

Chapter 14 (14th)

Forging the National Economy

1. The Westward Movement
 1. Americans continued to move westward in large numbers. The trip though, proved to have lots of difficulties, hardships, and diseases.
 2. Generally speaking, the westerners were (independent, stubborn, uneducated, and individualistic and ambitious in their own way).
 3. Emerging literature reflected these unique types of people such as **James Fenimore Cooper's** woodsy hero "Natty Bumppo" or **Herman Melville's** whale-hunting "Captain Ahab."
2. Shaping the Western Landscape
 1. The land was shaped by those who moved onto it.
 1. Tobacco farmers were accustomed to "land butchery" where they'd wear out a piece of land, then just move on to find more.
 2. "Kentucky bluegrass" began to thrive after settlers burnt off the tall cane grass.
 2. Trapping was big business.
 1. Fur trappers were taking a toll on the beaver population but reaping the profits of their sales. Beaver hats had become a fashion must-have back in Europe—good for the trappers, bad for the beaver.
 2. Buffalo hides also were big business and the buffalo population began to dwindle. It'd drop considerably as the 1800's wore on.
 3. Although the land was to be used, Americans respected it and noticed its beauty.
 1. **George Catlin** was an artist who painted western scenes and Native Americans. He was a first advocate of national parks and his suggestion eventually became the first national park, Yellowstone in 1872.
3. The March of the Millions
 1. America continued to grow rapidly in numbers. By the mid 1800's the population continued to double every 25 years.
 2. There were 33 states and America was the 4th largest nation in the world.
 3. Cities were growing very fast.
 1. In 1790, only 2 cities had more than 20,000 people. By 1860, 43 cities that size existed.
 2. The west was growing quickly, witnessed by New Orleans and Chicago ("hog butcher for the world").
 3. The drawback of such fast growth was poor sanitation. Later on, pipes would bring in clean water and sewers would take out the bad.
 4. The increase came from a high birthrate but also from immigration.
 1. Two groups came en masse: the Irish and Germans.
 2. The appeal of America was for land, religious freedom, safety from wars, but mostly, just the opportunity for a better life than in Europe.
4. The Emerald Isle Moves West
 1. In the 1840's, the potato crop failed and the "**potato famine**" resulted. 2 million Irish died.
 2. During the "Black Forties" thousands of Irish emigrated to America searching for a better life.
 1. From the American perspective, the Irish brought little to the table because they mostly were uneducated and poor.
 2. They were also Catholic which was frowned upon.
 3. From the beginning Americans looked down upon the Irish and gave them the worst and lowest-paying of jobs.
 4. Politicians quickly learned that there was power in the Irish vote and got their votes by "twisting the lion's tail" (antagonizing England whom the Irish hated).
 5. Despite discrimination, the Irish were hard workers and stubbornly determined to make a better life for themselves. They worked hard, drank hard, & were passionate people living robust lives.
5. The German Forty-Eighters
 1. At the same time, 1 million Germans came to America. Their reasons for coming were (a) crop failure (as in Ireland) but also, (b) to flee the chaos of war in 1848.
 2. Whereas the Irish largely stayed in the cities on the east coast, the Germans leap-frogged over to the frontier, notably to Wisconsin.
 3. The Germans gave America Conestoga wagon, the Kentucky rifle, the Christmas tree, and kindergarten.
 4. The Germans were unique in that...

1. They were Lutheran and clung to their native language.
 2. They were outspokenly against slavery.
 3. They drank large quantities of beer (this helped fuel the "**temperance movement**" against alcohol).
 4. And they kept to themselves in order to preserve their culture. All told, the Americans looked upon these Germans with suspicion.
6. Flare-ups of Antiforeignism
1. The large influx of immigrants caused "**nativists**" to strike back. "Nativists" were those born in America and were opposed to immigrants.
 2. Nativists complaints were that the newcomers were uneducated, poor, from non-democratic backgrounds, Catholic (in the Irish case), and willing to work for next to nothing (which drove down American wages).
 3. The "Order of the Star Spangled Banner" emerged but was better known as the "**Know-Nothings**." They were called this since, being a secret society, they'd answer an inquiry with, "I know nothing."
 1. The Know-Nothings fed off of fear and sensational stories, usually untrue, such as Maria Monk's book *Awful Disclosures* which was very popular reading.
 2. Violence also flared up, usually directed at the Irish Catholics.
 3. The idea of a "melting pot" where all races and peoples melted into one American people was under fire.
 4. As time wore on, the presence of these immigrants grew to be less threatening. Their hard work and the economic growth of the nation went hand-in-hand.
7. Creeping Mechanization
1. The **Industrial Revolution** began in England when machines and factories began to replace handmade products. It then spread to Europe and America.
 2. America had characteristics that enabled it to become an industrial powerhouse...
 1. Cheap land. This meant there was always a shortage of labor. Why work for someone else when you could get your own land and work for yourself?
 2. Workers. Immigration, which started to rise sharply in the 1840's, began to solve the problem of shortage of labor.
 3. Raw materials. America was large and blessed with many resources.
 4. Consumers. America had many people and they were just "starting out" and therefore ready to buy whatever was produced.
 3. Still, America struggled to compete with the British in manufacturing. The U.S. simply couldn't produce goods as fast and cheap as the Brits.
8. Whitney Ends the Fiber Famine
1. **Samuel Slater** was a textile worker in England. He memorized the plans of the factory, came to America, got financial backing from **Moses Brown**, and built a factory for spinning thread at Pawtucket, Rhode Island (1791). He's known as the "Father of the Factory System."
 2. Slater's thread-spinning system created a shortage of cotton fiber. **Eli Whitney** invented the cotton gin which separated the fiber from the seed (1793).
 1. The machine was 50 times more efficient than a person using only his hands.
 2. The cotton gin caused the South to expand its cotton producing land and increase its desire for slaves.
 3. The cotton gin caused the North to expand its factories for spinning and weaving cloth. New England was a good choice for factories because its soil wasn't very good for farming, but its quick-moving rivers drove the mills and it had quick access to the seaports.
9. Marvels in Manufacturing
1. The War of 1812 had an unexpectedly positive impact on the economy. The dated Embargo Act, which hurt the economy, forced young manufacturing to grow.
 1. But, after the war ended, the British began to flood America's markets with their inexpensive products. This hurt American manufacturers who couldn't compete with the older Brits.
 2. Therefore, Congress pass the **Tariff of 1816** as a "protective tariff" (one to boost foreign goods and therefore make American goods look cheaper).
 2. Eli Whitney also created "**interchangeable part**" where machine-made components of anything could simply be swapped out if one broke. Though more well-known for the cotton gin, interchangeable parts turned into "mass production" and was really his greatest legacy. Whitney made guns in this manner.
 3. Now with cloth easily made, clothes couldn't keep up. **Elias Howe** and **Isaac Singer** invented the sewing machine.

4. Invention Boom - The 1850's ended with 28,000 patents compared to only 306 in the 1790's.
5. Companies also changed. The "**limited liability corporation**" came into existence. These companies ensured that if the company went badly, an investor could lose *only* what he'd invested (not everything he owned). This assurance caused more people to invest in business and thus for businesses to grow.
6. **Samuel Morse** invented the telegraph thus providing nearly instant communication. The first words on his "talking wire" were "What hath God wrought?"

10. Workers and "Wage Slaves"

1. A side-effect of factory systems was exploitation of workers coming to be called "wage slaves."
2. Conditions in a typical factory were not good...
 1. They were unsafe.
 2. They were unhealthy.
 3. Hours were long and wages were low.
 4. Child labor was common. Childhood was short and harsh.
3. Conditions for adult workers improved during the 1820's and 30's as universal white manhood suffrage gave workers the power of the vote.
 1. Goals were the 10-hour workday, higher wages, better conditions, public education, and humane imprisonment for debt.
 2. The results were only fair, at best. Any group that went on strike to achieve these goals were likely fired. There were always more immigrants happy to work for whatever they could get. These substitute workers were called "scabs."
4. In 1840, President Van Buren did set a 10-hour work day for federal employees.
5. Early labor unions had little impact at best (due the constant availability of scab workers).
 1. They did score victory with the Massachusetts supreme court case of *Commonwealth v. Hunt* which legalized labor unions in 1842.

11. Women and the Economy

1. With the factories came female labor.
 1. **Lowell, Mass.** was well-known as employing young women to work in its textile factories. The women worked, bunked in dorms, were able to take classes, and were carefully guarded over.
 2. Other opportunities for women were nursing, domestic service, and teaching. **Catharine Beecher** was the leading proponent who pushed for women to enter teaching.
 3. Almost always, these working women were young and single. Once they married, the expectation was that they'd stay at home and raise their family.
2. The home and families also changed with the onset of the Industrial Revolution.
 1. Families also began to shrink in size. As cities grew and factory jobs increased, an extra mouth to feed was considered to be a detriment rather than an assistant. On a farm, another child was simply another worker—not so in the city.
 2. The home changed from a place of work (like on the farm) to a place of rest (away from the factory). This is when the phrase "Home Sweet Home" emerged.
3. Although women began to work more at this time, it shouldn't be over-stated. Women were still expected to mostly be at home. Their number one job was still to efficiently and lovingly manage a home and family.

12. Western Farmers Reap a Revolution in the Fields

1. The lands Allegheny Mountains (the modern Midwestern states) were growing rapidly.
 1. Corn was the main crop. Hogs (corn on the hoof) and whiskey (corn in a bottle) were also large products.
 2. Cincinnati, on the Ohio River, was booming and called the "Porkopolis" of the West.
2. Like the cotton gin for the South, inventions helped the western states grow.
 1. **John Deere** invented the steel plow. Letting farmers cut the hard, fertile Midwestern soil.
 2. **Cyrus McCormick** invented the mechanical mower-reaper to harvest grains like wheat.
 3. These inventions changed agriculture from a mindset of growing-to-eat to growing-to-sell-and-make-money.
3. The Midwestern farmers now had a problem—how to get their crops to the markets (cities) back in the East. Traveling from West-to-East over the Appalachian Mountains was impractical. So, crops flowed from North-to-South down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

13. Highways and Steamboats

1. The future growth and the economic backbone of the western states was dependent on transportation. A transportation boom took place in the first half of the 1800's.
2. Roads were built.
 1. The **Lancaster Turnpike** (a hard-surfaced highway) went from Philadelphia to Lancaster, PA.

2. The **Cumberland Road** (better known as the **National Road**) went from Maryland all the way to Illinois. It was the main East-West thoroughfare.
 3. Steamboat was built.
 1. **Robert Fulton** is credited with building the first steamboat, the *Clermont* (1807). This invention radically changed the transportation structure...
 1. Rivers were now *two-way* streets, not one-way.
 2. The South and especially the West would draw the benefits of the steamboat.
14. "Clinton's Big Ditch" in New York
1. The granddaddy of canals was the **Erie Canal**. It was headed up by NY governor **Dewitt Clinton** and built using only state money.
 2. The "Big Ditch" went 1817 - 1825. It linked the western rivers with the Atlantic Ocean.
 3. The effects of the Erie Canal were drastic...
 1. Shipping costs from the West to the East dropped 20 times (\$100 became only \$5).
 2. The canal effectively stole most of the trade from the Mississippi River. After its completion, more goods would flow over the Erie Canal/Hudson River route to New York City than down the Ohio and Mississippi River route to New Orleans.
 3. "Western" cities boomed, like Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago.
15. The Iron Horse
1. The only thing that trumped the Erie Canal was the "iron horse" (railroads).
 2. The first tracks were laid in 1828. However, tracks didn't really make a large impact until the 1850's and 60's. By the 1860's there were 30,000 miles of track.
 3. By far (3 quarters), most of the tracks were in the North.
 4. Railroads were dangerous however...
 1. Their embers started fires, collisions weren't uncommon, their boilers sometimes blew up, brakes were ridiculously poor, tracks wore out and rusted out quickly, and the gauge (width) of track wasn't standardized.
16. Cables, Clippers, and Pony Riders
1. **Cyrus Fields** laid a telegraph wire across the Atlantic Ocean floor to Ireland in 1858. It lasted only 3 weeks, but was a start to instant communication with Europe.
 2. Americans began to build "**clipper ships**" to haul cargo to foreign nations, notably China. These sailing ships were long, sleek, and very fast. They ruled the seas for a while.
 1. Their speed gave them much of the tea trade between the Far East and Britain.
 2. Yankee clipper ships were soon outdated. British "teakettles" (steamships) replaced the clippers. Though slow, they carried a lot of cargo and weren't susceptible to the wind.
 3. The **Pony Express** carried mail from Missouri to California, 2,000 miles in 10 days. It lasted 2 years before being replaced by trans-continental telegraph wire giving instant communication.
17. The Transport Web Binds the Union
1. The "**transportation revolution**" wanted to link the West with the rest of the nation, and it did. Roads, canals, and steamboats linked the nation. The South was largely left to use its rivers.
 2. The Erie Canal was the greatest triumph. It "stole" much of the Mississippi River's commerce.
 3. The notion of "**division of labor**" emerged—each section of the U.S. specialized in its own thing. The North: manufacturing, the South: cotton for export, and the West: grain and livestock.
 4. A split was also forming between the South and the North/West. The South had long considered the West as its ally, but the transportation and economic network now linked the West to the North. The South was growing isolated.
18. The Market Revolution
1. Industry and business were coming into maturity.
 2. Legal issues sided with businesses.
 1. Supreme Court Chief Justice **Roger Taney** said that "the rights of a community" were greater than a corporate contract. This was good news for entrepreneurs trying to get a start-up business going.
 2. Also, the trend in the courts was toward "limited liability" of companies. This also encouraged start-ups.
 3. The fabric of society was changing from "life on the farm" to "life working at a job."
 4. On the bad side, the rich-poor gap was widening. The factory owner was growing richer while the worker was struggling along.
 5. The starkest contrasts were seen in the cities...
 1. "Drifter" workers wandered from town to town looking for work.
 2. Rags-to-riches stories were rare, but they did occur. Certainly the chances of a pauper becoming a "prince" were much greater than back in Europe.
 3. Despite problems, the overall standard of living did rise.