The readings for this week are the prologue and chapter 1 in *‘Forging America: The History of*

*Bethlehem Steel’*.

The prologue gives a view from Guillermo Lopez Jr., how he experienced and felt of the flourishing and downfall of Bethlehem Steel. In the past he dislikes the place he worked. Guillermo starts to recall his experiences when he was working there: the egg like smell, the bad working conditions, the jokes from old workers. When years past, the downfall of Bethlehem Steel happened, he finally finds out that in his heart, he misses that place, the place he used to hate. He love this place, at the end, he finally realized.

Chapter one shows how a little boy in South Wales grown up to a man who brought great changes to the America. How he started his company Bethlehem Steel and developed the company into a world famous company.

After David Thomas turned 17, he left his home and became an apprentice in an ironworks where he studied how to blast furnaces work and business of making iron. But in this place, his talent was covered. In 1817, to help the place he worked for get rid of the dilemma, he started to investigate on tramway &#151; tracks on which cars were pulled by horses and mules. In 1823, George Crane, the merchant who bought David’s company saw David’s potential and encouraged him. Tomas gave the opinion that without using ‘stone coke’ as fuel, Ynyscedwyn's furnaces could be more efficient and economical. They believed that coals are cheaper and South Wales has a lot of it. However, though anthracite could burn, it hard to be burned intensely enough to make iron. So Tomas started to figure it out. Until mid-1830s, he was inspired by James Beaumont Neilson’s work: blasted the hot air can help coke burned more effective and hotter. People also found out that furnace works better in winter than in summer. In 1837, Thomas built an oven and connected it to a furnace, it burned fiercely and out came good iron. It was the first commercially successfully attempt to make iron with anthracite in the world. And it will start an revolution.

During this period, America was still using woods as burning energy. Businessmen in America knew that with coal, America can go out of “Wooden Age”. Lehigh Valley, was rich resources of iron and limestone. Josiah White and his partners saw the chance. To solve the problem of transportation, they started to build a navigation system along Lehigh River. After that, failed to smelt iron ore with anthracite, they turned to Crane for cooperate. At this time Tomas was not important to Crane for Crane has already got enough invention and money. So Hazard attracted Tomas by giving him a really good treatment.

Tomas first didn’t want to go to Lehigh, but he changed his mind after his wife talked to him. Tomas and his families moved to Lehigh in 1839. No. 1 Furnace was been built after a few months they lived in Lehigh. Lehigh Crane Iron Co. was the first that use a fuel which is not charcoal to make iron profitably. Toms had become a pioneer of America's Industrial Revolution. America turned to Smoke and Iron Age.

At the beginning, the conditions were really tough, but people worked hard for it. Tomas proved to be an honorable master, a model of sobriety and thrift under this condition. His workers could learn a lot from him. With his great effort, his sons and he started Thomas Iron Co. in Hokendauque. Lehigh Valley turned into the iron center of America.

With the asked from Republicans, suggests Thomas to run for Congress in 1866, Tomas became well known. He got the nickname “Papa” from people who work for iron.

Tomas was died in 1882, at that time, he was 88 years old.

For 81 years, Tomas did great works for Lehigh Valley and America. He started the iron revolution in America, built Lehigh into an iron city, creating the structure for Bethlehem Steel.

Reference

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