

Define the term
middle class and
discuss the factors
that led to its growth
in th...

[History](#)



Middle in the Early 19th Century Middle in the context of American History, is borrowed from the traditional British colonial ideas where people with a relatively comfortable lifestyle were accorded the status of middle class based on their influence and wealth but they still could not attain the level of nobility (Murrin, et al, 56). The first American middle class emerged after the war period, the World War II, in about 1944. During this period of time, war veterans who were returning home were rewarded by the president with money which was enough to take care of their college expenses as well as enable them to afford good businesses and high standard housing facilities (Temin, 44). This was the emergence of the real middle class society in America.

Over the periods, various factors have contributed to the development, sustenance and elimination of the middle class depending on the prevailing circumstances which has led to the ever changing definition of the members of the middle class group (Murrin, et al, 14).

Apart from rewards for the war veterans, the key factor which led to the emergence and development of social class in America can be dated back to the effects of the agrarian revolution of the 18th century and the industrial revolution of the 19th century. During the agrarian revolution, people who could acquire some piece of land, apart from the colonizers, and were able to employ at least a few people on their land, managed to live more comfortable lives than the others and were therefore considered as the middle class (Temin, 36). In the industrial revolution, people who were employed to work as supervisors in the industries were capable of earning good pay to make them lead better lives thus becoming the middle. Today,

the middle class is defined as those people capable of owning at least two cars and living comfortably but will struggle if they missed paycheck for two months. They are actually not sufficient.

Works Cited

Murrin, John, et al . Liberty, Equality and Power: A History of the American People, Volume I: To 1877, 6th Edition. 2011.

Temin, Peter. Engines of enterprise: an economic history of New England. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000. Print. pp. 11-68