

Industrializing Antebellum America The Rise Of Manufacturing Entrepreneurs In The Early R Lic

A study of the early years of the life insurance industry in 19th century America. Investing in Life considers the creation and expansion of the American life insurance industry from its early origins in the 1810s through the 1860s and examines how its growth paralleled and influenced the emergence of the middle class. Using the economic instability of the period as her backdrop, Sharon Ann Murphy also analyzes changing roles for women; the attempts to adapt slavery to an urban, industrialized setting; the rise of statistical thinking; and efforts to regulate the business environment. Her research directly challenges the conclusions of previous scholars who have dismissed the importance of the earliest industry innovators while exaggerating clerical opposition to life insurance. Murphy examines insurance as both a business and a social phenomenon. She looks at how insurance companies positioned themselves within the marketplace, calculated risks associated with disease, intemperance, occupational hazard, and war, and battled fraud, murder, and suicide. She also discusses the role of consumers—their reasons for purchasing life insurance, their perceptions of the industry, and how their desires and demands shaped the ultimate product. Winner, Hagley Prize in Business History, Hagley Museum and Library and the Business History Conference Praise for Investing in Life “A well-written, well-argued book that makes a number of important contributions to the history of business and capitalism in antebellum America.” —Sean H. Vanatta, Common Place “An intriguing, instructive history of the establishment and development of the life insurance industry that reveals a good deal about changing social and commercial conditions in antebellum America . . . Highly recommended.” —Choice

Publisher description

Because of its strong agrarian roots, the South has typically been viewed as a region not favorably disposed to innovation and technology. Yet innovation was never absent from industrialization in this part of the United States. From the early nineteenth century onward, southerners were as eager as other Americans to embrace technology as a path to modernity. This volume features seven essays that range widely across the region and its history, from the antebellum era to the present, to assess the role of innovations presumed lacking by most historians. Offering a challenging interpretation of industrialization in the South, these writings show that the benefits of innovations had to be carefully weighed against the costs to both industry and society. The essays consider a wide range of innovative technologies. Some examine specific industries in subregions: steamboats in the lower Mississippi valley, textile manufacturing in Georgia and Arkansas, coal mining in Virginia, and sugar planting and processing in Louisiana. Others consider the role of technology in South Carolina textile mills around the turn of the twentieth century, the electrification of the Tennessee valley, and telemedicine in contemporary Arizona—marking the expansion of the region into the southwestern Sunbelt. Together, these articles show that southerners set significant limitations on what technological innovations they were willing to adopt, particularly in a milieu where slaveholding agriculture had shaped the allocation of resources. They also reveal how scarcity of capital and continued reliance on agriculture influenced that allocation into the twentieth century, relieved eventually by federal spending during the Depression and its aftermath that sparked the Sunbelt South's economic boom. Technology, Innovation, and Southern Industrialization clearly demonstrates that the South's embrace of technological innovation in the modern era doesn't mark a radical change from the past but rather signals that such pursuits were always part of the region's economy. It deflates the myth of southern agrarianism while expanding the scope of antebellum American industrialization beyond the Northeast and offers new insights into the relationship of southern economic history to the region's society and politics.

Pussyhats, typically crafted with yarn, quite literally created a sea of pink the day after Donald J. Trump became the 45th president of the United States in January 2017, as the inaugural Women's March unfolded throughout the U.S., and sister cities globally. But there was nothing new about women crafting as a means of dissent. *Crafting Dissent: Handicraft as Protest from the American Revolution to the Pussyhats* is the first book that demonstrates how craft, typically involving the manipulation of yarn, thread and fabric, has also been used as a subversive tool throughout history and up to the present day, to push back against government policy and social norms that crafters perceive to be harmful to them, their bodies, their families, their ideals relating to equality and human rights, and their aspirations. At the heart of the book is an exploration for how craft is used by citizens to engage with the rhetoric and policy shaping their country's public sphere. The book is divided into three sections: "Crafting Histories," "Politics of Craft," and "Crafting Cultural Conversations." Three features make this a unique contribution to the field of craft activism and history: The inclusion of diverse contributors from a global perspective (including from England, Ireland, India, New Zealand, Australia) Essay formats including photo essays, personal essays and scholarly investigations The variety of professional backgrounds among the book's contributors, including academics, museum curators, art therapists, small business owners, provocateurs, artists and makers. This book explains that while handicraft and craft-motivated activism may appear to be all the rage and “of the moment,” a long thread reveals its roots as far back as the founding of American Democracy, and at key turning points throughout the history of nations throughout the world.

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Traces the dynamic expression of the American experience and how the nation's sense of identity offers alternate perspectives into history, in an anthology that also explores modern cultural creations in a range of disciplines.

In this unique anthology, Steckel and Floud coordinate ten essays that bring a new perspective to inquiry about standard of living in modern times. These papers are arranged for international comparison, and they individually examine evidence of health and welfare during and after industrialization in eight countries: the United States, Britain, Sweden, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Japan, and Australia. The essays incorporate several indicators of quality of life, especially real per capita income and health, but also real wages, education, and inequality. And while the authors use traditional measures of health such as life expectancy and mortality rates, this volume stands alone in its extensive use of new "anthropometric" data—information about height, weight and body mass index that indicates changes in nations' well-being. Consequently, *Health and Welfare during Industrialization* signals a new direction in economic history, a broader and more thorough understanding of what constitutes standard of living.

In this book an eminent scholar and policymaker analyzes the lessons history can teach those who wish to reform the American educational system. Maris Vinovskis begins by tracing the

evolving role of the federal government in educational research, providing a historical perspective at a time when there is some movement to abolish the U.S. Department of Education. He then focuses on early childhood education, exploring trends in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He examines the troubling history of the Follow Through Program, which existed from 1967 to 1994 to help Head Start children make the transition into the regular schools, and he reviews the development of the Even Start Program, which works to improve the literacy of disadvantaged parents while providing early childhood education for their children. He discusses changing views toward the economic benefits of education and critically assesses the validity and usefulness of the idea of systemic or standards-based reform. Finally he develops a conceptual framework for mapping and analyzing education research and reform activities.

Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Martin Delany--these figures stand out in the annals of black protest for their vital antislavery efforts. But what of the rest of their generation, the thousands of other free blacks in the North? Patrick Rael explores the tradition of protest and sense of racial identity forged by both famous and lesser-known black leaders in antebellum America and illuminates the ideas that united these activists across a wide array of divisions. In so doing, he reveals the roots of the arguments that still resound in the struggle for justice today. Mining sources that include newspapers and pamphlets of the black national press, speeches and sermons, slave narratives and personal memoirs, Rael recovers the voices of an extraordinary range of black leaders in the first half of the nineteenth century. He traces how these activists constructed a black American identity through their participation in the discourse of the public sphere and how this identity in turn informed their critiques of a nation predicated on freedom but devoted to white supremacy. His analysis explains how their place in the industrializing, urbanizing antebellum North offered black leaders a unique opportunity to smooth over class and other tensions among themselves and successfully galvanize the race against slavery.

Antebellum American Pendant Paintings: New Ways of Looking marks the first sustained study of pendant paintings: discrete images designed as a pair. It opens with a broad overview that anchors the form in the medieval diptych, religious history, and aesthetic theory and explores its cultural and historical resonance in the 19th-century United States. Three case studies examine how antebellum American artists used the pendant format in ways revelatory of their historical moment and the aesthetic and cultural developments in which they partook. The case studies on John Quidor's Rip Van Winkle and His Companions at the Inn Door of Nicholas Vedder (1839) and The Return of Rip Van Winkle (1849) and Thomas Cole's Departure and Return (1837) shed new light on canonical antebellum American artists and their practices. The chapter on Titian Ramsay Peale's Kilauea by Day and Kilauea by Night (1842) presents new material that pushes the geographical boundaries of American art studies toward the Pacific Rim. The book contributes to American art history the study of a characteristic but as yet overlooked format and models for the discipline a new and productive framework of analysis focused on the fundamental yet complex way images work back and forth with one another.

First published in 1979, this volume offers students and teachers a unique view of American history prior to the Civil War. Distinguished historian David Brion Davis has chosen a diverse array of primary sources that show the actual concerns, hopes, fears, and understandings of ordinary antebellum Americans. He places these sources within a clear interpretive narrative that brings the documents to life and highlights themes that social and cultural historians have brought to our attention in recent years. Beginning with the family and the issue of socialization and influence, the units move on to struggles over access to wealth and power; the plight of &"outsiders&" in an &"open&" society; and ideals of progress, perfection, and mission. The reader of this volume hears a great diversity of voices but also grasps the unities that survived even the Civil War.

There has been considerable debate about the process of and the underlying motivation for the expansion of public education in nineteenth-century America. Interpretations which focused on the role of reformer like Horace Mann, or on the demands by workers for more public education, have been criticized by revisionists who see education being imposed upon an uninterested and unwilling populace by capitalists seeking to maintain a docile labor force during industrialization. Here, Maris. A. Vinovskis challenges that revisionist view, employing sophisticated social science methodology in a work sure to be welcomed by all historians of American education. The revisionist view of the nature of educational changes rests heavily upon the now classical study by Michael Katz of the abolition of the public high school in Beverly, Massachusetts, in the mid-nineteenth century. An especially detailed analysis of education in Beverly is made possible by the unique availability of a list of the voters who supported or opposed the public high school in 1860. Katz used this information to demonstrate that the workers strongly opposed the public high school which he claimed has been established by a small group of the leading capitalists not only to provided educational opportunities for their own children, but also to help restore community harmony which was being eroded by the economic transformation of the town. Vinovskis's study of the origins of the Massachusetts antebellum public high school reanalyzes the establishment of the Beverly Public High School within the broader perspective of the other educational developments occurring in that community as well as in the Commonwealth as a whole. The results raise serious questions about Katz's depiction of the timing of and the reasons for the creation of that institution in Beverly. This reanalysis of the vote to abolish the high school also suggests a very different interpretation of events in Beverly than the one presented by Katz. By expanding the number of factors used in this study as well as employing recently developed techniques of statistical analysis, the importance of the opposition of the workers to the public high school is minimized, while the differences in the needs and resources among the school districts in that community become more important factors. Vinovskis's reexamination does not find that the struggle over the Beverly Public High School is primarily a class conflict as suggested by Katz and other revisionists; instead it reveals the complex process by which towns expanded their public school offerings and allocated scarce educational funds to elementary and high schools. His work offers an important contribution to our understanding of the development of American public school education in the nineteenth century.

This book explores the rise of manufacturing through the beliefs and practices of key industrialists and their families, exploring how they represented the diverse possibilities for the organization of a new industrial society.

A Companion to the Era of Andrew Jackson offers a wealth of new insights on the era of Andrew Jackson. This collection of essays by leading scholars and historians considers various aspects of the life, times, and legacy of the seventh president of the United States. Provides an overview of Andrew Jackson's life and legacy, grounded in the latest scholarship and including original research spread across a number of thematic areas Features 30 essays contributed by leading scholars and historians Synthesizes the most up-to-date scholarship on the political,

economic, social, and cultural aspects of the Age of Andrew Jackson

How conflict sparked by the debate over the future of slavery remade the urban West.

From one of America's smartest political writers comes a "captivating and comprehensive journey" (#1 New York Times bestselling author David Limbaugh) of the United States' unique and enduring relationship with guns. For America, the gun is a story of innovation, power, violence, character, and freedom. From the founding of the nation to the pioneering of the West, from the freeing of the slaves to the urbanization of the twentieth century, our country has had a complex and lasting relationship with firearms. In *First Freedom*, nationally syndicated columnist and veteran writer David Harsanyi explores the ways in which firearms have helped preserve our religious, economic, and cultural institutions for over two centuries. From Samuel Colt's early entrepreneurship to the successful firearms technology that helped make the United States a superpower, the gun is inextricably tied to our exceptional rise. In the vein of popular histories like *American Gun*, *Salt*, and *Seabiscuit*, Harsanyi takes us on a captivating and thrilling ride of Second Amendment history that demonstrates why guns are not only an integral part of America's past, but also an essential part of its future. *First Freedom* is "a briskly paced journey...a welcome lesson on how guns and America have shaped each other for four hundred years" (National Review).

While elite merchants, financiers, shopkeepers, and customers were the most visible producers, consumers, and distributors of goods and capital in the nineteenth century, they were certainly not alone in shaping the economy. Lurking in the shadows of capitalism's past are those who made markets by navigating a range of new financial instruments, information systems, and modes of transactions: prostitutes, dealers in used goods, mock auctioneers, illegal slavers, traffickers in stolen horses, emigrant runners, pilfering dock workers, and other ordinary people who, through their transactions and lives, helped to make capitalism as much as it made them. *Capitalism by Gaslight* illuminates American economic history by emphasizing the significance of these markets and the cultural debates they provoked. These essays reveal that the rules of economic engagement were still being established in the nineteenth century: delineations between legal and illegal, moral and immoral, acceptable and unsuitable were far from clear. The contributors examine the fluid mobility and unstable value of people and goods, the shifting geographies and structures of commercial institutions, the blurred boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate economic activity, and the daily lives of men and women who participated creatively—and often subversively—in American commerce. With subjects ranging from women's studies and African American history to material and consumer culture, this compelling volume illustrates that when hidden forms of commerce are brought to light, they can become flashpoints revealing the tensions, fissures, and inequities inherent in capitalism itself. Contributors: Paul Erickson, Robert J. Gamble, Ellen Gruber Garvey, Corey Goettsch, Joshua R. Greenberg, Katie M. Hemphill, Craig B. Hollander, Brian P. Luskey, Will B. Mackintosh, Adam Mendelsohn, Brendan P. O'Malley, Michael D. Thompson, Wendy A. Woloson.

Governance by regulation – rules propounded and enforced by bureaucracies – is taking a growing share of the sum total of governance. Once thought to be an American phenomenon, it is now a central form of state action in every part of the world, including Europe, Latin America, and Asia, and it is at the core of much international lawmaking. In *Comparative Law and Regulation*, original contributions by leading scholars in the field focus both on the legal dimension of regulation and on how this dimension operates in those places that have turned to regulation to meet their obligations.

This benchmark volume addresses the debate over the effects of early industrialization on standards of living during the decades before the Civil War. Its contributors demonstrate that the aggregate antebellum economy was growing faster than any other large economy had grown before. Despite the dramatic economic growth and rise in income levels, questions remain as to the general quality of life during this era. Was the improvement in income widely shared? How did economic growth affect the nature of work? Did higher levels of income lead to improved health and longevity? The authors address these questions by analyzing new estimates of labor force participation, real wages, and productivity, as well as of the distribution of income, height, and nutrition.

A lively, accessible collection of essays exploring the history of the struggle for women's rights in the United States from the colonial period to the present. • Primary sources, including the 1692 witchcraft examination of Bridget Bishop; an excerpt from a 1917 National American Woman Suffrage Organization document, "Why Women Should Vote; " and excerpts from "School Days of an Indian Girl by Zitkala-Sa" • Each chapter contains sidebars for more in-depth coverage and an annotated bibliography offers information on scholarly works for further research This book documents the potency of Manifest destiny in the antebellum era.

This book brings together a group of leading economic historians to examine how institutions, innovation, and industrialization have determined the development of nations. Presented in honor of Joel Mokyr—arguably the preeminent economic historian of his generation—these wide-ranging essays address a host of core economic questions. What are the origins of markets? How do governments shape our economic fortunes? What role has entrepreneurship played in the rise and success of capitalism? Tackling these and other issues, the book looks at coercion and exchange in the markets of twelfth-century China, sovereign debt in the age of Philip II of Spain, the regulation of child labor in nineteenth-century Europe, meat provisioning in pre-Civil War New York, aircraft manufacturing before World War I, and more. The book also features an essay that surveys Mokyr's important contributions to the field of economic history, and an essay by Mokyr himself on the origins of the Industrial Revolution. In addition to the editors, the contributors are Gergely Baics, Hoyt Bleakley, Fabio Braggion, Joyce Burnette, Louis Cain, Mauricio Drelichman, Narly Dwarkasing, Joseph Ferrie, Noel Johnson, Eric Jones, Mark Koyama, Ralf Meisenzahl, Peter Meyer, Joel Mokyr, Lyndon Moore, Cormac Ó Gráda, Rick Szostak, Carolyn Tuttle, Karine van der Beek, Hans-Joachim Voth, and Simone Wegge.

Looks at the rise of industrialization in the Eastern United States during the first half of the nineteenth century.

White Light, Yellow Light, Districts, Dynamics: The Socioeconomic Divide By: L. Tommy Long In our nation's neighborhoods, there is a disturbing indicator of inequality that few have noticed: light. Have you ever stopped to wonder why there is such a stark contrast between the appearances of low income communities and more affluent ones at night? The disparity has many causes, but the two most notable are the differences in operational cost and illumination levels, and these point to deeper systemic issues. This contrast thus separates America's white light

and yellow light districts, the haves and the have nots. In this book, author L. Tommy Long explores the impact politics has on economic opportunities and lived experiences. As the economic inequality gap continues to widen in America, Long offers possible solutions, and he challenges each reader to look inward for ways to improve his/her life.

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The United States has long epitomized capitalism. From its enterprising shopkeepers, wildcat banks, violent slave plantations, huge industrial working class, and raucous commodities trade to its world-spanning multinationals, its massive factories, and the centripetal power of New York in the world of finance, America has come to symbolize capitalism for two centuries and more. But an understanding of the history of American capitalism is as elusive as it is urgent. What does it mean to make capitalism a subject of historical inquiry? What is its potential across multiple disciplines, alongside different methodologies, and in a range of geographic and chronological settings? And how does a focus on capitalism change our understanding of American history? *American Capitalism* presents a sampling of cutting-edge research from prominent scholars. These broad-minded and rigorous essays venture new angles on finance, debt, and credit; women's rights; slavery and political economy; the racialization of capitalism; labor beyond industrial wage workers; and the production of knowledge, including the idea of the economy, among other topics. Together, the essays suggest emerging themes in the field: a fascination with capitalism as it is made by political authority, how it is claimed and contested by participants, how it spreads across the globe, and how it can be reconceptualized without being universalized. A major statement for a wide-open field, this book demonstrates the breadth and scope of the work that the history of capitalism can provoke.

The fascinating stories behind their design, construction, and marketing reveal in rich detail how these buildings became cultural symbols that shaped the urban landscape.

The Devil's Right Hand chronicles the legacy of death and destruction in the gunmaking Colt family during the nineteenth century, a legacy largely remembered for a lurid murder case that inspired Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Oblong Box"—but one that encompassed much more. . . . New York Times and nationally bestselling author M. William Phelps reveals an unfathomable pattern surrounding repeating arms inventor Samuel Colt—from the death of all his children, including Sam's sea captain son's mysterious demise aboard his yacht, to the eccentric life of his widow. But the tip of this iceberg was the 1841-42 murder case of brother John C. Colt, one of New York's most sensational scandals. Printer Samuel Adams went to collect a debt from bookkeeper and author John Colt and was never seen alive again.

Shocking revelations followed: Did John shoot Adams with one of his brother's Colt firearms before hacking him up and packing him in an oblong box? Did Sam Colt invent the revolving pistol, or steal the idea? Part historical true-crime, part family biography and cultural history, *The Devil's Right Hand* is a stirring narrative about a darkly cursed American dynasty.

With this book, Nancy Isenberg illuminates the origins of the women's rights movement. Rather than herald the singular achievements of the 1848 Seneca Falls convention, she examines the confluence of events and ideas—before and after 1848—that, in her view, marked the real birth of feminism. Drawing on a wide range of sources, she demonstrates that women's rights activists of the antebellum era crafted a coherent feminist critique of church, state, and family. In addition, Isenberg shows, they developed a rich theoretical tradition that influenced not only subsequent strains of feminist thought but also ideas about the nature of citizenship and rights more generally. By focusing on rights discourse and political theory, Isenberg moves beyond a narrow focus on suffrage. Democracy was in the process of being redefined in antebellum America by controversies over such volatile topics as fugitive slave laws, temperance, Sabbath laws, capital punishment, prostitution, the Mexican War, married women's property rights, and labor reform—all of which raised significant legal and constitutional questions. These pressing concerns, debated in women's rights conventions and the popular press, were inseparable from the gendered meaning of nineteenth-century citizenship.

Why are we speaking English? *Replenishing the Earth* gives a new answer to that question, uncovering a 'settler revolution' that took place from the early nineteenth century that led to the explosive settlement of the American West and its forgotten twin, the British West, comprising the settler dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Between 1780 and 1930 the number of English-speakers rocketed from 12 million in 1780 to 200 million, and their wealth and power grew to match. Their secret was not racial, or cultural, or institutional superiority but a resonant intersection of historical changes, including the sudden rise of mass transfer across oceans and mountains, a revolutionary upward shift in attitudes to emigration, the emergence of a settler 'boom mentality', and a late flowering of non-industrial technologies - wind, water, wood, and work animals - especially on settler frontiers. This revolution combined with the Industrial Revolution to transform settlement into something explosive - capable of creating great cities like Chicago and Melbourne and large socio-economies in a single generation. When the great settler booms busted, as they always did, a second pattern set in. Links between the Anglo-west and their metropolises, London and New York, actually tightened as rising tides of staple products flowed one way and ideas the other. This 're-colonization' re-integrated Greater America and Greater Britain, bulking them out to become the superpowers of their day. The 'Settler Revolution' was not exclusive to the Anglophone countries - Argentina, Siberia, and Manchuria also experienced it. But it was the Anglophone settlers who managed to integrate frontier and metropolis most successfully, and it was this that gave them the impetus and the material power to provide the world's leading super-powers for the last 200 years. This book will reshape understandings of American, British, and British dominion histories in the long 19th century. It is a story that has such crucial implications for the histories of settler societies, the homelands that spawned them, and the indigenous peoples who resisted them, that their full histories cannot be written without it.

Industrializing Antebellum America: The Rise of Manufacturing Entrepreneurs in the Early Republic Palgrave Macmillan

This book contains a series of interpretive essays on the most dramatic aspects of American economic growth during the last century—the sweeping technological and organizational changes in manufacturing and agriculture and their profound economic and social consequences. The overall focus is the maturing of the American economy from a classic market economy, based primarily on small units of production and private enterprise, through the growth of industrialism and the structural transformation of the economy, to the modern mixed economy with its complex array of giant corporations and labor unions and greatly expanded government sector. The chapters are organized thematically. A distinctive feature of the book is the use of illustrative case studies in each chapter.

For all the recent attention to the slaveholding of the founding fathers, we still know remarkably little about the influence of slavery on American politics. *American Taxation, American Slavery* tackles this problem in a new way. Rather than parsing the ideological pronouncements of charismatic slaveholders, it examines the concrete policy decisions that slaveholders and non-slaveholders made in the critical realm of taxation. The result is surprising—that the enduring power of antigovernment rhetoric in the United States stems from the nation's history of slavery rather than its history of liberty. We are all familiar with the states' rights arguments of proslavery politicians who wanted to keep the federal government weak and decentralized. But here Robin Einhorn shows the deep, broad, and continuous influence of slavery on this idea in American politics. From the earliest colonial times right up to the Civil War, slaveholding elites feared strong democratic government as a threat to the institution of slavery. *American Taxation, American Slavery* shows how their heated battles over taxation, the power to tax, and the distribution of tax burdens were rooted not in debates over personal liberty but rather in the rights

of slaveholders to hold human beings as property. Along the way, Einhorn exposes the antidemocratic origins of the popular Jeffersonian rhetoric about weak government by showing that governments were actually more democratic—and stronger—where most people were free. A strikingly original look at the role of slavery in the making of the United States, *American Taxation, American Slavery* will prove essential to anyone interested in the history of American government and politics.

From the invention of eyeglasses to the Internet, this three-volume set examines the pivotal effects that inventions have had on society, providing a fascinating history of technology and innovations in the United States from the earliest colonization by Europeans to the present.

- Encourages readers to consider the tremendous potential impact of advances in science and technology and the ramifications of important inventions on the global market, human society, and even the planet as a whole
- Supports eras addressed in the National Standards for American history as well as curricular units on inventions, discoveries, and technological advances
- Includes primary documents, a chronology, and section openers that help readers contextualize the content

A look at the role of state policies in North-South economic divergence and in American industrial development leading up to the Civil War. In 1796, famed engineer and architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe toured the coal fields outside Richmond, Virginia, declaring enthusiastically, “Such a mine of Wealth exists, I believe, nowhere else!” With its abundant and accessible deposits, growing industries, and network of rivers and ports, Virginia stood poised to serve as the center of the young nation’s coal trade. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Virginia’s leadership in the American coal industry had completely unraveled while Pennsylvania, at first slow to exploit its vast reserves of anthracite and bituminous coal, had become the country’s leading producer. Sean Patrick Adams compares the political economies of coal in Virginia and Pennsylvania from the late eighteenth century through the Civil War, examining the divergent paths these two states took in developing their ample coal reserves during a critical period of American industrialization. In both cases, Adams finds, state economic policies played a major role. Virginia’s failure to exploit the rich coal fields in the western part of the state can be traced to the legislature’s overriding concern to protect and promote the interests of the agrarian, slaveholding elite of eastern Virginia. Pennsylvania’s more factious legislature enthusiastically embraced a policy of economic growth that resulted in the construction of an extensive transportation network, a statewide geological survey, and support for private investment in its coal fields. Using coal as a barometer of economic change, *Old Dominion, Industrial Commonwealth* addresses longstanding questions about North-South economic divergence and the role of state government in American industrial development.

There are so many books on so many aspects of the history of the United States, offering such a wide variety of interpretations, that students, teachers, scholars, and librarians often need help and advice on how to find what they want. The *Reader's Guide to American History* is designed to meet that need by adopting a new and constructive approach to the appreciation of this rich historiography. Each of the 600 entries on topics in political, social and economic history describes and evaluates some 6 to 12 books on the topic, providing guidance to the reader on everything from broad surveys and interpretive works to specialized monographs. The entries are devoted to events and individuals, as well as broader themes, and are written by a team of well over 200 contributors, all scholars of American history.

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