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INTRODUCTION

Working Americans 1880-2016 Volume VII: Social Movements, is the seventh volume in a 14-volume series that profiles the lives of Americans—how they lived, how they worked, how they thought—decade by decade. Previous volumes focused primarily on economic status. This volume focuses on Americans, from all walks of life, who were social advocates for something they believed in—for themselves, their family, the human race.

Since the first edition in 2010, several additional significant social issues have captured the attention of many Americans, most notably the incidents that catapulted the Black Lives Matter movement, and the rights of the LGBTQ community.

In addition to the courageous Americans featured in the first edition, including a physician in 1921 who risked public scorn by promoting birth control, a high school student in 1966 who led a Ban the Beatles campaign after John Lennon compared the Beatles to God; and a mother who led the fight in 2000 for the right to pray in public schools, this second edition features the individuals behind the Black Lives Matter movement in 2014, the process faced by a same-sex couple who exercised their legal right to marry in 2015, and a single mother in 2016 who used her battle with drug addiction and homelessness to help others climb back into society.

This second edition of *Working Americans: Social Movements* includes 12 chapters, most of them comprising one decade. Chapters present individual **Profiles** that highlight the subject's work, home and community, followed by historical and economic information of the time. **Historical Snapshots** chronicle major milestones; **Timelines** pinpoint the progress of the social issue profiled; and a variety of **Primary Documents** put the topic in context. These common elements, as well as specialized data, such as **Selected Prices**, punctuate each chapter and act as statistical comparisons between decades, as well as between Americans of different socioeconomic backgrounds. The 38 men and women profiled in this volume represent a wide range of ages, social backgrounds, ethnicities, and professions.

The social issues in this work are not all social movements in the strictest sense of the words. They are, however, all stories of social improvements caused by those willing to take a stand. From trying to contain the flu epidemic in 1919, to the fight to make America alcohol free in 1937, to the struggle against the conservation of the Spotted White Owl in

1986, this volume covers 38 topics, from Censorship to Religion to Civil Rights, with dozens of variations. The Table of Contents provides a detailed list of topics.

Working Americans 1880-2016 Volume VII: Social Movements is so much more, however, than simply a list of social issues in America. It's a window into how Americans think, act, react and get motivated. Fighting for change is the American way, from immigrants struggling to find work, to same sex couples struggling for the right to marry. The right to protest is one of the distinguishing factors that sets this country apart from many others around the world.

Like the other volumes in this series, *Working Americans 1880-2016 Volume VII: Social Movements* is a compilation of original research—personal diaries, school files, family histories—combined with government statistics, commercial advertisements and news features. The text is presented in bulleted format. There are hundreds of supportive graphics—photographs, advertisements, magazine covers, even campaign buttons.

Like the earlier volumes in this *Working Americans* series, the second edition of *Volume VII* is a “point in time” book, designed to illustrate the reality of that particular time. Some activists were successful and some were not. Many of the fights portrayed in this volume are still being fought. As issues are resolved, there are dozens more waiting for their champion. This is America.

Praise for earlier volumes:

“the volume succeeds at presenting various cultural, regional, economic and age-related points of view . . . [it is] visually appealing [and] certainly a worthwhile purchase . . .”

—Feminist Collections

“. . . easy reading that will help younger students come to an understanding of the lives and situations of American women.”

“The volume ‘promises to enhance our understanding of the growth and development of the working class over more than a century.’ It capably fulfills this promise . . . recommended for all types of libraries.”

—ARBA

“[the author] adds to the genre of social history known as ‘history from the bottom up,’ which examines the lives of ordinary people . . . Recommended for all colleges and university library collections.”

—Choice

“this volume engages and informs, contributing significantly and meaningfully to the historiography of the working class in America . . . a compelling and well-organized contribution for those interested in social history and the complexities of working Americans.”

—Library Journal

“these interesting, unique compilations of economic and social facts, figures, and graphs will support multiple research needs. They will engage and enlighten patrons in high school, public, and academic library collections.”

—Booklist

This is no dull statistical compilation of economic history. It is a very interesting, readable account of life in the United States for the worker or laborer. It would be very useful for undergraduate students researching laborers or working and social conditions.

—Journal of Business &
Finance Librarianship



1894 Profile

Child Welfare: The Orphan Train

Otis Sandusky used his experience as a foundling on an Orphan Train to make the experience smoother and less frightening for other orphans arriving in Dysart, Iowa.

Life at Home

- Otis Sandusky liked to think of himself as a crusader for children, although he would never actually say that out loud.
- However, since he started acting as a part-time agent for the Children's Aid Society, he felt as though he was rescuing children from a life of crime or worse.
- After all, he came out okay after being shipped into the healthy air of the Midwest; why shouldn't more homeless children be saved from urban blight?
- Otis Sandusky was named after his adoptive father when he was three years old after a five-day ride on the Orphan Train; it was his first real name.
- Until he was adopted, he had simply been called "Baby Boy" by the Sisters of Mercy, who operated the Foundling Asylum and coordinated adoptions through the Children's Aid Society.
- The first recorded appearance of Baby Boy Otis was as a day-old baby abandoned in a basket provided by the Foundling Asylum of New York City.
- The note pinned to his shirt and probably written by his mother said simply, "Care for my baby boy. I can't."
- The unnamed child was one of seven children left at the Foundling Asylum that week.
- At three years old, he was placed on an Orphan Train with 39 other two- and three-year-olds for adoption in the West.



Three-year-old Otis Sandusky rode the Orphan Train all the way from New York City to Iowa.



Big Otis Sandusky needed sons to help him on the family farm.

- When the Orphan Train stopped at a depot station in Indiana, Baby Boy Otis and the other children—a wriggling mass of tired, hungry, cold toddlers from the streets of New York—were lined up on the platform.
 - Otis began to cry.
 - The nine families who had gathered to adopt a child all passed him by without a look.
 - Within an hour, 11 children had been picked out by the farm families, loaded into horse-drawn wagons, and taken to their new homes.
 - The children who were not picked were marched back onto the train for inspection at the next designated depot station in Illinois or Iowa or Texas.
 - Baby Boy Otis cried at the next stop, and the next.
 - When the train stopped in Dysart, Iowa, the Orphan Train was down to six children—five girls and Baby Boy Otis, who couldn't stop crying.
 - That's where the Sandusky family found a child and Otis got a name, a home, and a future.
- Baby Boy Otis was named after Otis and Celestine's first child, who had died of cholera.
 - Baby Boy's new father Big Otis was not sure this tiny, red-faced crybaby would be much of a farm hand, but over time he became pleasantly surprised.
 - At the constant urging—nagging, really—of Celestine, the Sanduskys formally adopted Otis on his fifth birthday, the age of the first Otis Sandusky when he died.
 - Over time, the Sanduskys would adopt three more Orphan Train children, two boys and then a girl named Pearl.
 - When Otis turned 17, he began helping out whenever an Orphan Train came near, serving as agent, scout, and recruiter for adoptive families in Iowa.
 - Otis was even made a member of the screening committee that included the town doctor, clergyman, newspaper editor, store owner, and a teacher—all men, of course.
 - The committee helped to select potential parents for the children.
 - He was even talked into telling his personal story in church to encourage other families to adopt, while his little brothers made faces at him from the balcony.
 - His little sister, who was very polite and attentive, simply smiled throughout the talk.
 - Otis's primary job was farm work, especially in the planting and harvesting times, but he cherished his designation as agent, which brought with it extra cash and the chance to see children who had started life just as he had.



Otis and Celestine Sandusky lost their first son to cholera.

Life at Work

- Father Anton Erdman, pastor of the St. Benedict's Catholic Church in Sexton, Iowa, and "Little" Otis Sandusky were both at the depot when the Orphan Train arrived in Dysart on a wintry day in 1894 with a baker's dozen of very young children.
- By long tradition and habit, all the frightened children would have been unceremoniously herded off the train and ushered into the town hall to be adopted by anyone who would have them—if Otis had not spoken up.
- The children who were not selected by a family would be put back on the train to try again in another town along the route: a terrible feeling for scared, homesick little children, Otis knew.
- For decades, this ceremony had been taking place.
- Since 1857, the Children's Aid Society had transferred 26,000 homeless, abused, or unwanted children from the urban squalor of New York City to a healthy environment in the countryside.
- This time, however, within minutes of their arrival, the children were loaded into Father Erdman's surrey for a ride to the rectory of St. Benedict.
- It was there, insisted Otis, that families could meet the frightened orphans and more easily decide to take them home.
- The church felt more like a home than did a train station, and besides, it was warmer out of the blistering winter that chapped the children's faces and elicited runny noses.
- For days the children had been in the care of only the conductor and one agent; most of the children possessed only the clothes they wore.
- Many thought they had been placed on the train to be sent away because they did something wrong.
- Nuns had sewn the names of the children in the dress or shirt they wore, their only identification or connection with their New York City homes.
- Most had no birth certificate or anyone to speak for their past.
- Many had been baptized as Catholics regardless of their birth mother's religion.
- The children were not even aware that they had dirty, coal-streaked faces when they greeted their prospective parents.
- Otis tried to clean up the children; the sickly and those who were crying were picked last in this rough land of hard work and bitter cold.
- But for all his scrubbing and good intentions, Otis only upset the sensitive ones even more.
- Then, in trooped the couples, most of whom had requested a child, often designating gender and eye or hair color.
- The Orphan Train had not stopped in 13 months, and many families were eager for a chance to adopt.
- Several of the women had been at the church service in which Otis spoke about his early life aboard the Orphan Train.
- He hated it when the women would mention the "crybaby" part and vowed not to mention that again.
- Thanks to a country fiddler who was sympathetic to the Orphan Train children, the church felt festive, just as Otis had hoped.
- Slowly, the farmers and their wives walked from child to child, and attempted in an instant to make a lifetime decision.
- Most of the couples already had children, but wanted more.
- Childbirth was a dangerous experience on the prairie, and farmers could always use another hand.

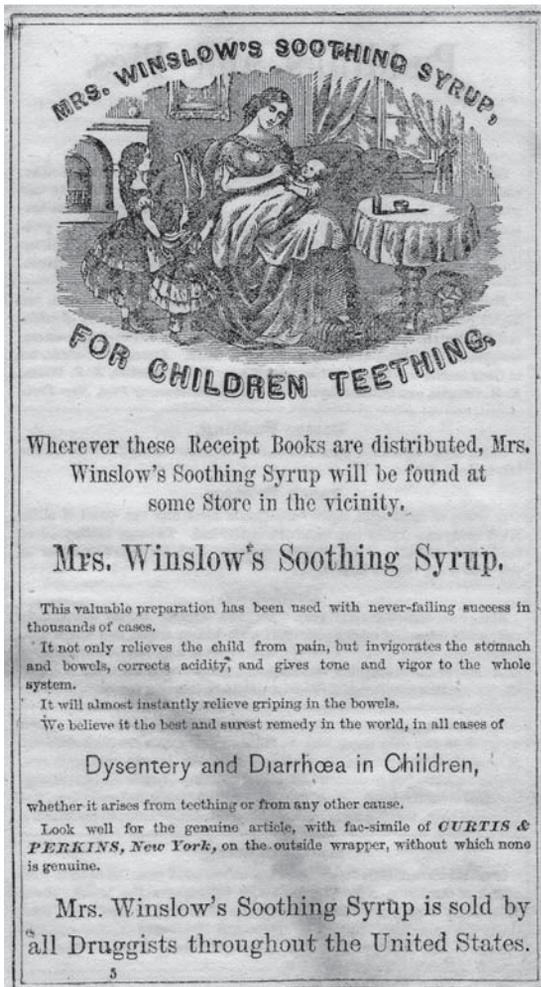


Children on the Orphan Trains often had no birth certificate or anyone to speak for their past.

- One by one, the children were selected and asked to stand beside their new parents.
- But when the church party was over, one little blond boy remained.
- The Merrills had planned to adopt only one of the 13 children, but after Father Schemel talked quietly with Elmer Merrill, they ended up with two children.
- To Otis’s great relief, all of the children had been adopted.

Life in the Community: Dysart, Iowa

- The Children’s Aid of New York and the Foundling Hospital required no legal adoption process, but adopting families had to promise to provide the children with some schooling and report to the institution about the child on a yearly basis.
- Children were taken on trains in groups of 10 to 40, under the supervision of at least one “western” agent, to selected stops along the route.
- Railroads were the least expensive way to move children westward from the poverty of inner city homes, orphanages, poorhouses, and sometimes right from the streets.
- In the open air of the West and Midwest, it was believed, solid, God-fearing homes could be found for the children.



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- The Sisters of Mercy worked tirelessly to save lives and help both the young, unwed mothers and unwanted children, but rarely gathered information on the parents of the child.
- Often, a child was left at the Foundling Hospital with no information given; the baby was simply placed in a basket on a turntable which a sister inside the building would turn to bring the baby in without the adult ever being seen.
- This device encouraged people to save the baby while remaining anonymous.
- As the program developed, the sisters requested that the unwed pregnant women stay at the Foundling Hospital to have their babies and then nurse theirs plus another one for a time.
- At the end of the agreed-upon time, the mothers could leave with no further restrictions placed on them.
- The goal was to bond mother and child so the mothers would seek a way to keep their children.
- While at the Foundling, many women were taught a craft or skill that would help them find work and raise their children, with a little help.
- The women learned safe and sanitary cooking and house-keeping methods.
- As a result of exceptionally high immigration into America’s port cities, the problem of homeless or abused children grew rapidly.
- Children as young as six years old worked to help support the family when food became scarce.
- Because it was not a priority, job safety was unregulated, and many men were killed in accidents at work.
- This left women and children to make their own living as best they could, even though few jobs were open to women with children.
- Infectious diseases from living in unsanitary quarters led to the early deaths of overworked mothers.

- In nearly all the East Coast port cities, orphanages were rapidly built to care for as many children as could possibly be taken.
- To place the children, priests and ministers throughout the Midwest and the West would make an announcement to the congregation, asking for volunteers to take the children.
- Couples signed up for a male or female child, specifying the hair and eye color they preferred.
- The priest would then notify the Children's Aid Society or the Foundling that the community could take a specific number of children with blond hair and blue eyes; brown hair and brown eyes; black hair and blue eyes; or a certain darkness of skin.
- One such request was for a boy with red hair because the farmer had five red-haired daughters and no sons.
- Everyone agreed that if a family got a child who "fit in," the child and the community would be better served.
- Based on the rules, boys over 16 years of age were to be retained as members of the family for one year, after which a mutual arrangement would be made concerning their future.
- Parties taking these boys agreed to write to the Society at least once a year, or to have the boys do so.
- If for any reason the child had to be removed from the household, the Children's Aid Society did it at their own expense.
- Most children began their new lives legally classified as indentured; thus, they were ineligible to inherit unless the family adopted them or a will specified that they were to be given an inheritance.



HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT

1894

- Approximately 12,000 New York City tailors struck to protest the existence of sweatshops
- The first Sunday newspaper color comic section was published in the *New York World*
- Antique-collecting became popular, supported by numerous genealogy-minded societies
- A well-meaning group of Anglophiles called the America Acclimatization Society began importing English birds mentioned in Shakespeare, including nightingales, thrushes and starlings, for release in America
- Overproduction forced farm prices to fall; wheat that sold for \$1.05 a bushel in 1870 now sold for \$0.49 a bushel
- The first Greek newspaper in America was published as the *New York Atlantis*
- New York Governor Roswell P. Flower signed the nation's first dog-licensing law; the license fee was \$2.00
- Hockey's first Stanley Cup championship game was played between the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association and the Ottawa Capitals
- Thomas Edison publicly demonstrated the kinetoscope, a peephole viewer in which developed film moved continuously under a magnifying glass
- Workers at the Pullman Palace Car Company in Illinois went on strike to protest a wage reduction; President Grover Cleveland ordered federal troops onto the trains to insure the delivery of mail
- Labor Day was established as a holiday for federal employees
- Congress established the Bureau of Immigration
- Congress passed a bill imposing a 2 percent tax on incomes over \$4,000, which was ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court
- The United States Government began keeping records on the weather
- Astronomer Percival Lowell built a private observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona, and began his observations of Mars
- The Regents of the University of Michigan declared that "Henceforth in the selection of professors and instructors and other assistants in instruction in the University, no discrimination will be made in selection between men and women"
- French Baron Pierre de Coubertin proposed an international Olympics competition to be held every four years in a different nation to encourage international peace and cooperation
- The *Edison Kinetoscopic Record of a Sneeze* was released in movie theaters

**Announcement,
The Algona Courier
(Iowa), 1894**

Father Schemel Bancroft (Iowa) has of late found good homes for 10 children which were sent him from an orphan asylum in New York which shelters 2,000 waifs. Father Eckert of Wesley has also found good homes for several and we understand that in the vicinity of the Prairie Church fifteen of the homeless children have of late been placed in comfortable homes. One day last week a number of the little waifs from the same place arrived in Algona over the Northwestern Road. All have been placed with good families. . . .

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AND IMPROVES THE
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HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT

2016

- Winter storm Jonas brought record-breaking amounts of snow and wind throughout the northeastern and mid-Atlantic United States in late January
- Scientists discovered that the fault beneath the Himalayas is kinked, making the mountains taller between major earthquakes
- The solar power industry grew 12 times faster than overall U.S. employment
- The federal deficit was at \$486 billion this year—about a third of what it was in 2009
- Films premiering this year included *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, *Risen*, and *The Choice*
- Roger Goodell, the commissioner of the National Football League, announced that at least one woman be interviewed for all executive positions in an effort to diversify leadership
- Bestselling books included *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi, *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates, and *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah
- A fast-loading format developed by Google sped up mobile web pages on smartphones
- South Korea and the People’s Republic of China held talks to develop a joint response to North Korea’s nuclear test
- After diverting Flint’s water source from Lake Huron to the Flint River, Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder faced a class-action lawsuit allowing lead-tainted water into the city’s homes
- The Black Lives Matter movement forced U.S. presidential candidates to deal with the issue of racial inequality
- Hurricane Alex became the first January hurricane to form in the Atlantic Ocean since 1938
- The Zika virus—a flulike illness that normally causes mild symptoms but can be severe—quickly spread throughout Latin America; Brazil estimated close to one million cases by mid-February
- The unemployment rate fell to an eight-year low of 4.9 percent
- Through the Affordable Care Act, 15 million more Americans are covered than in 2014

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