

## Chapter 9: The Market Revolution, 1800-1840

### Potential Essay Questions

1. The Marquis de Lafayette, who fought for American independence and revisited the United States fifty years later, wrote that he “would never have drawn my sword in the cause of America if I could have conceived that thereby I was founding a land of slavery.” What might Lafayette have seen in 1824 America that would impel him to make such a statement? How had slavery evolved? Was it expanding? How entrenched in American life was it at this time?
2. Explain how improvements in transportation and communication made possible the rise of the West as a powerful, self-conscious region of the new nation.
3. Two groups of people were left out of the market revolution: women and blacks. Describe their experiences.
4. Explain the shift from artisan to factory worker, and discuss the factory system. What were the advantages and disadvantages? Who was left out? Who benefited? What were some ways workers responded?
5. Thoroughly describe the arguments made that linked American freedom to westward expansion. Who or what were obstacles to freedom in the pursuit of expansion? How did Americans deal with those obstacles?
6. Explain how transcendentalism and the Second Great Awakening affected the definitions of freedom. How were both movements a response to the market revolution?
7. Comment on what Alexis de Tocqueville meant when he said that Americans “combine the notions of Christianity and of liberty so intimately in their minds that it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other.” How accurate do you think that observation was?
8. Some women worked in the mills, relishing the freedom and independence they felt away from the farm for the first time, while others developed a cult of domesticity, thinking themselves free to not have to work. Compare the meaning of freedom for these two groups of women. Think back to previous chapters and compare the role of women during the market revolution with the “republican motherhood” role of women during the American Revolution.
9. Describe how the laboring class used the language of slavery and freedom. In a thoughtful essay, illustrate the varying arguments of the day about labor, individualism, and freedom. What were the arguments put forth by Langdon Byllesby, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Orestes Brownson? Think too of Noah Webster’s definition of freedom and whether the wage earner was truly free of his employer’s power. Be sure to utilize the *Voices of Freedom* documents.

10. One German newcomer wrote that “there aren’t any masters [in America], here everyone is a free agent.” How accurate a statement was that? Why would a German immigrant view America as free? Do you think an Irish immigrant would feel the same way about America? Why or why not?

11. During the Revolutionary period virtue was seen as an essential component of a male’s character for the survival of the republic. The founding fathers often spoke of a virtuous citizenry as the key to liberty and freedom taking hold. Fifty years later, however, virtue had shifted to become a character sought after in women. Describe why this shift occurred and its consequences.