

Post civil war the  
united states and how  
the government  
helped build  
entrepreneur...

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Although it is oftentimes considered that the way in which Franklin D. Roosevelt was able to breathe new life into the ailing economy of the United States during the Great Depression was somehow unique, the fact of the matter is that economic stimulus and organization of labor as a means of persevering through difficult periods of reconstruction was an approach that had been practiced nearly 100 years prior to FDR's New Deal. As such, the following analysis will be concentric upon the way in which the United States government utilized projects such as the deepening and widening of the Erie Canal as a means of providing infrastructure improvement, reducing unemployment rates, building the economy, and seeking to provide something of a smooth transition for tens of thousands of recently released soldiers that existed throughout the Northeast and other regions of the country. Firstly, in understanding the impetus behind utilizing former soldiers as the backbone of the workforce that would build the Erie Canal, it must be understood that the United States government realized that they could in fact contract this work out to other individuals that might be able to perform it for a lower cost. However, even though it was true that Chinese labor, Irish immigrants, or any other ethnic group could be taken advantage of and utilized to affect this particular project, this would not have a positive impact with regards to the overall levels of unemployment, dissatisfaction, and sense of unity that many individuals felt after the conclusion of a horrific five-year struggle that left the United States morally and economically exhausted. Although the Erie Canal had existed itself for many decades prior to the Civil War, the overall level of traffic that could utilize this particular Canal in any given calendar year was limited. This was partially due to the

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fact that the overall width and depth of the channel was incapable of handling the increased tonnage that New York was experiencing each and every day. As such, realizing this fundamental shortcoming ultimately constricted the rate of growth for the economy of New York, and by extension the economy the entire Northeast, the federal government appropriated money with the stipulation that the labor for this particular project should exclusively be directed towards the individuals that had recently been released from service of their nation. As such, the project itself was not only able to improve upon the ultimate infrastructure that the Northeast could rely upon, the economic strength of New York and the United States, and a repositioning of New York as a more effective port on the eastern seaboard, it also leveraged the engineering expertise of an entire generation of men. Oftentimes, the recruits that had been pressed into service for either the Confederacy or the Union were ultimately little more than teenagers (Cartwright 82). As such, these young individuals had not had the opportunity to learn a specific craft or trade prior to experiencing the brutality and hardship of a sustained domestic struggle. Realizing this fundamental shortcoming, it was the point of the United States government to fund a litany of different projects that would allow this demographic to engage in useful and quality skills that would provide effective in helping these individuals to attain future employment. As a direct result of this drive and initiative to incorporate more individuals in the economy and provide a more ethical transition to normal life after the horrors of war, the United States government began to appropriate further monies to the development of a more effective and useful domestic postal system. As such, post offices

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needed to be constructed throughout the nation as a means of linking towns and regions to one another. Individuals needed to be hired as a means of carrying these letters, and construction workers needed to be employed as a function of building these post offices and the network of infrastructure that would allow for the mail to be transferred from one place to the other in a timely manner. Furthermore, steamships up and down the Mississippi, many of which had all but disappeared as a result of the war and the requisition and destruction that it affected, were built in record numbers by a workforce that slowly helped to train and develop a new generation of engineers, technicians, and workers. In short, the United States government engaged on a sustained spending plan that allowed for the industrial revolution to take place in the way that it did. Although it is true that the Industrial Revolution would necessarily have taken place without such a spending plan, it is doubtful that the speed and scope to which it was impacted, nor the fact that it was impacted in the United States prior to anywhere else in the world, would have been evidenced. Work Cited Cartwright, Gary. " Eerie Canal." Texas Monthly 24. 7 (1996): 82. Academic Search Complete. Web. 1 Nov. 2013.