

The Jacksonian era saw great economic and technological changes. It seemed that anyone willing to work hard could make a living in the United States. Even Andrew Jackson's own life, from backwoods Carolina boy to U.S. president, seemed to echo this very American ideal. But by the middle of the era, banks began to collapse and the great panic of 1837 led to fears about how this new U.S. economy could sustain itself.

Technological innovations, such as the invention of the sewing machine for industrial use, led to mass production. Drawing upon the

South's surplus of cotton, textile mills opened across the North and provided workplaces for poor immigrants and women.

The Irish potato famine began in 1845. The potato was the main source of food for most Irish. When the potato crop failed because of a potato blight, thousands died of starvation, and thousands more came to the United States, seeking a better way of life. Jobless and poor, they lived in crowded, unhealthy living conditions in large cities. However, this provided the North with an influx of workers who needed jobs.

## Exercise

1. What was Manifest Destiny? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. Describe Jacksonian democracy. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. How did the Irish potato famine change America's population? How did this population change affect Northern cities and the manufacturing industry? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. Name at least one invention during this period and how it affected people's lives. \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. What was the Oregon Trail and what did it set in motion? \_\_\_\_\_  
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