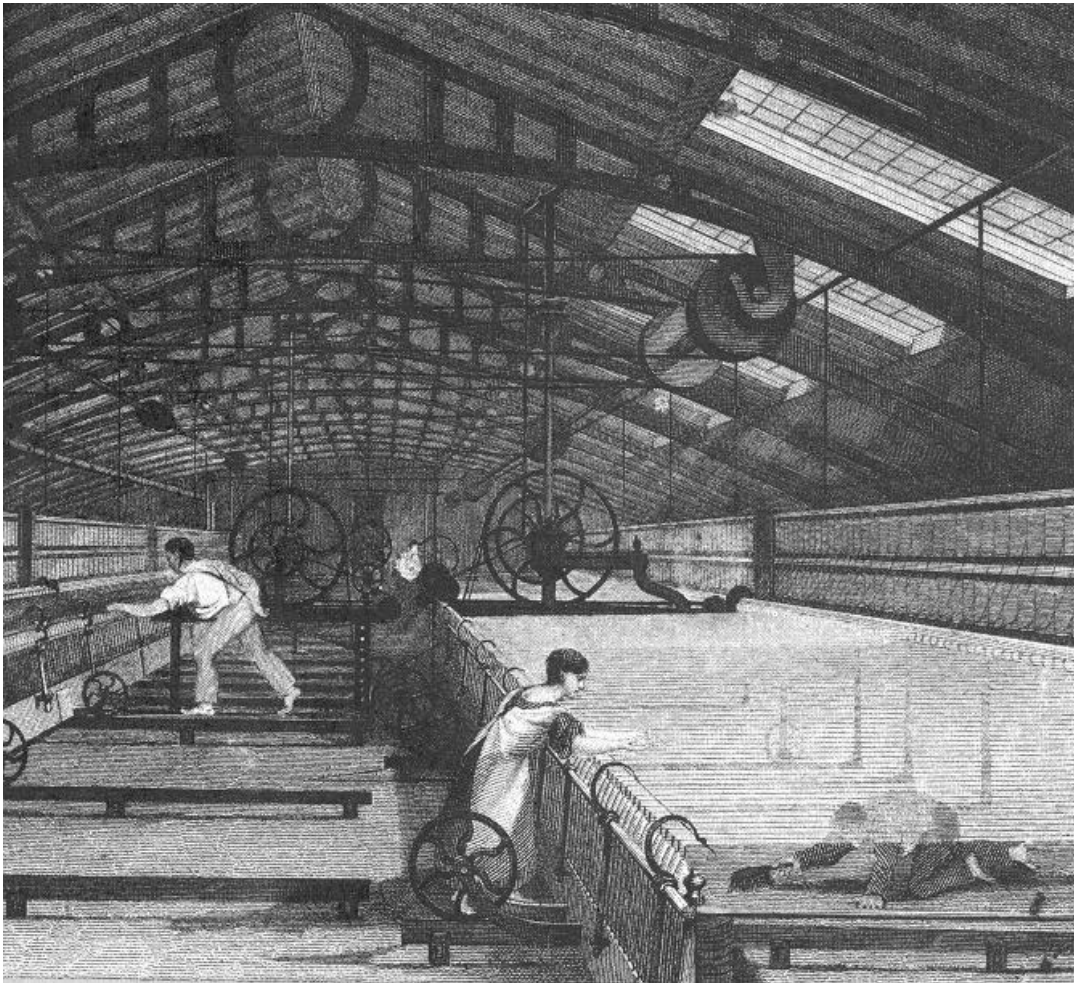


Comparing Regions, 1800-1850

You've studied data about the three main regions of the United States in the period from 1800 to 1850, and you've considered the ways in which people in those regions thought and acted. You've also examined the events and conditions—experiences—that helped shape those thoughts and actions.

In certain ways, of course, the three regions were alike. All were part of the United States. All were affected by the same national laws and decisions. But in other important ways the regions differed.

Here's the key question: *How do different experiences lead to different ways of thinking and acting?*



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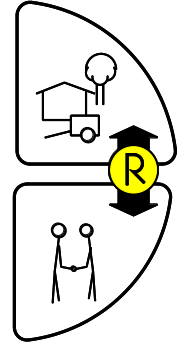
Investigation: Technology and Regional Difference

Technology is all of the machines, tools, and methods by which a group of people make the things they need and want. Technology is part of a society's setting; and you've learned that because societies are systems, changes in one part will cause changes elsewhere.

Important changes in technology affected all sections of the United States in the first half of the 1800s, often in different ways. In every case, new technology was important in the development of these regions.

Below are brief descriptions of inventions or developments that became important between 1800 and 1850. For each invention or development:

1. ***Identify the region or regions you think it most affected.***
2. ***Describe, in a sentence or two, the effects it had on the region.***
3. ***Which of these technological developments described was probably most important? Why?***
4. ***How would the technology have affected regional differences? Explain.***



Cotton Gin

One of the early problems with growing cotton was separating the seeds from the fibers. This was a slow, difficult, and expensive job. Hand-picking one pound of fibers from three pounds of seed had been a full day's work for one slave. Because of this, very little cotton was grown, and cotton cloth was rare. In 1793 Eli Whitney developed a machine for this job. Even in its first crude form, it could clean cotton fifty times faster than work by hands. Later, larger cotton gins (**gin** is short for engine) could clean hundreds of pounds each day.

Spinning Machine

English textile factories were more advanced than factories in America. Machines for spinning fibers into thread were developed in England, but the design of these machines was kept secret. Americans offered money to anyone who would bring the secret of the design to America. Samuel Slater, a young textile mechanic familiar with the machines, came to America and succeeded in building a spinning machine here in 1791. Many cotton-spinning mills were soon established.

Power Loom

Weaving thread into cloth was originally done slowly on hand looms. After several years of experiments, a successful power-driven loom was built around 1814. By 1840 one American town had nine mills with 4,000 power looms. Water power was used to drive most textile machinery.

(Continued)

Railroads

The first practical steam locomotive was built in England in 1812. By 1825 John Stevens had opened the first railway in America. The use of steam-powered locomotives grew extremely rapidly, and by 1840 there were 2,800 miles of railroad track in the United States. At first most railways were local operations. It was not until 1850 that long-distance runs began.

Steamboats

In 1807 a steam-powered boat called the Clermont steamed up the Hudson River from New York City to Albany. It traveled 150 miles in 32 hours, against the current. Steamboats had been built earlier but Robert Fulton was the first to build one powerful enough to convince people of its success. By 1860 over 1,000 steamboats were in use in America.

Reaper

Producing large quantities of wheat and other grain was difficult because of the labor needed to harvest the grain. Cyrus Hall McCormick solved this problem for wheat growers in 1834 when he developed the reaper. This machine cut the wheat stalks evenly, which made it far easier to remove the grain. With a reaper, one man and a team of horses could do the work of 20 or more men cutting grain by hand.

Canals

Water transportation was the cheapest way to move large quantities of freight, but some parts of the country did not have navigable rivers. This problem was solved by building canals. Boats were lifted from one level to another by changing the water level in compartments called **locks**.

Best known and most successful of the canals built during this period was the Erie Canal. By using the Erie Canal, a shipper could reduce the cost of shipping a ton of grain from Buffalo to New York City from 100 dollars to five dollars. The shipping time was cut from about twenty days to six.

Mass Production

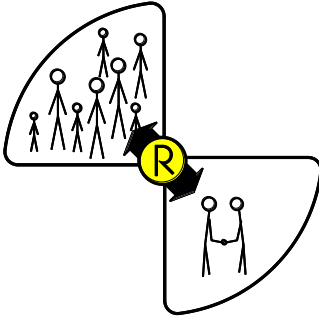
Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin, had another important invention. Firearms had always been made one at a time by a highly skilled gunsmith, who handmade every part to fit. This meant that every musket was different—the trigger or stock from one musket wouldn't fit another. Gunsmiths took years to train, and their production was slow. If a musket failed during a battle, the soldier was out of luck, because only a gunsmith could fix it.

Whitney's idea was to have each part built by a different person, using machinery that could make parts very precisely, so they were interchangeable. Because each worker made only one part, training the worker was simple and quick. Manufacturing was much faster and cheaper, and firearms could easily be repaired even by a soldier on a battlefield.

Whitney's idea, originally called "the American system," was soon applied to every kind of manufacturing—farm equipment, furniture, tools—anything that a factory could build.

Investigation: New Americans

Since the first Jamestown colonists, immigrants had continued to come to America. However, about 1815 the flow of newcomers began to increase, as indicated in the table below.



Year	Number of Immigrants
1820	10,000
1825	14,000
1830	25,000
1835	45,000
1840	90,000
1845	115,000
1850	370,000

Based on what you know about the three regions of the United States between 1800 and 1850:

- 1. Where would you expect most immigrants to settle? Why?*
- 2. In what region would you not expect immigrants to settle? Why?*
- 3. In what region would you have settled if you had been a skilled laborer in Europe?*
- 4. In what region would you have settled if you had been a farmer and arrived in the United States with no money? With a little money?*

Investigation: Sectional Issues

The following data selections indicate sectional differences that became important sources of disagreement between people in the three sections of the country.

Read the data, and identify and describe each issue in your journal. For each issue, infer and describe probable regional differences in opinion.

Congressman Thomas R. Gold from New York, as part of a debate in the House of Representatives, 1816:

New machinery has revolutionized the manufacture of cotton cloth. Five or six men can now operate a factory having 2,000 spindles. Any country which doesn't make use of this machinery, and buys its cloth from another country, is throwing money away. Sir James Stewart, an expert on these matters, has said, "A nation should manufacture everything it can at home, and control the competition from other nations by taxing foreign products brought into the country."

No friend of this country can look at the enormous amount of manufactured products brought into America last year and not be worried. We paid over 130 million dollars for British products. They paid us only about 21 million dollars for ours.

In fairness to all parts of the country, manufacturing should be encouraged. The South sold her cotton and tobacco for about 30 million dollars last year, but the North can produce no huge, profitable crop. The North must either turn to manufacturing or become poor.

Albert Gallatin, Treasurer of the United States, in a "Report on Manufactures," 1810:

The only important problem American manufacturers face comes from Great Britain. British merchants have great reserves of money which allow them to give long-term credit to buyers. They also generally have a large volume of business, which allows them to operate on a small profit.

The best way to help American manufacturers overcome the advantages British manufacturers enjoy is to raise the tariff on British products coming into this country.

Congressman Thomas Telfair, Georgia, 1816 House debate:

In my opinion, manufactured products coming into this country should be taxed only for the purpose of raising money to operate the government. We should not get involved in trying to protect American manufacturers. I believe it is dangerous to pass laws which favor certain small groups or classes.

At the present time, the small profits and great skill of foreign manufacturers keep the price of their products low. If a bill protecting American manufacturers is passed, it will mean that the planters will be able to choose only between high-priced American and high-priced foreign products.

Let us leave the manufacturers alone. We have in this country vast areas of land. The soil is rich. The people are healthy, strong, and independent. Considering these facts, it is obvious that for years to come Americans should be farmers and traders. We should not get ahead of ourselves by pushing the development of manufacturing too soon.

Congress passed laws setting up tariffs in 1816, 1824, and 1828. Vice-President John C. Calhoun, a native of South Carolina, discussed the 1828 tariff law:

We are slaves of this system. Out of our labor the manufacturers get rich. Whatever helps them, hurts us. The taxes on imports raise the costs of what we buy, and we cannot increase the price of what we sell enough to make up the difference.

God has given our section of the country a warm sun and a rich soil which produces much. Is it not strange then that we struggle in poverty while the rest of the country, with fewer natural advantages, is becoming ever richer?

My claim that what helps the manufacturers hurts us can be proven. We raise crops for the whole world, so our concern is for world trade. Northern manufacturers sell almost entirely within the country. They want taxes on foreign products high enough to keep those products out of the country. That forces us to buy from them at whatever price they ask. It means we must sell our crops at higher prices, and then our foreign competitors undersell us. This tariff makes it easy for the manufacturing states to compete against foreigners here in the home market, but it makes it hard for us to compete against foreigners in the foreign market.

Worse yet, in the past we have always traded Europe raw cotton for finished cloth. Now, with this tariff, European cloth will not sell here. This means that Europe must pay cash for our cotton, and this involves so much money they will refuse to do it. We will then have to depend entirely on our sales within this country, which will amount to only one fourth of our total production.

It is easy to see what will happen to us. Instead of supplying the world with cotton, as we could do if there were no tariff and trade was free, we will have to cut our production by three quarters. That will ruin us.

In 1830, a famous Senate debate occurred between Senators Daniel Webster (Massachusetts) and Robert Hayne (South Carolina). Here's a portion of the debate:

Daniel Webster: The honorable gentleman from South Carolina seems to be saying that state legislatures have the right to decide whether or not a federal law is constitutional, and to disobey it if they think it is not.

He seems to be saying that the states have a right to force the federal government to do whatever the states decide it ought to do.

He seems to be saying that the right to decide what powers the federal government has does not belong to that government or to one of its branches. He seems to think that each state can lawfully decide for itself when the federal government has acted unconstitutionally.

As I know it, this is the "South Carolina doctrine."

Robert Hayne: [*Mr. Hayne rose and said that to avoid misunderstanding, he would restate his position by quoting from a resolution passed by the Virginia legislature.*] This Assembly [the Virginia legislature] absolutely declares its position that the federal government has only those powers specifically given to it, and listed in, the Constitution. If the federal government deliberately tries to exercise any power not specifically named in the Constitution, the states have a right and a duty to interfere.

Daniel Webster: We, sir, who oppose this "Carolina doctrine" do not deny that the people can, if they wish, overthrow the government and set up a better one. That is revolution, and the people have that right. But the gentleman does not seem to be talking about revolution. He seems to be saying that without revolution, without rebellion, without disorder, the solution to an abuse of power by the federal government is for the state governments to interfere.

Robert Hayne: I do not argue for the simple right to revolt. I only say that, in case of an obvious violation of the Constitution by the federal government, a state may reject the federal position.

Daniel Webster: I am happy to find that I did not misunderstand the gentleman. The great question is, then, who has the right to decide whether or not a law is unconstitutional? This leads us to the question of where the federal government gets its power. Who created that power—the state legislatures or the people?

You've seen that regions differed in many ways, including ideas about national laws. *Why is this debate between Webster and Hayne considered important?*

The opinions of South Carolina native John C. Calhoun were usually, but not always the same as most Southerners. One side of another issue was supported by Congressman Calhoun in 1817:

This seems to me to be the best possible time to make some needed improvements in our country. We are at peace with the world, we have wealth, and most citizens are willing to put the good of the country ahead *of* political and sectional feelings.

Considering these favorable conditions, we ought to promote the construction of internal improvements, particularly roads and canals. This is by far the best way we have of increasing the wealth, strength, and political health of this nation. So much has been written about the advantages of convenient and inexpensive trade and travel that I do not need to discuss the matter at length. I will simply remind you that every important part of our economy—agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce—is helped by internal improvements.

Internal improvements tend to spread wealth among the population. They give to inland locations the same advantages enjoyed by trading centers on the coasts. Internal improvements also help keep prices in rural areas about the same as they are in the towns. In fact, investigation will prove that building roads and canals will cause wealth to grow faster than money spent in any other way.

Some people think that internal improvements are the responsibility of the states and of individuals. Now, I know that they can accomplish a great deal, but in a country as new and as large as this, even more is needed. Some of the necessary projects are simply too large and too expensive to be done by the states or by individuals. Only the federal government is in a position to plan them and complete them.

We can accomplish a great deal. If, however, we don't make use of our advantages, if we let selfish sectional jealousies divide the Representatives, our great opportunities will disappear.

The next data is from the diary of John Quincy Adams. Adams wrote the entry while he was Secretary of State under President James Monroe. At the time, John C. Calhoun was Secretary of War.

March 3, 1820

When I got to the office today, there was a note from the President calling a meeting of administration leaders for one o'clock.

The President expected a bill to be sent up from Congress starting Maine and Missouri on their ways to statehood. Before he signed the bill, he wanted written opinions on whether Congress had a right to prohibit slavery in a territory.

(Continued)

I said there was no doubt in my mind that Congress had that right. During the discussion, I maintained that, according to the Constitution, our final duty was to “establish justice.” What could be more just than to keep slavery from spreading?

After the meeting, I walked home with Calhoun. He said he thought my views about what was right and just were noble, but that in the South, it was believed they applied only to white men.

We talked about slavery, and he told me that Southerners felt no white man should do manual labor. That is the proper work of slaves, he said, and no white man should stoop to that.

It seems to me that Southerners see themselves as better than ordinary free men who work for a living. They look down on Yankees, because they are not arrogant and do not treat Negroes like dogs. Slavery blinds its defenders to what is right and wrong. What could be more wrong than to have a man's fate depend on the color of his skin?

If the Union must be dissolved, slavery is the best possible reason.

In 1818, the territory of Missouri applied for admission as a state. Most of the people living there had come from the South, and many had brought slaves.

Below is a list of states and their position on slavery at the time. ***How would entry of Missouri as a slave state affect the process of making laws? What might be the effects on sectional issues?***

Slave States

Delaware
Maryland
Virginia
North Carolina
South Carolina
Georgia
Alabama
Mississippi
Louisiana
Kentucky
Tennessee

Free States

Vermont
New Hampshire
Massachusetts
Rhode Island
Connecticut
New York
New Jersey
Pennsylvania
Ohio
Illinois
Indiana

For each issue you've identified, list (1) the values that are violated, and the section that shares those values, (2) the values that are supported, and the section that shares these values. Explain relationships between the issues and the ideas or values.

Follow-Up: Technology Here and Now

You've seen how technology affected societies and regions in the nineteenth century. Changes caused by technology continue to be important.

Several kinds of technology that didn't exist or were uncommon 40 years ago are common now: computers, the Internet, cell phones and smart phones, video surveillance, social networks, and much more.

Choose two of these recent innovations, and generate a system change diagram that predicts some of their probable and possible consequences.

Follow-Up (2): Regional Differences Here and Now

Use the present-day data you've collected for states in the Northeast, South and states originally considered part of the "West," and identify differences in the characteristics you've been investigating:

- Population density
- Employment distribution (service, trade, government, manufacturing)
- Per capita income
- Educational achievement
- Crime Rate

Use the Model to help you identify some possible reasons for regional change.

If your own state was not one you investigated, collect its data for comparison.

Based on your data, have regional differences increased or decreased over the past 150 years? Use the Model to identify possible reasons for regional change.

Describe similarities and differences between your own state and other states in your own region and in other regions.

Acknowledgements/Sources

Page 4: *U.S. Statistical Abstract*, **5t:** *Debates*, 14 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 1321, 1324, 1325. **5c:** Albert Gallatin, "Report on Manufactures, April 19, 1810," in *American State Papers, Finance*, vol. 2, pp 425, 431. **5b:** M. M. Miller, ed. *Great Debates in American History*, New York 1913, Current Literature Pub. Co., pp 25-28. **6t:** Meyers, *Sources of the American Republic*, Vol. 1. Scott-Foresman, pp 245-246. **7:** M. M. Miller, ed., op. cit. pp 49-51. **8t:** M. M. Miller, op. cit. pp 140-143. **8b:** Meyers, op. cit., p. 260.

Notes for teachers and mentors:

This unit is designed to be used after completion of the three units on regional difference (“Northeastern Region, 1800-1850,” “Southern Region, 1800-1850,” and “Western Region, 1800-1850”), and also after learners complete Part 8 of *Investigating American History*. See <https://www.marionbrady.com/AHH.asp>.

This unit adds important data about regional effects of changes in technology (part of setting), demography, and consequent regional differences in shared ideas.

When technology changes, it affects much else. Of all the causes of historical change in American society, technological innovation has almost certainly had the greatest impact. Southern slavery, northern manufacturing, western large-scale agriculture, and the movement of goods were all transformed by technology in the first half of the nineteenth century. The events of that century were shaped, powerfully and indelibly, by inventions.

Understanding the systemic consequences of technological change should be a primary goal of every American history course.

Regional differences in setting, demography, and action patterns, and the important technological influences on these differences, led inevitably to regional differences in ideas and proposals about public policy. Primary sources depicting these differences are in the second investigation—additional background for understanding the coming Civil War.

The data for investigating issues is a bit abstract, so discussion within work groups may be helpful to learners in identifying the issues and the regional differences in opinions about them.