

THE IRON INDUSTRY IN KENT

AN ABSTRACT OF  
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The object of this paper is to show that natural resources and how they are used have always been of prime importance in determining the economy of a country, state or town. The use of natural resources in the town of Kent, Connecticut, influenced the economy of that town in its early years. The people who were involved in building the subsequent industry, that of iron-making, were also influential in the political and social structure of the town.

The paper is divided into four parts which deal respectively with the following:

The actual process of iron-making and charcoal-burning is described at some length. The many uses of iron in those early times are noted, as well as the market for the metal. The physical features of the furnace itself are described.

The economy of Kent in the 1800's is pictured by recounting the many side-businesses which were carried on as a result of the water power gained from the furnace dam across the river and those resulting from the iron industry itself.

By using journals and account books which were kept daily, the writer has been able to determine how the company owners, the furnace workers, and those engaged in charcoal-burning lived and were paid. Values of the day are shown by the inventories which were kept.

The depletion of two natural resources, iron ore and timber, caused the Kent iron industry to terminate. This had a definite effect upon the economy and social structure of the town. Moves are being made today to restore the old furnace landmark, which was a vital factor in the rapid growth of the town of Kent.