

# 1800s Literature

- Texts
- Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher”
- Bierce, “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”
- London, “To Build a Fire”
- Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper”
- Emerson and Thoreau

# 1800s Literature

- A New Young Nation
- Hope and Optimism
- Independence and Opportunity – The West and Journey – Manifest Destiny
- Language and Identity – Noah Webster 1820s = 1<sup>st</sup> American Speller
- Art and Literature – Hudson River School – Landscape Painting – See page 214 for Idea of America

# 1800s Literature

- Romantics
  - Feelings over reason
  - Faith in inner experience and imagination
  - Sees civilization as artificial and distancing
  - Values freedom and the individual
  - Celebrates nature as redemptive and inspiring
  - = Intuition, Imagination, Innocence, Inspiration, Inner-self, Individual

# 1800s Literature

- Dark Romantics
  - Contemplate natural world
  - Symbolism in human events
  - Innate depravity of humans
  - Examines effects of sin and guilt
  - Wild haunted landscapes
  - Supernatural elements

# 1800s Literature

- Portrait of 1850s America
- General
  - Age 40 life expectancy (also married by now)
  - 17 million / 3 million black = mostly rural
- New York City
  - No garbage collection – Dead animals and feces in streets
  - 20,000 homeless kids
  - Tenements = 400 people to 1 toilet

# 1800s Literature

- Transcendentalism
  - Go beyond everyday experience of physical world – denies history and tradition
  - Seek reality beyond perception – only a fragment of truth – social norm is one way
  - Individual soul part of Over-soul – we have a piece of god in all of us – God exists all places
  - Native Mysticism – natural act = spiritual fact – find metaphors in nature
  - Focus on individuality, finding of self, living by personal code, following own path

# 1800s Literature

- Defense of American Literature
  - Berkshire Hills Party
  - Hawthorne and Melville
- Lyceum Movement
  - Educate Adults – Train teachers – Start museums – Institute reforms
  - Emerson
- Utopian Projects
  - Brook Farm

# 1800s Literature

- Realism
  - Post Civil War
    - 625, 000 Dead
    - Battle of Westport = 30,000 / 3,000 Dead
  - Depict life without idealizing
  - Analyze social relationships
  - Concentrate on contemporary life
  - Uses vernacular = common and utilitarian language
  - Create portrait of landscapes and people, like fashions and manners



# 1800s Literature

- Naturalism (Extension of realism)
  - Dissect human behavior in specific situations
  - Explore sociology and psychology objectively
  - Behavior determined by heredity and environment
  - Examines humans in relationship to nature
  - Juxtapose human pretension versus universe indifference