

## U.S. as an Industrial Power

### Immigration and Urbanization

Industrialization in the U.S. was helped out by the increasing number of immigrants from Europe. Immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe came to the U.S. seeking jobs and better opportunities. They were often willing to work for very low wages. They settled in large cities and went to work in factories and mines. They helped produce the iron, steel, and coal that allowed the U.S. economy to grow. They went to work on construction projects like building skyscrapers and bridges. Women and children worked in garment factories producing clothing. Other immigrants worked to build new railroads across the country. Immigrants also became a new market for manufactured goods. As immigrants began to earn better wages, they used the money to buy the products that were being produced in factories.

### Natural Resources and Geography

Industrialization in America was assisted by the large supplies of natural resources in the U.S. The U.S. had large deposits of iron and coal. Immigrants often worked to mine these important raw materials. Coal was used as a fuel to run new factory machines and power trains and steamships. Iron could be processed into steel. Steel was then used to build new railroads, bridges, ships, and skyscrapers. Immigrants also worked in factories that produced steel. The U.S. also benefited from having a large number of rivers. Before railroads, rivers and canals were the main source of transportation. Natural resources and finished products could be shipped from city to city using the nation's network of connected rivers and canals.

### Government Support

Government support also helped the nation rapidly industrialize. The government would give free land to railroad companies to build their railroads. The government would also loan money to businesses to help them build new factories, mines, railroads, and canals. There were also very few government regulations on business. This allowed businessmen to amass huge amounts of money that they used to expand their businesses. However, it also meant that workers worked long hours for low wages in often dangerous conditions.

## Railroads

Railroads were another development that helped the U.S. to industrialize rapidly. With railroads, raw materials and finished products could be sent to any city in the U.S. quickly and cheaply. Quick transportation meant that the prices of goods went down. As prices went down, customers began to demand and buy more products. This meant that more factories were being built and more workers were being hired which increased the wealth of the entire nation. Because railroads could reach all areas of the country, this meant more markets or customers for manufactured goods. Railroads also required steel to build railroad tracks and coal to fuel the locomotives. More railroads being built meant more demand for coal and iron. So railroads also benefited the steel, iron, and coal industries.

## Foreign Trade

Foreign trade was another factor that helped the development of the U.S. economy. One problem caused by industrialization was overproduction. This meant that U.S. factories and farms were producing more goods and crops than people in this country needed or could use. Foreign trade solved this problem by opening up new markets to U.S. goods. New steamships, built using steel and powered by coal, could ship U.S. produced goods all over the world. Goods produced in U.S. factories and crops grown on U.S. farms were being sold as far away as Europe and Asia. This meant more money coming into the U.S. economy. Foreign trade also meant more natural resources for U.S. factories. In return for finished products, countries around the world would ship more coals and iron to the U.S. which helped fuel greater industrialization.