

US History Turn of Century America

Learning Target:

I can identify reasons for expansion of industry and determine the impact of railroads on the country.

1. Expansion of Industry & The Age of Railroads

Reasons for Industrial Boom –

1. Wealth of Natural Resources
2. Government Support for Business
3. Growing Urban Population (Provided cheap labor and markets for products)

Natural Resources:

Oil –

- Edwin L. Drake – 1st used steam engine to drill for oil (Titusville, PA)
- made drilling for oil practical
- led to refining petroleum for kerosene and later gasoline

Steel –

- Bessemer process (1850) – led to cheap manufacturing of steel from iron
- Led to rise of Pittsburgh as a steel town from the 1860s to the early 1900s
- New uses for steel developed:
 - Barbed Wire, Farm equipment, Construction (track, bridges, skyscrapers)

Inventions:

Thomas Edison – incandescent light bulb (1880) and made electricity safer and less expensive
-electricity allowed factories to be located away from power sources like rivers

Christopher Sholes – invented typewriter (1867)

Alexander Graham Bell – invented telephone (1876)

Impact on Life –

- Office work made easier and led to more women being employed
- Factories started producing clothing also leading to more women in the workplace
- Slowly made factory work easier but some factories needed less workers – cost jobs

Railroads Shrink the Country

A National Network

- Railroads made westward expansion possible for businesses and people
- Government gave huge loans and land grants to railroad companies
- May 10, 1869 the first transcontinental railroad finished in Promontory, Utah
- 1890 – almost 180,000 miles of track laid

Danger for Workers

- Chinese and Irish immigrants along with Civil War vets laid track
- Thousands killed and injured each year
- 1888 – more than 2,000 workers died and 20,000 injured

Time Zones Established

- Each town operated under their own time
- Noon was when sun was directly overhead – noon in Boston 12 minutes later than noon in NYC
- Travelers could experience 20 different times travelling across the country
- 1869 – Prof. C.F. Dowd proposed 24 time zones for the whole planet
- US would have four – Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific
- Congress adopted time zones in 1918

Opportunities Created

New Towns & Markets

- Railroads linked isolated towns & cities promoting trade
- Cities began to specialize in particular products
 - Chicago (stockyards), Minneapolis (grain), Pittsburgh (steel)
- New towns developed along railroads
 - Flagstaff, AZ – Denver, CO – Seattle, WS owed existence to railroads

Company Towns

- Pullman, IL – created by George Pullman to manufacture railroad cars
- Company provided housing and all services (medical, schools, stores)
- Town under company control to maximize profits
- Residents not allowed to loiter on front steps or drink alcohol