Antebellum American Art

ARCHITECTURE
MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT
LITERATURE
  - National Literature
  - Transcendentalism
  - Literary Giants
  - Historians
PAINTING
  - Hudson River School
  - The Luminist Artists
  - The Classical Artists
  - The Patriotic Artists
  - The Frontier Artists
Most Antebellum architecture came from Greek and Roman styles, a Gothic revival, or styles from Europe.

US Customs House, 1836
Thomas Jefferson was the most noteworthy American architect. He designed his home (below), Monticello, and much of the campus for University of Virginia (right)
**Music**

*Dixie*, written in 1859
became Battle Hymn for the Confederacy.
War version replaced “Look Away” with “To Arms”

I wish I was in de land ob cotton,
Old times dar am not forgotten;
Look away! Look away! Look away!
Dixie Land.
In Dixie Land whar I was born in,
Early on one frosty mornin,
Look away! Look away! Look away!
Dixie Land. …
Music

Stephen Foster
Father of American Music

My Old Kentucky Home
Oh! Susanna
Camptown Races
Swanee river
Old Black Joe
Song written in 1858 by William Steffe, lyrics in 1861 by Julia Ward Howe

Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.
The minstrel show consisted of comic skits, variety acts, dancing, and music, performed by white people in blackface or, after the Civil War, black people in blackface.
Before the War of 1812
*The Federalist* (Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, James Madison)
*Common Sense* (Thomas Paine)
*Hayne-Webster Debate* and other writings (Daniel Webster)
Benjamin Franklin’s *Autobiography*

After the War of 1812
**Knickerbocker Group**
- *Knickerbocker’s History of New York, the Spy, and the Leatherstocking Tales* by Washington Irving
- *The Sketch Book* by James Fenimore Cooper, including short stories like “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”
- “Thanatopsis” and other poems by Wiliam Cullen Bryant
**What is it?**
A movement away from *knowledge from sensing* and the world of academia to *knowledge transcending* through more spiritual means… from doctrine to intuition.

**Where did it begin?**
New England

**Influences:**
Relaxing of Puritanism
Asian religions
German philosophers

**Core beliefs:**
Individualism
Good Works
Self-Reliance, Self-Control, Self-Confidence
Freedom
Optimism

“Every person possesses an inner light that can illuminate the highest truth and put him or her in direct touch with God” (Oversoul).
Ralph Waldo Emerson
*The American Scholar* – urged American writers to end European traditions and begin their own

Henry David Thoreau
*Walden: Or Life in the Woods, On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* – encouraged less materialism, more nature and search of truth through meditation

Walt Whitman
*Leaves of Grass* – nonconformist style
Others

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow - poems on American tradition like “Evangeline”
John Greenleaf Whittier - poems with abolition theme
James Russell Lowell - poet
Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes – poet as well as scientist
Louisa May Alcott – *Little Women*
Emily Dickenson – poet, sense of sentimentalism
Edgar Allan Poe - poems with a pessimistic tone like *the Raven*
Herman Melville - *Moby Dick*
William Gillmore Simms – wrote of the Southern frontier in Revolutionary times
Nathaniel Hawthorn – *The Scarlet Letter*
Historians

George Bancroft – founded Naval Academy, **Father of American History**, 6 volumes of American history published in late 1700s
William H. Prescott – recorded history of the conquest of Mexico and Peru
Francis Parkman – recorded British and French colonization of America (colonial history)

New England had the most education and libraries, so historians were typically Yankees with little sympathy to the slave-holding south. Therefore, American textbooks had a heavy northern bias until the 1900s.
The Hudson River School

Humans are insignificant
Landscapes/Nature
Niagara
Frederic Church, 1857
View of the Catskills, Early Autumn
Thomas Cole, 1837
View from Mt. Holyoke: The Oxbow
Thomas Cole, 1836
The Course of Empire: The Savage State
Thomas Cole, 1834
The Course of Empire: The Arcadian or The Pastoral State - Thomas Cole, 1836
The Course of Empire: Consummation
Thomas Cole, 1836
The Course of Empire: Destruction
Thomas Cole, 1836
Kindred Spirits – Asher Durand, 1849
Watercolors by John Audubon

Stanley Hawk

Barred Owl
The Luminists

Light in Landscape
Boston Harbor from Constitution Wharf
Robert Salmon, 1833
The Constitution in Boston Harbor
Fitz Hugh Lane, 1848-49
Fur Trappers Descending the Missouri
George Caleb Bingham, 1845
The Patriots

Celebrating History
Nationalism
The Landing of the Pilgrims
Unknown Artist, 1830s
Washington Crossing the Delaware
Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze, 1851
Our Banner in the Sky - Frederic Church, 1861
Native Americans
(portrayal as noble or evil)
Young Omahaw, War Eagle, Little Missouri, and Pawnees - Charles Bird King, 1821
Buffalo Bull’s Back Fat, Head Chief, Blood Tribe - George Catlin, 1832
Mato-Tope – Karl Bodmer, 1830s
Osage Scalp Dance
John Mix Stanley, 1845
Last of the Race – Tompkins Matteson, 1847