

## The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Industrial Revolutions

The **Industrial Revolution** was “the process of change from an agrarian, handicraft economy to one dominated by industry and machine manufacture” (britannica.com). It began in the 1700’s, starting in Britain and spreading to the United States. Prior to this time, most people lived **rural** lives. Their life was based out in the country areas and was dominated by **agriculture** (farming). The Industrial Revolution would be the beginnings of big **urban** (city) growth that we now know today in society. Needless to say, big changes were occurring which would impact society greatly. These big changes were known as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Industrial Revolutions.

The Industrial Revolution was a huge change to a mechanical society, dominated by new inventions. Of course, there was still farming. However, major industries began to spring up which would have lasting effects. The **First Industrial Revolution** (1760-1840) began in Britain and later spread to the United States. New inventions were created that allowed machine power to play a major role in making work easier and faster. For example, the **steam engine** began to be a major source of power for factories. The **steam boat** was created that caused goods and materials (as well as people) to be shipped faster to different places. **Railroads** began to appear which added another faster way of transportation, shipping large loads much more quickly.

The **2<sup>nd</sup> Industrial Revolution** (approximately 1860-1914) was centered on the United States and its enormous growth in manufacturing and new inventions. Huge businesses run by wealthy individuals began to take shape across the nation. There were changes in such areas as transportation, communication, power, and manufacturing. The **transcontinental railroad** connected the U.S. from east to west coast. **Cars** were eventually manufactured which revolutionized society. The **telephone** was invented by Alexander Graham Bell, allowing faster ways to talk. A useable light bulb was made, allowing people and businesses to carry on work into the night. Probably one of the most important changes was the production of steel (manufactured from iron) in large quantities. This steel began to be used to create cars, skyscrapers, machinery for factories, and even weapons which would come into big use in World War I (1914-1918).

The United States began to be a world leader in industry. However, not all of the changes that the revolutions brought were positive. Cities began to become more crowded. Workers felt they had little rights when it came to getting paid fairly from their bosses. Family life was changed with men working long hours in the factories, away from their loved ones. Pollution also was going to increase with all the coal being burned to supply power to factories. As with most new changes in life, there were cons as well as pros.