THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY (1790 - 1850)

THE RISE OF THE INDUSTRIAL NORTH
The Transformation of American Society (1790 – 1850)

The Family Business -vs- the Factory

- Hard working families increased their standard of living through higher output
- However, U.S. Economic Competition with Great Britain required manufacturers to make changes

Products that started to be unsuited for the “outwork system” became the first targeted by early manufacturing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1803</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1829</th>
<th>1833</th>
<th>1857</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of looms in England</td>
<td>12,150</td>
<td>45,500</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Scotland</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>14,650</td>
<td>55,500</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Economic Competition facilitates Labor Changes

- Americans used three strategies to compete with British textile manufacturers

- Congress passed three tariffs that eventually became unpopular with Southern Planters, Western Farmers, and Urban Consumers

- American Inventors improved on British technology

- American Manufacturers decided to tap a new and cheaper source of labor
The Waltham-Lowell System

- Francis C. Lowell established his new textile mill in Waltham, Massachusetts
- Recruiting thousands of young women from local farms to work in the mill

LOWELL GIRLS
- Strict Curfews
- Prohibited alcoholic beverages
- Required Church attendance

- By the early 1830’s: more than 40,000 employed

LOWELL GIRLS
- Offering them food and housing
- Educational evening lectures
- Cultural Activities
THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY (1790 – 1850)

• Before machinery, threads were spun by unmarried, orphan girls, and widows with no prospects of marriage

• Thus, unmarried women became known as “SPINSTERS”

• Oh! Isn’t it a pity, such a pretty girl as I, should be sent to the factory, to pine away and die? Oh! I cannot be a slave, I will not be a slave. For I’m so fond of liberty, that I cannot be a slave

“By an unknown Lowell Girl”
THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY (1790 – 1850)

Task Laborers to Wage Workers

- Rise of Factories changed the Working Class:
  - Took semi-skilled workers and taught them a specific task
  - Changed pay from being linked to task completion to wage oriented
  - Allowed some wageworkers to become skilled stonecutters, masons, machinists generating a strong sense of identity

- American craft workers developed a proud collective identity known as an “artisan republican work ethic”

- Men, in defiance of the traditional “master - servant” stigma, began referring to their employers as “bosses”
Dividing and Changing Labor Ideologies

• The New Industrial System divided the traditional artisan class into two groups:

  ✓ Self-Employed Craftsmen often moved to smaller towns and set up specialized shops

  ✓ Wage-earning industrial workers banded together to form unions

• However, under American Common Law, Unions were illegal:

  ✓ Regardless, Union Leaders promoted the “artisan republican work ethic” ideals that the cost of each good should go mostly to the paid craftsmen and not to factory owners, middlemen, & merchants
1827: Artisans and workers in Philadelphia organized the Mechanics’ Union of Trade Associations with 10,000 members.

1828: They founded the Working Men’s Party to secure a just balance of power between all the various classes.

In 1836, Unionized men organized nearly 50 strikes for higher wages.

Factory owners responded with the very first “Blacklists” with the names of workers who belonged to unions on it.

In the 1840’s, the Working Men’s Party persuaded the Pennsylvania Legislature to authorize a tax to build schools to educate their kids.
The Transformation of American Society (1790 – 1850)

The Changing Job Market and the Changing Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TOTAL WORKFORCE</th>
<th>AGRICULTURAL</th>
<th>INDUSTRIAL</th>
<th>BANK &amp; TRADE</th>
<th>TRANSPORT</th>
<th>OTHER PROFESSIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>FREE</td>
<td>SLAVE</td>
<td>FARM</td>
<td>COT</td>
<td>FISH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>1,370</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>2,330</td>
<td>1,590</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>3,135</td>
<td>2,185</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>2,470</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>3,020</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>2,965</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>5,660</td>
<td>4,180</td>
<td>1,480</td>
<td>3,570</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>8,250</td>
<td>6,280</td>
<td>1,970</td>
<td>4,520</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>11,110</td>
<td>8,770</td>
<td>2,340</td>
<td>5,880</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE: Totals are in Thousands of People  ** NOTE: NA means information Not Available

Ref: Historical Statistics of the United States - Colonial Times to 1957 (U.S. Bureau of Census)

- Many single and married men began leaving the farm to take new industrial jobs
- Unmarried women left the farm to work in the new textiles factories
- Married women were expected to be the moral compass for the family
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Source: Stanley Lebergott, Manpower in Economic Growth: The American Records Since 1800; 1963, p. 510
THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY (1790 – 1850)

The Changing Society and the Role of Women

• REPUBLICAN MOTHERHOOD (1790’s – 1840’s)
  ✓ Virtues of Modesty and Purity were inherent in Women
  ✓ Giving Women a unique ability to promote Christian values
  ✓ Making women the moral compass of the family
  ✓ Expecting women to promote the Republican lifestyle
THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY (1790 – 1850)

The Changing Society and the Role of Women

- AUTHORS SUPPORTING REPUBLICAN MOTHERHOOD

To American Mothers,
On Whose Intelligence and Discretion the Safety and Prosperity of our Republic So Much Depends,
This Volume is Respectfully Inscribed.

_The Mother’s Book_, by Lydia Maria Child

To My Young Countrywomen -
The Future Ministers of the Charities of Home,
This Volume is Dedicated

_Live and Let Live_, by Catharine Maria Sedgwick

Hath any being on earth a charge more fearfully important than that of the Mother. God help us to be faithful, in proportion to the immensity of our trust.

_Letters to Mothers_, by Lydia Huntley Sigourney
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The Changing Society and the Role of Women

• THE CULT OF DOMESTICITY (1830’s – 1900’s)
  ✓ Prevailing value system among the upper and middle classes
  ✓ Emphasized newer ideas of femininity and women’s role in the home & society
  ✓ Promoted the Separate Spheres Ideology that married women belonged in the home:
    ❖ Running the household
    ❖ Rearing the Children
    ❖ Taking Care of the Husband
THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY (1790 – 1850)

The Changing Society and the Role of Women

• PROMOTING THE CULT OF DOMESTICITY
  ✓ Godey’s Ladies Book (1830 – 1878) & Peterson’s Magazine (1842 – 1898)
  ✓ Both published in Philadelphia, PA
  ✓ Both promoted women’s virtues, fashion, poetry, and articles attractive to upper and middle class married women

• Catharine Beecher (Daughter of Abolitionist Lyman Beecher)
  ✓ Promoted the ideals of the Cult of Domesticity
    ❖ 1842 – A Treaties on Domestic Economy
    ❖ 1845 – The Duty of American Women to Their Country
1. Decline of home as realm of economic production

2. The “cult of domesticity”
   a. Separate spheres
   b. Distinctive ideals of femininity and masculinity

3. Wage-earning women
   a. Limited rights and options
   b. Meager terms of labor

4. Middle-class women
   a. Domestic respectability
   b. Freedom from household labor
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The Changing Society of the Market Revolution

MAKING COMPARISONS

“Self Made Men”
- Professional Craftsmen vs Industrialized Wage Workers

“Society Defined Women”
- Unmarried Female Factory Workers vs Home bound Married Women
THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY (1790 – 1850)

The Changing Society of the Market Revolution

MAKING CONCLUSIONS

“BENEFITS”

• Rise of the “Self Made Man”
• Improved Standard of Living
• Growth of Urban Centers
• Development of Skilled Laborer

“PROBLEMS”

• Widening Economic Inequalities
• Increased Gap between Rich & Poor
• Overcrowding and Poor Sanitation
• Decline of the Village Craftsmen

“MIXED ISSUES”

• Repetitive Cycles of Boom or Bust
• Rise of Wage Dependency and Unions
• Redefining the Roles of Women in Society