Chapter 29
Shaken to the Roots, 1965—1980

Chapter Summary

Chapter 29 addresses America’s entry into the turbulent decade of the 1960s. Topics focused on include the continuation of the American involvement in Vietnam, the emergence of the counterculture, and urban and suburban growth. This chapter then proceeds to explore the Nixon presidency with an emphasis on foreign policy and the Watergate scandal, and it concludes with an examination of the Jimmy Carter presidency.

I. The End of Consensus
   A. Deeper into Vietnam
   B. Voices of Dissent
      1. From protest to confrontation
   C. New Left and Community Activism
   D. The Feminist Critique
   E. Youth Culture and Counterculture
   F. Sounds of Change
   G. Communes and Cults

II. Cities Under Stress
   A. Diagnosing an Urban Crisis
   B. Racial Rioting
   C. Minority Separatism
      1. Hispanic activism in the Southwest
      2. Native Americans assert their identity
   D. Suburban Independence: The Outer City
      1. Suburban economic growth and political influence
      2. School busing controversies

III. The Year of the Gun, 1968
   A. The Tet Offensive
   B. LBJ’s Exit
   C. Red Spring
   D. Violence and Politics: Kennedy, King, and Chicago

IV. Nixon and Watergate
      1. “Vietnamization” and the secret war against Cambodia
      2. Stalemate and cease-fire
   B. Nixon and the Wider World
   C. Courting Middle America
   D. Oil, OPEC, and Stagflation
   E. Americans as Environmentalists
   F. From Dirty Tricks to Watergate
   G. The Ford Footnote
V. Jimmy Carter: Idealism and Frustration in the White House
   A. Carter, Energy, and the Economy
   B. Closed Factories and Failed Farms
   C. Building a Cooperative World
   D. New Crises Abroad
      1. The failure of Salt II
      2. The Iranian hostage crisis

VI. Conclusion

Learning Objectives

After a careful examination of Chapter 29, students should be able to do the following:

1. Identify and explain the historical significance of the term *Rolling Thunder*.

2. Define the term *search and destroy* and explain its significance to American military strategy during the Vietnam War.

3. Explain the realist position regarding the American role in Vietnam.

4. Identify and explain the historical significance of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and explain the political philosophy and approach presented by the SDS in the Port Huron Statement.

5. Explain the terms *feminist mystique* and explain the roots of the modern women’s rights movement.

6. Distinguish between the terms *youth culture* and *counterculture* as they applied to 1960s American society.

7. Distinguish between communes and cults and discuss the impact of each on modern American society.

8. Describe the changing image of urban centers between the 1950s and the 1970s. Identify the factors that contributed to this change in the American perception of urban centers.

9. Distinguish the northern, urban civil rights movement of the 1960s from the earlier southern, rural movement.


11. Explain suburban problems with school desegregation and zoning during the last 30 years.

12. Identify and explain the impact of the Tet Offensive.

13. Explain the impact of television on the American perception and understanding of the Vietnam War.
14. Identify the factors that led to Lyndon Johnson's withdrawal from the 1968 presidential election.

15. Explain the meaning of the terms *Prague Spring*, *Red Spring*, and *The Battle of Morningside Heights*.

16. Identify the significance of *Vietnamization* and *the Nixon Doctrine* as the cornerstones of the Nixon policy in Vietnam.

17. Describe the impact of the secret war in Cambodia on domestic protest against the Vietnam War.

18. List the major accomplishments of the Nixon administration in foreign affairs outside the realm of the Vietnam War.

19. Identify and explain the significance of the term *New Federalism*.

20. List the factors that contributed to the economic inflation and stagflation of the 1970s.

21. List the major initiatives of the Nixon administration's environmental program.

22. Briefly outline the events that culminated in the Watergate scandal. Explain the ways in which the Watergate scandal gave Americans lessons in the workings of the Constitution and the value of a political system that provides for separation of powers.

23. Discuss the ways in which Carter attempted to handle the nation's economic crisis and energy shortage.

24. Explain the significance of the Camp David Agreement.

**Topics for Classroom Lecture**

1. Discuss the issue of women involved with the New Left movement during the 1960s. Many students assume that because the New Left was a liberal political movement, gender equity was part of its agenda. Discuss with students how women were treated within the counterculture, the New Left, and the civil rights movement. How did men involved with these movements feel about the status of women? How did women’s experiences in these leftist movements pave the way for the women’s liberation movement of the 1970s?

2. Discuss the role of Henry Kissinger in the foreign affairs of the Nixon administration. How did his European background define his approach to diplomacy? How did he respond to the American tradition of moral diplomacy? How significant was Kissinger’s role in defining American foreign policy during the 1970s?

3. Present a lecture on Jimmy Carter as a southern president. How did his character, political style, and political agenda reflect his southern background? One historian has characterized Carter as the Yankee from Georgia. Why? How do Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter compare as southern presidents? How do they differ?
Topics for Class Discussion and Essays

1. Finalize the course’s ongoing debate regarding American dissent against war. Have students compare and contrast the ways in which the federal government addressed issues of dissent during World War I and the Vietnam War. Invite students to respond to some of the following:
   a. Assess the public’s response to the American involvement in Vietnam. Which Americans were most active in their protests? What specific issues associated with the war were the targets of protests? Did these issues change over time? Demonstrate how domestic protest escalated with the escalation of the war.
   b. Assess the factors that resulted in American involvement in these two wars. How were these factors similar? How were they different? Does the fact that the Vietnam conflict was never a declared war impact the propriety or impropriety of dissent against the war?
   c. Assess the extent to which there was, during both these wars, a gap between the government and the American people regarding support for the wars from the very beginning. To what extent was the government effective in closing this gap during World War I? During the Vietnam War?
   d. Finally, address the issue of the propriety or impropriety of dissent against war. Was the government right to suppress dissent during World War I? Was it wrong? Was the public right to openly protest the Vietnam War? Was it wrong? Connect these debates to loyalty and dissent during the 2003 war in Iraq.

2. Have students compare and contrast the three major leftist movements of the twentieth century: the Lyrical Left, the Old Left, and the New Left. Consider the following:
   a. Place each movement in its historical context. During which general period of American history did each movement emerge?
   b. Who was involved in each movement? Which sector of society was moved and inspired by the message of each movement? Why?
   c. What was each movement’s agenda? Does it borrow anything in terms of issues or political style from the movements that preceded it?
   d. How effective was each movement? Did it have a lasting impact on American politics and/or society?

3. Compare and contrast the southern and northern civil rights movements. Who led the movements? How were these leaders similar? How were they different? What was the style and agenda of the movements? How were they similar? How were they different? How effective were the two movements? To what extent did they define American race relations for the future?

Topics for Class Projects and Term Papers

1. Have students address the issue of Hollywood and the Vietnam War. Allow students to choose one film from the last 25 years that addresses the American involvement in Vietnam, and then discuss the following:
   a. How accurately does the film portray the American role in Vietnam? Is it historically accurate?
   b. How does the film reflect the American struggle with the war not only the struggle with protest during the war, but also the lingering conflicts after the war ended?
   c. When was the film produced? Are there differences between films produced immediately after the war and those produced decades later?
   d. What is the background of the producer and/or director of the film? Does he or she have a clear political agenda? Was he or she actually involved in the war?
This assignment would work well for a group project.

2. Have students prepare an oral history project based on interviews with individuals who lived during the 1960s and 1970s. They can talk to individuals who participated in or were exposed to the counterculture, the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and the Vietnam War. Emphasize to students that the subject of an oral history does not have to be a renowned person. Anyone who lived through these years, either as an active participant or as a passive observer, offers a perspective from which historians can learn. This can be an exciting way to expose students to the fact that history is living and happening around them. It also often proves to be a personally rewarding experience for the students as well as the subjects.

Resources for Lectures and Research Projects


Audio-Visual Resources

This video examines events surrounding the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago.

*Citizen Carter*, The Discovery Channel, 60 minutes.
This video presents a look at Jimmy Carter's life after the presidency.

This PBS video examines Nixon's policy on China.

*The Twentieth Century with Mike Wallace: Vietnam: How We Went to War*, The History Channel, 50 minutes.
Mike Wallace takes a look at the policies and events that carried America to Vietnam.

*The Twentieth Century with Mike Wallace: Pioneers in Space*, The History Channel, 50 minutes.
Mike Wallace examines the early years of the NASA space program.