**How can individuals have an impact on the nations problems?**

**Read the following and respond to the essay question at the end.**

While America was undergoing an "era of good feeling" there were many problems lying under the surface. These social ills were attacked many social reformers. This reform movement was led by people who believed that America could do anything if she put her mind to it. Major reform movements existed in the following areas:

A. Women's Rights:

1. This movement led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott held a women's rights conference at the **Seneca Fall Convention**. At the convention they wrote a **Declaration of Women's Rights**.

B. Temperance

1. The temperance movement was an attempt to eliminate the evils of alcohol. Mostly the same women involved in the women's rights movement. Led by the American Christian Temperance Union they sought to save the American family by trying to get alcohol declared illegal.

2. They were successful in getting some states to adopt state constitutional amendments banning alcohol.

3. This movement continued until the passage of the 18th amendment in 1920.

C. Education

1. Led by Horace Mann, the great educational reformer, a movement was led to create mandatory public education in America. It was eventually successful.

D. Treatment of the insane

1. Reformers led by Dorothea Dix led the way to more modern treatment of the mentally ill.

2. The first mental hospital was built in the state of Massachusetts as a result of her efforts.

**Reformers In Action**

Few areas escaped the notice of reformers in the 1830's and 1840's. Here are some examples of their writings. For each selection note their goals, methods used to convince their leaders, your opinion of their effectiveness and a judgment as to what extent their goals have been reached today.

1. *Dorothea Dix was an extremely influential reformer of the period. Her work led to prison reform and improved treatment of the insane. In 1843 Dix sent the following report to the Massachusetts legislature:*

If I inflict pain upon you, and move you to horror, it is to acquaint you with the sufferings which you have the power to alleviate (cure), and to make you hasten to the relief of the victims of legalized barbarity.

*Lincoln Institution*. A woman in a cage. *Medford*. One idiotic subject chained, and one in a closed stall for seventeen years. *Pepperell*. One often doubly chained, hand and foot; another violent; several peaceable now. *Brookfield*. One man caged, comfortable. *Granville*. One often closely confined; now losing the use of his limbs from lack of exercise. *Charlemont*. One man caged. *Savoy*. One man caged. *Lenox*. Two in the jail, against whose unfit condition there the jailer protests.

*Dedham Institution*. The insane disadvantageously placed in jail. In the (charity ward), two females in stalls, situated in the main building; lie in wooden bunks filled with straw; always shut up. One of these subjects is supposed curable. The overseers of the poor have declined giving her a trial at the hospital, as I was informed, on account of expense.

2. *Some who worked for equal rights for blacks also fought to win equality for women. Denied admission to the World Antislavery Convention in London in 1840, abolitionists Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the nations first women's rights convention. The convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. It issued the following "Declaration of Women's Rights":*

We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. . . Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government. . .

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward women, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this let the following facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise (the vote).

He has compelled her to submit to laws in the formation of which she has had no voice. . .

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns. . .

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her. . .

He has endeavored, ion every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject (submissive) life.

3. *Alcoholism was a serious problem in the United States, particularly in an era when women had no right to control their own earning*s *and an entire family could starve because of a drunken father. Organizations like the American Temperance Union and the American Christian Temperance Union worked to eliminate excessive drinking (and eventually to pass a prohibition amendment). Songs like the following were sung in parades, at meetings, and during rallies:*

**Come Home Father**

Father, dear father, come home with me now!

The clock in the steeple strikes one.-

You said you were coming home from the shop,

As soon as your day's work was done.-

Our fire has gone out, our house is all dark,

And mother's been watching since tea,

With poor brother Benny so sick in her arms,

And no one to help her but me.-

Come home father, come home, come home!-

Please ,- father, dear father, come home!

4. *Horace Mann was an educational reformer. He helped improve schools, curricula, and instructional methods throughout the Northeast. As secretary to the Massachusetts Board of Education, he argued for reforms in reports submitted to the state legislature. The following is his twelfth and last report (1848):*

According to European theory, men are divided into classes, some to toil and earn, others to seize and enjoy. . . Our ambition as a state should trace itself to a different origin and propose to itself a different object. . *.*

Education. . . beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance wheel of the social machinery. . . I mean that it gives each man the independence and the means by which he can resist the selfishness of other men. . .

. . . To all doubters, disbelievers, or despairers in human progress, it may still be said there is one experiment which has never yet been tried*.*It is an experiment, which, even before its beginning, offers the highest authority for its ultimate success. . . It is expressed in these few and simple words: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and, when he is old he will not depart from it."

But this experiment has never been tried. Education has never been brought to bear with one-hundredth part of its potentialforce upon the natures of children, and, through them, upon the character of men and of the race.

<http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/lesson_28_notes.htm>

Please respond to the following question by writing a minimum of two paragraphs and maximum one page hand written essay response:

Essay Question: How can individuals have an impact on the nations problems today?