

**CHAPTER NINE: WORKERS, FARMERS, AND SLAVES:  
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AMERICAN ECONOMY, 1815–1848**

**READING AND STUDY GUIDE**

- I. The Market Revolution
  - A. Agricultural Changes and Consequences
  - B. A Nation on the Move: Roads, Canals, Steamboats, and Trains
  - C. Spreading the News
  
- II. The Spread of Industrialization
  - A. From Artisan to Worker
  - B. Women and Work
  - C. The Lowell Experiment
  - D. Urban Industrialization
  
- III. The Changing Urban Landscape
  - A. Old Port Cities and the New Cities of the Interior
  - B. Immigrants and the City
  - C. Free Black Communities in the North
  - D. Riot, Unrest, and Crime
  
- IV. Southern Society
  - A. The Planter Class
  - B. Yeomen and Tenant Farmers
  - C. Free Black Communities
  - D. White Southern Culture
  
- V. Life and Labor under Slavery
  - A. Varied Systems of Slave Labor
  - B. Life in the Slave Quarters
  - C. Slave Religion and Music
  - D. Resistance and Revolt
  - E. Slavery and the Law

The United States experienced extraordinary economic growth and change in the first half of the nineteenth century. But the economies of the Northern and Southern regions of the nation evolved along very different paths. The North developed a free labor economy marked by rapid industrialization and urbanization as well as massive immigration. Essential to this process was the introduction of new technology like water-powered looms, railroads, steamboats, and the telegraph. By contrast, while the South experienced some industrialization and urban growth, the great majority of its expansion and development focused on raising cash crops by means of slave labor. The huge profits generated by cotton cultivation prompted the expansion of plantations into the so-called Black Belt that stretched from Alabama westward.

By mid-century Northerners and Southerners became increasingly self-conscious about the distinctiveness of the labor system in their own region and more critical of that employed in the other half of the nation. Although North and South had developed different labor systems, each was tied to the expanding market economy that Henry Clay praised in his 1824 address. The expansion of the market economy transformed the countryside in both the North and South and fueled the growth of America's cities. Economic growth was spurred by new technologies that made agriculture more productive and factories more efficient, as well as by improvements in transportation and communication that spurred consumer demand for the latest goods.

## Learning Objectives

After a careful examination of Chapter 9, students should be able to do the following:

1. Define the term *transportation revolution* and explain its impact on stimulating the development of American manufacturing.
2. Explain the role of state governments as funding agents for transportation projects.
3. Identify two Supreme Court decisions that offered protection and support for railroads.
4. Compare and contrast Irish and German immigrants of the early nineteenth century, focusing on the numbers of people of each nationality who came to the United States and the levels of economic security reflected in each population.
5. Define the term *putting out system* and explain why it is so often considered the first step in the Industrial Revolution.
6. Identify and describe the working and living conditions of the Lowell girls.
7. Explain the impact of steam power on the expansion of industrial growth in the United States.
8. Identify the major difference between American industrial workers of the early nineteenth century and the labor of the mid-nineteenth century. Comment on the extent to which skill, class, and national origin contributed to this division.
9. Distinguish geographically, economically, and demographically among the Upper South, the Lower South, and the Border South.
10. List the factors that contributed to the rise of short staple cotton as a profitable commodity in the Old South. Explain why slave labor was considered by southern planters to be particularly suitable to the cultivation of cotton.
11. Describe the physical characteristics and operation of a southern plantation.
12. Discuss the profitability of the institution of slavery, including the return on investment and the increase in value of slave property during the first half of the nineteenth century.

13. Discuss the reasons southern planters feared industrialization and urbanization, and explain the impact they felt these trends could have on the southern institution of slavery.
14. Identify Edmund Ruffin and explain his contribution to promoting agricultural reform in the Upper South.
15. List factors that contributed to the decline of the slave population in the Upper South during the first half of the nineteenth century.
16. Describe the work routines and living conditions of slaves in the antebellum South.
17. Define the term *slave codes* and explain how they defined the status of slaves and the rights of slave owners in the antebellum South.
18. Describe the characteristics of family life in slave communities of the antebellum South.
19. Describe African Christianity and explain its effect on slave identity and indirect resistance of the institution of slavery.
20. Identify three examples of slave conspiracies in the antebellum South and comment on the success or failure of each.
21. Explain the meaning of the term *Underground Railroad* and explain its connection to the issue of slave resistance.
22. Summarize the diversity and complexity of the non-slaveholding southern white community.
23. Define the term *black codes* and describe how they were used to restrict the rights of free African Americans and to preserve racial inequity in the South.
24. Outline the major points of both the religious and racial justifications for slavery. Explain the circumstances in which each argument was more likely to be used.

### **Key Terms & Definitions:**

**market revolution** A set of interrelated developments in agriculture, technology, and industry that led to the creation of a more integrated national economy. Impersonal market forces impelled the maximization of production of agricultural products and manufactured goods. (254)

**telegraph** Invention patented by Samuel Morse in 1837 that used electricity to send coded messages over wires, making communication nearly instantaneous. (258)

**artisan production** A system of manufacturing goods, built around apprenticeship, that defined the pre-industrial economy. The apprentice learned a trade under the guidance of an artisan who often housed, clothed, and fed the apprentice. (260)

**Waltham System** Also known as the mill town model, a system that relied on factories housing all the distinctive steps of cloth production under a single roof. The Waltham System depended on a large labor force housed in company-owned dormitories. (261)

**Black Belt** A swath of dark rich soil well suited to cotton agriculture that stretched from Alabama westward, and eventually reached the easternmost part of Texas. (273)

**spirituals** Religious songs created by slaves. Spirituals' symbolism drew heavily on biblical themes. (276)

**Nat Turner's Rebellion** The 1831 Virginia slave uprising led by Nat Turner shocked many in the South and led to a host of new repressive measures against slaves. (277)

**Steve v. Mann** The 1829 North Carolina Supreme Court case that involved a white man's assault on a slave. The case asserted that the domination of the master over the slave was complete. (276)

### **Study Questions:**

How did the dominant labor systems of the North and the South differ from one another? (252)

How did technology change agriculture in the era of the market revolution? (254)

Why did the *Farmers Almanac* frown on huskings and frolics? (255)

What impact did the Erie Canal have on New York's economy? (256)

How did George Inness view technological progress in his painting of the Lackawanna Valley? (257)

How did the telegraph transform communication? (258)

What examples of the transportation revolution are evident in this Currier and Ives image of progress? (259)

How did the factory change the nature of work? (260)

What was the Lowell system? (261)

How did urban industrialization differ from other models of industrialization such as the Waltham (Lowell) model? (262)

How did ideas about gender shape the response of critics of the Lowell strike? (263)

What was the Five Points neighborhood and why did it become so well known? (264)

What does the creation of gated parks such as Gramercy Park tell us about urban life in this period? (265)

How did immigration patterns change in the early nineteenth century? (266)

What historical changes led to increased urban violence in the early nineteenth century? (267)

What does the murder of Helen Jewett reveal about nineteenth-century city life? (268)

What does plantation architecture tell us about Southern society? (269)

What values defined the planter class? (270)

How did slavery impact gender roles among the planter class? (271)

What role did honor play in Southern culture? (272)

Where was the Black Belt? (273)

What role did violence play in slave society? (274)

Why did so many slaves marry slaves living on other plantations? (275)

Why did Old Testament themes figure so prominently in slave spirituals? (276)

Who was Nat Turner? (277)

Does the law of slavery support the claim that the law is a tool of the powerful or a constraint on the powerful? (278)

How did the market revolution change American society in the North and South? (279)