

Name: _____

Date: _____

Student Inquiry – Working Conditions in Industrial England

Source #1 - The Sadler Report

Featured Source

Source 1: Michael Sadler, interview with former child laborer Michael Crabtree, 1832

Question: What age are you?

Answer: Twenty-two.

Question: What is your occupation?

Answer: A blanket manufacturer.

Question: Have you ever been employed in a factory?

Answer: Yes.

Question: At what age did you first go to work in one?

Answer: Eight.

Question: How long did you continue in that occupation?

Answer: Four years.

Question: Will you state the hours of labour at the period when you first went to the factory, in ordinary times?

Answer: From 6 in the morning to 8 at night.

Question: Fourteen hours?

Answer: Yes.

Question: With what intervals for refreshment and rest?

Answer: An hour at noon.

Question: When trade was brisk what were your hours?

Answer: From 5 in the morning to 9 in the evening.

Question: Sixteen hours?

Answer: Yes.

Question: With what intervals at dinner?

Answer: An hour.

Question: How far did you live from the mill?

Answer: About two miles.

Question: Was there any time allowed for you to get your breakfast in the mill?

Answer: No.

Question: Did you take it before you left your home?

Answer: Generally.

Question: During those long hours of labour could you be punctual; how did you awake?

Answer: I seldom did awake spontaneously; I was most generally awake or lifted out of bed, sometimes asleep, by my parents.

Question: Were you always in time?

Answer: No.

Question: What was the consequence if you had been too late?

Answer: I was most commonly beaten.

Question: Severely?

Answer: Very severely, I thought.

Question: In those mills is chastisement towards the latter part of the day going on perpetually?

Answer: Perpetually.

Question: So that you can hardly be in a mill without hearing constant crying?

Answer: Never an hour, I believe.

Question: Do you think that if the overlooker were naturally a humane person it would still be found necessary for him to beat the children, in order to keep up their attention and vigilance at the termination of those extraordinary days of labour?

Answer: Yes; the machine turns off a regular quantity of cardings, and of course, they must keep as regularly to their work the whole of the day; they must keep with the machine, and therefore however humane the slubber may be, as he must keep up with the machine or be found fault with, he spurs the children to keep up also by various means but that which he commonly resorts to is to strap them when they become drowsy.

Question: At the time when you were beaten for not keeping up with your work, were you anxious to have done it if you possibly could?

Answer: Yes; the dread of being beaten if we could not keep up with our work was a sufficient impulse to keep us to it if we could.

Question: When you got home at night after this labour, did you feel much fatigued?

Answer: Very much so.

Question: Had you any time to be with your parents, and to receive instruction from them?

Answer: No.

Question: What did you do?

Answer: All that we did when we got home was to get the little bit of supper that was provided for us and go to bed immediately. If the supper had not been ready directly, we should have gone to sleep while it was preparing.

Question: Did you not, as a child, feel it a very grievous hardship to be roused so soon in the morning?

Answer: I did.

Question: Were the rest of the children similarly circumstanced?

Answer: Yes, all of them; but they were not all of them so far from their work as I was.

Question: And if you had been too late you were under the apprehension of being cruelly beaten?

Answer: I generally was beaten when I happened to be too late; and when I got up in the morning the apprehension of that was so great, that I used to run, and cry all the way as I went to the mill.

Source #2 – Factory Inspectors Report

Featured Source

Source 2: Factory inspector's report, statement on factory working conditions, *British Parliamentary Papers No. 353, 1836*

My Lord, in the case of Taylor, Ibbotson & Co. I took the evidence from the mouths of the boys themselves. They stated to me that they commenced working on Friday morning, the 27th of May last, at six A.M., and that, with the exception of meal hours and one hour at midnight extra, they did not cease working till four o'clock on Saturday evening, having been two days and a night thus engaged. Believing the case scarcely possible, I asked every boy the same questions, and from each received the same answers. I then went into the house to look at the time book, and, in the presence of one of the masters, referred to the cruelty of the case, and stated that I should certainly punish it with all the severity in my power. Mr. Rayner, the certificating surgeon of Bastile, was with me at the time.

Transcript

My Lord, in the case of Taylor, Ibbotson & Co. I took the evidence from the mouths of the boys themselves. They stated to me that they commenced working on Friday morning, the 27th of May last, at six A.M., and that, with the exception of meal hours and one hour at midnight extra, they did not cease working till four o'clock on Saturday evening, having been two days and a night thus engaged. Believing the case scarcely possible, I asked every boy the same questions, and from each received the same answers. I then went into the house to look at the time book, and in the presence of one of the masters, referred to the cruelty of the case, and stated that I should certainly punish it with all the severity in my power. Mr. Rayner, the certificating surgeon of Bastile, was with me at the time.

Source #3 – Friedrich Engels – Working Class Living Conditions

Featured Source

Source 3: Friedrich Engels, book about English laborers, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England in 1844 (excerpt), 1844*

Manchester proper lies on the left bank of the Irwell, between that stream and the two smaller ones, the Irk and the Medlock, which here empty into the Irwell....The whole assemblage of buildings is commonly called Manchester, and contains about four hundred thousand inhabitants, rather more than less. The town itself is peculiarly built, so that a person may live in it for years, and go in and out daily without coming into contact with a working-people's quarter or even with workers, that is, so long as he confines himself to his business or to pleasure walks. This arises chiefly from the fact, that by unconscious tacit agreement, as well as with outspoken conscious determination, the working people's quarters are sharply separated from the sections of the city reserved for the middle-class....

I may mention just here that the mills [factories] almost all adjoin the rivers or the different canals that ramify throughout the city, before I proceed at once to describe the labouring quarters. First of all, there is the old town of Manchester, which lies between the northern boundary of the commercial district and the Irk. Here the streets, even the better ones, are narrow and winding, as Todd Street, Long Millgate, Withy Grove, and Shude Hill, the houses dirty, old, and tumble-down, and the construction of the side streets utterly horrible. Going from the Old Church to Long Millgate, the stroller has at once a row of old-fashioned houses at the right, of which not one has kept its original level; these are remnants of the old pre-manufacturing Manchester, whose former inhabitants have removed with their descendants into better built districts, and have left the houses, which were not good enough for them, to a population strongly mixed with Irish blood. Here one is in an almost undisguised working-men's quarter, for even the shops and beer houses hardly take the trouble to exhibit a trifling degree of cleanliness. But all this is nothing in comparison with the courts and lanes which lie behind, to which access can be gained only through covered passages, in which no two human beings can pass at the same time. Of the irregular cramming together of dwellings in ways which defy all rational plan, of the tangle in which they are crowded literally one upon the other, it is impossible to convey an idea. And it is not the buildings surviving from the old times of Manchester which are to blame for this; the confusion has only recently reached its height when every scrap of space left by the old way of building has been filled up and patched over until not a foot of land is left to be further occupied.

Right and left a multitude of covered passages lead from the main street into numerous courts, and he who turns in thither gets into a filth and disgusting grime, the equal of which is not to be found—especially in the courts which lead down to the Irk, and which contain unqualifiedly the most horrible dwellings which I have yet beheld. In one of these courts there stands directly at the entrance, at the end of the covered passage, a privy without a door, so dirty that the inhabitants can pass into and out of the court only by passing through foul pools of stagnant urine and excrement. Below it on the river there are several tanneries which fill the whole neighbourhood with the stench of animal putrefaction. Below Ducie Bridge the only entrance to most of the houses is by means of narrow, dirty stairs and over heaps of refuse and filth. The first court below Ducie Bridge, known as Allen's Court, was in such a state at the time of the cholera that the sanitary police ordered it evacuated, swept, and disinfected with chloride of lime....At the bottom flows, or rather stagnates, the Irk, a narrow, coal-black, foul-smelling stream, full of debris and refuse, which it deposits on the shallower right bank.

In dry weather, a long string of the most disgusting, blackish-green, slime pools are left standing on this bank, from the depths of which bubbles of miasmatic gas constantly arise and give forth a stench unendurable even on the bridge forty or fifty feet above the surface of the stream. But besides this, the stream itself is checked every few paces by high weirs, behind which slime and refuse accumulate and rot in thick masses. Above the bridge are tanneries, bone mills, and

gasworks, from which all drains and refuse find their way into the Irk, which receives further the contents of all the neighbouring sewers and privies. It may be easily imagined, therefore, what sort of residue the stream deposits. Below the bridge you look upon the piles of debris, the refuse, filth, and offal from the courts on the steep left bank; here each house is packed close behind its neighbour and a piece of each is visible, all black, smoky, crumbling, ancient, with broken panes and window frames. The background is furnished by old barrack-like factory buildings. On the lower right bank stands a long row of houses and mills; the second house being a ruin without a roof, piled with debris; the third stands so low that the lowest floor is uninhabitable, and therefore without windows or doors. Here the background embraces the pauper burial-ground, the station of the Liverpool and Leeds railway, and, in the rear of this, the Workhouse, the “Poor-Law Bastille” of Manchester, which, like a citadel, looks threateningly down from behind its high walls and parapets on the hilltop, upon the working-people’s quarter below.

Everywhere heaps of debris, refuse, and offal; standing pools for gutters, and a stench which alone would make it impossible for a human being in any degree civilised to live in such a district. ...Passing along a rough bank, among stakes and washing-lines, one penetrates into this chaos of small one-storied, one-roomed huts, in most of which there is no artificial floor; kitchen, living and sleeping-room all in one. In such a hole, scarcely five feet long by six broad, I found two beds—and such bedsteads and beds!—which, with a staircase and chimney-place, exactly filled the room. In several others I found absolutely nothing, while the door stood open, and the inhabitants leaned against it. Everywhere before the doors refuse and offal; that any sort of pavement lay underneath could not be seen but only felt, here and there, with the feet. This whole collection of cattle-sheds for human beings was surrounded on two sides by houses and a factory, and on the third by the river, and besides the narrow stair up the bank, a narrow doorway alone led out into another almost equally ill-built, ill-kept labyrinth of dwellings....

Source #4 – Hard Times by Charles Dickens

Featured Source

Source 4: Charles Dickens, description of the fictional factory town Coketown, *Hard Times* (excerpt), 1854

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and to-morrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

These attributes of Coketown were in the main inseparable from the work by which it was sustained; against them were to be set off, comforts of life which found their way all over the world, and elegancies of life which made, we will not ask how much of the fine lady, who could scarcely bear to hear the place mentioned. The rest of its features were voluntary, and they were these.

You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful. If the members of a religious persuasion built a chapel there—as the members of eighteen religious persuasions had done—they made it a pious warehouse of red brick, with sometimes (but this is only in highly ornamental examples) a bell in a birdcage on the top of it. The solitary exception was the New Church; a stuccoed edifice with a square steeple over the door, terminating in four short pinnacles like florid wooden legs. All the public inscriptions in the town were painted alike, in severe characters of black and white. The jail might have been the infirmary, the infirmary might have been the jail, the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything that appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction. Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Student Inquiry – Working Conditions in Industrial England

Source 1 – Michael Sadler, interview with former child laborer Michael Crabtree, 1832

- 1) How old was Mr. Sadler when he began working? How many hours a day did he work?

- 2) What was a typical consequence for a worker who was late? For a worker who fell behind in their work?

- 3) Based on this testimony, do you feel Mr. Sadler is a credible source? Why or why not?

Source 2 - Factory inspector's report, statement on factory working conditions, *British Parliamentary Papers No. 353, 1836*

- 4) What type of sources did the investigator use to collect information? How did he confirm the validity of his sources?

- 5) What could be done to protect child workers from the conditions described?

Source 3: Friedrich Engels, book about English laborers, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England in 1844 (excerpt), 1844*

- 6) Why could a middle class person live in a city for many years and never come into contact with a working class person or their living quarters?

7) Why do all of the mills and factories adjoin to rivers or canals?

8) According to Engels, what are the most troubling characteristics of the working peoples quarters?

9) Based on this account, what is the most significant long-term impact of the conditions of these cities?

10) Describe an average home in the working people's quarters:

Source 4: Charles Dickens, description of the fictional factory town Coketown, *Hard Times* (excerpt), 1854

What evidence does Dickens articulate that describes the impact of pollution on this town?

What does the existence of so many churches tell us about the population of Coketown? What historical event is most responsible for this situation?

Based on all four sources, identify 3 of the most significant negative impacts of the industrial revolution?

Imagine you are a historian studying the Industrial Revolution, what other types of sources would be useful to you in gaining a more complete understanding of the time period?