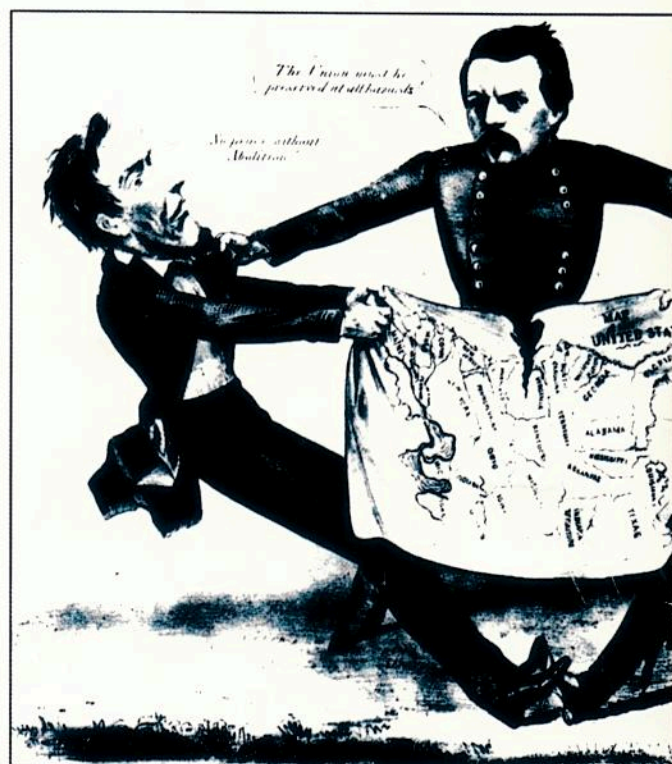
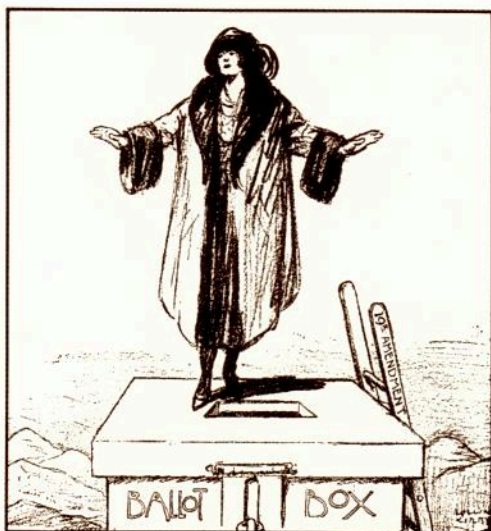
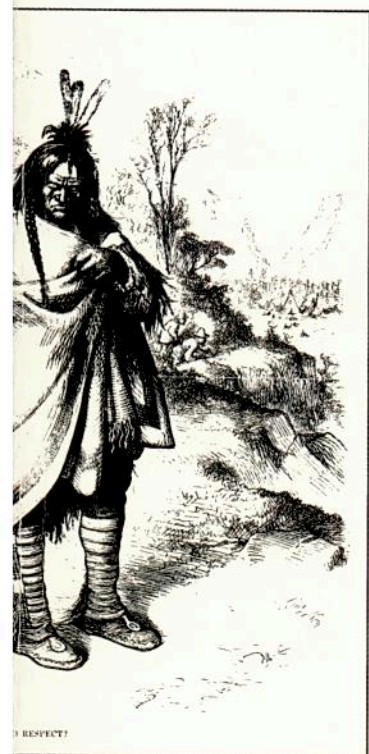


# AMERICAN ADVENTURES

PEOPLE MAKING HISTORY

## HISTORICAL CARTOONS



PRINT MASTERS

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# To the Teacher

Political cartoons translate complex events into quick, biting, and funny commentary. In a single glance, they can sum up an era—or an opinion—and deliver their message with a savage blow.

Because cartoons are so accessible—and so powerful—they make ideal tools for teaching American history. A single cartoon, sketched in the past and studied in the present, can bring history to life before your class. Working their way from 18th century woodcuts to today's syndicated cartoons, students can trace not only the history of our nation but also a progression of changing technology. This book is designed to help you and your students enjoy that journey.

## About the Book

In struggling to grasp the meaning of any historical cartoon, students are confronted with the complexities of symbolism, irony, satire, caricature, and editorial perspective. Included in this book of *American Adventures HISTORICAL CARTOONS* are 52 reproducible pages, or print masters, with 26 political cartoons. Each cartoon has been selected for study with a major topic in U.S. history. From the worksheet accompanying each cartoon, students will get an overview of the historical period and will also learn new concepts and answer questions for understanding and interpreting the cartoon. Four activities will challenge students to create their own cartoons on topics of American history.

As they work through lessons from this book, students will learn to identify such common symbols as Uncle Sam, donkey and elephant, bull and bear. They will also practice such skills as interpreting caricature, satire, and irony; and they will encounter the work of such famous cartoonists as Thomas Nast, Rollin Kirby, and Herblock. The lessons move chronologically through American history, and later lessons build on skills developed in the earlier ones. However, you can teach any lesson independently.

## Teaching the Lessons

Each lesson in this volume can be used to complement a related unit and chapter in *American Adventures* or in any other U.S. history textbook. For your convenience, the chart on pages 5 and 6 correlates all 28 cartoon lessons with related topics in U.S. history.

To use a lesson of *HISTORICAL CARTOONS* with your class, simply photocopy the print master pages of the cartoon and its accompanying worksheet, and distribute copies to your students. The students can work on the lessons together as a class or in small groups, or for individual homework assignments. You will find a "Teachers Copy With Answers" on the reverse side of each worksheet print master. To help you further supplement these lessons with background information, a brief summary follows of the history of political cartoons in America.

## American Political Cartoons

Political cartoons evolved out of the work of 18th century social critics. English painters, such as William Hogarth (1697-1764), turned their brushes on the hypocrisy of the day, inaugurating a tradition of satirical art. In 1754, the tradition crossed the ocean. That year Ben Franklin carved a woodblock of a snake cut into pieces, each segment representing a colony. He captioned his work, "Join, or Die" and printed it in his newspaper, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*.

The crude printing techniques of the time, however, prevented political cartoons from gaining widespread popularity. Most early American cartoonists produced their work as flyers, or penny-sheets, sold individually through print dealers and bookshops.

Then, during the mid-1800s, two events propelled editorial cartoons into the national spotlight. One was the invention of commercial lithography, which made reproducing art faster and easier. The other was the advent of weekly magazines. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Vanity Fair*, and later, *Puck* and *Judge* ushered in the golden era of political cartoons. Presiding over the period was Thomas Nast, whose powerful commentary captivated readers—and felled crooked politicians—from about 1862 to 1886.

Because these magazines were printed on smooth paper and usually came out just once a week, the cartoons of the period share a delicacy and attention to detail unknown today.

The word “cartoon” took on its modern meaning during this time. In 1843, an exhibit of “cartoons,” or rough sketches, went on display in London. The sketches suggested designs for the walls of the Houses of Parliament. *Punch*, the first regular illustrated comic weekly—first published in England in 1841—came up with its own set of “cartoons,” making fun of the designs. From that point on, “cartoon” took on its present meaning.

By the end of the 19th century, American political cartoons had moved onto the pages of newspapers, largely as a result of the circulation war between the *New York World* and the *New York Journal*. The swift pace of daily journalism and the rough finish of newsprint transformed cartoons into the bolder, smaller, highly symbolic works with which we are familiar today. In modern times, syndication has spread cartoons to nearly every newspaper; and prestigious awards, such as the Pulitzer Prize, have recognized the power and importance of cartooning. Your students can observe these transformations, themselves, as they work their way through the lessons of this book.

### **Additional Reading**

If you'd like to devise your own lessons on political cartoons, or find out more about the artists behind these works, the following titles will be particularly helpful. You may also want to check issues of *Junior Scholastic* and *Scholastic Update* magazines, which regularly feature lessons on current political cartoons.

Block, Herbert. *Herblock at Large*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1987. Herblock's best work from 1985 to 1987.

Foreign Policy Association, ed. *A Cartoon History of the United States Foreign Policy, 1776-1976*. New York: William Morrow, 1975. Includes dozens of excellent cartoons, along with historical background.

*The Gang of Eight*. Boston: Faber and Faber, 1985. Work by Tony Auth, Paul Conrad, Jules Feiffer, Jeff MacNelly, Doug Marlette, Mike Peters, Paul Szep and Don Wright, with an introduction by Tom Brokaw.

Johnson, Gerald W. *The Lines Are Drawn*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1958. Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoons from 1922 to 1958.

Ketchum, Alton. *Uncle Sam: The Man and the Legend*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1959. A delightful history of American symbols, from Pocahontas to Uncle Sam, including biographical information about the real Uncle Sam.

Nevins, Allan and Frank Weitenkampf. *A Century of Political Cartoons: Caricature in the United States from 1800 to 1900*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944. A century of cartoons and commentary.

Robinson, Jerry, ed. *The 1970s: Best Political Cartoons of the Decade*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981. Work by the best cartoonists of the decade.

St. Hill, Thomas Nast. *Thomas Nast: Cartoons and Illustrations*. New York: Dover Publications, 1974. A large-format book including some of Nast's most famous work, along with commentary by the artist's grandson.