Name ______________________ Date ______________

GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: HUMAN–ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

The Changing Labor Force

Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the charts carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.

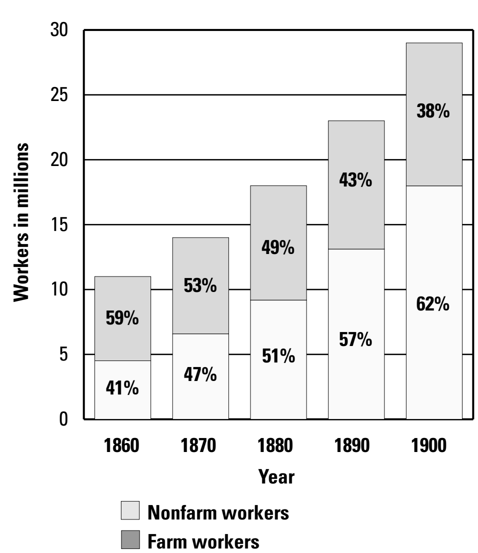
In 1859, the annual value of U.S. industrial production exceeded that of agricultural production for the first time. A shifting toward a predominantly urban population was occurring at the same time. This led to profound changes in occupations and income.

During the Civil War and immediately afterward, a broad spectrum of industries in the United States experienced incredible growth while fulfilling the product demands of the war and the expanding urban population. The increasing industrialization, though, brought grim working conditions. Employees often worked up to 12 hours a day, 6 days a week—with pay often less than $3 a day. Soon after 1870, industry over-expanded and over-produced, and wages fell.

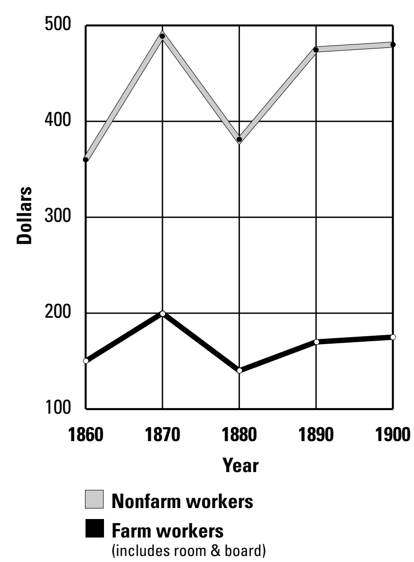
Those still working on farms also had their problems. New farm machinery reduced the number of farm workers needed, even though the number of farms increased during the period. Then, after farm production greatly increased, prices for crops such as cotton and corn dropped in the 1870s when output exceeded demand.

The graphs below show how these changes affected those who worked on farms and those who did not.

U.S. Farm and Nonfarm Workers, 1860 –1900



Average Annual Income for Farm and Nonfarm Workers, 1860 –1900



Interpreting Text and Visuals

1. About how many workers were there in the United States in 1860?

____

2. What percentage of the American labor force were farm workers in 1860?

____

3. About how many more farm workers were there in 1900 than in 1860? ___________

Explain why the percentage was less in 1900. ___________________________

____

____

4. In what decade did the percentage of nonfarm workers first exceed the percentage of farm workers? ___________________________

What was the trend for the rest of the century? ___________________________

____

5. About how much did the average farm worker earn in 1860? ___________

6. How much did the average nonfarm worker earn in 1860? ___________

How much did he or she earn in 1900? ___________

7. Explain what happened to wages during the 1870s. ___________

____

____

____

8. Contrast the trend in number of workers between 1890 and 1900 with the trend for the same time period in workers' income. ___________________________

____

____

____