

CHAPTER 17

INDUSTRIAL SUPREMACY

Chapter Summary

Although some economists place the industrial "take-off" of America in the years before the Civil War, it was in the three decades following that great conflict that the United States became the world's leading industrial power. A fortunate combination of sufficient raw materials, adequate labor, enviable technological accomplishments, effective business leadership, nationwide markets, and supportive state and national governments boosted America past its international rivals. The industrial transformation had a profound impact on the lives of the millions of workers who made the production revolution possible. Some who were distrustful of industrial power turned toward socialism; others tried to organize workers into powerful unions. But, in these early years of industrial conflict, the forces of business usually triumphed.

Objectives

A thorough study of Chapter 17 should enable the student to understand

1. The reasons for the rapid industrial development of the United States in the late nineteenth century.
2. The specific impact of technological innovation in promoting industrial expansion.
3. The role of the individual entrepreneur in the development of particular industries.
4. The changes that were taking place in American business organizations.
5. The ways in which classical economics and certain ideas of Darwin were used to justify and defend the new industrial capitalism.
6. The critics of the new industrial capitalism and the solutions they proposed.
7. The conditions of immigrants, women, and children in the workforce.
8. The rise of organized labor on a national federated basis.
9. The reasons organized labor generally failed in its efforts to achieve its objectives.

Main Themes

1. How various factors (raw materials, labor supply, technology, business organization, growing markets, and friendly governments) combined to thrust the United States into worldwide industrial leadership.
2. How this explosion of industrial capitalism was both extolled for its accomplishments and attacked for its excesses.
3. How American workers, who on the average benefited, reacted to the physical and psychological realities of the new economic order.

AP US History
Chapter 17 Questions
Assignment 1

Sources:

Textbook: pg. 463 to end of pg. 477.

Questions:

1. What technological innovations of the late 19c transformed communications and business operations?
2. What new methods were developed for the large-scale production of durable steel? Where were the principal American centers of steel production and ore extraction?
3. What was the relationship between the steel industry and the railroads?
4. What technological development profoundly changed the oil industry?
5. Although the age of the automobile would not fully arrive until the 1920s, what developments of the 1890s and early 1900s laid the basis for the later boom?
6. Describe the emergence of organized corporate research and its impact on American economic development. What role did universities play in this process?
7. Explain the concepts of "scientific management" and "mass production." Who were the leading pioneers of these new approaches to industry?
8. How did the railroad transform America economically and ecologically?
9. What was the main legal principle that made buying stock in the modern corporation attractive to investors?
10. Explain the new approach to management and business organization that accompanied the rise of large corporations. What industries led in these developments?
11. Compare and contrast the vertical and horizontal integration strategies of business combinations. Which approaches did Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller use initially? Why did they evolve toward using both strategies?
12. How did financiers and industrialists use pools, trusts, and holding companies to expand their control. What was the result of this trend toward corporate combination?
13. Describe how the railroad created a truly national market. Explain the ecological changes that accompanied this transformation. Were the advantages worth the costs?
14. How did popular culture keep alive the "rags-to-riches" and "self-made man" hopes of the American masses? How realistic were such dreams?
15. What parts of Horatio Alger's message often got lost in the public's mind at the time he wrote and later? Why was this the case?
16. Explain how the theories of Social Darwinism and classical economics complemented each other. Who formulated those theories? How did the great industrialists embody such concepts?
17. Describe the "alternative visions" to the business-dominated view of society. How influential were such radical voices?
18. What were the visible symptoms that many Americans blamed on the trend toward "monopoly?"

AP US History
Chapter 17 Questions
Assignment 2

Sources:

Textbook: end of pg. 477 to pg. 486.

Questions:

1. What were the two sources of the massive migration into the industrial cities of the late 19c and early 20c?
2. Contrast the earlier immigrants to the United States with those who dominated after the 1880s. What attracted these migrants? What tensions ensued?
3. What happened to the standard of living of the average worker in the late 19c? What physical hardships and psychological adjustments did many workers face?
4. Why did industry increasingly employ women and children? How were they treated?
5. What attitudes toward working women were exhibited by many adult male workers and their unions?
6. What was the significance of the Great Railroad Strike of 1877?
7. Compare and contrast the organization, leadership, membership [especially the role of women] and programs of the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor.
8. Why did the AFL succeed, while the Knights of Labor disappeared by the end of the 19c?
9. What methods were used by business to thwart labor reforms?
10. Compare and contrast the Haymarket Riot, the Homestead Strike, and the Pullman Strike. On balance, what was their effect on the organized labor movement?
11. Why did labor union membership begin to decline in the late 1890s?
12. What factors combined to help explain why organized labor remained relatively weak before World War I?