CHAPTER 14

Forging the National Economy, 1790–1860

PART I: REVIEWING THE CHAPTER

A. Checklist of Learning Objectives

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Describe the growth and movement of America’s population in the early nineteenth century.
2. Describe the largely German and Irish wave of immigration beginning in the 1830s and the reactions it provoked among native Americans.
3. Explain why America was relatively slow to embrace the industrial revolution and the factory.
4. Describe the early development of the factory system and Eli Whitney’s system of interchangeable parts.
5. Outline early industrialism’s effects on workers, including women and children.
6. Describe the impact of new technologies, including transportation and communication systems, on American business and agriculture.
7. Describe the development of a continental market economy and its revolutionary effects on both producers and consumers.
8. Explain why the emerging industrial economy could raise the general level of prosperity, while simultaneously creating greater disparities of wealth between rich and poor.

B. Glossary

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms.

1. **caste** An exclusive or rigid social distinction based on birth, wealth, occupation, and so forth. “There was freedom from aristocratic caste and state church. . . .”
2. **nativist** One who advocates policies favoring native-born citizens and displays hostility or prejudice toward immigrants. “The invasion of this so-called immigrant ‘rabble’ . . . inflamed the prejudices of American ‘nativists.’ ”
3. **factory** A large establishment for the manufacturing of goods, including buildings and substantial machinery. “The factory system gradually spread from England—‘the world’s workshop’—to other lands.”
4. **trademark** A distinguishing symbol or word used by a manufacturer on its goods, usually registered by law to protect against imitators. “. . . unscrupulous Yankee manufacturers . . . learned to stamp their own products with faked English trademarks.”
5. **patent** The legal certification of an original invention, product, or process, guaranteeing its holder sole rights to profits from its use or reproduction for a specified period of time. “For the decade ending in 1800, only 306 patents were registered in Washington. . . .”
6. **liability** Legal responsibility for loss or damage. “The principle of limited liability aided the concentration of capital. . . .”

7. **incorporation** The organization of individuals into an institutional entity with legally defined privileges and responsibilities. “Laws of ‘free incorporation’ were first passed in New York in 1848. . . .”

8. **labor union** An organization of workers—usually wage-earning workers—to promote the interests and welfare of its members, often by collective bargaining with employers. “They were forbidden by law to form labor unions. . . .”

9. **strike** An organized work stoppage by employees in order to obtain better wages, working conditions, and so on. “Not surprisingly, only twenty-four recorded strikes occurred before 1835.”

10. **capitalist** An individual or group who uses its accumulated funds or private property to produce goods or services for profit in a market. “It made ambitious capitalists out of humble plowmen. . . .”


12. **posterity** Later descendants or subsequent generations. “He installed a powerful steam engine in a vessel that posterity came to know as the Clermont. . . .”

13. **productivity** In economics, the relative efficiency in the production of goods and services, measured in terms of the quantity of goods or services produced by workers in a certain length of time. “The principle of division of labor . . . spelled productivity and profits. . . .”

14. **barter** The direct exchange of goods or services for one another, without the use of cash or any other medium of exchange. “Most families . . . bartered with their neighbors for the few necessities they could not make themselves.”

**PART II: CHECKING YOUR PROGRESS**

**A. True-False**

Where the statement is true, circle T; where it is false, circle F.

1. T F American frontier life was often plagued by poverty and illness.

2. T F Even as they often despoiled nature, Americans celebrated the spectacular American landscape and wilderness as a defining element of national culture and identity.

3. T F The growing cheapness and speed of transatlantic steamships made the United States the preferred destination for European immigrants.

4. T F The primary cause of nativist hostility to Irish immigrants was their frequent involvement in fights and street gangs.

5. T F The early industrial revolution was greatly advanced by Eli Whitney’s introduction of the system of interchangeable parts.

6. T F Early labor unions made very slow progress, partly because the strike weapon was illegal and ineffective.

7. T F Most married women in the early nineteenth century worked only part-time and contributed their income to the support of their families.

8. T F The child-centered family developed in the early nineteenth century partly because Americans deliberately limited the number of their children.
9. T F The Erie Canal greatly lowered the cost of Midwestern agricultural products in the markets of eastern big cities and even Europe.

10. T F The railroad gained quick acceptance as a safer and more efficient alternative to waterbound transportation.

11. T F In the sectional division of labor that developed before the Civil War, the South provided corn and meat to feed the nation, the Midwest produced industrial goods and textiles, and the Northeast supplied financial and communications services.

12. T F The growth of the market economy increasingly undermined the family’s role as a self-sufficient producing unit and made the home a place of refuge from work.

13. T F By 1850, permanent telegraph lines had been stretched across both the Atlantic Ocean and the North American continent.

14. T F The advances in manufacturing and transportation decreased the gap between rich and poor in America.

15. T F In the 1830s, new legal and governmental policies prohibiting chartered business monopolies encouraged competition and aided the market economy.

B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and circle the corresponding letter.

1. In 1850, over one-half of the American population was  
   a. foreign-born.  
   b. living west of the Mississippi River.  
   c. under the age of thirty.  
   d. living in cities of over 100,000 people.  
   e. Irish or German.

2. Writers like James Fenimore Cooper and Herman Melville explored characters who exemplified the American frontier’s cultural emphasis on  
   a. masculinity.  
   b. rugged individualism.  
   c. group conformity.  
   d. environmental awareness.  
   e. white racial superiority.

3. Americans came to look on their spectacular western wilderness areas especially as  
   a. opportunities for imperialistic expansionism.  
   b. a potential location for industrial development.  
   c. a potential attraction for tourists from abroad.  
   d. the sacred home of American Indian tribes.  
   e. a distinctive and inspirational feature of American national identity.

4. Compared to European immigration to other countries like Australia and Argentina, immigrants to the United States were  
   a. from a greater diversity of European countries.  
   b. more affluent.  
   c. primarily from European urban centers rather than rural areas.  
   d. English-speaking.  
   e. politically liberal or radical.
5. The two leading sources of European immigration to America in the 1840s and 1850s were
   a. France and Italy.
   b. Germany and France.
   c. Germany and Ireland.
   d. Ireland and Norway.
   e. Britain and the Netherlands.

6. Many nineteenth-century Americans feared and distrusted Roman Catholicism because
   a. American Catholics had been Loyalists during the American Revolution.
   b. French-Canadian Catholics were largely poor and uneducated.
   c. it was seen as a strange foreign religion under total control of an authoritarian pope.
   d. they disliked the Catholic belief in the Virgin Mary as the mother of Jesus.
   e. they saw Catholic monasteries and convents buying up choice western lands.

7. Industrialization was, at first, slow to arrive in America because
   a. there was a shortage of labor, capital, and consumers.
   b. low tariff rates invited foreign imports.
   c. the country lacked the educational system necessary to develop technology.
   d. the country lacked a patent system to guarantee investors the profits from new machines.
   e. most American consumers preferred hand-crafted goods.

8. The first industry to be substantially dominated by the new factory system of mass manufacturing
   was the
   a. shipbuilding industry.
   b. telegraph and communications industry.
   c. agricultural implement industry.
   d. iron-making industry.
   e. textile industry.

9. Wages for most American workers rose in the early nineteenth century, except for the most
   exploited workers like
   a. immigrants and westerners.
   b. textile and transportation workers.
   c. single men and women.
   d. women and children.
   e. American Indians.

10. A major change affecting the American family in the early nineteenth century was
    a. the rise of an organized feminist movement.
    b. the movement of most women into the work force.
    c. increased conflict between parents and children over moral questions.
    d. a decline in the average number of children per household.
    e. the growing opposition to families’ use of children as economic assets.

11. In early nineteenth-century America, almost all the women who worked for wages in the new
    factories were
    a. young and single.
    b. middle aged.
    c. Irish or German immigrants.
    d. skilled workers.
    e. exploited by their husbands as well as factory owners.
12. The greatest economic and political impact of New York’s Erie Canal was to
   a. make upstate New York the new center of American agriculture.
   b. delay the development of railroads by several decades.
   c. tie the agricultural Midwest by trade to the Northeast rather than to the South.
   d. enable southern cotton to reach New England without ocean transport.
   e. make the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers the primary paths of inland transportation.

13. The new regional division of labor created by improved transportation meant that the South specialized in
   a. cotton, the West in grain and livestock, and the East in manufacturing.
   b. manufacturing, the West in transportation, and the East in grain and livestock.
   c. cotton, the West in manufacturing, and the East in finance.
   d. grain and livestock, the West in cotton, and the East in transportation.
   e. manufacturing, the West in cotton, and the East in communications.

14. Free incorporation laws, limited liability laws, and the Supreme Court’s decision prohibiting state governments from granting irrevocable charters to corporations all greatly aided
   a. private American colleges’ ability to compete with state universities.
   b. established businesses with large capital investments.
   c. Americans’ ability to compete with cheap British imports.
   d. more entrepreneurial enterprises and greater market competition.
   e. European investors in American business enterprises.

15. One major effect of industrialization was
   a. increasing economic equality among all citizens.
   b. strengthening of the family as an economic unit.
   c. increasingly stable labor force.
   d. rise in ethnic tensions.
   e. rise in the gap between rich and poor.

C. Identification
Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

1. ________ New York Democratic machine organization that exemplified the growing power of Irish immigrants in American politics
2. ________ Semisecret Irish organization that became a benevolent society aiding Irish immigrants in America
3. ________ Liberal German refugees who fled failed democratic revolutions and came to America
4. ________ Popular nickname of the secretive, nativist American Party that gained considerable, temporary success in the 1850s by attacking immigrants and Catholics
5. ________ The transformation of manufacturing that began in Britain about 1750
6. ________ Whitney’s invention that enhanced cotton production and gave new life to black slavery
7. ________ Principle that permitted individual investors to risk no more capital in a business venture than their own share of a corporation’s stock
8. ________  Major European exposition in 1851 that provided a dazzling showcase for the American inventions of Samuel Morse, Cyrus McCormick, and Charles Goodyear

9. ________  Massachusetts Supreme Court decision of 1842 that overturned the widespread doctrine that labor unions were illegal conspiracies in restraint of trade

10. ________  Term for the widespread nineteenth-century cultural creed that glorified women’s roles as wives and mothers in the home

11. ________  Cyrus McCormick’s invention that vastly increased the productivity of the American grain farmer

12. ________  The only major highway constructed by the federal government before the Civil War (either of the two names for the highway are acceptable)

13. ________  The name of Robert Fulton’s first steamship that sailed up the Hudson River in 1807

14. ________  Clinton’s Big Ditch that transformed transportation and economic life across the Great Lakes region from Buffalo to Chicago

15. ________  Short-lived but spectacular service that carried mail from Missouri to California in only ten days

D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

1. ___  Samuel Slater
2. ___  Maria Monk
3. ___  Samuel Colt
4. ___  Eli Whitney
5. ___  Elias Howe
6. ___  Samuel F.B. Morse
7. ___  Catharine Beecher
8. ___  Know-Nothings
9. ___  Commonwealth v. Hunt
10. ___  Cyrus McCormick
11. ___  Robert Fulton
12. ___  Cyrus Field
13. ___  Roger Taney
14. ___  Molly Maguires
15. ___  DeWitt Clinton

a. Inventor of the mechanical reaper that transformed grain growing into a business

b. Weapons manufacturer whose popular revolver used Whitney’s system of interchangeable parts

c. New York governor who built the Erie Canal

d. Inventor of a machine that revolutionized the ready-made clothing industry

e. Supreme Court justice whose ruling in the Charles River Bridge case opened chartered monopolies to competition

f. Agitators against immigrants and Roman Catholics

g. Wealthy New York manufacturer who laid the first temporary transatlantic cable in 1858
h. Escaped nun whose lurid book *Awful Disclosures* became an anti-Catholic best seller in the 1830s

i. Immigrant mechanic who initiated American industrialization by setting up his cotton-spinning factory in 1791

j. Painter turned inventor who developed the first reliable system for instant communication across distance

k. Developer of a folly that made rivers two-way streams of transportation

l. Prominent figure who helped turn teaching into a largely female profession

m. Radical, secret Irish labor union of the 1860s and 1870s

n. Yankee mechanical genius who revolutionized cotton production and created the system of interchangeable parts

o. Pioneering Massachusetts Supreme Court decision that declared labor unions legal

E. Putting Things in Order

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 5.

1. ___ First telegraph message—“What hath God wrought?”—is sent from Baltimore to Washington.

2. ___ Industrial revolution begins in Britain.

3. ___ Telegraph lines are stretched across Atlantic Ocean and North American continent.

4. ___ Major water transportation route connects New York City to Lake Erie and points west.

5. ___ Invention of cotton gin and system of interchangeable parts revolutionized southern agriculture and northern industry.
### F. Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The open, rough-and-tumble society of the American West</td>
<td>a. Made the fast-growing United States the fourth most populous nation in the Western world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Natural population growth and increasing immigration from Ireland and Germany</td>
<td>b. Opened the Great Lakes states to rapid economic growth and spurred the development of major cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The poverty and Roman Catholic faith of most Irish immigrants</td>
<td>c. Encouraged western farmers to specialize in cash-crop agricultural production for eastern and European markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Eli Whitney’s invention of the cotton gin</td>
<td>d. Made Americans strongly individualistic and self-reliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The passage of general incorporation and limited-liability laws</td>
<td>e. Aroused nativist hostility and occasional riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The early efforts of labor unions to organize and strike</td>
<td>f. Bound the two northern sections together across the mountains and tended to isolate the South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Improved western transportation and the new McCormick reaper</td>
<td>g. Aroused fierce opposition from businesspeople and guardians of law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825</td>
<td>h. Enabled businesspeople to create more powerful and effective joint-stock capital ventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The development of a strong east-west rail network</td>
<td>i. Transformed southern agriculture and gave new life to slavery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The replacement of household production by factory-made, store-bought goods</td>
<td>j. Weakened many women’s economic status and pushed them into a separate sphere of home and family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
G. Developing Historical Skills

Reading a Chart and Bar Graph
Examine the bar graph Population Increase, Including Slaves and Indians to learn more about the character of the American population from 1790 to 1860.

Answer the following questions.
1. Which decade showed the largest absolute increase in total population?

2. During which decade did the nonwhite population begin to decrease as a percentage of the total population?

3. In which census year did the nonwhite population surpass the white population of 1790?

4. Using the bar graph, indicate about how many times larger the total population was in 1860 than it had been in 1820.

H. Map Mastery

Map Discrimination
Using the maps and charts in Chapter 14, answer the following questions.
1. Cumberland (National) Road and Main Connections: How many states did the Cumberland Road pass through? (Do not count Missouri.)

2. Industry and Agriculture, 1860: Which industry developed near Philadelphia?

3. Industry and Agriculture, 1860: If you were a tobacco farmer, in which state would you most likely live?
4. *Principal Canals in 1840*: If you had traveled from Albany, New York, to Evansville, Indiana, which two canals and one lake would you have traversed?

5. *Principal Canals in 1840*: If you had traveled from Columbia, Pennsylvania, to Cleveland, Ohio, which two canals and one river would you have traversed?

6. *The Railroad Revolution*: In 1860, how many direct rail lines linked the North and the South west of the Appalachians?

7. *The Railroad Revolution*: Which three Midwestern states had the greatest number of rail lines in 1860?

8. *Main Routes West Before the Civil War*: If you had traveled from Independence, Missouri, to Los Angeles, California, before the Civil War, which major trails would you have traversed?

**Map Challenge**

Using the maps of *Erie Canal and Main Branches, Principal Canals in 1840, and The Railroad Revolution*, write a brief essay explaining the economic importance of the Erie Canal and other canals and railroads for trade between the Northeast and the Northwest.

**PART III: APPLYING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED**

1. How did the migration into a vast western frontier shape Americans’ values and society in the period 1790–1860?

2. Since all white Americans were descended from European immigrants, what made the Irish and German immigration of the 1830s and 1840s so controversial. Was the crucial factor in fueling nativist hostility really religion (that is, Catholicism) and poverty rather than immigration itself?

3. What were the effects of the new factory and corporate systems of production on early industrial workers. Why were Americans relatively slow to move from their traditional agricultural and craft forms of production to industrial factory manufacturing?

4. Argue for or against: Americans’ love of technology and success in inventing labor-saving devices occurred in part because skilled labor was such a scarce commodity in the United States.

5. What was the impact of the new economic developments on the role of women in society? Which women were most affected by early industrialization and which least?

6. How did the American family change in the early nineteenth century? How did these changes especially affect the place of children within the family?
7. In America, early industrialization, westward expansion, and growing sectional tension all occurred during the first half of the nineteenth century. How were these three developments connected? Which section of the nation gained the most from the transportation and communications revolutions of the period, and which gained least?

8. Should the rise of early American industry and the market revolution be seen as an expression of American popular democracy and the rise of mass politics (see Chapter 13), or was the Jacksonian movement toward democracy and equality in part a response to the threat that expanding capitalism posed to those core American values?