

CITY CONNECTIONS: RIVER TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a key part of economic development. Rivers are a major resource for development because they bring fresh water and cheap transportation links to an area. In the 1800s, America introduced two important innovations that improved water transportation: the building of new kinds of boats and the building of canals.

When Robert Fulton introduced his steamboat in 1807, it was not the first steamboat. But it was the first to become successful. People had resisted the change. And many people still felt in 1807 that the boat would bring problems—“fishermen became terrified...and they saw nothing but destruction devastating their fishing grounds...”

Here is a framework for looking at economic change based on our model. Use your knowledge of history, the statement above, and your imagination to answer the question in the framework.

FRAMEWORK FOR INNOVATION	APPLICATION
1. An entrepreneur responds to a change in conditions with an idea for another change.	What probably gave Fulton his idea?
2. Some people support the idea. It takes money to support an innovation.	What kinds of people might have welcomed the steamboat and why? Why might bankers or government have provided funding?
3. Some people resist the idea.	What kinds of people might have fought this change and why?
4. Some ideas fail because of opposition.	Earlier attempts to introduce the steamboat failed. What kinds of opposition could have stopped Fulton?
5. Some ideas succeed despite opposition.	Fulton succeeded. Why might his innovation have been successful while others with the same idea had failed?
6. Each idea leads to other changes. Some changes are other innovations, called “secondary innovations.” Some changes affect workers, consumers, and other businesses.	On the back of this page, make a list or diagram showing what changes the steamboat might have led to. (Be sure to include people whose jobs it would hurt.)