the "personals" sections of magazines and newspapers, and Internet sites. Couples conducted courting on their own terms, as both men and women assumed more individual responsibility and initiative in finding a mate than at any previous time, while also exercising greater freedom in the process.

[*See also* **Adolescence; Amusement Parks and Theme Parks; Dance Halls; Family; Life Stages; Marriage and Divorce; Separate Spheres Ideology;** ***and*** **Sexual Reform and Morality.**]

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COWBOYS

The American cowboy descended from the Spanish and Mexican vaquero, who evolved in New Spain after the arrival of cattle in the Western Hemisphere. As cattle ranching spread northward into California and Texas, Americans adopted the tools and techniques of the vaquero. Texas cowboys watched over cattle, branded them, and rounded them up before herding them to markets first in New Orleans and by the 1850s northward to Missouri and beyond. As railroads pushed westward following the Civil War and the demand for beef increased in the East, Texas cowboys began to drive cattle herds north to railheads in Kansas and later Nebraska. By the late 1870s, cowboys, including many of African American and Hispanic descent, were found in cattle-raising regions throughout the West. After the invention of barbed wire and the fencing of ranches, the cowboy became a hired man on horseback, repairing fences, doctoring cattle, and participating in cattle-branding roundups. By 1900 the golden age of the American cowboy was over.

Compared to his counterpart south of the Rio Grande, the American cowboy played a regional and relatively short-lived role. Yet he found his place in the history and mythology of the West, celebrated for fairness, justice, and courage, as exemplified by the hero of Owen Wister's enduring novel *The Virginian* (1902). Dime novels, folk songs, motion pictures, television series, and the fashion and advertising industries all helped to create the mythic version of the American cowboy that survives today.

[*See also* **Southwest, The,** ***and*** **West, The.**]

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CRACK COCAINE

Crack is a smokable form of cocaine that first appeared in 1984 in impoverished neighborhoods in New York City, Los Angeles,

and Miami. Produced by cooking a mixture of powder cocaine (cocaine hydrochloride), water, and baking soda in a microwave, crack was typically sold in tiny vials costing $5 to $20. Crack was not a new drug: its active ingredient is entirely cocaine. Nor was it a new way of using cocaine: freebase cocaine had been smoked since the 1970s. Rather, it was a marketing innovation. It repackaged an expensive, upscale commodity (powder cocaine) into small, inexpensive units (crack) that were sold by and to mainly working-class individuals.

The marketing innovation succeeded for several reasons. First, a workforce of unemployed young people was available to take jobs in the new inner-city business of crack preparation and sales. Second, from 1986 to 1992 a frenzy of media stories about the risks of crack use effectively advertised the drug by describing an intense high and reporting incorrectly that crack's use was spreading rapidly from cities to suburbs. Third, crack offered an extremely intense but very brief intoxication. Smoking crack is a strong, even harsh, way to use cocaine, but some people, especially those who could afford little else, were willing to try it.

Contrary to widespread claims of media, politicians, and law enforcement, most people who tried crack did *not* find it appealing and have *not* continued using it. Daily or routine crack use takes a severe toll on users' bodies and disrupts their social functioning. The drug has been used heavily mainly by the poorest, most marginalized people in American society—and only by a small minority of even this population, chiefly the same population that has used heroin regularly. Because crack's heavy use is so disruptive and unsatisfying, crack never became a popular or widely used drug in either the United States or anywhere else in the world.

Crack's most harmful and lasting effects have been legal, economic, and social. U.S. government health surveys have consistently found that whites use powder and crack cocaine at the same rates as or at higher rates than blacks do, and that drug use is found in all American communities. But drug policing is concentrated in low-income urban neighborhoods, and African Americans have been arrested and imprisoned for all drug offenses at much higher rates than whites have.

Beginning in 1986 the United States enacted and strongly enforced laws against crack that were the most punitive that it ever adopted for low-level drug offenses. But the intense policing, many arrests, and long sentences did not significantly reduce crack's availability or use. Instead they created more job openings in the crack business, which drew in yet more impoverished young people, many of whom also eventually received long prison sentences for crack possession. This legal, judicial, and law-enforcement war on crack was a major cause of the largest imprisonment wave in American history, with the prison population nearly tripling from 1986 to 2006.

For many years, prominent reform and philanthropic organizations sought to reform crack law and enforcement policies, pointing out their racial bias and harmful effects and calling attention to reputable medical and scientific findings that crack is no more addictive than powder cocaine. In 2010, Congress passed the Fair Sentencing Act, which reduced the sentencing disparity of crack to powder cocaine from 100 to 1 down to 18 to 1. This reduced but by no means eliminated the racial disparities and harmful social consequences of the still well-funded war on crack.

[***See also*** **Drugs, Illicit; Law and Society; Slums; *and* War on Drugs.**]

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CUBAN AMERICANS

Politically, economically, and culturally, Cuban Americans occupy a unique place in American society. Compared to the overall Latino population in the United States, Cuban Americans are more likely to have college or graduate degrees. Their median household income is higher, and they are more likely to own their own homes. Statistically, Cuban Americans are also older than members of other Latino groups. All these features are tied to the processes that have shaped Cuban migration since the early twentieth century.

Located just ninety-eight miles from the coast of Florida, the island of Cuba is one of the United States' closest neighbors. Throughout the period of Spanish colonial rule, Cuban dissidents like José Martí (1853–1895) found shelter in the United States and used their temporary home as a launchpad for revolution. During the Ten Years' War (1868–1878) between Cuban nationals and the Spanish military, scores of Cuban cigar manufacturers also fled the island, reestablishing their businesses on the U.S. mainland and recruiting many workers to follow. Together these migrants helped to create thriving, transnational communities in Florida, New York, and New Jersey.

Cold War Migrations. The largest numbers of Cuban migrants, however, have come to the United States since the early 1960s. In the immediate years following Fidel Castro's socialist revolution in 1959, an estimated quarter of a million Cubans fled Cuba for the United States. The first to leave were primarily members of the former government and its close supporters. But as the new government moved farther left, confiscating private property, closing Catholic schools and churches, and working to build national economic and political independence from U.S. interests, more Cubans began to leave the island. Executives from American multinational corporations and many well-established professionals also left Cuba for the United States during this period. Another more than fourteen thousand were children, sent out of Cuba by their parents, who feared for their future and were aided by the Catholic Church and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency through a program called Operation Pedro Pan. This first major wave of Cuban out-migration continued until 1962 when the United States imposed a blockade on the island after U.S. spy planes found Soviet missile sites there.

Coming at the height of the Cold War, a time when U.S. foreign policy was sharply binary and fervently anti-Communist, Cuban immigrants were afforded special immigration status as political refugees and also became a critical force within American agencies related to national security and foreign policy. Worried that Cuba's socialist transformation would set off a domino effect within the Western Hemisphere, threatening