

Response to Reading: *Cities in the Heartland*

Due: Saturday, 5 April 2008

Core Theme: Farm to Factory: Rural Life & the Impact of Industrialization

Reading Assignment: Jon C. Teaford. *Cities of the Heartland: The Rise and Fall of the Industrial Midwest*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993.

Writing Assignment: My City in the Heartland

Write a two page summary of your city in the heartland based on relevant themes from Teaford and your observations of your community.

Jon Teaford discusses various influences on the growth of Midwestern cities over the centuries. These include

- Transportation issues: proximity to water, whether river or canal, the coming of railroads, street cars and interurbans, and finally, highways.
- The rise and fall of industry.
- Migration patterns, including from rural areas to cities and immigration from abroad.
- Architecture, including skyscrapers and the rise dense central business districts surrounded by low-density residential areas.
- Other: sports and entertainment; political reform

Apply some of these themes to the urban area near you (such as Mansfield, Lima, Marion, or Newark) or even the town where you live. Think about how Teaford is describing the history of your area city or town without necessarily mentioning it.

I don't want you to do additional research beyond what you can infer from applying the processes Teaford talks about to what you see around you and may already know. (If you want to take a quick look on Ohio Memory or OhioPix [both available at www.ohiohistory.org] to see older photos of the city under investigation that could be helpful.) Not all of them may apply to the area you are writing about, but some combination of them will.

Consider: the remnants of canals, railroads that do or did run through the area that you are considering, the proximity of highways; working or abandoned factories, past and current population, the buildings around you.

Some of your remarks will likely be speculative—that is fine. Consider this a first draft as you consider how the local reflects national themes. Filling in the blanks could even be developed into a project for your students.