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Chapter 14 - Forging the National Economy (1790 - 1860)

I. The Westward Movement

1. The U.S. marched quickly toward the West which proved to be very hard with disease and loneliness.
2. Frontier people were individualistic, superstitious and ill-informed of current matters.

II. Shaping the Western Landscape

1. The westward movement molded the environment.
 - Tobacco overuse had exhausted the land forcing settlers to move on, but "Kentucky bluegrass" thrived.
 - Settlers trapped beavers, sea otters, and bison for fur to ship back East.
2. The spirit of nationalism led to an appreciation of the American wilderness.
 - Artist George Catlin pushed for national parks and later achieved it with Yellowstone in 1872.

III. The March of the Millions

1. In the mid-1800s, the population continued to double every 25 years.
 - By 1860, the original 13 states now had become 33 states; the American population was 4th in the world (behind Russia, France, Austria).
 - Urban growth continued explosively.
 - In 1790, only New York & Philadelphia had more than 20,000 people, but by 1860, 43 cities had.
 - With growth came poor sanitation & later, sewage systems and piped-in water came about.
2. A high birthrate had accounted for population growth, but near 1850s, millions of Irish and German came.
 - They came due to a surplus population in Europe, but not all came to the U.S.
 - The appeal of the U.S. was for land, freedom from church, no aristocracy, 3 meat meals a day.
 - Also, transoceanic steamships were used meaning travel time dropped to 12 days and it was safer.

IV. The Emerald Isle Moves West

1. The Irish potato famine in the mid-1840s led to the death of 2 million and saw many flee to the U.S.
 - “Black Forties”—they mainly came to cities like Boston and especially New York (biggest Irish city).
 - They were illiterate, discriminated against by older Americans, and received lowest-paying jobs (railroad-building).
 - They were hated by Protestants because they’re Catholic.
 - Americans hated the Irish (such as “NINA”—No Irish Need Apply); the Irish hated competition with blacks for the low-paying jobs.
 - The Ancient Order of Hibernians was established to aid the Irish.
 - Gradual property ownership came about, and their children earned education.
 - The Irish were attracted to politics, and often filled police departments as officers.
 - The politicians tried to appeal to the Irish by yelling at London (“Twisting the Lion’s Tail”).

V. The German Forty-Eighters

1. 1 million Germans poured in between 1830s-1860s because of crop failures and revolution/war of 1848.
 - Liberals such as Carl Schurz contributed to the elevation of the U.S. political scene.
 - They had more money than the Irish, so they bought land in West, especially in Wisconsin.
 - Their votes were crucial, so they were wooed by U.S. politicians, yet they lacked potency because they were rather spread out.
 - The Germans contributed to the U.S. culture (i.e. the Christmas tree) and isolationism.
 - They urged public education (started kindergarten) and freedom (they were enemies of slavery).
 - They faced resentment from old Americans because the Germans grouped themselves together, were aloof, clung to their old ways and kept speaking the German language and religion, and brought beer to the U.S.

VI. Flare-ups of Antiforeignism

1. “nativists” – older Americans who were prejudiced against newcomers in jobs, politics, and religion
2. Catholicism became a major faith due to the immigration of the 1840s and 50s; they also set out to build Catholic schools
3. nativists feared that Catholicism challenged Protestantism (Popish idols) so they formed the “Order of Star-Spangled Banner”
AKA, “The Know-Nothings”
 - they met in secrecy - “I Know-Nothing” was their response to any inquiries
 - fought for restrictions on immigration, naturalization & deportation of alien paupers
 - wrote fiction books about corruption of churches
 - there was mass violence, i.e. Philadelphia in 1844, which burnt churches, schools, and saw people killed
 - it made America a pluralistic society with diversity
 - as time passed, immigrants were less disliked since they were crucial to economic expansion & more jobs were becoming available (although they were low-paying)

VII. Creeping Mechanization

1. The industrial revolution spread to U.S. The U.S. was destined to become an industrial giant

because...

- land was cheap, money for investment plentiful, raw materials were plentiful
 - Britain lacked consumers for factory-scale manufacturing whereas America had the growing numbers
 - But, Britain's long-established factory system was in competition with the infant U.S. industries
 - the Brits kept textile industry secrets as a monopoly (forbade travel of craftsmen & export of machines)
2. Still, the U.S. remained very rural and was mostly a farming nation

VIII. Whitney Ends the Fiber Famine

1. Samuel Slater – “Father of the Factory System”
 - learned of textile machinery when working in British factory; he escaped to U.S., was aided by Moses Brown and built 1st cotton thread spinner in the U.S. located in Pawtucket, Rhode Island (1791)
2. Eli Whitney built a cotton gin (which was 50 times more effective than separating cotton seed by hand)
 - cotton economics were now profitable and saved the South with “King Cotton”
 - the South flourished and expanded the cotton kingdom westward
 - the Northern factories manufactured textiles (cloth), especially in New England due to its poor soil, dense labor, access to sea, and fast rivers for water power)

IX. Marvels in Manufacturing

1. The Embargo Act of the War of 1812 encouraged home manufacturing
2. after the peace treaty at Ghent, the British poured in a surplus of cheap goods, forcing the close of many American factories who could not compete with long-established British companies
3. Congress then passed Tariff of 1816 to protect U.S. economy
4. Eli Whitney introduced machine-made inter-changeable parts (on muskets) - 1850
 - this was the base of the assembly line which flourished in the North, while the cotton gin flourished South
5. Elias Howe & Issac Singer (1846) made the sewing machine (the foundation of clothing industry)
6. The decade of 1860 had 28,000 patents while 1800 only had 306
7. The principle of limited liability in a corporation (can't lose more than invested) stimulated the economy
8. Laws of “free incorporation” came about saying there was no need to apply for a charter from a legislature to start a corporation
9. Samuel Morse's telegraph connected the business world when he asked, “What hath God wrought?”

X. Workers and “Wage Slaves”

1. The factory system led to impersonal relations
2. The benefit went to factory owner; hours were long, wages low, conditions unsafe and unhealthy, no unions existed to address these issues
3. child labor was heavy; 50% of the industrial labor force were children

4. adult working condition improved in the 1820s & 30s with the mass vote given to workers
 - 10 hour day, higher wages, tolerable conditions, public education, a ban of imprisonment for debt
 - in the 1840s, President Van Buren established 10 hour day for federal employees
 - many went on strike, but lost because employers simply imported more workers (the much-hated immigrants)
5. labor unions formed in the 1830s, but were hit by Panic of 1837
 - case of Commonwealth v. Hunt in Massachusetts Supreme Court (1842) legalized unions for peaceful and honorable protest
 - however, the effectiveness of unions was small (due mostly to their threat of a strike was always undermined by the management's ability to simply call in "scabs", plentiful immigrants eager to work)

XI. Women and the Economy

1. women toiled in factories under poor conditions
2. in Lowell, Massachusetts, a model textile mill employed young, single women under a watchful eye.
3. opportunities were rare and women mainly worked in nursing, domestic service, teaching (encouraged by Catharine Beecher)
4. women usually worked before marriage, after marriage they became housewives and mothers
5. arranged marriages died down; marriages due to love tied family closer
6. families grew smaller (average of 6); the fertility rate dropped sharply; this "domestic feminism" was a crude form of birth control
7. child-centered families emerged with less children and discipline
8. the home changed from a place of labor, to a place of refuge and rest from labor at the mill
9. women were in charge of family: small, affectionate, child-centered families. This was a small arena for talented women

XII. Western Farmers Reap a Revolution in the Fields

1. the trans-Allegheny region (Ohio-Indiana-Illinois) became the nation's breadbasket
 - they planted corn and raised hogs (Cincinnati was known as "the porkopolis" of the west)
2. inventions that boomed agriculture
 - John Deere – invented the steel plow that cut through hard soil and could be pulled by horses
 - Cyrus McCormick – invented the mechanical mower-reaper to harvest grain
3. this led to large-scale production and growth of cash crops
4. The North produced more food than the South (who grew cotton); products flowed from the North to the South via sea and rivers, not East to West which need transportation revolution in roads and canals

XIII. Highways and Steamboats

1. improvements in transportation were needed for raw material transport
2. Lancaster Turnpike – a hard road from Philadelphia to Lancaster, PA which brought economic expansion westward
3. The federal government constructed the Cumberland Road AKA The National Road (Maryland - Illinois) with state and federal money
4. Robert Fulton invented the first steamboat, the Clermont in 1807; steamboats were common by

the 1830s

- this caused an increase of U.S. trade because there was no concern for weather and water current
- this contributed to the development of Southern and Western economies

XIV. “Clinton’s Big Ditch” in New York

1. Gov. DeWitt Clinton’s Big Ditch was the Erie Canal between Lake Erie and the Hudson River
 - it shortened the expense and time of transportation (to one twentieth what it was before); cities grew along the canal and the price of food was reduced
 - farmers were unable to compete in the rocky soils of the East, so they went to the West

XV. The Iron Horse

1. The 1st railroad in U.S. was introduced in 1828; by 1860, 30,000 miles of railroad tracks had been laid in the U.S. (3/4 of those tracks were up North)
2. The railroads were 1st opposed because financiers were afraid of losing money from Erie Canal traffic; railroads also caused fires to houses from their embers.
3. Early trains were poorly constructed (with bad brakes) and the gauge of tracks varied

XVIII. Cables, Clippers, and Pony Riders

1. foreign exports
 - South: cotton account for 50% of exports
 - North: after the repeal of the British Corn Law of 1846, wheat became an important commodity in trade with England
2. Americans imported more than they exported (causing substantial debt to foreign creditors)
3. In 1858, Cyrus Field laid a telegraph cable between the U.S. & Europe (but died in 3 weeks); a better one was laid in 1866. This provided instant communication with Europe—a monumental step forward.
4. American vessels had been idle due to embargoes and panics; the U.S. Navy made little progress
 - the golden age of the American merchant marine came in 1840s and 50s – Donald McKay built the clipper ships which dominated the seas for a brief time (they were very fast, sleek, and long)
 - tea trade with the British grew and carried many to California
 - America’s brief dominance at sea with the clipper ships was crushed by British iron steamers, “Tea kettles” that were more reliable and could haul heavier loads, though slower.
5. speedy communication popped up from Missouri to California, in the Pony Express (going 2,000 miles in 10 days). The Pony Express was short-lived though, lasting but 2 years, and was replaced by the telegraph wire.

XIX. The Transport Web Binds the Union

1. the steamboat allowed reverse transport of South to West and served to bind them together
2. more canals led to more trade with East from the West (the South was left out with canals)

3. New York became the queen port of the country, replacing New Orleans, thanks to the Erie Canal
4. Principle of divided labor emerged with each region specializing in its own economic activity
 - South cotton to New England; West grain & livestock for the East & Europe; East machines, textiles for South and West
5. The South thought the Mississippi River linked them to upper valley states; they would overlook man-made links when they began to consider secession
6. Transformed the home, it was once the center of economics, but now served as a refuge from work.

XXI. The Market Revolution

1. Just as the political landscape of America changed, the economic scene did too. Essentially, business began to grow up.
2. The era of the self-supported farm was changing to a more modern, specialty driven economy.
3. These times widened the gap between the rich and poor.
4. Cities saw the greatest extremes
 - unskilled workers were “drifters” from town to town looking for jobs (1/2 of industrial population)
 - social mobility existed, although rags-to-riches stories were rare
 - the standard of living did rise, however, as wages did rise (this helped diffuse any potential class conflict)

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