First Peoples
American Indians have lived in the East for thousands of years. Each group’s culture was affected by climate and natural resources. Indian nations used resources differently. The Haudenosaunee, who are also called the Iroquois, built houses, tools, weapons, and canoes with wood from the forests. In the north, the growing season was short, so the Micmac hunted for food. Further south, the growing season was longer. The Lenni Lenape grew corn and tobacco. They farmed in the summer and hunted in the winter. Today, American Indians in the East have a modern lifestyle, but preserve their culture.

Colonies and Traders
Explorers from Europe came to North America in the 1500s. In the 1600s, Pilgrims and Puritans came to practice their religion freely. England started colonies in the East along the coast. The Dutch settled in the Hudson River Valley. Along the St. Lawrence River, the French traded pots, cloth, and tools for furs from the Indians.

More Europeans came. They built towns and farms. They forced the Indians from most of their land. By the late 1700s, many American colonists wanted to be free from England. They fought the British and won independence. The new nation’s constitution provided a written plan for the country’s new government. Europeans had brought captives from Africa to the Americas and enslaved them. Most enslaved Africans worked in the South. Some traders in the East grew rich from this business of slavery. Ship building was another important business.

Factories and Workers
By the end of the 1700s, new inventions changed life for workers. A new spinning machine and power loom helped make the textile industry grow. Many young women came from farms to work in the textile industry. Cities grew as immigration increased. In the late 1800s, millions of people fled war and poverty in Europe and came to find jobs in American factories. Many African Americans also moved north to work in factories.