond has long been recognized as a Revolutionary city since before Patrick Henry gave his famous Liberty or Death speech in St. John's Church. The devotion of a Southerner from Richmond to the cause of

Liberty & Country is not to be questioned, no matter what his political stance on more current social laws may be.

Culture

Everyday Life

The American people are a hardworking and diligent people, and for the average person their day to day life doesn't change very much. During the week each citizen is expected to work while weekend and evenings are often spent with family, practicing ones hobbies or simply enjoying the grandness of the American outdoors.

Thanks to the beloved President Isabella Baumfree citizens no longer struggle with inadequate wages, as now it is federal law that employers must pay all employees based on merit. As a result citizens take great pride in all of their efforts, ensuring that it is their best work. This in turn fosters great teamwork and greater efficiency. While in office, President Rockefeller even joked that "there is nothing that is impossible for America to accomplish if we can get enough Americans working on it".

With the application of steam power to assembly lines, thanks to President John D. Rockefeller, the production and safety of manufacturing towns has boomed. Now projects that formerly took months can be completed in weeks and workers find themselves only needing to work forty-hour weeks as opposed to formerly needing to work sixty to eighty hours a week just to make deadlines. With this improved efficiency factory bosses are happy with met deadlines and the workers in these factory towns find themselves with plenty of free time.

It is in this free time that citizens celebrate life, family and country.

Social Mores

Beyond being an industrious people, the typical American citizen is not only polite, but trustworthy, honest and proud. When encountering new people, or visiting friends introductions may not always be necessary, however, it is expected that everyone act politely and give respect to those involved.

A sign of respect can be a simply thing such as a nod or a tip of the hat, or it can be a firm handshake or the offer of a warm beverage. This gesture will, however, never be bowing; the act symbolizes inferiority and the American people view themselves as equals to everyone regardless of station, rank or title.

One thing that Americans hold as dear as their love for family and country is their word. Americans often will go out of their way to ensure that they remain true to their word and adhere to any promises they make to others. Sure there are all kinds of contract law out there, but contracts are for people with more money than Uncle Sam. When average citizens need to come to an agreement typically it's discussed over a cup of coffee or a meal, and then sealed with a firm handshake. At that time both parties are bound by the terms of the agreement.

In the unusual circumstance that someone is unable to complete his side of the deal within the terms of the agreement he would be expected to make good on the agreement by completing his requirements as soon as possible and then properly compensating the other for any inconvenience the delay has caused.

By sticking to their word, being respectful and working hard, each citizen exemplifies what it means to be an American.

Recreation

Picnics and Jamborees

Being a very passionate people, Americans take every opportunity they are given to celebrate their appreciation for all they have in their lives, their family, their city and their nation. Now with a forty-hour work week, workers can get much needed rest and relaxation on weekends and evenings. It is with this new-found free time that citizens focus their lives on their families. On Saturday and Sunday afternoons it is not uncommon to see friends and families enjoying the peaceful outdoors of local parks in the cities, or the rolling fields that surround more rural towns. On these days meals are shared and stories are told, while adults showcase their hobbies and skills and children run and play. These picnics serve many purposes to the American people, but first and foremost they strengthen the family and give hardworking citizens a means to disconnect from the fast-paced work schedule and enjoy the finer points of life.

Around National or Local Holidays larger towns and cities across the nation host several day long events, called Jamborees, through which citizens from one town can compete in friendly competitions against those of another. Typically starting each day with a parade to the music of the National Anthem, and decorated with red, white and blue these celebrations help foster not only great pride in one's hometown, but also one's nation. Often at Jamborees baseball teams from all around match-up in weekend long tournaments to see which team can bring pride to their hometown by winning it all. Other individual competitions allow people to exhibit their skills and hobbies, cooking, feats of strength, et cetera, again hoping to bring back the First Prize ribbon to their hometown.

The National Pastime - Baseball

As early as the 1830s, children throughout the nation passed their free time playing a game with many names - baseball, barn ball, stick ball. Adopted from a game played by American soldiers at Valley Forge during the American Revolution, baseball quickly became a common pastime for Americans once the Difference Engines were established and running in Boston and Philadelphia. Due to the efficiency by which the Engines allowed projects to be completed workers found themselves with more free time than ever before. In order to ensure that workers did not stray toward bad habits local manufacturing leaders organized teams and leagues in which workers could compete.

By the end of the decade baseball had become the nation's unofficial pastime, and finally in 1845 with the publication of standardized rules, President Polk officially dubbed baseball as the "Great American Pastime." During an address, he announced the National Tournament which would commence in the fall of 1850 and culminate on July 4th, 1851 in a game played between the top two teams to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the nation's Independence. The men and women on both teams would vie for the right to bring home the President's Trophy and bring great pride to their home city. The National Tournament was such a hit that it was repeated annually and the President's Trophy was passed from city to city.

After the Rending, the National Tournament was temporarily put on hold as the top two cities were lost in the event. However, once the nation was back on its feet, the Tournament continued as it was tremendous means to build community and national pride.

National Holidays

Inauguration Day - March 4th

Honoring the political process of Liberty's democracy.

Independence Day - July 4th

Triumphing the nation's Independence from the tyrant across the seas.

Federation Day - May 12th

Memorializing the swift victory of the North over the South. A day that is celebrated triumphantly by the North and fumed over fitfully by the South.

Loyalty Day - September 1st

Reaffirming loyalty to the United States of America, and the heritage of Freedom in America.

Pioneer Day - October 15th

Celebrating the American spirit of eminent domain and western expansion.

Religion

America has no official state religion to speak of. Some Quaker settlements survive on the outskirts of Pennsylvania, likely preserved by the minimal destruction that occurred near the nation's capital. Unique amongst the American population, the Quakers have rejected the miracles of modern technology afforded by the Engines. They remain one of the only steadfastly religious societies in America, and their insistence on faith before patriotism has caused more than a few conflicts with nearby communities over the years.

While many Americans may keep their own faiths at churches or other houses of worship, the real religion in America is the "civil religion." While most Americans might not be entirely conscious of it, a fiercely patriotic pride inhabits all their rituals and habits. From parades filled with the pomp of John Philip Sousa's latest compositions, to the singing of the national anthem, "My Country 'Tis of Thee," to picnics of apple pie eaten under bunting of red, white, and blue; most celebrations in America always seem to celebrate America itself as much as the actual event folks are gathered to commemorate.

If civil religion is the God of America, there are notable men and women who might almost be called the saints of it. Though some are long dead, their names are said with reverence and pride, true examples of American exceptionalism. Fine patriots, like Samuel Adams, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Deborah Sampson, Patrick Henry, and Mercy Otis Warren have their names and quotes intoned at many an important gathering.

Factions

United States Government -

The United States Government comprised of the Senate, the House of Representatives and the President, is responsible for the handling of internal and international policy. Since the Rending and the fact that only 12 states remain these political bodies are very powerful. Using insights granted to them from the calculations of the Byron Engines members of the Senate, House, as well as the President, are highly influential in guiding or shaping the direction of the country.

The United States Navy

In the past, the role of the United States Navy was to protect American interests and to patrol its ocean borders. However, after the Rending, addition roles became just as vital such as protecting trade routes and exploring the Gulf of Americas and the Broken Atlantic. After the signing of the Treaty of Cardiff, many member of the United States Navy volunteered to serve in the Cardiff Forces as well as train those that did. These brave soldiers are expected to serve their country and sail off into the uncharted waters of the Gulf of the Americas. This is less a soldiers life and more the life of an explore, but regardless it is not one for the faint of heart.

The United States Army

Much like the United States Navy, the United States Army's main role was to protect American interests on the ground whether they be domestically or internationally. After the Rending many soldiers joined forces with the Cardiff Forces and set out explore the American north-west. Whether they are looking a chance to find the answers to what happened to their nation or just looking for a new start, men and women alike are signing up to be part of the next Cardiff Expedition.

Pinkerton National Detective Agency

Agents of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, or Pinkertons as they are commonly referred as are private detectives who often work at the request of the United States Government. In the 1850's it wasn't a secret that most of the Agency was on the government payroll as they actively hunted down international spies on American soil. There is no official record of the agency being called in to work internationally, but it wouldn't be a stretch to think that agents could have been sent anywhere to keep watchful eyes on American interests.

Students of the Machine

Rumors claim that members of this organization have been somehow enlightened by the Machine and as such can understand its whispers. Other rumors claim that the technological boom that took place in the United States was in part due to the efforts of influential members of this organization. Nothing more than rumors are accredited to this group, and even its existence has never been proven.

The Explorer's Club

Founded in 1844 by John C. Fremont, the Explorer's Club started as a public organization that stressed the importance of getting out and enjoying the great outdoors. Local chapters of the Explorer's Club scheduled monthly 'expeditions' allowing like-minded people to enjoy the outdoors together. It was not at all unexpected that the United States Government might fund an expedition, and it was in fact a government funded expedition that identified the location upon which Fortress Laramie would be built. Recently, the Explorer's Club has been called upon to travel with the Cardiff Forces upon the expedition to ensure that all exploration efforts and findings are properly documented and reported back to the United States Government.

The Saboteurs

Regardless of the glory and strength that the trio of Engines brought to the United States, not all regarded this as a gift. Often citing questions and concerns about who is truly in control of the Engines- and wondering what the cost is for the truths they spew- came the Saboteurs, as they are known in the United States and Britain. The group has actively lobbied Congress to unplug the nation from the Great Machines. In the US this group holds firmly to the belief that the Engines are eating away at the very soul of the country, the core of the American Dream. The Saboteurs say that the Engines are removing the American people as the source of Innovation; leaving them to simple work as pawns or slaves to the ideals and concepts formulated by the Engines and their unknown masters.

Despite being known as a political group, many unsolved attacks on the systems, that interconnect the Engines and serve as means for rapid message delivery, are rumored to be the work of the more fanatical members. It is for this reason the group carries the name it has.

Temperance Society

Headed by Susan B. Anthony & Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the National Temperance Society originally pushed for social reforms such as prohibition, abolition of slavery and suffrage for women. Thanks to the Legislation Wars, most of their efforts have come to fruition on such topics- of course, with the exception of Prohibition. Rather than rest their energies, however, they have turned their attentions towards the similar re-education of the more "savage" or "old-fashioned" cultures that America has been brought back into contact with. Some of its more militant members have been known to follow in the steps of Carrie Nation, launching all out attacks on those who do not conform to the wishes of the Society.

Crime and Punishment

Horse Thieving: To steal a horse or a herd from its rightful owner. (Hanging)

Rustling: To steal a herd of cattle from its rightful owner. (Hanging)

Buffalo Hunting: To hunt wild buffalo without owner. (Not a crime)

Murder: To end the life of another person, regardless of circumstance (Hanging)

Attempted Murder: Like Murder, but without success. (20 years in prison)

Bank Robbery: To rob resources or funds from an established bank. (20 years in prison)

Train Robbery: To rob resources or funds from an active train. (20 years in prison)

Theft of an Official: To rob resources or funds from someone who holds an official position of office, such as a sheriff, marshal or mayor. (5 years in prison)

Grand Larceny: The theft of resources or funds in excess of \$100.00, not counting horses or cattle. (5 years in prison)

Theft: The theft of resources or funds under \$100.00, not counting horses or cattle. (1 week to 1 year in prison)

Drunk in Public: Displays of egregious behavior while drunk. (Night in jail, plus \$10.00 fine)

Public Lewdness: Appearance that promotes lewd behavior or otherwise considered indecent (Night in jail, plus \$10.00 fine)

Disorderly Conduct: Behavior that causes a ruckus, such as rough-housing, bar fights and the like. (\$10.00 fine)

Carrying a Weapon in a No-Weapon Zone: Being armed in an area marked as a "No-Weapon Zone" by the authorities. (Confiscation, plus \$10.00 fine)

Views on Other Nations

The United Kingdom - "My grandfather, John, threw the tea in Boston Harbor, and he and my own father Edmund fought in the American Independency, right on Bunker Hill. They bore the scars of that battle their whole lives. And right down the line, it's been those damned Brits trying to still exact revenge at every turn- can't bear to have been whooped so thoroughly, humiliated on the global scale like that. I dare them to come back. We'll show them that we haven't forgotten, either..." - David Sawtelle, a tavernkeep from Groton, Massachusetts

People of the Land - "You get good apples and bad apples, sometimes on the same tree, if you know what I mean. One minute, a tribe is fighting on your side during the Revolution, next thing you know you're looking at them with the barrel of a British-made gun facing you. We're bringing culture and civilization to the backwards people of this great country, and I know it's bound to be rocky going, but you'd expect a little gratitude, wouldn't you?" - Josiah Smith, a cooper from Richmond, Virginia

New Lhasa - "The difficulty with China is that the British got there first, for all the good it did them. We bandied about trying to court Imperial favor, but really in the end, it just wasn't what America needed most- to say nothing of the cost. And just look what happened to poor Napier. I don't normally take the time to mourn a dead Brit, but that was just uncivilized. No, I say it is time to focus our energies and attention on our own frontier, wouldn't you agree, good people?" - William Healy Dall, a naturalist in Port Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Roman Ascendancy - "Angels, they tell me, descended down from on high and came to talk to just the Catholics gathered there in St. Peter's Square. But we got Catholics here in the good ol' USofA- so why didn't those flying visitors take the time to land here, if they really dropped in for a chat? If'n you ask me, something got into the water there. That's what happens when people put faith before country- they get all addlepatated in the head." - Margaret O'Leary, a washerwoman from Providence, Rhode Island

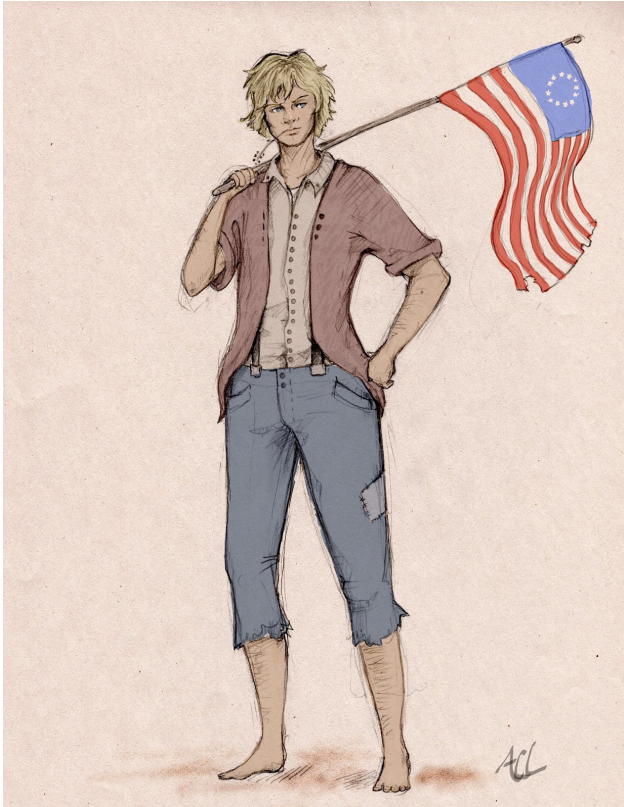
Fortress Laramie - "Glorious was the recent day when we discovered that our long-lost child, Fortress Laramie, was still surviving. The chances of that, with her being out there alone on that distant frontier, were so staggeringly small that I fear even the Engines had reported it as being hopeless. Still, her people are our people, and that made them strong. As a nation, we heartily look forward to reestablishing contact with our western vanguard, and we pledge whatever aid she may require to rebuild! God bless America!" - President Douglass

Clothing

Americans are known for their thrift and common sense, and this is typically evident in their clothing choices. With some notable exceptions, they largely eschew the extravagances of silks and satins, as it is seen as flaunting one's wealth or success. Durable canvas, American-made linens & printed cottons, and other such serviceable cloths are customary in most places, especially in rural areas. Americans tend to be a hard-working people, willing and almost eager to get their hands dirty and be ready for anything. This is sometimes seen in their tendency to carry many items on their person. Whatever tools they need on a daily basis are always close at hand. From the parent who keeps their sewing kit and kerchiefs tied to their apron strings, to the smith with their knapsack of tools tied to their back, Americans are an ever-ready people.

Owing to the Legislation Wars, social norms relating to gender and dress have become significantly blurred. While there are still some, either older in years or just in tastes, who eschew the modern standards, it is now entirely common to see women





wearing not simply divided skirts, but even trousers. Men and women serving in the military wear the same uniforms, for example, without turning a single head in the process.

Personal style and necessities of life, and not cultural mores, have increasingly become the hallmark of modern American women's clothing choices. While some women choose trousers, others have embraced the structured silhouette obtained through corsetry and bustling, while still others find they are happiest in the frothy tea gowns of the aesthetic fashion movement. It is worth mentioning that occasionally, those who embrace such frivolous and expensive attires may find themselves considered "too British", with consequences ranging from social snubbing to a good drubbing, circumstances depending.