

ABSTRACT
TEACHING ENGLAND'S INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION USING SOURCES
FROM THE TEXTILE MUSEUM AT HELMSHORE, LANCASHIRE,
ENGLAND

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The ideas and materials in this teaching unit came from a three-week summer sabbatical spent at the museum and at the local public library.

The museum site is a former woolen fulling mill built in 1789. It was subsequently used for weaving and cotton waste spinning. Buildings and original machinery are still intact and operable. The museum also contains a large number of the significant inventions (original machines, not copies) that created the revolution in the textile industry - Kay's Flying Shuttle, Hargreaves' Spinning Jenny, Cartwright's Power Loom, etc. and the only remaining Arkwright Water Frame.

The museum is geared to teaching. It has an education officer, a historian and an engineer as well as trained guides and former textile employees to operate machinery. Groups of students - first grade to college - from all over Europe visit Helmsore. The historian spent a great deal of time with me and shared information and materials not normally available to the public. He also arranged for me to read the diary of David Whitehead, a highly successful 19th century textile manufacturer.

A slide collection accompanies the eight teaching units. The various materials and documents focus on certain important issues. Each topic has questions for students to pursue independently using materials provided. Some of the areas of study are geared to World History students at the high school level. Others are more appropriate for Advanced Placement European History or a college World History course. There are photocopies of all materials for a class of 30 students and eight areas of study all together.

The first of the units is based on a recent Manchester University study of pre-industrial Lancashire. The section on textiles indicated a thriving domestic industry in the 16th, 17th, and early 18th centuries using both wool and flax. Students study the importance of textiles to the local economy and how the domestic system worked. The second unit focuses on Higher Mill itself, how and why it developed; its physical features; William Turner, its first, very shrewd owner; working conditions, etc.

Among the sources is a museum poster with a diagram and explanation of all the earliest machinery; a set of work rules for employees from 1838 and a recently-written history of the mill.

A third unit deals with the development of an industrial community in Helmsshore. There are five maps of the area, dated 1786, 1818, 1848, 1896, and 1924. Students study the map and answer questions to determine their chronological order, transportation developments in the area, the expansion of industry and the growth of workers' housing. The next unit involves a comparison of the standard of living of textile workers in the early 19th century with that of workers in the early 20th century. Sources include a weekly earnings chart from Manchester for 1810-1819; a list of the price of food of "the simplest kind" for a family of six for the same period; an average weekly earnings chart of cotton workers c. 1906, and "predominant retail prices" paid by the working classes in October 1912.

The unit on David Whitehead's diary is based on three pages: one describing his father's will and his mother hearing John Wesley preach; one relating to the power loom riots of 1836 and one describing the building of a school for Whitehead's workers' children in 1839. Students answer questions about Whitehead, who was an outstanding example of the Victorian blend of successful businessman and humanitarian. Unit six deals with the fate of England's hand-loom weavers from their "Golden Age" at the end of the 18th century to their demise in the 1830's. Students use extracts from Samuel Bamford's *Autobiography* (1788-1872) and an earnings and expenditures chart of hand-loom weavers, 1814-1833.

In unit seven students learn the processes involved in textile manufacturing (carding, spinning, weaving, etc.) and the major 18th century inventions which promoted the Industrial Revolution. Particular attention is paid to the "flying shuttle," the "spinning jenny," the water frame, the power loom and pattern weaving. A pamphlet from the International Institute for Cotton is used here as are several titles from the Shire Album series on British Industry (e.g. "Spinning and Spinning Wheels," "Textile Machines," etc.) The final unit is based on a reprint of Allen Clarke's *The Effects of the Factory system* (1899). This polemic on the evils of industrialization presents the student with the late 19th century socialist point of view. It provides them with the opportunity to assess Clarke's position vis-a-vis more traditional interpretations of the effects of industrialization.