

American Social & Cultural History  
1607-1865

# Fourth Class

- Discuss how Diverging Economies turn four regional cultures into two sections – North and South
  - Cotton & Slavery
  - Industrialization
- Discuss the Transportation & Communication Revolutions and their socio-cultural-economic implications
- Discuss some of the changes in everyday life and culture between 1800 and 1860

# Democratization

- Voter in colonial Virginia and New England
  - Political leaders are personally known to the voter and members of locally prominent and well-established families

# Democratization

- Voting in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century
  - Political leaders, except for some local offices, are not personally known by the voter. You vote for a candidate because you support his political party
  - Elections are the culmination of a months' long campaign involving banners, torchlight parades, and election hoopla
  - The voter's connection to a party is based less on its stand on public policies and more on a strong sense of partisan loyalty
  - The act of voting is an act of solidarity

# Democratization

- The change from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century represented:
  - A shift from the concept that property qualifications were necessary to ensure that the voter possessed the economic independence necessary to exercise independent political judgment to the concept that voting was a right of all adult white males
  - A shift from the personal authority of gentlemen to the impersonal authority of a party
  - From personal knowledge of the candidate to a knowledge of the opinions of the party and its most active partisans

# Democratization

- The Democrats appealed to those who favored limited government, free trade, and white supremacy
  - These people saw themselves as ‘outsiders’ suspicious that an activist government would favor ‘insiders’ and infringe on their lifestyles
    - Inhabitants of areas bypassed by canals, rivers, and railroads
    - Large cotton and tobacco planters
    - Immigrants
    - Persons committed to white supremacy and the expansion of slavery

# Democratization

- The Whigs, Know Nothings, and later the Republicans appealed to those who supported internal improvements and government support of moral reform
  - Businessmen
  - New England and areas settled by New Englanders
  - Persons committed to various “reform” causes
  - Nativists

# From the Revolution to the Civil War

- The Second Great Awakening
  - Two Main Strands of evangelism that at first were separate but later intertwined
    - One began in Kentucky & Tennessee by circuit-riding preachers who led camp meetings at which conversions took place
    - The other originated at Yale, and spread west with the New England diaspora
  - Religious Innovation – the creation of new denominations



# From the Revolution to the Civil War

- The Second Great Awakening – 2
  - Besides Lyman Beecher, another key evangelist was Charles Grandison Finney who:
    - Saw revivals as man-made events designed to bring sinners to God – complete with ‘hell-fire’ sermons, music, and spectacle
      - Paved the way for such future preachers as Dwight Moody, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham, and the modern televangelists.
    - Saw the converted sinner as free from sin [Perfectionism] and morally obligated to improve society
      - Result was the formation of a host of reform groups aimed at wiping out such social evils as intemperance, prostitution, and slavery

# From the Revolution to the Civil War

- Impact of the Second Great Awakening
  - Fostered a wide variety of church-related benevolent associations
    - Led women to take an active role in the churches and church-related benevolent associations.
      - This in turn fostered such reform movements as women's suffrage, abolition, prison reform & temperance
    - Sunday School movement, which not only provided religious education but also taught basic literacy
    - Provided a framework for the creation of a whole host of civic, educational, fraternal, and business organizations on both a national and even international level
      - Pooling of capital
      - Civic responsibility
      - Founding of colleges

# From the Revolution to the Civil War

- Slavery -- 1
  - During Colonial Period, slavery was legal in all 13 colonies
  - American Revolution led to subsequent abolition of slavery in the North
  - Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Slavery seen everywhere as a regrettable institution contrary to both Christianity and Natural Rights
    - Fear of emancipation in places with large Black populations

# From the Revolution to the Civil War

- After 1815, short-staple cotton made slave labor highly profitable
  - Short-staple cotton led to the expansion of slave-plantation agriculture far beyond the areas that sustained tobacco, rice, and indigo cultivation
- After 1815, the apologetic attitude toward slavery gave way to the idea that slavery was a positive good
  - Planter paternalism toward a ‘childlike’ people
  - Without slavery, white supremacy would be at risk and Black social & political equality with whites would follow

# From the Revolution to the Civil War

- The Rise of the 'Cotton Kingdom'
  - Converted thousands of semi-subsistence farmers into cotton producers
  - Provided 59% of U.S. exports in 1840
  - Fostered through the manufacture of cotton textiles the Industrial Revolution in both Europe and the American North
    - Gave rise to textile mills in New England

# Industrial Revolution

- What is the Industrial Revolution?
  - The application to manufacturing of both new methods of organization (factories, division of labor), and new technologies (machines & power) to produce more goods at cheaper prices
  - It was a process that occurred in several waves – two of which are important in the pre-Civil War period
    - 1. First Wave – dominated by cotton textiles with an assist from arms manufacture
    - 2. Second Wave – dominated by the railroads and the iron, steel, coal, and engineering industries that the railroads fostered
  - Each wave had major economic and socio-cultural impacts in areas outside its immediate sector of the economy

# Industrial Revolution

- IN 1790, Samuel Slater, using the secrets of Arkwright's spinning frame, established a mill in Pawtucket RI to manufacture yarn
- In 1813, Francis Cabot Lowell formed the Boston Manufacturing Company to construct a water-powered loom in Waltham MA to manufacture cloth
- In 1821, Lowell's associates founded the custom-built mill town of Lowell MA
  - Hired unmarried farm girls to live in factory-owned boardinghouses and work in the mills
  - Largest concentration of industry in U.S. before Civil War
- Slater's & Lowell's success led to many imitators elsewhere
- In 1832, textile corporations comprised 88 of the largest 106 corporations in the U.S.

# Industrial Revolution

- 1798 – Eli Whitney proposed to mechanize arms manufacture by replacing highly-skilled artisans with machines capable of producing muskets that were identical to one another and whose parts were interchangeable
  - This appealed to the Federal Government which
    - Wanted to be independent of foreign arms producers
    - Be able to obtain arms on short notice
    - Have arms that could be repaired or cannibalized on the battlefield



# Industrial Revolution

- Three key inventions made possible the production of interchangeable parts:
  - Simeon North's invention of the Milling Machine [a machine for shaping, cutting, polishing, or dressing metal surfaces] in 1816.
  - Thomas Blanchard's invention of the Lathe [a machine for shaping a piece of material, such as wood or metal, by rotating it rapidly along its axis while pressing against a fixed cutting or abrading tool] in 1819 which permitted uniform cutting or irregular wooden shapes which is what a gunstock is.
  - John H. Hall's invention of special purpose vises [clamping devices of metal or wood, usually consisting of two jaws closed or opened by a screw or lever, used in carpentry or metalworking to hold a piece in position] and gauges [measuring instruments] which permitted measurement of each part for uniformity

# Industrial Revolution

- ‘Armory practice’ -- the use by the Springfield and Harpers Ferry armories of special purpose machines, division of labor, and an unskilled workforce of machine operators -- soon spread quickly to other industries
- Among the industries which adopted “armory practice” were the clock making, cutlery, machine tool, and furniture industries

# Industrial Revolution

- 1793 – Samuel Slater establishes the first successful textile mill, which produced cotton yarn, in Pawtucket RI, using water power
  - Initially, he used the labor (mostly child labor) of families residing near the mill site
  - As the mills grew, Slater provided housing and company stores for the mill workers
  - Slater's success prompted many imitators

# Industrial Revolution

- 1813 – Francis Cabot Lowell formed the Boston Manufacturing Company, to make cotton textiles.
- Lowell opened his first textile factory in 1814 in Waltham, MA
- 1821 – Lowell's brother-in-law, Patrick Tracy Jackson, moved the mill to a site on the Merrimack River where the river fell 32' in a one-mile stretch. Jackson named the mills and the city that grew up around them for Lowell who died in 1817

# Industrial Revolution

- Lowell's system differed from Slater's
  - The Lowell mills were the first fiber-to-fabric textile mill – raw cotton in, finished colored cloth out.
  - In the mills, every process that could be mechanized was mechanized
  - The mills were run by employed managers rather than by the owner(s)

# Industrial Revolution

- Lowell's system – 2
  - The workforce consisted of young adult unmarried women who lived in mill-owned boardinghouses run by respectable widows who enforced strict rules regarding behavior and church attendance.
    - The mill workers worked over 70 hours a week
  - The Lowell mills were owned by a corporation so that if and when the owners wanted to expand, all they had to do was sell new stock.
  - As a result of both profitability and corporate ownership, the Lowell mills soon dwarfed all others

# Industrial Revolution

- Impacts
  - Made textile manufacturing a major sector of the American economy
    - In the words of one historian, “Within a decade of Lowell’s founding, New England’s textile aristocracy had gained so much wealth and political power that they had become uncrowned royalty.”
    - In 1832, textile corporations comprised 88 of the 106 largest corporations in the U.S.
  - Made cotton growing and slavery profitable in the American South.

# Industrial Revolution

- Impacts – 2
  - Fostered the growth of other industries, especially railroads
    - By creating a pool of surplus capital for investment in railroads and other industries
    - By creating a demand for large-scale transportation of cotton to the mills and finished cotton textiles from the mills to merchants across the country
    - By creating a demand for machines that, with modifications, could be used in other industries
      - The ability to create machines with precise tolerances had implications for the machine tool, clock, gun, and similar industries where the product and/or its manufacture required precise tolerances and interchangeable parts



# Industrial Revolution

- Impacts – 3
  - Caused the price of cotton cloth fall 90% between 1800 and 1850
    - Permitted the British and Americans to undersell Third World producers of cotton goods, driving them out of business
    - Created an exploding demand for cotton clothes and other cotton goods
    - Impacted on social and cultural behavior
      - Custom of wearing mourning clothes
      - Houses have drapes, curtains on windows, upholstered chairs with cushions, and table cloths
      - People have multiple sets of clothes and a need for clothes closets in which to hang them

# Industrial Revolution

- Notes about Cotton Textile Manufacturing
  - Cotton manufacturing remained a rural phenomenon for many decades.
    - Early textile manufacturers preferred cheap waterpower rather than expensive steam power. Thus, they preferred rural locations
    - Eventually, many of the rural manufacturing villages (like Lowell MA) became cities
  - The era of the Lowell factory girls ended in the 1850s as a result of a combination of Irish immigration, the business depressions of 1837 and 1857, and Yankee female worker resentment of both mill working conditions and new immigrant arrivals

# Industrial Revolution

- The Industrial Revolution greatly increased the volume of goods produced
  - Traditional clock makers, who worked by hand in both wood and brass, could make 4 or 5 clocks a year. As a result, clocks were expensive, costing \$50 if they had brass wheels and gears or \$25 if they had wooden wheels and gears. By 1850, an average clock factory was turning out 130,000 to 150,000 clocks annually, and the price of a clock had fallen to \$1.50. (p81) [Schwartz-Cowan]

# The Transportation Revolution

- The Transportation Revolution - 1
  - As noted earlier, the states had built turnpikes and canals
    - Travel was slow
      - Stagecoaches went 6 to 8 mph & were better at moving people than goods
      - Canals while good at moving bulk items were also slow and often not usable in the winter
      - River traffic was often one-way downstream

# The Transportation Revolution

- The Transportation Revolution – 2
  - Steamboats, starting with Robert Fulton in 1807:
    - Enhanced the comparative advantage of water transportation
    - Permitted travel up-stream on rivers with powerful currents. E.g. the Mississippi
      - In 1817, a steamboat went from New Orleans to Louisville in 26 days. By 1826, the same voyage was down to 8 days
    - Reduced sailing times in the coastal trade

# Railroads

- Steam locomotive invented in 1814 by George Stephenson to move coal from a mine shaft to a nearby dock. In 1825, Stephenson's locomotive pulled 36 wagons of coal and flour along a level track of 9 miles in 2 hours
- On October 7, 1826, the Granite Railroad between Quincy and the Neponset River dock in Milton MA to convey granite began operation.
  - This railroad used horses in its operation
- August 8, 1829, the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company Railroad between Carbondale and the canal at Honesdale PA became the first railroad to have the first locomotive – the *Stourbridge Lion* - to run on rails in the United States. The railroad was constructed to haul anthracite coal from the mine to the canal.
- On July 4, 1828, the B & O began construction of its first railroad line in America. This was the first railroad to provide passenger service.
  - The first 1.5 mile section opened January 7, 1830; the line opened to Ellicott's Mill, May 22, 1830, with regular passenger service beginning on May 24<sup>th</sup>. This was the first railroad that evolved into a major system rather than being gobbled up by another.

# Railroads

- Immediate Impacts
  - Increased Volume of Traffic
    - Before the Charleston & Hamburg RR began operating between these two locations in 1833:
      - Passenger traffic was handled by a stagecoach 3 times a week
      - In 1835, railroad passenger traffic was 30,000 passengers a year
  - Increased Speed of Travel
    - In comparison with the stagecoach, the railroad cut the travel time from New York City to Chicago from 3 weeks to 2 days
    - In comparison with canal/river boats, the railroad cut travel time from Boston to Concord NH from 5 days upstream and 4 days downstream to 4 hours each way
    - It took Thomas Jefferson 10 days to travel from Monticello to Philadelphia. In 1850, it took the railroad 1 day

# Railroads

- A Few Key Notes
  - In comparison with previous business enterprises, the railroad had some unique features
    - It was a public service enterprise that required enormous up-front outlays of capital
    - It was a geographically spread-out entity that required extensive coordination to operate
    - Once built, railroads were expensive to run and maintain – i.e. they were both capital-intensive and labor-intensive enterprises
    - The profitability of railroads required both the power of eminent domain and limited liability



# Railroads

- Some Notes
  - Railroads were corporations – only corporations could raise the enormous amounts of capital needed and had limited liability
  - In addition to capital from stockholders and bondholders, railroads required subsidies initially from state governments and later from the Federal government
    - These subsidies took the form of state and municipal purchases of stock and Federal government land grants

# Railroads

- Some Notes – 2
  - Railroads were the first firms that that needed C<sup>3</sup> systems that could operate over large geographic areas.
  - Before the telegraph, railroads were also the fastest known means of communication as well as of transportation.
    - In a single track environment where trains could run into each other, the only way of conducting train operations was via a hierarchical organization run by the time table, the rulebook, and the stop watch.
  - Coordination remained a major problem until railroads adopted the telegraph.
    - The use of the telegraph for railroad dispatching began with the Erie RR in 1851

# Railroads

- Economic Impacts - 1
  - The railroad created new economic resources by making exploitation of Pennsylvania, (West) Virginia, and Kentucky coal deposits economically possible
  - The railroad created a national market for goods by destroying the transportation cost barrier that had protected local manufacturing monopolies from competition

# Railroads

- Economic Impacts – 2
  - The railroad, as a consumer, created a massive demand for iron, steel, coal, lumber, steam engines, telegraphic equipment, and machine tools
  - The railroad created a whole host of new occupations: conductor, engineer, fireman, stationmaster, etc.
  - The railroad linked the agricultural Midwest to the industrial Northeast

# Railroads

- Economic Impacts -3
  - The railroad turned certain villages into thriving towns and cities and others into hamlets and ghost towns
  - The railroad relegated the stagecoach and wagon from a primary mode of land transport to feeder status
  - The railroad fostered the development of capital markets and the New York Stock Exchange

# Railroads

- Social Effects - 1
  - The railroads, with their need to have trains be at specific places at specific times, altered people's consciousness of time and made us slaves to the clock
    - The railroad created both timetables and a major market for watches since both railroad employees and passengers needed to know the exact time so they could catch their trains
    - The railroad created standardized time.

# Railroads

- Social Effects – 2
  - The railroad with the help of the telegraph and newspaper built a national audience for certain actors, speakers, and entertainers
    - The railroads permitted performers and speakers to tour much of the country and become famous
  - The railroad, with the aid of the postage stamp, fostered the growth of the postal service

# Railroads

- Social Effects – 3
  - By building railroad stations on the outskirts of cities through which their lines passed, the railroads created the first city suburbs.
    - By 1849, commuter railroad service linked Boston with such suburbs as Brookline, Dedham, Milton, Quincy, Dorchester, Brighton, Newton, Medford, Melrose, and West Cambridge.
  - The railroad, with the help of the post office, made possible a national market for books and other publications



# Railroads

- Social Effects – 4
  - The train altered the psychological experience of travel

# Telegraph

- Theoretically, Telegraphy became possible when Stephen Gray of England in 1729 discovered that electric current could be conveyed along a wire and activate some sort of receptacle at the other end
  - Variation in the number or duration of the impulses could signal different letters or numbers which could be strung together to form a message
- Practically, creating a telegraph system proved possible only when reasonably reliable and economical batteries became available

# Telegraph

- What Samuel F.B. Morse and Theodore Vail accomplished was:
  - A telegraphic system that used Morse Code
  - A telegraphic receiver that could both mark the dots and dashes onto a moving strip of paper and emit sounds that an experienced telegrapher could decipher at speeds up to 40-50 words a minute

# Telegraph

- Some Notes About the Telegraph
  - Before the telegraph, the speed of information was tied to the speed of transportation. The telegraph broke that link and made possible the almost instantaneous communication of information
    - This revolutionized information-intensive industries and activities
      - News could now be reported as it occurred and instantly disseminated across a fairly wide region
      - Facilitated the operation and coordination of the railroads
      - Business transactions between merchants in different cities that formerly took days or weeks now took only minutes or hours

# Telegraph

- Some Notes About the Telegraph – 2
  - It created a lot of technological hype and technological utopianism
    - The notion that new technology equals progress and that technological innovation can solve our socio-economic-political problems largely gets its start with the telegraph and the railroad.
  - It made possible the future creation of large-scale corporate entities

# Telegraph

- Some Other Consequences
  - The combined desire for speed and the increasing costs involved in using the telegraph to get news led New York City newspapers in 1848 to create the first news wire service, the Associated Press
  - The unreliability of early telegraph lines (especially in wartime) led reporters to develop the ‘inverted pyramid’ style of news writing
    - The concern with essential facts led to a differentiation between news and opinion – with the latter being segregated into an editorial section or caged in quotation marks

# Telegraph

- Some Other Consequences – 2
  - To economists, it is axiomatic that markets are limited to the area in which communications is effectively instant
    - Thus, before telegraphy, markets were inherently local. After telegraphy, they became regional and then national.
      - One effect was to concentrate the trading of items such as gold, stock, bonds, and commodities in the place where most of their related financial transactions took place:
        - » New York became a center of stock and bond trading
        - » Chicago became a center of commodities trading

# So What Had Changed

- Cities
  - Began to develop railroad suburbs
  - As railroads linked cities and immigrants poured into them, cities became sites of industry and the physical structure of the city starts to change
  - Begin to develop municipal services
- Life on the Farm
  - Family farming becomes more of a commercial enterprise as output increases due to such technological innovations as steel plows and horse-drawn reapers



# So What Had Changed

- Middle Class Family Life - 1
  - Coal- and wood-burning stoves largely replace fireplaces and hearths for cooking and heating
    - The fireplace moves to the parlor
  - Drapes, curtains, upholstered furniture, and kerosene lamps become common in upper-middle-class houses
    - Pianos and organs begin to inhabit upper middle-class parlors
  - Clocks and pocket watches become common

# So What Had Changed

- Middle Class Family Life - 2
  - People, especially middle-class women, begin to acquire wardrobes
  - Ice boxes with daily delivery of ice becomes common in urban areas
  - Meals consisted largely of meat and bread, with vegetables and fruits in season. Catsup is a popular condiment.
    - In 1858, John Mason patents the Mason jar, thus facilitating home canning of fruits and vegetables
  - People begin to travel and move around more
  - Middle-class Victorianism

# So What Had Changed

- The North:
  - Two of the regional cultures, the Puritan and the Middle States, had largely merged, especially in the Old Northwest
  - The North had become to some extent both industrialized and urbanized
  - In the urban areas, a substantial Yankee middle class and immigrant working class had developed
  - Northern agriculture had remained an economy of family farms growing wheat and corn
  - The area had been influenced by the reform movements arising out of the Second Great Awakening

# So What Had Changed

- The South
  - Two of the regional cultures, the Tidewater South and the Frontier, had largely merged, especially in the trans-Appalachian cotton South
  - The Southern economy was still overwhelmingly agricultural, dominated largely by the cotton plantation elite
  - Slavery formed the basis not only of the southern economy but also of southern society and culture
  - Racism served not only to justify slavery but also to dampen class conflict among whites and foster a sense of white egalitarianism.

# The Coming of the Civil War

- Two key events on the path to Civil War were the Mexican War and the collapse of the Whig Party
  - The Mexican War raised the issue of slavery in the newly-acquired territories
  - The collapse of the Whig Party
    - The party had been deeply divided over slavery
    - The cultural issues of anti-immigrant nativism and temperance shattered the Whigs in the North and gave rise to the Know-Nothings
    - After a strong showing in the 1854 elections, the Know Nothings once in office showed itself to be incompetent, failed to deliver on either its reform or anti-immigrant promises, and proved unable to handle the slavery issue
    - The failure of the Know Nothings paved the way for the rise of the Republicans

# The Coming of the Civil War

- A Stable Democracy requires:
  - The existence of a competitive party system
  - The acceptance of opposition parties as legitimate
- Most southerners, however, did not see the Republican party as legitimate
  - Defeat in 1860 was not perceived as a temporary setback but as a fateful defeat with disastrous consequences
- Result: Secession

# The Coming of the Civil War

- In April 1861, both North and South went to war to save democracy as they understood it
  - For the South, at stake was the right of southern whites to control their own destiny and preserve their traditional society and culture
  - For the North, the war was a struggle to uphold the democratic principle of majority rule, as expressed in a free and fair election, and to preserve the Union, which northerners believed was inseparably linked to democracy

# Some Notes About the Civil War

- Some Interesting Facts About the Civil War
  - Between 20%-25% of the Union Army was foreign-born; 9% were Black
  - Because logistics were primitive, both sides often resorted to foraging
    - Many Civil War battles often resulted from the escalation of skirmishes involving foragers
  - With the minie ball, the rifled musket could hit a man at 800 yards. This, combined with artillery shrapnel and obsolete massed formation assaults, helped make the conflict so deadly
  - There were an estimated 620,000 military dead and 50,000 civilian dead as a result of the Civil War.
    - 20% of all Southern white males of military age were KIAs
  - 94% of Union casualties were caused by minie balls shot from rifles, 5.5% by artillery, and 0.4% by saber or bayonet



# Some Notes About the Civil War

- The War popularized several things:
  - Canned goods, especially Borden's condensed milk and Van Camp's pork & beans
  - Pup tents or Dog tents
  - Ambulances
  - Mass-produced sized clothing
    - Military uniforms
    - Mourning clothes
  - Dog tags
  - Routine embalming of the dead
  - National cemeteries, including Arlington National Cemetery