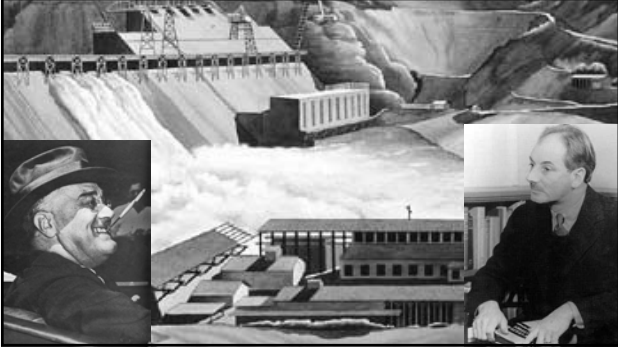


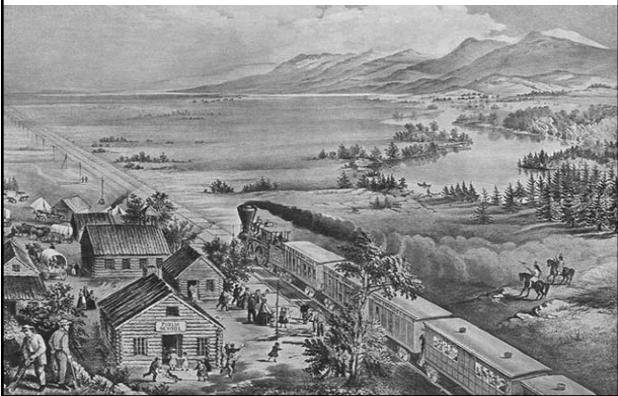
**The New Deal & the American West:
Dams, Hydropower & the Modern
Yeoman Republic**



Oregon Fever: Emanuel Leutze, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1861)



The Lure of Oregon: Currier & Ives, *Across the Continent: Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1868)



"American Progress" by John Gast (1879)

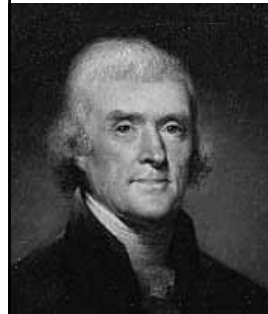
The allegorical woman "Columbia" hold a school book and spool of telegraph wire in her right and unravels the line with her left hand. She illuminates the dark wilderness of the American West with the light of civilization from the East.

The West: The New "Garden of the World"

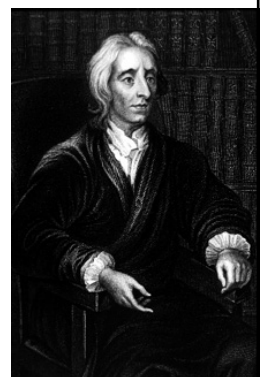


Charles Mead's *Mississippi Scenery* (1819). An allegorical expression of the dream of an agrarian utopia in the American West. Ceres, the goddess of fertility leans upon the sacred plow. In the background a pioneer fells a tree with an axe, while his yeoman companion plows furrows in the newly cleared earth. A primitive steamboat plying the river suggests future progress and commercial development.

¹ Yeoman Republic & Fee Simple Empire



**Jefferson's
Vision of the
West**



John Locke

John Locke's Labor Theory of Property

- "Every man has a property in his own person: this no body has any right to but himself. The labour of his body, and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property. It being by him removed from the common state nature hath placed it in, it hath by this labour something annexed to it, that excludes the common right of other men: for this labour being the unquestionable property of the labourer, no man but he can have a right to what that is once joined to, at least where there is enough, and as good, left in common for others." –*Second Treatise*, Chapter 5 Sec. 27.

Jefferson Freehold Philosophy

- 1) Agriculture is the only source of real wealth.
- 2) Americans enjoy a natural right to own land.
- 3) The labor expended cultivating the land creates a valid legal title or Freehold/ "Fee Simple" ownership.
- 4) Fee Simple ownership instills the yeoman/ agrarian with independence, civic-mindedness and **PERSONAL LIBERTY!**
- 5) This independence empowers the yeoman to protect democracy and republican virtues.

Jefferson's Yeoman: Pillar of Democracy & Republican Virtues

The Idealized American Farmer: The Antithesis of the European Peasant/Serf:

- 1) Independent
- 2) Land-Ownng
- 3) Self-sufficient/Self-reliant
- 4) Civic-Minded
- 5) Ennobled Through Labor and Property Ownership
- 6) Love of Local Autonomy



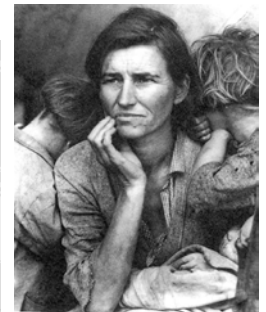
The "Dust Bowl" & The End of the Frontier? The Failure of the Garden?



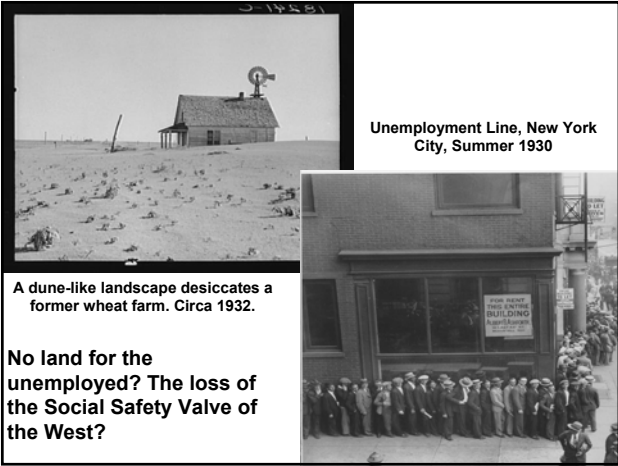
The Dust Bowl



The Yeoman Dispossessed? A Threat to American Democracy?



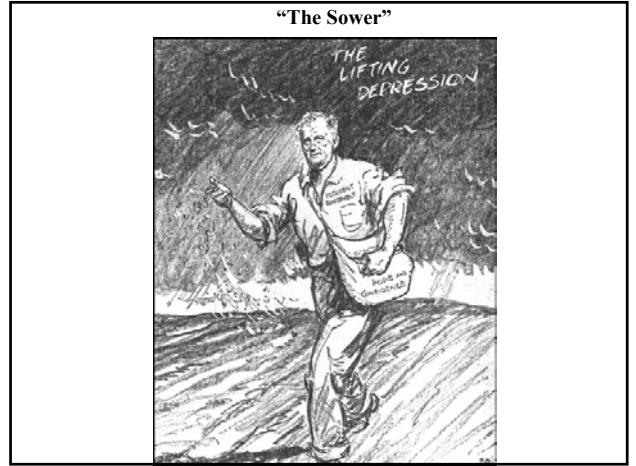
"Migrant Mother" (1936)
Dorothea Lang, WPA



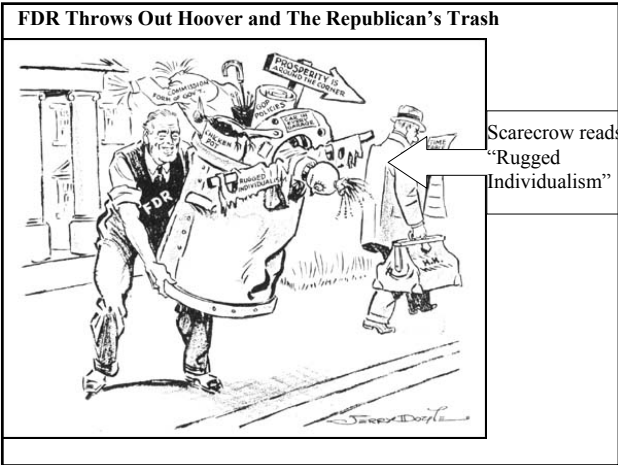
Unemployment Line, New York City, Summer 1930

A dune-like landscape desiccates a former wheat farm. Circa 1932.

No land for the unemployed? The loss of the Social Safety Valve of the West?

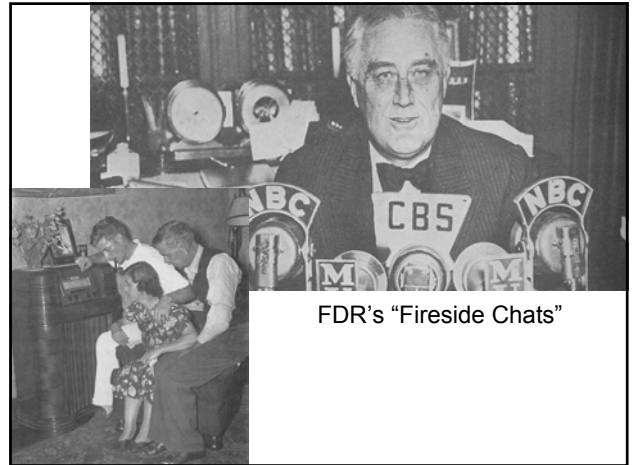


"The Sower"



FDR Throws Out Hoover and The Republican's Trash

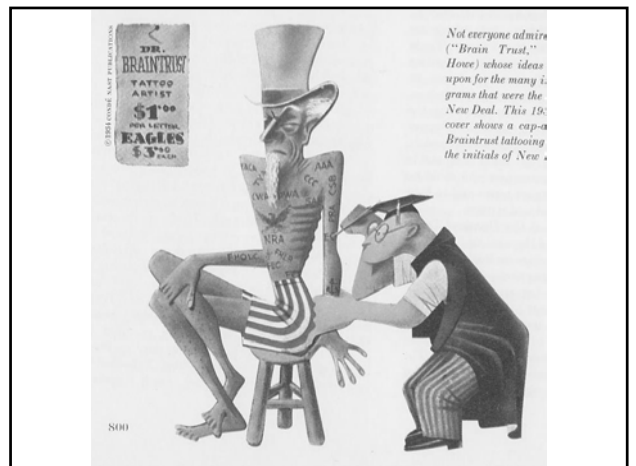
Scarecrow reads "Rugged Individualism"



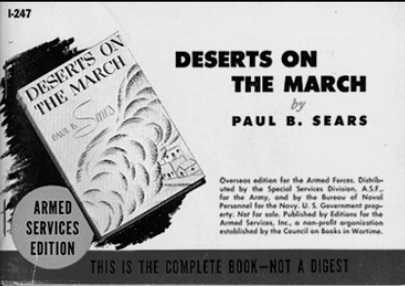
FDR's "Fireside Chats"



FDR's Relief Agencies "Children" Dance Around His Feet.



Not everyone admires ("Brain Trust," Howe) whose ideas upon for the many programs that were the New Deal. This 1936 cover shows a cap-a-braintrust tattooing the initials of New



New Dealers & the Rehabilitation of the West.

Paul Sears, *Deserts on the March* (1935)

"Nature had established a balance in the Great Plains . . . The White man has disturbed this balance; he must restore it or devise a new one of his own.—The Great Plains Committee

Agricultural Fundamentalism & the Agricultural Adjustment Act (1932): Redeeming the Family Farm



Scene in county agent's office, San Augustine, Texas. Farmer is receiving his AAA check. Photo by Russell Lee, April 1939, LOC.

New Dealer's Adapt to Nature's Limits:

New Deal Reformist Conservation: LEWIS CECIL GRAY

- *America "over-developed"/Anti-Expansion
- *Fundamental Redistribution of Wealth to Stabilize Economy
- *National Planning to Adapt to Environmental Limits
- *Redefinition of Private Property/End to Fee Simple Empire
- *Restrictions placed on "unconditional title" to land/property rights
- *Elevation of public welfare over private interests
- *New Level of Federal Intervention in Economy/Land Use
- *Restructuring of Capitalism
- * "Social or Collectivist Counter-Movements"

Gray's Three-Part Platform

- 1) **End of the Era of Disposal: The withdrawal from entry and permanent reservation of all remaining public domain.**
- 2) **The federal re-acquisition of sub-marginal (environmentally fragile/damaged) private lands.**
- 3) **The extension of land use restrictions and federal management to all private lands.**



Resettlement Administration Submarginal Land Purchase in SW Michigan. Relief workers combat soil erosion by covering failed farmland with branches.

The Subsidized Yeoman: Longview, WA Homesteads



Residents received a rent-subsidized house, barn, garage, landscaped yard, and garden area.

Longview Homesteads



Chamber of Commerce Sign Advertising the Longview Homesteads



Family Moving into Their Home, Longview Homesteads



Longview Homesteads



Resettlement Administration Cooperative Farmstead, Nebraska.



Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographer Russell Lee (1903-1986) in July 1941, shows rows of tents at a migratory farm-labor camp in Athena, Oregon. By the end of the Great Depression, more than 1 million migrants had moved to Washington, Oregon, and California—most of them from the Farm Belt states of Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri,

The Federally Subsidized Yeoman:

Division of Subsistence Homesteads:

34 communities; 3,304 units; \$30 million cost

Federal Emergency Relief Association:

28 communities; 2,426 units; \$21.6 million cost

Resettlement Administration:

37 communities; 5,208 units; \$56 million cost

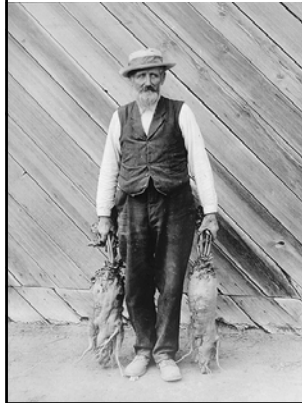
Why did the federal government finally embrace hydro-electric power as an economic or social justification for building dams? What had the attitude toward hydro-electric power been in the Progressive Era and the 1920s? What caused this change?

- 1) The Newlands Act (Reclamation Act) of 1902 and the Bureau of Reclamation prioritized irrigation and the reclamation of arid lands over hydro-power.
- 2) The Army Corps of Engineers prioritized navigation and flood control over hydro-power.
- 3) In fact, the New Deal had no incentive to build dams for these reasons: Expanded reclamation would exacerbate overproduction and depress prices on farm goods even further.

The Mission of Dam Building, 1902-1932: Klamath Reclamation Project: Irrigated Fields Near Tule Lake, CA



Klamath Reclamation Project



Farmer with Sugar Beets, Merrill Ranch, 1910

The Mission of Dam Building, 1902-1932: Owyhee Dam (early construction)



Owyhee Dam



Treasure Valley Irrigation (aerial photograph)



Diversion Canal, Owyhee Dam, Near Nyssa, OR. circa early 1930s



Lewis Mumford

The prophet of the redemptive powers of electricity and “energy utopianism”.

Hydro-electric power would:

- 1) Re-open the western frontier.
- 2) Replenish the Garden of the World.
- 3) Recreate superabundance, inexhaustibility, and a social “Safety Valve.”
- 4) Redeem the Yeoman Farmer as a pillar of the American economy and democracy.



Mumford’s Ideological Influence on New Deal Policy:

Technics and Civilization (1931). Promoted the liberating potential of hydro-electric power, which would unfetter human labor and natural energy. Hydro-electricity became a surrogate frontier.

The Culture of Cities (1930s). Decried the life of over-industrialized and over-crowded cities of the East and sought a return to a pastoral “living community” centered around multi-purpose, regional river basin development. He exhorted Americans to begin the “re-animation and re-building of regions as deliberate works of collective art.” Dams embodied the “thrust and sweep of the new creative imagination.”

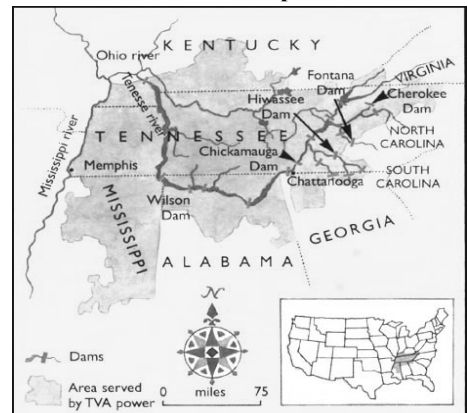
Paleotechnic Era V. Neotechnic Era

Paleotechnic relied upon “coal and iron,” and represented only an “upthrust into barbarism” exploiting finite fossil fuels that generated a “befouled and disorderly environment; the end product an exhausted one.” PRIVATE OWNERS = MONOPOLY. **Neotechnic**, in contrast, purified the social and ecological environment through infinite hydro-electricity and the production of alloys. PUBLIC POWER = DEMOCRACY.


Did the Tennessee Valley Act of 1933 and the Bonneville Power Act of 1937 realize Mumford’s “Neotechnic Vision” as the Oregon Donation Act of 1850 and Homestead Act of 1862 realized Jefferson’s vision of the “Yeoman Republic”?

Benjamin Kizer, chair of the Washington State Planning Council and adviser of the Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission (PNWRPC) wrote to Mumford that the *Culture of Cities* was “causing young men to see vision and old men to dream dreams.”

TVA Map


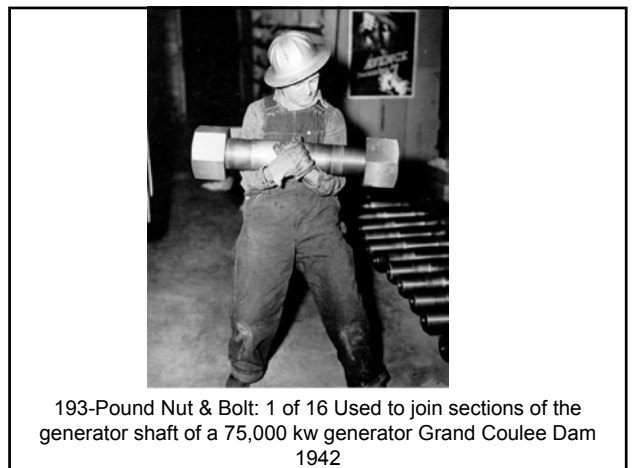
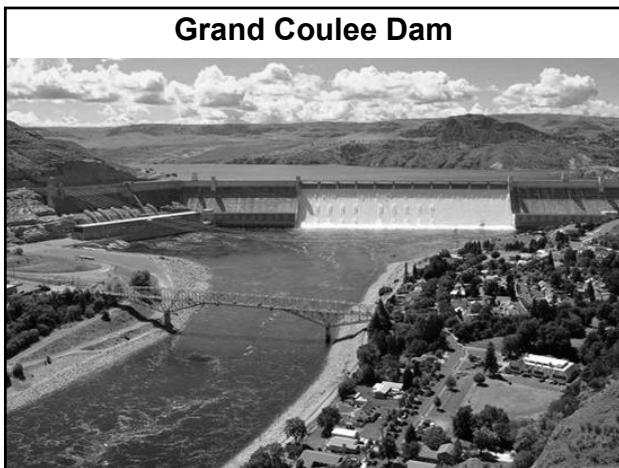
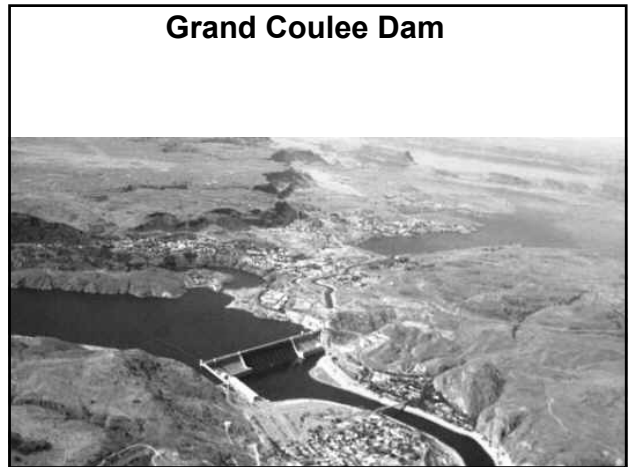
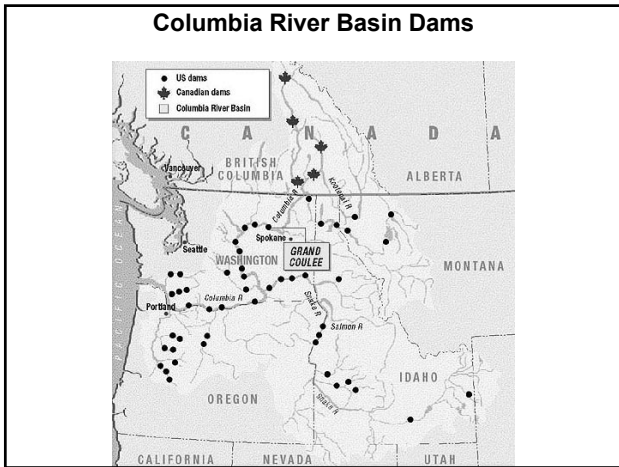
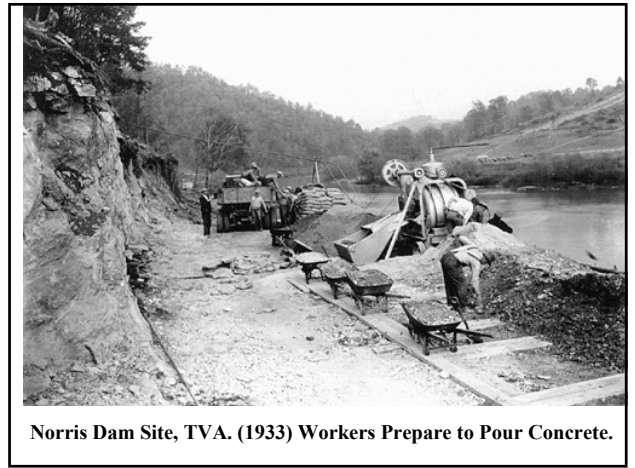


Rural Electrification Administration

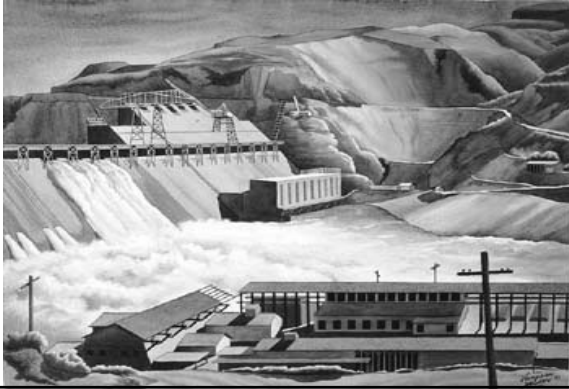


Mumford supported the wholesaling of electricity through public utility districts (PUDs) and "postage stamp rates" that offered consumers a standardized delivery rate regardless of their distance from the point of generation.

FDR's Rural Electrification began supplying public power to the 6 out of 6.8 million farms that remained un-electrified as late as 1935.

Grand Coulee Dam (Vanessa Helder)



Bonneville Dam, PWA Project. (Presently owned by US Army Corps of Engineers)

Murals by Carl Morris at the Eugene Post Office on Willamette St.: *Agriculture & Lumbering*

