During the Gilded Age the length of all the railroads combined increased threefold ("Second Industrial Revolution"). This was significant not only because it decreased travel time from the eastern to western parts of the U.S and vice versa down from months to weeks and allowed people to settle the central United States, but also opened new areas for commercial farming and gave an economic boost to steel... 27 Feb. 2010. 5. Perry, Elisabeth Israels, and Karen Manners Smith. The Gilded Age and Progressive Era: a student companion. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Print.