

History of northern and southern united states



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The Northern United States consists of a wide variety of people from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Dutch, Swedes and Puritans were the early settlers who lived here before the American Revolution. Agriculture did not develop extensively here because the climate was cold and soils were rockier. Northern farmers were mainly subsistence farmers. They grew corn, wheat, beans and livestock. By the start of the nineteenth century the industrial revolution began in the North. Many European immigrants like the Irish, Germans and Scandinavians also moved to the North in large numbers. This led to the creation of large cities. Cincinnati, Chicago, Cleveland, Boston, Philadelphia and New York City were all large cities in the North (Milner, 1996).

The North had an industrial sector with advanced financial and commercial services. Most of the farms in the North used free labor. The massive immigration of the 19th century brought new industries to America's North to provide for the booming population. The North provided the greatest opportunities to new settlers. The Northern states were becoming more and more powerful as the populations increased.

There was a desire in the Northern states to abolish slavery in the West which would soon become states. The economical structure of the Northern states, the Union, was vastly dependent on industry. Slavery did not exist in most of the Union, as there was no demand for it due to the type of industrial development taking place. As the Union had a paid work force, the profits made were lower and the cost of the finished manufactured item higher. In turn, the Union used the profits and purchased raw materials to use. This cycle is referred to as interdependency.

The Southern United States constitutes a large geographical location which is famous for the early European colonial settlements, slavery, American Civil War and the legacy of the Confederate States. The American South was settled by British Colonists which also included Scots and Ulster-Scots. These people began their trade and cultural exchanges with the local Native Americans. The South witnessed the creation of large plantations which grew cash crops like cotton and tobacco.

The South did not receive foreign immigration before the American Civil War. The population of the South was also mostly rural. There were very few large towns and cities. Slavery was considered a vital practice for the South's economy. Wealthy slave owners dominated Southern politics and they defended the institution of slavery vigorously. This issue sharply divided the North and South. It would eventually lead to the American Civil War.

Southerners also resented the domination of the North in American politics (Milner, 1996). The economy of the Southern states, the Confederacy, greatly if not entirely depended on the institution of slavery. The Confederacy was heavily reliant on agriculture, and they used the profits made from the sale of such raw materials to purchase finished goods to use and enjoy. Their major export was cotton, which thrived on the warm river deltas and could easily be shipped to major ocean ports from towns on the Mississippi and numerous river cities.

Slavery was a key part of this, as slaves were the ones who harvested and planted the cotton. Being such an enormous unpaid work force, the profits made were extraordinarily high and the price for the unfinished goods

drastically low in comparison; especially since the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 which made the work all that much easier and quicker. Many Americans migrated to the West in search of gold. The West was a land which had many opportunities for people.

The Western countryside was rough and full of hurdles. Many Americans wanted to get out of the cities which were polluted and overcrowded. Some of them came in search of adventure while others fled because of poverty and religious discrimination. The West seemed to be an ideal place to become rich. Many settlers faced hostility from the Native American tribes living there. There were constant skirmishes and battles with the Native Americans which eventually led to their confinement to reservations.

An area that was settled west of the Mississippi that was affected by its natural environment is the Great Plains. Probably more than any other region of the West, the natural environment played havoc with those living there. The years between 1843 and 1869 are the years when most of the famous covered-wagon migration took place. During those years, thousands of people moved west, looking for better lives. The people moved in long trains of covered wagons, exposed to every sort of danger and hardship. Trails were formed, most notably the Oregon Trail. Although many people died on the long journey, people kept moving west (Milner, 1996).

People were migrating in search of fertile land and economic opportunities beyond the pre-existing border of the nation. There were many other more specific reasons for the expansion as well. One of the main economic attractions of the west was the discovery of gold in California in 1848.

People went west at the thought of becoming rich fast. They had no idea exactly how wild the west would prove to be. Others belonging to the lower classes were enticed to the west by the free land. All these three areas now form part of the United States of America. All of them started as agricultural lands which have now become heavily industrialized.

References:

Milner II, Clyde A; The Oxford History of the United States of America. Oxford University Press; Reprint edition, 1996