



South Side: Industrialization

Historical Context and Overview

Between the end of the Civil War in 1865 and the early 20th century, the United States witnessed a rapid economic transformation. This industrial boom—known as the Second Industrial Revolution—was the result of a new wave of technological innovation and a growing urban population. The rapid growth of factory production, mining, and railroad construction marked the transition to an advanced industrialized nation. By 1913, the United States produced one-third of the world's industrial output. Most manufacturing took place in industrial cities, especially in the Midwest, where factories producing iron and steel, machinery, chemicals, and packaged food thrived.

The railroad made possible the Second Industrial Revolution. At the start of the Civil War, the United States had about 30,000 miles of track. The number of miles of railroad track tripled between 1860 and 1880 and again by 1920, establishing a national market for industrial goods. The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869. By the 1890s, five transcontinental lines transported products from western mines and farms to eastern markets and carried manufactured goods to the West. Iron, coal, steel, lumber, and glass industries grew quickly to meet the railroads' increasing demand for materials.

During this industrial era, the South Side of Columbus became home to several large industries. Cheap, undeveloped land was plentiful and attracted businesses like Buckeye Steel Castings and Federal Glass. Buckeye Steel began as the Murray-Hayden Foundry and became the Buckeye Automatic Car Coupler Company in 1891. The company thrived as the expansion of railroads increased demand for railroad car couplers, which were mandated by federal law. Buckeye Steel moved to its Parsons Avenue location in 1902. Frank Rockefeller (brother of John D. Rockefeller) was president from 1905-1908. Samuel Prescott Bush (grandfather of President George H.W. Bush and great-grandfather of President George W. Bush) served as Buckeye Steel President from 1908-1928.

Standards Alignment

Ohio's New Learning Standards: Social Studies

Grade 3

Content Statement 3. Local communities change over time.

Content Statement 18. A market is where buyers and sellers exchange goods and services.

Grade 4

Content Statement 10. The economic development of the United States continues to influence and be influenced by agriculture, industry and natural resources in Ohio.

Content Statement 14. Ohio's location and its transportation systems continue to influence the movement of people, products and ideas in the United States.

HS American History

Content Statement 10. The rise of corporations, heavy industry, mechanized farming and technological innovations transformed the American economy from an agrarian to an increasingly urban industrial society.

Content Statement 11. The rise of industrialization led to a rapidly expanding workforce. Labor organizations grew amidst unregulated working conditions, laissez-faire policies toward big business, and violence toward supporters of organized labor.

Learning Objectives

- Explain how the South Side underwent change from wide open farmland to the community of neighborhoods and industry that it became.
- Explain why the South Side was one of the last areas of Columbus to develop and why industries eventually moved to the South Side.
- Explain how natural resources and location played an important role in attracting companies like Federal Glass to Columbus (Ohio).
- Explain how railroad expansion impacted industrial growth in Columbus.
- Describe the impact of industrial growth on people and the environment as reflected in the growth of Buckeye Steel.
- Describe the “Americanization” program and explain how this program was implemented at Buckeye Steel.

Discussion Questions

1. What was the relationship between the flow of the Scioto River and the development of the South Side of Columbus?
2. How did the Old Oaks and Driving Park neighborhoods reflect the growth of the middle class and new modes of transportation during the Industrial Era?
3. Why did the founders of Buckeye Steel and Federal Glass choose Columbus as the location for their companies?
4. In what part of Columbus were most industries originally located? Why did industries move to the South Side?
5. How did the growth of companies like Buckeye Steel and Federal Glass change the South Side?
6. Who were the buyers of Buckeye Steel’s products and Federal Glass’ products? Where were the markets for these products?
7. What was the relationship between the expansion of railroads and the growth of Buckeye Steel?
8. What were the working conditions like in industrial factories? How did the businesses meet the demand for labor?
9. In what way was the environmental impact of South Side industries typical of many Midwestern industrial cities?
10. What were key points of the “Americanization” program favored by Samuel Prescott Bush? What services and activities were provided for workers?
11. Explain what is meant by the statement: “There was opportunity on the South Side, even if there wasn’t equality.” How were African Americans discriminated against at Buckeye Steel?

Extension Activities

- Have students investigate how glass is made. This could be part of a science study on the states of matter, heat energy, or natural resources. The end result should be that students can discuss: how did sand, natural gas, railroads, and water routes such as canals all play a part in luring companies like Federal Glass to Ohio and cities like Columbus?
 - Sand - Ohio had a ready supply of sand, which is a major component of glass
 - Natural gas - Ohio had an unlimited supply of to fuel the furnaces
 - Railroads/Water routes - Ohio had a huge network of these to move the glass to markets around the nation quickly and rather inexpensively
- Have students conduct further research and debate the aims of “Americanization.” Was the movement motivated by benevolence or prejudice? Was it designed to help immigrants assimilate into American society or to indoctrinate them with a particular set of patriotic beliefs?
- Have students assume the role of a newspaper reporter in the early 1900s and write a newspaper article about Buckeye Steel. What are working conditions like? Who works at Buckeye Steel? Why did they come to Ohio? What are their lives like? The articles should quote a variety of perspectives from workers and management.

Additional Resources

- Shield F - The Mark of Quality (includes a history of Federal Glass). www.fohbc.org/PDF_Files/ShieldF_MIwen.pdf
- How is Glass Made? This educational video is used at the Columbus Museum of Art to show how glass can change from solid to fluid and back again. <http://www.watchknowlearn.org/Video.aspx?VideoID=28563>
- Some Assembly Required: How Glass is Made. This is a video from How Stuff Works on how glass is made. <http://science.howstuffworks.com/innovation/28024-some-assembly-required-how-glass-is-made-video.htm>
- History of Columbus Castings: <http://www.columbuscastings.com/history.html>
- Buckeye Steel Castings, Ohio History Central: http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Buckeye_Steel_Castings_Company?rec=854
- Ohio Memory: <http://www.ohiomemory.org/> (Keyword search – “buckeye steel”)
- Americanization, Encyclopedia Britannica: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/20361/Americanization>
- Americanization: http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/mmh/clash/imm_kkk/immigration%20pages/Subnarratives/Americanization.htm

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Buckeye Steel Castings

