The Jefferson Performing Arts Society
And

Presents

O l i v e r !

A Study Companion

JEFFERSON PERFORMING ARTS SOCIETY
1118 Clearview Parkway
Metairie, Louisiana 70001
Phone: 504 885 2000
Fax: 504 885 3437
jpasinfo@jpas.org

Teacher Notes

Welcome to 19th century England and the world of Charles Dickens. Dickens was a very prolific writer. Many of his works borrowed from the difficulties he experienced in his early life. Oliver Twist was the first of such works. Versions of this work have been adapted many times for stage and screen.

This study companion includes website resource lists, lesson plans and Benchmark lists. Following the history of Oliver!, to help teachers integrate the play into their classroom, each section begins with a list of corresponding Standards and Benchmarks from Louisiana's State Department of Education. In the interest of brevity, only Standards and Benchmarks for grades K thru 4 have been listed. Most Benchmarks follow a uniform coding system, ie: **ELA-1-E1** becomes **ELA-1-M1**, and can be changed easily to fit the appropriate grade level. For a detailed list of all Standards and Benchmarks for the state of Louisiana, please refer to: http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/curriculum/home.html

Oliver! takes place during the early days of the industrial revolution. In England, life was difficult for many during this period of Poor Laws, workhouses and orphanages. One of the central focuses of Oliver! is poverty, and the resulting social unrest. Following a brief introduction to the industrial revolution, teachers may wish to explore the phenomena of workhouses, a byproduct of rampant poverty prevalent during this era.

This time period, from 1830 to 1840, was also considered the "decade of development." Ingenuity was everywhere. New inventions were making photography possible. Fashions were becoming more decorative due to the advent of the sewing machine. Many of the costumes you will see in Jefferson Performing Arts Society's Oliver! are period pieces, and their artistry replicates that of the time. Teachers may wish to visit the beginnings of the sewing machine and investigate the role this new technology played in defining fashions of the day.

Oliver's Theatrical History

Retrieved from: http://w1.303.telia.com/~u30302957/richard.html

THEATRE ARTS: AESTHETIC PERCEPTION

STANDARD

Students develop aesthetic perception through the knowledge of art forms and respect for their commonalities and differences

FOCUS

The study of *aesthetics*, or the philosophy of the arts, cultivates the direct experience of the senses and supplies the individual with a structure for perceiving and responding to the arts. A grasp of aesthetics empowers the individual to experience beauty in many forms, to appreciate artistic expression, and to develop insight into the creations and performances of others. By questioning concepts, weighing evidence, and examining intuitive reactions, the individual becomes increasingly discriminating in formulating preferences and conclusions about the values inherent in art. Aesthetic perception promotes creativity, flexible thinking, and the pursuit of excellence.

.

TH-AP-E1 Understand and use basic theatre arts vocabulary, including language for describing theatre in various cultures/time periods; (1)
TH-AP-E2 Recognize and respond to concepts of beauty and taste in the ideas and creations of others through the study of theatre arts; (1, 4, 5)
TH-AP-E3 Develop a basic understanding of the processes of creating, performing, and observing theatre; (2, 5)
TH-AP-E4 Recognize that there are many possibilities and choices in the creative processes for theatre arts; (2, 4)
TH-AP-E5 Identify and discuss how works of theatre and dramatic media affect thoughts and feelings; (1, 2)
TH-AP-E6 Share personal feelings or preferences about theatre and other dramatic works. (1)

THEATRE ARTS: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

STANDARD Students develop historical and cultural perspective by recognizing and understanding that the arts throughout history are a record of human experience with a past, present, and future.

FOCUS *Historical and cultural perspective* is the vehicle for understanding works of art in time and place. The arts survive through times of interruption and neglect; they outlive governments, creeds, societies, and even the civilizations that spawned them. The artist is a harbinger of change, a translator of social thought, an analyst of cultures, a poetic scientist, and a recorder of history. To understand creative output in the history of the arts is to understand history itself.

TH-HP-E3 Recall and recognize characters and situations in literature and dramatic media from the past and present; (4)
TH-HP-E4 Recognize universal characters and situations in stories and dramas of various cultures and how theatre reflects life; (2, 4)

THEATRE ARTS: CRITICAL ANALYSIS

STANDARD Students make informed verbal and written observations about the arts by developing the skills for critical analysis through the study of and exposure to the arts.

FOCUS *Critical analysis* is the process of inquiry associated with an individual's knowledge of the arts. Communication about the arts in a structured way provides the individual with means to describe, analyze, interpret, and make critical, reasoned judgments about the form and content of the arts.

TH-CA-E1 Describe in simple terms how voice, language, and technical elements are used in works of theatre and other dramatic media; (1, 2)
TH-CA-E2 Identify motivations, personality traits, and responses to emotional experiences in characters portrayed in dramatic literature and media; (2)
TH-CA-E3 Identify and discuss the theme, message, or story idea conveyed in a dramatic work; (1, 2)
TH-CA-E4 Use basic theatre arts vocabulary to express and explain opinions about scripts and performances; (1)

Synopsis of "Oliver!"

In the dreary confines of a workhouse outside London, **Oliver Twist** and the other orphans await their daily portion of gruel, while dreaming of **Food, Glorious Food**. The workhouse is run by **Widow Corney** and the parish beadle, **Mr. Bumble**. After the children have been served, young Oliver commits the unpardonable sin of approaching Mr. Bumble with the entreaty "Please sir, I want some more." While deciding to expel young **Oliver**, Corney and Bumble find time to flirt, though (false) modesty demands that the widow protest **I Shall Scream!** Oliver is removed from the workhouse, led off by Bumble, who sings the haunting **Boy For Sale**. Walking through the streets of London, they arrive at the place of business of the undertaker, **Mr. Sowerberry**, to whom Oliver is "sold." Mr. Sowerberry and his wife, **Mrs. Sowerberry**, sing the morbid **That's Your Funeral**. Later, alone and frightened and surrounded by coffins, Oliver sings the plaintive **Where Is Love?** After a fistfight with the undertaker's apprentice **Noah Claypole**, Oliver runs away the very next morning, and is picked up hungry and tired in the streets by the **Artful Dodger** who cheers him up with the song **Consider Yourself**. The Dodger leads him through crowded streets to Fagin's kitchen. The boys come in and **Fagin** himself appears and, with a mock solemn welcome to Oliver, sings **You've Got to Pick a Pocket or Two**. **Nancy**, Bill Sikes's girl, and **Bet** arrive. The two of them, accompanied by the kids and Fagin, celebrate their way of life in **It's a Fine Life**. The next morning, Fagin sends the boys off on a pocket-picking expedition, Oliver among them. In a case of mistaken identity, Oliver is arrested without ever having picked a pocket.

In the second act, at the underworld tavern "Three Cripples," Nancy is encouraged to sing a music hall number, **Oom-Pah-Pah**. Fagin's boys pour down the stairs telling of Oliver's apprehension by the police, at the same time revealing that his innocence has been established and that he is presently ensconced in the home of a rich old gentleman. Fearful lest he give away their set-up, Fagin and **Bill Sikes** dispatch Nancy to get Oliver back. Meanwhile, at the home of his new-found benefactor, **Mr. Brownlow**, the erstwhile ragged orphan has become a well-tailored, well cared-for little lad. Looking out of his bedroom window he observes some passing street vendors crying their wares; and with them he sings **Who Will Buy?** a plea that his good luck and new situation in life will be permanent. However, the moment he sets foot outside his benefactor's house, Oliver is seized and dragged off by Nancy to Fagin's. Meanwhile, Fagin considers going straight in **Reviewing the Situation**. Subsequently, Bumble and Mrs. Corney, now uncomfortably married, discover that Oliver is the scion of a rich family. Their scheme to get him back fails as Nancy, regretting her part in the capture of Oliver, plans to return him to his benefactor at midnight on London Bridge. Though Nancy is determined to deliver Oliver, she is equally determined not to bring down the law on Bill, **As Long as He Needs Me**. Sikes, fearful of being exposed, stalks her and kills her. He grabs Oliver and, after a chase, is shot dead. Oliver is restored to Mr. Brownlow, and Fagin, now without boys, home and money, is once again **Reviewing the**

Situation.

OLIVER! won 3 Tony Awards© in 1963 for Musical Score, Musical Director / Conductor and Set Design. The film version (1968) was nominated for eleven Oscars©, and won five: Best Art Direction / Set Decoration, Best Score (original or adaptation), Best Sound, Best Director (Carol Reed), and Best Picture.

OLIVER! was first presented in London, and played for 2,618 performances at the New Theatre. It played for 774 performances on Broadway at the Imperial Theatre.

http://www.aiconversions.com/cap/2oliversynopsis.htm

Cast

Ron Moody...Fagin

Shani Wallis...Nancy

Oliver Reed...Bill Sikes

Mark Lester...Oliver

Jack Wild...Dodger

Harry Secombe....Mr. Bumble	Hugh Griffith .... The Magistrate
Joseph O'Conor.... Mr. Brownlow	Peggy Mount.... Mrs. Bumble
Leonard Rossiter.... Mr. Sowerberry	Hylda Baker.... Mrs. Sowerbrry
Kenneth Cranham.... Noah Claypole	Megs Jenkins.... Mrs. Bedwin
Sheila White .... Bet	Wensley Pithey.... Dr. Grimwig
James Hayter.... Mr. Jessop	Elizabeth Knight.... Charlotte
Fred Emney.... Workhouse Chairman	Edwin Finn.... Workhouse Pauper
Roy Evans .... Workhouse Pauper	Norman Mitchell .... Arresting Policeman

Fagin's boys

Robert Bartlett	Graham Buttrose
Jeff Chandler	Kirk Clugston
Dempsey Cook	Chris Duff
Nigel Grice	Ronnie Johnson

Nigel Kingsley

Robert Langley

Brian Lloyd

Peter Locke

Clive Moss

Ian Ramsey

Peter Renn

Billy Smith

Kim Smith

Freddie Stead

Raymond Ward

John Watters

Directed by Carol Reed

Music and lyrics by Lionel Bart

Some facts

Oliver! was made in 1968 and is based on Charles Dickens's novel Oliver Twist. The musical opened in London in 1960 and became the most long running production ever with 2619 performances until it was beaten by Jesus Christ Superstar twelve years later. The music and the lyrics are written by Lionel Bart who at the time was 30 years young. The film got six Academy Awards and was nominated for another six. The awards were: Best Picture, Best Director, Best Art Direction, Best Music, Best Sound and a special award to Oona White for her choreography. The nominations were: Best Actor Ron Moody, Best Supporting Actor Jack Wild, Best Writing Screenplay, Best Cinematography, Best Costume Design and Best Film Editing.
The Film is 153 minutes long (4195 meters) and is U-rated in Great Britain, G-rated in the USA, rated PG in Canada, K-8 in Finland and rated 11 in Sweden.

A Few Lyrics from the Famous Score:

'Consider Yourself'

Consider yourself, at home.
Consider yourself, part of the family.
I've taken to you, so strong.
It's clear, we're, going to get along.
Consider yourself, well in.
Consider yourself, part of the furniture.
There isn't a lot, to spare.
But who cares, wotever we got we share.
It it could chanse to be,
We should see that harder days,
Empty larder days, why grouse?
If you should chanse to meet,
Someone who could foot the bill,
Then the drinks are on the house!
Consider yourself, a mate
We don't wanna have, no fuss
So after some consideration we can state
Consider yourself, one of us!

'Where is love?'

Oliver:

Where is love?

Does it fall from skies above?
Is it underneath the willow tree
That I've been dreaming of?

Where is she
Who I close my eyes to see?
Will I ever know the sweet 'hello'
That's meant for only me?

Who can say where she may hide?
Must I travel far and wide?
'Till I am beside the someone who
I can mean something to?
Where, where is love?

Every night I kneel and pray
Let tomorrow be the day
When I see the face of someone who
I can mean something to
Where, where is love?

'I'd Do Anything'

I'd do anything for you, dear, anything
For you mean everything to me
I know that I'd go anywhere for your smile, anywhere
For your smile everywhere I see
Would you climb a hill?
Anything.
Wear a daffodill?
Anything.
Leave me all your will?
Anything.
Even fight my Bill?
Wot fisticuffs!?
I'd risk anything for one kiss, everything
Yes, I'd do anything-
Anything?
Anything, for you!

There are many different versions of Oliver Twist :

A Modern Oliver Twist (1906)

Oliver Twist (1909)

Oliver Twist (1912)

Oliver Twist (1916)

Oliver Twist (1920)

Oliver Twist, Jr. (1921)

Oliver Twist (1922)

Oliver Twist (1933) USA

Oliver Twist (1948)

Oliver! (1968)

Oliver Twist (1982) Made for TV

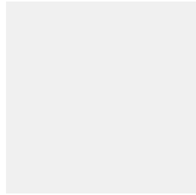
Oliver Twist (1985) Made for TV

Oliver Twist (1997) Made for TV USA

Oliver Twist (1999) Made for TV

Retrieved from: http://w1.303.telia.com/~u30302957/film.html

The following are synopses for the 1922 film, the 1948 film, the upcoming 2005 film, and a little history of the Artful Dodger:



OLIVER TWIST

Produced by *Jackie Coogan Productions*; Released *10/30/22* by *Associated First National Pictures*; Director: *Frank Lloyd*; Producer: *Sol Lesser*, Screenplay: *Frank Lloyd and Harry Weil, from the novel by Charles Dickens*; Cinematography: *Glen MacWilliams and Robert Martin*; Titles: *Walter Anthony*, Lighting Effects: *Louis Johnson*; Art Direction: *Stephen Goosson*; Editor: *Irene Morra*; Costumes: *Walter J. Israel*; *8 reels (7,761')*; Print Source: *Library of Congress, Film Preservation Associates*

CAST: *Jackie Coogan* (Oliver Twist), *Lon Chaney* (Fagin), *Gladys Brockwell* (Nancy Sikes), *George Siegmann* (Bill Sikes), *Lionel Belmore* (Mr. Brownlow), *James Marcus* (Mr. Bumble), *Aggie Herring* (The Widow Corney), *Edouard Trebaol* (The Artful Dodger), *Taylor Graves* (Charlie Bates), *Lewis Sargent* (Noah Claypole), *Joan Standing* (Charlotte), *Joseph H. Hazleton* (Mr. Grimwig), *Nelson McDowell* (Mr. Sowerberry), *Esther Ralston* (Rose Maylie), *Florence Hale* (Mrs. Bedwin), *Carl Stockdale* (Monks), *Eddie Boland* (Toby Crackit), *Gertrude Claire* (Mrs. Maylie)

SYNOPSIS: A young woman dies, leaving her baby, Oliver, in the care of a notorious workhouse near London. When he asks for an extra serving of food one day he is branded as a troublemaker, and is soon sold to Mr. Sowerberry, an undertaker, where he has a run-in with cruel Noah Claypole. Oliver escapes from Sowerberry, heads for London, and on the road meets The Artful Dodger, a young man who promises him food and lodging when they reach London. Oliver is introduced to Fagin, a hideous looking old man who teaches him the art of

picking pockets. Thinking it all a game, Oliver goes along, but when he realizes that he is to actually steal, he escapes to the care of the kindly Mr. Brownlow. Monks is Oliver's half brother, and conspires with Fagin to keep Oliver from inheriting a great fortune so that Monks may claim it. While running an errand for Mr. Brownlow, he is captured and returned to Fagin, where he is forced to perform a burglary for Bill Sikes. Oliver is pushed through a small window and told to let the gang in, but Oliver cries out a warning, and is shot by Sikes. The occupants of the house, Mrs. Maylie and her daughter Rose, nurse Oliver back to health. Nancy Sikes, Bill's wife, warns Mr. Brownlow of a plot to capture Oliver, and for this crime, Bill beats her to death. Pursued by the police, Bill races to the rooftops and, losing his footing, slips off the roof and accidentally hangs himself with a rope he was carrying. Fagin is arrested, Monks confesses his treachery, and Oliver is restored to his position of great wealth.

"Director Lloyd deserves credit for the manner in which he has handled the production, in the sets, the selection of types and the preservation of the atmosphere of this novel...Jackie Coogan is ideal as Oliver Twist, and shows that he is a sterling little actor...Lon Chaney is fine as Fagin, though this role has been somewhat subordinated; his make-up and acting are exceptional." ---Moving Picture World

"Although there are a number of names with picture value in the supporting cast, there is hardly anything in their performance that stands out. They appear to be rather lacking when weighed against some of the stage characterizations that have been presented of the better known roles of the Dickens work. This is particularly true of the interpretation of Fagin presented by Lon Chaney and the Bill Sikes of George Siegmann." ---Variety

NOTES: Long believed to be a lost film, a print of *OLIVER TWIST* was found in Yugoslavia in the early 1970s, with *no* intertitles. With assistance from Jackie Coogan and Sol Lesser (over 50 years after the filming!), appropriate intertitles were created by film distributor Blackhawk Films, and the film was released to the home collecting market.

Retrieved from: http://members.aol.com/ChaneyFan/129.htm?x=112&y=206

OLIVER TWIST: A Movie Review

starring Jackie Coogan and Lon Chaney

MOTION PICTURE MAGAZINE

February, 1923

"Oliver Twist" comes to the screen with success.

Jackie Coogan may well be considered with the greatest stars of the motion picture world - or the entire dramatic world for that matter. We will endeavor to consider his production, but it will be Jackie himself who will absorb most of our attention.

The well-known and beloved story of the little waif, Oliver, who, leaving the Orphans' Home falls into the hands of a band of crooks in the East End of London, has been brought to the screen with the same atmosphere and the same conception of characterization which you find in the Cruikshank illustrations in the Dickens's novel. And if there are any changes in the story, they are so slight that there was no confliction between our memory of "Oliver Twist" and the filmed story.

It is, undoubtedly, one of the finer pictures of the year and one which reflects credit upon the screen, in addition to furnishing splendid entertainment.

Frank Lloyd may be proud of his direction of this production. And if he was also entrusted with the selection of the cast, he may be doubly proud. We did not realize that the ranks of motion picture players might so effectively rally to the casting of this classic.

Lon Chaney is sinister as Fagin. We also liked Edouard Trebaol as the Artful Dodger, and we wish to congratulate Gladys Brockwell upon her performance as Nancy Sikes. We had ceased to regard her seriously until we saw her as Nancy Sikes. We know now that we were unfair to judge her by the frightful productions in which she was starred.

And now we come to consider Jackie Coogan.

The same people who complained that he was too young to portray "Oliver Twist" before they saw the picture will undoubtedly remember "Oliver Twist" in years to come essentially as Jackie portrayed him. We never cease to marvel over this extraordinary child. Someone said that if we remembered half we knew in our infancy we would be wise indeed. Jackie's infancy is not so far behind him that it is improbable that he remembers some of those things he brought with him from the Infinite.

Irving Cobb said of him in tribute . . .

". . . I do not know who is responsible for jackie Coogan. Perhaps the kindly Angels. If so, they did a good job, for I believe that, in his maturity, Jackie Coogan will be one of the blithest spirits that ever gave unending joy to countless millions." He already is that.

Retrieved from: http://www.silentsaregolden.com/olivertwistreview.html

Oliver Twist (1948)

Synopsis

Warning: *screenonline* full synopses contain 'spoilers' which give away key plot points. Don't read on if you don't want to know the ending!

A thunderstorm rages as a pregnant woman stumbles across fields and along lanes to reach the shelter of the parish workhouse. Here the woman gives birth to Oliver Twist, but is so exhausted she dies soon afterwards. Oliver grows up an orphan in the workhouse. Unfairly, he is seen as a stubborn, belligerent boy by the Beadle, Mr Bumble. While still young, he is apprenticed to Mr. Sowerberry, the undertaker. Exploited and unhappy, Oliver resolves to run away.

In London, he meets the streetwise Artful Dodger. The older boy introduces Oliver to a gang of juvenile delinquents. In a disused house, they are looked after by their charismatic leader, an old man named Fagin. Fagin ensures the boys are taught how to commit petty crimes - chiefly pick-pocketing. The boys walk the streets of London by day practising their trade. Bill Sikes, also taught by Fagin as a boy, is now a burglar and is a frightening presence in the hideout. Nancy, his kind girlfriend, is a mother-figure to many of the boys.

Oliver learns to pick pockets, but on one of his first attempts he is arrested. At the police station a wealthy old gentleman, Mr. Brownlow, takes pity on the boy and speaks up for him. The gentleman takes custody of Oliver, planning to educate and care for him.

Bill Sikes finds out where Oliver is living and immediately senses an opportunity to rob the Brownlow house. Sikes plans to force Oliver to let them in. He kidnaps Oliver and returns with him to Fagin's hideout to plan the robbery. Nancy tries to return Oliver to Mr. Brownlow, only to be brutally murdered by the enraged Sikes.

The attempted robbery fails. Sikes then drags Oliver over the rooftops of London as he is chased by the police and a torch-carrying mob. Sikes falls and dies, while Fagin is subsequently imprisoned. Oliver is saved and soon returns to Mr. Brownlow. He discovers that he is the lost grandson Brownlow has been seeking for so long.

Retrieved from: http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/459925/synopsis.html

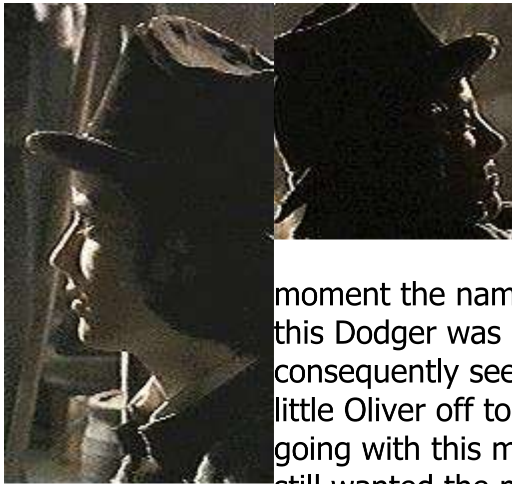
Oliver Twist

STARRING:	
DIRECTOR:	Roman Polanski
STUDIO:	
RATING:	N/A
GENRE:	Drama
WIDE RELEASE DATE:	TBA 2005

SYNOPSIS:
A young boy, Oliver Twist, whose mother has passed away and whose father is estranged, lives a tough life in London, working under tough conditions just to survive. On the street Oliver meets Fagin, a thief. Fagin invites Oliver to live with him and join a crew of pick-pockets. But it's not long before Oliver is caught thieving by Mr. Brownlow, who, instead of punishing Oliver, decides to raise him.

Roman Polanski and screenwriter Ronald Harwood, who won Oscars this year for The Pianist, have re-teamed for a feature adaptation of Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist. It will be Polanski's next film, which he plans to shoot in Europe next summer, using a British cast.

Elijah Wood



Elijah Wood played the Artful Dodger in Disney's made-for-tv (I think) version of Oliver Twist- not the musical, but just a movie of it. Elijah was a Dodger that I wasn't used to- but it wasn't such a painful performance as the late mini series Dodger by Alan Bleasdale (that's the director, at the moment the name of actor is lost to me). Like the miniseries, this Dodger was much older then what we are used to- consequently seeming 'eviler' for knowingly leading innocent little Oliver off to a life of crime in the slums- but instead of going with this more sinister version of the Artful, this movie still wanted the more playful, sweet version. To get this, the Artful Dodger becomes much more on Oliver's side then ever before. The small boy seems to touch his heart the same way Nancy's is- and when Nancy is killed, the Artful himself decides to take Oliver away to the Brownlows. Also, he is in regret for most of the movie for ever taking Oliver to Fagins- although to give him some credit, he's adamant that he himself loves his life. And also, he brings up a great point of how 'jail' (which he goes to at the end) is really a great place of higher learning for pickpockets- and they come out with a lot more knowledge gained from the other criminals they've been living with at the end.
All in all, he pulled off the older Dodger to the best that I've seen yet- and I enjoyed seeing his little mind torn in half for most of the movie between his greediness and awful deeds (spying on Nancy, etc.) and his own growing guilt towards Oliver.

Retrieved from: http://www.geocities.com/Broadway/Balcony/7486/woods.html

Charles Dickens:

Background and Literary Works

Retrieved from: http://www.geocities.com/Broadway/Balcony/7486/index.html

English Language Arts Standards and Benchmarks

Standard Six: Students read, analyze, and respond to literature as a record of life experiences.
Focus: Qualities of Enduring Literature • Literary Genre • Cultural Traditions • Uniqueness of National Experience
Literary Viewpoints/Points of View • Connecting Literary Text to Real-Life Experiences

ELA-6-E1 Recognizing and responding to United States and world literature that represents the experiences and traditions of diverse ethnic groups

ELA-6-E2 Recognizing and responding to a variety of classic and contemporary fiction and nonfiction literature from many genres (e.g., folktales, legends, myths, biography, autobiography, poetry, short stories)

Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812, in Portsea, England. His parents were middle-class, but they suffered financially as a result of living beyond their means. When Dickens was twelve years old, his family's dire straits forced him to quit school and work in a blacking factory, a place where shoe polish is made. Within weeks, his father was put in debtor's prison, where Dickens's mother and siblings eventually joined him. At this point, Dickens lived on his own and continued to work at the factory for several months. The horrific conditions in the factory haunted him for the rest of his life, as did the experience of temporary orphanhood. Apparently, Dickens never forgot the day when a more senior boy in the warehouse took it upon himself to instruct Dickens in how to do his work more efficiently. For Dickens, that instruction may have represented the first step toward his full integration into the misery and tedium of working-class life. The more senior boy's name was Bob Fagin. Dickens's residual resentment of him reached a fevered pitch in the characterization of the villain Fagin in Oliver Twist.

After inheriting some money, Dickens's father got out of prison and Charles returned to school. As a young adult, he worked as a law clerk and later as a journalist. His experience as a journalist kept him in close contact with the darker social conditions of the Industrial Revolution, and he grew disillusioned with the attempts of lawmakers to alleviate those conditions. A collection of semi-fictional sketches entitled Sketches by Boz earned him recognition as a writer. Dickens became famous and began to make money from his writing when he published his first novel, The Pickwick Papers, which was serialized in 1836 and published in book form the following year.
In 1837, the first installment of Oliver Twist appeared in the magazine Bentley's Miscellany, which Dickens was then editing. It was accompanied by illustrations by George Cruikshank, which still accompany many editions of the novel today. Even at this early date, some critics accused Dickens of writing too quickly and too prolifically, since he was paid by the word for his serialized novels. Yet the passion behind Oliver Twist, animated in part by Dickens's own childhood experiences and in part by his outrage at the living conditions of the poor that he had witnessed as a journalist, touched his contemporary readers. Greatly successful, the novel was a thinly veiled protest against the Poor Law of 1834, which dictated that all public charity must be channeled through workhouses.

In 1836, Dickens married Catherine Hogarth, but after twenty years of marriage and ten children, he fell in love with Ellen Ternan, an actress many years his junior. Soon after, Dickens and his wife separated, ending a long series of marital difficulties. Dickens remained a prolific writer to the end of his life, and his novels—among them Great Expectations, A Tale of Two Cities, A Christmas Carol, David Copperfield, and Bleak House—continued to earn critical and popular acclaim. He died of a stroke in 1870, at the age of 58, leaving The Mystery of Edwin Drood unfinished.

The Poor Laws: Oliver Twist's Social Commentary

Oliver Twist opens with a bitter invective directed at the nineteenth-century English Poor

Laws. These laws were a distorted manifestation of the Victorian middle class's emphasis on the virtues of hard work. England in the 1830s was rapidly undergoing a transformation from an agricultural, rural economy to an urban, industrial nation. The growing middle class had achieved an economic influence equal to, if not greater than, that of the British aristocracy.

In the 1830s, the middle class clamored for a share of political power with the landed gentry, bringing about a restructuring of the voting system. Parliament passed the Reform Act, which granted the right to vote to previously disenfranchised middle-class citizens. The middle class was eager to gain social legitimacy. This desire gave rise to the Evangelical religious movement and inspired sweeping economic and political change. In the extremely stratified English class structure, the highest social class belonged to the "gentleman," an aristocrat who did not have to work for his living. The middle class was stigmatized for having to work, and so, to alleviate the stigma attached to middle-class wealth, the middle class promoted work as a moral virtue. But the resulting moral value attached to work, along with the middle class's insecurity about its own social legitimacy, led English society to subject the poor to hatred and cruelty. Many members of the middle class were anxious to be differentiated from the lower classes, and one way to do so was to stigmatize the lower classes as lazy good-for-nothings. The middle class's value system transformed earned wealth into a sign of moral virtue. Victorian society interpreted economic success as a sign that God favored the honest, moral virtue of the successful individual's efforts, and, thus, interpreted the condition of poverty as a sign of the weakness of the poor individual.

The sentiment behind the Poor Law of 1834 reflected these beliefs. The law allowed the poor to receive public assistance only if they lived and worked in established workhouses. Beggars risked imprisonment. Debtors were sent to prison, often with their entire families, which virtually ensured that they could not repay their debts. Workhouses were deliberately made to be as miserable as possible in order to deter the poor from relying on public assistance. The philosophy was that the miserable conditions would prevent able-bodied paupers from being lazy and idle bums.

In the eyes of middle-class English society, those who could not support themselves were considered immoral and evil. Therefore, such individuals should enjoy no comforts or luxuries in their reliance on public assistance. In order to create the misery needed to deter immoral idleness, families were split apart upon entering the workhouse. Husbands were permitted no contact with their wives, lest they breed more paupers. Mothers were separated from children, lest they impart their immoral ways to their children. Brothers were separated from their sisters because the middle-class patrons of workhouses feared the lower class's "natural" inclination toward incest. In short, the state undertook to become the surrogate parents of workhouse children, whether or not they were orphans. Meals served to workhouse residents were deliberately inadequate, so as to encourage the residents to find work and support themselves.

Because of the great stigma attached to workhouse relief, many poor people chose to die in the streets rather than seek public aid. The workhouse was supposed to demonstrate the

virtue of gainful employment to the poor. In order to receive public assistance, they had to pay in suffering and misery. Victorian values stressed the moral virtue of suffering and privation, and the workhouse residents were made to experience these virtues many times over.

Rather than improving what the middle class saw as the questionable morals of the able-bodied poor, the Poor Laws punished the most defenseless and helpless members of the lower class. The old, the sick, and the very young suffered more than the able-bodied benefited from these laws. Dickens meant to demonstrate this incongruity through the figure of Oliver Twist, an orphan born and raised in a workhouse for the first ten years of his life. His story demonstrates the hypocrisy of the petty middle-class bureaucrats, who treat a small child cruelly while voicing their belief in the Christian virtue of giving charity to the less fortunate.

Dickens was a lifelong champion of the poor. He himself suffered the harsh abuse visited upon the poor by the English legal system. In England in the 1830s, the poor truly had no voice, political or economic. In Oliver Twist, Dickens presents the everyday existence of the lowest members of English society. He goes far beyond the experiences of the workhouse, extending his depiction of poverty to London's squalid streets, dark alehouses, and thieves' dens. He gives voice to those who had no voice, establishing a link between politics and literature with his social commentary.

Retrieved from: http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/oliver/context.html

Oliver Twist was the first in a series of works by Dickens that reflected on both his early life and the social conditions of his time. The following is a chronology of his work:

1836 - 37	**The Pickwick Papers** A rambling tale about the adventures of the naive, good-natured Mr Pickwick and his travelling companions. The streetwise Sam Weller, recruited along the way by Pickwick, helps them to survive. Full of fun, capturing the exuberant spirit of the young Dickens, the work catapulted him to fame and is still one of the best loved books in English Literature.
1837 - 39	**Oliver Twist** With a serious theme, to expose the abuse and corruption suffered by children, this second major work is nevertheless full of humour, but of a satirical kind. The orphan Oliver Twist manages to survive the worst that the authorities and criminal fraternity put him through. The scene of Oliver's plea in the workhouse for more to eat is familiar to countless millions, even to those who have never read the book.
1838 - 39	**Nicholas Nickleby** A tale of how the young Nicholas Nickleby and his sister make good after they and their mother are left penniless. Following a bad start working under Wackford Squeers, the cruel schoolmaster of a Yorkshire boarding school, Nicholas comes eventually to thrive, thanks in great measure to the help of Newman Noggs, clerk to his hateful uncle, and to the goodwill of the Cheeryble brothers, benevolent businessmen.
1840 - 41	**The Old Curiosity Shop** This story, written for the shortlived magazine *Master Humphrey's Clock*, has a young girl, Little Nell, fleeing with her grandfather from the clutches of the repulsive Quilp, a malicious moneylender. Their flight exposes them to a variety of experiences and characters, many having to do with the vagabonds and itinerant entertainers of the time. The death of Little Nell is among the best known scenes in

	the works of Dickens.	
1841	**Barnaby Rudge** The first of Dickens's two historical novels, set in the period that led up to the Gordon Riots of 1780 against Roman Catholicism. Barnaby is a half-witted young man who becomes caught up in the mayhem, but escapes the gallows through the intervention of Gabriel Varden, a locksmith. Dolly Varden, the coquettish daughter of Gabriel, is a creation whose name was subsequently used for a style of dress and hat.	
1843 - 44	**Martin Chuzzlewit** Selfishnessness, as typified by the young Martin Chuzzlewit, and hypocrisy, as typified by Mr Seth Pecksniff, who purports to be an architect, are among the themes of this work. Martin is chastened and humbled by his experiences in the USA, which Dickens portrays as a country full of vulgar, brash and boastful people. This work contains one of Dickens's great creations: the often intoxicated Mrs Sairey Gamp, a midwife, sick nurse and layer-out of the dead.	
1843	**A Christmas Carol** The first of five Christmas books written by Dickens in the 1840s, this is one of the best known and best loved of all his works. It tells of the transformation of Ebenezer Scrooge from a tight-fisted curmudgeon to a generous and genial man. This is brought about by a haunting and visions at Christmas that remind him of happier days, demonstrate the generous spirit of others in adversity, and terrify him with dire prospects should he not change his ways.	
1846 - 48	**Dombey and Son** Pervading this work are the pride and cold-hearted obduracy of Mr Paul Dombey Senior, a businessman. Following the death of his first wife, he invests all of his hopes in Paul, their only son, neglecting their daughter, Florence. But the fragile boy dies. Dombey marries again, but his will is thwarted by stubborn resistance and treachery, and he loses	

his fortune. A broken man, he is eventually reconciled to his daughter who has remained true throughout.

1849 - 50

David Copperfield
This story, narrated in the first person, of a man who becomes a successful author, is partially autobiographical. It is generally considered to be a masterpiece. Leo Tolstoy, who was greatly influenced by it in his early writing, accorded it the highest of rankings. The quality of writing is especially evident in the description of a storm. Among a number of memorable characters is that of Mr Wilkins Micawber, who resembles in some respects Dickens's father.

1851 - 53

Bleak House
A prolonged law case concerning the distribution of an estate, which brings misery and ruin to the suitors but great profit to the lawyers, is the foundation for this story. Told in part through the eyes of the principal character, Esther Summerson, it is a complex one involving a good many secrets, a murder and a number of investigators. Among these is a professional detective, Inspector Bucket. Bleak House is the home of John Jarndyce, principal member of the family involved in the law case.

1854

Hard Times
The shortest of Dickens's novels, set in a northern industrial town, this champions imagination, fun and experience against the fact-based, stern and bookish philosophies of the time, as epitomised in the outlook of Thomas Gradgrind, one of the principal characters. Faced with the effects of his rigid attitudes on the lives of his son and daughter, he comes to accept the emptiness of his pet precepts.

1855 - 57

Little Dorrit
Here Dickens plays on the theme of imprisonment, drawing on his own experience as a boy of visiting his father in a debtors' prison. William Dorrit is locked up for years in that prison, attended daily by his daughter, Little Dorrit. Her unappreciated self-sacrifice comes to the attention of Arthur

	Clennam, recently returned from China, who helps bring about her father's release but is himself incarcerated for a time when his business speculation fails. Little Dorrit, unable to adjust to a world of plenty, eventually finds contentment caring for Clennam and, following the loss of her father and the family fortune, they marry.	
1859	**A Tale of Two Cities** This, the second of Dickens's two historical novels, relates to the French Revolution, the two cities being London and Paris. French-born Charles Darnay, settled in London, returns to Paris to help save the life of his agent, but is eventually himself condemned to death. He is saved by the self-sacrifice of Sydney Carton, who takes his place, having previously led a debauched and wasteful life. Carton's words at the very end of the novel are widely familiar: "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."	
1860 - 61	**Great Expectations** Like *David Copperfield*, this story is narrated in the first person. The narrator, Philip Pirrip, known as Pip, looks back over his life, from his rural boyhood, under the care of a ferocious sister and her mild husband, a blacksmith, to living the life of a gentleman in London, funded by a mysterious benefactor. The mystery solved, his pretentiousness was destroyed, and he then had to cope with some harsh realities, remorseful of the way he had treated those who loved him most. Central to the story is the strange recluse, Miss Havisham, deranged by having been jilted on her wedding day.	
1864 - 65	**Our Mutual Friend** The basis of this carefully plotted story is the desire of John Harmon, an heir to the fortune of a refuse contractor, to disguise his identity till he has formed an opinion of Bella Wilfer, the woman he is supposed to marry under the terms of his father's will, . From the time he finds himself assumed dead, complications abound, but all turns out well in the end. Opinions differ widely as to the ranking of this novel, the last which Dickens completed, but it is undoubtedly a model	

	of his outstanding craftmanship.	
1870	**The Mystery of Edwin Drood** Dickens had completed nearly half of this story when he died. Speculation about how it would have ended has since tended to attract greater interest than any assessment of the work as it stands. The central mystery of the story arises from the disappearance of Edwin Drood. It seems likely that he has been murdered. There is evidence to suppose that this is what Dickens had had in mind, but the identity of the murderer, if there was such, has been a cause of much dispute. The episodes published were very popular and some passages are considered to be among the most sublime that Dickens wrote.	

Retrieved from: http://www.dickens.fellowship.btinternet.co.uk/fiction.htm

Oliver Twist

Plot Overview

Oliver Twist is born in a workhouse in 1830s England. His mother, whose name no one knows, is found on the street and dies just after Oliver's birth. Oliver spends the first nine years of his life in a badly run home for young orphans and then is transferred to a workhouse for adults. After the other boys bully Oliver into asking for more gruel at the end of a meal, Mr. Bumble, the parish beadle, offers five pounds to anyone who will take the boy away from the workhouse. Oliver narrowly escapes being apprenticed to a brutish chimney sweep and is eventually apprenticed to a local undertaker, Mr. Sowerberry. When the undertaker's other apprentice, Noah Claypole, makes disparaging comments about Oliver's mother, Oliver attacks him and incurs the Sowerberrys' wrath. Desperate, Oliver runs away at dawn

and travels toward London.

Outside London, Oliver, starved and exhausted, meets Jack Dawkins, a boy his own age. Jack offers him shelter in the London house of his benefactor, Fagin. It turns out that Fagin is a career criminal who trains orphan boys to pick pockets for him. After a few days of training, Oliver is sent on a pickpocketing mission with two other boys. When he sees them swipe a handkerchief from an elderly gentleman, Oliver is horrified and runs off. He is caught but narrowly escapes being convicted of the theft. Mr. Brownlow, the man whose handkerchief was stolen, takes the feverish Oliver to his home and nurses him back to health. Mr. Brownlow is struck by Oliver's resemblance to a portrait of a young woman that hangs in his house. Oliver thrives in Mr. Brownlow's home, but two young adults in Fagin's gang, Bill Sikes and his lover Nancy, capture Oliver and return him to Fagin.

Fagin sends Oliver to assist Sikes in a burglary. Oliver is shot by a servant of the house and, after Sikes escapes, is taken in by the women who live there, Mrs. Maylie and her beautiful adopted niece Rose. They grow fond of Oliver, and he spends an idyllic summer with them in the countryside. But Fagin and a mysterious man named Monks are set on recapturing Oliver. Meanwhile, it is revealed that Oliver's mother left behind a gold locket when she died. Monks obtains and destroys that locket. When the Maylies come to London, Nancy meets secretly with Rose and informs her of Fagin's designs, but a member of Fagin's gang overhears the conversation. When word of Nancy's disclosure reaches

Sikes, he brutally murders Nancy and flees London. Pursued by his guilty conscience and an angry mob, he inadvertently hangs himself while trying to escape.

Mr. Brownlow, with whom the Maylies have reunited Oliver, confronts Monks and wrings the truth about Oliver's parentage from him. It is revealed that Monks is Oliver's half brother. Their father, Mr. Leeford, was unhappily married to a wealthy woman and had an affair with Oliver's mother, Agnes Fleming. Monks has been pursuing Oliver all along in the hopes of ensuring that his half-brother is deprived of his share of the family inheritance. Mr. Brownlow forces Monks to sign over Oliver's share to Oliver. Moreover, it is discovered that Rose is Agnes's younger sister, hence Oliver's aunt. Fagin is hung for his crimes. Finally, Mr. Brownlow adopts Oliver, and they and the Maylies retire to a blissful existence in the countryside.

Retrieved from: http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/oliver/summary.html

Oliver Twist: Where it all Began

Retrieved from: http://www.fathom.com/course/21701754/session2.html

English Language Arts Standards and Benchmarks

Standard One: Students read, comprehend, and respond to a range of materials, using a variety of strategies for different purposes.
Focus: Reading as a Process • Responding to Text • Word Meaning • Word Identification • Understanding Textual Features • Connecting Reading to Prior Knowledge and Experiences

ELA-1-E1 Gaining meaning from print and building vocabulary using a full range of strategies (e.g., self-monitoring and correcting, searching, cross-checking), evidenced by reading behaviors using phonemic awareness, phonics, sentence structure, and meaning

ELA-1-E2 Using the conventions of print (e.g., left-to-right directionality, top-to-bottom, one-to-one matching, sentence framing)

ELA-1-E3 Adjusting speed of reading (e.g., appropriate pacing, intonation, expression) to suit the difficulty of materials and the purpose for reading (e.g., enjoying, learning, problem solving)

ELA-1-E4 Recognizing story elements (e.g., setting, plot, character, theme) and literary devices (e.g., simile, dialogue, personification) within a selection

ELA-1-E5 Reading, comprehending, and responding to written, spoken, and visual texts in extended passages (e.g., range for fiction passages—450-1,000 words; range for nonfiction—450-850 words)

ELA-1-E6 Interpreting (e.g., retelling, summarizing) texts to generate connections to real-life situations

ELA-1-E7 Reading with fluency (natural sequencing of words) for various purposes (e.g., enjoying, learning, problem solving)

Standard Four: Students demonstrate competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning and communicating.
Focus: Communication Process • Interpersonal Skills

ELA-4-E1 Speaking intelligibly, using standard English pronunciation

ELA-4-E2 Giving and following directions/procedures

ELA-4-E3 Telling or retelling stories in sequence

ELA-4-E4 Giving rehearsed and unrehearsed presentations

ELA-4-E5 Speaking and listening for a variety of audiences (e.g., classroom, real-life, workplace) and purposes (e.g., awareness, concentration, enjoyment, information, problem solving)

ELA-4-E7 Participating in a variety of roles in group discussions (e.g., active listener, contributor, discussion leader)

Standard Seven: Students apply reasoning and problem-solving skills to reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing.
Focus: Critical Thinking • Questioning • Prediction • Investigation • Comprehension • Analysis • Synthesis • Communication Understanding

ELA-7-E1 Using comprehension strategies (e.g., sequencing, predicting, drawing conclusions, comparing and contrasting, making inferences, determining main ideas) to interpret oral, written, and visual texts

ELA-7-E2 Using basic reasoning skills, life experiences, and available information to solve problems in oral, written, and visual texts

ELA-7-E3 Recognizing an author's purpose (reason for writing), and viewpoint (perspective)

ELA-7-E4 Using basic reasoning skills to distinguish fact from opinion, skim and scan for facts, determine cause and effect, generate inquiry, and make connections with real-life situations

Character List

Oliver Twist - The novel's protagonist. Oliver is an orphan born in a workhouse, and Dickens uses his situation to criticize public policy toward the poor in 1830s England. Oliver is between nine and twelve years old when the main action of the novel occurs. Though treated with cruelty and surrounded by coarseness for most of his life, he is a pious, innocent child, and his charms draw the attention of several wealthy benefactors. His true identity is the central mystery of the novel.

As the child hero of a melodramatic novel of social protest, Oliver Twist is meant to appeal more to our sentiments than to our literary sensibilities. On many levels, Oliver is not a believable character, because although he is raised in corrupt surroundings, his purity and virtue are absolute. Throughout the novel, Dickens uses Oliver's character to challenge the Victorian idea that paupers and criminals are already evil at birth, arguing instead that a corrupt environment is the source of vice. At the same time, Oliver's incorruptibility undermines some of Dickens's assertions. Oliver is shocked and horrified when he sees the Artful Dodger and Charley Bates pick a stranger's pocket and again when he is forced to participate in a burglary. Oliver's moral scruples about the sanctity of property seem inborn in him, just as Dickens's opponents thought that corruption is inborn in poor people. Furthermore, other pauper children use rough Cockney slang, but Oliver, oddly enough, speaks in proper King's English. His grammatical fastidiousness is also inexplicable, as Oliver presumably is not well-educated. Even when he is abused and manipulated, Oliver does not become angry or indignant. When Sikes and Crackit force him to assist in a robbery, Oliver merely begs to be allowed to "run away and die in the fields." Oliver does not present a complex picture of a person torn between good and evil—instead, he is goodness incarnate.

Even if we might feel that Dickens's social criticism would have been more effective if he had focused on a more complex poor character, like the Artful Dodger or Nancy, the audience for whom Dickens was writing might not have been receptive to such a portrayal. Dickens's Victorian middle-class readers were likely to hold opinions on the poor that were only a little less extreme than those expressed by Mr. Bumble, the beadle who treats paupers with great cruelty. In fact, Oliver Twist was criticized for portraying thieves and prostitutes at all. Given the strict morals of Dickens's audience, it may have seemed necessary for him to make Oliver a saintlike figure. Because Oliver appealed to Victorian readers' sentiments, his story may have stood a better chance of effectively challenging their prejudices.

Fagin- A conniving career criminal. Fagin takes in homeless children and trains them to pick pockets for him. He is also a buyer of other people's stolen goods. He rarely commits crimes himself, preferring to employ others to commit them—and often suffer

legal retribution—in his place. Dickens's portrait of Fagin displays the influence of anti-Semitic stereotypes.

Although Dickens denied that anti-Semitism had influenced his portrait of Fagin, the Jewish thief's characterization does seem to owe much to ethnic stereotypes. He is ugly, simpering, miserly, and avaricious. Constant references to him as "the Jew" seem to indicate that his negative traits are intimately connected to his ethnic identity. However, Fagin is more than a statement of ethnic prejudice. He is a richly drawn, resonant embodiment of terrifying villainy. At times, he seems like a child's distorted vision of pure evil. Fagin is described as a "loathsome reptile" and as having "fangs such as should have been a dog's or rat's." Other characters occasionally refer to him as "the old one," a popular nickname for the devil. Twice, in Chapter 9 and again in Chapter 34, Oliver wakes up to find Fagin nearby. Oliver encounters him in the hazy zone between sleep and waking, at the precise time when dreams and nightmares are born from "the mere silent presence of some external object." Indeed, Fagin is meant to inspire nightmares in child and adult readers alike. Perhaps most frightening of all, though, is Chapter 52, in which we enter Fagin's head for his "last night alive." The gallows, and the fear they inspire in Fagin, are a specter even more horrifying to contemplate than Fagin himself.

Nancy - A young prostitute and one of Fagin's former child pickpockets. Nancy is also Bill Sikes's lover. Her love for Sikes and her sense of moral decency come into conflict when Sikes abuses Oliver. Despite her criminal lifestyle, she is among the noblest characters in the novel. In effect, she gives her life for Oliver when Sikes murders her for revealing Monks's plots.

A major concern of Oliver Twist is the question of whether a bad environment can irrevocably poison someone's character and soul. As the novel progresses, the character who best illustrates the contradictory issues brought up by that question is Nancy. As a child of the streets, Nancy has been a thief and drinks to excess. The narrator's reference to her "free and agreeable . . . manners" indicates that she is a prostitute. She is immersed in the vices condemned by her society, but she also commits perhaps the most noble act in the novel when she sacrifices her own life in order to protect Oliver. Nancy's moral complexity is unique among the major characters in Oliver Twist. The novel is full of characters who are all good and can barely comprehend evil, such as Oliver, Rose, and Brownlow; and characters who are all evil and can barely comprehend good, such as Fagin, Sikes, and Monks. Only Nancy comprehends and is capable of both good and evil. Her ultimate choice to do good at a great personal cost is a strong argument in favor of the incorruptibility of basic goodness, no matter how many environmental obstacles it may face.

Nancy's love for Sikes exemplifies the moral ambiguity of her character. As she herself points out to Rose, devotion to a man can be "a comfort and a pride" under the right circumstances. But for Nancy, such devotion is "a new means of violence and suffering"—indeed, her relationship with Sikes leads her to criminal acts for his sake and eventually to her own demise. The same behavior, in different circumstances, can have very different consequences and moral significance. In much of Oliver Twist, morality

and nobility are black-and-white issues, but Nancy's character suggests that the boundary between virtue and vice is not always clearly drawn

Rose Maylie - Agnes Fleming's sister, raised by Mrs. Maylie after the death of Rose's father. A beautiful, compassionate, and forgiving young woman, Rose is the novel's model of female virtue. She establishes a loving relationship with Oliver even before it is revealed that the two are related.

Mr. Brownlow - A well-off, erudite gentleman who serves as Oliver's first benefactor. Mr. Brownlow owns a portrait of Agnes Fleming and was engaged to Mr. Leeford's sister when she died. Throughout the novel, he behaves with compassion and common sense and emerges as a natural leader.

Monks - A sickly, vicious young man, prone to violent fits and teeming with inexplicable hatred. With Fagin, he schemes to give Oliver a bad reputation.

Bill Sikes - A brutal professional burglar brought up in Fagin's gang. Sikes and Nancy are lovers, and he treats both her and his dog Bull's-eye with an odd combination of cruelty and grudging familiarity. His murder of Nancy is the most heinous of the many crimes that occur in the novel.

Mr. Bumble - The pompous, self-important beadle—a minor church official—for the workhouse where Oliver is born. Though Mr. Bumble preaches Christian morality, he behaves without compassion toward the paupers under his care. Dickens mercilessly satirizes his self-righteousness, greed, hypocrisy, and folly, of which his name is an obvious symbol.

Agnes Fleming - Oliver's mother. After falling in love with and becoming pregnant by Mr. Leeford, she chooses to die anonymously in a workhouse rather than stain her family's reputation. A retired naval officer's daughter, she was a beautiful, loving woman. Oliver's face closely resembles hers.

Mr. Leeford - Oliver and Monks's father, who dies long before the events of the novel. He was an intelligent, high-minded man whose family forced him into an unhappy marriage with a wealthy woman. He eventually separated from his wife and had an illicit love affair with Agnes Fleming. He intended to flee the country with Agnes but died before he could do so.

Mr. Losberne - Mrs. Maylie's family physician. A hot-tempered but good-hearted old bachelor, Mr. Losberne is fiercely loyal to the Maylies and, eventually, to Oliver.

Mrs. Maylie - A kind, wealthy older woman, the mother of Harry Maylie and adoptive “aunt” of Rose.

Harry Maylie - Mrs. Maylie’s son. Harry is a dashing young man with grand political ambitions and career prospects, which he eventually gives up to marry Rose.

The Artful Dodger - The cleverest of Fagin’s pickpockets. The Dodger’s real name is Jack Dawkins. Though no older than Oliver, the Dodger talks and dresses like a grown man. He introduces Oliver to Fagin.

Charley Bates - One of Fagin’s pickpockets. Charley is ready to laugh at anything.

Old Sally - An elderly pauper who serves as the nurse at Oliver’s birth. Old Sally steals Agnes’s gold locket, the only clue to Oliver’s identity.

Mrs. Corney - The matron of the workhouse where Oliver is born. Mrs. Corney is hypocritical, callous, and materialistic. After she marries Mr. Bumble, she hounds him mercilessly.

Noah Claypole - A charity boy and Mr. Sowerberry’s apprentice. Noah is an overgrown, cowardly bully who mistreats Oliver and eventually joins Fagin’s gang.

Charlotte - The Sowerberrys’ maid. Charlotte becomes romantically involved with Noah Claypole and follows him about slavishly.

Toby Crackit - One of Fagin and Sikes’s associates, crass and not too bright. Toby participates in the attempted burglary of Mrs. Maylie’s home.

Mrs. Bedwin - Mr. Brownlow’s kindhearted housekeeper. Mrs. Bedwin is unwilling to believe Mr. Bumble’s negative report of Oliver’s character.

Bull’s-eye - Bill Sikes’s dog. As vicious as his master, Bull’s-eye functions as Sikes’s alter ego.

Monks’s mother - An heiress who lived a decadent life and alienated her husband, Mr. Leeford. Monks’s mother destroyed Mr. Leeford’s will, which left part of his property to Oliver. Much of Monks’s nastiness is presumably inherited from her.

Mr. Sowerberry - The undertaker to whom Oliver is apprenticed. Though Mr. Sowerberry makes a grotesque living arranging cut-rate burials for paupers, he is a decent man who is kind to Oliver.

Mrs. Sowerberry - Sowerberry's wife. Mrs. Sowerberry is a mean, judgmental woman who henpecks her husband.

Mr. Grimwig - Brownlow's pessimistic, curmudgeonly friend. Mr. Grimwig is essentially good-hearted, and his pessimism is mostly just a provocative character quirk.

Mr. Giles - Mrs. Maylie's loyal, though somewhat pompous, butler.

Mr. Brittles - A sort of handyman for Mrs. Maylie's estate. It is implied that Mr. Brittles is slightly mentally handicapped.

Mrs. Mann - The superintendent of the juvenile workhouse where Oliver is raised. Mrs. Mann physically abuses and half-starves the children in her care.

Mr. Gamfield - A brutal chimney sweep. Oliver almost becomes Mr. Gamfield's apprentice.

Bet - One of Fagin's former child pickpockets, now a prostitute.

Mr. Fang - The harsh, irrational, power-hungry magistrate who presides over Oliver's trial for pickpocketing.

Barney - One of Fagin's criminal associates. Like Fagin, Barney is Jewish.

Duff and Blathers - Two bumbling police officers who investigate the attempted burglary of Mrs. Maylie's home.

Tom Chitling - A rather dim member of Fagin's gang. Tom has served time in jail for doing Fagin's bidding.

Retrieved from: http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/oliver/characters.html

Themes, Motifs & Symbols

Themes

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

The Failure of Charity

Much of the first part of Oliver Twist challenges the organizations of charity run by the church and the government in Dickens's time. The system Dickens describes was put into place by the Poor Law of 1834, which stipulated that the poor could only receive government assistance if they moved into government workhouses. Residents of those workhouses were essentially inmates whose rights were severely curtailed by a host of onerous regulations. Labor was required, families were almost always separated, and rations of food and clothing were meager. The workhouses operated on the principle that poverty was the consequence of laziness and that the dreadful conditions in the workhouse would inspire the poor to better their own circumstances. Yet the economic dislocation of the Industrial Revolution made it impossible for many to do so, and the workhouses did not provide any means for social or economic betterment. Furthermore, as Dickens points out, the officials who ran the workhouses blatantly violated the values they preached to the poor. Dickens describes with great sarcasm the greed, laziness, and arrogance of charitable workers like Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Mann. In general, charitable institutions only reproduced the awful conditions in which the poor would live anyway. As Dickens puts it, the poor choose between "being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it."

The Folly of Individualism

With the rise of capitalism during the Industrial Revolution, individualism was very much in vogue as a philosophy. Victorian capitalists believed that society would run most smoothly if individuals looked out for their own interests. Ironically, the clearest pronunciation of this philosophy comes not from a legitimate

businessman but from Fagin, who operates in the illicit businesses of theft and prostitution. He tells Noah Claypole that "a regard for number one holds us all together, and must do so, unless we would all go to pieces in company." In other words, the group's interests are best maintained if every individual looks out for "number one," or himself. The folly of this philosophy is demonstrated at the end of the novel, when Nancy turns against Monks, Charley Bates turns against Sikes, and Monks turns against Mrs. Corney. Fagin's unstable family, held together only by the self-interest of its members, is juxtaposed to the little society formed by Oliver, Brownlow, Rose Maylie, and their many friends. This second group is bound together not by concerns of self-interest but by "strong affection and humanity of heart," the selfless devotion to each other that Dickens sees as the prerequisite for "perfect happiness."

Purity in a Corrupt City

Throughout the novel, Dickens confronts the question of whether the terrible environments he depicts have the power to "blacken [the soul] and change its hue for ever." By examining the fates of most of the characters, we can assume that his answer is that they do not. Certainly, characters like Sikes and Fagin seem to have sustained permanent damage to their moral sensibilities. Yet even Sikes has a conscience, which manifests itself in the apparition of Nancy's eyes that haunts him after he murders her. Charley Bates maintains enough of a sense of decency to try to capture Sikes. Of course, Oliver is above any corruption, though the novel removes him from unhealthy environments relatively early in his life. Most telling of all is Nancy, who, though she considers herself "lost almost beyond redemption," ends up making the ultimate sacrifice for a child she hardly knows. In contrast, Monks, perhaps the novel's most inhuman villain, was brought up amid wealth and comfort.

The Countryside Idealized

All the injustices and privations suffered by the poor in Oliver Twist occur in cities—either the great city of London or the provincial city where Oliver is born.

When the Maylies take Oliver to the countryside, he discovers a "new existence." Dickens asserts that even people who have spent their entire lives in "close and noisy places" are likely, in the last moments of their lives, to find comfort in half--imagined memories "of sky, and hill and plain." Moreover, country scenes have the potential to "purify our thoughts" and erase some of the vices that develop in the city. Hence, in the country, "the poor people [are] so neat and clean," living a life that is free of the squalor that torments their urban counterparts. Oliver and his new family settle in a small village at the novel's end, as if a happy ending would not be possible in the city. Dickens's portrait of rural life in Oliver Twist is more approving yet far less realistic than his portrait of urban life. This fact does not contradict, but rather supports, the general estimation of Dickens as a great urban writer. It is precisely Dickens's distance from the countryside that allows him to idealize it.

Motifs

Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

Disguised or Mistaken Identities

The plot of Oliver Twist revolves around the various false identities that other characters impose upon Oliver, often for the sake of advancing their own interests. Mr. Bumble and the other workhouse officials insist on portraying Oliver as something he is not—an ungrateful, immoral pauper. Monks does his best to conceal Oliver's real identity so that Monks himself can claim Oliver's rightful inheritance. Characters also disguise their own identities when it serves them well to do so. Nancy pretends to be Oliver's middle-class sister in order to get him back to Fagin, while Monks changes his name and poses as a common criminal rather than the heir he really is. Scenes depicting the manipulation of clothing indicate how it plays an important part in the construction of various characters' identities. Nancy dons new clothing to pass as a middle-class girl, and Fagin strips Oliver of all his upper-class credibility when he takes from him the suit of clothes purchased by Brownlow. The novel's resolution revolves

around the revelation of the real identities of Oliver, Rose, and Monks. Only when every character's identity is known with certainty does the story achieve real closure.

Hidden Family Relationships

The revelation of Oliver's familial ties is among the novel's most unlikely plot turns: Oliver is related to Brownlow, who was married to his father's sister; to Rose, who is his aunt; and to Monks, who is his half-brother. The coincidences involved in these facts are quite unbelievable and represent the novel's rejection of realism in favor of fantasy. Oliver is at first believed to be an orphan without parents or relatives, a position that would, in that time and place, almost certainly seal his doom. Yet, by the end of the novel, it is revealed that he has more relatives than just about anyone else in the novel. This reversal of his fortunes strongly resembles the fulfillment of a naïve child's wish. It also suggests the mystical binding power of family relationships. Brownlow and Rose take to Oliver immediately, even though he is implicated in an attempted robbery of Rose's house, while Monks recognizes Oliver the instant he sees him on the street. The influence of blood ties, it seems, can be felt even before anyone knows those ties exist.

Surrogate Families

Before Oliver finds his real family, a number of individuals serve him as substitue parents, mostly with very limited success. Mrs. Mann and Mr. Bumble are surrogate parents, albeit horribly negligent ones, for the vast numbers of orphans under their care. Mr. Sowerberry and his wife, while far from ideal, are much more serviceable parent figures to Oliver, and one can even imagine that Oliver might have grown up to be a productive citizen under their care. Interestingly, it is the mention of his real mother that leads to Oliver's voluntary abandonment of the Sowerberrys. The most provocative of the novel's mock family structures is the unit formed by Fagin and his young charges. Fagin provides for and trains his wards nearly as well as a father might, and he inspires enough loyalty in them

that they stick around even after they are grown. But these quasi-familial relationships are built primarily around exploitation and not out of true concern or selfless interest. Oddly enough, the only satisfactory surrogate parents Oliver finds are Brownlow and Rose, both of whom turn out to be actual relatives.

Oliver's Face

Oliver's face is singled out for special attention at multiple points in the novel. Mr. Sowerberry, Charley Bates, and Toby Crackit all comment on its particular appeal, and its resemblance to the portrait of Agnes Fleming provides the first clue to Oliver's identity. The power of Oliver's physiognomy, combined with the facts that Fagin is hideous and Rose is beautiful, suggests that in the world of the novel, external appearance usually gives a fair impression of a person's inner character.

Symbols

Symbols are objects, characters, figures, or colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

Characters' Names

The names of characters represent personal qualities. Oliver Twist himself is the most obvious example. The name "Twist," though given by accident, alludes to the outrageous reversals of fortune that he will experience. Rose Maylie's name echoes her association with flowers and springtime, youth and beauty. Toby Crackit's name is a lighthearted reference to his chosen profession of breaking into houses. Mr. Bumble's name connotes his bumbling arrogance; Mrs. Mann's, her lack of maternal instinct; and Mr. Grimwig's, his superficial grimness that can be removed as easily as a wig.

Bull's-eye

Bill Sikes's dog, Bull's-eye, has "faults of temper in common with his owner" and is a symbolic emblem of his owner's character. The dog's viciousness reflects

and represents Sikes's own animal-like brutality. After Sikes murders Nancy, Bull's-eye comes to represent Sikes's guilt. The dog leaves bloody footprints on the floor of the room where the murder is committed. Not long after, Sikes becomes desperate to get rid of the dog, convinced that the dog's presence will give him away. Yet, just as Sikes cannot shake off his guilt, he cannot shake off Bull's-eye, who arrives at the house of Sikes's demise before Sikes himself does. Bull's-eye's name also conjures up the image of Nancy's eyes, which haunts Sikes until the bitter end and eventually causes him to hang himself accidentally.

London Bridge

Nancy's decision to meet Brownlow and Rose on London Bridge reveals the symbolic aspect of this bridge in Oliver Twist. Bridges exist to link two places that would otherwise be separated by an uncrossable chasm. The meeting on London Bridge represents the collision of two worlds unlikely ever to come into contact—the idyllic world of Brownlow and Rose, and the atmosphere of degradation in which Nancy lives. On the bridge, Nancy is given the chance to cross over to the better way of life that the others represent, but she rejects that opportunity, and by the time the three have all left the bridge, that possibility has vanished forever.

Retrieved from: http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/oliver/themes.html

Key Facts

Full title

· Oliver Twist: The Parish Boy's Progress

Genre

· Children's story; detective story; novel of social protest

Time and place written

· 1837–38, London

Date of first publication

· Published in serial form between February 1837 and April 1839; first book edition published in November 1838

Publisher

· First published serially in Bentley's Miscellany, a periodical edited by Dickens

Anonymous narrator

· The narrator is third person omniscient, and assumes the points of view of various characters in turn. The narrator's tone is not objective; it is sympathetic to the protagonists and far less so to the novel's other characters. When dealing with hypocritical or morally objectionable characters, the narrative voice is often ironic or sarcastic.

Tone

· Sentimental, sometimes ironic, hyperbolic, crusading

Tense

· Past

Setting (time)
· 1830s

Setting (place)
· London and environs; an unnamed smaller English city; the English countryside

Protagonist

· Oliver Twist

Major conflict

· Although Oliver is fundamentally righteous, the social environment in which he is raised encourages thievery and prostitution. Oliver struggles to find his identity and rise above the abject conditions of the lower class.

Rising action

· Oliver is taken care of by a gang of London thieves, but refuses to participate in their thievery. An upper-class family takes him in, but the thieves and a mysterious character, Monks, continue to pursue him.

Climax

· Nancy is murdered for disclosing Monks's plans to Oliver's guardians. Mr. Brownlow gets the full story of Oliver's origins from Monks.

Falling action

· Fagin is executed and Sikes dies; Oliver and his new family live out their days in happiness.

Foreshadowing

· The truth about Oliver's parentage is foreshadowed by the portrait in Mr. Brownlow's house, by the locket that Old Sally has stolen, and by Monks's pursuit of Oliver.

Retrieved from: http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/oliver/facts.html

Study Questions & Essay Topics

Study Questions

1. Victorian stereotypes about the poor asserted that poverty and vice were fundamentally connected and that, moreover, both were hereditary traits: the poor were supposedly bad from birth. How does Dickens approach such stereotypes?

2. Consider the female characters of Nancy, Rose Maylie, and Agnes Fleming. How are the three women different? How are they similar? What do their differences and similarities suggest about Dickens's ideas about women?

3. Discuss the portrait of the criminal justice system presented in Oliver Twist.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. In Chapters 48 and 52, Dickens explores the consequences of Sikes's and Fagin's crimes. Is the narrative technique in these chapters different from that in the rest of the novel? If so, how? How does the reader's perspective on Sikes and Fagin change in these chapters? How do these chapters address the issues of guilt and punishment?

2. Discuss the character of Fagin. To what extent does anti-Semitism influence Dickens's portrait of him? Should Fagin be

taken to represent all Jews? May he be taken to represent anything else?

3. Oliver Twist is full of thievery. Some of it is committed by criminals like Sikes against respectable people like the Maylies, while some of it is committed by “respectable” people like Mrs. Mann and Mr. Bumble against the poor. How are these two types of thievery different? What do they have in common? Also, consider the various ways in which other people “rob” Oliver of his identity. What does the prevalence of thievery in the novel say about the world that it portrays?

4. What role does clothing play in the various characters’ identities? Consider Nancy’s disguise, the new suit that Brownlow purchases for Oliver, and Mr. Bumble’s regret at giving up the office of parish beadle.

5. How does Dickens represent marriage in Oliver Twist? Compare and contrast the marriages of Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Corney, of Rose and Harry, and of Mr. Leeford and Monks’s mother. Consider also the prevalence of “families” that do not center around a marriage: for example, Oliver, Brownlow, Grimwig, and Mrs. Bedwin; or Mrs. Maylie, Rose, and Mr. Losberne.

Retrieved from: http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/oliver/study.html

Quiz

1. Who runs the home for young orphans where Oliver lives for nine years?

(A) Mr. Bumble

(B) Mrs. Mann

(C) Agnes Fleming

(D) Miss Hannigan

2. How does Oliver violate the rules of the workhouse?

(A) By asking for more gruel

(B) By taking the Lord's name in vain

(C) By running a pickpocketing ring

(D) By spreading revolutionary ideology among the paupers

3. What is Mr. Gamfield's profession?

(A) Undertaker

(B) Chef

(C) Butler

(D) Chimney sweep

4. What is Mr. Sowerberry's profession?

(A) Undertaker

(B) Chef

(C) Butler

(D) Chimney sweep

5. How does Noah Claypole incur Oliver's wrath?

(A) By insulting his mother

(B) By insulting his clothes

(C) By mistreating Charlotte

(D) By stealing food from the larder

6. What is Jack Dawkins's nickname?

(A) Toby Crackit

(B) The Artful Dodger

(C) Loopy

(D) The Jackal

7. Of what ethnicity is Fagin?

(A) Irish

(B) Italian

(C) Mixed race

(D) Jewish

8. Mr. Brownlow notices that Oliver bears a close resemblance to whom?

(A) Mrs. Bedwin

(B) The woman in the portrait on his wall

(C) Queen Victoria

(D) The Christ child

9. What does Nancy pretend to be in order to drag Oliver back to Fagin?

(A) A truant officer

(B) Oliver’s sister

(C) A workhouse official

(D) Oliver’s mother

10. Who comes to Oliver’s defense after Fagin recaptures him?

(A) Jack Dawkins

(B) Charley Bates

(C) Nancy

(D) Mr. Brownlow

11. Who is shot in the attempted burglary of the Maylie house?

(A) Oliver

(B) Bill Sikes

(C) Bull’s-eye

(D) Toby Crackit

12. Which character falls deathly ill in the countryside?

(A) Oliver

(B) Mrs. Maylie

(C) Mr. Bumble

(D) Rose Maylie

13. Why does Mr. Bumble propose to Mrs. Corney?

(A) He wants to take revenge on Oliver

(B) She reminds him of his late wife

(C) He wants children

(D) He wants her money

14. What did Old Sally steal from Agnes Fleming?

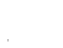
(A) A will

(B) A marriage certificate

(C) An engraved watch

(D) A gold locket

15. Why does Rose refuse to marry Harry Maylie?

(A) Because they are related

(B) Because she does not want to stand in the way of his ambition

(C) Because she wants to marry someone who would be a better provider

(D) Because she is in love with Bill Sikes

16. To whom does the dog Bull's-eye belong?

(A) Bill Sikes

(B) Oliver

(C) Monks

(D) Mr. Brownlow

17. What is Nancy's profession?

(A) Flower-seller

(B) Nurse

(C) Prostitute

(D) Con artist

18. Where does Nancy meet Rose and Brownlow?

(A) London Bridge

(B) The Three Cripples

(C) The Old Victoria Theater

(D) A blacking factory

19. What image haunts Bill Sikes after he commits murder?

(A) Oliver’s face

(B) A bloody club

(C) The gallows

(D) Nancy’s eyes

20. Which three characters are all related to Oliver?

(A) Harry Maylie, Mrs. Maylie, Rose Maylie

(B) Rose Maylie, Monks, Agnes Fleming

(C) Agnes Fleming, Old Sally, Mr. Losberne

(D) Monks, Bill Sikes, Agnes Fleming

21. Where does Oliver last see Fagin?

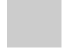
(A) In a courtroom

(B) In the West Indies

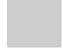
(C) Underneath London Bridge

(D) In a jail cell

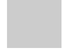
22. Which character's real name is Edward Leeford?



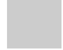
(A) Jack Dawkins



(B) Monks



(C) Oliver



(D) Noah Claypole

23. Which character is subject to violent spasmodic fits?

(A) Monks

(B) Fagin

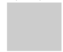
(C) Bull's-eye

(D) Mr. Grimwig

24. Which of the following novels did Dickens not write?

(A) Bleak House

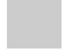
(B) The Mill on the Floss



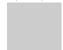
(C) The Pickwick Papers

(D) Great Expectations

25. Dickens wrote Oliver Twist in response to what piece of legislation?

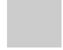


(A) The Law of Estates and Inheritance



(B) The Poor Law of 1834

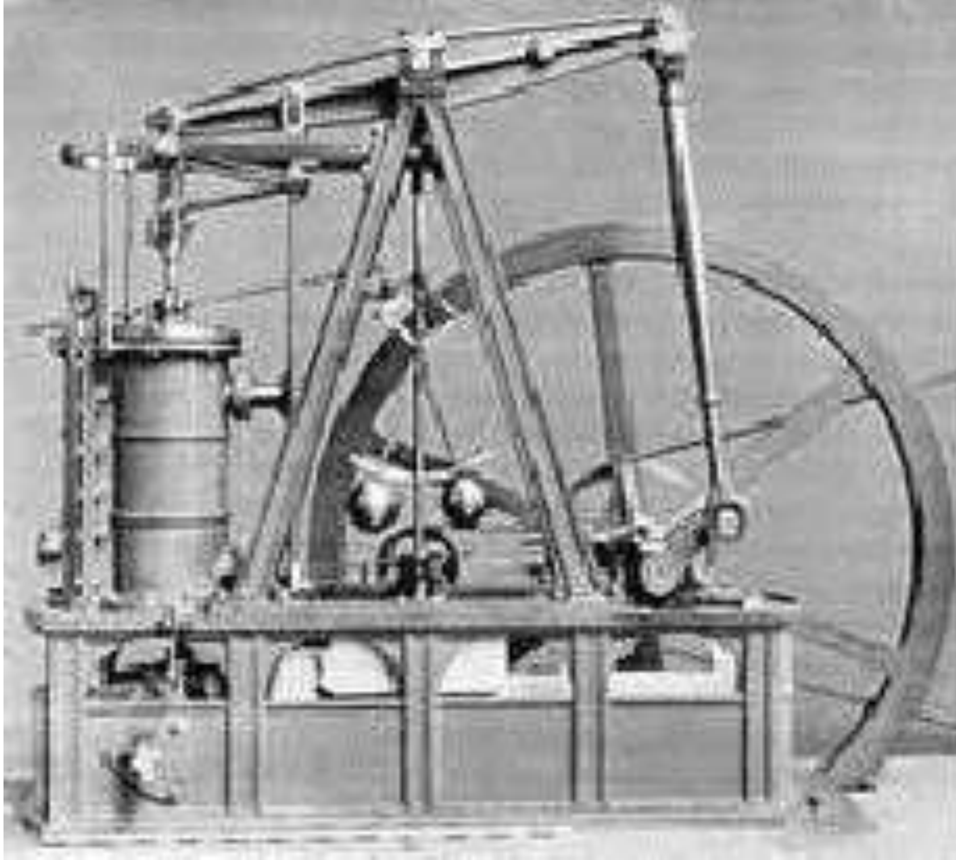
(C) The institution of the death penalty



(D) The Decency Act

Retrieved from: http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/oliver/quiz.html

The Industrial Revolution



Retrieved from: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/watteng.jpg

The Two Countries That Invented The Industrial Revolution

by Curt Anderson

Why do the British and American approaches to machinery differ? A short history of machine tools explains why. No two countries were more responsible for the Industrial Revolution than America and England. In England, during the 18th and 19th centuries there was no shortage of skilled labor. Rather than replacing English workers, their machines made work more precise. Meanwhile, in sparsely populated America, the needs of a new nation required rapid and simple means of production. Machines augmented the scant work force. In England, machines served to make talented artisans better. In America, machines served to make entrepreneurs more productive.

ENGLISH CONTRIBUTIONS

In 1769, Englishman James Watt sparked the Industrial Revolution. His steam engine's large cylinders posed a vexing problem. They had to be precise in interior size so that steam could not leak between cylinder and piston.
Another Englishman, John Wilkinson invented a precision horizontal-boring machine in 1775. Wilkinson's machine made efficient steam engines possible. The steam engine cylinder could not be manufactured until machine tools had been devised that were capable of producing accurate parts.
A British subject, Henry Maudslay, developed the first engine lathe and developed an improved micrometer. Other creative Englishmen, invented, perfected and produced various machines around the turn of the century.
Joseph Whitworth developed in 1830, a measuring instrument accurate to a millionth of an inch.

AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS

Eli Whitney. The term "Yankee ingenuity" could have been coined with Whitney in mind.

Americans solved issues of speed and mass production. In 1798, American Eli Whitney, secured a US government contract (for $134,000) to produce 10,000 army muskets. Whitney refined and successfully applied the "Uniformity-System" of production using inter-changeable parts. However, Whitney met bureaucratic disbelief and delays in implementing his ideas. He overcame these obstacles by convincingly demonstrating to President John Adams the workability of the inter-changeable parts concept. He showed Adams that randomly selected parts would fit together as a whole working musket. Whitney then single-handedly designed and built all the machinery to produce the weapons...all before a solitary worker entered the factory.

Later, in 1818, Whitney invented the first milling machine.

Also in the same year, Thomas Blanchard of Worcester, Mass. invented a copying machine for turning the stocks of rifles, using a model to key the machine.

Americans Elias Howe, Isaac Singer (sewing machines) and Cyrus McCormack (harvesters) and Henry Ford (automobiles) followed with inventions and innovations that used Whitney's examples of mass production and interchangeable parts.

Retrieved from: http://www.darex.com/indurevo.htm

Modern History Sourcebook: Richard Guest: The Steam Loom, 1823

Initial advances in the manufacture of textiles used older methods of power provision - water-mills and so forth. It was the application of steam power which accelerated the centralization of textile production in factories.
The new powered machines also leading to the substitution of women and children for the previously highly-skilled spinners and weavers. The result was enormous production gains in a very short period - output increased while labor costs decreased. The skilled workers were, in the meantime, made poor while the factory owners became wealthy.

The same powerful agent which so materially forwarded and advanced the progress of the Cotton Manufacture in the concluding part of the last century, has lately been further used as a substitute for manual labour, and the Steam Engine is now applied to the working of the loom as well as to the preparatory processes....

In 1785, the Rev. E. Cartwright invented a Loom to be worked by water or steam. The following account of this invention is taken from the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica: -

> "Happening to be at Matlock, in the summer of 1784, I fell in company with some gentlemen of Manchester, when the conversation turned on Arkwright's spinning machinery. One of the company observed, that as soon as Arkwright's patent expired, so many mills would be erected, and so much cotton spun, that hands never could be found to weave it. To this observation I replied that Arkwright must then set his wits to work to invent a weaving mill. This brought on a conversation on the subject, in which the Manchester gentlemen unanimously agreed that the thing was impracticable; and in defence of their opinion, they adduced arguments which I certainly was incompetent to answer or even to comprehend, being totally ignorant of the subject, having never at that time seen a

person weave. I controverted, however, the impracticability of the thing, by remarking that there had lately been exhibited in London, an automaton figure, which played at chess. Now you will not assert, gentlemen, said I, that it is more difficult to construct a machine that shall weave, than one which shall make all the variety of moves which are required in that complicated game.

"Some little time afterwards, a particular circumstance recalling this conversation to my mind, it struck me, that, as in plain weaving, according to the conception I then had of the business, there could only be three movements, which were to follow each other in succession, there would be little difficulty in producing and repeating them. Full of these ideas, I immediately employed a carpenter and smith to carry them into effect. As soon as the machine was finished, I got a weaver to put in the warp, which was of such materials as sail cloth is usually made of. To my great delight, a piece of cloth, such as it was, was the produce.

"As I had never before turned my thoughts to any thing mechanical, either in theory or practice, nor had ever seen a loom at work, or knew any thing of its construction, you will readily suppose that my first Loom must have been a most rude piece of machinery.

"The warp was placed perpendicularly, the reed fell with a force of at least half an hundred weight, and the springs which threw the shuttle were strong enough to have thrown a Congreve rocket. In short, it required the strength of two powerful men to work the machine at a slow rate, and only for a short time. Conceiving in my great simplicity, that I had accomplished all that was required, I then secured what I thought a most valuable property, by a patent, 4th April, 1785. This being done, I then condescended to see how other people wove; and you will guess my astonishment, when I compared their easy modes of operation with mine. Availing myself, however, of what I then saw, I made a Loom in its general principles, nearly as they are now made. But it was not till the year 1787, that I completed my invention, when I took out my last weaving patent, August 1st, of that year."

Mr. Cartwright erected a weaving mill at Doncaster, which he filled with Looms. This concern was unsuccessful, and at last was abandoned, and some years afterwards, upon an application from a number of manufacturers at Manchester, Parliament granted Mr. Cartwright a sum of money as a remuneration for his ingenuity and trouble.

About 1790, Mr. Grimshaw, of Manchester, under a licence from Mr. Cartwright, erected a weaving factory turned by a Steam Engine. The great loss of time

experienced in dressing the warp, which was done in small portions as it unrolled from the beam, and other difficulties arising from the quality of the yarn then spun, were in this instance formidable obstacles to success; the factory, however, was burnt down before it could be fully ascertained whether the experiment would succeed or not, and for many years no further attempts were made in Lancashire to weave by steam.

Mr. Austin, of Glasgow, invented a similar Loom, in 1789, which he still further improved in 1798, and a building to contain two hundred of these Looms was erected by Mr. Monteith, of Pollockshaws, in 1800.

In the year 1803, Mr. Thomas Johnson, of Bradbury, in Cheshire, invented the Dressing Frame. Before this invention the warp was dressed in the Loom in small portions as it unrolled from the beam, the Loom ceasing to work during the operation. Mr. Johnson's ma. chine dresses the whole warp at once; when dressed the warp is placed in the Loom which now works without intermission. A factory for Steam Looms was built in Manchester, in 1806. Soon afterwards two others were erected at Stockport, and about 1809, a fourth was completed in Westhoughton. In these renewed attempts to weave by steams considerable improvements were made in the structure of the Looms in the mode of warping, and in preparing the weft for the shuttle With these improvements, aided by others in the art of spinning, which enabled the Tinners to make yarn much superior to that made in 1790, and assisted by Johnson's machine, which is peculiarly adapted for the dressing of warps for Steam Looms, the experiment succeeded Before the invention of the Dressing Frame, one Weaver was required to each Steam Loom, at present a boy or girl, fourteen or fifteen years of age, can manage two Steam Looms, and with their help can weave three and a half times as much cloth as the best hand Weaver. The best hand Weavers seldom produce a piece of uniform evenness; indeed, it is next to impossible for them to do so, because a weaker or stronger blow with the lathe immediately alters the thickness of the cloth, and after an interruption of some hours, the most experienced weaver finds it difficult to recommence with a blow of precisely the

same force as the one with which he left off. In Steam Looms, the lathe gives a steady, certain blow, and when once regulated by the engineer, moves with the greatest precision from the beginning to the end of the piece. Cloth made by these Looms, when seen by those manufacturers who employ hand Weavers, at once excites admiration and a consciousness that their own workmen cannot equal it. The increasing number of Steam Looms is a certain proof of their superiority over the Hand Looms. In 1818, there were in Manchester, Stockport, Middleton, Hyde, Stayley Bridge, and their vicinities, fourteen factories, containing about two thousand Looms. In 1821, there were in the same neighbourhoods thirty-two factories, containing five thousand seven hundred and thirty-two Looms. Since 1821, their number has still farther increased, and there are at present not less than ten thousand Steam Looms at work in Great Britain. It is a curious circumstance, that, when the Cotton Manufacture was in its infancy, all the operations, from the dressing of the raw material to its being finally turned out in the state of cloth, were completed under the roof of the weaver's cottage. The course of improved manufacture which followed, was to spin the yarn in factories and to weave it in cottages. At the present time, when the manufacture has attained a mature growth, all the operations, with vastly increased means and more complex contrivances, are again performed in a single building. The Weaver's cottage with its rude apparatus of peg warping, hand cards, hand wheels, and imperfect looms, was the Steam Loom factory in miniature. Those vast brick edifices in the vicinity of all the great manufacturing towns in the south of Lancashire, towering to the height of seventy or eighty feet, which strike the attention and excite the curiosity of the traveller, now perform labours which formerly employed whole villages. In the Steam Loom factories, the cotton is carded, roved, spun, and woven into cloth, and the same quantum of labour is now performed in one of these structures which formerly *oc*cupied the industry of an entire district.

A very good Hand Weaver, a man twenty-five or thirty years of age, will weave two pieces of nine-eighths shirting per week, each twenty four yards long, and

containing one hundred and five shoots of weft in an inch, the reed of the cloth being a forty-four, Bolton count, and the warp and weft forty hanks to the pound. A Steam Loom Weaver, fifteen years of age, will in the same time weave seven similar pieces. A Steam Loom factory containing two hundred Looms, with the assistance of one hundred persons under twenty years of age, and of twenty-five men will weave seven hundred pieces per week, of the length and quality before described. To manufacture one hundred similar pieces per week by the hand, it would be necessary to employ at least one hundred and twenty-five Looms, because many of the Weavers are females, and have cooking, washing, cleaning and various other duties to perform; others of them are children and, consequently, unable to weave as much as the men. It requires a man of mature age and a very good Weaver to weave two of the pieces in a week, and there is also an allowance to be made for sickness and other incidents. Thus, eight hundred and seventy-five hand Looms would be required to produce the seven hundred pieces per week; and reckoning the weavers, with their children, and the aged and infirm belonging to them at two and a half to each loom, it may very safely be said, that the work done in a Steam Factory containing two hundred Looms, would, if done by hand Weavers, find employment and support for a population of more than two thousand persons.

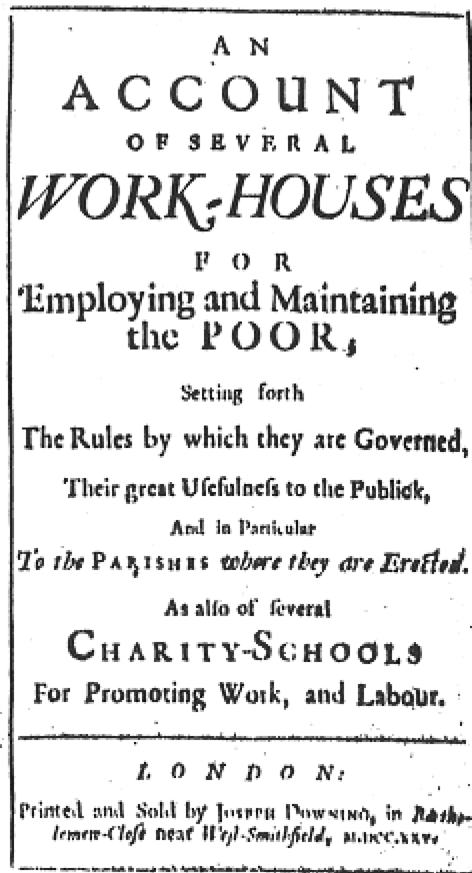
The Steam Looms are chiefly employed in Weaving printing cloth and shirtings, but they also weave thicksetts, fancy cords, dimities, cambrics and quiltings, together with silks, worsteds, and fine woollen or broad cloth. Invention is progressive, every improvement that is made is the foundation of another, and as the attention of hundreds of skilful mechanics and manufacturers is now turned to the improvement of the Steam Loom, it is probable that its application will become as general, and its efficiency as great, in Weaving, as the Jenny, Water Frame and Mule, are in Spinning, and that it will, in this country at least, entirely supersede the hand Loom.

From Richard Guest, *Compendious History of the Cotton Manufacture* (Manchester 1823), pp. 44-48.

This text is part of the Internet Modern History Sourcebook. The Sourcebook is a collection of public domain and copy-permitted texts for introductory level classes in modern European and World history.
Unless otherwise indicated the specific electronic form of the document is copyright. Permission is granted for electronic copying, distribution in print form for educational purposes and personal use. If you do reduplicate the document, indicate the source. No permission is granted for commercial use of the Sourcebook.
(c)Paul Halsall Aug 1997
halsall@murray.fordham.edu

Retrieved from: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1823cotton.html

History of Workhouses



AN
ACCOUNT
OF SEVERAL
WORK-HOUSES
FOR
Employing and Maintaining
the POOR,
Setting forth
The Rules by which they are Governed,
Their great Ufefulnefs to the Publick,
And in Particular
To the PARISHES where they are Erected.
As alfo of feveral
CHARITY-SCHOOLS
For Promoting Work, and Labour.

LONDON:
Printed and Sold by JOSEPH DOWNING, in Bartho-
lomew-Clofe near West-Smithfield, M.DCC.XXV.

A significant impetus to the provision of parish workhouses was Knatchbull's Act of 1723 which introduced the 'workhouse test' whereby a pauper would only be granted poor relief through being admitted to a workhouse. In the wake of Knatchbull's Act, several hundred parish workhouses were set up.

Unlike the large union workhouses erected following the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, parish workhouses were generally small establishments, and often in rented existing buildings rather than specially built premises. The running of workhouses was often handed over to a contractor who would, for an agreed price, feed and house the poor. He would also provide the inmates with work and benefit from any income generated. This system was known as 'farming' the poor.

Sometimes a parish might run a workhouse for a few years, then give up on the practice, only to try it again a decade or two later in different premises. It is therefore difficult to give any definitive list of where parish workhouses operated.

An Account of Several Work-houses...

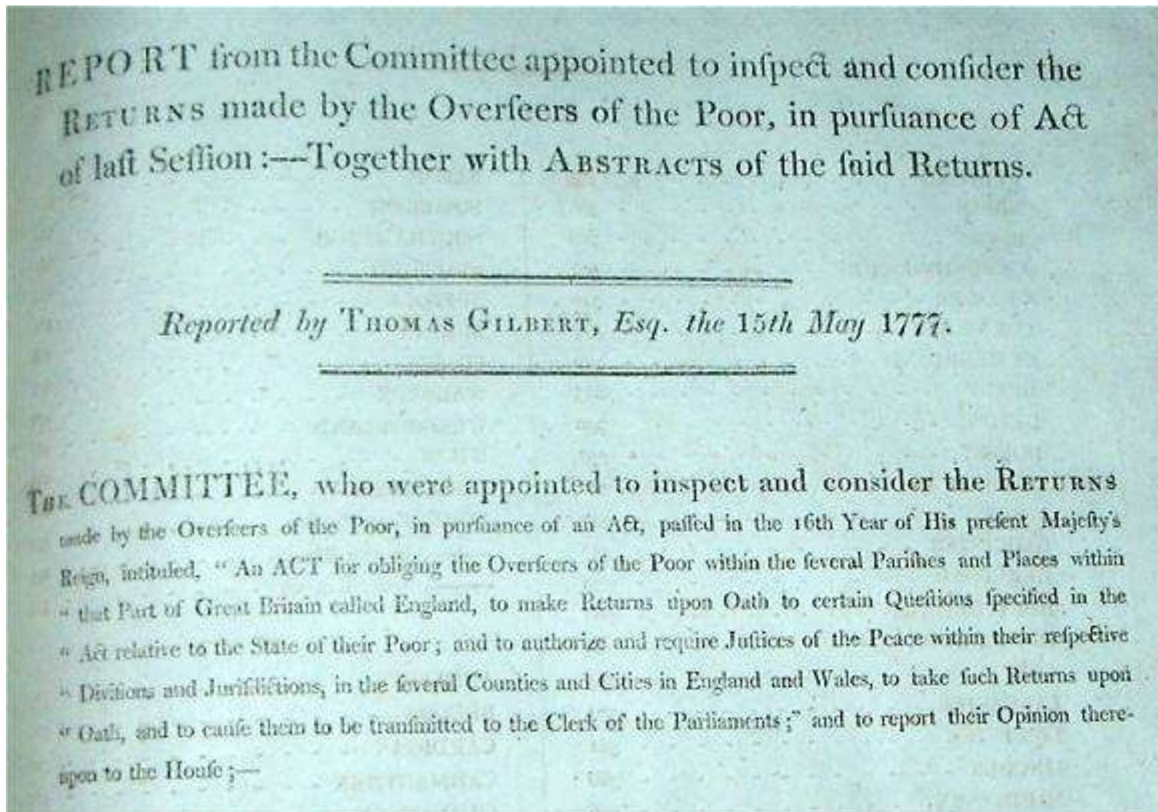
An Account of Several Work-houses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor published, anonymously, by SPCK (the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge) was one of the earliest directories of parish workhouses in England. In the early 18th century, SPCK was a small but influential London-based organisation which strongly promoted the use of workhouses. SPCK published a variety of resources such as recommendations for masters, guides to rules and diets etc. In many respects, their *'An Account of Several Work-houses...'* was a

practical guide to the setting up and running of a workhouse.

The first edition of 1725 listed 126 establishments, while an enlarged edition of 1732 added a further 55. (According to Slack (1990), the total number of workhouses in operation nationwide by 1732 may have been more than 700.)

Parliamentary Reports

In 1776-7, a Parliamentary survey of poor-relief expenditure in England and Wales, the *Abstract of Returns Made by the Overseers of the Poor* included an inventory of workhouse provision.



REPORT from the Committee appointed to inſpect and conſider the RETURNS made by the Overſeers of the Poor, in purſuance of Act of laſt Seſſion:—Together with ABSTRACTS of the ſaid Returns.

Reported by THOMAS GILBERT, *Esq. the* 15*th May* 1777.

THE COMMITTEE, who were appointed to inspect and consider the RETURNS made by the Overſeers of the Poor, in purſuance of an Act, paſſed in the 16th Year of His preſent Majeſty's Reign, intituled, "An ACT for obliging the Overſeers of the Poor within the ſeveral Pariſhes and Places within "that Part of Great Britain called England, to make Returns upon Oath to certain Queſtions ſpecified in the "Act relative to the State of their Poor; and to authorize and require Juſtices of the Peace within their reſpective "Diviſions and Juriſdictions, in the ſeveral Counties and Cities in England and Wales, to take ſuch Returns upon "Oath, and to cauſe them to be tranſmitted to the Clerk of the Parliaments;" and to report their Opinion thereupon to the Houſe;—

The list included a total of 1,873 parish workhouses (approximately one parish in seven) with a total capacity of over 90,000 places. Workhouse capacities range in size from 1 (Hougham in Kent) to 700 (St George, Hanover Square, and St

Martin in the Fields, both in Westminster). Outside of London, Liverpool operated the largest workhouse with room for 600. Workhouse provision in Wales was almost non-existent although, somewhat curiously, Pembrokeshire had more workhouses than the rest of Wales put together.

The survey also reported that the total expenditure on poor relief in England and Wales in the year ending at Easter 1776 was just over £1.55 million of which only £80,000 (about five per cent) was spent on workhouse provision.

Non-Parish Workhouses

Parishes were not the only bodies to run early workhouses. Cities such as London, Bristol and Exeter organised their own poor relief under special Acts of Parliament. Various incorporations or other unions of parishes were also formed, particularly following Gilbert's Act of 1782.
Other organisations such as the Society of Friends (the Quakers) also operated or funded workhouses. One early non-parish establishment was the Quaker workhouse at Clerkenwell, for which the Steward's diary from 1711-37 survives (Hitchcock, 1987). It offers a valuable insight into the operation of an early 18th century workhouse, as the following extract shows:

> And now we have in the house about 28 [boys] and 17 girls, 11 men and 11 women. Two of them, a man and the other a woman, are lame and use crutches, and another woman friend is blind. The rest are mostly aged and weak, of whom several have kept their beds pretty much this last winter and three of the women friends who are usually sent into the house now are not of ability to be nurses as formerly they were. And our children are generally now small and several of them have been sickly and weak most part of last winter. One girl in particular was ill near six months, who had been sorely afflicted with convulsion fits to such a degree as has made her incapable of walking but by use of crutches; and she had a fire in her chamber constantly for several weeks and one to sit up or to be with her in her chamber all the time, the fits being often upon her and suddenly taken.
>
> In the year 1714 the committee gave leave by minute to hire a nurse into the house as occasion required. But upon enquiry found a nurse could not be had under 4s. per week & victuals and that if 5 or 6 of the family should be unwell at the same time a nurse would scarcely be willing to tend the sick in several places in the house, especially when they sit up all night. And if we have not suitable assistants who may be helpful from one place to another in the house as occasion requires, the sick & aged cannot have that due tendance they ought to

have. These things, with how little work nurses do in the house and some of them wasteful withal, being considered made us very unwilling to take a nurse in the house. But in winter season it has been very hard for my wife and the servants, especially the servant maid who spent most of her time in that service and tending the children.

She has lately left this place alleging the hardness of her service here had impaired her health. She was a very good servant and would willingly have stayed with us, but could not go through the business. She used to mend the children's woollen clothes, which are generally but very ordinary and if they were put out to mend would cost more than they are worth and might make the monthly meetings very uneasy. She makes their beds and cleans their rooms, takes in and gives out their woollen and linen clothes, combs their heads, and dresses their sore hands and feet in the winter season, having many of them sores, which business alone takes several hours every day as may reasonably be supposed where there are so many small children and 17 or 18 of them are girls, who are more trouble than boys. Which with the weak and aged and when sickness, lameness happens in the family we find pretty much uneasiness, the sick and weak complaining for want of tendance on the one hand and the servants, not being able to do the business, complain on the other hand, so that we find a real necessity for another maid servant, which my wife can better make appear to any of the committee who will please to inspect into the business of each servant [than] I can demonstrate in writing. And it being expected my wife should see the provision &c orderly managed and seasonably distributed with frugality towards the house and a sufficiency towards the poor, and also to see the aged and weak have no just cause to complain for assistance, these particulars cannot be answered with ease to the family's satisfaction, to the helpless, and we who have the direction of the affairs under you, without the assistance herein mentioned. May 1718.

[Extract by kind permission of Tim Hitchcock]

Bibliography

- Hitchcock, Tim. *Richard Hutton's Complaints Book. The Notebook of the Steward of the Quaker Workhouse at Clerkenwell, 1711-1737.* 1987, London Record Society.
- Hitchcock, Tim. *Paupers and Preachers: The SPCK and the Parochial Workhouse Movement* in Lee Davison *et al* (eds), *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems, 1688-1750* 1992, Alan Sutton.
- Slack, Paul. *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782*, 1990.

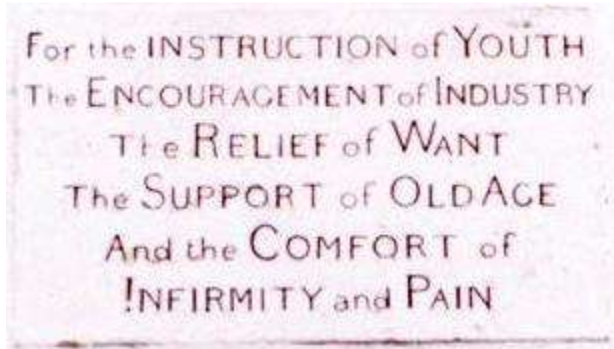
Retrieved from: http://www.workhouses.org.uk/index.html

Workhouse Life

Why Did People Enter the Workhouse?

People ended-up in the workhouse for a variety of reasons. Usually, it was because they were too poor, old or ill to support themself. This may have resulted from things such lack of work during periods of high unemployment, or someone having no family willing or able to provide care for them when they became elderly or sick. Unmarried pregnant women were often disowned by their families and the workhouse was the only place they could go during and after the birth of their child. Prior to the establishment of public mental asylums in the mid-nineteenth century (and sometimes even after that), the mentally ill and mentally handicapped poor were often consigned to the workhouse. Workhouses, though, were never prisons, and entry into them was generally a voluntary although often painful decision.

The operation of workhouses, and life and conditions inside them, varied over the centuries in the light of current legislation and economic and social conditions. The aims of many pre-1834 workhouses are well expressed in this 1776 sign above the door of Rollesby workhouse in Norfolk:



East & West Flegg workhouse, Rollesby, 2000. © Peter Higginbotham.

The emphasis in earlier times was more towards the relief of destitution rather than deterrence of idleness which characterized many of the institutions set up under the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act.

Entering the Workhouse

Whatever the regime inside the workhouse, entering it would have been a distressing experience. New inmates would often have already been through a period of severe hardship. It was for good reason that the entrance to the Birmingham Union workhouse was through an arch locally known as the "Archway of Tears".

Archway of Tears at Birmingham workhouse, 2000.
© Peter Higginbotham.

Admission into the workhouse first required an interview to establish the applicant's circumstances. This was most often undertaken by a Relieving Officer who would visit each part of the Union on a regular basis. However, the workhouse Master could also interview anyone in urgent need of admission. Formal admission into the workhouse proper was authorised by the Board of Guardians at their weekly meetings. In between times, new arrivals would be placed in a receiving or probationary ward. There the workhouse medical officer would examine them to check on their state of health. Those suffering from an illness would be placed in a sick ward.

Upon entering the workhouse, paupers were stripped, bathed, and issued with a workhouse uniform. Their own clothes would be washed and disinfected and

then put into store along with any other possessions they had and only returned to them when they left the workhouse.

Workhouse Uniform

Workhouse clothing could be either bought-in or else made by workhouse inmates themselves as a work task. It was usually made from fairly coarse materials with the emphasis being on hard-wearing rather than on comfort and fitting.

In 1837, the Guardians of Hereford Union advertised for the supply of inmates' clothing. For the men this consisted of jackets of strong 'Fernought' cloth, breeches or trousers, striped cotton shirts, cloth cap and shoes. For women and girls there were strong 'grogram' gowns, calico shifts, petticoats of Linsey-Woolsey material, Gingham dresses, day caps, worsted stockings and woven slippers. ('Fernought' or 'Fearnought' was a stout woollen cloth, mainly used on ships as outside clothing for bad weather. Linsey-Woolsey was a fabric with a linen, or sometimes cotton, warp and a wool weft — its name came from the village of Linsey in Sussex. Grogram was a coarse fabric of silk, or of mohair and wool, or of a mixture of all these, often stiffened with gum.)

In later years, the uniform for able-bodied women was generally a shapeless, waistless, blue-and-white-striped frock reaching to the ankles, with a smock over. Old women wore a bonnet or mop-cap, shawl, and apron over.

Able-bodied female inmates' uniforms.
© St James Hospital, Leeds.

Old women inmates' uniforms.
© Peter Higginbotham.

The daughter of the matron of Ongar workhouse in the early 1900s recalls that

> My mother made all the women's dresses, I think. They were blue and white striped cotton material, lined. Some wore white aprons and some did not. I think the ones who worked wore caps, and the dear grannies who did not work, bonnets. They had woollen material shawls to wear, and red flannel petticoats tied around the waist, thick black stockings and black shoes or boots. The men wore thick corduroy trousers, thick black jackets and black hats, grey flannel shirts, black thick socks and hobnailed boots.

For many years, certain categories of inmate were marked out by clothing or badges of a particular colour, for example, yellow for pregnant women who were unmarried. In 1839, the Poor Law Commissioners issued a minute entitled "Ignominious Dress for Unchaste Women in Workhouses" in which they deprecated these practices. However, more subtle forms of such identification often continued. At the Mitford and Launditch workhouse at Gressenhall, unmarried mothers were made to wear a 'jacket' of the same material used for other workhouse clothing. This practice, which resulted in their being referred to as 'jacket women', continued until 1866.

Classification of Inmates

After 1834, inmates were strictly segregated into seven classes:

1. Aged or infirm men.
2. Able bodied men, and youths above 13.
3. Youths and boys above seven years old and under 13.
4. Aged or infirm women
5. Able-bodied women and girls above 16.
6. Girls above seven years old and under 16.
7. Children under 7 seven years of age.

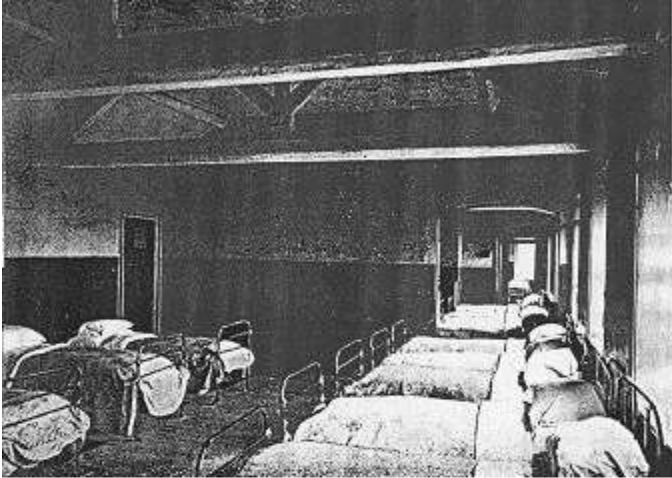
Each class had its own area of the workhouse. Husbands, wives and children were separated as soon as they entered the workhouse and could be punished if they even tried to speak to one another. (In 1847 this was relaxed slightly in the case of married couples over the age of sixty who could request to share a separate bedroom.)

Inside the Workhouse

The workhouse was like a small self-contained village. Apart from the basic rooms such as a dining-hall for eating, and dormitories for sleeping, workhouses often had their own bakery, laundry, tailor's and shoe-maker's, vegetable gardens and orchards, and even a piggery for rearing pigs. There would also be school-rooms, nurseries, fever-wards for the sick, a chapel, and a dead-room or mortuary.

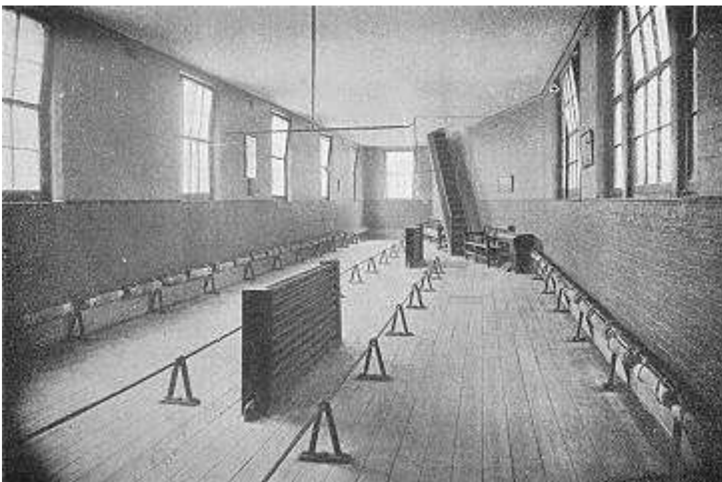
You can get a good idea of the complexity of a workhouse from old maps or plans. You can see examples of these on some of the pages for individual institutions such as Manchester or Oxford. The workhouse tour section of the web-site will show you what many of the buildings actually looked like.

Once inside the workhouse, an inmate's only possessions were their uniform and the bed they had in the large dormitory. Beds were simply constructed with an wooden or iron-frame, and could be as little as two feet across. Bedding, in the 1830s and 1840s at least, was generally a mattress and cover, both filled with straw, although blankets and sheets were later introduced. Bed-sharing, particularly amongst children, was common although it became prohibited for adult paupers.


Dormitory at Hunslet old workhouse c.1903.

Iron beds from Gressenhall workhouse.
© Peter Higginbotham.

For vagrants and casuals, the 'bed' could be a wooden box rather like a coffin, or even just be a raised wooden platform, or the bare floor. In some places, metal rails provided a support for low-slung hammocks.


Casuals ward at Whitechapel workhouse c.1900.
© Peter Higginbotham.

Irish workhouses were particularly cramped, with the narow attic space pressed into service as sleeping space for children as shown here at Londonderry.

Londonderry attic ward.
© Peter Higginbotham.

The inmates' toilet facilities were often a simple privy — a cess-pit with a simple cover having a hole in it on which to sit — shared perhaps by as many as 100 inmates. Dormitories were usually provided with chamber pots or, after 1860, earth closets — boxes containing dry soil which could afterwards be used as fertiliser.

Once a week, the inmates were bathed (usually superintended — another assault on their dignity) and the men shaved.

The Daily Routine

The daily routine for inmates proposed by the Poor Law Commissioners was as follows:

	Hour of Rising.	Interval for Breakfast.	Time for setting to Work.	Interval for Dinner.	Time for leaving off Work	Interval for Supper.	Time for going to Bed.
25 March to 29 September	6 o'clock.	From ½ past 6 to 7.	7 o'clock.	From 12 to 1.	6 o'clock.	6 to 7.	8.
29 September to 25 March	7 o'clock.	From ½ past 7 to 8.	8 o'clock.	From 12 to 1.	6 o'clock.	6 to 7.	8.

The ringing of the workhouse bell announced meal breaks during which the rules required that "silence, order and decorum shall be maintained".

Rules and Regulations

One source of insight into life in the workhouse comes from the lists of rules under which workhouse operated. These were often printed and prominently displayed in the workhouse, and also read out aloud each week so that the illiterate could have no excuse for disobeying them. The rules for Aylesbury workhouse from 1831 outline the daily regime:

RULES & ORDERS

TO BE OBSERVED BY

The Poor of the Parish Workhouse of Aylesbury,

IN THE COUNTY OF BUCKS.

I. That the Master and Mistress live in the House, and see that the following Rules be observed.

II. Every Person in health shall rise by six o'Clock the summer half year, and by seven the winter half year, and shall be employed in such labour as their respective age and ability will admit, and commence their work by six o'Clock in the Morning, and work till six o'Clock at Night, from Lady-day to Michaelmas; and from seven o'Clock till dark, from Michaelmas to Lady-day, allowing half an hour for breakfast, one hour for dinner, and half an hour for supper; and any one refusing to work, shall for the first offence go without their next meal, and for the second offence be reported to the Overseers, that they may otherwise be punished.

III. That all the poor in the House go to bed by eight o'Clock the summer half year, and by seven o'Clock the winter half year, and that all candles be put out by that time.

IV. That the poor shall have their provisions in a clean and wholesome manner, their breakfast by eight, their dinner at twelve, and their supper at six o'Clock; that no waste be made, nor any provisions carried away; and that Grace shall be said before and after dinner, and none may depart until Grace is said; and their dinner three times a week to be hot meat and vegetables properly cooked.

V. That the House be swept from top to bottom every morning and cleaned all over once a week, or so often as the Master and Mistress think necessary; and the windows be opened daily.

VI. That none absent themselves from the House without leave, nor stay beyond the time allowed them, on pain of losing their next meal, or of some other punishment; nor may any one be admitted into the House without leave of the Governor.

VII. Any of the poor guilty of stealing, selling their provisions or clothing, or of drunkenness, swearing, quarrelling, fighting, or in any other way disturbing the peace of the House, or of being in any way saucy or abusive to the Master or Mistress, shall be punished with the utmost severity of the law.

VIII. That all in the House who are able, and can be spared from the duties thereof, shall attend Church or some other Place of Worship twice every Sunday; and those who refuse or neglect to attend, or do not return as soon as Service is over, shall go without their next meal, or be punished in some other way, as the Overseers shall think proper.

IX. No person shall be permitted to bring spirituous liquors into the House, or smoke in any part of the premises, except the hall. Those found transgressing, shall lose their next meal, or be otherwise punished.

X. Workers shall be allowed 2*d*. in every shilling they earn; Cook 4*d*. per week; Doctor's Nurse from 1*s*. Washerwomen half a pint of ale each per day, and tea in the afternoon.

XI. Any of the poor acting in disobedience of the orders of the Master or Mistress, or in contempt of these Orders, shall be taken before a Magistrate, and punished as the law directs.

XII. That these Orders be placed in the hall, dinner-room, or in any other place that the Overseers may direct; and that they be read on a Sunday at dinner-time by the Master or Mistress, so that the poor may not plead ignorance of the same.

XIII. If any of the poor are found defacing or destroying these Rules, they shall be punished by being fed on bread and water only for two days.

JOHN KERSELEY FOWLER,
JASPER JACKSON,
WILLIAM HOMEMAYER, } Churchwardens.

ROBERT READ,
JOSEPH SHAW, } Overseers.

27th JANUARY, 1831.

Here is another set of rules, from Manchester (date unknown but probably pre-1834)

THE POOR IN THE HOUSE
are required
TO OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING RULES

I. That they obey the *Governor* and *Matron* in all their reasonable commands.
II. That they demean themselves orderly and peaceable, with decency and cleanliness.
III. That they never drink to excess.
IV. That they be diligent at their work.
V. That they work from six o'clock in the morning till six at night, in summer; and from seven o'clock in the morning till such hours in the evening, as the *Directors* shall appoint, in the winter; except *Saturday afternoons*, from four o'clock; and on *Good Friday, Christmas Day*, and the *two days following*, and *Monday* and *Tuesday* in the *Easter* and *Whitsun Weeks*, which are to be regarded as *Holidays*.
VI. That they do not pretend sickness, or other excuses to avoid their work.
VII. That they do no wilful damage, but execute their work to the best of their abilities. — Such rewards and gratuities shall be distributed to the industrious and skilful in proportion to the quantity and perfection of their work, as to the *Church-wardens* and *Overseers*shall seem reasonable. *(Man. Act. Sec.36)*
VIII. That they regularly attend divine service on *Sundays*, and prayers before breakfast and supper every day.
IX. That they go to breakfast, and to supper, in the *Dining-Hall*, when summoned by ring of bell.
X. That they be allowed half an hour at breakfast, and an hour at dinner.
XI. That no strong or spirituous liquors be allowed in the House, except by order of the *Physicians* or *Apothecary*.
XII. That they do not curse, nor swear, nor lie.
XIII. That they do not steal, sell their provisions, or sell or pawn their clothing, nor be guilty of any other breach of trust.
XIV. That they never go out during working hours, nor at any other time, without leave.
XV. That when permitted to go out, they do not stay longer than the hour appointed.

WHOEVER shall offend against the above Rules, will be punished either by confinement in the stocks, or in the dungeon, or elsewhere, or by distinction of dress, by abatement of diet, loss of gratuity, by such corporal or other punishment as may be determined and adjudged by the *Weekly Board of Overseers*, according to the powers vested in them by the Act of Parliament.
The Rules shall be read to the Poor in the House by the *Governor* on the first *Monday* in every month.

Misdemeanours and Punishments

After 1834, the breaking of workhouse rules fell into two categories:

- **Disorderly** behaviour (making noise, swearing refusing to work, trying to escape, disobeying orders etc.) was punished for up to 48 hours by a diet of just bread or potatoes and the withholding of all "luxuries" such as broth, butter or tea.
- **Refractory** behaviour (reviling a member of the workhouse staff, assaulting another person, damaging property, being drunk, acting or writing in an indecent manner) was punished by a reduction in diet and also solitary

confinement for up to 24 hours. Serious cases could be sent before a Justice of the Peace.

Workhouse punishment books record the severity of punishments meted out to inmates. Some chilling examples of this can be seen in the "Pauper Offence Book" from Beaminster Union in Dorset. Offences against property, for example breaking a window, received particularly harsh punishment:

Name	*Offence*	*Date*	*Punishment*
Elliott, Benjamin	Neglect of work	31 May 1842	Dinner withheld, and but bread for supper.
Rowe, Sarah	Noisy and swearing	19 June 1842	Lock'd up for 24 hours on bread and water.
Aplin, John	Disorderly at Prayer-time	22 July 1842	Lock'd up for 24 hours on bread and water.
Mintern, George	Fighting in school	26 July 1842	No cheese for one week.
Greenham, Mary and Payne, Priscella	Quarreling and fighting	14 Dec 1842	No meat 1 week.
Bartlett, Mary	Breaking window	21 Mar 1843	Sent to prison for 2 mths.
Park, James	Deserted, got over wall	4 Sep 1843	To be whipped.
Hallett, Isaac	Breaking window	25 April 1844	Sent to prison for 2 months hard labour.
Staple, John	Refusing to work	7 Jany. 1856	Committed to prison for 28 days.
Johnson, John	Refusing to work	19 Oct 1858	Cheese & tea stop'd for supper. Breakfast stop's altogether.
Soaper, Elizabeth	Making use of bad language in bedroom. Trying to excite other inmates to insubordination. Refusing to work.	17 Jany. 1863	Taken before the Magistrate & committed to prison for 14 days hard labour.
			Note by Chairman of the Guardians: "Would not 28 days be better—J.F.?"

Being "lock'd up" might well mean a spell in the "refractory cell" — this was often underground in one of the workhouse cellars, such as the one at Keighley workhouse:

The subterranean cell at Keighley, 2000.
© Peter Higginbotham.

Diet

The diet fed to workhouse inmates was often laid down in meticulous detail. For example, the workhouse rules for the parish of St John at Hackney in the 1750s stipulated a daily allowance of:

> 7 Ounces of Meat when dressed, without Bones, to every grown Person,
> 2 Ounces of Butter,
> 4 Ounces of Cheese,
> 1 Pound of Bread,
> 3 Pints of Beer

From 1835 onwards, the Poor Law Commissioners issued sample dietary tables for use in Union workhouses. Each Board of Guardians then used one of these tables as the basis for the particular diet in their own workhouse, subject to the agreement of the Poor Law Commissioners. For example, here is the dietary used at Abingdon workhouse:

		Breakfast.		Dinner.				Supper.	
		Bread. oz.	Gruel. pints.	Cooked Meat, with Vegetables, oz.	Soup. pints.	Bread. oz.	Cheese. oz.	Bread. oz.	Cheese. oz.
Sunday	Men ..	7	2	5	..	..	..	7	2
	Women ..	5	2	5	..	..	..	5	1½
Monday	Men ..	7	2	..	2	7	..	7	2
	Women ..	5	2	..	2	5	..	5	1½
				Bacon.					
Tuesday	Men ..	7	2	4	..	..	..	7	2
	Women ..	5	2	4	..	..	..	5	1½
Wednesday	Men ..	7	2	..	2	7	..	7	2
	Women ..	5	2	..	2	5	..	5	1½
Thursday	Men ..	7	2	..	..	7	2	7	2
	Women ..	5	2	..	..	5	1½	5	1½
Friday	Men ..	7	2	4	..	..	..	7	2
	Women ..	5	2	4	..	..	..	5	1½
Saturday	Men ..	7	2	..	2	7	..	7	2
	Women ..	5	2	..	2	5	..	5	1½

Children and the aged or infirm had a slightly different diet, usually with more meat-based meals, and with inclusion of milk or tea. From 1856, special diets were also provided for children aged from two to five, and from five to nine.

Special or medical cases might require extra or alternative food. Thus, each workhouse had to cope with at least seven classes of diet for the various categories of inmate, each carefully measured to comply with the regulations. The main constituent of the workhouse diet was bread. At breakfast it was supplemented by gruel or porridge — both made from water and oatmeal (or occasionally a mixture of flour and oatmeal). Workhouse broth was usually the water used for boiling the dinner meat, perhaps with a few onions or turnips added. Tea — often without milk — was often provided for the aged and infirm at breakfast, together with a small amount of butter. Supper was usually similar to breakfast.

The mid-day dinner was the meal that varied most, although on several days a week this could just be bread and cheese. Other dinner fare included:

- pudding — either rice-pudding or steamed suet pudding. These would be served plain. In later years, suet-pudding might be served with gravy, or sultanas added to make plum pudding particularly when served to children or the infirm.
- meat and potatoes — the potatoes might be grown in the workhouses own garden; the meat was usually cheap cuts of beef or mutton, with occasional pork or bacon. Meat was usually boiled, although by the 1880s, some workhouses served roast meat. There was some scope for local variation, for example some unions in Cornwall were allowed to substitute fish for meat.
- soup — this would usually be broth, with a few vegetables added and thickened with barley, rice or oatmeal.

Although healthy in some respects, for example sugar was rare in the workhouse diet until the 1870s, it was often created from the cheapest ingredients. Milk was often diluted with water. Fruit was a rarely included.

Recipes

As well as dietaries, official recipes or "formulae" were also produced. The examples below are from around 1870, by which time more milk and sugar and even luxuries such as "sweet dip" were included.

Pea-soup, to make a pint—

Meat (as shin of beef), 3 oz; bones, 1 oz; peas, 2 oz; potato and other fresh vegetables, 2 oz; dried herb and seasoning; meat liquor.

Barley-soup, or meat broth, to make a pint—

Meat, 3 oz; bones, 1 oz; Scotch barley, 2 oz; carrots, 1 oz; seasoning and meat liquor.

Broth, to make a pint—

Meat liquor, 1 pint; barley, 2 oz; leeks or onions, 1 oz; parsley and seasoning.

Suet-pudding (baked or boiled), to make one pound—

Flour (good seconds), 7 oz to 8 oz (according to the quality of the flour and the thickness desired); suet, 1¼ to 1½ oz; skimmed milk, 2 oz; salt.

To be served with gravy or sweet dip.

Rice-pudding, to make one pound—

Rice, 3oz; suet, ½ oz; sugar ½ oz; skimmed milk, ½ pint; spice and salt.

Rice-milk, to make one pint—

Rice, 2oz; new milk, ½ pint; sugar, ½ oz; allspice and salt.

Meat-pudding, to make one pound—

Flour, 6 oz; suet, 1 oz; uncooked meat, 4 oz; meat liquor and seasoning.

Meat and potato-pie, to make one pound—

Flour, 3½ oz; suet or other fat, ½ oz; uncooked meat, 3 oz; potato 7 oz; onions, seasoning and meat liquor.

Potato hash or Irish stew, to make one pint—

Uncooked meat, 3 oz; potatoes, 12 oz; onions, 1½ oz; meat liquor and seasoning.

Gruel, to make one pint—

Oatmeal, 2 oz; treacle, ½ oz; salt and sometimes allspice; water.

Oatmeal-porridge, to make one pint—

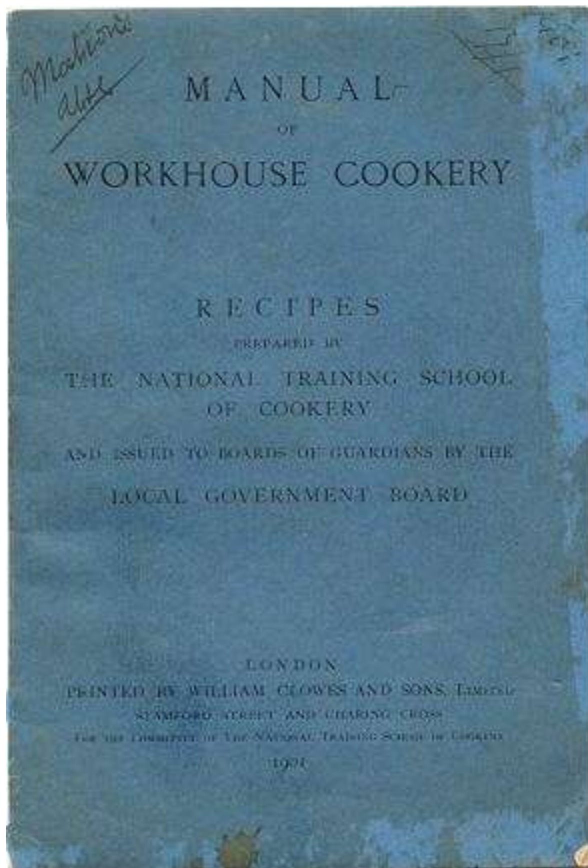
Oatmeal, 5 oz; water and seasoning. To be eaten with milk.

Milk-porridge, to make one pint—

Oatmeal, 2 oz; milk 2/3 pint; water, salt.

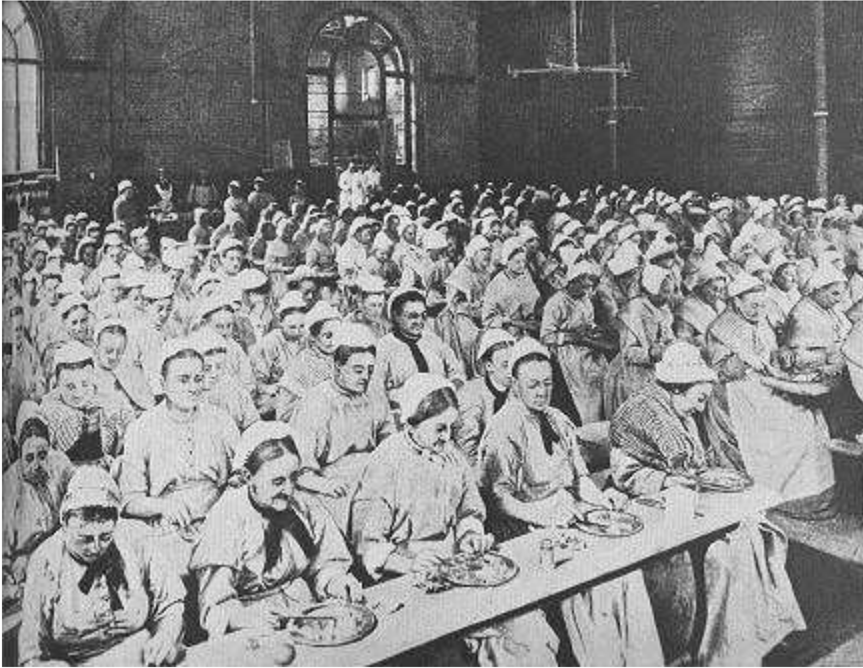
Tea, to make ten pints—

Tea, 1 oz; sugar, 5 oz; milk, 1 pint.



Workhouse cookery book, 1901.
© Peter Higginbotham.

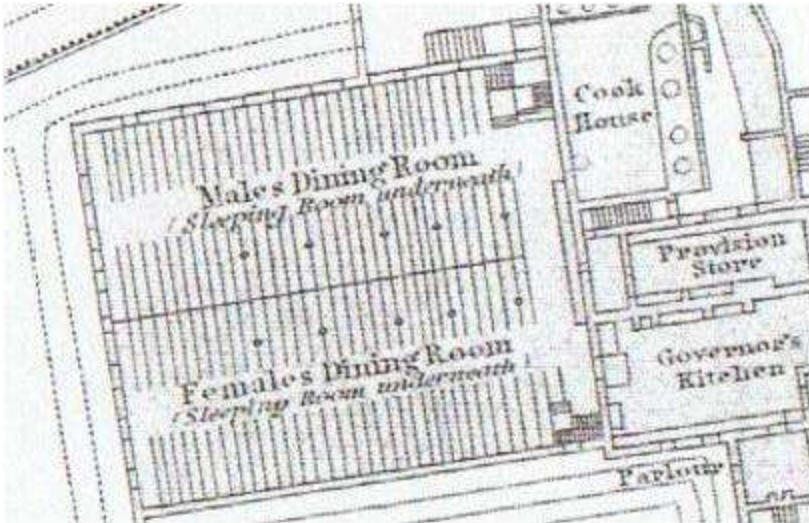
Meals were usually eaten, in silence, in a large dining-hall which often doubled-up as a chapel.



Meal time at St Pancras Workhouse, c.1900.

The inmates commonly sat in rows all facing the same way, with men and women separated.

St Marylebone dining room, 1900.
© Peter Higginbotham.



Map of Manchester workhouse dining room, 1848

Dining halls were equipped with scales so that inmates could get their food weighed if they thought it was below the regulation weight (though woe betide an inmate who did this without good reason).

However, practice did not always match theory and stories abounded about the quality and quantity of food in the workhouse diet. The "gruel cauldron" was blamed for outbreaks of diarrhoea amongst inmates. In 1841, Baxter condemned the workhouse diet as being inferior to that given to transported convicts. He also criticized the variability in the diets of different Unions, for example men in the Cirencester workhouse received a much smaller weekly allowance than men in the London workhouses.

The horror of conditions in some workhouses came to public attention in 1845 when inmates at Andover workhouse were discovered to have been fighting over scraps of decaying meat on the bones they were meant to be crushing.

Work

Inmates were given a variety of work to perform, much of which was involved in running the workhouse. The women mostly did domestic jobs such as cleaning, or helping in the kitchen or laundry. Some workhouses had workshops for sewing, spinning and weaving or other local trades. Others had their own vegetable gardens where the inmates worked to provide food for the workhouse.

In 1888, a report on the Macclesfield workhouse found that amongst the able-bodied females there were 21 washers, 22 sewers and knitters, 12 scrubbers, 12 assisting women, 4 in the kitchen, 4 in the nursery, and 4 stocking darners. On the men's side were 2 joiners, 1 slater, 1 upholsterer, 1 blacksmith, 3 assisting the porter the tramps, 6 men attending the boilers, 3 attending the stone-shed men, 4 whitewashers, 4 attending the pigs, 2 looking after sanitary matters, 1 regulating the coal supply, 18 potato peelers, 1 messenger, 26 ward men, 2 doorkeepers. There were also 12 boys at work in the tailor's shop.
In rural areas, inmates were sometimes used for agricultural labour. Other more menial work included:

- Stone-breaking — the results being saleable for road-making
- Corn-grinding — heavy mill-stones were rotated by four or more men turning a capstan (the resulting flour was usually of very poor quality)
- Bone-crushing — this was abolished after the Andover scandal)
- Gypsum-crushing — for use in plaster-making
- Oakum-picking
- Wood-chopping

Oakum-picking involved teasing out the fibres from old hemp ropes — the resulting material was sold to the navy or other ship-builders - it was mixed with tar and used to seal the lining of wooden ships.

Oakum-picking in a London workhouse, 1902
© PRO 30/69/1663

Stone-breaking was a task often given to male inmates. It was physically demanding, the amount performed could be readily measured, and the results could be sold for road-mending.

Hackney workhouse stone yard c.1900
© London Borough of Hackney Archives Dept.

Wood chopping at Pontefract, 1920s
courtesy of Edwin Pickett

Leaving the Workhouse

Any pauper could, on giving three hours notice, leave the workhouse. In the case of a man with a family, the whole family would have to leave if he left. Short-term absence could also be granted to an able-bodied pauper seeking work.
It was not unknown for a pauper to discharge himself in the morning and then return demanding re-admission the same evening, possibly the worse for wear from drink. Various attempts were made to deal with these "ins and outs", for example by lengthening the amount of notice required. There was actually little to prevent a pauper from walking out of the workhouse, although delaying the return of his own clothes could be used to achieve this — if he left wearing workhouse clothes, he could be charged with theft of workhouse property and brought before the magistrates.

Many inmates were, however, to become long-term residents of the workhouse. A Parliamentary report of 1861 found that, nation-wide, over 20 percent of inmates had been in the workhouse for more than five years. These were mostly consisted of elderly, chronically sick, and mentally ill paupers.

Death in the Workhouse

If an inmate died in the workhouse, the death was notified to their family who could, if they wished, organize the funeral themselves. If this did not happen, the Guardians arranged a burial which usually took place in a local cemetery or burial ground. The burial would be in the cheapest possible coffin and in an unmarked grave, into which several coffins might be placed on the same occasion. Unclaimed bodies could also be disposed of by donating them for use in medical research and training.

No.

STOURBRIDGE UNION.

Notice of Death.

UNION HOUSE, WORDSLEY, NEAR STOURBRIDGE.

Date Nov. 15th 1907 (1907?)

Dear Sir,

I beg to inform you that

John Howland Clarke

late an Inmate of this House, died on

November 14th 1907

If you desire to make any arrangement with respect to the Funeral of the Deceased, please let me know on or before

[illegible] WALLINGTON

Master.

To Mr. James Clarke

E 232. Shaw & Sons, Fetter Lane, E.C. (11013—06)

Stourbridge Death Notice, 1907.
Courtesy of Robert L Clarke.

In some places, the workhouse had a special coffin for transporting bodies to the cemetery. This one at Londonderry had a hole on top where a flag would be placed when the coffin contained a body.

Londonderry workhouse coffin.
© Peter Higginbotham.

The End of an Era?

Life in the workhouse was not entirely bad, however, and slowly got more tolerable as time went on. Relaxations introduced in the early 1890s included the allowance of books, newspapers and snuff for the elderly, toys for the children, and tea-brewing facilities for deserving inmates. Living conditions were often healthier than existed in much poor housing of the time. Although monotonous, the food was regular and reasonably wholesome. The staff in many institutions were kindly, and the brutal treatment that was sensationalized in the press was probably much the exception.

By 1930, when workhouses were officially abolished, conditions in some places had become much more relaxed. In Abingdon, for example, the inmates had a wireless in their day room, and supervised excursions to the local cinema.

Some workhouses became "Public Assistance Institutions" — continued to provide care for the elderly and infirm and the destitute. In such establishments (often given names such as "The Laurels") this often meant little more than the abolition of uniforms and a little more freedom to come and go. For many years, the "superintendent" of the Institution would still be refrerred to as "Master" by the former "inmates", now called "residents".

"Man by Fire" - Wantage, 1946
© Oxfordshire Photographic Archive.

Even when conditions did improve, living in the workhouse was something that would never lose its stigma.

Bibliography

- *Diets in Workhouses and Prisons* by Valerie Johnston (Garland, 1985)

Retrieved from: http://www.workhouses.org.uk/index.html

1830 – 1840: The Decade of Development

Retrieved from: http://www.marquise.de/en/1800/pics/1830_1.shtml

1830-1840

History: During this decade, the “development” of the new wonderment – the photograph, was being discovered by Louis Daguerre of France and Henry Talbot of England. In 1830, Frenchman Barthelemy Thimonnier, received a patent for his one-thread chain stitch sewing machine. Improvements were made by Eias Howe and Isaac Singer. The Alamo fell on March 6, 1836 where Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie lost their lives. The “Victorian Era” (1837 – 1901) began in June 1837 when 18-year old Alexandrina Victoria was ordained Queen of England. *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, the most famous ladies magazine was first published in 1830. The first institution of higher learning to which women were admitted was at Ohio’s Oberlin College in 1833. Mt. Holyoke was the first all-women’s college, established in 1836.

Fashion: Tight corsets, small waistlines accented with belts, wide V-neckline bodices, huge leg-of-mutton sleeves, full dome-shaped skirts worn to ankle length, and flat square-toed shoes was “the style of the day.”

Hats: Bonnets replaced the hats of the 1820’s. They rose high off the face in a circular shape framing the face nicely. Ribbons, laces, feathers, and artificial flowers decorated the exterior. The wearing of an interior lingerie cap was replaced when the interior of the bonnets started to be decorated with gathers and ruffles.

ca. **1820–1840** A large leghorn bonnet with possible original trim.

It is extremely rare to find one with its trim intact from the period of its creation. This one is of European (British) origin but very similar ones were being worn in America at the time.

ca. **1825–1830** Black straw hat with upright crown, wide oval brim edged with velvet.

Presumably, this hat once had additional decorations such as plumes and artificial flowers. The only remaining elements consist of two large stiffened satin and velvet trefoils (ornament in the form of a three-parted leaf) on either side of the crown. This hat is a rare survivor.

ca. **1825–1830** A large, fragile cloth bonnet drawn over canes.

The upstanding trim is formed over wire and straw. The interior of the bonnet has been patched in recent years and older, replacement ribbons have been added over top the old broken ties.

The cap under the hat is from the Van Rensslaer family estate in New York. The Van Rensslaer family, of Dutch heritage, goes back to colonial times when they settled in New York

Retrieved from:

http://www.greencastlemuseum.org/Special_Exhibits/vintage_hats/hats_1830-1840.htm

Both men's and women's dress becomes more complex during this era due to the invention of the Sewing Machine, and the popular dissemination of pattern books and systems for garment cutting. Men's clothing construction, while outwardly simple, begins to acquire the internal padding, interfacings and complex structure that makes modern men's suits fall so smoothly even over an object as lumpy and mobile as the human form.

early *Hand crank sewing machine*

Elias Howe, the inventor of the first mass produced, practical sewing machine, originally demonstrated it's utility to a group of prospective investors by holding a sewing race between himself and his machine, and ten professional hand stitchers. He easily won, and the economic situation of stitchers (mostly female) declined as a consequence of the adoption of the invention. With a sewing machine, a stitcher could produce ten times the output as before, with greater quality, but the stitcher rarely could afford the machine, and with so many stitchers out of work, stitchers were easily replaceable. Industrialists would invest in the machines, hire the stitchers cheaply, and then swallow the profits that their increased output produced. With profits so high, soon competition between manufacturers of clothes got fierce, and so producers tried to "improve" their product by adding more sewing decoration, such as ruffles, pleats, and top stitching, to lure customers. The end result was that fashionable Women's dress became incredibly over decorated in the 19th Century.

Another result of this increased output in clothing manufacture was that poor people's clothing got better, and the rags of earlier eras were replaced by cheaply made mass manufactured work clothes. The middle classes were able to afford more than clean simple clothes, and began to actively indulge in fashion for it's own sake.

"The Last of England" by Ford Maddox Brown, showing the dress of poor English people as they emigrate to Australia.

Fashionable women's dress grew more and more cumbersome and impractical during the 1830's and 1840's. The visual line of 1840's gowns, hats and headdress all point down, and the eyes of women depicted in fashion plates are demurely cast to the floor. The increasing size of the skirts, held out only with voluminous and usually unsanitary crinoline (horsehair canvas) petticoats, made the weight of the skirts oppressive, and movement awkward. Tight laced Corsets of a waist-cinching style, pinched the waist without providing the back supporting properties of corsets of other eras.

Retrieved from:

http://www.costumes.org/classes/fashiondress/IndustrialRevolution.htm

Stitches - The History of Sewing Machines

By Mary Bellis

Hand sewing is an art form that is over 20,000 years old. The first sewing needles were made of bones or animal horns and the first thread was made of animal sinew. Iron needles were invented in the 14th century. The first eyed needles appeared in the 15th century.

The first possible patent connected to mechanical sewing was a 1755 British patent issued to German, Charles Weisenthal. Weisenthal was issued a patent for a needle that was designed for a machine, however, the patent did not describe the rest of the machine if one existed.

The English inventor and cabinet maker, Thomas Saint was issued the first patent for a complete machine for sewing in 1790. It is not known if Saint actually built a working prototype of his invention. The patent describes an awl that punched a hole in leather and passed a needle through the hole. A later reproduction of Saint's invention based on his patent drawings did not work.

In 1810, German, Balthasar Krems invented an automatic machine for sewing caps. Krems did not patent his invention and it never functioned well.

Austrian tailor, Josef Madersperger made several attempts at inventing a machine for sewing and was issued a patent in 1814. All of his attempts were considered unsuccessful.

In 1804, a French patent was granted to Thomas Stone and James Henderson for "a machine that emulated hand sewing." That same year a patent was granted to Scott John Duncan for an "embroidery machine with multiple needles." Both inventions failed and were soon forgotten by the public.

In 1818, the first American sewing machine was invented by John Adams Doge and John Knowles. Their machine failed to sew any useful amount of fabric before malfunctioning.

The first functional sewing machine was invented by the French tailor, Barthelemy Thimonnier, in 1830. Thimonnier's machine used only one thread and a hooked needle that made the same chain stitch used with embroidery. The inventor was almost killed by an enraged group of French tailors who burnt down his garment factory because they feared unemployment as a result of his new invention.

In 1834, Walter Hunt built America's first (somewhat) successful sewing machine. He later lost interest in patenting because he believed his invention would cause

unemployment. (Hunt's machine could only sew straight steams.) Hunt never patented and in 1846, the first American patent was issued to Elias Howe for "a process that used thread from two different sources." Howe's machine had a needle with an eye at the point. The needle was pushed through the cloth and created a loop on the other side; a shuttle on a track then slipped the second thread through the loop, creating what is called the lockstitch. However, Elias Howe later encountered problems defending his patent and marketing his invention.

For the next nine years Elias Howe struggled, first to enlist interest in his machine, then to protect his patent from imitators. His lockstitch mechanism was adopted by others who were developing innovations of their own. Isaac Singer invented the up-and-down motion mechanism, and Allen Wilson developed a rotary hook shuttle.

Sewing machines did not go into mass production until the 1850's, when Isaac Singer built the first commercially successful machine. Singer built the first sewing machine where the needle moved up and down rather than the side-to-side and the needle was powered by a foot treadle. Previous machines were all hand-cranked. However, Isaac Singer's machine used the same lockstitch that Howe had patented. Elias Howe sued Isaac Singer for patent infringement and won in 1854. Walter Hunt's sewing machine also used a lockstitch with two spools of thread and an eye-pointed needle; however, the courts upheld Howe's patent since Hunt had abandoned his patent. If Hunt had patented his invention, Elias Howe would have lost his case and Isaac Singer would have won. Since he lost, Isaac Singer had to pay Elias Howe patent royalties. As a side note: In 1844, Englishmen John Fisher received a patent for a lacemaking machine that was identical enough to the machines made by Howe and Singer that if Fisher's patent had not been lost in the patent office, John Fisher would also have been part of the patent battle.

Retrieved from: http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blsewing_machine.htm

Oliver Twist was only one literary work that reflected on aspects of the industrial revolution. Below is a list of suggested readings that detail the effects, both positive and negative, of the industrial revolution on society.

Literary Response

- William Blake: Preface to 'Milton', 1804 [At Clinch Valley College]
- William Wordsworth (1770-1850): The Excursion, 1814 [At this Site]
- Charles Dickens: Hard Times, Excerpts [At PIMA]
- Charles Dickens: Hard Times, Chapter 2 [At Mt Holyoke]
- Elizabeth Gaskell: North and South, 1855, excerpts [At Clinch Valley College]
- Elizabeth Gaskell: Mary Barton - A tale of Manchester life [At Nagoya University][Full Text]
- Elizabeth Gaskell: North and South [At Nagoya University][Full Text]
- Elizabeth Gaskell: Cranford [At Nagoya University][Full Text]
- Thomas Carlyle: Signs of the Times: The "Mechanical Age [At this Site]
- Emile Zola (1840-1902): *Germinal*, 1885, extracts [At WSU]
- Andrew Carnegie (18351919): The Gospel of Wealth, 1889 [At this Site]
- Horatio Alger: The Boy who Makes Good

Retrieved from:
www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook14.html#The%20Industrial%20Revolution

Other Suggestions for Further Reading

* Bayley, John. "Oliver Twist: 'Things as They Really Are.'" In John Gross and Gabriel Pearson, ed. Dickens and the Twentieth Century. London: Routledge, 1962.
* Collins, Philip. Dickens and Crime. London: Macmillan, 1968.
Dunn, Richard J. Oliver Twist: Whole Heart and Soul. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993.
* Miller, J. Hillis. Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958.
* Raina, Badri. Dickens and the Dialectic of Growth. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986.
* Slater, Michael. Dickens and Women. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1983.
* Swisher, Clarice, ed. Readings on Charles Dickens. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1998.

Retrieved from: http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/oliver/bibliography.html

Resource List

Here are a few web sites that have additional information on the works of Charles Dickens, as well as teacher guides:

http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/dickens/dickenstg.html

http://www.webenglishteacher.com/dickens.html

http://www.geocities.com/pdubelbeis/

http://www.teachwithmovies.org/guides/oliver-twist.html

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/olivertwist/teachers_guide.html

http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/catalogs/bysubject-lit-charlesdickens.html

http://www.freebooknotes.com/guides/olivertwist.htm

http://www.underthesun.cc/Classics/Dickens/index.htm

http://www.c-dickens.com/

http://www.selfknowledge.com/123au.htm

http://www.helsinki.fi/kasv/nokol/dickens.html

http://www.dur.ac.uk/martin.ward/gkc/books/dickens_Britannica.txt

http://www.people.memphis.edu/~wodonnll/DICKENS.HTML