

MIGRATION IN ENGLAND 1700 TO 1900.

Influence of Industrial Development.

*Presented by Alan Cassley.
AFHS Meeting 7th January 2008.*

In the 1600's mobility of population was restricted by a number of factors, including the Poor Law, very few good roads and the Civil War. Industries were localized and small scale. Power requirements were small and provided by water-wheels and horses.

In the 1700's knowledge of scientific principals increased dramatically. Perhaps the most important development was that of the stationary steam engine by engineers such as Trevithick and Watt. The power developed by these engines enabled mines to go deeper and the output from mines to grow. The increased output required the transportation of heavier and bulkier loads. This in turn made it necessary to build better roads and led to the building of canals.

The road builders were usually local gentry with a vested interest in the movement of goods, and tolls were levied on the users. These toll-roads were gated at intervals for the collection of tolls and the gates or bars were spiked to discourage toll evasion. Hence the name 'turnpike'.

The first canal was built in 1759 and canal building continued until the early 1800's. The canal boats, or barges, were pulled by horses. The construction labourers were called 'navigators', shortened to 'navvies'.

The development steam engines was also applied to the spinning and weaving of cotton, giving rise to the cotton factory or mill. The first mill was built in 1770 in the Manchester area. There were many developments in the cotton industry enabling development of large cotton mills.

Then in the early 1800's the power/size ratio of steam engines was increased, enabling the steam engine to be used as a form of motive power, and thus began the growth of the railways. George Stephenson built the first public steam railway from Stockton to Darlington in 1825. There followed an almost frenzied construction of railways throughout England, from about 200 miles of track in 1840 to 18,000 miles in 1900. Gladstone's Railway Act of 1844 stipulated that a daily return fare of a penny a mile be available for third class passengers. This enabled easier travel for the developing working class.

All these developments led to a drastic change in population distribution, changing from mainly rural in the early 1700's to mainly

urban by 1900. Most migrants moved from the rural villages to the nearest town, the average distance being about 35 miles. In the 1800's the increase in population was greatest in those regions which had the largest coal and iron deposits, i.e. Durham, Yorkshire, Lancashire, the Midlands and South Wales. The population of London increased from 600,000 in 1700 to 6,000,000 by 1900.

For over 200 years my family worked in the tin mines of Cornwall. From the 1700's the family were stationary steam-engine drivers. In 1860's the production of tin from the mines of Cornwall collapsed. In 1867 great-grandfather (ggf) migrated to the Furness region of Lancashire where iron mines were opening. He was employed as a stationary-engine driver, as eventually was my grandfather. His migration route was a little unusual. In an interview with the local press on the occasion of his golden wedding he described how he traveled from St. Just-in-Penwith in Cornwall to Lancashire.

".....walked from St. Just to Penzance (7 miles), took train to Hayle, and then steamboat to Swansea (where we stayed one night) and Liverpool, and took train to Dalton."

In late 1890's production from the iron mines collapsed, so my gf migrated to the Manchester area.

A closing question:

Where will your family go when Alberta oil runs out?

References:

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