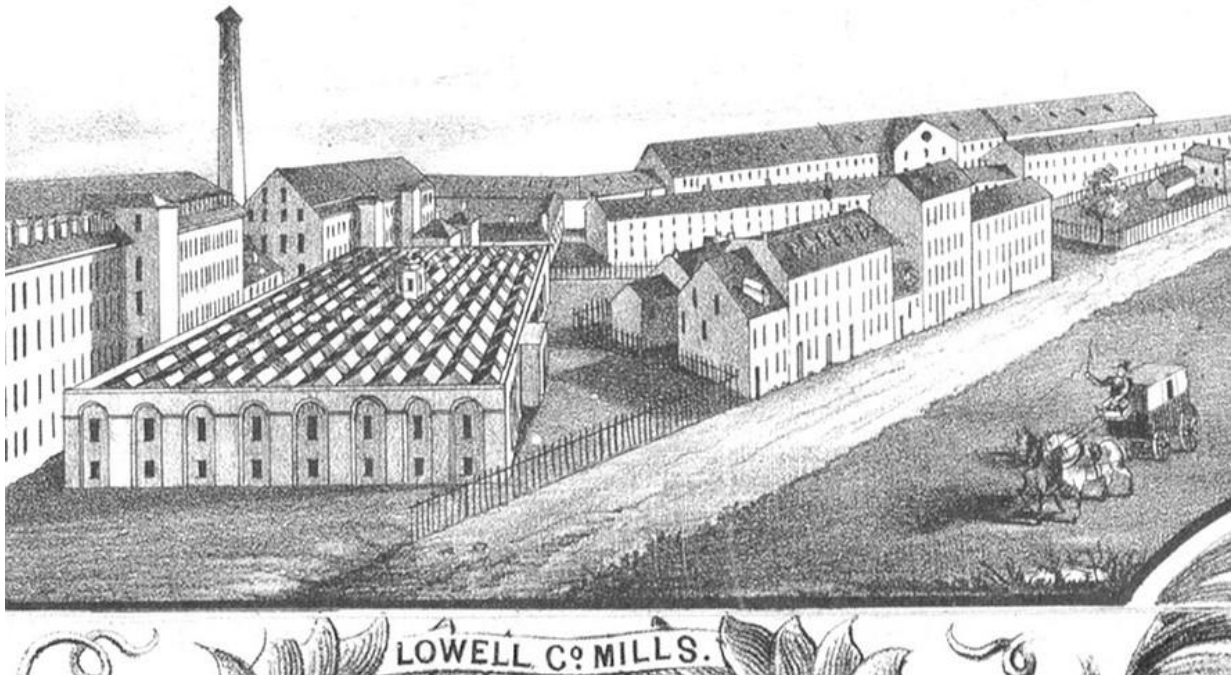


The Industrial Revolution and the Growth of Cities

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An illustration of the textile factories in Lowell, Massachusetts. The textile factories wove cotton produced in the South using cotton spindle machines. By the 1850s, Lowell had the largest industrial complex of factories in the United States. Photo from Wikimedia Commons.

The Industrial Revolution was a time of great change that began in the late 1700s. It started in England and then spread to other parts of the world. The Industrial Revolution marked the shift from a way of life that focused on farming to one centered on factories. During this period, city populations exploded.

The Industrial Revolution followed another big change known as the Agricultural Revolution. Earlier in the 1700s, rich British landowners had taken advantage of poor peasants. They fenced off lands that had once belonged to everyone. This turned the lands into private property. As a result, many poor families were forced to move. Some moved to other towns, and others moved to cities.

More people move to the cities

Around the same time, improvements in farming technology greatly increased food production. This made it possible for much larger groups of people to live closer together. But then fewer workers were needed on farms, making more of them available to go to work in factories.

These factories helped to spark the growth of cities. In 1801 in England and Wales, there were only 106 "cities" or places with 5,000 people or more. By 1891 there were 622, with larger numbers of the population. Similar changes were also taking place in the United States, as hundreds of thousands of immigrants arrived looking for jobs and a better life.

In 1790, the largest city in the United States was New York with about 33,000 people. During the 1800s, New York City's population soared to 1.5 million. Many other cities also saw huge growth.

Dirty, stinky city air

Many feared that city life would be harmful, especially for the masses of the working poor. Founding Father Thomas Jefferson, who was a farmer, was especially concerned. He believed that the "mobs of great cities" were a danger to the government.

The French writer Alexis de Tocqueville was both impressed and disgusted by the growth of cities. In 1835, he visited Manchester, England. "Smoke, thick and black, covers the town," he wrote. "A thousand noises rise endlessly. ... The steps of scurrying crowds, the cranking of wheels grinding against each other. ... Yet out of this stinking drain the most powerful stream of human industry springs to fertilize the whole world. From this filthy sewer pure gold flows."

In the early 1900s, most large cities were filled with the smell of horse dung and urine. There was also the stink of human waste and garbage. Factories burning coal in London, England, made the air dense and foggy. This was a serious health problem.

New ways to get around

Advances in transportation sparked changes in city life. In the early 1800s, people in cities mostly lived within walking distance of factories. Rich people could afford to live farther away and take carriages into town. Later, railroads and streetcars were built. These allowed people to spread out and live farther from factories. Yet this type of transportation remained quite expensive for some time. It was not available to many working people until prices went down.

All of the new transportation created huge traffic jams. The roads were packed with wagons, horses and people on foot. To deal with this problem, large cities began to develop public transportation systems. They built subways and elevated trains to help people move around more easily.

Office buildings begin to appear

In the late 1800s, a new building method was introduced in Chicago, Illinois. It was known as steel-cage construction. In place of stone, steel poles were used as the main support for a building. Elevators were used to move people between floors. As a result, buildings became taller and taller.

These new towering buildings would change the skylines of Chicago, New York City and most other big cities around the world.

The taller buildings meant that even more people would be going to work in cities on trains and subways, and eventually buses.

Quiz

- 1 HOW does the section "More people move to the cities" relate to the section "Dirty, stinky city air"?
- (A) The first section outlines actions of people moving to cities and the next section shows their reactions.
 - (B) The first section compares cities in England and the next section contrasts them with the United States.
 - (C) The first section explains what caused more people to move to cities and the next section describes the effects.
 - (D) The first section describes problems of people moving to cities and the next section explains the solutions.
- 2 What effect did the growth of cities have on transportation?
- (A) Transportation in cities and farming areas improved as the population became more spread out.
 - (B) Transportation was not as necessary as it had been earlier because people were able to walk to work.
 - (C) New types of transportation needed to be invented in order to allow people to get to and from work with less traffic.
 - (D) New types of transportation were invented to make it faster for people living in cities to visit relatives living on farms.
- 3 Alexis de Tocqueville would MOST likely agree with which of the following statements?
- (A) Cities were important but terrible places.
 - (B) Cities seemed like a good place to live.
 - (C) Cities were a danger to the government.
 - (D) Cities seemed to be getting cleaner.
- 4 Overall, the article is organized around:
- (A) a time and its advances
 - (B) a place and its ideas
 - (C) a time and a person
 - (D) a place and an event