Transformation of the Economy & Society in Antebellum America 1820-1860
Guiding Question

- Analyze the causes of the transformation of the American economy in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Include: developments in transportation, population, manufacturing and agriculture.
Economic Revolution?
Market Revolution?  Transportation Revolution?
THE TRANSPORTATION REVOLUTION & CREATION OF A NATIONAL MARKET ECONOMY

- agrarian economy – subsistence?
- Key catalysts:
  1. transportation improvements – canals, RRs
  2. development of textile mills and factories
  3. innovations in banking and legal practices
  4. Capital – from Europe (esp. Britain)
  5. Population growth – 9M in 1820 → 30+M in 1860
  6. innovations in technology

- “Market Revolution”?
- Not Yet the Industrial Revolution
Transformation of the Antebellum Economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Factors Promoting Economic Growth, 1820–1860</th>
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<td><strong>Factor</strong></td>
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<td>Abundant natural resources</td>
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<td>Substantial population growth</td>
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<td>Transportation revolution</td>
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<td>Capital investment</td>
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<td>Government support</td>
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<td>Industrialization</td>
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TRANSPORTATION REVOLUTION

& THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL MARKET ECONOMY
Eras of Transportation

- Turnpike & River Era 1790s-1820s
- Canal Era 1825-1840s
- Railroad Era 1850s-1940s
- Automobile Era 1920s-present
- Airplane Era 1960s-present
TRANSPORTATION REVOLUTION

- turnpikes
- National Road

[Map showing the National Road and turnpikes in the United States]
TRANSPORTATION REVOLUTION

- Steamboats
  - Robert Fulton
  - *Clermont* (1807)

- Impact on transportation and trade

Robert Fulton’s *Clermont* plies the Hudson River
TRANSPORTATION REVOLUTION

- Erie Canal (1825)

  - Significance
    - Cost of trade
    - Direction of trade
    - Settlement of NW
    - New York City
    - Upstate NY
    - Canal boom
TRANSPORTATION REVOLUTION

- Canal boom
- Effect on transportation and trade patterns
Paths of Northern Migration after 1800
TRANSPORTATION REVOLUTION

- Railroads
- Baltimore & Ohio RR (1830)
- short lines
- trunk lines
TRANSPORTATION REVOLUTION

1840

1860

Railroads

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Mohawk And Hudson Railroad’s *Dewitt Clinton*
National Market Economy:

Inland Freight Rates, 1790-1865
TRANSPORTATION REVOLUTION

- Impact of Railroads
  a) Promoted national trade and economic growth
  b) Linked Northeast and old Northwest for trade
     - Consolidation of early short lines leads to E-W orientation
     - Chicago
  c) Promoted the growth of other industries
     - Iron
     - Coal
     - Telegraph
  d) Encouraged farmers to specialize
  e) First great corporations in US – model for later large businesses
BEGINNINGS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

- Factory System
- Rise of Corporations
- Technological Innovations
- Labor
- Old Northwest
BEGINNINGS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

- textiles
- Samuel Slater
- factory system

Samuel Slater
(“Father of the Factory System”)
BEGINNINGS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

- Lowell (or Waltham) Factory System
  - Francis Cabot Lowell
  - First dual-purpose textile plants
  - employees
- Lowell towns
Lowell Girls

- Lowell Girls - typical “profile”
- Factory Girls Association

Early Textile Loom

Lowell Boarding Houses
The Growth of Cotton Textile Manufacturing, 1810–1840
BEGINNINGS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION: Legal and Financial Developments

- **Corporations**
  - In 1800, c. 20 corps US; by 1817, over 1800
  - General incorporation laws
    - New York, 1848
  - stock
  - limited liability

- **Banking** – paper banknotes
Distribution of Wealth

- During the American Revolution, 45% of all wealth in the top 10% of the population.
- 1845 Boston → top 4% owned over 65% of the wealth.
- 1860 Philadelphia → top 1% owned over 50% of the wealth.
- The gap between rich and poor was widening.
BEGINNINGS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION: WORKFORCE & LABOR

- Skilled artisans vs. unskilled workers
- Working class
- Immigrant workforce

*The Factory Girl’s Garland*

February 20, 1845 issue.
BEGINNINGS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION: LABOR & THE EARLY UNION MOVEMENT

- craft societies
- National Trades’ Union
- Early issues:
  - Child Labor Laws
  - 10 Hour Workday
  - Right to Strike
- *Commonwealth v. Hunt* (Massachusetts, 1842)

> Early unions were usually local, social, and weak
> – and were largely ineffective before the Civil War
BEGINNINGS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION: RISE OF AN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY IN (OLD) NORTHWEST

- Northeastern Agriculture vs. The Old Northwest
  - Decline in Northeast
  - Rise of the Midwest
  - Ties between Northeast and old Northwest
POPULATION GROWTH, IMMIGRATION AND NATIVIST REACTION
Guiding Question

“Throughout its history, the United States has been a land of refuge and opportunity for immigrants.”

Assess the validity of this statement in view of the experiences of the English, Germans, & the Irish in the 19th-century urban Northeast.
POPULATION GROWTH

- 1775: 2.5 Million
- 1790: 4 Million
- 1820: 10 Million
- 1840: 17 Million
- 1860: 32 Million
POPULATION GROWTH

Causes
- Natural increase
- Immigration

Immigration to the United States, 1820-1860
Immigration

Major immigrant groups
- Irish
- Germans
- English

When did they come?
Where did they settle?
Participation of Irish and German Immigrants in the New York City Workforce for Selected Occupations, 1859
The distribution of foreign-born residents of the United States in 1860.
Immigration & Nativism

- Nativism
- Native American Association
- Supreme Order of the Star Spangled Banner
- American (“Know-Nothing”) Party

Recent immigrants, from Harper’s Weekly, 1858
Americans were willing to try anything.

They were first copiers, then innovators.

• Patents Approved:
  • 1800: 41
  • 1860: 4,357
Eli Whitney: The Cotton Gin, 1791

(Actually invented by a slave)
Eli Whitney’s Gun Factory

Interchangeable Parts Rifle
John Deere & the Steel Plow
Cyrus McCormick
& the Mechanical Reaper
Samuel F. B. Morse

1840 - Telegraph
Cyrus Field & the Transatlantic Cable, 1858
Elias Howe & Isaac Singer

1840s
Sewing Machine
CHANGES IN SOCIAL AND CLASS STRUCTURES
Guiding Question

- How did the transformation of the American economy in the first half of the nineteenth century bring about changes to society, including the role of women?
CHANGES TO SOCIETY

The market economy changed:
- class structure
- The nature and location of work
- Gender roles (Middle class)
- the standard of living

Social Class structure
- Working class
- Rise of the middle class
- Social mobility?
- Geographic mobility

Where do Farmers fit?
CHANGES TO SOCIETY

Work & Home

- Lower birthrates
- “Separate Spheres”
  - end of cottage industry
  - new gender roles
- “cult of domesticity”
- employment opportunities
- Education of women
  - Oberlin College

Occupations of Women Wage Earners in Massachusetts, 1837
The results of early 19th Century industrialization in America?

ECONOMIC?

POLITICAL?

SOCIAL?

FUTURE PROBLEMS?