

ON YOUR WALKABOUT

Australia is made up of multiple environments and climates, each offering its own unique experience. Here are some hotspots to consider.



By the dawn of the twentieth century industrialism had swept its way across the country, leaving nothing untouched in its wake. Seemingly overnight industrialization profoundly changed the face of the nation, influencing every aspect of life. The events that took place between 1885 and 1910 represent the metamorphosis of the country from a society relatively untouched by industrialism to one almost transformed by it. Emphasizing the speed and intensity of industrial advance Samuel Hays states that “seldom, if ever, in American history had so much been altered within the lifetime of a single man.” The accelerated rate of technological progress quickly rendered obsolete everything that had provided meaning for members of preindustrial America. These sudden and unprecedented changes left people disoriented and unable to call on previous experience to help understand their surroundings.

Religious beliefs were fundamentally challenged by scientific advancements, while the dominance of the Protestant church was threatened by the millions of Catholic and Jewish immigrants who came from Southern and Eastern

There really is no limit when it comes to exploring in Australia.

Europe in the late 1880s. Urbanization redefined community standards and the rise of the industrial city in the 1880s resulted in the consequential decline of long-standing agrarian ideals. Mass production, which had become a significant characteristic of the American industrial economy by the 1880s, determined how and where Americans worked, as well as redefined the reasons why they worked. By the 1890s educational institutions had begun restructuring programs according to the specialized needs

of industry. International markets, as well as faster modes of communication and transportation changed our perception of time and distance as well as heightening our sense of interdependence. The cumulative effect of these diverse changes created confusion and misperception among even the most forward thinking members. Changes to traditional work patterns had a profound effect on the autonomy of both the community and the individual. Advances in transportation, communications, and manufacturing pulled semi-autonomous local societies into a vast integrated national market. As society became increasingly

complex, citizens began to feel the growing influence of large impersonal forces, like Wall Street, railroads, and big business, upon their lives. Consequently, many felt their ability to control.

No longer did the business of life revolve around natural cycles of season and sun as the work day became determined by regulated procedures and the clock. Wage earning reduced laborer’s time to monetary measurement, assembly line techniques removed the worker from a sense of participation in production, and college educations replaced systems of apprenticeship. Specialization and scientific management stripped the worker

of any input into what was being produced or how to produce it. This was devastating to semi-independent farmers and craftsmen who were accustomed to playing an integral role in the entire production process. Jack of all trades like the independent, multi-skilled farmer gave way to many interdependent individuals who were skilled in particular functions like the factory worker. There was little satisfaction to be derived from the performance of tedious repetitive tasks that industrial labor required.

Other methods of production also removed the sense of connection to the community from the work process. The local farm epitomized

traditional notions of work in that it involved both the private and public spheres. The religiously guided calling, one in which God’s will determined a person’s purpose within society, was replaced by the professional career and industrial labor. The notion of work as a calling implied social responsibility, that one was performing a necessary function within the community. As this sense of calling diminished

so does the sense of moral meaning that was once associated with work. In the early 1800s workers generally acted individually rather than collectively with management. Labor organizations were local in character and loose in structure. The relationship between employee and employer was familiar, even patriarchal. The impetus to organize was not strong due to the predominance of an agricultural economy, the ability of the west to act as a safety valve for industrial discontents, and slavery. Immigration discouraged collective action among large diverse groups. Labor as an organized force would not become important until mass production became a significant characteristic of industry.

The rapid growth of industry was made possible by the numerous available resources. Industry took full advantage of a government which backed its progress through legislative acts, tariffs, and subsidies. It also profited from a wealth of untapped, unprotected natural resources. An adequate labor force, constantly supplied by immigration, also created a favorable market for employers allowing them to keep wages low, hours long, and conditions poor. Economic recessions were frequent, and the depressions of the 1873 and 1893 were particularly hard on labor. Industry was rarely harmed by such economic droughts, and when its profits did drop, it simply looked for ways of cutting costs. These cuts usually came at the laborer’s health and expense which management had little regard for. An infamous example of the conditions that management subjected their workers to is the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire in New York in 1911. After exits were locked to ensure that workers didn’t take breaks a fire broke out which resulted in the deaths of 145 workers. The increased unregulated use of toxic materials also threatened the health of workers. Laundry workers were forced to



The oldest Australian Aboriginal boomerangs are over ten-thousands years old.