

AMERICAN DREAM QUOTATIONS

I happen temporarily to occupy this big White House. I am a living witness that anyone of your children may look to come here as my father's child has. It is in order that each of you may have through this free government which we have enjoyed, an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise, and intelligence; that you may all have equal privileges in the race of life, with all its desirable human aspirations. It is for this the struggle should be maintained, that we may not lose our birthright. . . . The nation is worth fighting for, to secure such an inestimable jewel.

—Abraham Lincoln, president, in a speech arguing for the preservation of the Union, 1864 (Cullen, 2003, p. 74)



A chicken in every pot, and a car in every garage.

—Herbert Hoover's presidential campaign slogan, 1928
(MultiEducator, Inc., 2003)



. . . that American dream of a better, richer, and happier life for all our citizens of every rank. . . . It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.

—John Truslow Adams, historian,
The Epic of America, 1931 (pp. 214–215)

I Dream a World

I dream a world where man
No other man will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.

A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all mankind—
Of such I dream, my world!

—Langston Hughes, poet, 1937



Could it be that Americans are a restless people, a mobile people, never satisfied with where they are as a matter of selection? The pioneers, the immigrants who peopled the continent, were the restless ones in Europe. The steady rooted ones stayed home and are still there.

—John Steinbeck, author,
Travels with Charley: In Search of America, 1962 (p. 80)



You see for me, America is an idea. It is a stage for transformation. I felt when I came to Iowa City from Calcutta that suddenly I could be a new person. What America offers is romanticism and hope. . . . Suddenly I found myself in a country where—theoretically, anyway—merit counts, where I could choose to discard that part of my history that I want, and invent a whole new history for myself. It's that capacity to dream and then try to pull it off, if you can.

—Bharatis Mukherjee, novelist, 1990
(University Center for International Studies)

For our parents and grandparents, the American dream meant hope—an unshakeable belief that happiness and security were truly possible. . . . The original focus on security and personal well-being is giving way to an obsession with “more.” More work. More material goods.

—Part of the Center for a New American Dream’s mission statement, n.d.



And that’s more or less where we remain today: life, liberty, and as much entertainment as is digitally possible.

—Jim Cullen, author, *The American Dream*, 2003 (p. 58)