

**Prologue: American Beginnings****Lesson 4**

# Economic and Social Changes

**Key Terms and People**

**free enterprise** The freedom of private businesses to operate competitively for profit with little government regulation

**entrepreneurs** Business owners

**Samuel F. B. Morse** Inventor of the telegraph

**Lowell textile mills** Large facilities in Lowell, Massachusetts, that produced cloth in the early 1800s

**strike** Work stoppage

**immigration** The movement of people into another place, such as a country, to live permanently

**Ralph Waldo Emerson** Leading transcendental philosopher

**abolition** Movement to outlaw slavery

**William Lloyd Garrison** Abolitionist leader and newspaper editor

**Frederick Douglass** Escaped slave who became a noted abolitionist leader

**Elizabeth Cady Stanton** Leader in the abolitionist and women's rights movements

**Seneca Falls Convention** Convention held in 1848 to argue for women's rights

**Before You Read**

In the last lesson you learned about political changes in the early years of the nation. In this lesson you will learn about economic and social changes of the early 1800s.

**As You Read**

Complete a chart with facts about economic and social changes in the 1800s.

**REGIONAL ECONOMIES****How did the economies of the North and South differ?**

The economies of the different regions of the United States began to differ in the early 1800s. By this time, the Industrial Revolution that started in Britain had reached the United States. However, the use of new technology for large-scale production mainly impacted the North.

The first American industries rose up in New England. Soon, textile mills and other kinds of manufacturers dotted the North. Farmers in the North changed as well. They started to specialize in just one or two kinds of crops or livestock. They used the money they earned from the sale of their products to buy goods made in northern factories. The interconnection of agriculture and

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manufacturing helped create a market economy.

Meanwhile, agriculture continued to support the southern economy. Eli Whitney's cotton gin allowed farmers in the South to grow cotton more profitably. Soon, cotton became the South's most important crop. Because many workers were needed to grow cotton, slavery expanded in the South.

1. How did the invention of the cotton gin affect the South?

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## THE MARKET REVOLUTION

### **How did the establishment of a market economy affect Americans?**

America's market economy continued to spread. More and more people bought and sold goods rather than making them for themselves. **Free enterprise** had become a main driving force for economic growth. In this system, private businesses have freedom to compete to earn profits with little government regulation. **Entrepreneurs** invested their own money in new industries. They were willing to take risks to earn huge profits.

The early 1800s became a time of invention. Some inventions improved the ways people communicated. For example, **Samuel F. B. Morse** patented the telegraph, which sent messages quickly. Such inventions allowed businesses to communicate over long distances.

Better transportation systems improved how people and goods moved. Robert Fulton's steamboat became a main way to move freight on rivers. People even built canals to move products in places where there were

no waterways. Yet the introduction of railroads gave Americans an even better way to move goods.

American workers produced more and better goods than ever before. The products were more affordable for Americans and easier to get, even if they were made far away. By the 1840s improved transportation and communication had made America's regions more interdependent.

With the help of investors, the Northeast became the center of American commerce. The fertile soil of the Midwest led that area to excel at farming. The newly invented John Deere steel plow turned prairie land into farmland. Cyrus McCormick's reaper helped farmers harvest grain. The South continued to grow crops such as cotton and tobacco.

The market economy changed how Americans worked. Machines let unskilled workers do tasks once done only by skilled artisans. However, they needed to work in factories. This meant less time with families. Sometime, people moved to new communities built around factories.

Many women left family farms to find work in the **Lowell textile mills**. Factory owners welcomed women because they were paid less than men. Still, this work offered women better pay than sewing or other jobs open to them.

Factory workers often faced poor conditions, such as long hours and cramped workspaces. One way to protest this was by organizing a **strike**, or work stoppage. Striking workers hoped to force employers to make changes. Most strikes failed because employers could easily replace striking workers with newcomers to the country who needed jobs badly.

Between 1830 and 1860 European

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**immigration** increased dramatically in the United States. Many Irish people came to escape the Great Potato Famine. These immigrants faced prejudice because they were poor and Roman Catholic. Also, some workers feared that the immigrants would take their jobs.

Unhappiness with working conditions led some workers to join together in trade unions to gain greater power. However, these new trade unions faced much opposition.

2. How did a market economy affect American life?

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### REFORMING AMERICAN SOCIETY

#### **How did Americans work to improve society?**

Besides working conditions, Americans faced many other problems. Religious and social reform movements formed to come up with solutions.

Many of the movements trace their beginnings to the Great Awakening. This Christian movement aimed at reviving religious feeling. It focused on individual responsibility for salvation and the improvement of society. Followers attended revival meetings where they listened to emotional sermons, studied the Bible, and reflected on their lives.

Writer **Ralph Waldo Emerson** led another kind of awakening known as transcendentalism. Transcendentalists believed that truth could be discovered by observing nature and relating it to one's own experience.

In the North, African American churches became political, cultural, and social centers. Slaves in the South did

not have their own churches, but interpreted Bible stories they heard as promises of freedom. African Americans, along with some whites, envisioned an end to slavery.

**Abolition**, the movement to end slavery, became the most important reform movement of all. Editor **William Lloyd Garrison** strongly supported abolition and wrote about the subject. His efforts helped convince more people to work to end slavery. Former slave **Frederick Douglass** was well known for the eloquent speeches he gave about the evils of slavery.

Some slaves, such as Nat Turner, unsuccessfully tried to rebel against their condition. More northerners called for emancipation, while southerners called for tighter restrictions on African Americans.

Women of the early 1800s had limited economic or social opportunities. Still, they took part in many of the reform movements, especially abolition. Women also worked to end alcohol use and help the mentally disabled and the imprisoned.

Women made strides in gaining an education as well. Some new schools were started just for women, while others began accepting women for the first time. Often, improved education led to more opportunities for women. Elizabeth Blackwell became the first woman to graduate from medical college. African American women, though, continued to have little chance of gaining an education.

Participation of women in the various reform movements led to the women's rights movement. Its goal was to provide women with increased opportunities outside the home. Reformers **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** and Lucretia Mott were early leaders of the women's rights

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movement. They and others worked hard to organize the **Seneca Falls Convention**. There, more than 300 women discussed issues such as gaining the right to vote.

3. What effect did working in reform movements have on women?

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Fill in the chart about economic and social changes in the 1800s.

<b>Describe the economies of the North and South during the early 1800s.</b>		
1. North	2. South	
<b>Explain how the people and inventions helped expand the national market economy.</b>		
3. Entrepreneurs		
4. Telegraph		
5. Steamboat and canals		
6. Steel plow and reaper		
<b>Fill in details about each of the reform movements listed.</b>		
<b>Movement</b>	<b>Key Leader(s)</b>	<b>Efforts Made on Behalf of the Movement</b>
7. Transcendentalism		
8. Abolition		
9. Women's Rights		