Advanced Placement Human Geography

VI: Industrialization and Economic Development
B. Growth and diffusion of industrialization
C. Contemporary patterns and impacts of industrialization and development

… The human face of industrialization -- past and present

Read the following pieces -- a poem by William Blake (below) and excerpts from *The Life of the Industrial Worker in 19th-Century England* -- to create a profile of what it was like to work in an industrial factory in the early 1800s in England. Consider such topics as pay, work hours, age of workers, factory conditions, and the attitude of the British aristocracy toward factory workers.

2) Then consider the extent to which the profile you have developed describes conditions in factories in the periphery and semi-periphery today.

The Chimney Sweeper: When My Mother Died I was very Young

by William Blake (1757-1827)

- 1 When my mother died I was very young,
- 2 And my father sold me while yet my tongue
- 3 Could scarcely cry " 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!"
- 4 So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.
- 5 There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
- 6 That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd, so I said
- 7 "Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare
- 8 You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."
- 9 And so he was quiet, and that very night
- 10 As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!
- 11 That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,
- 12 Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.
- 13 And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
- 14 And he open'd the coffins and set them all free;
- 15 Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,
- 16 And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.
- 17 Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,
- 18 They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;
- 19 And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
- 20 He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.
- 21 And so Tom awoke, and we rose in the dark,
- 22 And got with our bags and our brushes to work.
- 23 Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm;
- 24 So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

The physical deterioration of the manufacturing class in England is still noticeable more than a century after the height of the Industrial Revolution. A medical observer's description of what the work did to the worker follows.

The Physical Deterioration of the Textile Workers

[P. Gaskell, *The Manufacturing Population of England. London*, 1833, pp.161-162, 202-203.]
Any man who has stood at twelve o'clock at the single narrow door-way, which serves as the place of exit for the hands employed in the great cotton-mills, must acknowledge, that an uglier set of men and women, of boys and girls, taking them in the mass, it would be impossible to congregate in a smaller compass. Their complexion is sallow and pallid--with a peculiar flatness of feature, caused by the want of a proper quantity of adipose substance to cushion out the cheeks. Their stature low--the average height of four hundred men, measured at different times, and different places, being five feet six inches. Their limbs slender, and playing badly and ungracefully. A very general bowing of the legs. Great numbers of girls and women walking lamely or awkwardly, with raised chests and spinal flexures. Nearly all have flat feet, accompanied with a down-tread, differing very widely from the elasticity of action in the foot and ankle, attendant upon perfect formation. Hair thin and straight--many of the men having but little beard, and that in patches of a few hairs, much resembling its growth among the red men of America. A spiritless and dejected air, a sprawling and wide action of the legs, and an appearance, taken as a whole, giving the world but "little assurance of a man," or if so, "most sadly cheated of his fair proportions..."

Factory labour is a species of work, in some respects singularly unfitted for children. Cooped up in a heated atmosphere, debarred the necessary exercise, remaining in one position for a series of hours, one set or system of muscles alone called into activity, it cannot be wondered at--that its effects are injurious to the physical growth of a child. Where the bony system is still imperfect, the vertical position it is compelled to retain, influences its direction; the spinal column bends beneath the weight of the head, bulges out laterally, or is dragged forward by the weight of the parts composing the chest, the pelvis yields beneath the opposing pressure downwards, and the resistance given by the thigh-bones; its capacity is lessened, sometimes more and sometimes less; the legs curve, and the whole body loses height, in consequence of this general yielding and bending of its parts.

John Fielden, although himself a Lancashire factory owner, was one of the staunchest fighters for protective legislation for the cotton worker. His difficulties are such as today in the Southern states of the United States are commonly urged by manufacturers.

A Cotton Manufacturer on Hours of Labor

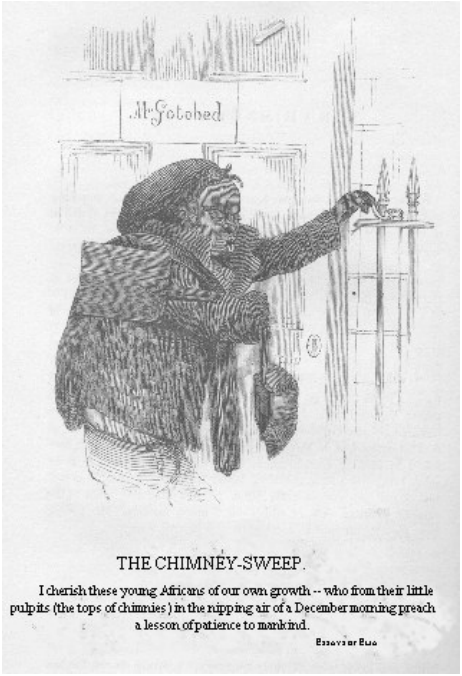
[John Fielden, M.P., *The Curse of the Factory System*. London, 1836,pp. 34-35.]

Here, then, is the "curse" of our factory-system; as improvements in machinery have gone on, the "avarice of masters" has prompted many to exact more labour from their hands than they were fitted by nature to perform, and those who have wished for the hours of labour to be less for all ages than the legislature would even yet sanction, have had no alternative but to conform more or less to the prevailing practice, or abandon the trade altogether. This has been the case with regard to myself and my partners. We have never worked more than *seventy-one* hours a week before Sir JOHN HOBHOUSE'S Act was passed. We then came down to *sixty-nine*; and since Lord ALTHORP's Act was passed, in 1833, we have reduced the time of adults to *sixty-seven and a half hours* a week, and that of children under thirteen years of age to *forty-eight* hours in the week, though to do this latter has, I must admit, subjected us to much inconvenience, but the elder hands to more, inasmuch as the relief given to the child is in some measure imposed on the adult. But the overworking does not apply to children only; the adults are also overworked. The increased speed given to machinery within the last thirty years, has, in very many instances, doubled the labour of both.

Sending boys up chimneys to clean them was a common practice, and a dangerous and cruel one. Lord Ashley became the chief advocate of the use of chimney-sweeping machinery and of legislation to require its use. Even earlier, however, such a law had been proposed, but it met with strong opposition. In a debate on this subject in the House of Lords in 1819 the Earl of Lauderdale well represented a large body of conservative opinion.

Opposition to the Chimney Sweepers' Regulation Bill

[Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, March 8, 1819. New Series, vol. 39, p. 901.]



THE CHIMNEY-SWEEP.

I cherish these young Africans of our own growth -- who from their little pulpits (the tops of chimnies) in the nipping air of a December morning preach a lesson of patience to mankind.

Their lordships had lately heard complaints of the encouragement given to machinery, in preference to manual industry. Now, though he differed most completely from those who cherished the prejudice he alluded to--though he was convinced that the introduction of machinery had not only had the effect of enriching the proprietor, but also of enabling the workman to live better and cheaper than he otherwise could have done--yet there certainly was some difference to be drawn between their encouraging and enforcing the adoption of machinery, and especially when those persons who best understood its application in the way of trade were against its introduction at all. ...If their lordships were determined to adopt such a course, they must introduce a code of moral legislation unknown to their ancestors, and quite unsuited to their habits and laws. The better way, in his judgment, would be to leave reforms of this kind entirely to the moral feeling of, perhaps, the most moral people, on the whole face of the earth.

Textile Workers: Industrial Revolution

1) Courtauld Silk Mill Workforce:

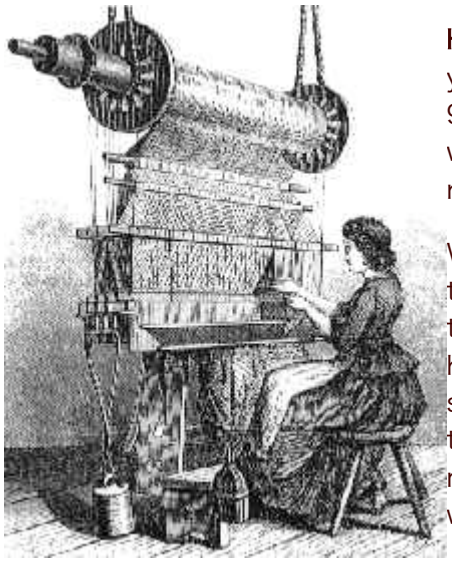
Samuel Courtauld built a silk mill in 1825 in Halstead, Essex (South East England).

Before the Industrial Revolution, Halstead was an agricultural community with a cottage industry producing woolen cloth. In Halstead, as elsewhere in England, unemployment among depressed farming households and former wool workers forced people to find work outside the home. Because their labor was cheap, women more than men were recruited into the textile factories that sprang up all over Britain in the 19th century. This is a chart of the Courtauld workforce in 1860. The wages are in British schillings.

Number	Weekly Wages	MALES
1	1000 pounds per year	Mill Manager (Also got 3 per cent of the profits)
26	15s-32s	Overseers and clerks
6	17s-25s	Mechanics and engine drivers
3	14s-21s	Carpenters and blacksmiths
1	15s	Lodgekeeper
16	14s-15s	Power loom machinery attendants and steamers
18	10s-15s	Mill machinery attendants and loom cleaners
5	5s-12s	Spindle cleaners, bobbin stampers and packers, messengers, sweepers
-	7s-10s	Watchmen
-	5s-10s	Coachmen, grooms and van driver
38	2s-4s	Winders
114		**Total Males**
Number	**Weekly Wages**	**FEMALES**
4	10s-11s	Gauze examiners
4	9s-10s	Female assistant overseers
16	7s-10s	Warpers
9	7s-10s	Twisters
4	6s-9s	Wasters
589	5s-8s	Weavers
2	6s-7s	Plugwinders
83	4s-6s	Drawers and doublers
188	2s-4s	Winders
899		**Total Females**
1013		GRAND TOTAL WORK FORCE

[Source: Carol Adams, Paula Bartley, Judy Lown, Cathy Loxton, *Under Control: Life in a nineteenth-century Silk Factory*, Cambridge University Press. The full unit contains illustrations, first person accounts and biographies of the workers.]

2) Evidence of Textile Workers in Wilson's Mill, Nottingham:



Hannah Goode: "I work at Mr. Wilson's mill. I think the youngest child is about 7. I daresay there are 20 under 9 years. It is about half past five by our clock at home when we go in....We come out at seven by the mill. We never stop to take our meals, except at dinner.

William Crookes is overlooker in our room. He is cross-tempered sometimes. He does not beat me; he beats the little children if they do not do their work right....I have sometimes seen the little children drop asleep or so, but not lately. If they are catched asleep they get the strap. They are always very tired at night....I can read a little; I can't write. I used to go to school before I went to the mill; I have since I am sixteen."

Mrs. Smith: "I have three children working in Wilson's mill; one 11, one 13, and the other 14. They work regular hours there. We don't complain. If they go to drop the hours, I don't know what poor people will do. We have hard work to live as it is. ...My husband is of the same mind about it...last summer my husband was 6 weeks ill; we pledged almost all our things to live; the things are not all out of pawn yet. ...We complain of nothing but short wages...My children have been in the mill three years. I have no complaint to make of their being beaten...I would rather they were beaten than fined."

[Source: Factory Inquiry Commission, Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1833. Found in Hellerstein, Hume & Offen, *Victorian Women: A Documentary Accounts of Women's Lives in Nineteenth-Century England, France and the United States,* Stanford University Press]

Source: http://www.womeninworldhistory.com