

North and South Take Different Paths

Primary Source

A Factory Report in 1846

When the factory town of Lowell, Massachusetts, was first created in the 1820s, it was considered a model of American industry. However, as the factory system developed, working conditions grew worse. The following is an excerpt from a report on working conditions in the mills of Massachusetts in 1846.

Directions: Read the excerpt, then answer the questions that follow.

We have lately visited the cities of Lowell and Manchester, and have had an opportunity of examining the factory system more closely than before . . . In Lowell live between seven and eight thousand young women, who are generally daughters of farmers of the different States of New England . . . The operatives work thirteen hours a day in the summer time, and from daylight to dark in the winter . . .

Enter with us into the large rooms, when the looms are at work. The largest that we saw is in the Amoskeag Mills at Manchester. It is four hundred feet long, and about seventy broad; there are five hundred looms, and twenty-one thousand spindles in it. The din and clatter of these five hundred looms under full operation, struck us on first entering as something frightful and infernal, for it seemed such an atrocious violation of one of the faculties of the human soul, the sense of hearing. After a while we became somewhat inured to it, and by speaking quite close to the ear of the operative and quite loud, we could hold a conversation . . .

The girls attended upon an average three looms; . . . Attention to two is as much as should be [expected] of a [worker] . . . The atmosphere of such a room cannot of course be pure; on the contrary it is charged with cotton filaments and dust, which, we were told, are very injurious to the lungs. On entering the room, although the day was warm, we remarked that the windows were down; we asked the reason, and a young woman answered very naively, and without seeming to be in the least aware that this privation of fresh air was anything else than perfectly natural, that "when the wind blew, the threads did not work so well."

Glossary

din—uproar
infernal—inhuman, hellish
atrocious—brutal
faculties—elements
inured—made accustomed to something painful
attended upon—operated
naively—innocently
privation—the loss of some condition

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Primary Source *(continued)*

1. Who are the workers in Lowell?

2. What are some of the unsafe or unhealthy conditions that the report discusses?

3. How many looms did the workers supervise? How many would be considered reasonable by the writer?

4. (a) How did the woman feel about the lack of fresh air?

(b) Why are the windows down?

5. **Draw Inferences** Why might the owners of these mills have ignored poor working conditions?

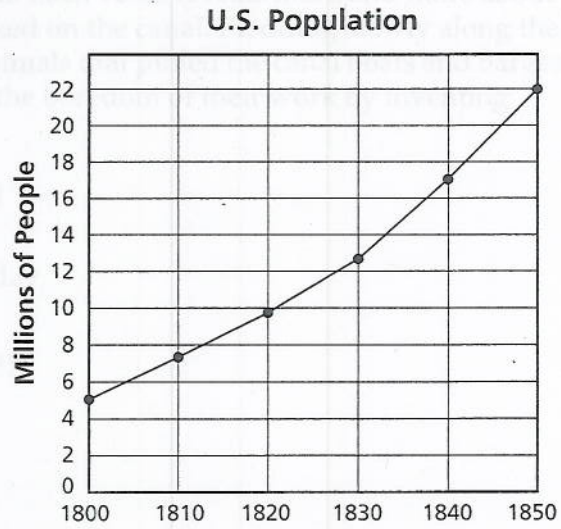
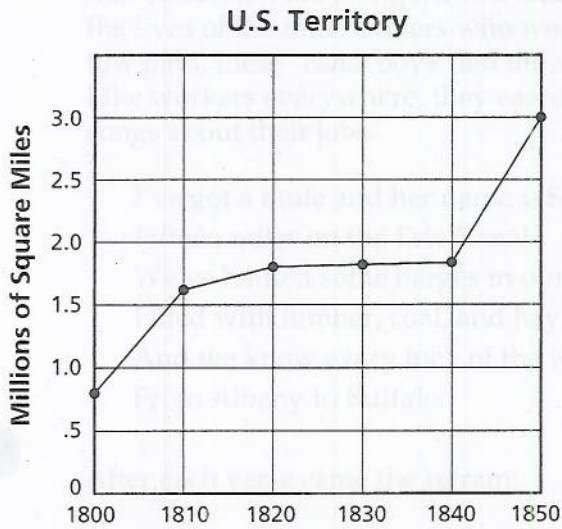
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Reading a Chart

Population and Territory

In this activity, you will examine the relationship between the growth of the nation's population and the size of the country in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Directions: Below are two line graphs showing the territory and population of the United States in the years 1800 to 1850. Study the graphs. Then answer the questions that follow.



1. What do the numbers on the vertical axis of each graph show?

2. What was the approximate population of the United States in 1840?

3. What was the approximate area of the United States in 1820?

4. How many thousands of square miles did the country gain between 1800 and 1810?

5. By how much did the population increase between 1820 and 1830?

6. In which decade did the greatest increase in territory take place?

7. Make a generalization about changes in the United States from 1800 to 1850.

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Apply Information

The Erie Canal

Directions: Read the passage and study the chart. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.

The Erie Canal was spectacularly successful. To build the canal, New York State had spent \$7.5 million. Within only seven years, the state had earned enough in tolls on the canal to recover its expenses.

The Erie Canal provided a cheap way to move heavy freight. Before the canal was built, the cost of shipping freight across New York was \$100 per ton. Using the canal, the cost dropped to \$5 per ton!

One type of cargo alone transformed the economy of the East. Wheat from the West made Rochester into a bustling mill town. The wheat flour shipped from Rochester made New York City into the foremost port on the Atlantic Ocean. The chart below shows how wheat cargoes increased after the canal was built.

Wherever canal traffic passed, towns sprang up. They served as market centers for products from the interior such as grain, fur, and timber. Some of these towns grew into major cities. One English visitor to Buffalo commented on its hasty development:

Of all the thousand and one towns I saw in America I think Buffalo is the queerest looking; it is not so wild as Lockport, but all the buildings have the appearance of having been run up in a hurry. . . . Everybody tells you there . . . that their improvement and [progress] are more rapid, more wonderful, than the earth ever before witnessed. . . .

New Yorkers were soon proud of their canal's success. Soon Philadelphia and Baltimore rushed to build canals of their own. By 1840, the United States had over 3,300 miles of canals. None of the other canals, however, rivaled the success of the Erie Canal.

Year	Number of Bushels
1829	3,640
1837	500,000
1845	1,330,000

1. How did New York recover the money that it spent to build the Erie Canal?
2. How did wheat and flour from the West affect the economy of the East?
3. What was the effect of the canal on the towns along the route?
4. **Organize Information** Make a bar graph of wheat cargoes eastbound on the canal using the figures in the chart above.