

Alex Martinez - HIST105 Research Paper

American History Survey

Title: The Impact of the Industrial Revolution
on American Society (1865-1900)

Abstract:

This paper examines the profound social, economic, and political changes brought about by rapid industrialization in post-Civil War America. The transformation affected every aspect of American life from rural to urban.

The period following the Civil War marked a turning point in American history. The rapid expansion of railroads, steel production, and manufacturing fundamentally altered the nation's economic landscape.

Key factors driving industrialization:

- Abundant natural resources (coal, iron, oil)
- Growing population and immigration
- Technological innovations
- Government policies favoring business
- Access to capital and investment

Page 3 - Economic Transformation

The Rise of Big Business:

Industrial giants like Andrew Carnegie (steel) and John D. Rockefeller (oil) built massive corporations that dominated their respective industries.

Railroad Expansion:

- â€¢ Transcontinental Railroad completed in 1869
- â€¢ Connected East and West coasts
- â€¢ Facilitated westward expansion and settlement
- â€¢ Created national markets for goods

Manufacturing Growth:

Factory production replaced artisan workshops

Page 4 - Social Changes

Urbanization:

Cities grew rapidly as people moved from farms to find work in factories. Chicago's population grew from 109,000 in 1860 to over 1 million by 1890.

Immigration:

Millions of immigrants, primarily from Southern and Eastern Europe, provided labor for expanding industries.

Working Conditions:

- Long hours (12-16 hour days)
- Dangerous working environments
- Child labor was common
- Low wages and no benefits

Page 5 - Labor Movement

Rise of Labor Organizations:

Workers began organizing to improve conditions:

- â€¢ Knights of Labor (1869) - first major labor union

- â€¢ American Federation of Labor (1886) - Samuel Gompers

- â€¢ Industrial Workers of the World (1905)

Major Labor Conflicts:

- â€¢ Great Railroad Strike of 1877

- â€¢ Haymarket Affair (1886)

- â€¢ Homestead Strike (1892)

- â€¢ Pullman Strike (1894)

These conflicts highlighted the tensions between capital and labor during this period.

Page 6 - Political Impact

Government and Business:

The federal government generally supported business interests through favorable policies:

- High protective tariffs
- Land grants to railroad companies
- Minimal regulation of business practices
- Use of military to break strikes

Progressive Era Reforms:

By the 1890s, reform movements began addressing the negative effects of rapid industrialization, leading to the Progressive Era of the early 1900s.

Page 7 - Conclusion

The Industrial Revolution transformed America from a largely agricultural society into a modern industrial nation. While it brought unprecedented economic growth and technological progress, it also created significant social problems and inequalities.

Legacy:

The period laid the foundation for America's emergence as a world economic power in the 20th century.

Bibliography:

[References would be listed here]