

**A REVOLUTIONARY AGE:
POLITICS AND EARLY AMERICAN INDUSTRIALIZATION
c. 1783-1815**

- I. How revolutionary is the industrial revolution?**
- II. Political timeline:**
 - 1620s-1770s – the “colonial period” of American history**
 - 1763 – French & Indian War ends; Britain at peak of its colonial power but deeply in debt**
 - 1760s-70s – post-war time of troubles as American colonies protest British taxation without representation**
 - 1775 – 1st shot fired at Lexington-Concord**
 - 1776 – Declaration of Independence**
 - 1776-1781 – Revolutionary war years**
 - 1781 – Articles of Confederation = 1st U.S. constitution**
 - 1783 – Treaty of Paris: Britain acknowledges U.S. independence**
 - 1783-88 – Social and political turmoil: recession, rebellion, reaction**
 - 1787 – Constitutional convention at Philadelphia**
 - 1788 – U.S. Constitution adopted by 9th state (N.H.), thus putting the new U.S. government in motion**
 - 1789 – George Washington inaugurated as 1st president of the U.S.**
- III. Question: How did the U.S. go about weaning itself from the British Empire and solidifying its independence?**

Political independence intimately connected with economic independence
- IV. Two sources of economic growth**
 - a. Government policy**
 - i. Inventing the corporation, 1780s**
 - 1. Example: The Potowmack Company (1784)**
 - ii. Federal government policy:**
 - 1. U.S. Patent Office established (1790)**
 - 2. U.S. Post Office established (1792)**
 - 3. Alexander Hamilton’s three reports (1790-91)**
 - a. Funding the national debt and assuming state debts**

- b. Establishing a national bank (1791)
- c. Subsidizing home manufacturing (Dec. 1791)

4. *Albert Gallatin's Report on Public Roads and Canals (1808)*

Note the implication: under Hamilton and Gallatin, the federal government was fully prepared to underwrite new industries and construct a national transportation system. In doing so, they establish an important precedent that involves the federal government as an early venture capitalist, an investor and developer of new technologies.

GOVERNMENT IN/GOVERNMENT OUT

- b. Another important source of economic growth in the new republic was, of course, private enterprise and the technological innovations that spring from it.

Examples:

1784 – American merchants and the China trade

1786 – Oliver Evans' automated mill

1789 – Samuel Slater's textile spinning mill at Pawtucket, R.I.

1794 – Eli Whitney's cotton gin

1807 – the Embargo Act and its implications

1813 – Francis Cabot Lowell, the "Boston Associates" and the Boston Manufacturing Co. at Waltham, MA.