

Industrialization and westward expansion essay

Countries, United States



The US government facilitated westward expansion through the use of education, assimilation and conversion of the people they encountered to Christianity. At the time, democrats championed the need for agricultural expansion in the West. Planters wanted to grow cotton and supply booming markets around the world. This could only be undertaken through the acquisition of more land and the availability of labor, which was provided by the slaves. The cotton kingdom continued to grow as the US anticipated for world dominion in the name of optimistic nationalism.

Westward expansion was promoted through the support for transportation improvements, acquisition of cheap land and protection of Americans from the native Indians (Norton et al. 342). Westward expansion saw the United States grow through purchases and treaties. Expeditions by people like Lewis and Clark provided information on the state of the West which eventually fuelled possibilities of expanding to the Pacific Ocean. This, however, led to the suffering of the native Indians.

Industrialization refers to the rapid change in sectors of agriculture, manufacturing, transportation and mining which virtually transformed most facets of the society (Ferrante 10). Industrialization in the United States was accelerated due to a variety of factors including railroads (Martin 231). These included presence of a peaceful and stable political climate as well as the availability of labor which provided industries with an abundant supply for exploitation. Furthermore, the railroads facilitated movement of people and immigrants, who provided labor, from the remote areas to factories.

Industrialization was fuelled by the development and expansion of the nation's railway systems which was accelerated by availability of steel used to make the tracks as well as build the locomotives. Due to the development of the railway system, manufactured goods and raw materials could easily be transported, especially finished goods which needed a cheap mode of transport to different markets.

The society greatly benefited from the wave of industrialization. The development of the railway system eased transportation. Initially people relied on walking and riding horses to various parts which was often slow and tiresome. Industrialization provided many people with job opportunities where they could earn a living and improve their living standards. This included access better housing. The factories provided opportunities for immigrants in many cities and towns where they could earn wages.

Industrialization made consumer products readily available to people of all walks of life, including low and middle income earners. This implied that items previously considered as luxurious could be accessible. This was attributed to reduction of costs in the manufacturing process as raw materials and transportation was easily acquired by the industries. People could access finished goods and agricultural produce easily due to eased transportation provided by the railway systems. Furthermore, population generally witnessed an increase as food was readily available.

In conclusion, the society indeed greatly benefited from industrialization. However, several challenges emerged which posed as threats to the society. The most notable was the level of environmental degradation that occurred

as a result of pollution from factories¹. More so, the presence of factories led to increased child labor, unsanitary or unsafe working conditions and subsequently placed a strain on amenities like water.

Ferrante, Joan. *Sociology: A Global Perspective Enhanced*, California, Cengage Learning, 2009, Print.

Martin, Peggy. *Kaplan SAT Subject Test: World History 2009-2010 Edition*, New York: Kaplan Publishing, 2009. Print.

Norton, Mary, Carol Sheriff, David Katzman, David Blight and Howard Chudacoff. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States*, Boston: Cengage Learning, 2008. Print.

¹ The air, water and land were immensely polluted and due to the increased activities in the industries, the adverse effects will continually be felt (Martin 233).