

in America being declared an independent country, lasted from 1775-1783.

19TH CENTURY

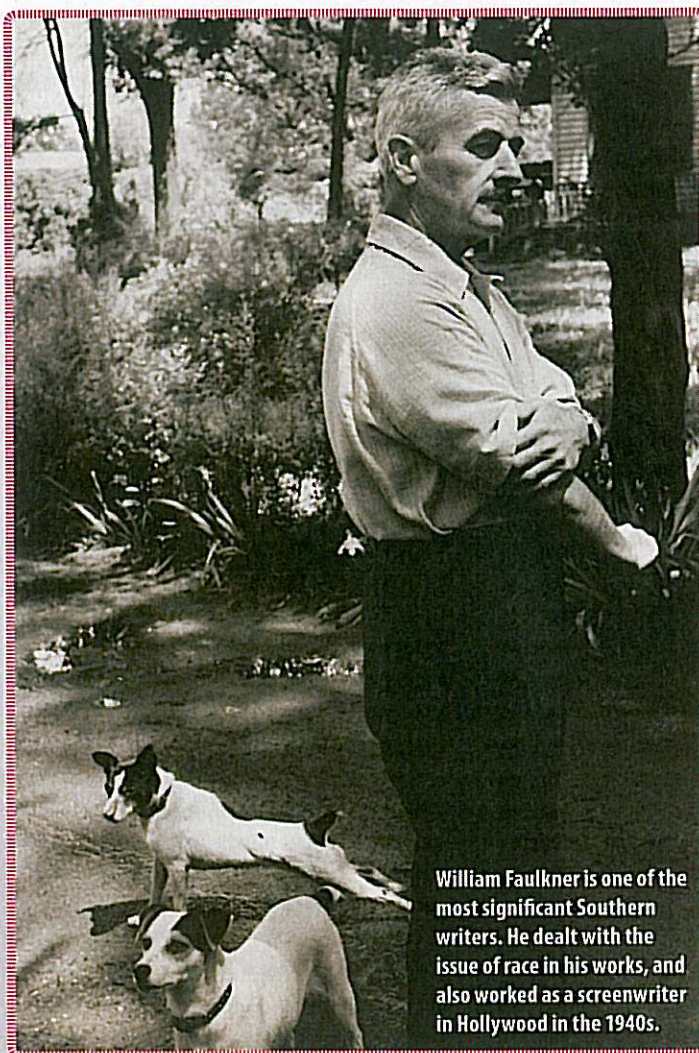
In the 1800s the country continued to expand westwards, with the historic Louisiana Purchase **doubling the amount of land** in America. The famous explorers Lewis and Clark made their expedition to the Pacific Ocean. In 1860s, the country went through the Civil War, ending with the **abolition** of slavery.

A variety of writers were busy during this period. Washington Irving wrote humorous short stories and folk tales about Dutch settlers like *Rip van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Edgar Allan Poe could be considered the father of horror and crime fiction thanks to stories like *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Herman Melville, on the other hand, used his real life experience as a sailor to write novels like *Moby Dick*, about an obsessive hunt for a white whale. Mark Twain, an entertaining writer, introduced Americans to what life was like along the Mississippi River with stories like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

A philosophical movement known as Transcendentalism also arose during this period. It was inspired by the works of the essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, who emphasized the individual and the natural world. His follower Henry David Thoreau was even more radical – he didn't believe in organized society and lived alone in a **cabin** for two years.

America's two greatest 19th-century poets were Walt Whitman, who used free verse and celebrated nature and human-self, and Emily Dickinson, who rarely left her home and wrote short poems about love, death and God.

In the beginning of the new century, Jack London became popular with his adventurous books, sometimes based on his



William Faulkner is one of the most significant Southern writers. He dealt with the issue of race in his works, and also worked as a screenwriter in Hollywood in the 1940s.

experiences from the Klondike gold rush (such as *White Fang*).

BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS

With the arrival of the 20th century, the construction of the Panama Canal started and the US began to introduce many new laws, like ones dealing with child **labor** and regulation of the food industry. Many writers at the time were writing about social problems. In 1917, the US joined World War I in Europe. Two important laws were adopted in 1920: Prohibition, which meant alcohol was banned (until 1933), and women received the **right to vote**.

Books by Francis Scott Fitzgerald, like *The Great Gatsby*, were being read, which described people trying to follow the "American dream" to become wealthy and respected in society. William Faulkner wrote books about the American

South such as *The Sound and the Fury*, which examined how the past, especially the era of slavery, influenced the present. He often used long chaotic sentences to show the thoughts and feelings of his characters. The term "The Lost Generation" is used for authors influenced by World War I. Nobel Prize winner Ernest Hemingway served as a war correspondent in WWI and the Spanish Civil War and wrote novels and short stories about soldiers and other men of action. *A Farewell to Arms* and *The Old Man and the Sea* are some of his best-known. His **plain** writing style became so famous that it was frequently parodied.

In the 1930s America was suffering from the Great Depression. One writer who **captured** this time period very well was John Steinbeck (*Grapes of Wrath*, *Of Mice And Men*). He often wrote about poor

working-class people and their **struggle to lead a decent** life during the Depression. President Roosevelt's New Deal plan created many new government institutions that gave Americans jobs and helped the economy.

In 1941, the US joined World War II when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. During this time, the life in the US changed dramatically. A lot of women began working outside the home because many men were off fighting in the war. The atomic bomb was brought to life, and the end of the war saw the beginning of the **nuclear arms race**. Some authors used their war experiences in their novels. Joseph Heller was a bombardier and used his experiences in his satirical novel *Catch-22*, a black comedy about military life. William Styron described the **devastating impact** of war in *Sophie's Choice*, a novel about a Polish woman who, while imprisoned in a concentration camp **was forced to make a cruel choice** – which of her two children would survive and which would be killed.

POST WWII PERIOD

Social changes continued through the '50s and '60s. Family life was important, so many people had children and **settled in the suburbs**. Writers however looked at it a bit differently. The 1950s gave birth to a literary movement known as the "Beat Generation". Authors **rejected** traditional society and looked for new experiences through drugs, jazz music and Eastern mysticism. Jack Kerouac celebrated the lifestyle in his book *On the Road*, describing his road trip across America. No one can forget the experimental '60s when drugs and rock and roll inspired a generation of youth. The Vietnam War and civil rights also played an important role in many people's lives. Vietnam continued to dominate the 1970s as did the Cold War and an **oil crisis**.