

Welcome to

GROWING A NATION THE STORY OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

Growing a Nation's chronological presentation of significant historical events focuses on the important role agriculture has played in America's development. Students gain an appreciation of our agricultural history and how agricultural events have affected our lives in America today. Statistical data are supplied to analyze trends or allow students a look into the future. The program's resources can be further enhanced by visiting the *Growing a Nation* website, www.agclassroom.org/gan. The website provides educators with classroom resources and activities including: primary sources, assessment options, an easily navigated timeline, photo gallery, and the national standards met by this program. Your comments via the website are appreciated.

Growing a Nation has been designed as a flexible resource for secondary United States history courses. The "Story of American Agriculture" has been broken into four lessons:

- Lesson 1: 1600–1929, Seeds of Change
- Lesson 2: 1930–1949, From Defeat to Victory
- Lesson 3: 1950–1969, Prosperity & Challenges
- Lesson 4: 1970–Present, Into a New Millennium.

This interactive program is a useful resource for U.S. history teachers and their students. The CD is not designed to be used as a student tutorial or to be viewed as a full-featured movie. It is recommended that screens from particular historical time periods be used throughout the year. *Growing a Nation* works seamlessly with textbooks as screens have been designed to "stand alone" and mesh with historical content. The program should be used throughout the course as time periods and events are discussed. The multimedia program is intended as a teaching tool to aid teacher-led discussions or to facilitate learning in small cooperative learning groups.

Each lesson includes several screens that, with the use of multimedia, engage students in the story. *Growing a Nation* features a total of 44 screens of historical content, told as the story of American agriculture, and 263 embedded resources. Each slide contains embedded resources that add content and meaningful questions that foster group dialogue and interaction. The program can be employed in a variety of ways to suit specific educational goals: by turning the



audio off, isolating screens for a particular time period, or selecting only the embedded resources. The audio narration can be turned off to access embedded resources more quickly. Screen narration can be accessed by clicking on the dropdown arrow in the upper left hand corner of each screen. The “Menu” button will navigate the user through the lessons while the “Index” button will display the screen titles in each lesson. Screens can be launched in any order from the Index menu. The icons on the right are used in the program as navigation tools.

This Instructional Unit contains all of the *Growing a Nation* narratives and Embedded Resource texts, images, and questions. The Embedded Resource Cards also identify U.S. History Standards content. Like the *Growing a Nation* CD, the Instructional Unit has been divided into four lessons. Each lesson uses the Embedded Resources with a variety of suggested teaching strategies to enhance historical understanding. Embedded Resource activities and other activities included in the lessons can be used independently from the *Growing a Nation* CD. Additional classroom resources can be found on the *Growing a Nation* website.

Embedded Resource Icons



Notable Quotations



American Experience



Geographical Information



Political Events



Biographies



Educational Influence



Web Links



Science & Technology



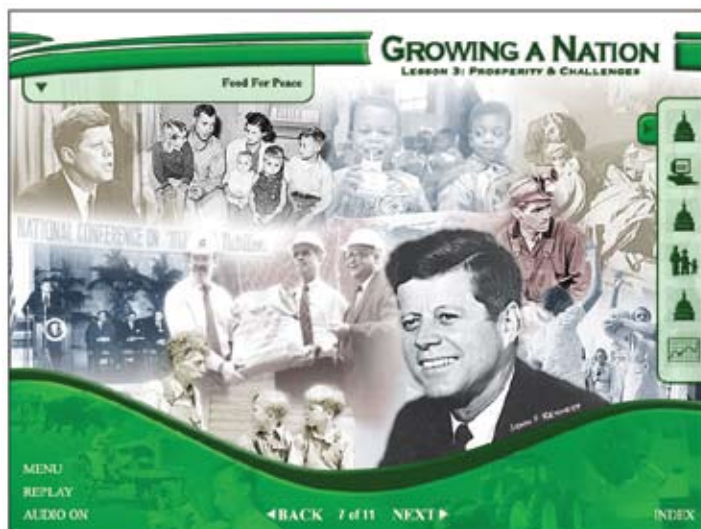
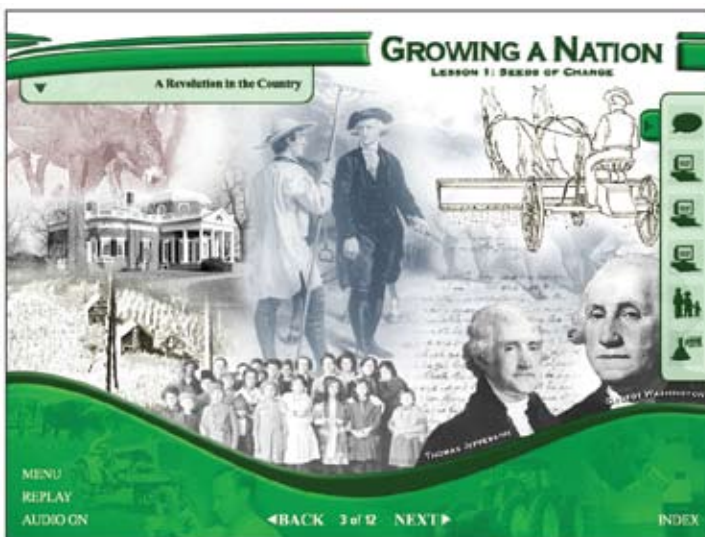
Important Statistics



Film/Video Media



Audio Media



INTRODUCTION

SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE

Our country has witnessed sweeping changes—from the untamed wild times of Buffalo Bill to the technological era of Bill Gates—but food has never lost its central role in our lives. Food not only sustains life but also enriches us in many ways. It warms us on cold, dreary days, entices us with its many aromas, and provides endless variety to the everyday world. Food is also woven into the fabric of our Nation, our culture, our institutions, and our families. Food is on the scene when we celebrate and when we mourn. We use it for camaraderie, as a gift, and as a reward (and sometimes as a crutch).

We are all aware of how food has changed. At the turn of the 20th century, home cooking and canning were fixtures of life in America. Lard, seasonal vegetables, potatoes, and fresh meats were the staples of our diet. And 40 percent of Americans lived on farms. Today, convenience foods and dining out are common. Ethnic diversity has influenced our tastes and the variety of foods available. Technology and trade allow us to enjoy most foods all year round. And less than 2 percent of the population grows our food, while 9 percent are involved in the food system in some way—in processing, wholesaling, retailing, service, marketing, and inspection.

What Americans often forget, however, is the remarkable system that delivers to us the most abundant, reasonably priced, and safest food in the world. The American food system—from the farmer to the consumer—is a series of interconnected parts. The farmer produces the food, the processors work their magic, and the wholesalers and retailers deliver the products to consumers, whose choices send market signals back through the system. Every piece fits every other piece, notwithstanding an occasional gap and pinch.

At the end of the day, it is safe to say the U.S. food system has done a remarkable job of using technology and inventiveness to its advantage and ultimately to the benefit of the consumer. We get the foods we want, when we want them, in the form we want them, all at affordable prices. Thanks to this system, Americans spend less of their income on food than do consumers anywhere else in the world.

Despite the dramatic evolution of the American food system, there are some constants in our ever-changing world. Americans will always love food. The American food system will continue to adapt, grow, and provide us with the products we desire.

James R. Blaylock, Associate Director
Food and Rural Economics Division, ERS
Amber Waves, June 2003

GROWING A NATION

THE STORY OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

Acknowledgements

Dedicated to the American farmer and all who serve to better American agriculture.

Funded by:

USDA CSREES cooperative agreement #2004-38840-01819 and developed cooperatively by: USDA, Utah State University Extension, and LetterPress Software, Inc.

Special Thanks to:

Dr. Joseph J. Jen, Under Secretary
Research, Education and Economics
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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LetterPress Software Development Team:

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Mike Petersen – Writer, Instructional Design
Mark Lemon – Audio Engineering

America's government and geography have helped to create agricultural abundance. Because most Americans don't worry about where their next meal is coming from, we are able to pursue a variety of interests, occupations, hopes, and dreams.

Debra Spielmaker, *Growing a Nation* Project Director



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