

Chapter 14: Forging the National Economy (1790—1860)

The Westward Movement

Recall

Notes

- Andrew Jackson symbolized westward expansion of American people
- as of 1850, half the population were under the age of 30
 - always wanted to move west
- pioneers were not buff men chopping down trees with a single swing, but rather families without much food or clothes living in temporary tents made of sticks
 - victims of disease, depression, premature death
 - people were extremely lonely, especially women, who had no contact with outsiders for days or weeks on end
- frontiersman saw no-holds-barred wrestling where damage was encouraged
- Jacksonian politics promoted the lone-wolf
- pioneers often ill-informed, superstition, fiercely individualistic
 - eventually called upon the government to help with internal improvements

Shaping the Western Landscape

Recall

Notes

- tobacco planters exhausted land quickly and moved west, leaving behind barren fields
 - European bluegrass thrived in that environment when the cane was burned away, and those were the right type of feed for livestock, so livestock was raised where tobacco couldn't be
- American fur-trappers started settings traplines all over the Rocky Mountain
 - fur-trapping was based on the **rendezvous** system
 - each summer, traders went from St. Louis to a verdant Rocky Mountain valley and waited for trappers and Natives to arrive with the goods
 - beaver and buffalo both almost went extinct, which is what historians call **ecological imperialism**
- despite hunting multiple species to the brink of extinction, Americans generally enjoyed nature and its beauty
 - United States had a unique wilderness counting as a defining attribute
 - natural beauty of America, unspoiled by human hands (for now)
- some Americans started pointing out preservation of nature as a national policy
 - George Catlin, painter and student, proposed a national park
 - Natives were killing too many buffalo just to trade for whiskey

The March of Millions

Recall

Notes

- population was doubling every 25 years as people moved west
- by 1860 US was fourth most populous nation in the world, behind Russia, France, Austria
 - 43 cities with populations of over 20,000
- overpopulation brought slums, bad street lighting, bad police, bad water, sewage, rats, bad garbage disposal
 - New York eliminated many mosquito diseases when they replaced water wells with a piped-in water supply
- immigrants came in 240,000 during the 1850s
 - 1.5 million Irish, almost as many Germans
 - came because Europe was running out of room and had too many displaced people and wanted to remove them to America
- America appealed the most to the struggling masses where migrants headed for the "land of freedom and opportunity"
 - break from aristocratic caste and state church
 - opportunities to get land and be successful
 - letters sent home by immigrants often described glowing terms of the richer life: low taxes, no required military service, "three meat meals a day"
- transoceanic steamships meant that immigrants could travel fast and cheap compared to before
- America had immigrants of all different countries

The Emerald Isle Moves West

Recall

Notes

- Ireland suffered to potato famine in mid 1840s
 - many flocked to the United States and swarmed Boston and New York
 - scorned by everyone else and got low-level jobs
 - "No Irish Need Apply" or NINA often showed up on factory doors
- Irish resented the blacks whom they shared the social basement with
- the Irish were forced to fend for themselves and formed the **Ancient Order of Hibernians**, a semisecret Irish society to fight landlords
 - helped start the **Molly Maguires**, an Irish miners union
- Irish tended to remain in low skill jobs but improved a little bit
 - most money still went towards getting a house over education
- Irishmen soon took interest in politics and started joining city machines, including New York's **Tammany Hall**
- Americans didn't want to include the Irish vote but politicians saw the 2 million new Irish immigrants and wanted to profit off of them
 - Irish also hated British

The German Forty-Eighters

Recall

Notes

- over 1.5 million Germans came to America between 1830s and 1860s
 - farmers that came from crop failures or liberal political refugees
 - German liberals contributed greatly to American democracy and political life
 - many already had a little bit of money or goods and could afford to settle in the Middle West like Wisconsin
- politicians pandered to Germans as well as Irish
- Conestoga wagon, Kentucky rifle, Christmas tree were all German contributions to American culture
- Germans were better educated than Americans for the most part, and supported public schools, art and music
 - did not support slavery at all before Civil War
- Germans wanted to preserve culture so they settled in close communities and kept away from others

Flare-ups of Antiforeignism

Recall

Notes

- American "nativists" were afraid that foreigners might outbreed, outvote, overwhelm the old "native" stock
- Roman Catholics started making their own schools to teach Catholic ways instead of Protestant
 - American "nativists" wanted political action
 - formed the American party, which became the **Know-Nothing party**
 - wanted stricter immigration laws and to be able to deport people
 - promoted fictional works of authors who posed as escaped nuns professing fake sins
 - Maria Monk's **Awful Disclosures** sold over 300,000 copies
 - sometimes would resort to violence like burning down Catholic buildings
- 1844 Irish Catholics fought back against nativist threats in Philadelphia
 - two Catholic churches burned down and 13 citizens killed, 50 wounded
 - foreshadowing America's treatment of minority groups
- immigrants made America ethnically and racially varied
 - American economy allowed immigrants to come and get a place for themselves without harming others
- **Industrial Revolution** swept throughout 19th century Europe

Creeping Mechanism

Recall

Notes

- British inventors in the 1750s perfected a machine that allowed mass production of textiles
 - brought in modern factory system, Industrial Revolution

- Americans were not eager to go work in factories when they had come to America for land in the first place
 - not enough people wanted to operate machines, under immigrants poured in during the 1840s
 - not high enough quality goods to sell for a lot of money
 - production cost was a little bit high
- British had a textile industry monopoly
 - Parliament enabled laws that didn't allow textile machines to get exported

Whitney Ends the Fiber Famine

Recall

Notes

- a skilled British mechanic, Samuel Slater, memorized plans for textile machines and brought them to America
 - made the first efficient American machine to spin cotton, but America had no cotton
- Eli Whitney, mechanical genius, said the Southern poverty could be relieved if someone invented a machine for separating seed from cotton
 - he built a **cotton gin**
 - overnight, cotton raising became extremely profitable
 - demand for cotton brought back slavery full force
- slaveowners cleared acres for cotton and pushed westward to Alabama and Mississippi
 - America's first phase of the Industrial Revolution came in the form of cotton textiles
- factories flourished in New England but they branched out to New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania
- the South was desperately bound to slaves
- New England was favored for industry because it didn't have the soil needed to farm anything
 - had seaports to import and export
 - rivers provided power to turn the cogs of the machines

Marvels in Manufacturing

Recall

Notes

- American factories stopped spreading when the embargo happened
- after Ghent in 1815, British advertisements flooded American newspapers
 - American businesses closed because they couldn't compete with British ones
- factories also started to make firearms
 - Whitney made musket parts the same so that they could be swapped out for each other if something broke, whereas previous ones were custom fit
 - interchangeable parts adopted by 1850
 - Samuel Colt's revolver

- basis of modern mass-production
 - allowed North to have more firearms than the South
- Whitney allowed slavery a second chance at life when he created the cotton gin, but also allowed the North to win by designing factory-made weapons
- Elias Howe made a sewing machine which was perfected by Isaac Singer
 - foundation of clothing industry
 - clerk of the **Patent Office** resigned in 1830 saying all the worthwhile inventions had already been discovered
- technical advances changed legal status of businesses
 - **limited liability** allowed investors to not risk any more than his own share of the corporation's stock
- Samuel F. B. Morse's telegraph was a new invention that helped the business world
 - he did the Morse code and people immediately took notice
 - instant communication with people across the country
- American products started showing up at London fairs, Great Exhibition

Workers and "Wage Slaves"

Recall

Notes

- factory system brought labor issues
 - relationships were no longer as personal and "wage slaves" clustered
- working people were wasted away
 - long hours, low wages, not enough for meals, unsanitary buildings, badly lit, heated, or ventilated
 - not allowed to form unions to lift wages
- child workers were vulnerable to exploitation
 - many children were under ten years old, emotionally starved, physically stunted, beat in "whipping rooms"
- most adult workers were better off as men could vote for workingmen's parties
 - many sided with Andrew Jackson to attack the National Bank and its rich folk
 - wanted ten-hour day, higher wages, tolerable working conditions
 - employers hated ten-hour days and fought it heavily
 - said it would lessen production, increase costs, demoralize workers
 - laborers have too much free time and the Devil would lead them to mischief
- President Van Buren signed the ten-hour day into effect for federal employees
- dozens of strikes occurred over higher wages in the 1830s and 40s
 - employers could hire new workers fresh off the boat from the Old World
- around 300,000 trade unionists by 1830, but destroyed by the depression of 1837
 - unemployment spread, unions crumbled
- won a legal victory in **Commonwealth v. Hunt** where labor unions were ruled as not illegal conspiracies if their methods were "honorable and peaceful"

Women and the Economy

Recall

Notes

- farmwomen and girls were important preindustrial economy for yarn, cloth, candles, soap, butter, cheese
 - gave jobs to girls promising greater economic independence
- **"factory girls"** worked six days a week for 12-13 hours at textile mills in factories
 - mostly English farm girls forbidden to form unions and talk about their work
- opportunities for women were still rare in the work industry
 - usually nursing, domestic service, teaching, household
 - white families employed servants who were poor white, immigrant, or black women
- majority of workingwomen were single
 - left jobs upon marriage and worked as wives and mothers
 - **cult of domesticity** which glorified customary homemaker functions
- women got more choice to say who they wanted to marry, but the parents could still ultimately say no
- families got smaller as they started privately using contraceptives
 - meant children were cared for more in smaller families
 - European visitors complained of the children being "brats"
 - parents chose not to beat their child but shape them gradually
 - good citizens were not raised to obey authority, but to be independent individuals who had their own standards
 - modern family outlined to be small, affectionate, child-centered

Western Farmers Reap a Revolution in the Fields

Recall

Notes

- farms were expanding out further west
 - Ohio, Indiana, Illinois producing more crop
- pioneers cleared forest and then planted fields of corn
 - could be fed to hogs or made into liquor, which both became staple market items
- most produce went down the Ohio-Mississippi River system to feed Cotton Kingdom
- John Deere invented a steel plow to make tilling land easier
- Cyrus McCormick made a mechanical mower-reaper
 - a single man did the work of five men with scythes
 - became known as the **McCormick reaper**
- cash-crop dominated the trans-Allegheny West
 - farmers harvested more crop than the Southerners needed
 - wanted to sell crop more East or Atlantic
 - commerce couldn't move until transportation evolved

Highways and Steamboats

Recall

Notes

- transportation was still slow and inefficient after the Constitution was ratified
- needed cheap and effect transportation to ship goods to and from factories
- some highways were built that required drivers to slow down and pay a toll before big pikes were turned away, and they were called **turnpikes**
 - appealed to a lot of people who started to use them
- building roads funded federally was hard and expensive
 - states' righters who opposed federal aid
 - eastern states didn't want roads leading to the west because people would move away from their cities
- construction of the National Road started in Maryland before War of 1812 began, but managed to reach Illinois in 1839
- Robert Fulton installed a steam engine in a boat and created the steamboat
 - easier to go up a river against current, wind, wave, tide
 - all streams used to carry commerce
 - steamboat races would blow up ships sometimes but that was ok because it was cool
- population clustered along banks of streams

"Clinton's Big Ditch" in New York

Recall

Notes

- steamboats were just as effective as turnpikes
- New Yorkers dug the **Erie Canal** which linked the Great Lakes with the Hudson River
 - quicker and cheaper transport and shipping
 - value of land along the route skyrocketed
 - attracted immigrants to Northwest to farm
- price of potatoes dropped in NYC and some farmers left
 - some became mill hands while others went to farm south of the Great Lakes
 - fruit, vegetable, dairy farming
- American products began to show up in foreign markets
 - displaced international workers who then came to America

The Iron Horse

Recall

Notes

- railroads were cheaper to construct than canals and wouldn't freeze over in winter
 - was able to go through the Allegheny barrier and go anywhere
 - first railroad appeared in 1828 then started expanding
 - would become advantageous in the Civil War
- early railroads could have set fire to nearby wooden structures from flying sparks

- brakes didn't work that well and passengers had to change trains constantly
- railroad gauges eventually became standardized and brakes actually worked and expanded quickly throughout the country

Cables, Clippers, and Pony Riders

Recall

Notes

- Cyrus Field organized a cable under North Atlantic waters from Newfoundland to Ireland and linked American and European continents
- American vessels suffered repeatedly under embargo, War of 1812, panics of 1819 and 1837
- Yankees in 1850s started to send **clipper ships** which were long and narrow and faster than steamers
 - sacrificed cargo space for speed but captains made money by shipping as expensive products as fast as they could
 - sped passengers
- British won naval superiority by Civil War with iron tramp steamers
 - steadier, roomier, more reliable, more profitable
- Americans continued moving to the Far West in wagons
- **Pony Express** established in 1860 to carry mail from Missouri to California
 - riders made the trip in ten days and in all types of weather
 - folded after eighteen months to Morse code

The Transport Web Binds the Union

Recall

Notes

- East connection to the West stimulated the **transportation revolution**
 - steamboat helped bind West and South together
- builders made so many railroads that people weren't dependent on the Mississippi for transport of goods anymore
- division of labor on a national scale by the eve of the Civil War
 - each region specialized in a specific economic activity
 - South grew cotton for East, West grew grain for the South, East made machines and textiles for the West
- political and military decisions followed economic ones
 - Southerners valued Mississippi and saw it as link that bound Mississippi Valley to the East

The Market Revolution

Recall

Notes

- **market revolution** turned farmers into essential parts of a national industry and commerce
- new legal questions about economy and winners/losers

- patents, monopolies, technologies and networks
- Chief Justice John Marshall made state governments grant charters
 - monopolies formed easily but Marshall died in 1835 and economic opportunity began to change
 - new Chief Justice Roger B. Taney sided with the public and argued for the rights of the community
 - new laws allowed investors "limited liability" if their companies got sued or went bankrupt
- as more people went to work, families became more dependent on the market to obtain goods
 - fabric, candles, soap, clothes, replaced homemade products
- household division of labor and status as goods were bought rather than made
 - women's work became devalued and home changed to be a refuge from work rather than economic production
- cities had extreme cases of worker inequality where many people were "drifters" going from town to town
- not the "social mobility" everyone always said
 - rags-to-riches accounted for very few people
 - New World still provided more opportunities for people than the old, so they took their chances anyways