The education and training of eighteenth-century English girls
With special reference to the working classes
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THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH GIRLS,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WORKING CLASSES

Ph.D. Thesis
University of Essex, 1988

Deborah Simonton

Please note: pagination does not match the deposited copy at the University of Essex. Refer to this as 2nd ed. with the website URL. The text has been edited only insofar as was necessary in the transition from a first generation Apple and Word to a 2016 MacBook Pro and Word, and misspelling corrected. Otherwise the text is unchanged.
CONTENTS

List of Tables v
List of Figures vi
Summary vii
Acknowledgements viii

Introduction 1

Chapter 1. Women in Eighteenth-Century England
   A. Woman as an Idea 13
   B. Women and Work 27
   C. Women, Marriage and the Family 42

Chapter 2. Theories of Popular Education
   A. Philosophical Roots of Eighteenth-Century Education 59
   B. Education and Social Mobility 78
   C. Ideology of Female Schooling 92

Chapter 3. Schools and Curriculum
   A. Provision of Schooling for Poor Children 106
   B. Curriculum and Educational Materials 127

Chapter 4. The Extent of Schooling
   A. Attendance 146
   B. Schooling and Literacy 170

Chapter 5. Apprenticeship
   A. The Nature of Apprenticeship 189
   B. Eighteenth Century-Apprenticeship 203
   C. Female Apprenticeship 225

Chapter 6. Further Structures for Education
   A. Patterns of Education, Adult Education and In-Service Training 247
   D. Home-Based Education 265

Conclusion 279
Appendices

1 Geographic Distribution of Records and Data, Essex and Staffordshire 282

3. 1 Schools and Pupils in Essex and Staffordshire from the
    Brougham Commission 285
3. 2 Case Studies: Digest of Information 286
3. 3 Sample of School Organization, Rules, Regulations and Minutes 287
3. 4 Ratio of Boys to Girls in Selected Schools 294

4. 1 Trends in Years Attended by Date of Admission 295
4. 2 The Derivation of Penetration 296
4. 3 Sunday Schools 298
4. 4 Penetration of Schooling 301
4. 5 Prices for Selected Publications 302

5. 1 Apprenticeship Data 303
5. 2 Apprenticeship Data Collected 307
5. 3 Trade Classification 308
5. 4 Demographics of Apprenticeship 311
5. 5 Apprenticeship Terms 316
5. 6 Apprenticeship, Trades and Sectors of the Economy 320
5. 7 Apprenticeship Premiums 328
5. 8 Milliners, Mantuamakers and Schoolteachers 331
5. 9 Sample Apprenticeship Indentures 335

6. 1 Summary of Details for Women Autobiographers 338

Bibliography 342
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. 1 Numbers of Children Present per Household 53

Table 3. 1 Proportion of Schools by Sex of Students Admitted 126
  3. 2 Proportion of Student Places by Sex 126
  3. 3 Subjects by Sex of Pupil Taught in Charitable Foundations in Eighteenth-Century Essex and Staffordshire 129
  3. 4 Proportion of Students in each Curricular Area for Single Sex Charity Schools 132
  3. 5 Working as Part of Charity Schools’ Curriculum 136

Table 4. 2 Average Length of Attendance at Day School, by Sex 150
  4. 3 Longest Staying Pupils recorded at Day Schools 152
  4. 4 Proportion of recorded Pupils staying at least Three or Four Years 152
  4. 5 Average Length of Attendance in Parishes with both Day and Sunday Schools 154
  4. 6 Reasons Given for Leaving School 158
  4. 7 Penetration of Schooling by Sex: Case Studies 168

Table 5. 1 Most Common Trades by Type, 1700-1799 218
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1 Schooling by Fee Status 111
3.2 Access to Schooling by Status of Child 113
3.3 Educational Charity 115

Figure 4.1 Age at Entry and Leaving Based on School Regulations 147
4.2 School Attendance Trends 161
4.3 Illiteracy by Sex, 1754-1814 183
4.4 Romford and Essex Illiteracy, 1754-1814 186

Figure 5.1 Number of Parish and Private Apprentices, 1750-1799 211
5.2 Apprentices as a Proportion of the Population and 5-14 Age Group, Staffordshire and Essex 212
5.3 Age at Indenture for Parish Apprentices 214
5.4 Decline in Terms, 1700-1799 215
5.5 Distribution of Indentures by Trade Groups, 1750-1799 217
5.6 Distribution of Trades by Type within Broad Trade Categories, 1750-1799 219
5.7 Apprenticeship by Economic Sector of Activity 222
5.8 Average Premiums by Trade Group and Type 223
5.9 Apprentices as a proportion of Types of Indenture by Sex, 1750-1799 228
5.10 Apprentices by Sex and Type of Indenture, 1750-1799 228
5.11 Length of Terms by Sex of Apprentice 231
5.12 Age of Parish Apprentices by Sex 232
5.13 Premium by Sex of Apprentice 233
5.14 Average Premium by Sex for Most Common Trades 234
5.15 Distribution of Trades by Sex, 1750-1799 235
5.16 Distribution of Trades by Sex for Private Apprentices, 1750-1799 236
5.17 Distribution of Trades by Sex for Parish Apprentices, 1700-1749 237
5.18 Distribution of Trades by Sex for Parish Apprentices, 1750-1799 237
5.19 Most Popular Trades for Female Apprentices, 1750-1799 238
5.20 Premiums for Broad Trade Categories by Sex 238

Figure 6.1 Educative Life Cycles, c. 1780 249
Eighteenth-century economic change ultimately undercut women’s economic position. Simultaneously, environmentalism contributed to a new image of woman. Ideological changes were central to issues of girls’ education which was shaped by perceptions of gender, class and status.

Plebeian girls’ schooling aimed to prepare them for a moral and useful life, primarily in menial occupations and largely serving the middle classes. Girls’ academic content was more likely than boys’ to be restricted, with greater emphasis on moral and religious education and practical tasks. Significantly, where girls had access to schools, two-fifths were taught to write and a quarter to do arithmetic. They also tended to stay longer than boys. By 1800, more plebeian girls experienced schooling than in 1750.

Though girls constituted a significant portion of apprentices, their opportunities were more limited than boys’, reflecting women’s position legally and economically. Women’s apprenticeship did not carry with it the rights and privileges of men nor was their work regarded the same way. They were concentrated in parish apprenticeship and in less prosperous trades; but so were many boys. The main divergence was in professions and lucrative, prestigious occupations which largely excluded girls.

A key function of apprenticeship was transmission of culture. Similarly, many girls acquired the knowledge they required as adults in patterns of learning outside of schooling and apprenticeship. Many women’s activities linked them, especially mother to daughter, in situations where they shared and passed on the knowledge and values required for adulthood.

The pattern of working-class girls’ education and training in eighteenth-century England were diverse, but throughout girls were active in taking advantage of opportunities. Overall, the extent and quality of their education, though sharply restricted by social strictures and perceptions of gender, were greater than earlier images projected.
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Introduction

This research centres on the nature and extent of girls’ education in eighteenth-century England. It will attempt to explore two interrelated themes: the expectations of society for working-class girls, views which were necessarily shaped by views of class and gender; and the impact of these beliefs on the patterns and content of female education. Drawing on the study of schools, charities and apprenticeships in Essex and Staffordshire, the thesis highlights the conceptual framework for girls’ educative influences and their opportunities in eighteenth-century England.

The history of girls’ educational experience is frequently treated as an adjunct to boys’ education, or is simply subsumed in the term children. This is a problem with the documentary evidence as well, since contemporary accounts often declined to distinguish differences in treatment and provision for girls and boys.\(^1\) Approaches to educational history often are framed around a drive for ‘improved opportunities’, ‘mass education’ or the story of a ‘movement’, e.g. ‘the Charity School Movement’. Frequently they become histories of educational theory and policy, describing the institutional or administrative structures imposed from above to provide schooling.\(^2\) These have their place in describing the overall pattern of educational development. Yet there is an important question of frame of reference since girls have been viewed from the vantage of educational history rather than in the context of the social and economic history of women, especially working women. Seldom has their education been understood in relation to their lifestyle or their projected roles in society. Similarly, some of these theoretical approaches tend to by-pass the questions of whether or not working people, and girls in particular, had the opportunity to attend school.

\(^1\)See the discussion at the beginning of Chapter 2B.

With the growth of the ‘new social history’ in the last 25 years and its related interest in assessing plebeian culture and in studies of literacy, some historians have taken a fresh look at the relationship between the education and literacy of the ‘plebs’ and their economic, cultural and political nexus.\(^3\) With these approaches there is the tendency to frame educational questions in terms of the growth of literacy and the motive force behind economic development and industrialization.\(^4\) In one important way, educational history has not broken away from older approaches. In most cases, the definition of education remains restricted to schooling, or the academic forms of learning. Even such important and useful studies of the working-class such as Neuberg, Altick, Kelly and Webb centred their discussions and arguments on literacy based education.\(^5\) This has the tendency to de-value education of any other sort, to suggest that it is an ‘other’ which is and was unimportant in working-class life. In fact, the cause is more likely that many such authors have as their underlying ethos a desire to describe the progress and development of working-class consciousness. One has the sense of a continually improving continuum which suggests at the least a whiggishness and at the worst a modernizationist approach, both of which run the risk of presenting a teleological argument which consciously or unconsciously misses variations and

\(^3\)See the review article in The Times Higher Education Supplement, 4 November 1983, pp. 12-13. Peter Laslett, The World We Have Lost, (London:1965) is usually considered the harbinger of the ‘new social history’.

\(^4\)The debate between Michael Sanderson, ‘Literacy and Social Mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England,’ Past and Present No. 56 (August 1972), 75-104, hereafter cited as Sanderson, ‘Literacy and Social Mobility’; and Thomas Laqueur, ‘Literacy and Social Mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England,’ Past and Present No. 64 (August 1974), 96-10, hereafter cited as Laqueur, ‘Literacy and Social Mobility’ is a good example, as is Carlo Cipolla, Literacy and Development in the West (Harmondsworth: 1969)

counter themes. In some instances, the same criticism can be made of the ‘new social historians’ whose arguments about industrialization and literacy similarly reflect a modernist approach.

In any case, this definition of education is inadequate in the context of eighteenth-century society. Access to schools depended upon social status, opportunity and economic need in conjunction with the expectations of adult life. Throughout the social spectrum, a variety of practices for learning, training and upbringing were employed, which often included sending children to other homes for work, service or vocational training. Thus schooling was hardly an adequate measure of the educational opportunities of the period. Gender clearly influenced such decisions and in employing a narrow definition of education, limited to a discussion of schooling, historians have often ignored the variety of patterns which existed and the different routes to adulthood through which a girl might have passed.

The transmission of culture and behavioural norms was an integral part of the educative process for both sexes. The word culture is, as Raymond Williams has pointed out, one of the most complex in the English language. As he described, the meaning of the word as ‘tending natural growth’ in a physical sense, e.g. agriculture, was extended between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries to refer to the process of human development. Johnson in 1759 remarked, ‘she neglected the culture of her understanding.’ Thus culture developed a social educational sense which was particularly important in eighteenth-century England. At the same time, it developed a

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class sense of the cultured or cultivated person, referring to the acquisition of manners and learning.

For the historian, looking back at the period, two modern usages of the word can be helpful. It retains the eighteenth-century flavour of a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development. But culture has also developed a sense which indicates a particular way of life which can refer to a people, period, a group or humanity in general. In attempting to identify educational influences in eighteenth-century England, the ways in which the material and ideological way of life are passed from one generation to the next are fundamental. Understanding culture as both a process and a way of life is therefore relevant. In writing of transmission of culture, the definition could be narrowed down to some extent to imply the sets of values, expectations and modes of thought of groups within that society, e.g. ‘plebeian’ culture as distinct from ‘patrician’ to use E. P. Thompson’s dichotomy. Because of the importance of non-academic forms of learning, this research has explored education in its broadest sense and includes schooling, apprenticeship and other educative influences.

Central to any hypothesis about the training and educating of girls are the assumptions made by the society under observation about the roles, functions and status of women in that society. Educational experience is necessarily intertwined with economic, social and familial expectations of women. A girl’s need and opportunity for education as well as the uses to which she puts it are largely determined by the social structures existing around her and by the attitudes which shape behavioural norms. Ideas about women’s position and function, of course, are not generated in isolation, but are part of a complex of social, economic and ideological factors.

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Previous work on the period has concentrated on the middle-class girl and her opportunities. Beyond Dorothy Gardiner’s broad survey in *English Girlhood at School*, there have been few scholarly attempts to delve into working-class female education. To some extent this probably resulted originally from an interest in the nineteenth-century movement for women’s rights and the important changes in education for middle-class girls in that period. The omission of working-class girls’ education suggests either that historians thought there was little to be discovered, or that working-class girls’ contribution was perceived as unimportant. Yet they constitute a significant proportion of the population and must contribute to our knowledge of the society of eighteenth-century England. Likewise, provision of education for and the educational expectations of the masses in a society is indicative of the nature of that society. It also says something about the value placed on people, both men and women.

This thesis, therefore, proposes to re-examine the education of the girls of the labouring orders in the last half of the eighteenth century. Initially, it will situate women in the society, the economy and the family. In eighteenth-century society, class differentials played a pivotal part in describing status, so that the discussion of women’s place will also examine the interplay between these factors and the ways in which they came together to define the role and status of working women at the end of the eighteenth century.

Most historians of the eighteenth century write of the social structure in the language of the period which refers to ‘orders’ and ‘ranks’, and most deny that there was a concept of ‘class’ which is appropriate to the period. However, this is not an

unchallenged view, much of the debate centring on what is meant by the term ‘class’ in
the first place.\(^{11}\) The term ‘class’ did not appear in contemporary language until the
nineteenth century, while

class consciousness in the sense of recognising the collective interest of a
‘working class’ as opposed to a ‘capitalist class’, and expressed in terms of the
ideologies which both form and develop from that consciousness, are
inappropriate to the analysis of eighteenth-century society.\(^{12}\)

This does not deny the existence of conflict, sometimes on vertical and sometimes
on horizontal levels, nor does it deny that there were group interests which bear many
of the hallmarks of what is manifestly a ‘class interest’ in the nineteenth century. Class,
as a conceptual framework, is tied up with historically specific language, events,
developments and theoretical derivations of the nineteenth century. This makes it
difficult to define and understand social relations in an earlier period which is distinct
in many respects from the nineteenth century. Yet, if class is ‘a historical category …
derived from the observation of the social process over time,’\(^{13}\) a case can be made for
the use of the term for a time predating the nineteenth century when ‘class in its modern
usage only became available to the cognitive system of the people then living at that
time,’ and exerting ‘caution against any tendency to read back subsequent notions of

\(^{11}\)Much of the debate stems from Harold Perkin’s attempt in The Origins of Modern
English Society, 1780-1880, (London: 1969) to describe a latent working class, and from the work
Work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism,’ Past and Present, No. 38 (1967), reprinted in M.W.
English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,’ Past and Present, No. 50 (1971), hereafter cited as
Thompson, ‘Moral Economy,’ ‘Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture,’ Journal of Social History, 7, 4
(Summer 1974), 382-405 and ‘Eighteenth-century English Society: class struggle without class?’
Society’. See other contributions to the debate in R.S. Neale, History and Class, Essential Readings
in Theory and Interpretation, (Oxford: 1983), hereafter cited as Neale, History and Class; R.J.
Morris, Class and Class Consciousness in the Industrial Revolution, 1780-1850, (London: 1979),
hereafter cited as Morris, Class and Class Consciousness; and the positions taken by John Rule in
Rule, Experience of Labour, and The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial England, 1750-1850,

\(^{12}\)Rule, Experience of Labour, p. 208. On the term ‘class’, see Asa Briggs, ‘The Language of

\(^{13}\)Thompson, ‘Eighteenth-century Society,’ p. 147.
Contemporary perceptions of ‘place’ in eighteenth-century society give a view of differing cultural ideals which manifest themselves in a variety of practices which define the social relations between what Thompson refers to as polite society and plebeian culture (or alternatively, patrician society and plebeian culture). Class as an identifiable term and class consciousness which necessarily predated an idea of class may be specifically nineteenth century, but relations in the previous century were no less class because they were less decisively identifiable. Plebeian culture of the eighteenth century was in many respects articulate in its resistance to the ideas and institutions of the ruling classes, while tracts which promulgated a particular form of behaviour for different groups of people partly articulate the tension between class which did mark relations at the end of the eighteenth century.

Following the discussion of ideology and woman’s place, the central sections of the thesis examine the schooling of girls. Beginning with an examination of the theories of popular education, Chapter 2 relates them to the ideology of female schooling. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of ideology and the social and economic constraints which place limits upon the forms of schooling available to working-class girls, their access to them and the curricula provided. The impact of schooling is dependent upon the length of time girls attended the schools and upon the proportion of girls who had an opportunity to attend. An examination of data relating to these questions will conclude the analysis of the nature and extent of schooling in the education of girls of the labouring orders. A discussion of literacy as a measure of the impact of formal instruction is part of this attempt to evaluate the significance of schooling to such girls. It might also help in addressing the question of whose social expectations did working-class education fill.

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14 Ibid., p. 148.
The other major formal influence in the education of working girls was apprenticeship.\textsuperscript{15} As a form of training, it reflected the contemporary expectation that those girls would be able to contribute economically as adults. At the same time, apprenticeship embodied gender distinctions which reflected socially determined evaluations of women’s status and value. Chapter 5 will evaluate the purposes and practices of apprenticeship as they applied to girls, with particular regard to the transmission of skill and culture. Through the language of apprenticeship with its ‘mystery’ and concepts of craft or trade, masculinity is further defined, and the male possession of property in skill is asserted, underlining the gender differences suggested by the statistical data.

Parallel to schooling and apprenticeship were other forms of education which both supplemented and replaced them. An exploration of informal patterns of education helps to suggest the numerous ways in which female education could be shaped within the class and gender assumptions of eighteenth-century society. Less formal influences contributed significantly to girls’ education in that work practices were transmitted, as well as the understanding of the strategies necessary for the organization of working and living. Particularly important was the nature of women’s work and their proximity to the young which operated to create networks through which girl’s knowledge, roles and status were transmitted.

The research has concentrated on two geographic areas for much of the archival evidence: Essex and Staffordshire. The two counties are geographically distant, one with close contacts to London, the other influenced by and encompassing urban areas of a very different character. Within each county there were important economic

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Little literature addresses these issues. Notable therefore is Keith Snell’s, ‘The Apprenticeship of Women’ in Annals of the Labouring Poor, Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1900 (Cambridge: 1985), pp. 270-319. While he provides a useful discussion based on published sources and on sampling parish records, there is little material from the last half of the eighteenth century. On page 291 he claims, ‘This source [Inland Revenue] ends after the mid-eighteenth century, because the decline of seven year apprenticeships entailed increasing numbers of indentures not being stamped, with no duties paid to the Board of Inland Revenue.’ Since the records, in fact, continue to 1811 and since my data, shown in Chapter 5, do not support a significant decline in the use of apprenticeship until late in the century and show the resilience of the seven year term, his conclusions must be treated with caution.}
distinctions. Both contain large agrarian tracts, while at the same time, each included significant industries, worsted manufacture in Essex and metalworking and pottery in Staffordshire. Neither Essex nor Staffordshire experienced rapid growth generated by increased mechanization and factory organization during the century. In Essex, economic change involved a dramatic decline of the cloth industry organized around a clothier and domestic system with recovery and prosperity the gradual result of an agricultural and commercial increase in trade. Arthur Brown, historian of eighteenth-century work in Essex, characterizes the change as ‘gradual, modifying the existing life but not fundamentally transforming it’ with the possible exception of the textile towns.\textsuperscript{16} In mid Staffordshire, both cloth and farming were of importance. But the two areas of most dramatic change were the potteries and the Black Country, where the pottery, mining and iron industries were, in the main, still organized in small units. Boulton’s firm at Soho and Wedgwood’s at Etruria were exceptional for their size and organizational pattern. In both areas the same industries endured throughout the century, but with accelerating prosperity after mid century. One reason for choosing these two counties was that women’s work was an important factor in both, but embraced very different patterns of activities. This contrast was likely to reveal variations which might have been relevant to educational practice.

Three main types of sources have been used in constructing an image of female education. Contemporary accounts, such as diaries, tracts, and sermons have helped shape an understanding of the ideology and theories which underpinned the provision of schooling, apprenticeship and other forms of upbringing. School records supplemented by retrospective nineteenth-century Parliamentary Reports and those of the Charity Commissioners contribute to an assessment of attendance, curriculum and the administration of charitable schools. The configuration of female apprenticeship was constructed from approximately 5100 parish indentures from the two counties and Inland Revenue records of tax paid on premiums collected from 1710 to 1811. The

problems inherent in the evidence are discussed as each area of the research is taken up. However, evidence has been difficult to locate for whole areas of this research, and in some cases, such as female networks, it remains largely suggestive.

Whilst this thesis was being finalised, new research which illuminates some of the central issues was published. Significantly, Catherine Hall’s and Leonore Davidoff’s work on gender and the middle class, Family Fortunes, Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850 (London: 1987) became available. Their central thesis rests on the assumption that gender and class always operate together, and that consciousness of class always takes a gendered form. Their identification of a tension between class aspirations and feminine identity corresponds with the ways in which gender was constructed for the plebeian orders through schooling, apprenticeship and informal patterns through which culture was transmitted. Similarly, some of the threads in Susan Dwyer Amussen’s An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England (Oxford: 1988), Lynda Nead’s Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain (Oxford: 1988), Janet Saristantian’s Gender, Ideology and Action: Historical perspectives on women’s public lives (London: 1987) and Pat Jalland’s and John Hooper’s, Women from Birth to Death, the Female Life Cycle in Britain, 1830-1914 (Brighton: 1986) might have been helpful. Issues of women’s work before and after the eighteenth century are the focus of Barbara Hanawalt, ed. Women’s Work in Preindustrial England (London: 1986), Susan Cahn, Industry of Devotion: the Transformation of women’s work in England, 1500-1600 (New York: 1987) and Angela John, ed. Unequal Opportunities: Women’s Employment in England, 1800-1918 (London: 1988). Alice Browne’s The Eighteenth-Century Feminist Mind (Brighton: 1987) and Margaret J. M. Ezell’s The Patriarch’s Wife; Literary evidence and the History of the Family (London: c. 1987) address other issues which are central to this thesis.

Where the nineteenth century provides many examples of working-class literature which explore perceptions of self and the exploitation of educational provision, however informal, this is far less true of the eighteenth century. As described below, much of the ‘self-help’ mode of education is linked to the nineteenth-century work of radical

Related to these is Philip Gardner, *The Lost Elementary Schools of Victorian England: The People's Education* (London: 1984) on dame schools. These schools are necessarily invisible in much of this thesis on eighteenth-century education because they left virtually no records and are mainly part of collective memory through numerous literary references such as William Shenstone's poem, 'The School-mistress', or through their inclusion in later reports such as the Brougham Commission's or mentioned in working-class autobiography. Further work in this area might extend the research in this study, but the nature of the source material is a reminder of the difficulties of locating and interpreting the evidence.

The pervasive view of working-class girls’ education is that there was very little of it, and that girls remained largely illiterate throughout the eighteenth century. Although references are made to the valuable nature of girls’ and women’s economic contribution, they are still regarded as nearly invisible and powerless. Their work is described as subordinate, their training as casual and unimportant. This thesis then sets out to challenge some of these perceptions and to try to construct a picture of the education and training of labouring women from a fresh ideological and economic perspective. The aim is to try to identify what were the important features of that educative experience, instead of subsuming them within a male constructed society with male

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definitions of significance. Indeed, schooling, service and apprenticeship were used to further define masculinity and class as well as femininity. Along the way, older views are confirmed, but much that is new and illuminating is presented, showing women to have been active participants in, rather than passive recipients of, their culture.
Chapter 1. Women in Eighteenth-Century England

A. Woman as an Idea

A leading characteristic of the Victorian middle-class feminine ideal was the division of male and female spheres into public and private domains. The female was to be sheltered within the domestic realm, while her duties were to be performed there. She was responsible for creating a haven from the hurly-burly of the male world and for establishing and manifesting an appropriate standard of taste and manners within it. Women achieved their status and position by their connections with men, husbands and fathers. The middle-class girl’s upbringing reflected her intended role in that more stress was put on self-sacrifice than was the case with boys. Regardless of its academic quality, most girls’ education was not intended to prepare them for gainful employment. To work, in itself, was a loss of caste. The assumption was that their future lay in the domestic setting.

The ideas which coalesced to form the Victorian ideal readily can be traced to their eighteenth-century roots. By mid-century gender roles defined in terms of public and private spheres appeared regularly in literature intended for middle-class consumption. Characteristic of this model of womanhood were many features associated with the later period: domesticity, subordination and self-sacrifice, acceptance of dual spheres and of

women as the weaker, meeker sex but with a responsibility for setting standards of morality and behaviour. Economically, the derivation of separate spheres had a basis in the division of labour among working families prior to and throughout the century. But the ideology of woman’s relationship to man, family and work was as much a theoretical and political creation as it was economic.

Anyway, the hierarchical orientation to the dichotomy between public and private did not necessarily reflect the realities of working life. Household division of labour implied that each member contributed what they were able, and that there was an interdependence of functions. This situation suggested a sense of equal dependency rather than a hierarchy.\(^2\) The relationship was not necessarily one of ‘equality’ though, since status was not perceived as purely economic. Law, custom and practice, and religion also contributed to establish the woman’s relative position within family and society.

A key element of the idea of woman was that she was coming to be defined in terms of and restricted to domestic pursuits. This ideology was as yet emerging and developing in eighteenth-century thought. Nevertheless, it had begun to influence lifestyle at one level of society, and to shape ideas about how and why girls of all levels should be brought up. Women’s relationships were usually seen by eighteenth-century writers as deriving logically from their unique and specific female nature. The appeal to Nature which was translated into a liberating appeal for the rights of ‘man,’ usually was a mechanism for redefining and restricting women’s field of action.\(^3\)

One of the clearest most typical mid-eighteenth-century formulations of female character is the sermon by John Brown, vicar of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, *On the Female Character and Education* (1765). Brown was a defender of established educational practice, whose response to Rousseau insisted on the ‘pre-established Habits of

\(^2\) The ‘family economy’ and work relationships will be taken up in Chapter 1B.

\(^3\) On Nature, see Chapter 2A.
Mankind’ and on inborn passions which had to be eradicated. His view of womankind was similarly shaped by a belief in natural traits, which stemmed from their physical weakness. His intention was to prove, in part:

I. THAT the Female Frame of Person and Mind tends chiefly to fit and qualify the sex for domestic Life only.

II. THAT from this Frame of Person and Mind, conducted by a suitable Education, the Female Virtues prescribed by Christianity do naturally arise.

He restricted females to the domestic scene because their ‘acknowledged delicacy and weakness of person’ disqualified them from heavy, robust activity. It was, he said, ‘so obvious as to not need further proof.’ He also ascribed innate female timidity to their physical weakness, from which followed a desire for peace, tranquillity and the safety of domestic life. ‘In all of nature, boldness is given to the strong, timidness to the weak, to argue otherwise is to contravene nature.’

A strong proponent of these views was Hannah More. In her youth she was active in London society, but religious conversion led her to adopt more ‘suitable’ forms of public activity in philanthropy, particularly education, and in publication of strongly moral works. More’s construction of a domestic female image was significant because of her potential for influencing working-class women through philanthropy amongst them and authorship of the Cheap Repository Tracts.

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6 Ibid., pp. 7-8.

In 1777, in Essays on Various Subjects, More explicitly posited the private world of the female and the public world of the male, like Brown linking these to physical differences. For women,

Greater delicacy evidently implies greater fragility; and this weakness, natural and moral, clearly points out the necessity of a superior degree of caution, retirement and reserve. … MEN, on the contrary are formed for the more public exhibitions of the great theatre of human life. Like the stronger and more substantial wares, they derive no injury, and lose no polish by being always exposed, and engaged in the constant commerce of the world. It is their proper element…

More clearly saw the female in relation to men, family and domestic pursuits, referring to

the man whose happiness she is one day to make, whose family she is to govern, and whose children she is to educate. … he will seek for her in the bosom of retirement, in the practice of every domestic virtue … to embellish the narrow but charming circle of family delights.

More’s comments on women reflect a view of women weaker than men, and designed for domesticity. Yet she differed subtly from many male commentators in demonstrating greater concern for the development of self, in moral and religious terms. Where they tended to see men and women only in relational terms, she argued for educating women for self-regulation, contributing to the well-being of others and the dignity of Christian teaching.

Restriction of females to the domestic arena derived from a combination of motives, but primarily women were seen as suited to domestic concerns, unable to cope outside that sphere. William Kenrick, in The Whole Duty of Woman (1753) admonished:

It is not for thee, O woman, to undergo the perils of the deep, to dig in the hollow mines of the earth, to trace the dark springs of science or to number the thick stars of the heavens. Let the kingdom rule itself, let the wise men and counsellors enact laws and correct them; the policy of government is a

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9 Ibid., p. 135.
hidden thing, like a well of water in the bottom of a deep pit. Thy kingdom is thine own house, and thy government the care of thy family.¹⁰

John Moir, in Female Tuition (1784) reiterated that family affairs were by far the most proper objects to engross their minds and occupy their talents: ‘This is their natural province. Here they are made to shine and preside: and he is a foolish or worthless husband, who shews the least inclination to justle them out of their sphere.’¹¹ Dr. Gregory’s A Father’s Legacy to His Daughters (1774) similarly insisted that ‘the domestic economy of a family is entirely a woman’s province.’¹² Throughout the period after mid-century, advice books to mothers and daughters regularly and consistently defined the domestic sphere as uniquely female and the female as uniquely domestic.¹³

Just as the domestic role for women was deduced from their nature, the capacity of the female mind was derived from inherent characteristics. Girls’ education was framed by what was suitable to their position in life, and by what people thought the female mind could comprehend. The literature in which perceptions of female intelligence were expressed was mainly middle class in origin and audience, but they were applied to all women. Because control of education was in the hands of the middle class, these formulations were explicit in the operation of schools for the poor.


¹¹John Moir, Female Tuition, or an address to Mothers on the Education of Daughters (London: 1784), pp. 45-6. Hereafter cited as Moir, Female Tuition.


¹³See Sarah Pennington, An Unfortunate Mother’s Advice to her Absent Daughters (1761), in The Young Lady’s Pocket Library or Parental Monitor (Edinburgh and London: 1807), p. 69; hereafter cited as Pennington, Mother’s Advice; and Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations (1776), ed. by R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner (London: 1976), vol. 2, p. 781; hereafter cited as Smith, Wealth of Nations. A number of historical studies have used advice books, either primarily or in conjunction with other material, to construct an image of the woman in society. Such a one is Branca’s Silent Sisterhood is on Victorian women, while Laura A. Curtis, ‘A Case Study of Defoe’s Domestic Conduct Manuals suggested by The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800’ in Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture ed. by Harry C. Payne (London: 1981), pp. 409-28, deals with an earlier period; hereafter cited as Curtis, ‘Defoe’s Domestic Conduct Manuals’. One of the best known is Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, For Her Own Good: 150 years of the Experts’ Advice to Women (London: 1979), but see the critique by Ludmilla Jordanova ‘Conceptualising Power Over Women’ Radical Science Journal 12 (1982), 124-128, which raises important questions about the use of advice books as historical source material and the problems of deriving meaning from them.
Perceptions of female intellect were not static, undergoing significant shifts during the eighteenth century. Throughout the century some authors argued that male and female minds were of equal capacity, but the claims were concentrated in the first half. This position was usually associated with the belief that faulty education was to blame for the apparently inferior image women projected.

Many early eighteenth-century conduct manuals and advice books adopted this stance in contrast to later ones. In 1697, Daniel Defoe claimed women’s capacities were greater, and their senses quicker than men’s; with equal educational advantages, women would demonstrate less folly and impertinence than men. In the Ladies Library (1714), Mary Wray argued also that Nature had given women talents equal to men’s but because men hindered their education they appeared weaker. Both she and Defoe recognized female inferiority in law. They perceived women as rational creatures, created by God to exercise their understandings. To Wray, ‘the Father is the Superior Authority, and must be obey’d [sic], because both the Laws of God and Man have subjected the Wife and the Husband.’ For two people to live together there is a ‘Necessity of Subordination and Subjection one to another … there can be no such thing as Unity where two Parties command, or pretend to Superiority, or such Equality as will not yield.’ Though she argued that Nature gave sovereignty to the husband, she did not identify the domestic female as the logical converse. Indeed she condemned those who created wives who were only a little above slaves. No wife owed subjection or

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14 Daniel Defoe, ‘The Education of Women,’ (from ‘An Essay upon Projects,’ 1697), in Later Stuart Tracts, An English Garner, vol. 12 (Westminster: 1903) pp. 281, 282. Taking a similar view of female mental abilities was Thomas Brown in Legacy for the Ladies, 1705; cited in Cynthia White, Women’s Magazines, 1693-1968 (London: 1970), p. 34; hereafter cited as White, Women’s Magazines. In contrast to Defoe he ferociously attacked women. White maintains that the strength of his attack connotes that men and women were regarded equally, if in an age of chivalry women were subjugated. However, the nature of his attack suggests contested areas rather than equality.

15 [Mary Wray], The Ladies Library (London: 1714), vol. 1, p. 34.

16 Ibid, 1, 59.
obedience to a husband who violated the laws of God. She cited a mother’s task as educating children, and a wife’s as ‘help meet,’ but in the context of equal capacities of mind and in a relation to men characterized also in Defoe’s _Family Instructor_ (1715): ‘[husband to his wife:] make no Scruple to say what you think is my Duty to my Servants; … There need not be so much Shyness between a Wife and her Husband, …’ Defoe consistently wrote about marriage as a partnership stressing,

> Love knows no superior or inferior, no imperious command on one hand, no reluctant subjection on the other; the end of both should be well-ordering their family, the good-guiding their household and children, educating, instructing and managing them with a mutual endeavour.

Thus female improvement, partnership in marriage and joint familial responsibilities mark the work of Wray and Defoe, without the ‘domestic’ emphasis found later in More and Brown.

Similarly several magazines of the first half century had the avowed aim of women’s edification, and contrary to many later periodicals, were not mainly concerned with domestic issues. As _The Visiter_ (1723-24) explained, ‘Knowing how to make a pudding and pleat their husbands’ neckcloths [was] not the only knowledge necessary to them.’ Instead a large proportion of these journals, or ‘essay-periodicals,’ comprised lengthy disquisitions on a range of topics, rather than short items on love, fashion and domestic affairs. Though _The Lady’s Magazine: or, the Compleat Library_ (7 October 1738 - 27 January 1739), was more of a miscellany with brief items like poems and songs, it was typical in that weekly issues contained descriptions of travel,

17Ibid, 1, 61-63.


21Bertha Monica Stearns, ‘Early English Periodicals for Ladies,’ _PMLA_, 48 (1933), 38-60.
mummification, how people see, and opium. That is, the content was not exclusively domestic or ‘feminine.’ Eliza Haywood, in the Female Spectator, 1744-46, reiterated the view that women’s capacities were equal to men’s, and they were handicapped because they were prevented from obtaining an equal education. These publications were intended for a readership which not only could read, but which had wide interests and the capacity to comprehend and enjoy lengthy and complicated topics, albeit topics more akin to the experience and context of the middle- or upper-class woman.

An outstanding example of a periodical which credited women with real mental ability was The Ladies’ Diary: or, the Woman’s Almanack, begun in 1703 by John Tipper, mathematician and master at Bablake School, Coventry. This annual contained difficult mathematical problems and abstruse literary enigmas and paradoxes. Although early issues offered an occasional recipe, most domestic features were dropped by 1710. Henry Beighton, editor after Tipper’s death in 1713, explained

And that the Rest of the Female Sex may be encouraged to attempt Mathematics and philosophical knowledge, they see here that their Sex have as clear judgements, a sprightly quick wit, and penetrating Genius, and as discerning and sagacious Faculties as ours.

While the content of most women’s magazines shifted after mid-century, the Diary altered only by doubling in length, and by resorting to smaller print to include more. Both moves imply a popularity, which did not require a devaluation of its contents. The price moved from 9d in 1771 to 1s 10d in 1811, making it more expensive than chapbooks or tracts, but well within the range of other ephemeral literature, and cheaper than most novels. (See Appendix 4. 5.)

Of similar nature were The Lady’s Weekly Magazine (1747) and The Ladies’ Magazine (1749-1753).


In 1840 it changed its name to The Ladies’ and Gentlemen’s Diary, and as early as 1753, acknowledged a male readership.\textsuperscript{25} This raises the question of whether it truly aimed at a female audience. Certainly the title was no clear indicator of readership; more than anything else it described a type of publication, which required mental agility and breadth of reading to comprehend its quizzes. It also demanded a readership with the leisure to resolve the conundrums. Having arrived at a successful formula under a familiar title, the editors chose to make no change.

From mid-century, and clearly from the 1760s, men were regularly described as mentally superior to women. At the very least, the nature of male and female minds was perceived to be quite different. This dating is consistent with the corresponding appearance of the concept of dual spheres described above. Beyond locating women in the home, Brown linked physical weakness with the character of the female mind. From women’s delicacy of ‘frame and fibre’ arose their emotional delicacy and quickness of fancy. Thus they were easily susceptible to first impressions, development of their reason was hampered and they could be easily swayed by argument. The female mind was not fitted for the tedium of long, plodding disquisitions required by the public affairs of life, science and philosophy.

Hannah More put this position more strongly in Essays on Various Subjects, 1777, and reiterated it in Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, 1799. She argued that there were boundaries to the talents of each sex, and the female mind was not capable of attaining a male degree of perfection in science. As More explained, women did not possess in equal measure, the faculty of comparing, combining, analysing and separating ideas, nor that deep and patient thinking which goes to the bottom of the subject.\textsuperscript{26} Women, she wrote, should not strive after male knowledge. ‘Is it not desirable … to be the best thing of one’s own kind, rather than an inferior thing

\textsuperscript{25} The Ladies’ Diary: or, the Woman’s Almanack, 1753, preface.

\textsuperscript{26} Hannah More, Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education with a view of the principles and conduct prevalent among females of rank and fortune (London: 1799), vol. 2, pp. 29-31. Hereafter cited as More Strictures on Female Education. See also Hannah More, Essays on Various Subjects, p. 6; Thomas Gisborne, quoted in White, Women’s Magazines, p. 34.
even if it were of an higher kind? to be an excellent woman rather than an indifferent man?  

Similarly, Sarah Pennington advised her daughters in 1761:

A sensible woman will soon be convinced, that all the learning her utmost application can make her the mistress of, will be, from the difference of education in many points, inferior to that of a schoolboy.

With regard to scientific study, she explained: ‘It is necessary for you to be perfect in the first four rules of arithmetic; more you can never have occasion for, and the mind should not be burdened with needless application.’ Both claimed a superior male intellect, which complemented female abilities.

More set the tone for all who claimed that the female mind had its own special nature. Females were repeatedly characterized as having delicacy, quickness of perception and discernment so that they excelled in imagery, sentiment and polite letters. These peculiar qualities of female understanding were seen as a strength, giving women compassion arising from sensibility. Brown described this capacity as a susceptibility to pain or fear, an ability to put oneself in another’s shoes and feel what they suffer. Indeed, women were warned about attempting too much education, because it encroached male preserves, and because it would ‘blunt the finer edge of their wit and change the delicacy in which they excel into pedantic coarseness.’

Most authors writing after mid-century identified two carefully defined areas of action for men and women, which dictated that women simply did not need the learning of men. Women were advised to be satisfied with the knowledge fitted for them, which prepared them for their role in the domestic arena. Most agreed with Brown that women were suited by their bodily frame, timidity, fancy and reason to the ‘obvious’ subjects of action for men and women.


28 Pennington, *Mother’s Advice*, p. 69.

29 Ibid., p. 67.

30 For example, see Gregory, *A Fathers’ Legacy to his Daughters*, p. 4; Brown, *Female Character*, p. 8; and More, *Strictures on Female Education*, vol. 2, p. 29.

domestic economy, the elegance of taste and moral researches tending to improve the heart.\textsuperscript{32} Drawing these threads together More wrote that ‘she who has the best regulated mind will, other things being equal, have the best regulated family.’\textsuperscript{33}

An exception was Mary Wollstonecraft who took up the attack against socially constructed female intelligence in the \textit{Vindication of the Rights of Woman}, 1791-92. Given the same education as men, she expected women to achieve equal virtue; she challenged society and men in particular to provide such an education and see if women did not become better, wiser and free.\textsuperscript{34} The equal capacity of the sexes is explicit in the \textit{Vindication} since Wollstonecraft argued reason would ultimately make women the equals of men. She constructed a scheme of national education in which boys and girls of all ages were to be educated in the same subjects together in schools, thus assuming the ability of females to comprehend the same ideas as males.\textsuperscript{35} Yet she was running contrary to the trend.

In conjunction with the tract literature, ladies’ magazines after 1760 placed far greater emphasis on domestic affairs with romance, fashion and domestic concerns dominant. The tone of the magazines and advice literature shifted in two different, but not necessarily contradictory ways. On the one hand, there was an emphasis on amusement, while on the other, interest in improvement of the female mind grew. At the end of the century, Gisborne, Moir and Wakefield all encouraged the pursuit of knowledge for ladies’ entertainment supplying them with innocent and amusing

\textsuperscript{32}Brown, \textit{Female Character}, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{33}More, \textit{Strictures on Female Education}, vol. 2, p. 6, and echoed by Pennington \textit{Mother’s Advice}, and Brown, \textit{Female Character}, amongst others.


\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 286-89. All classes and both sexes were taught together until age nine. Then those intended for domestic or mechanical employments were separated into another school, boys and girls still taught together in the mornings. Only in afternoons were girls taught separately, when significantly they concentrated on ‘female’ skills like plain work, mantuamaking and millinery.
occupations. Strictures for middle-class females clearly diverged from those for working girls; amusement was seldom recommended for the latter.

This emphasis on amusement in advice books has also to be seen in the context of a growing emphasis on leisure which reached beyond the middle classes. It was partly indicative of a trend including domestic hobbies, rather than paid work, which was becoming more prevalent for middle-class women. Plumb argues that middle-class leisure expanded rapidly as part of the commercialization of eighteenth-century society. Cunningham likewise has

come to see [the half-century from 1780] as one of vigorous growth of popular leisure and of a commercialisation of it comparable to the commercialisation of leisure for the middle class ... which Professor Plumb has identified.

In the earlier years of the century, the balance in women’s magazines tended in favour of information and instruction, subordinating the amusement function. By the end of the century, the balance had shifted so that information meant domestic and ‘feminine’ matters, while amusement featured heavily. One illustration of the shift is The Lady’s Pocket Magazine, or elegant and entertaining companion for the fair sex, 1796. Love, attachments and romance dominated the articles, stories and letters columns, supplemented by recipes and lists of promotions, births, deaths and marriages. Such was the case also with other major ladies’ magazines of the period: The Lady’s

36 Gisborne, An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex (1797), quoted in White, Women’s Magazines, p. 49; Moir, Female Tuition, p. 266; Pricilla Wakefield, Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex with suggestions for its improvement (London: 1798), p. 8; hereafter cited as Wakefield, Reflections on the Female Sex.


38 Ladies’ Magazine, 1738 and 1749 versions, and The Female Spectator, 1744-46 are good examples.
Magazine, or entertaining companion for the fair sex, published from 1770-1832, and The Lady’s Monthly Museum, from 1798.

Interest in improving the female mind had persisted throughout the century from The Freethinker (1718) through The Female Spectator (1744-46) to The Ladies’ Magazine (1770-1832). Many, but certainly not all, of those advocating female intellectual improvement were themselves women, including the editors of The Visiter, The Ladies’ Library (Mary Wray), The Female Spectator (Eliza Haywood), and the 1760 version of The Ladies Museum (Charlotte Lennox), all published before 1761. At the end of the century a heightened interest in ‘improvement’ was shown by such disparate writers as Hannah More and Mary Wollstonecraft, among others. Their pressure for intellectual provision embodied not only a complaint about the poor nature of girls’ education, but also concern with the debasing effects on young ladies of concentrating upon physical attributes and accomplishments. Though aimed at middle-class girls’ education these criticisms led to adoption of a more serious approach to poor girls’ schooling as well.39

The above evidence from women’s magazines and advice literature indicates that at the beginning of the eighteenth century, women’s mental ability seemed to be taken more seriously than in the period after about 1760. Women were more likely to be thought to possess equal intelligence to men, and their apparent inferiority was usually attributed to bad education. Likewise, reading material in the form of essays and early magazines implicitly assumed that women had an interest in a wide range of material and the capacity for sustained reading. By about 1760, several shifts became apparent in that women’s minds were regarded as inferior to men’s and of a significantly different character and there was a growing emphasis on domestic pursuits. Reading material became both shorter, more amusing and anecdotal at the same time as it became orientated to household and ‘feminine’ interests.40

39 See Chapter 2B.

also suggest a deterioration in women’s education, with a concentration on accomplishments and on less academic attainment. Concern from several divergent quarters also signalled a renewed interest in girls’ education.

Even though the reality of plebeian life created alternative preconditions for female activity, authors, deriving ideas from their own largely middle-class experiences and expectations, applied many of the same definitions and values universally. Often prescriptive literature made no class distinctions, directing its message to the generality of ‘women’; others such as John Moir claimed their lessons were ‘not wholly framed for young women in superior stations’.41 While in one sense the image of women was highly classed, its transference to all women denied class difference. Though recognizing the social differences between women of different stations, the assumption was that all women wished for the domestic existence and desired to remain away from the contamination of the public world. Thus in 1787, Sarah Trimmer could plead for the poor woman unable to use her own feminine skills and forced to work in the fields.

Instead of sitting down in peace and quietness in her own neat apartment, surrounded by playful innocents, she finds in the fields or gardens a set of reprobates, who shock her ears with oaths, blasphemies and indecency. Her mind is filled with anxiety for her children’s safety; she is not at liberty to return home to prepare a comfortable dinner, nay not even a supper for her husband.42

As we shall see, acceptance of this image of woman’s place had an influence on women’s familial and social relationships. While it is important to see the plebeian orders as active in shaping their own life experience, middle-class ideology and structural changes in the economy altered the kind of education and work available to women.

41Moir, Female Tuition, preface; see also George Horne, Reflections on the importance of forming the female character by education (Dublin: 1796); hereafter cited as Horne, Forming the Female Character; Brown, Female Character; and Kenrick, The Whole Duty of Woman.

B. Women and Work

The idea of women which was evolving in the last half of the eighteenth century was not a reflection of middle-class reality, but it was even less pertinent to plebeian culture. Where it was important to the experience of working women is where it shaped the social context in which they operated. Work, family and household were integrally related ideas whose functions were not separable. The nature of the integration of kinship, household and family through affective or instrumental concerns forms the focus of much debate amongst historians.43 Arising out of different approaches, the historiography of the family provides both contradictory and complementary answers to an assessment of women’s position. Effectively, however, decisions about household formation, fertility, and economic survival, while not completely within an individual’s control, were undoubtedly coloured both by the economic need to survive and by love, sentiment and affection. The idea of a mutually interdependent family or household economy does not rule out the importance of emotion in shaping the way strategies for survival were derived. The woman’s relationship to her home and its membership, on affective, demographic and economic terms, is crucial to an understanding of her place within society. This is fundamental to the role which education and training could and would play in her life. For many plebeian women, their lives circulated around the home since much of their employment and familial responsibilities were based there.

The changing economic structure of eighteenth-century English society influenced the character of women’s work and the ways it was perceived. While the late eighteenth century was a period of self-sustained economic growth, the effect and significance of changes in industrial organization by the end of the century must not be over-emphasized.44 The population was still predominantly rural in 1801, and agriculture

43 The outlines of the debate and a valuable bibliography can be found in Michael Anderson, Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914 (London, 1980); hereafter cited as Anderson, Approaches. Many of these issues are taken up in Chapter 1C.

44 The debate about proto-industry and its relationship to ‘preindustrial’ and ‘industrial’ society and the dynamic of economic and social change are outlined in L.A. Clarkson, Proto-Industrialization: the First Phase of Industrialization? (London: 1985); hereafter cited as Clarkson, Proto-Industrialization.
continued to be the largest single employer. The growth in textile mills took place only after 1770, rotary steam power after 1785; and industrial and agricultural development was as yet substantially unmechanized relying on large numbers of unskilled workers. The dramatic changes brought by factory working in some areas sometimes obscures the fact that it never was the major occupation and that much of industrial organization continued to centre on the small workshop.45 For many decades some domestic industries expanded alongside mechanized factory branches of the industry concerned. As Hobsbawm suggested, the obvious way of expansion was to extend domestic industry, not to build large scale units.46

Likewise regional variations and increasing geographical specialization affected the pattern and structure of working. This is demonstrated in the two counties central to this study, Essex and Staffordshire. Essex had been primarily a woollen worsted area with a capitalistically organized cottage industry. Decline was due partly to continental wars affecting the Spanish market and exacerbated by the growing popularity and availability of cotton in the face of an unimaginative approach to the Essex woollen industry’s problems.47 Mechanization and factory production did not come to the rescue as alternative employment nor did adequate replacement cottage industries. Thus a once prosperous area became one of hardship for many.

Staffordshire was affected by two trends illustrating an essential division in the largely rural county. In the North, the developing potteries improved opportunities from the 1760s, providing work, training and skills for a number of people. Wedgwood, to take one example, employed 220 workers in 1790 in his factory at Etruria and 450 by 1810. Roughly a third were female.48 Women’s and children’s earnings in the potteries

45See the discussion of alternative forms of industrial organization in Berg, Age of Manufactures, pp. 84-90.


47Brown, Essex at Work, pp. 16-26.

48Keele University Library, Wedgwood Archives 46-29123, hereafter cited as Wedgwood Archives, no.
contributed significantly to family incomes, often doubling them.\textsuperscript{49} In the Black country, the expanding metal trades were conducted in a multiplicity of small workshops. Employing generally fewer than ten workers, they produced a range of goods from the complex, such as buckles and locks in Wolverhampton, to the simple, like nails in Sedgeley. Thus cottage, workshop and factory organization existed side by side throughout the period. With them came different interpersonal relationships between co-workers, managers, masters, and owners. Likewise the work-discipline and the value placed on industrial time varied.\textsuperscript{50}

The conventional emphasis in historical writing on late eighteenth-century textile and factory development is misleading in describing labour patterns, but it is especially a misrepresentation of women’s work. It implies that women were newly brought into the work force largely as millworkers. Women had been and continued to be employed throughout the economy in all forms of industrial organization. But this is blurred by the overlapping changes in their employment. Accelerated growth generated new opportunities for women, but the loss of work in traditional lines was probably greater than the new creations.\textsuperscript{51} Thus their participation rates during early industrialization probably increased in both cottage and factory work, though with some structural and geographic unemployment. This was followed by a decline.

Women’s work was also importantly affected by changes in agricultural production during the century. Before enclosure, many married women’s agricultural work centred on their own holding whether as a freehold farmer’s wife or a cottager’s wife. Income from her responsibilities for the stock and gardening together with her wages at haymaking and harvest meant she made as much towards housekeeping as


\textsuperscript{50}See Thompson, ‘Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism.’

\textsuperscript{51}For examples and a detailed discussion see Berg, \textit{Age of Manufactures}, pp. 108-25. See also Eric Richards, ‘Women in the British Economy Since about 1700, an Interpretation,’ \textit{History}, 59, 197 (June 1974), 344. Hereafter cited as Richards, ‘Women in the British Economy.’
her husband did. Single females in better off rural families assisted their mothers, learning the tasks they would be expected to know when they married. Female farm servants were drawn from the single daughters of the small farmers or cottagers, saving for some years to set themselves up on a smallholding. In the open field system, women appear as day labourers only infrequently, except for harvest and haymaking. Before 1750, women were engaged in all aspects of agricultural working including the heaviest, the range of female tasks was much greater, while the seasonality of their work and their wages were more similar to men’s than in the half century which followed.

A marked degree of sexual division of labour, accompanied by lower wages, occurred after the mid-eighteenth century as larger farms became more the rule, and as the methods and focus of farming changed. The disappearance of the commons and many smallholdings coupled with the need to contribute to family earnings caused many women to turn to day labour. The decline in some domestic industries, especially hand spinning, compounded the problem. New farming methods, particularly weeding and hoeing of root crops created a kind of work which suited day labourers, and women could be hired cheaper than men. Specialization and concentration on grain farming took place in many areas at the expense of livestock and dairy farming which employed


54 Pinchbeck, Women Workers, p. 53; Hasbach, English Agricultural Labourer, p. 69.


56 Pinchbeck, Women Workers, pp. 54, 57, 59.
women more than men. Settlement examinations in a number of southeastern parishes confirm that women’s work became associated with the spring activities, characterized by a low demand for labour and relatively slight labour costs.\textsuperscript{57} Parish apprentice records suggest a falling off of female apprenticeships in agriculture at the same time. \textsuperscript{58} Women’s strong position in agriculture at the beginning of the eighteenth century had altered significantly by the end of the period, reducing wages for those who continued to rely on agricultural employment.

Proprietorial and entrepreneurial classes as a whole experienced a significant increase in prosperity, allowing both men and women to become managers. It is easy to overstate middle-class women’s removal from the workplace. Marriage was a business partnership for many wives who were well acquainted with the management and practice of the business. Servants often released the woman from housework so that she might take a greater part in business affairs.\textsuperscript{59} The process was uneven, and by the mid-eighteenth century a very irregular pattern existed. As women’s work outside the home declined, their importance within it became more prominent contributing to the ideology about woman’s role. Increased wealth allowed women to increase their consumption of luxury items, to adopt a more leisured lifestyle and in many respects to aspire to the material lifestyle of the leisured upper-classes.\textsuperscript{60} It began to be seen as an improvement in status for women not to engage in paid work outside the home, or even work to which economic value could be attached.\textsuperscript{61} This development heralded the new middle-class female who would become economically dependent upon men.

\textsuperscript{57}Snell, ‘Agricultural Seasonal Unemployment,’ pp. 410-16.

\textsuperscript{58}Ibid., pp. 422, 429, 429n. Apprenticeship data, reported in Chapter 5, show an uncertain and erratic pattern, but do suggest a decline in female parish apprentices, primarily after 1780.

\textsuperscript{59}Pinchbeck, Women Workers, p. 282.


\textsuperscript{61}See below for a discussion of the character of work.
Contributing to the process was increased availability of servants, particularly females. Population pressure and changes in employment opportunities, meant that large numbers of rural girls were available for service. Service represented a secure job and a chance of advancement socially without the difficulties of comparable occupations such as millinery and dressmaking. Though the growth in numbers of servants was partly the result of underemployment in rural areas, Coventry ribbon weavers condemned the increased demand which was drawing girls away from silkweaving. Servants were status symbols so that the employment of servants also contributed to the gentility of the household.

Deriving from middle-class culture, emergent ideas of femininity were largely alien to plebeian women and substantially irrelevant to working-class economic circumstances. The lives of the masses in eighteenth-century society centred on obtaining a livelihood, and women’s share in that process militated against a leisured ideal. The need for women to contribute to the maintenance of the family was the central aspect of female responsibilities. Women were expected to be able to earn sufficient for their own maintenance, and marriage partners were chosen with that expectation in mind. The often quoted Present for a Servant Maid (1743) made explicit what was a truism for a majority of women:

Consider, my dear girl, that you have no portion, and endeavour to supply the deficiencies of fortune by mind. You cannot expect to marry in such a manner as neither of you shall have occasion to work, and none but a fool

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62 Earlier in the century, Defoe thought the numbers were falling, though possibly they simply did not keep up with demand. [Daniel Defoe,] The Great Law of Subordination Consider’d; or, the Insolence and Insufferable Behaviour of Servants in England duly enquir’d into (London: 1724), pp. 139-40. Hereafter cited as Defoe, Great Law of Subordination. By the end of the century, the supply of servants as with labour supply generally was variable, dependent upon other opportunities in the area.


will take a wife whose bread must be earned solely by his labour and who will contribute nothing towards it herself.65

Women’s skills, work capacity, dowry, and potential fertility were all assets. The labour intensive unspecialized economy with low productivity and a high rate of dependency required as many workers as possible, thus enhancing female labour.66

The economic interdependence of the household which required the contributions of all its members has led historians to refer to the unit as ‘the family economy.’ Much debate rages over the meanings, implications, structure and formative motivation of a ‘family economy.’ The concept is also caught up in current debate over the periodization and categorization of peasant, preindustrial and protoindustrial economies.67 Using a methodological approach which ‘seeks to interpret households and families above all in the context of the economic behaviour of their members,’68 the family economy is variously described as

[an] economy dependent upon the efforts of each individual member and one in which the rôle of both partners was equally crucial,69

or,

The interdependence of work and residence, of household labor needs, subsistence requirements, and family relationships constituted the ‘family economy,’70

or,


68Anderson, Approaches, p. 65.


70Tilly and Scott, Women, Work and Family, p. 12.
The synonymity of home and work place for husband and wife.\textsuperscript{71}

The essential elements are the interrelationship between family structure and patterns of economic development, strategies for survival employed by the family unit, the implications for women’s work and division of labour, and the relationships within the family or household which are mediated by economic concerns.\textsuperscript{72}

Laslett refuted ‘the old hypothesis of the evolution from the large, extended, multigenerational household of the preindustrial age to the nuclear family of the industrial age.’ But Hans Medick, in his seminal 1976 article, nevertheless was ‘doubtful whether the employment of [his] structural concept of household and family makes it possible at all to render significant findings in the sense that “social structural history” demands.’\textsuperscript{73} Instead he turns to the changing function of household and family in the social context of production, reproduction as well as power relationships, … to determine the repercussions of social and economic changes on family structure.\textsuperscript{74}

He argues that the family economy of the agrarian peasantry, based firmly on land and inheritance, underwent fundamental change in its motivation and function to become the family economy of the proto-industrial cottage worker. This was based on balancing the consumer-labour needs of the household.

Berg challenges Medick’s analysis of the peasant economy, arguing that

\textsuperscript{71}Snell, \textit{Annals of the Labouring Poor}, p. 62.


\textsuperscript{74}Medick, ‘Protoindustrial Family’, p. 296.
There is increasing evidence that English farmers were dominated neither by
land nor by family. ... And there was no necessary relationship between
farm size and household. ... If the peasant or farming community was not
fixed within a narrow framework of family and subsistence, there seems no
reason why we should transpose this model to the dynamic of domestic
industry, or to largely manufacturing communities.75

One of the problems of Medick’s model is the relatively uncritical acceptance of
Chayanov’s description of peasant behaviour in which the peasant farm is taken as the
fundamental unit of the economy.76 It is doubtful how relevant this was in the English
experience, and particularly by 1700. Although three-quarters of the population still
lived on the land, drawing a major portion of their living from it, few held adequate
amounts to gain their living directly from their own holding.77 Similarly the economic
and moral controls necessary to retain children at home in response to ‘proto-industrial’
requirements did not exist in England in the way they may have in the Chayanovian
peasant world. Care of the elderly was community rather than kin based and the young
were in a position to accumulate capital and marry away from the family unit
establishing their own.78 Thus the thesis cannot be applied uncritically to the English
experience.

The traditional model of the family economy based on family and subsistence is
inadequate to explain many of the aspects of economic relations of eighteenth-century
England. For Berg it is patently ‘not adequate to the task of analysing the domestic
system. For the reality of that system involved the individual and the household, wage
labour and family labour, market and custom.’79 Medick’s dominant family form in

75 Berg, Age of Manufactures, p. 134. See also Clarkson, Proto-Industrialization, pp. 39-42.
It is worth noting that Medick’s thesis is heavily based on continental evidence which helps
illuminate the English scene but may misrepresent the trends and changes in English economic
or familial development.

76 Medick, ‘Protoindustrial Family’, p. 298; see the comments by Berg, Age of
Manufactures, p. 133, Anderson, Approaches, p. 92, and Houston and Snell, ‘Proto-
Industrialization?’ 477-79.

Hereafter cited as Malcolmson, Life and Labour.

78 Houston and Snell, ‘Proto-industrialization?’ p. 486.

79 Berg, Age of Manufactures, p. 134.
cottage industry did not address itself to those who were not part of a family unit, or who were only casually and temporarily so. For many people, day labourers in particular, productive activities were directed and coordinated by outsiders, and in ways which frequently conflicted with the interests of the labourers’ families as a whole.\textsuperscript{80} Likewise, the reliance of proto-industrial theory on kin as the labour force is criticized by Houston and Snell referring to the need to acquire labour from outside the kinship group.\textsuperscript{81} As a model the family economy undervalues the range of variables affecting the economic life of most families of the working orders whose strategies were conducted in the context of wider market forces, an increasing level of waged labour and a higher incidence of day labour and geographic mobility.

Features of the family economy model which do remain useful are the concepts of ‘strategies’ and interdependence and the centrality of women and children and their labour to a household’s response to economic conditions.\textsuperscript{82} Whether in an agricultural or a domestic industry setting, women’s labour as wife or daughter was significant. The interdependence of household or family members was an important feature of their economic participation. Co-residence was not essential since one strategy for balancing the requirements of the household involved apprenticing, hiring out or sending out children. Similarly it could involve importing labour, from either kin or non-kin. This labour too was not necessarily co-resident. A woman’s work must be seen within this context. The importance and frequently pivotal role of the wife in particular meant that she was neither powerless nor dependent. Not only was she economically active but as household manager often determined and manipulated the strategies for survival. The strategies employed by a family were not simply in the context of family and

\textsuperscript{80}Ibid.; Anderson, \textit{Approaches}, p. 75; see however Medick’s discussion of sub-peasant households which supplied seasonal labour needs to the peasantry, ‘Protoindustrial Family,’ p. 307.

\textsuperscript{81}Houston and Snell, ‘Proto-industrialization?’ p. 485-6.

subsistence, though these were important. Other considerations, such as transmission of culture, played a part. Also increasing reliance on wages may well have changed family relationships and affected plebeian responses linked to culture, custom and control.83

The configuration of women’s work usually depended on their relationship to the household and the level of their domestic responsibilities. For this reason distinctions need to be drawn between single and married women, mothers and non-mothers. Married women were likely to be responsible for housekeeping and household management duties; they were also likely to be mothers with time spent in childbearing and rearing. Single women, and to some extent married women without children, were more able to work away from home. Thus women’s life cycle considerations are especially crucial.

The concept of ‘work’ is important in the ways it was defined and perceived, e.g. whether it was seen as ‘productive activity’ or ‘waged activity’, whether or not it had ‘use value’ or ‘exchange value.’ Some important ideas about women’s work were derived from their positions within the household. They often performed jobs to help support the family such as growing vegetables, raising animals, making clothing or assisting in farm and craft work. Thus many of women’s activities were not intended to bring in money, and their work had ‘use value’ rather than ‘exchange value.’ As waged labour became more prominent and wage earning came to be the measure of productivity, because women’s work merged with household chores, it often came to be seen as non-productive. At the same time, the term ‘work’ came to represent productive market-orientated activity, often disassociated with the home.84 Activities customarily carried out by women are often laden with a pejorative connotation. For example, when housewifery or other female activity around the household is defined as not being


84 Tilly and Scott, Women, Work and Family, p. 3.
‘work’ because it is unwaged, a status or hierarchy is automatically implied. The locus of female work does not determine its importance. Whether work is described as female or as situated at home is not by itself necessarily significant. It becomes significant because it is part of a cluster of ideas about women, work and family; the importance of ‘work’ is dependent on the cultural values associated with it. Thus what matters is the value placed on that work or the meanings ascribed to being at home. Working at home did not always imply inferior tasks, or domesticity in the context of shared responsibility for household maintenance. Even where division of labour existed, it was not always couched in the cultural terms which are associated with the nineteenth century or even the late eighteenth century. Thus ‘work’ as a concept is both historically specific and relative to the context and value systems in operation.

Much of their market-oriented work within the domestic economy was supplementary and complementary to male work: e.g. carding and spinning while men wove. The rate paid for the finished product, in this case cloth, represented the whole effort. In the process, the woman’s participation was interpreted as supplementary and subordinate. Because their work was subsidiary, it was cheap. Berg argues that their status may have improved in new manufacturing households in contrast to the agrarian situation, but ‘where they remained within the family production unit, their labour was still far cheaper than it would have been, and indeed was, in workshops or early factories.’\(^{85}\) As families turned more and more to waged activities, the male continued to draw the equivalent of the ‘family wage’ while women regularly were paid less than men. The combination of work moving out of the home and of the reliance on wages made it difficult for women to support themselves, or a family.

For women, work-discipline and the value placed on industrial time could be significant. When household duties demanded a woman’s attention, her work for the market was limited by her available time. Where working practices allowed flexibility, a married woman or mother would be more able and likelier to be employed. Where

\(^{85}\) Berg, *Age of Manufactures*, p. 155.
time-discipline was rigid, these women had to find alternative ways of juggling their responsibilities or withdraw from gainful employment. In 1740, Mary Collier, a washerwoman, described women who worked all day in the harvest:

> When Ev’ning does approach, we homeward hie,  
> And our domestic Toils incessant ply:  
> Against your coming Home prepare to get  
> Our Work all done, our House in order set; ...

> Early next Morning we on you attend,  
> Our children dress and feed, their cloaths we mend;  
> And in the Field our daily Task renew,  
> Soon as the rising Sun had dry’d the Dew.

With one part of the work, the children and the home, seen as inevitable, such hours were endured. Because much of women’s household work was task orientated, employment which was also centred on tasks, rather than on time, was far more suitable. But the task orientation of women’s work, made it appear as though women were ‘part-time.’ They could be seen as supplementing the ‘real’ work of men. It lent credence to the idea of women as casual, non-essential labour, although quite the opposite was the case.

Women’s activities could be described as ‘domestic’ in recognition of their responsibility for home management, food production and preparation, childbearing and rearing. This belies the extent of their non-family, non-domestic activities. In the sense that male work also contributed to household maintenance, the distinction between public and private also becomes blurred. Much of women’s work, as well as men’s, was performed outside the domestic setting. The nature of that work did not always fall into the clothing and food production activities associated with females, as demonstrated by the numbers in mining and metal trades. Similarly women’s family

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87 Mary Collier, *The Woman’s Labour, an Epistle to Mr. Stephen Duck, in Answer to his late poem entitled The Thresher’s Labour* (London: 1740), pp. 8-9; hereafter cited as Collier, ‘Woman’s Labour.’

maintenance or household management activities frequently involved them in negotiations in the so-called public sphere. Marketing was the most obvious aspect of this, at times leading to popular protest, often bread riots. Tilly and Scott cite English women who acted as intermediaries between husbands and employers, negotiating working and financial arrangements, while for the seventeenth century, Clark describes women who managed the financial affairs of business and household. These variations illustrate the divergence between reality and the ideology of women as domestic creatures.

Another characteristic of work within the small-scale domestic economy was that tasks were differentiated by age and sex. Many distinctions possibly derived from custom and habit, while childbearing and rearing at least partially influenced most women’s activities. Many of women’s responsibilities, as already suggested, were linked more closely than men’s with household management; at the same time, men were more likely to work away from home. Even in cottage industries however, tasks were usually segregated by sexual division of labour, viz. the division in woollen cloth production. It does not appear to be the heaviness of the task which was the determining factor, and indeed shifts could take place so that what was once men’s work became women’s and vice versa. As the century was ending more women were taking up weaving; men were becoming more prominent in harvest activities while women’s activities moved toward spring.

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89 Examples can be found in Malcolmson, _Life and Labour_, p. 117, Tilly and Scott, _Women, Work and Family_, pp. 55-56 and see Malcolm I. Thomis and Jennifer Grimmett, _Women in Protest, 1800-1850_ (London: 1982) for the first part of the following century.


Population pressure, male unemployment and a far greater reliance on wage labour may have contributed to development of sexual differentiation in work roles. Similarly the task orientated nature of women’s work along with her ‘supplementary’ role in the household may have combined to limit the kind of work married women could undertake while at the same time suppressing the wage level that they could command. The extent to which much of women’s work merged into domestic responsibilities lent credence to the image of domesticity as woman’s rightful place. But women in the labouring orders undoubtedly needed to work. The shift in agricultural opportunities meant that women’s farm work became substantially devalued. At the same time there was a decline in the availability of work in many domestic industries, certainly in textiles. For single women, domestic service instead of farm service provided an alternative. New opportunities were created in some industries, especially where an expansion of small scale production responded to growth in demand. As the location and the time-discipline of waged work came into increasing conflict with the woman’s need to tend to family or household requirements, the woman may have been forced limit the types of work she could undertake, possibly abandoning remunerative employment altogether.
C. Women, Marriage and the Family.

The woman’s economic relationships within the family only partly describe her place in society. Her decisions about family strategies were influenced by the structure, membership and affective character of her family. It must be conceded that the whole area of affections is problematic. Yet the affiliations of the poor and the way those may have affected decision-making are even more difficult to evaluate than those of the middle- and upper-classes because of their relative silence on these matters.

By ideologically withdrawing women from the external world, their position became more clearly defined in relation to men. On the one hand, the identification of women with an idealized domestic role defined the character of their activities; and on the other it appeared to enhance their image, sanctifying as virtues characteristics which arose from their supposed weaknesses. Yet weakness, no matter how gloriously it was described, meant that women required not mates, but protectors. Brown justified women’s need for protection as an extension of their nature and physical weakness, while others assumed that it was in the God-given order of things, sometimes appealing to scripture.93

In assigning increasing importance to a refuge for women there was a strong current of sexual protection. Concern with female chastity and modesty runs throughout the literature. Brown claimed that female timidity was the basis for their modesty, which he called ‘an ingenuous fear of shame.’ This in itself was the strongest guard of chastity, the great female virtue.94 Pricilla Wakefield, arguing for useful employments for women, limited their options.

Whatever obliges them to mix in the public haunts of men, or places the young in too familiar a situation with the other sex; whatever is obnoxious to the delicacy and reserve of the female character, or destructive, in the smallest degree, to the strictest moral purity is inadmissible.95

93 Brown, Female Character, p. 10; Kenrick, The Whole Duty of Woman, p. 44; Fordyce, Sermons to Young Women, p. 6; Moir, Female Tuition, p. 15.

94 Brown, Female Character, p. 11.

95 Wakefield, Reflections on the Female Sex, pp. 8-9.
Thus domestic retirement for women rested heavily on control of female sexuality and all of its manifestations.

Authors of advice books equated this need with an inherent position of inferiority and subordination:

> From the acknowledged Delicacy, Timidity, the limited Knowledge of the Sex, the Christian duty of Gentleness, Meekness, and honourable Subordination, doth clearly result. For Weakness asks Protection; and Protection implies Superiority in the Protector."96

Submission was seen to be an essential female characteristic since it was not the intention of nature that they should assume the lead. Thus More argued that women should exercise restraint and bow to the superiority of the male: ‘The more a woman’s understanding is improved, … the more accurate views will she take of the station she was born to fill, and the more readily will she accommodate herself to it.’97 Importantly these authors perceived the subjection of women as shelter and protection believing only worthless men would enslave women. Sensible to their own inadequacies, women would be filled with gratitude toward their protectors. Indeed, if educated according to nature and Christianity, the subordination itself would be a source of genuine and lasting pleasure to women.98

This stance is somewhat more intelligible when understood as only one aspect of gender relations in which marriage itself was seen as the most natural state for women.99 By relying on established Christian dogma reinforced by the newer belief in nature, women were effectively tied to men, marriage and home. The common core of Christian thought was that marriage was the rightful status for both men and women. The Protestant view prominent in England held that married love was a duty which

96 Brown, Female Character, p. 10.

97 More, Strictures on Female Education, p. 17.

98 Brown, Female Character, p. 10.

99 See for example, William Hayley, A Philosophical, Historical, and Moral Essay on Old Maids, 3 vols. (London: 1785), pp. 8-9, 13; Wakefield, Reflections on the Female Sex, p. 29; Fordyce, Sermons to Young Women, p. 3.
underpinned many of life’s other duties so that both partners had responsibilities to one another. It is characteristic that many of those who spoke or wrote on woman’s duty were Anglican clergymen preserving traditional Christian views while lending weight to an image of women tied to husband, children and home. Rousseau’s appeal to nature was in tone and sense remarkably similar:

The obedience and fidelity which she owes to her husband, the tenderness and care due to her children, are such natural and self-evident consequences of her position that she cannot honestly refuse her consent to the inner voice which is her guide, nor fail to discern her duty in her natural inclination.

Locke appeared to reject women’s subjection to the male as patriarch, claiming ‘there is here no more Law to oblige a Woman to such a subjection, if the Circumstance of her Condition or Contract with her Husband should exempt her from it.’ But he claimed women were subordinate to men within the conjugal, not political, realm of marriage. Thus marriage as a conjugal relation was separated from the political. Within marriage he granted men authority over women because ‘the Laws of Mankind and customs of Nations have ordered it so; and there is, I grant, a Foundation in Nature for it.’

These views resolved themselves into a prescription of the wife’s duty in late eighteenth-century manuals. Within marriage woman’s life had purpose. Domestic love was the first duty of her life and her purpose of being. Her ultimate goal was to preserve her husband, and his honour, and to respect and love him even when he wronged


her.\textsuperscript{103} She was to be a helpmate to her husband, his truest and best friend. She was to do him good when he was out of sorts, ‘to become the participator of her husband’s cares, the consoler of his sorrows, his stimulator to every praiseworthy undertaking, his partner in the labours and vicissitudes of life.’\textsuperscript{104} Women were expected to be managers of their husbands’ affairs though it usually meant that a wife was ‘the judicious superintendent [sic] of his family.’ She should steward his possessions in his absence, including herself as the husband’s most prized possession.\textsuperscript{105}

Despite the demeaning tone of much of the prescriptive literature, the authors were aware that women, as half of the human race, but had ‘as much reason to pretend to, and as much necessity to aspire after, the highest accomplishments of a Christian and solid virtue.’\textsuperscript{106} Because they claimed women were able to achieve a higher moral plane than men, women had special responsibility as arbiters of morality and virtue. This operated in two ways: in a private, domestic sense and in a more public, global sense. As mothers, or potential mothers, women were charged with bringing up children according to Christian values and virtues. With growing emphasis on the importance of childhood in shaping the adult character, mothers had the care of children at a critical time so that ‘the soundness or folly of our minds are not less owing to those first tempers and ways of thinking, which we receive from the love, tenderness, authority and constant conversation of mothers.’\textsuperscript{107} Likewise the mother’s demeanour and example was held to account for the effect it had on her children.\textsuperscript{108}


\textsuperscript{104}Wakefield, \textit{Reflections on the Female Sex}, pp. 31-2.

\textsuperscript{105}Ibid., p. 32; Horne, \textit{Forming the Female Character}, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{106}Horne, \textit{Forming the Female Character}, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{107}Ibid., p. 8.

The emphasis on proper moral education of children was also a reflection of the concern for posterity and the society as a whole. As the child is father to the man, so the woman was the mother of adult virtue. In particular she was charged with guardianship of male honour, since a virtuous woman could reform a man through his passion for her, while the immodest woman was responsible for men’s immorality. ¹⁰⁹ The vices of men often proceed either from the ill education they received at first from their mothers, or else from the passions which other women inspire into them at a riper age.¹⁰⁹ Women who obeyed the injunctions of modesty, piety, and humility benefited society, but should their manners relax and degenerate, society would become more vicious and debauched.¹¹⁰ In this way women came to be exalted and debased at the same time.

The formulation of femininity was grounded in the need for men to establish their property in women. With respect to companionship within marriage, ‘adultery was seen as a form of theft, particularly a theft of the exclusive and monopoly rights in a partner’s sexual and companionly services.’¹¹¹ Adultery damaged that relationship exacerbating the injury if a child were conceived, since English law recognized all children born of a marriage as legitimate offspring of that marriage. Thus women’s adultery was regarded as more heinous than men’s. Largely derived from middle-class culture, the sexual double standard, charted historically by Keith Thomas, was contradicted by two important elements of that culture.¹¹² By the eighteenth century, English opinion was growing that adultery was as great a sin in the husband as the wife, although the ramifications were more threatening when committed by the latter. Also the renewed interest in family values and respectability decried libertine conduct which jeopardized

¹⁰⁹ Horne, *Forming the Female Character*, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 5, 7; Moir, *Female Tuition*, preface; [John Brett], *Conjugal Love and Duty* (Dublin: 1757), p. 10; Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 328; Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*, pp. 16-17; Moir, *Female Tuition*, p. 27.


family life. Not the least important was the question of illegitimate children and their relationship to inheritance.

Sexual promiscuity was condemned because it was incompatible with the high emotional values expected from marriage, because it was wasteful, and because it took time and money which would have been better spent in the pursuit of a gainful occupation.\(^\text{113}\)

Middle-class opinion on sexual activity outside marriage was directed towards safeguarding the chastity of respectable women. Less concerned with lower-class women, the ideology also was not part of working-class culture. The case for a distinct plebeian culture in eighteenth-century England has been made by E. P. Thompson, ably supported in terms of familial affection by John Gillis.\(^\text{114}\) Lower-class views on a range of subjects linked with marriage, sexuality, sexual activity and illegitimacy clearly require more investigation, although the evidence is both difficult to find and to interpret. Nevertheless, these historians contend that the lower orders did not have an identity of interest with the middle classes and that the mode of operation and system of values of the former owed relatively little to the latter.

In plebeian culture, a double standard was much less marked and the resulting injunctions about female image, role and chastity were also far less significant. Macfarlane, citing the records of ecclesiastical courts, concludes that ‘these anxieties are not so obvious at the level of the mass of the population.’ There was, he noted, ‘no evidence of singling out of wives rather than husbands for especially severe treatment.’\(^\text{115}\) Gillis’ work on common law marriage further suggests that marital values amongst working people were at variance with middle-class strictures.\(^\text{116}\)

\(^{113}\)Ibid., p. 204.


\(^{115}\)Macfarlane, Marriage and Love, p. 243.

commenting on the ‘companionate marriage’ identified by Stone as a feature of bourgeois family life in the eighteenth century, Gillis argued that Stone negated the values of the poor because his central point of reference, affective individualism, does not begin to comprehend the way that the poor felt about the world and acted upon it. Their personal and social relations do not easily fit the sharply defined moral and emotional categories he employed.\textsuperscript{117}

Bourgeois ideals in eighteenth-century England, at all levels of personal relationships can be seen to be divergent from plebeian culture. Likewise the construction of emotion took alternative forms: ‘Among the eighteenth century plebs … the compatibility of individual affection and collective solidarity was an ideal worth struggling for.’\textsuperscript{118} Gillis shows that creative common law practices were evolved as ways of marrying, divorcing and legitimizing children, ‘at a time when personal relations were under particular strain.’\textsuperscript{119} Those practices suggest a collusion between partners against parents and, from 1753, against ‘the triumph of property, patriarchy, and male dominance’ embodied in Hardwicke’s Marriage Act.\textsuperscript{120} In particular, he argues that where the family constituted a productive unit, marriage could be regarded as forming a partnership which involved individual rather than parental choice. In the face of greater need to control the labour of children, parental control appeared to be lessening.’ Sex and age relations had become simultaneously more equal and more


\textsuperscript{118} Gillis, ‘Affective Individualism,’ p. 127.


\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., p. 12.
Betrothal had become the private concern of the young couple, who formed a partnership against the control of parents.

Contemporaries Jonas Hanway and John Smeaton noted the plebeian practice of ‘trial marriage’ implying a variant mode of behaviour than that found in middle-class culture. Richard Smith cites cases of ‘the better sorts’ or village elites regulating the sexual activity of poorer couples, thus again inferring differential attitudes towards sexual behaviour. This evidence further signifies not only a divergent culture, but specifically a different attitude to premarital relations, if not extramarital relations.

Similarly, the construction of female identity within the plebeian orders was shaped by factors which diverged from middle-class experience and culture. Within the family or household unit, the woman’s power and strength rested on her management of the household and the importance of her labour. Relations between husbands and wives were characterized by interdependence, by a partnership involving pursuit of a common goal. Thus cooperation resulting from economic subsistence requirements has to be seen as a part of gender relations. At the same time, female involvement in clandestine marriage could be an expression of her desire to retain her separate legal position. She could preserve her right to her name, property and children, and could protect her access to trade. Thus the woman gained public validation of her private life without loss of her legal identity.

However, cooperation in economic matters and the use of clandestine marriage only partly define gender relations. Eighteenth-century England was a patriarchal society in which men held all the overt political power and in which law and custom

121 Ibid., p. 10. In his argument about family structural/functional change he follows Medick’s in ‘Protoindustrial Family,’ p. 303.

122 Quoted in Malcolmson, Life and Labour, pp. 104-05 and 105n. See also the discussion of premarital sexual activity in Macfarlane, Marriage and Love, pp. 303-307.


125 Ibid., pp. 12-14.
recognized the subordination of women to men. At the same time there is evidence that
the Pauline dogma, ‘Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the
Lord,’ was less likely to be construed in an absolute sense than in previous centuries.
Where once charivari were used to berate the overweening wife, by the eighteenth
century, historians find them applied to husbands who beat their wives. Flandrin and
Stone also note a shift in marriage manuals by the eighteenth century, in which
reciprocity of duties was emphasized. Nevertheless, the law recognized husbands
and wives as one, ‘and that person is the husband’, society still expected the male to
be the authority in the family, and through marriage most women gained strength,
position and status.

Within this context, female reputation was an important commodity. Chaytor
argued that the aspersions on female chastity

point to women’s vulnerability, their dependence on men and marriage, not
just for economic survival in a society where the alternatives were few and
bleak, but also for status and prestige. Men acquired this through property,
wealth and perhaps through office holding, women through marriage.

Thus she saw the divergence in their lives, the subordination of women and the unequal
division of power between men and women as lying behind the different reputations
they had to defend. In contrast, Morris suggests that ‘whore’ was a metaphor for the
loss of femininity that accompanied women’s exercise of authority over men. The focus
on female adultery and marital relations in defamation cases carried with it comment
on a husband’s inability to control his wife. The most common case was male defamation

126 Flandrin, Families in Former Times, pp. 126-27, also 118-25; Porter, English Society., p.
45; Stone, Family, Sex and Marriage, pp. 374-75, also 324-403; Shorter, Making of the Modern

(London: 1800), vol. 1, pt. 15; hereafter cited as Blackstone, Commentaries. On the legal
construction of marriage see Macfarlane, Marriage and Love, pp. 287-90.

128 Miranda Chaytor, ‘Household and Kinship: Ryton in the Late 16th and early 17th
and Kinship.’

129 Ibid., pp. 26, 51
of a married female, and involved the power relations between men and women. It was the women whose lives most closely approximated those of their men and were furthest from the purely domestic role who found themselves in court defending their reputations. Thus defamation cases may say far more about the contested areas than the separate spheres of men and women, more about the conflicts over power than the sexual division of labour. \textsuperscript{130} Taken together with Gillis’ conclusions, these present a complex picture of plebeian gender relations. Because of the difficulty of research in this area, perhaps the best we can say is to agree with Malcolmson that gender relations depended on ‘certain stoical qualities’ summed up much later by George Sturt: ‘a kind of dogged comradeship … is what commonly unites the labouring man and his wife; they are partners and equals running their impecunious affairs by mutual help.’\textsuperscript{131}

Because responsibility for childcare and household management was placed on the mother, demography shaped the context in which she operated. In England, the simple family household prevailed, that is, a family comprised mainly of parents and their children. Research on mobility, mortality, and remarriage has demonstrated how complex such a simple family unit could be. With high population turnover, most households may well have been hybrid families of parents, step and foster children and their own offspring, at some time.\textsuperscript{132} Also, servants were common in many households; Laslett reckoned that only one fifth of children escaped the experience of living with or serving as servants.\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{130}Polly Morris, ‘Defamation and Female Sexual Reputation,’ seminar presentation, University of Essex, 27 June 1983. See the critique of these sources in Rab Houston and Richard Smith, ‘A New Approach to Family History?’ \textit{History Workshop Journal} 14 (Autumn, 1982), 126.

\textsuperscript{131}Quoted in Malcolmson, \textit{Life and Labour}, p. 70.


\textsuperscript{133}Laslett, \textit{Family Life and Illicit Love}, p. 38. See Medick on the divergence in pattern between ‘agrarian’ and ‘protoindustrial’ families, ‘Protoindustrial Family’, p. 302.
Ultimately most women married, and marriage was becoming more frequent than in previous centuries. By the mid-eighteenth century only between four and seven percent never married, while up to a quarter of marriages were remarriages.\textsuperscript{134} Meanwhile, the age at first marriage for women fell from a mean of 26.2 years in the first half of the century to 24.9 in the later half.\textsuperscript{135} The mother herself was likely to be a mature woman aged between the late twenties and early thirties at the birth of her children. She was usually close in years to her husband, and often older.\textsuperscript{136}

The presence of children in the home often shaped the decisions women had to make about how to ration their time and energies. Wrigley suggests that eighteenth-century population growth was not dependent on more children being born per woman, but upon earlier and more frequent marriage.\textsuperscript{137} Though both the population and the gross reproductive rate were increasing, marital fertility showed no significant fluctuation, with the mean number of live births per woman hovering at 6.83 throughout the period 1550-1800.\textsuperscript{138} Yet Laslett’s household data show a much smaller number of children present per household:


\textsuperscript{135}Ibid., p. 255.


Table 1.1. Numbers of Children present per Household.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean size of groups of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gentlemen</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeoman</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husbandmen</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradesmen &amp; craftsmen</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paupers</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Because of the high rate of unfulfilled pregnancies and the child mortality rate, these figures do not fully describe the situation. Whether or not a child was born live or survived, the pregnancy affected the potential mother’s time, energy and approach to her daily work. If the child survived, the early years of its life were the period of maximum dependency. So even with stillbirth and infant and child mortality, many women had greater childcare responsibilities than household figures imply. In a period of high child employment both at home or in other households, the image of very large numbers of children resident at home, requiring full maintenance is somewhat overstated. The proportion of children aged 10-19 remaining at home bears a strong relation to the opportunities for work at home against work in another household. Late eighteenth-century data for Cardington, though a single example, illustrates the tendency for children lower down the occupational scale to be non-resident.139 These points converge in the families of the poor, who had potentially higher mortality, a greater need to send children out to work and probably fewer live births due to maternal health.

New attitudes towards children throughout the century may have modified perceptions of both child and mother at all levels of society. In 1960, Philippe Ariès

postulated the discovery of childhood in early modern Europe as a distinct stage in the life cycle with its own special nature.\textsuperscript{140} He and others have argued that childhood as a formative stage in personality development gained in importance. More emotional involvement with children was accompanied by tangible physical changes in their treatment and position in the family.\textsuperscript{141} From the Reformation, a concern with the spiritual welfare of the individual contributed to a growing interest in childhood. Thus it became acceptable, indeed desirable, to invest emotional energy in children, whilst it was essential to invest in the future by shaping the moral character of the child. They were seen as fragile creatures both to be safeguarded and reformed.

As such childhood became identified with the period of life associated with dependence; therefore it could be seen, especially among the lower orders, as lasting until the early 20s or economic independence. However Gillis made a useful distinction between childhood and youth. Childhood could be seen as a period of complete dependence while youth was

\begin{quote}
\textbf{a very long transition period, lasting from the point that the very young child first became somewhat independent of its family, usually about seven or eight, to the point of complete independence at marriage, ordinarily in the mid- or late twenties.}\textsuperscript{142}
\end{quote}

Youth coincided with the period when a person began to separate from the family and go to service, apprenticeship, work or school. It was a time for preparation for adult life, when the roles of adults were internalized and during which young people gradually came into adult rights.\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{140}Philippe Ariès, \textit{Centuries of Childhood} (Harmondsworth: 1973), Chapter I.


\textsuperscript{143}Ibid., p. 2; Sommerville, \textit{The Rise and Fall of Childhood}, pp. 179-80; Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, \textit{Children in English Society} (London: 1969), vol. 1, pp. 298-9. See also Chapter 5 relating youth to apprenticeship.
The eighteenth century differed from earlier periods in its orientation. Previously, interest in the child was socially motivated and adult orientated. In contrast, the eighteenth century demonstrated a new sympathy with the child; the image of childhood was accepted and by century’s end, even glorified. During the century a combination of Puritan-Evangelical precepts and Enlightenment philosophy was to firmly establish childhood and the child as central concerns to the society, the family and particularly the mother.144 The debate about human nature focused attention on the child and the child’s early environment. The malleability of the child became central to issues of epistemology and contributed to emphasizing the role of the mother in early childhood education. It should be emphasized that the ideology did not necessarily match reality, nor was it accepted at all levels of society.

A leading characteristic of the idea of childhood as postulated by Stone and Ariès, was the creation of a privatized family group in which the socialization and protection of the young gained primacy. As a corollary, family relationships became more affectionate so that the older style formality between parents and children was deposed by a more loving attitude.145 The model suggests that children were more likely to be found in their own home, not some other household, and the concept of ‘home’ gained meaning.146 The family gained pre-eminence as a formative force in the child’s character, so that ‘the family ceased to be simply an institution for the transmission of a name and an estate - it assumed a moral and spiritual function, it moulded bodies and souls.’147

In this model, Ariès linked the concept and moral ascendancy of the family to the middle classes, while the lower classes retained a preference for sociability and sense of

144 The discussion of the nature of knowledge and its implications for children are taken up in Chapter 2.


146 Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 390.

147 Ibid., p. 396.
community. Both Ariès and Stone argued that the idea of home and its enclosing character did not yet have meaning for cottagers’, artisans’ and poor labourers’ families in the eighteenth century since poverty and labour demands precluded the development of child centred attitudes. ¹⁴⁸ Social relationships were influenced by the economic and labour requirements of the family or household enterprise so that children’s needs were not necessarily the central concern of the household. They may have been more a handicap than an advantage. Though useful in families which required the work of children, the number of deserted children in times of distress suggests that they were frequently most expendable. Medick and others argue that children’s labour was at a premium in domestic industry, and mark this as one of the important shifts between peasant and protoindustrial families, while Wrigley and Schofield place the emphasis on demographic factors over instrumental concerns as the causes of an increased birth rate. ¹⁴⁹ The need for labour may have affected decision-making and the resultant structure of the household but it does not rule out the importance of emotion in shaping the way strategies for survival were derived.

Familial moulding of character could have been undercut by the experience of children as servants or with servants in the household, child labour and apprenticeship away from the family of origin, and the level of sociable, communal living of the poor. ¹⁵⁰ However, the first years of life were usually spent in the parental home. Richard Wall’s case study showed that eight or nine children out of ten aged fourteen or younger were residing with their parents, while 36-46% of tradesmen’s, craftsmen’s and labourers’ children aged 15 and above were at home. ¹⁵¹ This is compatible with

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 390-91, 397-98; Stone, Family, Sex and Marriage, pp. 449-78.


¹⁵¹ Wall, ‘Age at Leaving Home,’ pp. 190, 195.
Laslett’s data on the life cycle. Thus parents would have been the prime factor in socialization even for poorer children, though their influence could have been reinforced and diluted by others. Laslett concurred that ‘the strongest single effect on the child from the presence of other personalities has always been that of parents and siblings.’ Influence of others has always been ‘incomparably weaker.’

The ideology of childhood identified the family, particularly the parents, as the key factor in childrearing and character development. Alongside the ideology of domesticity, emphasis on children gave mothers primary responsibility for childcare and nurture. In the eighteenth century, the pervasive and widely accepted belief in the importance of environmental factors is demonstrated by the number and range of tracts, sermons and advice manuals predicated upon it. Whether accepting the child as born innocent, evil or good, authors of conservative and radical persuasion relied on the malleability of the child as the keystone to the its development. Environmentalism stressed the importance of the earliest contacts, and mothers had care of the children for that most critical time. As described earlier, women were ascribed the function of propagating morality in society through their early instruction of children. They were also believed to be the natural educators of children, more capable than men of teaching children because of their milder disposition, tenderness and patience. Their natural apprehension made them more concerned for their children’s everlasting welfare and more solicitous. Also their circumstances, from being indoors and with more time to spare, made them better acquainted with children’s tempers. Consequently many tracts on children’s education were addressed to mothers.

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153 Horne, Forming the Female Character, p. 8; Moir, Female Tuition, p. 35.

154 Horne, Forming the Female Character, p. 9; Trimmer, Oeconomy of Charity, p. 21.

155 Rousseau took this position, admonishing other writers to ‘Address your treatises on education to the women, for not only are they able to watch over it more closely than men, not only is their influence always predominant in education ...’, Emile, p. 5. Moir is just one who followed this injunction, Female Tuition, p. 1.
The fallacy of this line of thought was that it did not and could not be applied to all classes. On the one hand the cultural and economic nexus of working-class life meant that the child orientated, domesticated female was an alien image. On the other hand, as work patterns changed, Laslett saw the removal of fathers and other earners from the household during the working day as a significant factor which altered working-class ideas of childcare. ‘The perpetual presence of the father, the paterfamilias, the household head, must have had an enormous effect on the pre-industrial family and household.’ Yet as Laslett himself admits, we do not know what part the father took in tending and instructing children. Where home and workshop coincided, the father may have been more ‘present’ than later wage earners would be; and in farming communities seasonality of work may have had a similar effect. But it was not necessarily true that they played a more substantial role in childcare and socialization than their successors. Nevertheless, patterns which progressively separated the home from the workplace may have altered the childcare responsibilities of the labouring household, providing a framework in which ideology could make inroads on reality.

156 Laslett, Family Life and Illicit Love, p. 37.
157 Laslett and Wall, Household and Family, p. 104.
Chapter 2: Theories of Popular Education

A. Philosophical Roots of Eighteenth-Century Education

Developments in eighteenth-century education had firm roots in the political and philosophical debates of the day. The ‘heavenly city of the eighteenth-century philosophers’ was based on the centrality of human reason instead of superstition, and on scientific principles and practice. As a result, the nature of human understanding and knowledge assumed a key role in perceiving the world and shaping its future. The new cosmology reached into all aspects of life, changing modes of thought throughout society, and influencing educational theory and practice in particular.

In the late seventeenth century, Newton had attempted to resolve the conflict between human reason and the world of God. His work marked a significant shift from the conception that the world could only be understood by revealed religion. God was not dismissed, but became the first Cause, the Great Mechanic or even the Watchmaker. Newton suggested that the world was governed by natural laws which were intelligible and reasonable. Once discovered, these immutable and axiomatic laws of Reason would be acknowledged as just and right by all. By the laws of Nature, man’s world was illuminated, as Pope wrote,

Nature and Nature’s laws lay hid in night:
God said, ‘Let Newton be!’ and all was light

The sixteenth and seventeenth-century scientific movement had produced a ‘climate of opinion in which supernatural and occult explanations ceased to satisfy.’ The significance of Reason was that religion no longer rested entirely on revelation;

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1 This is the title of the well-known discussion of the enlightenment by Carl Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (New Haven: 1959).


3 Basil Willey, The Eighteenth-Century Background, (Boston: 1961), p. 4. Willey’s useful and important discussion of Nature in eighteenth-century thought is fundamental to the development of this section. See also Williams, Keywords, on the ambiguity of Nature, pp. 184-189; and Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment (Boston: 1955), pp. 37-49.
retaining a supernatural foundation, faith must be grounded firmly on Nature and Reason. Archbishop Tillotson explained it thus, ‘All the duties of Christian religion which respect God, are no other but what natural light prompts men to, excepting the two sacraments, and praying to God in the name and by the mediation of Christ.’4 Thus to Newton, Locke and others the voice of reason was seen to be the voice of God. He could be perceived as the reasonable creator of a reasonable universe which worked by determined laws of material causation. From the well-ordered universe rational men could deduce the sort of religion He intended them to follow. The new cosmology provoked controversy amongst organized religion during the eighteenth century. Many in the Anglican Church concentrated their energies on refuting Deism, whilst others used the rationalist message to fend off the challenge from the ‘superstitious’ High Church party and the ‘enthusiasm’ of the Dissenters.5 For some Christianity became a reasonable religion, a natural religion.

Natural law and reason also influenced the political and social order. From 1688, the British constitution tended to be seen as something sacred and inviolable.6 A natural and rational creation, it reflected the universal principles governing the universe, so that the laws, which sprang from it, necessarily echoed the laws of Nature. Such a perception of English law could be summed up in Pope’s phrase, ‘whatever is, is right.’7 Similarly, this optimistic view of natural law provided an apologia for the existing order. Pope’s vast chain of being, ‘which from God began … angel, man, beast, bird, fish, insect’

4Quoted in Willey, Eighteenth Century Background, p. 3.


6Typified by Blackstone, Commentaries, (1765-69).

implied, for each link in the chain a right place and ‘Where, one step broken, the great scale’s destroyed.’

This interpretation was challenged by those who argued that many social institutions were the products of superstition, bigotry and prejudice. Writing before Blackstone, and in the wake of the ‘glorious revolution,’ Locke maintained that constitutions were the work of men and not of nature. They were not living things but mechanical constructions which should be dismantled and rebuilt if they did not work properly. Thus Nature as an absolute ideal standard could condemn obsolescence instead of justifying the existing state of things.

This argument led to a need to understand human nature and the workings of the human mind. Men had to begin with first principles, and understand the nature of knowledge, before they could trust the results of their investigations into the natural world, religion, morals or politics. As Locke explained,

It came into my thoughts that … before we set ourselves inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own understandings, and see what objects our understandings were or were not fitted to deal with. In other words, before they could know anything they must know how they know. Thus, epistemology assumed a central role in Enlightenment thought. In this context, Locke wrote Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690). Like Newton’s explanation of natural laws, Locke’s exposition of human understanding seemed a blueprint for explaining, and by implication, controlling human behaviour. For some it led to a belief in a perfect world ‘in which reasonable educators produced reasonable men to live in a reasonable society under a reasonable constitution.’ Implicit within this body of thought is the notion of progress and with it the perfectibility of man.

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8 Ibid., p. 513.

9 Locke, Human Understanding, p. 56, also 66.


However, perfectibility required a link between individual reason and the good of society. In 1699, Shaftesbury demonstrated via a tautology that reasonable men desired for themselves what was in the interests of society. This view, encapsulated in Pope’s dictum that ‘true self-love and social are the same,’ had important implications for social, political and economic theory. Half a century later, in David Hartley’s more complex argument in Observations on Man (1749), moral sense was the result of a process of association of ideas rather than an innate faculty. He saw the human mind as a place where sensations worked upon the brain to produce ideas while reason, operating by the association of those ideas one with another led the mind from simple to complex concepts and from selfish to social desires. Although Hartley’s ‘moral sense’ was of necessity derived from associations, in order for the law of associations to have the maximum influence for good, man must manipulate circumstances to produce better behaviour. Willey points to the fundamental contradiction in this position. Hartley, and Godwin later, proclaimed men’s characters to be the product of circumstances, but they also were anxious to control and alter circumstances to mould the right kind of character. By implication, the task for educators was to ensure that all minds developed naturally, in a reasonable way, and for legislators to see that the law allowed reasonable men to pursue their interests freely.

Thus a new radicalism was born which looked forward to a perfect society of the future instead of backward to seventeenth-century republicanism. Proponents of this

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12 Inquiry Concerning Virtue, see Willey, Eighteenth Century Background, pp. 57-76; educated partly under Locke, Shaftesbury is typical of those who took the ideas of Locke and Newton beyond their intent, and helped to shape the optimistic cosmology of the early eighteenth century.


15 Willey, Eighteenth Century Background, pp. 152-53.
world view included Dissenters like Joseph Priestley (Essay on the First Principles of Government, 1768) and Richard Price (Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, 1776). Also in 1776, the year of the American Declaration of Independence, Adam Smith published Wealth of Nations, on the laws and motives governing economic behaviour. His restatement of ‘true self-love and social are the same’ reflected much of late eighteenth-century thinking about the role of government and provided a justification for the ‘laissez faire’ attitude so important to nineteenth-century economic and social policy:

The natural effort of every individual to better his own conditions when suffered to exert itself with freedom and security, is so powerful a principle that it is alone, and without any assistance, not only capable of carrying on the society to wealth and prosperity, but surmounting a hundred impertinent obstructions with which the folly of human laws too often encumbers its operations.16

Because mankind was malleable with the potential for perfectibility, education became central to the philosophical and political debates of the late eighteenth century. Yet attitudes to governmental intervention, and an appreciation of the contradictory ways in which schooling could be used meant that a voluntary approach to educational provision was widely accepted in England. Importantly, Dissenters such as Priestley opposed John Brown’s proposal for state education because they perceived it would strengthen the power of the ruling group, and act to enforce religious conformity.17

Thus education remained a matter of individual choice with provision resting in the community. At the same time, the perception of school provision as a public good requiring state intervention developed from these arguments.

Jeremy Bentham translated the eighteenth-century concept of utility into a potential tool for social engineering.18 In his sweeping attack on Blackstone, Fragment


17Passmore, ‘Malleability of Man,’ p. 44.

on Government (also in 1776), he regarded existing law as ‘a vast rubbish dump, the tangled and meaningless residue … of countless generations of dishonest lawyers.’ He disagreed that development through time gave any particular sanctity to an institution. Instead, he argued that the test should be whether something was useful to people or not, that is, whether it had ‘utility.’ He believed in the compatibility of selfish and social desires, and from Priestley took the phrase most associated with him, ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number.’ Thus his followers pressed for legislated social reform during the first half of the nineteenth century including poor law and factory legislation. In particular, Bentham influenced the liberal Whigs Henry Brougham and Samuel Whitbread, early proponents of state education for the masses.

Opposing the optimistic and rationalist view of society were forces rooted within enthusiastic religion and radicalism itself. Natural, rationalist, deist religion never superseded religious enthusiasm and evangelical preachers existed throughout the century. But in 1739, enthusiastic religion was rejuvenated when George Whitefield and his friend John Wesley began open-air and itinerant preaching, frequently in areas without the benefit of parish clergy. Their fervent sermons described the rewards of paradise and the terrors of hell, in order to raise the level of spirituality.

Initially, the Methodists, as they were called, bore the opprobrium of the establishment who saw them as a threat for the character of their meetings and their strength amongst the working classes. But by mid-century there were signs of a new mood. On the one hand, the rank and file Methodist was seen as sober and hardworking, whilst Methodism preached resignation, not revolution. Wesley himself was a staunch supporter of the existing order, denouncing the American revolutionaries. On the other hand, spirituality and righteousness began to come back into fashion especially among the middle classes. The London earthquakes in 1750 and the Lisbon earthquake

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19 Jarrett, Britain, 1688-1815, p. 365.


in 1755 challenged notions of rationality. Then from 1760, on the accession of George III, the monarchy set a standard for piety and domestic virtue which was widely welcomed. In 1785, Wesley wrote, ‘I am become, I know not how, an honourable man.’ In this changing climate, Methodism had a lasting effect on the Anglican Church because of its rejuvenation of faith and enthusiasm in religion.

From within the Church, a corresponding evangelical response demonstrated a similar mood of moral earnestness and concern with philanthropy. One of the best known Evangelical groups was the Clapham Sect, based on John Venn’s church in Clapham from 1792 to 1813, including Wilberforce, several members of Parliament and other prominent men. Fundamentally they shared a genuine compassion for suffering, and worked to alleviate poverty and social evils. Like Methodists, Evangelicals supported the existing social order and were antipathetic to radicalism. They did not attack social inequalities, promoting instead active Christianity as the panacea for the world’s ills and striving for a reformation of conduct through philanthropy, education and missionary enterprise. Of special anxiety to them was the influence of revolutionary ideas in Britain, specifically amongst the untaught, susceptible poor.

An additional thread in the reaction to radicalism was a significant shift in the understanding of Nature. Though the child of rationalism, the ‘historical’ as opposed to the ‘philosophical’ view of Nature came to effectively challenge the rationalist view of humanity. The ‘historical’ sense of Nature meant ‘things as they now are or have become,’ as opposed to a view of Nature which represented a future ideal state, or ‘things as they may become.’ As early as 1739, Hume questioned the relationship between Nature and Reason:

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'Belief is more properly an act of the sensitive than of the cognitive part of our natures,' and our belief in the order of Nature, though not capable of rational demonstration, is practically valid because it arises from 'the principles of human nature.'

The most direct rejection of pure rationalism occurred after mid-century, so that Nature came to be perceived in quite different ways, and was used to justify both revolution and reaction, reason and sensibility.

An important challenge to the rationalist view of Nature was Burke’s, initiated in his parody of Bolingbroke, *Vindication of Natural Society* (1756), but more fully expressed in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Central to Burke’s thinking was a belief in the organic nature of society. Human societies were living and growing things with roots that stretched far back into the past. Contrary to the notion of a blank slate, Burke believed that people were born with predispositions inherited from the past, prejudices which varied from time and place. Therefore, there was no universal perfect, ideal or natural society. For Burke, reliance on reason alone was tantamount to moral anarchy. The French ‘Reign of Terror’ was proof that abolishing the reverence for the past in the name of reason created something fallible in lieu of a complex, natural, organically developed organism. He concurred that the ‘proper study of mankind was man,’ but argued that the whole man and not an artificial abstraction uprooted from his past must be examined.

If reason was one part of man, feelings and emotion were another. Appreciating that things which were neither beautiful nor reasonable could still move people deeply, and that the utterly irrational could have power over the human mind, Burke showed that Nature could lead two ways. It could mean the head, or it could mean the heart; ideas or facts; theories or history; what is congenial to abstract reason, or what is due to

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26 See Willey on Burke, *Eighteenth Century Background*, p. 240-52.

the heart.'\textsuperscript{28} The noble savage of Rousseau and others came to be seen to possess a ‘remote primeval ancestor, responding to the mysterious rhythms of the natural world and living out his life in terms of myth and ritual and taboo.'\textsuperscript{29}

This view of nature did not supplant the rationalist view, and in the work of so-called rationalists like Mary Wollstonecraft, one can see a fine mixture of reason and feelings. Even Godwin, who represented pure rationalism, modified his own most extreme position by 1798. But the revised view of Nature and the idea of organic social development were significant factors sustaining the status quo in England. They explain how some accepted the American revolution as a legitimate response to the restrictions of Englishmen’s rights and then, like Burke, rejected the French revolution as destructive of the whole complex organism of society. The Methodist and Evangelical view of mankind fitted with an image of the natural man containing a strange savage who needed controlling and improving. There are other indications in art, architecture and literature of growing ‘romanticism,’ of a fashion for the gothic, and of a fascination with the sublime, all of which reflect the changing mood. Most important here is the effect these varied views of nature had on education, and particularly on the education of girls of the labouring orders.

As described earlier, a new emphasis on childhood in family life was emerging, and with it came a change of direction and focus in the education of children. Departing from a severe pessimistic view of human nature, the Neo-Platonist philosophers in the 1680s asserted that not only was the child born with innate knowledge but also with an innate goodness.\textsuperscript{30} The idea of inborn characteristics was not new, but the idea of essential goodness or innocence was. This led to the belief that the child born good was corrupted by the world. Locke made two significant contributions to revising ideas of

\textsuperscript{28}Willey, \textit{Eighteenth Century Background}, p. 250; see also his comparison of Burke with Rousseau, p. 244.

\textsuperscript{29}Jarrett, \textit{Britain, 1688-1815}, p. 369.

\textsuperscript{30}Sommerville, \textit{Rise and Fall of Childhood}, pp. 120-121.
learning. First, from his philosophical concern with the nature of human knowledge, he published *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). Second, he applied his epistemology to the question of social education with *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693). Building on the work of earlier writers, he evolved a new way of looking at children and a different approach to educating them for their role as adults. The popularity of the latter book attests to public receptiveness to a more child orientated way of rearing children.\(^{31}\)

Locke characterized the mind at birth as a blank, a *tabula rasa*, which was furnished with ideas, intellect and character by experience. Thus the child was born neither good nor bad but innocent. Essentially children were non moral creatures until they developed a will and the ability to resist impulses and make deliberate decisions. Attacking innate ideas, Locke attempted to demonstrate that all knowledge was derived from observation ‘either about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds perceived and reflected upon by ourselves.’\(^{32}\) To Locke education meant the development of mental and physical capacities through sense impression and experience rather than the traditional training by drill and memory. Locke’s perceptions of mental and physical processes led him to a profound regard for the child, and to emphasize the importance of the childhood years to the formation of character:

> We have reason to conclude, that great Care is to be had of the forming Children’s Minds, and giving them that seasoning early, which shall influence their Lives always after.\(^{33}\)

The process of learning should, therefore, begin early and be shaped by the child’s special capacities and needs. He would bring the child to learn through pleasure and

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\(^{31}\)Ibid., p. 121; Plumb, ‘New World of Children,’ p. 67,


\(^{33}\)Locke, *Educational Writings*, p. 138.
encouragement, since ‘The right Way to teach them Those things is, to give them a liking and Inclination to what you propose to them to be learn’d.’

At the same time, he warned against overindulgence or fondness, remaining conscious of a need to instil obedience and parental respect in children. Shame and praise were recommended as correctives to bring the child to adopt the parents’ moral position rendering him less vulnerable to social pressure. Like the Puritans in the use of moral suasion, Locke also believed that the child’s character could be moulded and shaped. Of all men ‘Nine parts of Ten are what they are, Good or Evil, useful or not, by their Education.’ Thus education was to be used explicitly to create the kind of person required by society, both occupationally and morally. He advocated useful education recommending subjects outside the classical regime favoured in grammar schools. Since the end of education was the creation of a social being suited to his role in society, correct habits should be instilled. Thus the Lockean man would develop the self-discipline necessary to control his passions. He wrote, ‘The Great Business of all is Vertue and Wisdom. Teach him to get a Mastery over his Inclinations, and submit his Appetite to Reason.’

Though Locke was concerned with a small social elite, the universal theoretical basis of his ideas about perception, the process of learning, and childhood gave them a much wider reception. Throughout eighteenth-century society, Locke’s influence altered educational emphasis so that it aimed to equip the child for gainful employment. Newer schools for middle-class boys advertised that they would teach useful social virtues advocated by Lockean educationalists, such as sobriety, obedience, industry, industry, industry.

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34 Ibid., p. 172.


36 Locke, Educational Writings, pp. 114, 341.

37 Ibid., pp. 313-14.
thrift, benevolence and compassion.\footnote{Plumb, ‘New World of Children,’ p. 69.} It is worth remembering, though that the philosophical foundations of Locke’s work were inaccessible to many in society, and that his ‘Thoughts’ were inevitably borrowed and interpreted with a range of practical results. Such was the case in poor children’s education, where ‘character moulding’ and ‘early influences’ took on a rather different connotation than they did in the middle-class children’s education.

Early in the eighteenth century, those interested in education of the poor turned some portion of his ideas to practical use, though not necessarily adhering to his spirit. Dr. James Talbot in \textit{The Christian Schoolmaster}, acknowledged the susceptibility of the child’s mind:

\begin{quote}
As to the Business of Instruction, it must be consider’d, that the Minds of Children, like blank Paper, or smooth wax, are equally capable of any Impression: the Use and Exercise of our Understanding advances by slower Degrees than that of our Limbs, and requires more Assistance from without, to Guide and Direct it. In this tender Age, the Mind seems to be purely Passive, and Susceptible only of such Notions, as it receives from others, by the Means of the Outward Senses.\footnote{James Talbot, \textit{The Christian Schoolmaster} (London: 1707), p. 24.}
\end{quote}

This manual on the purposes and curriculum of charity schools was aimed at those wishing to establish such a school. In it Talbot was primarily concerned with moulding an obedient, subservient Christian poor population. Consequently, he declared the first care of all teachers was to ‘imprint in the Minds and Memory of the Children’ the doctrines and principles of the Established religion, putting it before all else, including reading.\footnote{Ibid., p. 25.} Secondly, … all Children should be Inured betimes to Submission and Obedience; Childhood being properly a state of Subjection to the Will of those that are more capable to Govern and Direct us than we our Selves … And it is more especially requisite that all children who are bred in Charity Schools, for Services and Apprenticeships, should be strictly obliged to practice Here that Subjection to their Teachers, which they must Afterwards pay to their Masters … They must likewise be admonished to order themselves lowly
and reverently, (i.e. humbly and respectfully) to all their Betters, in Age, Degree, Wisdom or Goodness.  

This theme that right impressions, principles and patterns of behaviour must be presented as early as possible in order to overcome baneful influences pervaded the sermons and tracts. For example, Philip Furneaux’s Dissenting Charity School sermon in 1755, echoed Locke’s admonition to curb the appetite:

The great secret of education is, the forming the temper; that is, manuring the soil, and destroying those rank and noxious weeds, which if they are suffered to spring up, will choke [sic] the principles of wisdom, which may afterwards be ingrafted …

Repeatedly those interested in educating poor children return to these two concepts, that the tender mind is impressionable and because ‘inquisitive docile Minds will never lie quite idle and unemployed … there is more than ordinary reason to instil Christian principles be times.’ Thus the shaping of the young child became a preeminent reason for advocating education of poor children.

By the end of the century, belief in the importance of experience and early example manifested itself in a desire to remove poor children from what was regarded as the baneful influence of their parents and in attempts to ‘correct’ against these experiences. A description of schools for the poor in Chester claimed that the wretched behaviour of the lowest class proceeded chiefly, if not entirely, from their different mode of instruction and the pernicious example of their own family and neighbours. A general lack of faith in the ability of poor parents to set a good example was clear. At the same

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41 Ibid., pp. 41-42.

42 Philip Furneaux, The Importance of Education, a sermon preached at St. Thomas’s for the Charity School of Gravel Lane, Southwark, 1 January 1755, p. 11.


time the responsibility for rescuing poor children from ignorance, vice and profanity was placed on their ‘betters.’ ‘The education of poor children is no longer entirely left to their ignorant and corrupted parents,’ wrote Sarah Trimmer in 1787, ‘if they are not in general better taught for the future, the fault will lie with ourselves.’ However, she was more generous than many in taking sympathy on the poor and regarding their situation as their parents’ misfortune instead of their fault.

Locke’s ideas became transmuted into a belief in perfectibility. If the character of individuals could be shaped by education, then society as a whole could be perfected by right education. Rousseau was instrumental in transmitting the optimism of perfectibility to England with the English publication of *Emile* in 1762. *Emile* promulgated a positive view of the child, which was more significant in some respects for how it was received than how it was intended. The fundamental social and political challenge upon which Rousseau’s educational theories were structured was the key. Earlier writers had thought that human institutions were necessary to correct human evils, but Rousseau turned that on its head. He asserted that nature was the source of good whilst society corrupted. From this flowed the belief in *Emile*’s innocence, and a theory of upbringing which was an attack on aspects of social and political life which Rousseau rejected as harmful.

Central to the book was the possibility of preserving the original perfect nature of the child by means of the careful control of his education and environment. The child was ‘born sensitive’ and ‘capable of learning, but knowing nothing, perceiving nothing.’ Thus the child must be shaped by the ‘gift of education.’ Since Rousseau accepted the importance of environment in education, he maintained ‘as soon as the child begins to

46 Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity*, p. 28.

47 Ibid., pp. 6-10, 14-15, 46.

48 Rousseau, *Emile*, pp. 6, 7, 28.
take notice, what is shown him must be carefully chosen.' The most important contribution of Rousseau to educational theory is the extent to which he made the child the focus of education, claiming that education must be suited to the child for ‘every age, every station in life, has a perfection, a ripeness of its own.’ Thus education should be based on the different physical and psychological stages through which the child passed from birth to maturity. Associated with this view was Rousseau’s ‘negative education,’ the development of the pupil in natural surroundings without the benefit of formal lessons, comprising Book II of _Emile_. These ideas are often construed to suggest that Rousseau did not believe in moulding the child to suit adult expectations. But implicit within his scheme, partly disguised by the use of ‘nature’ and ‘natural education’, was the child’s malleability in conjunction with the necessity to shape the child against an adult standard. Admittedly his methods were different, nevertheless, ‘the authority is only hidden. Emile’s tutor uses nature itself to subdue the child, manipulating him through circumstances.’ When the child suffered, Rousseau claimed he was only suffering at the hands of nature and for his own good. Indeed Rousseau’s feelings of guilt and shame toward his desire to dominate, which are sublimated in _Emile_, are reminiscent of the ‘projective reactions’ of parents described by DeMause.

Rousseau’s impact in England was greatest on educational radicals at the end of the century such as Richard Edgeworth, David Williams, Joseph Priestley, Erasmus

49Ibid., p. 30, see also p. 48: ‘it is the business of those who have charge of the child to keep him in his place.’

50Ibid., p. 122.

51For example, see _Emile_, p. 57: ‘Therefore the education of the earliest years should be merely negative. It consists, not in teaching virtue or truth, but in preserving the heart from vice and the spirit of error.’

52Sommerville, _Rise and Fall of Childhood_, p. 131.

Darwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin and Thomas Day. Their work contributed to new insights into children, methods of teaching and new directions in English educational thought, although the effect on practice was fairly modest at the time. Day’s well-known fictional work, *Sandford and Merton* was typical of the tendency to focus attention on Book II of *Emile*. It also reflected Day’s own rejection of aristocratic values and a predilection for bodily hardiness, views which were demonstrated also in his attempts to rear Sabrina Sidney as his perfect wife. Others made similar experiments to educate children as noble savages.54

With his eldest daughter Maria, Edgeworth wrote *Practical Education* which struck a middle line between the unrestricted education which was construed from Rousseau and the drill, memorization and inflexibility of much existing educational practice. They argued that education should be a child-centred process adapted to the child’s level and abilities, progressing in difficulty as the child grew older. Likewise, the child’s interest should be stimulated and encouraged, so that education was pleasurable rather than painful, creative rather than limiting.55 With clear links to Locke, and drawing further on the associationist theories of Hartley and Priestley, Edgeworth proclaimed,

The general principle, that we should associate pleasure with whatever we wish that our pupils should pursue, and pain with whatever we wish that they should avoid forms … the basis of our plan of education.56

Sympathetic, realistic and functional, *Practical Education* exemplified the best in educational theory at the end of the century.

Williams opened the Lawrence Street Academy, where for two years he put into practice a theory of education which owed much to Rousseau. He believed in education


56Ibid., II, 410.
according to nature, innate goodness and the perfectibility of man. But to him the object of education was to reconcile the claims of nature and the claims of society. Education was ‘the art of forming a man on rational principles, and yet making him capable of entering into the community and becoming a useful and good citizen’.\(^\text{57}\) Williams is credited with being the first British educationalist to give Rousseau’s views a searching criticism, and with applying the useful portions in a classroom situation.\(^\text{58}\)

Williams recorded that changes and improvements in the management of children and in schools were the direct result of Rousseau’s influence.\(^\text{59}\) But there was also an important reaction against these responses to Rousseau, which influenced poor children’s education especially. Despite the optimism and energy generated by the hopes of human perfectibility, much of society held more traditional, orthodox views. Similarly, evangelical religion and revolutionary reaction influenced the education of the poor. Innovative notions had only subtle effects on education for poorer people, while a major influence at both parish and national level was the response of the conservative sectors of society. They reacted strongly to Rousseau’s ‘natural’ education and demonstrated a fear of too much freedom for children of the lower orders. Accepting the importance of nurture, most writers desired to control firmly the impressions to which poor children were exposed.

Representative of this opinion was John Brown, whose sermons directly refuted Rousseau and the essential virtue of humanity. Because of his inherently opposing view of the nature of man, Brown criticized Rousseau for faulty logic in expecting discernment from a child. If the child ‘… acquire not Virtue in his Infancy, the Condition of human Nature inevitably leads him to acquire That which is destructive [sic] of it.’\(^\text{60}\)


\(^{58}\) Stewart and McCann, *Educational Innovators*, p. 39.


\(^{60}\) Brown, *Sermons on Various Subjects*, p. 12, see also pp. 6-7, 33-34.
Believing that virtue was not inherent but acquired, he rigorously advocated the early inculcation of habits of obedience, self-denial and self-control.

'Tis necessary, therefore, in order to form a good Citizen, to impress the Infant with early Habits; even to shackle the Mind ... with salutary Prejudices, such as may create a Conformity of thought and Action with the established Principles on which his native Society is built.61

Likewise Hannah More, a member of the Clapham Sect, consistently stressed the corruption and helplessness of human nature. The purpose of education was not to allow free reign to childish curiosity but to counteract the innate depravity of children.

Is it not a fundamental error to consider children as innocent beings, whose little weaknesses may perhaps want some correction, rather than as beings who bring into the world a corrupt nature and evil dispositions, which it should be the great end of education to rectify.62

The intervention of the Evangelicals in education was part of their wider campaign for the moral regeneration of society through active Christianity. With regard to the poor, Evangelicalism manifested itself in the inculcation of morals and the principles of Christianity, specifically the Established religion. Thus they interjected themselves into the debate about the need for educating the poor on the one hand and actively helped to shape the nature of educational and curricular provision on the other.63

The activities of Hannah More well illustrate this point. She contributed to the philosophical side of the debate in Strictures on Female Education, while providing moralistic literature through the Cheap Repository Tracts (1795-98).64 She also established and ran schools to educate the poor where

61Ibid., p. 16.

62More, Strictures on Female Education, I, 64.

63For the range of their activities, see Howse, Saints in Politics.

64Several of the Tracts were collected in The Works of Hannah More, Vol. 5: Tales for the Common People (London: 1801). Hereafter cited as More, Works. Another typical example of her contribution is ‘Hymns to be Sung by Sunday School Children in Colchester, immediately after their Anniversary Dinner in the Castle Bailey, 1795 and 1796,’ E.R.O., D/DVv 84. The hymn for 1795 echoed the importance of teaching religion and right principles while young:

What bless'd Examples do we find.
Writ in the Word of Truth;
Of Children that began to mind
My object has not been to teach dogmas and opinions, but to form the lower class to habits of industry and virtue. I know no way of teaching morals but by infusing principles of Christianity nor of teaching Christianity without a thorough knowledge of Scripture … To make good members of society (and this can only be done by making good Christians) has been my aim.\footnote{Quoted in Jones, \textit{Hannah More}, p. 152.} 

More was unusual amongst the women of the Evangelical group, who were largely backdrops to male activities. These women were highly important in establishing a definition of the female role, which had repercussions on their approach to female education.\footnote{For the influence of Evangelicals on the nineteenth-century feminine ideal see Hall, ‘The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology.’} Similarly, educational charity by the Evangelical women was part of a trend in charitable activities amongst leisured, middle-class women which blossomed in the following century.\footnote{See Prochaska, ‘Women in English Philanthropy, 1790-1830,’ and \textit{Women and Philanthropy}.} Philanthropy could be seen to be particularly suited to women, since right conduct and moral fervour were perceived as a female province. In this context, More’s activities were perfectly in tune.

Educational theory about educating the poor in the last half of the eighteenth century incorporated both the new ‘liberal’ view of the impressionable child and older, traditional concepts of the base nature of mankind. On the one hand, nurture was gaining a significant place in the infrastructure of education while contradictions about the nature of the child led commentators to advocate securing the future of the child, of society, of behaviour and of religion by early inculcation of right principles. While the effect was much the same, mid-century writers placed more emphasis on the innocence and vulnerability of the child, stressing that correct impressions were important to forestall the effect of invidious influences. By the end of the century, as the result of the religious and moral revival combined with responses to the ‘misguided’ views of Rousseau, greater emphasis was placed on the inherent weaknesses of mankind, base appetites and passions requiring early education to control and counteract.

\textit{Religion in their youth.}
B. Education and Social Mobility

The essence of the debate about poor children’s schooling was whether or not they should be taught at all. Demands for popular education came from many quarters at the end of the eighteenth century, but the intentions which lay behind those demands varied widely. They ranged from anxiety about the impact of social and economic change, the importance of teaching Christian values, and with it the desire to improve the manners and morality of the children of the labouring classes, and the desire to keep the poor in their place.

The resurgence in educational interest in the last half of the century was a response to new social problems arising out of economic and demographic changes. In part these changes focused attention on the poor because of both their increasing number and their consolidation in new industrial areas. The effect was to create a vast number of poor people in circumstances where there was a lack of administrative control over them. At the same time, the occupational controls of guilds and apprenticeship seemed to loosen, because many workers lay outside that structure. Additionally, the hierarchy of trades underwent disorientation in the fluid economic situation where time-honoured occupations declined, and new ones rose to take their place. This situation created uncertainty about status and heightened a concern for maintaining social distinctions.

During the last quarter of the century, these insecurities were compounded by the development of subversive political doctrines. For some, radicalism always posed a threat. But for others, sympathy with American revolutionaries turned to aversion during the French Revolution. With the reaction which set in, the need to counter seditious ideas and wrong thinking amongst the labouring sectors of the population became even more critical. Concern about the security of the social system led people to turn to education as a preventative measure. Thus the impetus for renewed efforts at education for the poor was created.
Blackstone argued in 1765 that a child with no education would ‘lead a life useless to others and shameful to himself.’\textsuperscript{68} Significantly, he believed compulsory education was the only safeguard of freedom and democracy. Writing at the time of the American Revolution, Adam Smith advocated mass instruction, as an integral part of his broadly liberal approach, but he also foreshadowed the trend which would follow the French Revolution:

The more [the poor] are instructed the less liable they are to the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition, which among ignorant nations frequently occasion the most dreadful disorders.\textsuperscript{69}

Thomas Paine claimed that popular education would reduce the number of poor, because their abilities, by the aid of education, would be greater thus enabling them to provide for themselves.\textsuperscript{70} Despite this apparently moderate view, it was precisely writers like Paine who stirred the concern and often the fear of the established conservative sectors of society. In 1798, Thomas Malthus argued against progressives with his belief that man lived in a hostile environment in which population exercised unremitting pressure on its resources. Seeing labour as the source of wealth, he wished to secure from paupers a due return of labour. National education contributed to this end. Like others, he also saw education and literacy as bulwarks against sedition.

on this subject I agree most cordially with Adam Smith in thinking that an instructed and well-informed people would be much less likely to be led away by inflammatory writings, and much better able to detect the false declamation of interested and ambitious demagogues, than an ignorant people.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{68}Blackstone, Commentaries, Book 1, p. 450.


For none of these authors was national education the central issue, but the frequency with which the subject occurred, and the general concern with ‘right ideas’ indicate how much education was the key to the realization of many political theories.

The arguments were more complex than simple sedition and political status quo. Permeating eighteenth-century society was a belief in the right order of things. Status and one’s social position in the rank order of society were paramount in many people’s minds. Reminiscent of Pope’s ‘vast chain of being,’ Clara Reeve stressed ‘in a well regulated state, a right and true subordination is beautiful, where every order is kept in its proper state.’

Public identity was defined by birth, property, occupation and taken collectively, by rank in the social order.

People did not perceive monolithic or homogenized classes, but groupings of a number of echelons, each represented by a variety of characteristics. Contemporary writers referred to the lower orders or middling orders for just such a reason. Spanning the century, both King’s and Colquhoun’s listings of society based on income lend weight to this assertion as does Defoe’s ranking of society into seven groups, according to consumption. Within each level, there were a number of minute gradations which were important to people throughout the century in creating status differentiation and defining one’s place in society. As society changed, these distinctions were continually reworked. Defoe was at great pains to distinguish tradesmen from manufacturers and artisans on the one hand and pedlars on the other. Likewise,

As there are several degrees of people employed in trade below [tradesmen] ..., such as workmen, labourers, and servants; so there is a degree of traders above them, which we call merchants.

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74 Defoe, English Tradesman, I, 2.
Amongst the poor, a distinction was drawn between the deserving poor and paupers, poor honest labourers and those reliant upon parish relief. For example, Catharine Cappe separated ‘orphan children of worthy respectable parents reduced by misfortune and the distressed offspring of those who may always have filled the lowest stations.’\textsuperscript{75} Reeve, Wakefield and Trimmer each described their educative systems in terms of appropriate schooling for particular levels, thereby sketching not only their educational views but asserting the significance and delineations of class.\textsuperscript{76}

At the same time, the age was coming to accept the concept of progress and of the power of education to improve a person. Along with the sense of industrial and scientific improvement and a feeling of growing prosperity, social aspirations governed the actions of wide sections of society. As Dorothy Marshall described it, ‘class distinctions were important and gave form and order to everyday living, but created no insurmountable barrier to either economic or individual progress.’\textsuperscript{77} Thus the belief in improvement was often translated into the desire for social advancement, for upward social mobility. Industrial and economic change had brought structural changes in occupational relationships which affected social position. Old distinctions between labourer and artisan were blurred by increasing employment of waged labour under skilled foremen instead of journeymen qualified by apprenticeship. Also formerly prosperous trades, such as Essex clothmaking, found their economic and social position gradually eroded throughout the century by a decline in trade while skilled artisans prospered.\textsuperscript{78} The increase of affluence, particularly for certain sectors of the middling orders, put them in a far better position to assume the trappings of those above them in

\textsuperscript{75}Catharine Cappe, \textit{Observations on Charity Schools, Female Friendly Societies and Other Subjects connected with the views of the Ladies’ Committee} (London: 1805), p. 21. Hereafter cited as Cappe, \textit{Observations on Charity Schools}.


\textsuperscript{78}Brown, \textit{Essex at Work}, pp. 138, 163.
the social hierarchy. In Essex, enhanced incomes led to a more pretentious social life for many farmers, as well as for the smaller professional groups. The falling demand for Essex baize undermined the clothiers, while successful artisans began to rise in prominence.79

Late eighteenth-century England was a fairly dynamic society, suggesting a high degree of social emulation. Hecht has shown how knowledge of the life style of the elite was derived by all levels of society from a variety of face to face contacts, complemented by secondary information spread by both the press and hearsay. For example, servants observed employers, while tradespeople came into contact with those they served, such as milliners and their clients. Imitation of their betters was widespread by the ‘subordinate’ classes in eighteenth-century England where there were no ‘wide fissures in the social structure.’ Each class or group, copied the stratum just above it, ‘so that a chain of emulation ran from the apex to the base of the social pyramid.’80

Not surprisingly education was an important vehicle of social elevation and emulation. In a sense, Locke’s view of educating the social man became merged with economic opportunity, resulting in more and different education for children of all classes. For the commercial classes and probably the skilled artisans, Plumb identified a steady growth in educational facilities from 1700 to 1770, with a very rapid increase afterwards.81 In the surge of academies and boarding schools, the useful subjects were intended to create Locke’s social man, concentrating on commercial and social subjects such as writing, arithmetic, English, drawing, dancing and music. Often French, accounts, surveying or navigation were also offered.82 The new curriculum was clearly aimed at providing young men with a career and future prospects.

79Ibid., pp. 158-59.

80Hecht, Domestic Servant, p. 204; see also pp. 200-204.

81Plumb, ‘New World of Children,’ p. 71-73.

82See the survey of schools’ advertisements in Plumb, ‘New World of Children,’ p. 74. There were clear indications in towns like Wolverhampton ‘that classical instruction is little needed by the mass of inhabitants of a manufacturing and trading town.’ In 1785 the parents
Middle-class girls’ educational opportunities and curricula also reflected increasing prosperity and social aspirations including a growth in the number of schools. Similarly, a middle-class girl’s future prospects were the most important aspect of her education, but the emphasis was less academic and more social, since her future was to be married. As Pricilla Wakefield claimed

in the education of females, the same view actuates every rank: an advantageous settlement in marriage is the universal prize, for which parents of all classes enter their daughters upon the lists.

Parents appeared willing to pay handsomely for schooling to prepare their daughters to compete effectively in the marriage market. The cost of educating girls at ‘fashionable’ boarding schools could be as high as £200 a year, but a hopeful parent could find cheap copies for as little as twelve to fourteen pounds a year, or even less. Day scholars could certainly pay less. ‘Accomplishments’ became entrenched in the curriculum as a response to this goal, overshadowing ‘useful’ housewifery skills. Even so, for some girls, even this schooling could prove useful if they had to fall back on a career as teachers or governesses. For girls from lower down the hierarchy, that kind of position would itself be an advance in social status.

Social mobility was central to the debate about education for the lower orders in society. They were not impervious to the desire for social advancement, such that when they could afford the small fees charged by the range of day schools available, often they would do so. The value placed on education and mobility by these groups is still open to debate since evidence is slim. Against the portrayal of aspiration and achievement for were taking their boys from the grammar school ‘finding the system of education to be such as did not suit their station in life.’ Great Britain, Commission to Inquire Concerning Charities, Reports, 1819-37, IV, 353, 355. Hereafter cited as Charities Commission, Reports.

A discussion of girls’ schooling follows in Chapter 2C.

Wakefield, Reflections on the Female Sex, p. 29.

one’s children is the image of the reluctant poor parent unwilling to send their children to school, sending them to labour instead.

Because schooling for the less well-to-do elements of eighteenth-century life followed two essentially divergent patterns, fee paying or charitable schools, their responses to education necessarily depended partly on their prosperity. Plumb suggests that some families in the broad artisanal range may have been purchasing education for their children, a possibility increased by the sheer number of small day schools sprinkled throughout villages and towns.86 Also competition between schools kept fees down making it affordable for some. Certainly, contemporary writers commented on the way the lower orders educated their children:

They assume an air of consequence; and the children of farmers, artificers and mechanics, all come into the world as gentry. They send them to the same schools with the first gentry in the country, and they fancy themselves their equals.87

Despite the probability of exaggeration, many late eighteenth-century writers expressed concern about a trend amongst ‘the inferior orders’ to educate their children above their station.

Economic considerations were often of primary importance. Most schools charged fees, and even small fees were a strong disincentive to sending children to school for the majority on low income. Some schools were nominally free, either because there were no costs or because fees, books and uniforms were paid for by charities. Even so, sending children to school involved an opportunity cost.88 While at school, a child does not work, but continues to consume and remains a liability on family resources. For many families, children’s work was necessary. When labour was seasonal, such as farming, the opportunity for children to attend school was more likely than in work which

86Plumb, ’New World of Children,’ pp. 71, 73-4.

87Reeve, Plans of Education, p. 60.

88For a discussion of the relationship between work, schooling and literacy and the importance of opportunity cost of schooling, see Cipolla, Literacy and Development in the West, pp. 32-34.
children were expected to perform continuously. Cipolla cited evidence from Scottish schools at the end of the century which showed summer attendance to be two-thirds to three-quarters of winter attendance. Similarly, several of Essex and Staffordshire schools repeatedly released children to ‘go a leasing’ or hop picking or complained that they were doing so without permission. The first stages of the industrial revolution with its opportunities for employing children throughout the year would have increased the opportunity cost of education significantly for families in regions affected by changing work patterns.

Some parents valued education because of the prestige attached to being able to send your child to school so that the child became the status symbol. Alternatively, schooling might create tangible results in terms of better occupational opportunities. The first stages of industrialization probably did not reward children simply because they had some form of academic learning. As just described the most probable effect of early increases in factory or workshop employment was to curtail the limited educational opportunities which had existed in cottage or farm industry. At the same time, commerce and trades expanded alongside manufacturing, and had a need for skills taught in schools. Jobs in those areas often carried with them an inherent rise in status or the chance to further develop one’s opportunities.

Michael Sanderson correlated fathers’ and sons’ occupations from the Lancaster Charity School register, 1770-1816, illustrating the potential effect of schooling. The register is particularly useful since it listed the occupation of the father as well as the child’s first occupation. While a similar proportion of sons and fathers took skilled craftwork, a much higher percentage of sons than fathers (20% to 3%) went into literacy and commerce based occupations. Also, sons were far less likely to take up occupations


90 Sanderson, ‘Literacy and Social Mobility,’ pp. 96-99.
involving the least skill and capital, only about two and a half per cent, compared to about a quarter of their fathers. Labouring practically disappeared from sons’ occupations. Labourers’ sons were distributed throughout the occupations though located predominantly in the crafts, the largest number taking up the heavy crafts. The import of this data, although only one example, is to illustrate what a powerful force for social mobility even a charity school education could be in fortuitous economic circumstances. Certainly other forces led parents to have their children educated, and various pressures kept children away from schools, but the significance of social aspirations cannot be overlooked.

Much of the schooling provided for children of the poor was generated by middle-class philanthropy. Thus the nature of these schools was largely determined by the attitudes held by the subscribers, trustees, visitors or donors towards the poor. In this respect, educating the poor held a number of contradictions. The long standing and essential argument against their education was precisely that it would provide them an avenue of social advancement. Any form of education other than work encouraged the poor to forget their place in society, or actively aspire beyond it, and thus made them unfit for the station in life for which they were intended. The result would be a class of unemployable semiliterates who would disrupt society through their discontent.

Probably the most notorious articulation of that point of view was Bernard Mandeville’s attack on charity schools in his Essay on Charity and Charity Schools initially appended to the 1723 edition of The Fable of the Bees. Mandeville was sceptical of the ‘civility’ which charity schools taught. Parents’ attitudes had a greater effect on children’s development than teachers, and Christian faith could, and should be taught through the Church.91 He believed,

> Those who spend a great part of their youth in learning to read, write and cypher, expect (and not unjustly) to be employed where those qualifications may be of use to them. Going to school, in comparison to working, is idleness; and the longer boys continue in this easy sort of life, the more unfit they will be, when grown up, for downright labour, both

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as to strength and inclination. Men who are to remain and end their days in a laborious, tiresome, and painful station of life, the sooner they are put upon it at first, the more patiently they will submit to it for ever after.92

Further, he argued schooling would make them unfit for their station in life, and consequently they would be dissatisfied and socially irresponsible. Mandeville’s attack came at the height of the charity school movement and was continually reprinted. By mid-century, educational charity had waned and criticism against educating poor children subsided.93

Nevertheless, the view that the poor must be kept in their place, maintaining the existing divinely ordained social structure resurfaced regularly. The More sisters encountered it in the wealthy Mendip farmers one of whom asked, ‘if property is not to rule, what is to become of us?’ supplemented by his wife, ‘The lower class were fated to be poor, and ignorant, and wicked; … as wise as we were, we could not alter what was decreed’.94 It was the deeply inbred belief in status and place and a need to protect their own position which made this such a telling argument.

The impact of this position can be seen by the response of those who believed in educating the poor. Proponents of their schooling argued that instruction in reading, catechism, manners and some form of work would teach the children their place in society and make them more devout, modest and industrious. Prescriptive schooling would create better servants and more civilized and duly subservient labourers. However much social mobility was a middle-class expectation, it was not to be part of education for the masses, as far as those governing and influencing that schooling were concerned. At the same time, those on both sides of the debate wished the ‘inferior

92Ibid., pp. 329-30.

93An Essay on Charity and Charity Schools was reprinted four times before 1730 and three more times during the century. A discussion of educational charity follows in Chapter 3.

orders’ to internalize middle-class values such as sobriety, modesty, diligence and thrift.95

As interest in education revived at mid-century, the debate was renewed. Archbishop Secker stressed that charity schools should teach religion, inculcate obedience to lawful authority and impose the acceptance of an inferior social position on the children.96 According to John Chapman, to instil the ‘Awe of Authority, they are tutored and governed by discreet Rules and Methods in their whole Behaviour.’97 Frequent concurrence that ‘there are Reasons of Civil Policy, as well as Religion’ to teach the poor is ample evidence of the concern with which the problem was regarded.98 By 1770, there was a well-developed response to critics who argued that schooling would give the poor aspirations above their station and make them vulnerable to dangerous ideas. This period coincided with renewed fears for social order which were awakened by radical ideas and publications, and ultimately by the two revolutions.

The revival of the debate was the signal for a new approach to schooling. Instead of suppression through ignorance, the teaching of ‘right ideas’ took hold. Educators intended

that the children of the poor should not be educated in such a manner as to set them above the occupations of humble life, or so as to make them uncomfortable among their equals, and ambitious of associating with persons moving in a higher sphere, with whom they cannot possibly vie in expense or appearance without manifest injury to themselves.99

Though schooling poor children served a positive good, it was not appropriate to train them in a way which would raise their ideas above the very lowest occupations and

95 Trimmer, Oeconomy of Charity, p. 4.


97 Chapman, Ends and Uses of Charity Schools, p. 19.

98 Burton, Religious Education of Poor Children Recommended, p. 30.

disqualify them from the performance of necessary servile offices. Schooling should not make children useless members of society by ‘interfering with their working, but that, working and schooling going hand in hand together, they might be useful members of society and not be burthensome to mankind.’

Thus in the last quarter of the century, a consensus was reached which brought together the views of political economists including Smith and Malthus, and educational moralists, including Trimmer and More.

Equally, philanthropists who were eager to educate the poor recognized the value of emulation in achieving their purpose. Providing models of manners and behaviour would teach the poor to behave more decently, losing their rough and uncontrollable ways. For girls, the female school ‘visitor,’ trustee or occasional teacher was a key element. Trimmer addressed Oeconomy of Charity (1787) to ‘ladies of rank and fortune’ and those of ‘the middling stations of life’ to whom she pointed out

the great advantages that would probably arise to society from their taking a more active part than it is at the present usual for them to take, in the management of Sunday Schools and the personal distribution of voluntary benefactions.

She argued that the divide between the classes ‘as if they came from different regions of the world,’ resulted from a lack of education and the good example of their betters. Thus she encouraged visitors to give attention to poor children and promote their attendance at Sunday schools. She also appealed to women as mothers or prospective mothers as having a special responsibility to children of the poor who would someday become their servants. She echoed the prevailing view in insisting that visitors were to maintain the differences between classes regarding dress, language and manner while giving the poor the example of

those graces which distinguish wellbred people: it may indeed tend to improve the manners of the lower sort of children, so as to prevent their


being disgusting, but will not refine them to such a degree as to place them on a level with young ladies who have regard to real refinement.  

All the girls’ charity schools identified in this research had women trustees, many boards being composed entirely of women. They usually took turns acting as visitors or inspectors to the school for a quarter or a year. Similar motives lay behind the establishment of female friendly societies, such as the ‘Original Female Friendly Society’ in Lichfield in 1794, or in those in York described by Catharine Cappe. The middle-class values of saving, thrift and forward planning were fundamental to the benefit society ethos and were shared with working men and women through their participation in these clubs. Women’s participation in their own societies appears very late in the century as the Lichfield and York examples indicate. But where a women’s society existed or where they participated or shared in a men’s benefit club, the institutions could have been an added influence in modifying behaviour or transmitting values.

As forms of ‘educating’ the poor, these clubs and the women visitors are examples of the ways in which emulation was knowingly used by the middle classes to promote portions of their own beliefs for the benefit of social order and stability. It is worth remembering Gillis’ warning however, that the poor must be seen neither as merely passive, nor as unilaterally operated upon in shaping their own lives. The research into plebeian culture by Thompson, Medick and Gillis and by Hecht on domestic servants serves as a useful reminder that the plebs were perfectly able to adopt or reject modes of behaviour as it suited their own purposes. The tone and temperature of those who wished to ‘keep the poor in their place’ suggests strongly that social aspirations permeated the whole range of society.

102Ibid., p. 41.

103‘Rules, Orders and Regulations for the Original Female Friendly Society,’ held at Vicar’s Hall, Lichfield, Sept. 9, 1794; Cappe, Observations on Charity Schools, pp. 67ff.

104See Frederick Morton Eden, The State of the Poor (London: 1797) on the importance of friendly societies in preventing poverty, v. 1, ch. 3, and, on the limits placed on female friendly societies, see pp. 624-30.
Those further up the social ladder, though accepting social mobility as their own prerogative, confidently demanded restraint of the lower orders. Education as a vehicle for social mobility became the focus of attention. Whether consciously or as part of their accepted view of things, schooling for poor children was to be kept within certain bounds. Growing approbation of teaching reading, initially and primarily for the purposes of religious and moral rectitude, was coupled with conflict over writing and arithmetic. As these became more useful to the poor, they became more of a challenge to those sections of society which controlled the schools. In many cases, the desire to maintain the established order of society meant a limitation on these subjects in the curricula of charitable schools. At the same time, it led to a renewed interest in training the poor to their place in society through teaching work related skills. Though more children received a modicum of schooling at the end of the century than at the beginning, it was intended by the middle and upper classes to mould the children of the poor into moral, subservient adults with the skills and demeanour to serve them.
C. Ideology of Female Schooling

Although assumptions about the social order shaped education, concepts of woman’s nature and her relative place in society clearly distinguished girls’ education from that of boys. In the same way as occupational divisions were gender determined, so were the assumptions about what skills and knowledge a girl needed. The focus of eighteenth-century thought on Nature led to attempts to ‘discover’ the ‘natural woman.’ Once her nature was understood, her position in society and her appropriate education could be deduced. The fundamental notion was that nature had created men and women different, each with unique functions to perform.

Beginning from the physical nature of the female sex, which was generally agreed to be weaker than men’s, it was possible to exclude women from a whole range of occupations and activities. But more significantly, the invention of female nature allowed the construction of a dual system of morality and education. Fundamental to this derivation was the nature of female mental and emotional characteristics which suited them for special responsibilities relative to marriage, home and children. Since the female mind could be shown to be of a different quality and character than men’s, it followed naturally that her education was to be different in content as well as essence. Linked to a need to provide sexual protection of women, the ideology also ultimately subordinated women to men. Even women’s special responsibilities as helpmates to husbands or as educators of children defined them in relation to men and family. Their energies, interests and moral force were to be directed to men’s virtue and well-being and to their children’s upbringing. The context of their lives was strictly limited by their political inferiority within a patriarchal society and by their acquiescence in submission to a male-dominated ideology. The implications of this theoretical approach ‘not only [set] new and strict limits to the powers, pursuits, and education of women; they … also [added] new and extremely durable theoretical justifications for the legal, economic, social, and educational disabilities under which women lived.’\(^{105}\) The perceived need

amongst the middle classes to educate the female sex was the direct consequence of ideas about the nature of women, and their position and role in society.

Female duty to husband, children and home appreciably altered the purposes of education. It became characterized as education for virtue, in order to make woman a suitable companion to man and to give her children the right early start in life. The importance of making women pleasing to men was reflected in the growth of accomplishments among the middle classes. Similarly it was apparent in the desire among upwardly mobile families for their daughters’ education to comprise the knowledge and practices of those above them in society. These two forces produced a typical boarding school curriculum which included various needlecraft skills, the art of polite conversation, dancing, music, drawing, painting, French, perhaps Italian and subjects such as history, geography and astronomy with which to make polite conversation.¹⁰⁶ Such a fashionable education served little practical purpose; indeed its main function was to present a girl in the best light in the marriage market and to make her a suitable ornament in marriage. Adam Smith illustrated this view writing that there was nothing wrong with girls’ education. They were taught what their parents or guardians judged necessary or useful, and their education rendered ‘them both likely to become the mistresses of a family and to behave properly when they have become such.’¹⁰⁷

In the last quarter of the century, powerful criticisms were raised against accomplishments because they were seen as a caricature of appropriate female education. Although More and Wollstonecraft diverged in their political construction of society, their view of sexual relations, the capacities and the public role of women, they were remarkably similar in their portrayal of the effects of existing education on women. Wollstonecraft believed in an equality between the sexes which More did not tolerate,


¹⁰⁷Smith, Wealth of Nations, p. 781. He made this comment whilst criticizing the uselessness of most boys’ public school education. In part, his point was that girls’ education was appropriate because it was more geared to their ultimate future, than boys’ was.
while More went much further in situating women in the domestic sphere. However, they both condemned ‘this phrenzy of accomplishments,’ with More criticizing female education because it was geared exclusively for the transient period of youth and beauty.\footnote{More, \textit{Strictures on Female Education}, p. 74.} ‘We educate them for a crowd, forgetting they live at home, for the world and not for themselves, for show and not for use, for time and not eternity.’\footnote{Ibid., p. 72.} Wollstonecraft found common ground here complaining that ‘the cultivation of the understanding is always subordinate to the acquirement of some corporal accomplishment.’\footnote{Wollstonecraft, \textit{Vindication}, p. 105; see also pp. 145-51.} She condemned contemporary education for fostering a frivolous love of pleasure and false refinement. The main function of education was development of the inner person, what Wollstonecraft called virtue or self-esteem, and what More referred to as the dispositions of the mind, the indications of the temper and the affections of the heart.\footnote{More, \textit{Essays on Various Subjects}, p. 125.}

There was a corresponding increase in calls for women to be educated as companions of men. The real object of education for More was to make them ‘good daughters, good wives, good mistresses, good members of society, good Christians.’\footnote{Ibid., p. 133.} Wollstonecraft, on the other hand, agreed in so far as improved education would make women better companions to men and better citizens. She believed that the false system of education prepared women to be the mistresses of men rather than ‘affectionate wives and rational mothers.’\footnote{Wollstonecraft, \textit{Vindication}, p. 78.} ‘Nay, marriage will never be held sacred till women, by being brought up with men, are prepared to be their companions rather than mistresses.’\footnote{Ibid., p. 283.}
She claimed the right of women to be independent of men and to be educated to find their own subsistence. Yet, she agreed with More that improved girls’ education would enhance their ability to carry out their domestic responsibilities.115

Girls’ education was at the forefront of the debate about social mobility. The range of criticisms indicate that the concern was as much about middle-class girls being educated above their station as it was about working-class girls learning their place in society. To many authors, themselves middle class, the framework of society was threatened not only by radical ideas, but also by the increasing wealth and social ambition of the middle class. Similarly they believed that the dissatisfaction, which the middle classes felt, was transmitted to the ‘inferior orders’ so that the whole of society based on rank and subordination was under threat. Clara Reeve, Hannah More, Priscilla Wakefield and John Burton, publishing between 1792 and 1799, all blamed the way people were educating their daughters.116 Reeve complained that ‘Every rank and degree of people bring up their children in a way above their station and circumstances; they step over their proper place and seat themselves upon a higher form.’117 Burton argued the folly of parents educating daughters in schools with others of a higher class, whose fortunes or probable station in life, will enable them to appear in a superior style of living. The consequence to the former is often fatal; because the ideas they have imbibed are not compatible, with that humble rank, or perhaps employment, to which they are born.118

Such an education made girls idle and fit for nothing. As More put it, girls were educated ‘either to make their fortune by marriage, or if that fail, to qualify them to become

115Ibid., p. 285.

116Reeve, Plans of Education; More, Strictures on Female Education; Wakefield, Reflections on the Female Sex; and John Burton, Lectures on Female Education and Manners, 2 vols. (London: 1793); hereafter cited as Burton, Lectures on Female Education.

117Reeve, Plans of Education, p. 60.

118Burton, Lectures on Female Education, I, 28.
teachers of others: hence the abundant multiplication of superficial wives, and of incompetent and illiterate governesses.'\textsuperscript{119}

The tract literature contained two basic assumptions about plebeian girls’ destiny: first, there was a specific female character and second, those girls would fill the positions of servants, wives and mothers. Thus it was seen as essential to develop her in ways, appropriate to her future, and to bring about an improvement in manners and morals for the benefit of society as a whole. As Cappe explained, ‘cultivation of social and pious affections, gentleness of temper and resignation to the will of God [were] as important to the female character in the lowest as well as the highest forms of life.’\textsuperscript{120} Although the economic circumstances of middle and working class females separated their goals in a pronounced fashion, labouring girls’ education reflected bourgeois perceptions of women’s domestic responsibilities and the upbringing of children. This ideology began to influence the middle-class female’s life directly, while it shaped ideas about how girls of all levels should be raised.

Though most of the literature and the sermons about female duty were written about and for young ‘ladies,’ a substantial body of it concerned poorer girls. Trimmer and Cappe addressed women of the middling ranks to enlist their aid in the educating girls lower down the scale. Moir wished to influence ‘the sex in general.’ Brown’s key sermon on girls’ education was delivered for the Female Orphan Asylum while he advocated that young women at the Magdalen Society should be educated according to his plan. Reeve and Wakefield designed class-based educational hierarchies which were informed by the ideology throughout. Central to Ingram’s book on girls’ industry schools was preparation for domestic concerns and ‘such occupations as have a tendency to generate a sedate and orderly deportment.’\textsuperscript{121} Yet, this monolithic view of

\textsuperscript{119}More, \textit{Strictures on Female Education}, p. 39; see also her ‘tale for the middling ranks,’ \textit{The Two Wealthy Farmers}, More, \textit{Works}, IV.

\textsuperscript{120}Cappe, \textit{Observations on Charity Schools}, p. 31.

womankind did not run roughshod over ideas of social difference. Descriptions of appropriate schooling and training for girls maintained social distance between classes, and prepared labouring girls for a life of work. For example, women like Hannah More who supported education for the poor, nevertheless saw education in terms of different types for different groups in society. Wollstonecraft, though vigorous in her defence of women’s right to education also maintained lines of social demarcation.\textsuperscript{122}

Class distinctions in girl’s education were clearly defined by Wakefield whose four broad degrees in society correlated with four types of education fitting girls for their adult functions.\textsuperscript{123} The daughters of the nobility were best educated at home or in very expensive boarding schools learning early to attend to their social obligations, including school visiting, checking on girl apprentices and patronizing the poor. Interestingly, no knowledge was considered inappropriate to these young ladies. Girls of the ‘opulent’ middle class were to learn restraint and economy, never confusing the distinctions between themselves and the nobility. They were to be taught at home or in day schools, covering a range of subjects including domestic skills, arithmetic and bookkeeping so that, once married, they could understand their husbands’ business. Girls, whose family’s industry provided an adequate living, were to attend day schools where the focus was humility, sobriety, modesty of deportment, and industry. The subjects should be limited to the three Rs, religion, geography, history and needlework. Then she recommended apprenticeship, encouraging them to earn their own living. Finally the fourth group, the labouring poor, should send their daughters to charity, industry or Sunday schools which would instil the virtues of economy, cleanliness, industry and good temper. Religion and useful skills such as plain work, knitting, mending, washing and ironing were most suitable to prepare them to lead industrious and virtuous lives.


\textsuperscript{123}Wakefield, Reflections on the Female Sex, pp. 78-182.
Fundamental to this scheme and many others were the particularities of class, and their implications for society and for the form and content of girl’s education. Some authors, like Cappe and Trimmer, drew further distinctions within the labouring classes. Cappe’s discrimination between orphan children and the distressed offspring of parents who always filled the lowest stations has already been referred to. Similarly Trimmer differentiated between the ranks of the poor when advocating their attendance at charity, industry or Sunday schools.124

Women’s assigned responsibility for influencing the behaviour of husbands and forming the character of children had particular significance to plebeian women. Middle-class anxiety about the morals and manners of the poor was a marked feature of the literature from mid-century. It was exacerbated in the last quarter of the century because of the growing conservative reaction to the spread of radical ideas. Particular criticism and attention was directed to the working-class mother’s childrearing: ‘Instead of acting as Mothers ought to do, of watching carefully over their little Family at home, and regulating their Manners, … [they] are too frequently intoxicating themselves.’125 Cappe pointed to mothers who, needing to work, left their daughters to run wild in the streets, forming habits ruinous to themselves. Children brought up under those influences were expected to do the same. ‘What a Prospect is this to subsequent Times if no Check or Antidote be applied to the growing Mischief!’126 Cappe and Trimmer argued that mothers of poor girls were unable to instruct their daughters properly because of their own want of education. Cappe preferred to educate ‘female children of the honest, virtuous and industrious poor’ at home, but ‘where a child is ill-treated, or has a bad example set before her, the sooner she can be removed from under the

124 Cappe, Observations on Charity Schools, pp. 19-22; Trimmer, Reflections on Education, pp. 11-12.

125 Chapman, Ends and Uses of Charity Schools, p. 15.

126 Cappe, Account of Two Charity Schools, p. 16.
pernicious influences the better.\textsuperscript{127} A major purpose of charity schools was to rescue girls ‘from pressure of extreme want, the risk of ill-usage, and the wretchedness of vice.’\textsuperscript{128} Both authors sympathized with parents whose unfortunate situation was not their fault. Nevertheless, they argued it was imperative to remove girls from an iniquitous environment. Trimmer put it somewhat picturesquely:

\begin{quote}

it is observable that poor children have a greater regard to their behaviour when they are lifted from the dunghill, decently clothed, and noticed by their betters, than when they are driven away to associate with their own abject class, and to eat husks with swine.\textsuperscript{129}
\end{quote}

The solution was to educate the girls of poor families in good morals and behaviour in order to ameliorate the manners of their children. Providing more of the right sort of education for poor girls would ultimately create reformation in every department of society.\textsuperscript{130} Ascribing to the mother a primary role in her children’s education, the prevailing opinion was that through her the manners and morals of the poor would improve and the labouring orders would accept their place in society. Many of the same characteristics were recommended for poor girls as for middle-class girls. A proper education would protect the female attributes of modesty, humility, chastity, submission, piety, gentleness, and good temper from debasing influences. Additionally the poor were to be taught industry, order and cleanliness. Habits of order and industry were associated with teaching the poor their place in life and fixing in their minds the right social order. Since they were intended to remain the labouring orders, the habits of hard work were to be impressed upon them.

Cleanliness occupies an interesting place in this triumvirate of virtues. In tune with the Wesleyan dictum ‘cleanliness is next to Godliness,’ it was a symbol for decency in conduct, appearance and character. A part of a girl’s earnings was withheld at the York

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{127}Cappe, \textit{Observations on Charity Schools}, p. 32, 23.
\item \textsuperscript{128}Ibid., p. 19.
\item \textsuperscript{129}Trimmer, \textit{Oeconomy of Charity}, p. 46.
\item \textsuperscript{130}Moir, \textit{Female Tuition}, preface.
\end{itemize}
spinning school and applied to the girls’ clothing which they made themselves. Otherwise, Cappe explained, the girls would be sent to school ill-clothed, and no change in manners could be expected. To her decency of apparel bore a close connection with decency of character. Throughout Trimmer’s writings, the cleanliness of poor girls was a dominant theme. In Oeconomy of Charity she proposed ‘let us furnish [the poor] with the means of cleanliness, and point out to them the comforts of it, and they will soon improve in their appearance to an astonishing degree; and their improvement in manners will keep pace with it.’ She referred to the ideal poor woman ‘in her own neat apartment,’ while her instructive tales for girls in The Charity Spelling Book frequently hinged on the contrast between ‘quite a neat child’ and a ‘dirty messy’ one. An extreme example was Patty Clive, who came to a sad lonely end having ruined her charity clothes. ‘In short she lost her life through her dirt; for those who live in such filth as she did, have no chance to get well when they are as bad as she was.’

The issue of cleanliness was not taken up in Trimmer’s moral tales for boys, nor do other writers mention it in the context of upbringing. Cappe simply stated that standards of ‘decency, cleanliness and order’ were not so important to boys as to girls. This discrepancy harks back to the importance of women as the foundation of moral society, with responsibility for setting standards of decency and virtue for children and men. It is also a subtle reiteration of the vulnerability of female sexuality and the importance of chastity. Underlying many of the views found in the tract literature is the veiled implication of prostitution or loose sexual behaviour. Cappe referred to ‘habits injurious to herself’ from running loose in the village, and shows

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131 Cappe, Account of Charity Schools, p. 9.

132 Trimmer, Oeconomy of Charity, p. 46.


134 Cappe, Observations on Charity Schools, p. 12.
concern for girls who were the offspring of illicit connections or who were left with widowed fathers. Brown’s sermon on women’s education was ended with a plea to educate the women at the Magdalen Society for ‘Penitent Prostitutes’ according to his strictures. In both cases, eighteenth-century language veiled the references and sexuality was not explicitly referred to. There may have been compassion for such unfortunate girls, but the tone was one of preserving society from vice with the onus falling on women. Whether poor women were the instigators of loose behaviour, or simply bad mothers to their own sons or daughters, they were the cause of sexual immorality.

Simultaneously, the advice literature firmly established that the correct province for the female of the lower orders was home and family. It was necessary ‘to rivet their young and ardent attentions wholly on domestic concerns,’ so that they provided the right atmosphere for bringing up children.\(^\text{135}\) Also men’s needs would be better provided for. Trimmer claimed that men became ‘sots’ when women worked out of doors all the time, instead of remaining at home. She accepted them taking part in the harvest as a diversion, but primarily a wife should attend at home to prepare her husband a comfortable dinner.\(^\text{136}\) Thus poor women’s responsibilities to husband, children and home were perceived in the same light as their ‘betters.’

The crucial class difference in education was the recognition that plebeian girls had to support themselves. Thus the other prong of the argument in favour of sending poor girls to school was that education should train them to provide their own living. Most educationalists would have agreed with Ingram that,

\begin{quote}
Their employment and duty in life will probably be to discharge the several offices at first of menial servants, and afterwards of wives and mothers, with the fear of God before their eyes; as well as to assist in the maintenance of a family by some species of profitable industry. Let their education, therefore be calculated to impress them with a sense of religious obligation as also to
\end{quote}

\(^{135}\)Moir, *Female Tuition*, p. 49; see also for example, Brown, *Female Character*, p. 8, Horne, *Reflections on Female Character*, p. 7-10, Kenrick, *Whole Duty of Woman*, p. 16.

prepare them for the various employments of the stations they are expected to occupy, as far as is practicable in a school.\textsuperscript{137}

He even limited the ‘species of profitable industry’ to ‘such occupations as have a tendency to generate a sedate and orderly deportment.’\textsuperscript{138} Wakefield too advised ‘useful occupations … without destroying the peculiar characteristic of the sex.’\textsuperscript{139} Throughout the literature, schools were advised to teach religion and domestic arts to provide the skills for domestic service and for the natural female positions of wife, mother and ‘homemaker.’\textsuperscript{140} Indeed Ingram felt too much industrial work and division of labour had caused women to forget skills they had previously known. As a result, they had become ‘helpless and torpid in all aspects of domestic arrangements.’\textsuperscript{141} His proposed schools of industry were a means of reasserting this ‘traditional’ knowledge and female function. Thus, education for labouring girls aimed to train them either as domestic servants or good wives, emphasizing industry, frugality, diligence and good management. It was seldom addressed to other employment options girls might have had.

A corollary of women’s domestic role, either as servant or housewife, was that their character should be properly shaped by education,

They will then accommodate themselves to the will of such as employ them, with fidelity and assiduity. In wedlock, their prudence and delicacy may probably preserve the hearts of their husbands; their economy must certainly prove an inviolable security of their property.\textsuperscript{142}

The character of female domestic servants was a particularly important educational issue. Maria Edgeworth referred to the consequences of children being frequently in the company of servants, and Cappe took up the point in advising close regulation and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{137}Ingram, \textit{Schools of Industry}, p. 37.
  \item \textsuperscript{138}Ibid., p. 15.
  \item \textsuperscript{139}Wakefield, \textit{Reflections on the Female Sex.}, pp. 8-9.
  \item \textsuperscript{140}See Chapter 3 for a fuller discussion of curricular stipulations.
  \item \textsuperscript{141}Ingram, \textit{Schools of Industry}, p. 6.
  \item \textsuperscript{142}Moir, \textit{Female Tuition}, pp. 50-51.
\end{itemize}
monitoring of charity schools for girls. Domestic service had an inauspicious image throughout the century; by the end, concern over the character of servants merged with anxiety about the lower orders in general and female ideology in particular. A large and growing number of girls turned to domestic service in the last half century, as population grew, as occupational shifts made it the only option in some areas and as prosperity allowed more and more households to hire servants. Concern about the influence of these servants, particularly untutored young females, on the children of the household raised problems for employers. Thus the emphasis on conduct and morals grew.

These reasons also lay behind some of the distinctions made in accepting and educating girls in charity schools. Trimmer thought a charity school education suitable only for

any who have been born to good prospects, who have enjoyed in their earliest years the comforts of affluence, and who still have respectable connections [and] others whose bright genius breaks through the thick clouds of ignorance and poverty.

She considered only children of the first degree of the lower orders suitable for domestic servants. Industry and Sunday schools were more appropriate for girls who would become common servants or work in industry. Cappe thought most charity school girls were only adequate as mere house servants; other schools of a higher order should be created to train ‘Nursery Maids for instance, … or upper Servants in small Families; or for attendants upon young Ladies, or dressers in boarding schools.’ She emphasized the importance of educating the nursery maid, ‘as parents in these families spend little time in the nursery, therefore the early habits and consequent character of the maid is

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143 Edgeworth, Practical Education, I, 124; Cappe, Account of Charity Schools, pp. ii-v.


important.\textsuperscript{146} Clearly, the view that early influences were of primary significance, for both wealthy child and servant, had become well entrenched. So, whilst much of the girl’s school curriculum was geared toward domestic work either as servant or housewife, more attention focussed on the female servant, especially if children were in her regular care.

Summing up the two-fold purpose of labouring girls’ education the description of the Chester Working Girl’s School explained:

We have thus the fairest hopes to behold the young generation growing up in habits and skill to obtain an honest and comfortable maintenance, and training up in the best principles of morality and religion. Our aim is, to fit them for their humble station, to be happy in themselves, and useful to the community, as good servants, wives and mothers... When the present scholars become mothers we may expect a much greater improvement in their children, as a domestic pattern will add great influence to the benefit of a good education. In this view we may fairly expect a gradual improvement in future generations.\textsuperscript{147}

Thus plebeian girls’ education and function in society was depicted in language which owed its tenor and import to the faith in human perfectibility. Working girls were to be educated so that they could bring up their children in a manner which the middle classes believed would improve society. In addition, they were to be given useful education to provide themselves a maintenance and fit them for their humble station.

Support for schooling poor girls was based in large part on an idealized version of their role in reforming the manners and attitudes of the labouring masses. While it was accepted that poor women also had an economic function to fulfil in the family context, a specific type of activity was seen as suitable to the female character, and indeed appropriate to the goals of schooling. Whereas domestic skills provided the single girl an avenue of employment, and might earn her enough for a marriage portion, the married woman would be able to stay at home to work, would be a better housekeeper and would have a better influence on children and husbands. Ideas of nurture may have liberalized the ideas of childhood and education. However, for the working-class

\textsuperscript{146} Cappe, Observations on Charity Schools, p. 22.

\textsuperscript{147} Working-Schools in Chester, p. 6.
woman those same ideas had begun to circumscribe her education and role, so that they were more narrowly defined in terms of children and family. Yet an interest in girl’s education probably also meant that more girls had more education than former generations. So as with the labouring men, education was a double-edged sword -- on the one hand limiting spheres of action while on the other beginning to provide the schooling to expand those limits.
Chapter 3: Schools and Curriculum.

A. Provision of Schooling for Poor Children

Eighteenth-century schooling does not conform to modern terminology. In two ways this causes confusion. First, frequently schools were not buildings of fixed location. The recording of a school usually meant a teacher was available. Likewise, two schools in a village often meant one for girls and one for boys, even if foundation and administration were concurrent. For most non-endowed or non-subscription schools, the life of the school coincided with the life or interest of the teacher. Often several distinct charities were applied toward one school, that is the schooling provided by a single teacher, instead of separate foundations. At the same time, that teacher might teach paying pupils. Obviously, these features complicate attempts to quantify schools, or even places in schools.

The second problem of terminology is the names or types of schools. The terms free, grammar and even charity do not always indicate a school’s purpose, curriculum or access. Grammar schools theoretically taught Latin grammar. Because children normally learned to read and probably to write English before attending grammar schools, they provided a second tier of education. Usually they were founded by endowments and fee-paying. Relatively few poor children obtained the standard of education required for admission to a grammar school, and they could not pay the fees. Poor boys might attend, however, if a benefactor or endowed places allowed them free access.

Poor girls had the same disabilities as poor boys. Additionally, both contemporary and modern literature assume that if girls attended a grammar foundation, the school necessarily taught elementary subjects, that is reading, writing and arithmetic.¹ Educational commentators uniformly presuppose that girls were not taught Latin even

when they attended a grammar school. Similarly, the nineteenth-century Charity Commissioners used the presence of girls as a determining factor in defining a school as grammar or English.² The difficulty in penetrating this sexual stereotype is exacerbated by records which frequently do not indicate sex, using the terms scholars and children without precision.³ Only more work on middle-class girls’ education can resolve this question. Certainly girls attended grammar schools, but what they learned is less clear. However, it is unlikely that grammar foundations played a significant part in the educational experience of labourers’ daughters.

Free schools could have been either grammar or English foundations. Where they were grammar schools, the above largely applies. A Free English school, teaching English rather than Latin, is more difficult to assess. It could resemble the charity school, providing free places and elementary education in reading and writing, and probably religion. Often the terms Free school and Charity school were used interchangeably.⁴ One difference was that many charity schools were instituted through subscriptions rather than endowments, though not consistently. Not all Free schools were free in practice, and they often provided access only for boys, though such schools for girls’ also existed.⁵ Charging fees at a Free school illustrates the common situation of a school,

² At Walsall Grammar School discretionary powers excluded girls from Latin teaching, while Bradley Free School apparently restricted girls to the preparatory school. Audley Grammar and Free Schools included girls, and whether or not they were allowed a more advanced education is unclear; Charities Commission, Reports, 7, 328-33; 9, 564-72; 11, 525-27; 13, 244-48. James Coker’s will, 1702 said ten poor children of Braintree were to be taught to read English and Latin; by 1837 both sexes were taught, but no Latin teaching was provided, Ibid., 32, pt. 1, 781.

³ Frequently ‘children’ became ‘boys’ when the charity was put into effect, as at Monox’s School, Walthamstow, Archbishop Harsnett’s Schools, Chigwell and Addye’s Free School, Aldridge, Ibid., 12, 538-40; 25, 129-40; 29, 218-33.

⁴ Aldridge Free school (1719) was called a charity school in its deed of enfoeffment though it taught Latin, while Envil (1755), Blithfield (1729), Whittington (1741), Colton [1764], and Harwich (1725) were very much like charity schools and called free schools, Ibid., 5, 617-18; 7, 314, 365-72; 32, pt. 1, 564.

⁵ Harwich and Leigh Free Schools were exclusively for boys and included paying scholars as was Rolleston Free School which had been a grammar foundation; Envil Free School was restricted to girls, Ibid., 5, 617-18; 11, 568-79; 13, 422-25; 32, pt. 1, 564.
based on a free foundation, which augmented its income by additional children paying for their education or for selected lessons.

To some extent, the confusion is caused by the various ways charity schools are regarded. Charitable foundations for education had existed before the Reformation. With the instigation of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1698, the term charity school came to be identified with a certain kind of foundation. Though SPCK involvement was significant in expanding free education, especially before about 1740, it was not the sole stimulus or organizer of educational philanthropy.6 Charitable foundations for educating the poor certainly preceded the SPCK and many were established well after it had turned its attention elsewhere. Similarly several were created by dissenting religions, while the SPCK was associated with the Established Church.7 The SPCK did provide organizational and administrative aid in the form of information such as Talbot’s *Christian Schoolmaster*. It also devised the subscription method of funding, and supplied numerous inexpensive teaching materials and pamphlets.8 By these means, the SPCK provided the impetus and design for what has become known as the Charity School Movement.

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6 The classic work on charity education and the role of the SPCK is Jones, *Charity School Movement*. The tendency to regard the SPCK as the creator and sole executor of charity education is challenged by Joan Simon, ‘Was there a Charity School Movement? The Leicestershire Evidence,’ in *Education in Leicestershire, 1540-1940, A Regional Study*, ed. by Brian Simon (Leicester: 1968), pp. 55-100.

7 Probably the best known was the Dissenting Charity School, Gravel Lane, Southwark, which lasted throughout the century, from 1719. Another was the Coseley Meeting House School, established in 1753 in Staffordshire. While preference was given to poor children of the congregation, when funds allowed, other children were accepted. Charities Commission, *Reports*, 9, 626-28. Furthermore, Jones lists over 30 Dissenters’ charity schools revealed by the Charity Commissioners, Jones, *Charity School Movement*, pp. 353-363.

Charity schools came to be seen as a distinct form, often absorbing older schools into the model. Usually founded and supported by subscriptions, they also drew bequests and endowments from supporters. They were primarily catechistical schools which offered some practical work, such as needlework. Charity schools were subject to local control, so that there was variation in practice which affected the subjects taught and the teaching quality. When interest in charitable education revived at the end of the century, many were revitalized and even their curricula broadened somewhat. Two Essex schools made obvious efforts to reorganize the foundation. Chelmsford’s record keeping improved after 1773, while in 1746 and 1788, the minutes record specific reorganizations. In 1776, the Colchester minute book closed with a plan setting the charity on a sounder footing. The school continued until its absorption into the new National school in the nineteenth century.9

After mid-century, the renewal of educational interest and the impetus of evangelical Christianity brought with them two different schools: the Sunday school and the industry school. They took on the more basic level of education and religious instruction, so that charity schools acquired the character of superior schools. Often they were the only ones for poor pupils teaching anything academic beyond reading and religion. Trimmer proposed the following hierarchy:

Charity Schools were for the first degree of the lower orders, in which a comprehensive plan of tuition would qualify them as teachers in charity supported schools, as apprentices to common trades and as domestic servants in respectable families.

Day Schools of Industry mixed labour and learning and were best for those to be afterward employed in manufacturers and other inferior offices in life, including common servants.

Sunday Schools provided religious instruction appropriate to all degrees of the poor and suitable instruction for those who could not be spared during the week from the plough or other labours contributing to the family

9 E.R.O., T/A 613; D/Q 8/3; ‘Chelmsford Charity School Minutes, 1716-1763,’ T/A 461; ‘Chelmsford Charity School Minute Book, 1787-1808,’ D/Q 8/1; Hereafter cited as E.R.O., (record number).
support. She wished this group would acquire a little writing and accounts but not at Sunday School.\(^\text{10}\)

In some ways Sunday schools represented the triumph of the proponents of popular education. Though an attenuated form of schooling, Sunday schools suited the religious, economic and political climate. They intended to introduce the working classes to the civilizing effects of education without the democratizing influence.\(^\text{11}\) By teaching due subordination to God and their betters, it was hoped to make the labouring classes less vulnerable to the radical ideas of the last decades of the century, ideas which seemingly advocated insubordination and equality. Trimmer believed that widespread education of the poor would reduce its aura of pre-eminence or distinction. By becoming commonplace schooling would cease to be seen as exceptional, so that poor children no longer acquired status by having attended.

In addition to the above free schools, there were of course ones which charged fees, mostly centred on the existence of a teacher rather than a foundation. Both fees and educational level ranged from the modest to the expensive and top quality, though the level of the fee was no measure of merit. Because there was no teacher training, the standard of education depended only on the teacher’s ability and enthusiasm. Poor children’s attendance at these schools is impossible to measure because of the schools’ transitory nature and a lack of records. Certainly high fees priced schools out of the range of most labourers’ children. However, where fees were modest and a family could do without children’s labour, then they might have attended such a school.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the nature of fees at eighteenth-century schools. Expensive education was available at boarding, private and grammar schools. Private day schools could be inexpensive however, especially the genre known as dame’s schools.

\(^{10}\) Trimmer, *Reflections on Education*, pp. 11-12.

education was possible at charity and Sunday schools, but sometimes local variations meant a small fee was charged, or families were expected to supply requisites, such as books, pens and ink.

A fundamental problem is who were the poor, or put another way, to whom were the various free and charity schools made available. In the eighteenth century, the poor could mean paupers, that is those on poor relief. However, most commentators did not intend only paupers when discussing the manners and morals of the poor. In 1696, King calculated that over half the population were decreasing the wealth of the nation, including labourers, cottagers and paupers. In 1709, Defoe described seven classes of the population; class four were a middling sort including the ‘working trades who labour hard but feel no want.’ The three groups below them fared indifferently or worse. To persons like Trimmer, Cappe, Reeve, More, Brown and Raikes, the poor included all of Defoe’s lower four ranks. In their opinion, many lesser freeholders, farmers, artisans and shopkeepers were of the ‘lower orders.’ In Colquhoun’s 1806 listing, half the population
was earning £55 p.a. or less, including artisans, labourers of all types and lesser freeholders in addition to paupers who had £20 p.a. including relief. Whether any of those could have afforded to pay for schooling depended very much on local circumstances and individual prosperity.

One such local variation was the access which trustees granted. Figure 3.2 shows types of school by the status of pupil likely to be admitted. Some charity and Sunday school foundations restricted access to the poorest children, while others specifically excluded pauper children. Romford Charity School dismissed children if they went into the workhouse. At Chelmsford, however, the master of the workhouse paid the Charity School to teach children in his care, and at Ashdon the overseers of the poor paid for three pupils each quarter. At the same time, tradespeople's children attended the Chelmsford Charity School. Generally children were considered for admission only on the recommendation of a subscriber or a trustee who sponsored them. Therefore a child had to come to the favourable attention of such a person in order to gain admission. This acted as a further limitation on which 'poor' attended these schools.


Though in practice ‘the poor’ is an amorphous term, charity and Sunday schools were open to wider sections of society than might have been thought. They were never intended for the truly indigent pauper child. Authors clearly ranked the poor as Trimmer did designating charity schools for ‘the first degree of the lower orders’. Though both charity and Sunday schools were aimed at the poor, they probably missed the neediest while attracting the tradesmen’s children. Particularly in a parish without an inexpensive private school, more prosperous parents may have taken advantage of the charity school to educate their children.

The educational venues for eighteenth-century girls were largely shared with boys, comprising three basic forms: 1) private ventures of all sorts from dame schools to the middle-class boarding school where attendance depended upon ability to pay and willingness to do so; 2) charity schools, including schools of industry, where uniforms and education were nominally free; and 3) from the 1780s, Sunday schools also...

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14Trimmer, Reflections on Education, pp. 11-12.
nominally free, but sometimes charging a modest sum. Roughly, a girl’s opportunities would be determined by her family’s financial well-being and their interest in educating her. If able and willing to pay a modest sum for education, girls had access to many village and dame schools on much the same terms as boys, and sometimes to a grammar school or boys’ schoolmaster for certain lessons. Free places financed by charity were available to girls, though with a variety of strings attached. Most girls of the lower orders would have been able to attend only modest private schools or the more or less free schools. The only avenue open to most pauper girls was the workhouse or Sunday school.

Educational enthusiasm ebbed and flowed during the eighteenth century. Philanthropy is a problematic barometer of educational change, but one which helps to give chronological shape to major fluctuations.\textsuperscript{15} Supporting this evidence are other indicators of the vigour of educational interest, including the tract literature described earlier. The proliferation of schools and the attention paid to record keeping mark a surge of enthusiasm early in the century, during the period of greatest SPCK participation. At later intervals there were reorganizations, a revitalization of record keeping and new establishments. Finally, the formation and increase in Sunday schools characterized the period from 1780.

Benefactions relating to education are readily extracted from the Abstract of Charitable Donations, 1787-88. The returns specified only bequests and endowments so that the extent and impact of subscription support for charity schools is not shown in Figure 3.3. The data peak in the first part of the century, reflecting the period of greatest SPCK activity, with a sharp falling off by 1740, particularly in school charity. In Essex the drop is more obvious than the rise, and the Essex data demonstrate a far flatter pattern than Staffordshire’s. In the latter half of the century, charity is a less clear indicator of trends. A modest mid-century recovery falls away until the end of the

\textsuperscript{15}This method of analysis was criticized by David Cressy, ‘Education and Literacy in London and East Anglia, 1580-1700,’ (Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge University, 1972), p. 52; hereafter cited as Cressy, ‘Education and Literacy.’ However it is not intended as a definitive indicator, operating in isolation.
century. There was a lull in educational bequests in Staffordshire until the 1780s, while Essex returned to pre-1740 levels, dropping just as Staffordshire charity rose rapidly.

![Figure 3.3. All Educational Charities](image)

Without more indication as to the motivations behind bequests and investment in education, only some surmises can be offered for the contrasting trends in the two counties. The more even pattern in Essex may have corresponded with a generally flattish economy, in which the earlier prosperity due to cloth waned but where agricultural and transport changes brought some recovery. In Staffordshire, however, the growth of the metal trades was pronounced in the last part of the century, accompanied by an increase in mining. The new found prosperity would not initially attract money to education because industrial investment could be expected to have drawn it off. However, by the end of the century, available capital and the rejuvenated interest in education which other developments suggest, may have caused the recovery indicated in Figure 3.3.

For schooling to take place, the schools themselves must, of course, be available, and for most children of the labouring classes, those schools needed to be free. Two early nineteenth century developments indicate that contemporaries felt the number of school places was inadequate to educate the poor. Firstly, the work of Lancaster and Bell and the foundation of the National and the British and Foreign Schools societies were responses to the desire to educate the poor and the need to find a cheap way to do so.
Secondly, reflecting a perceived inadequacy of voluntary efforts, the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Education of the Lower Orders was established in 1816, chaired by Henry Brougham. Though many parents probably could not spare their children for school, the inquiry concluded, ‘that poor parents everywhere were anxious to have their children educated.’ Brougham believed and nineteenth-century reports illustrate that the number of places available probably neither satisfied actual demand nor the wish to educate the poor.

Accurate calculation of the number of existing places is impossible because of the nature of school records, the disappearance of some records and the simple fact that quantifying educational provision was not important to eighteenth-century educationalists. It is significant that the first attempts to do so appear with the intervention of Parliament in the nineteenth century. Using figures reported by the SPCK, Brougham and the Charity Commissioners, and keeping in mind the limitations of the data, a picture of the extent of education and of the places for pupils can be created. To assess the availability of schooling for poor children during the latter half of the eighteenth century, these are supplemented by parish case studies from Essex and Staffordshire.

The Accounts of Charity Schools, published annually by the SPCK, reported the numbers of schools and students for each county. The reliability of their figures is open to challenge. The SPCK acted only as mentor to the schools, so that they had no way of requiring correspondents to supply information, nor was there any guarantee that it was accurate. The reports became a matter of form, the same figures being returned repeatedly. Because of their affiliation with the Established Church, they reported no


17 Jones, Charity School Movement, p. 24 provides one example; also Staffordshire figures were identical in 1724 and 1759, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Account of Charity Schools in Great Britain and Ireland (London: 1759), p. 46. Hereafter cited as SPCK, Account (date).
non-conformist charity schools. Nevertheless the SPCK reports were the earliest attempt to record an extensive network of schools for the poor and the number of pupils.

In 1724, the SPCK listed fourteen schools containing 318 pupils in Staffordshire and 31 schools with 604 pupils in Essex; in 1759 the figures remained the same for Staffordshire while 37 schools and 676 pupils were reported for Essex. However, the numbers of pupils were not given for all schools; only 26 Essex schools indicated their size. Also the figures for some schools were unreliable. For example, the SPCK reported 61 pupils at Chelmsford charity school when the minute books show only 50 pupils on the roll. Overreporting was a feature of the reports though the fault may have lain with the school trustees who sent in the figures, as was true at Wolverhampton. Also it is one thing to report enrolment or the number of children the schools were funded to teach; it is quite another to report actual attendance. The references to poor attendance and children dismissed for not coming suggest that published totals of pupils were almost always an upper limit. In any case, if these charity schools were the only schooling available for the poor throughout the century, there is little doubt that educational provision would have been very inadequate.

Clearly the SPCK charity schools did not constitute all available provision. The Brougham committee set out to identify the supply of schools for the poor, and the report claimed to be the ‘most extensive and factual survey of British education.’ Though early nineteenth century in origin, the reports go some way towards filling gaps in our knowledge (see Appendix 3.1). The total number of children attending school cannot be obtained from this data since the categories overlap. However, Brougham reported a far larger number and type of school than the SPCK: 724 schools in Staffordshire and 639 in Essex. Because Brougham included endowed grammar and fee-paying schools in the inquiry in addition to charity schools, the reports contain children

18SPCK, Account (1724, 1759).

19E.R.O., T/A 461, S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1.

20Education of the Lower Orders, vol. 5, 11.
of the reasonably well off as well as children of the poor. In any case, these figures do not accurately reflect late eighteenth-century schooling for the labouring classes, if only because they included 119 schools on ‘the new plan,’ i.e. the monitorial system. Most were nineteenth-century foundations, although they often absorbed existing charity foundations. They were very large by nineteenth-century standards, and far larger than eighteenth-century schools. For example, the eighteenth-century Chelmsford Charity School had 50 pupils and the two monitorial schools in Chelmsford, a total of 421; the National school with 255 children and the Lancastrian one with 166.\textsuperscript{21}

Though the Charity Commissioners’ inquiries were also carried out in the nineteenth century, they were retrospective to the origin of a foundation, thus identifying schools teaching children in the eighteenth century. The Charity Commissioners’ involvement with schools came about largely because the Brougham Committee identified abuses in administering endowed schools. As a result, their terms of reference were restricted to endowed foundations and they investigated subscription schools only when a sizeable portion of funding came from bequests. Consequently, some of the best recorded charity schools like Wolverhampton, Colchester, Chelmsford, Penkridge and Romford appear in the \textit{Reports}, while others such as Ashdon Charity School, supported only by voluntary contributions, did not.\textsuperscript{22} This causes some overlap between the SPCK and Charity Commissioners’ reports. But schools like the Bocking Dissenters’ Charity School established by subscribers in 1746, were missing from both sources.\textsuperscript{23}

The SPCK and Charity Commissioners’ reports together indicate 127 foundations each in Staffordshire and Essex at some time during the eighteenth century, most from

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}, 3, 250.


\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Protestant Dissenters’ Charity School,’ Bocking, Essex (Document in custody of Rev. Ewart Davis, copy loaned by A.F.J. Brown).}
the last half. They were spread throughout the counties, but left many parishes without schooling for the poor except for Sunday schools or inexpensive private ones. Only 1302 students in Staffordshire and 1656 in Essex could be identified from these reports, since the Charity Commissioners, like the SPCK, did not always indicate the numbers attending schools. Added to the calculation are the vagaries created by poor attendance, inadequate attendance records and imprecise control over numbers. Children paying for their education and those in Sunday and industry schools are also excluded. The figures then understate the numbers in charitable schools and only suggest the extent of educational provision.

An examination of case studies can bring the picture into greater relief. The schools of six Essex and Staffordshire parishes illustrate the type and variety of schools attended by the poor: Ashdon, Chelmsford, Romford and Witham in Essex and Penkridge and Wolverhampton in Staffordshire. Great Yeldham Industry School, described in Chapter 4A, is added in some discussions because it gives a unique insight into one form of girls’ education. Staffordshire may appear underrepresented, but the records of most of its eighteenth-century schools do not permit statistical analysis. These parishes were chosen primarily because of the quantity and quality of information on their schools from a variety of sources. In each it was possible to examine the size of at least one school and to evaluate the length of time children attended. Throughout the rest of this thesis, these case studies are used to provide deeper insight into educational practice at parish level than the scanty national information allows.

The main sources of information about these schools are trustees’ account and minute books which do not lend themselves easily to quantitative analysis. The records were not kept for the purposes of historians, but to record meetings and decisions. Administration was relatively ad hoc and the quality of the records depended very much on the ability, vigour and consistency of the recorders. Only Witham yielded a school register, though occasionally a list of students appeared. Also as indicated earlier,

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24See Appendix 3.2 for a tabular digest of the case studies.
attendance was not clearly recorded. At best, students were reprimanded or dismissed for non-attendance, or ‘concern’ was expressed in meetings. On the other hand, most of the records indicate the general structure, size, intent, curriculum and rules of the schools. All recorded admissions and discharges, though sometimes erratically. Used carefully and with an eye to their limitations, they do provide a method of assessing the nature and extent of poor children’s schooling. In particular, they permit comparison between girls’ and boys’ schooling.

The most typical foundation for poor children was the subscription charity school. One notable feature was the relative smallness of the schools. Though Wolverhampton and Romford Charity Schools were large (70 pupils), Penkridge (20 pupils), serving a small rural parish, illustrates the smaller charity foundation. Charity schools were typically run by a governing committee of Trustees, chosen by subscribers from their own number. They held regular meetings, commonly monthly, keeping minutes of the meetings, records of admissions and discharges, and accounts including expenditure on salaries, building maintenance, clothing and books, and recording subscriptions and donations received. They also employed a master to teach the boys and a mistress for the girls, though it was common for the master’s wife to undertake this task. Some schools also hired a dame, who supervised the girl’s practical work and sometimes the littlest children. Qualifications of the teaching staff included religious knowledge and suitable moral standards, sometimes specifying ‘keeps good orders in his family’.

The children’s parents usually were parishioners, though sometimes neighbouring parishes paid for a child to attend. The typical school day ran from seven to eleven in the morning and one to five in the afternoon during Summer half-year, and eight to eleven and one to four in Winter half-year. Few formal holidays existed, and ‘summer hols.’ were at the discretion of the trustees, who sometimes released children for harvesting or gleaning. The rules spelt out what studies would be taught, sometimes

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25 See Appendix 3.3 for a sample of organization, rules, regulations and minutes.

26 S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1.
ordering the day in detail. On Sundays, the children attended church twice in the company of the master and the whole school. At school and church, and on special occasions such as the annual sermon in aid of the school, the children wore their charity clothes, provided by the trustees. These were frequently kept on leaving the school, as a reward for compliance with the rules and conditions. The control exercised by the school frequently extended beyond the child's leaving with apprentices and servants expected to continue attending church with the pupils for an unspecified time.

From 1713, there was a charity school at Chelmsford which, according to Rev. Philip Morant, was established to educate 50 boys and 20 girls. However, the school records indicate that it never took more than 30 boys and 20 girls, while minute book entries show that it was frequently smaller still, with 25 boys and 15 girls enrolled on a regular basis between 1718-1773. As mentioned above, the school appears to have been reorganized twice. Chelmsford also had a Free Grammar School from the time of Edward VI educating 25 free boys; in the nineteenth century it became an English school. In 1819, Brougham reported that the provision of schooling in the town was adequate.

In addition to the grammar and charity school, his committee noted two monitorial schools teaching 421 pupils in the week and 434 on Sundays. Three Sunday schools also appeared in the Archdiocesan Returns to the Bishop of London in 1808, one Church of England and two Dissenting. However, in this town of 3755 people in 1801, it appears that the charity school was the main form of schooling for poor children throughout the eighteenth century.

27See Appendix 3.3.3.


Smaller than Chelmsford and much nearer to London, Romford (population of 2690 in 1801) provided only a single charity school, from 1710, for 65 children (45 boys and 20 girls). A bequest of 1738 may have paid for additional pupils and Brougham gave the size of the school as 90 children (60 boys and 30 girls). With no mention of any other schools besides a Dissenters’ Sunday school in 1816, the Brougham conclusion that ‘the poor are without sufficient means of education but desirous of possessing it,’ seems plausible.30

In central Staffordshire, Penkridge (population of 1821 in 1801) supported a much smaller charity school of about 20 pupils. It was not reported by the SPCK in 1724, though it had been founded by subscription about 1695. It could, however, have been in temporary abeyance, since the documents imply the reestablishment of a decayed charity in 1730. The school continued at the same size into the nineteenth century although in 1821, the master had many other paying scholars. Brougham thought the poor were without adequate schooling, but reported five fee paying day schools which taught 245 children.31

A different type of charity school provided free schooling for the poor in Ashdon in northeast Essex, the smallest parish in the case studies with only about 900 people in 1801. The teaching of individual pupils was paid for by a series of benefactors rather than by subscribers. From 1745, the rector, initially Rev. Saltier, provided for six (from 1770, seven) scholars to be taught reading and writing. At least from 1770, seven more children were paid for by the Guild charity; according to the Charity Commissioners, this was an ancient benefaction (thought to be 1695), paying for a schoolmaster ‘for some years.’ Additionally from 1793, Lord Maynard maintained seven readers and five writers and at some time before 1814, the Overseers began to support three readers. Thus

30Education of the Lower Orders, 3, 268; Charities Commission, Reports, 32, pt. 1, 731-41. E.R.O., D/Q 24/2; ‘Romford Charity School Account and Minute Book of Trustees, 1710-1762,’ D/Q 24/1A, hereafter cited as E.R.O., D/Q 24/1A.

those combined charities made it possible for up to thirty children to go to school. In 1814, the 82-year-old clerk had been teaching the school for 29 years. Additionally, in 1810, a dame school for young children was reported by the vicar who assured his Bishop that, ‘the children of the poor are duly instructed in catechism.’ Brougham disagreed and recorded that the poor were without adequate means of education. In Penkridge and Ashdon, paying schools could have supplemented the two small charity schools, but the later probably comprised the educational provision for the poor.32

Tantalizing evidence of educational philanthropy exists for Witham (population 2186 in 1801), north of Chelmsford in central Essex. However the resulting educational provision cannot be identified. Although Dame Catherine Barnardiston’s bequest of 1630 to provide teaching for eight children to age 14 was paid to the National School in 1837 when the Charity Commissioners visited, its previous distribution is not clear. In 1719, the will of Rev. Joseph Warley left £100 to establish a school for poor aged 8 to 14. Neither were reported as charity schools by the SPCK in 1724. Essex Record Office suggests a Congregational school from 1674, but though a meeting house was built in 1714, the school records are nineteenth century. Thus its date of opening is not known.

However, amongst the parish records is an attendance book for the Witham Day and Sunday School, 1787-1806. Unfortunately the nature of the funding, administration and religious affiliation of the school remains obscure though it might have benefited from Barnardiston’s and Warley’s bequests and was probably Anglican. The day school taught approximately eleven boys and eleven girls at a time, while there were 30 boys and 20 girls on the Sunday school rolls at one time. The presence of both a day and Sunday school, administratively linked, meant that not only were there two different educational opportunities for the poor of Witham, but that many children could have

their elementary learning reinforced by continued attendance at the Sunday school after leaving the day school.\textsuperscript{33}

Wolverhampton with 13000 people in 1801 was one of the largest towns of Britain comprising several townships and chapelries. It brought together most of the types of schooling available for all classes in the eighteenth century, presenting a mixed educational picture. In Wolverhampton itself, there was a Free Grammar School from the sixteenth century. Though it claimed 150 boys, Brougham and the Charity Commissioners agreed that it was far below its maximum, mainly because grammar education did not suit the young men of a commercial and industrial town. From 1714, a substantial subscription Blue Coat Charity School taught variously 36 to 90 pupils, reporting 90 to the SPCK in 1745.\textsuperscript{34} A bequest in 1669 known as Wynn’s established a small school for a few children. It was closed in 1787 and later the money was paid to the Blue Coat School. The SPCK reported another charity school, which was probably the one called Bilston School by the Charity Commissioners. It was funded by a series of bequests from 1686, and by 1821, eight free and 92 paying scholars were taught. At Pelsall, another seventeenth-century charity financed a school for six poor girls and six poor boys, and Brougham reported an endowed school for eight girls. By 1804, Wolverhampton also had a school of industry teaching 35 children though its origin is unrecorded. In addition, Brougham reported a number of day schools: one in Wolverhampton teaching 697 children, and twelve in Willenhall teaching 303. Nine


\textsuperscript{34} The actual roll in 1746 was 32 boys and 26 girls—a drop of 10 girls from the previous year. The highest ever recorded in the minute book was 89 pupils in 1723-24.
Sunday schools were ascribed to the various parts of the town in 1816, teaching 3319 children.\textsuperscript{35}

Despite the apparent variety of opportunities in Wolverhampton, large numbers of the children of poor labourers and artisans probably went unschooled. Besides the employment offered by mining, children’s labour was useful in the increasingly numerous workshops engaged in the metal trades. At the same time, the number of places in eighteenth-century free schools was remarkably limited in a town of 13,000 inhabitants. The impression is that the schooling available to the poor in Wolverhampton was more inadequate than in towns much smaller in size. Certainly one possible explanation is that the population outgrew educational provision, but the relationship between the economic circumstances of child labour and educational expectation also played an important part.

In both Essex and Staffordshire, places were less frequently provided for girls than they were for boys. An analysis of the available information on charity school composition in the two counties is shown in Table 3.1. On average there were about nine schools for boys for every eight for girls. The difference in the numbers of schools teaching each sex, therefore, is not very pronounced. However, where girls were given access to schools, they usually were not admitted in the same proportion as boys. This is illustrated in Table 3.2. For those schools which indicated the composition of the student population, boys outnumbered girls about seven to two in Staffordshire and three to two in Essex. Half the mixed sex schools only gave numbers of ‘children’ without any sex breakdown, but the ratio was probably similar. Most of the charity schools used in this study provided fewer places for girls than boys with the ratio of between 1.5 to 2 boys admitted to every girl remaining remarkably consistent (see Appendix 3.4). The overwhelming trend appears to have been to give preferential treatment to boys, both in admissions policies and practices.

\textsuperscript{35}Education of the Lower Orders, 4, 870; Charities Commission Reports, 4, 349-360; 5, 569-70, 588-89, 594-97; Charitable Donations, 1787, 2, 1117-60; SPCK, Account (1724); Returns Relative to the Poor, 1804, pp. 466-76; S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1.
Although terminology often obscures the nature of educational provision both in terms of students admitted and of curriculum taught, there clearly was a range of schools teaching poor children throughout the eighteenth century. However schools were often small and dotted haphazardly over the landscape so that children could experience difficulty in obtaining access. Also the curriculum offered in those schools was limited by ideas about what the poor needed and ought to know. Girls in particular, with more limited access than boys, had less chance of schooling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Schools Teaching Boys and Girls</th>
<th>Boys Only</th>
<th>Girls Only</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>All Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Counties</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Compiled from Charities Commission, Reports, Staffordshire and Essex reports, and E.R.O. and S.R.O., all school records as listed in bibliography.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Ratio of Boys to Girls</th>
<th>No. of Boys and Girls</th>
<th>Boys and Girls</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>1562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>1466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1558</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>3028</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: As for Table 3.1.
B. Curriculum and Educational Materials.

The development of a more sophisticated industrial economy and the evolution of child-centred attitudes associated with new concepts of nurture may have enhanced the provision of schooling, and widened the curriculum. Simultaneously, middle-class fears that educating labourers’ children would have dangerous consequences for the social and political order often resulted in careful limitation of the curriculum with prescriptive schooling to create obedient, well-behaved, deferential Christians. At the same time as education for the social man was becoming prominent in middle-class boys’ schooling, ‘useful’ education for the labouring orders also became important. An approach to education evolved which blended traditional views of society and the poor with a more scientific, practical, utilitarian view of the role of education and the person’s place in society. These features are apparent in both the curriculum and the educational materials used.

The academic character of schools for the poor varied by the type of school and by the purposes behind it. Schools of all types usually taught reading, together with spelling, even industry and spinning schools. This was because many in society believed that the children of the poor should be able to read their Bible and understand principles of religion. Regardless of any other merit of knowing how to read, religious, moral education was the overwhelming reason for its inclusion in the curriculum. In Sunday schools, which probably reached the greatest number of poor children, the curriculum was likely to be curtailed at this point. The secular nature of writing and arithmetic meant that many Sunday school trustees felt they were unsuitable subjects for the Sabbath. For example, the rules at Coggeshall stipulated that

The religious observation of the Christian Sabbath being an essential object with the Society...the exercise of the scholars on that day shall be restricted to reading in the Old and new [sic] Testament and to spelling as a preparation for it.\(^{36}\)

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It could be argued that the scientific, technical and economic changes taking place during the century could enhance a person’s need for all three skills: reading, writing and arithmetic. If ordinary working men and women could increase their opportunities through acquiring these skills, or indeed if such knowledge became fundamental to their ability to relate to society, then the 3Rs passed from being desirable to being useful. Reading would change from being morally improving to being socially improving. Accounts, arithmetic or ‘ciphering’ were fairly common parts of the syllabus for both sexes by the end of the eighteenth century. That reflected the changing nature of society and the enhanced value of education within it.

Certainly many masters expected their apprentices to have learned to read, write and figure. This was one reason behind linking charity schools to apprenticeship. The rules at the Wolverhampton Charity School for Boys stated explicitly:

4. The Master shall teach them the true Spelling of Words, and Distinction of Syllables, with the points and stops.

5. As Soon as the Boys can read competently [sic] well, the Master Shall teach them to Write a fair legible Hand, with the Grounds of Arithmetic to fit them for Service or Apprenticeship.37

Likewise a common theme among writers urging female education was the need for knowledge of reading and writing for domestic service.38 In 1799, ‘The Committee of a Congregational Union for Promoting the Knowledge of the Gospel’ declared its intention to teach ‘lads going to daily labour and young women in service’ to read.39 Both writing and arithmetic were considered as preparation for service or apprenticeship.

A comparison of subjects taught in Staffordshire and Essex in Table 3.3 demonstrates the differential between girls’ and boys’ schooling in the ‘charitable’

37S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1.

38Cappe, Observations on Charity Schools, pp. 58-61; Trimmer, Oeconomy of Charity, p. 26; and Edgeworth, Practical Education, I, 158.

sector. Schools’ records and the Charities Commission frequently did not specify what subjects were taught. Also in some cases writing and arithmetic were reported, without mentioning the more common subjects of reading and religious education. The reporting body may have assumed instruction in those subjects. For example, at Waterfall school, only the subjects for which they charged extra were indicated.

Table 3.3. Subjects by Sex of Pupil taught in Charitable Foundations in Eighteenth-Century Essex and Staffordshire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County / Sex</th>
<th>Number of Schools by Sex</th>
<th>Proportion of School Teaching</th>
<th>Total No. of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Counties</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: As for Table 3.1.

In both counties, reading was taught to both sexes in virtually all of the schools examined, though to boys in a slightly higher number of cases. This supports the advice literature which portrayed reading as the most important basic skill, essential to religious education. Thus the content of reading lessons was frequently religious or moral. In contrast, religious education as a distinct curricular element was reported remarkably seldom in both counties. Given the strictures on religious education in contemporary tracts, this probably resulted from serious underreporting. Either the assumption was made that religion was automatically included in the curriculum, or it was encompassed in the reporting of reading.

40 About three-quarters of Staffordshire schools and half of Essex schools reported the subjects taught.

41 Charities Commission., Reports, 13, 453.
In comparison with Staffordshire, and with boys, Essex girls were instructed in religion far more frequently. The SPCK was stronger in the regions nearest to London, and many Essex schools had clear ties with the SPCK. The emphasis on girls’ religious education in Essex concurs with the strictures on educating servants and the future wives and mothers of the poor. It also is consistent with the numbers of young Essex girls who turned to domestic service on leaving school. Because of the agricultural composition of the county, and the proximity to London, it was a common occupation. This was less true in Staffordshire where, despite large agricultural tracts, most of the population lived in two industrial areas, the Potteries and the Black Country. In those regions, industry provided a wider range of options to girls than those available to their sisters in Essex. The frequency of religious teaching in the two counties may also reflect the divergence in religious influence between a largely agrarian county and one with growing industrial towns, such as Staffordshire.

Boys were more often taught writing and arithmetic or accounts than girls. Though forty per cent of the schools offered writing to girls, the percentage dropped significantly for arithmetic. Again the widest variance was in Essex where nearly three-quarters of the schools taught boys writing and nearly one half taught them accounts. It would appear therefore, that gender difference was an important criterion in making educational provision, a situation which was pronounced in Essex. A comparison of the curricular provision of single-sex charity schools puts the different educational treatment of poor boys and girls into stark relief (Table 3.4). While for boys the established pattern was reading, writing and arithmetic, for girls it was reading, religious instruction and needlework or similar vocational training. These patterns were typical across both counties in co-educational schools as well, though the picture is moderated for co-educational schools by a number of exceptions. It is worth noting that

42Links with the SPCK are indicated in the records of Colchester and Ashdon Charity Schools, Kelvedon Sunday School and Great Yeldham Industry and Sunday Schools, frequently through book purchase, E.R.O., T/A 613, D/P 18/3/75B, D/P 134/28/2, D/P 275/28/2. The SPCK also reported three times as many Essex charity schools, though the Charity Commissioners identified an equal number in each county.
a sizeable proportion of girls sent to charity schools obtained more academic schooling than averages indicate; a quarter received instruction in arithmetic and forty per cent in writing.

Essex had a higher proportion single-sex schools, 42 per cent, than Staffordshire where only 24 per cent were. Of schools reporting sex composition, girls, therefore, appear far more likely to have been educated separately from boys in Essex. This characteristic could have affected the nature of their education. Where boys were taught, a wider curriculum may have been available, giving girls the potential of greater access to a range of subjects. Conversely, when girls were taught separately, their curriculum may have been more easily restricted. The clear difference in curriculum for girls and boys which existed in single-sex schools tends to confirm that hypothesis. Because a larger proportion of Essex schools taught a single sex, the gender differentiation of the curriculum was more pronounced there than in Staffordshire. Thus in Staffordshire, schools were more likely than in Essex to teach girls arithmetic, with less emphasis on needlecraft skills while in Essex there was a strong tendency to adopt the ‘reading, religion and work’ pattern.
Table 3.4. Proportion of Students in each Curricular Area for Single Sex Charity Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Essex Boys</th>
<th>Essex Girls</th>
<th>Staffordshire Boys</th>
<th>Staffordshire Girls</th>
<th>Both Counties Boys</th>
<th>Both Counties Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17(^b)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>13(^a)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>17(^b)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>13(^a)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Only writing and arithmetic were reported but the later Charity Commissioners Reports indicated that reading and needlework were also taught in the early nineteenth century.

\(^b\)Only one school.

Sources: As for Table 3.1.

Limiting the curriculum to religion, behaviour and reading was one response to critics of education for the poor. Another reaction to them and to the social mobility debate was the introduction of work-related skills into schools. There were many advantages: it could be shown to critics as a positive way to inculcate proper attitudes in the young; it helped to support schools dependent upon voluntary contributions; and it improved the chance of regular attendance if the children were allowed some small income from their work. However, except in unique circumstances, early eighteenth-century attempts failed. Markets, the appropriate teachers, raw materials or work suitable for children, among other things were rarely concurrently available.\(^{43}\)

At the end of the century the idea re-emerged, indeed if it had ever completely died. Schools of industry were recommended by Trimmer as a middle form of education

\(^{43}\)Pinchbeck and Hewitt, Children in English Society, 1, 293-94 and Jones, The Charity School Movement, pp. 91-95. Catharine Cappe provided a contemporary description including the difficulties inherent in establishing and maintaining such a school in Account of Charity Schools, pp. 2-7.
for the labouring orders in the hierarchy quoted above. Echoing earlier arguments, she was certain that a modest form of education: reading, enough writing for the common purposes of life and an industrial occupation would suit poor children for their appropriate station. As the Chester girls’ working schools’ pamphlet explained, whereas some may have doubted the need to teach the poor to read, none doubted the urgent necessity of teaching them to work. Hannah More likewise advocated a ‘limited and strict plan,’ including work to fit them for service, and excluding writing.

As a variation on the theme, Ingram proposed opening industry schools to children of every class ... and while they civilize the [parish poor], they should be no disgrace to the former. In short it is desired, that the lower classes should regard the admission of their children into the school of industry, as an advancement in respectability, in lieu of a degradation to the level of the poor-house.

Even rationalist writers supported the need to equip the poor for service and ascribed to similar views of providing work in schools. Catharine Cappe, in 1782, set up a girls’ spinning school to teach them habits of industry. Mary Wollstonecraft advocated plain sewing, mantuamaking, millinery, etc. as part of the education for those girls intended for domestic employments or mechanical trades. They too distinguished children by their fortune, educated them according to their place in society and decreed that work should be a natural part of their training.

However, Trimmer felt that charity schools should not be turned into manufactories. Though needlecrafts were part of a girl’s necessary education as was a boy’s ability to mend shoes, and perhaps stockings, these skills were not the main aim of charity schools. They should remain distinct from schools of industry. Charity school children required a good religious education since they would probably achieve

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45 Working-Schools in Chester, p. 4.


47 Cappe, Account of Charity Schools, pp. 1-3, Wollstonecraft, Vindication, p. 287.
superior stations, becoming school teachers to their subordinates or superior servants." Similarly Ingram felt an industry school should not be a ‘mere spinning school. The process of education ought to be a proper pattern, or model of the business of life. So practical skills were to be included in the curriculum, but without dominating it.

‘Working’ was a dominant theme in girls’ education. Trimmer proposed that girls should spin wool and flax, clean the school and sew plainwork. She declared, ‘no Charity Girl can be deemed properly educated who has not attained to a tolerable proficiency at her needle.’ Needlecraft skills, in particular, fulfilled two prescriptions for women. Firstly, needlework was a proper activity for women. Suited to their nature and physical weakness, it was part of the appropriate domestic province of women. Secondly, it was an essential skill for a frugal practical housewife or a domestic servant. So in addition to teaching girls the value of work and industry, needlework provided them with a valuable vocational and domestic skill.

Numerous spinning and industry schools for girls were established, evidence that benefactors and educationalists alike recognized the value of useful knowledge to poor girls. The Chester working school was set up in 1787, to train girls who were increasingly found to be ‘unskilled in the common and most useful arts of life and plainly disqualified for domestic service and most other offices.’ The scheme established four day schools, each teaching a different brand of needlework, rotating the girls, so that after four years and of age to go into service, they would be capable of such work. In schools associated with Cappe in York, a similar rotation applied at the Grey Coat

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49 Ingram, *Schools of Industry*, p. 31.


51 *Working Schools in Chester*, p. 4.

52 Ibid., p. 5.
School; her spinning school included vocational training as did her plan for a school to train house servants and nursery maids.\textsuperscript{53}

An early nineteenth-century survey identified schools of industry in sixteen Staffordshire parishes catering for 359 pupils, and in thirty-one Essex parishes for 846 pupils.\textsuperscript{54} The sex ratio of these pupils is unknown. Records for two schools have been found, Tamworth in Staffordshire and Great Yeldham in Essex, and both were small schools teaching girls to read and sew, and by implication, religion and good manners.\textsuperscript{55}

At Gosfield School of Industry (Essex) the work consisted of sewing, spinning and strawplaiting, so that the eighty pupils probably were predominantly girls.\textsuperscript{56}

Providing girls with the knowledge and the opportunity to attain a place in service was tacitly accepted by the charity schools. Some linked leaving with gaining a place in service. At Wolverhampton Charity School some girls were not allowed to leave school until they had done so. In another instance, a younger sister was prevented from entering the school, until the elder one had gone into service. At Romford the declared purpose was to teach the girls reading, knitting, sewing and all other requisites to make them good servants. Likewise, the girls’ work at Chelmsford was preparation for service.\textsuperscript{57} In this respect the curriculum reflected the image of working-class girls projected in advice literature.

Charity schools more frequently set both paid work and occupational training for girls than for boys, as shown in Table 3.5. Invariably needlework was included. At Chelmsford ‘from time to time,’ boys were set such work as the trustees saw fit, such as

\textsuperscript{53}Cappe, Observations on Charity Schools, pp. 13, 58-61 and Account of Charity Schools, p. iii.

\textsuperscript{54}Returns Relative to the Poor, 1803-4, pp. 150-68, 466-76.

\textsuperscript{55}S.R.O., ‘Tamworth, Rawlett’s Trust Charity Book, 1759-1862,’ D204/1, hereafter cited as S.R.O., D204/1; E.R.O., D/P 275/28/2.

\textsuperscript{56}Chelmsford Chronicle, 5 Nov. 1790; Brown, Essex at Work, p. 139.

\textsuperscript{57}February 1729 and 1 October 1730, for example, S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1; Charities Commissioners, Reports, 32, pt. 1, 731, and 10 April 1794, E.R.O., D/Q 24/2; Morant, History of Essex, vol. 2, p. 6.
picking stones or cleaning the town. Otherwise little mention was made of what work, if any, boys were to do. Perhaps, providing work which they thought suited to boys was difficult within the administrative constraints of most schools. Certainly it was straightforward to have girls knit and sew, especially in schools which clothed the children. In some schools, girls made their own and boys’ stockings and portions of the uniforms, or their output was sold to supplement income.

Table 3.5. Working as Part of Charity Schools’ Curricula.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mixed Sex Schools</th>
<th>Boys’ Schools</th>
<th>Girls’ Schools</th>
<th>All Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Counties</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: As for Table 3.1.

Because skill in textile and clothing operations was a viable economic asset for girls and young women, the emphasis on work for girls was not misplaced. Education was not only to teach poor girls their station in life; it was geared to providing them with a particular type of knowledge leading to an explicit kind of adult job. Interestingly, educational tracts were far vaguer about the opportunities or expectations of boys than about girls. The importance of domestic service to a girl permeates the literature, minute books and schools’ rules. But except for general and occasional references to apprenticeship, boy’s role, occupation or expectations receives little or no mention. Trimmer made this distinction in The Charity Spelling Book, admonishing girls to follow the appropriate strictures to ‘get a good place’ while boys were simply to use

58 E.R.O., D/Q 8/3.
school to improve themselves. She allows that they could learn to mend shoes, so that they did not get ‘too much learning.’ Fewer opportunities may have been available for girls than boys. Nevertheless, the nature of the commentary implied a consensus about working-class girls, further defining their activities and social position.

The gender difference in attitudes to social mobility suggests a tension with class. Boys were, of course, expected to work. They were encouraged to improve their occupational prospects, but within the broad band of their class, and not to encroach upon middle-class prerogatives. For girls, ideology was formulated around a domestic and ‘non-working’ image of woman so that the middle-class viewed only certain kinds of work as appropriate for labouring women. Yet it was recognized they would have to contribute to family income. So their education had to be suitable to their station since an ‘inappropriate’ education would disqualify a girl for work. The boundary between ‘working’ women and ‘leisured’ genteel females was one the middle classes were keen to maintain despite imposing their own behavioural values on plebeian women. This conflict did not arise for men. The largest proportion of domestic servants were girls, who were in closest contact with their employers, so that it was necessary to maintain distance between them and the women of the family. Improvement for girls meant better behaviour, cleanliness, and the feminine attributes of submission and humility, not enhanced work opportunities or autonomy.

Yet in improving those girls, in providing them with the manners and norms which the middle class expected and which set them apart from the rest of the lower orders, they gave them a ‘leg up’ the social ladder. The children of agricultural labourers and servants together with the children of small farmers were, according to Hecht, the chief source of supply of servants. Once having obtained a place, opportunities existed for rising within the servant hierarchy, and using it for social ascent. There were individual and familial implications. Service itself was a learning experience which

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60 Trimmer, Charity Spelling Book, pt. 1, p. 115.

could improve one’s status. Also other members of the family might benefit since relatives might be brought into service.

Thus the curriculum was addressed to the debates about social mobility and gender difference; likewise the materials used in teaching reflected these concerns. While a new interest in children focussed attention on them and their upbringing, older established practices continued to influence education. Traditional teaching materials such as the Bible and The Whole Duty of Man continued in widespread use throughout the century. Simultaneously new books using progressive teaching patterns, reflecting the enhanced emphasis on children, were produced specifically for use in schools. They nevertheless contained a heavily didactic flavour which was intended to impress on children the rectitude of the social and ethical status quo. The ambivalence and contradiction inherent in education was apparent in the production and use of educational materials.

By and large, children’s books became simpler, orientated to novice readers, and more interesting, including woodcuts, riddles, short poems, etc. to pique the fancy. The London publisher, John Newbery, pioneered this field in 1744 with A Little Pretty Pocket-Book, following it with over two hundred titles. The book’s motto, ‘Instruction with Delight,’ made its purpose clear and heralded the trend in children’s books. The new books embraced a range of philosophies, but no matter how serious their purpose, they were marketed to engage the attention of the young reader.

At the same time, whether rationalist or moralist, these works were clearly didactic. They attempted to lead or mould children along the lines of the author’s own conception of the universe. Newbery began the Pocket-Book by echoing Locke’s

62 See Hecht, The Domestic Servant, and below, Chapter 6.

63 A Newbery catalogue is Sydney Roscoe, John Newbery and his Successors, 1740-1814, A Bibliography (Wormley: 1973). A sourcebook of children’s literature is Patricia Demers and Gordon Moyles, From Instruction to Delight, Anthology of Children’s Literature to 1850 (Oxford: 1982), including historiographical introductions. For Newbery see pages 104-119. Hereafter cited as Demers and Moyles, From Instruction to Delight. See also Neuberg, Popular Education.
theories, and *Goody Two-shoes* (1765) illustrated the success of virtue. Educational writers with a rationalist background, such as Sarah Fielding, Wollstonecraft and Maria Edgeworth wrote to make learning an active, creative, pleasurable experience, along the lines of Locke and Rousseau. Writers like Barbauld, Trimmer and More wrote engaging instructive pieces, whose essence was Christian religion. Ironically those by the last three were more appealing and more clearly directed at the child’s level than those which professed to follow Locke and Rousseau, but whose language and arguments remained very adult.

Yet the books remained consistently matter of fact. Maria Edgeworth asked, ‘why should the mind be filled with fantastic visions instead of useful knowledge?’ However, she made ‘the stories … in some measure dramatic’ to activate the child’s interest. Competing with chapbooks which increasingly made fanciful stories cheaply available, educationalists such as Day used tales like ‘The History of the Two Dogs’ as instructive lessons. Both Day and Edgeworth were followers of Rousseau, but exemplary tales in the hands of many authors subverted Rousseau’s avowed aims. Instead of ‘natural’ education, nature became a directive instrument while children, instead of developing at their own pace, were the object of intense study. The tutor was intrusive and in the hands of religious moralists like Trimmer, such tales became new clothing for religious principles associated with many Sunday and charity schools.

64 Demers and Moyles, *From Instruction to Delight*, pp. 105, 117-19.


66 Maria Edgeworth, *The Parent’s Assistant* (1796), quoted in Demers and Moyles, *From Instruction to Delight*, p. 141.

In *An Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature and Reading the Holy Scriptures* (1793), Trimmer turned an exploratory ramble through fields and forests, into an appreciation of the food God provided. She intended ‘a kind of general survey of the works of Providence [which] might be very useful; as a mean to open the mind by gradual steps to the knowledge of the SUPREME BEING.’ The *Story of the Robins* used nature, in the guise of an anthropomorphic robin family, to convey similar messages, this time concentrating on good behaviour.

Material of the latter sort was more likely than rationalist literature to be used in educating the children of the labouring orders. At the same time, hornbooks containing the alphabet and prayers continued to be employed. The *Bible*, the *Common Prayer Book*, various catechisms and the *Whole Duty of Man* were the staple diet of many charity schools, and frequently were given as rewards or leaving presents. An ability to read the *Bible* still represented the ultimate aim for many children, most particularly the poor who were expected to be able to read it by completion of their schooling. Also emphasis on catechism, learned by rote memorization continued, and perhaps accelerated. Charity schools often relied upon the SPCK publication *Church Catechism Broke into Short Questions* and others such as *Lewis’s Catechism*, *Dr. Watts’ Catechisms* and the *Assembly’s Catechism*.70

Additionally, many seventeenth and early eighteenth-century textbooks were reprinted throughout the eighteenth century, with apparently enduring popularity. Thomas Dyche’s *Guide to the English Tongue* was used for over one hundred years, 

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70 S.R.O., D 204/1; E.R.O., D/NC 9/1, D/P 275/28/2, T/A 613.
1709-1830, as was Thomas Dilworth’s *New Guide to the English Tongue*. Thomas Dyke’s *Reading Made Perfectly Easy*, frequently reordered by Great Yeldham Sunday School, reached its 34th edition by 1792. The perpetuation of such texts implies that little real change in teaching methods took place over the century. Rote memorization, question and answer methods and teaching writing only after reading skill was gained continued throughout.

However, poor children were not overlooked in the trend toward ‘child-centred’ literature. Authors such as Anne Slack and Francis Fox who published from mid-century acknowledged that material should be organized in terms of progressive difficulty and should be both instructive and entertaining. With an awakening interest in poor children’s education and with the involvement of women like More and Trimmer among others, specific provision was made for them. Trimmer wished to see ‘learned [authors] rendered effectual by means of ... books in more simple style which may gradually lead them on.’ She followed her own dictate by developing an entire course of instruction beginning with the alphabet and ending with the Scriptures. Her *Spelling Book* and *Servant’s Friend* appear frequently in charity and Sunday schools’ records.

In 1761, an edition of *A Present for Children* which contained Watts’ *Catechisms*, and his *Moral* and *Divine Songs* (1715—) claimed to be

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72 E.R.O., D/P 275/28/2.

73 For example, the Trustees of Wolverhampton Charity School declared on 4 November 1731, ‘That the children do repeat all winter long.’ S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1.


75 Trimmer, *Reflections on Education*, p. 36.

76 E.R.O., D/P 275/28/2, ‘Colne Engaine, Overseers Accounts including Schools Accounts, 1793-96,’ D/P 193/12/2, hereafter cited as E.R.O., D/P 193/12/2.
... a cheap sizeable book for Children either at Home or at School, consisting of some Variety for their Entertainment. ... Though it contains a few Things, which at first Sight, may seem fit only for Amusement, it is hoped that even these will not be judged improper, when it is considered, that some of them may serve to unbend the tender Mind, and others to excite its Curiosity and whet its edge, which is a very material Point; while none of them have the least Tendency to vitiate its moral or natural Taste.  

The 1799 edition of his Divine Songs similarly argued that teaching through rhymes ‘make[s] this part of their business a diversion ... [and] what is learnt in verse is longer retained in memory and sooner recollected.’ These were clear attempts to engage children’s attention, as a means to teaching them religion and right principles.

William Sellon’s An Abridgement of the Holy Scriptures (1781) used at the Great Yeldham schools retold the Bible as short stories. Though not illustrated, it was a palatable approach to the scriptures. Sellon paid homage to the advantages of making instruction comprehensible to children:

The great art of education is to soften the bitterness of the work, and render it agreeable and pleasant. It may be impossible indeed, totally to divest young persons of the opinion, That learning is labour; but when it is enlivened with variety, and the affections are interested, knowledge becomes pleasant to the Soul. The accustomed mode of putting the Bible into the hands of children, and causing them to read difficult and obscure passages, before they can have the least conception of what they are doing ... naturally creates a dislike to the book.

Sellon, like Trimmer, was critical of many teachers who relied on unimaginative methods:

He should adapt their lessons and exercises to their capacities, and instead of resting in a formal reading or a verbal repetition of them, should study by all means, to convey meaning and sentiment together with the words.

Trimmer’s The Charity Spelling Book is a good example of the newer literature for charity and Sunday School children. The book was clearly progressive in structure, comprehensible to children:

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80 Ibid., p. xiii.
moving from easy to harder concepts. It passed from simple short sentences, containing commonplace concepts, to more taxing material at a fairly gradual pace. The first volume contained basic alphabetic and reading guidelines and relied on single syllable words, using short passages for practice. The second volume followed a similar escalating mode, introducing polysyllabic words, longer passages, moral fables - many of which were traditional - and scriptural words, names, a glossary and finally the catechism, prayers and a couple of hymns. She did not introduce scriptural passages at that level, because the child was still learning to read; she felt it was a profanity of God’s word to use the Bible as ‘a mere teaching book.’

Behavioural strictures are ever present, as are her assumptions about gender and class:

The Man digs well.
The Boy plows well.
The Girl sews fast. …

The Girl makes the boy’s shirt.
Good Girls make their own clothes.
Good Girls take care of their shoes.

or: ‘Those who wish to be good, will try to be so at all times … Those who are poor, want friends, and friends cannot be had, if folks will not be good.’ The first part finished with moral stories, issued in two versions, one for girls, the other for boys. Invariably careless, uncooperative and ignorant children suffered in society while benefits accrued to those who acceded to benefactors’ wishes. Typical was the contrast between Patty Clive, ‘who lost her life through her dirt,’ and Becky Downes. Becky Downes took care of her charity clothes and so was put to school to read;

81 Trimmer, Reflections on Education, p. 41.

82 Trimmer, Charity Spelling Book, pt. 1, p. 16.

83 Ibid., p. 18.
I dare say when you grow up you will get a good place. And she did for it was not hard for such a good neat girl to get a place, as it was known that she would take care and not spoil things, but do as she ought to do.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 33-34.}

Trimmer made it clear that girls were to work at school, and to go to service afterward. As described earlier, school was a way to improve oneself, but ‘improvement’ had different meanings for girls than for boys.

To modern eyes, the volumes developed too rapidly both structurally and conceptually, but in terms of established practice they were innovative. Trimmer herself recognized that most existing reading books relied on the perspicacity and ability of the teacher, and strove to make hers more independent from the tutor.

In making these remarks, I do not mean to impute carelessness or neglect to the teachers; … - I do not scruple to say that [the deficiencies] are in great measure to be ascribed to the prevailing method of exercising the memories of children in learning by rote lessons greatly above their capacities, and suffering them to read without reflection, instead of initiating them by such simple instructions as would gradually unfold their understandings, and render their minds capable of receiving lasting impressions concerning things of the utmost importance to their present and future happiness.\footnote{Trimmer, Reflections on Education, p. 34.}

She argued that ‘the totally illiterate require previous instruction to prepare their minds’ and the Charity Spelling Book was intended as just such a preparatory form of instruction.\footnote{Ibid., p. 35.} In her comprehensive scheme, the student would progress from it to her more advanced books on Scripture Lessons, Moral Instructions, Lessons on the Liturgy and Exemplary Tales.\footnote{Ibid., p. 38.}

So while the Bible and other demanding materials continued to figure strongly in charity education, the simpler approach and attempts to beguile the child were hallmarks of a changing attitude toward children and their education. Many of these relied on the moral tale as the didactic medium, but they were written more on the level of the child than older catechistical works, and often included woodcuts. The influx of
children’s educative materials was not exclusively experienced by the more well-to-do children. Yet once poor children attained places at school, they faced the dichotomy which ideas about schooling created. Where some sympathy for child orientated methods existed, frequently practice did not follow principle. The curriculum varied little over the century continuing to reflect the primary concerns with religion and work. But while late eighteenth-century arguments returned to the need for work in the curriculum, there is evidence that writing and arithmetic were taught more frequently than before and that they were becoming a natural part of the educational scheme for both boys and girls.
Chapter 4: The Extent of Schooling

A. Attendance

An assessment of the level of education is concerned with the type, number and size of schools but must also consider the length of time children attended school. Such an evaluation is crucial for an understanding of what children learned and could be expected to retain. Because of the phasing of education, i.e. teaching reading followed, after a child could read well, by teaching writing, the question is important to historians of literacy who rely upon direct measures such as signings of marriage registers.

Length of attendance is also as much about the quality as ‘quantity’ of educational provision. Knowing the number of years children attended school helps to clarify the extent to which reading ability could be reinforced to become abiding literacy. If reading were a familiar activity, it could contribute to broadening a person’s horizons. Similarly, writing and arithmetic, where taught, could have become much more important elements of a person’s working knowledge, the longer they stayed at school.

This study considers two factors: the length of time the trustees allowed girls and boys to stay at school, and the average length of time they actually spent there. Attendance regulations varied by sex, reflecting the effect of gender on education. Also attendance was not obligatory and numerous factors other than trustees’ regulations affected the length of attendance. This quantitative approach indicates how long girls went to school, and therefore, within curricular limits, how much they could have learned. It also suggests what proportion of labouring families’ daughters might have gone to school and provides a basis for an examination of eighteenth-century female literacy.

The Charity Commissioners’ Reports and parish records establish the age of admission to thirty-eight schools and the age of discharge from thirty-four schools during the century. Children were most commonly admitted into charity schools at

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1 The case studies may overestimate average length of attendance since they were well documented schools with above average record keeping; as a corollary the schools and selection of pupils may have been well managed.
seven and eight years of age, although nearly a third of the schools admitted them younger (Figure 4.1). There is little divergence by sex from this pattern, but the data are too sparse to draw any firm conclusions. Similarly Trustees tended to discharge children at age fourteen, regardless of sex.

Figure 4.1. Ages at Entry and Leaving based on School Regulations.

Sources: As Table 3.1.

Practices varied at individual schools, but without clear trends. Wolverhampton admitted girls a year younger than boys, while Romford after 1768, discharged boys two years younger, at twelve. By way of contrast, Writtle’s and Roxwell’s schools discharged
girls at ten and boys at twelve.\textsuperscript{2} The results are consistent with private apprenticeships and domestic service where fourteen was considered the suitable age for placing out. However, nearly all parish apprentices had already been put to masters by the time they reached fourteen, and a third were apprenticed before the end of their eighth year.\textsuperscript{3} So, taking the ages at entry and leaving together, a child could have spent seven or eight years at school. Afterwards they could have been apprenticed, probably privately.

However, apprenticeship evidence raises two possibilities. If parish apprenticeships and charity schools served the same clientele, then children probably did not stay their full time at school since they would leave when apprenticed. Parish apprenticeships were applied to families receiving poor relief, who probably did not send their children to charity schools. But there was some overlap between these two groups. The school and apprenticeship records in the case studies coincide poorly so that only Chelmsford and Ashdon allowed some comparison. In Chelmsford of the 108 surviving indentures which coincide with the minute book, eight boys had attended the school. The period of attendance, 2.8 years, could be verified for only one, a gardener’s apprentice. At Ashdon one of nine parish apprentices attended the charity school for nine months in 1794. At Coggeshall where the only free schooling appeared to be the Sunday schools, three of the five parish apprentices whose dates correspond, attended the school prior to apprenticing.\textsuperscript{4}

Probably parish apprenticeships and charity schooling did not usually cater for the same children. Those who went to charity school and then into service or apprenticeship very likely were placed out by parents, the school, or by a charity, often attached to the school. Such was the case at Wolverhampton and Colchester charity schools, and

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{2} S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1; E.R.O., D/Q 24/2, D/P 50/25/42.

\textsuperscript{3} See below Chapter 5B.

\textsuperscript{4} E.R.O., D/P 18/3/75B, D/P 18/3/75, D/P 18/12/3, D/P 18/12/4, D/P 18/11/3, D/Q 8/3, D/Q 8/1, T/A 461, D/NC 1/9, and Chelmsford Parish Apprenticeship Indentures, D/P 94/14, Ashdon Parish Apprenticeship Indentures, D/P 18/14, Coggeshall Parish Apprenticeship Indentures, D/P 36/14.
\end{footnotesize}
probably at Romford and Chelmsford. Wolverhampton records frequent referred to mothers finding their daughters a place, or boys coming before the school trustees to finalize apprenticeship details. At Colchester, Nagg’s Charity apprenticed fourteen-year-old boys who had attended the school for three years, paying £5 to apprentice them. Yet, the coincidence of entry age for school and parish apprenticeship entry implies a consensus that some destination should have been chosen by the time children reached eight years old.

Few children entered these schools at seven and stayed until fourteen. Calculations based on school records, in Table 4.2, indicate an average duration of attendance of nearly three and a half years. This was a significant length of time for children to spend at such a school. Schofield estimated that reading took twelve months to teach and writing and arithmetic another three to four years. If that were the case, then children at these schools could have gained a good foundation in reading, and possibly in writing and arithmetic. The sources for this information are minute books and dated lists of pupils over a period of years, but they pose difficulties in arriving at average lengths of attendance. Many children appeared in records only once, when admitted or discharged, but not on both occasions; the records are sometimes vague as to what the entry means; and some children were still on the roll when the record ended, which did not coincide with the school’s termination. So calculations exclude those who were admitted and of whom no further mention was made. Whether they ever attended or stayed on after records ended is not known.

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5 For example, see 12 June 1735, Hannah Perry’s mother found her a place, and see similar references in October of the same year. Boys usually went to a trade, such as William Thompson, 9 March 1787, put to Joseph Steel, toymaker, or Ben Stringer, 5 November 1761, put to William Lott, bucklemaker. The school’s involvement was clarified by an entry of 1 October 1761 Richard Johnson was to be apprenticed to his father, but not enough trustees attended to finalize arrangements, S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1.

6 E.R.O., T/A 613, see especially p. 42.

Table 4.2. Average Length of Attendance at Day Schools, by Sex.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESSEX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelmsford CS</td>
<td>1716-99</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gt. Yeldham IS</td>
<td>1789-93</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romford CS</td>
<td>1762-99</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witham Day</td>
<td>1787-99</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>238</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAFFORDSHIRE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penkridge CS</td>
<td>1779-98</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
<td>1714-99</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOTH COUNTIES</td>
<td></td>
<td>364</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: E.R.O., D/P 18/12/3, D/P 18/12/4, D/P 18/11/3, D/Q 8/3, D/Q 8/1, T/A 461, D/Q 24/2, D/P 30/1/2A; S.R.O., D260/M/F/120, D1157/1/5/1.

Romford Charity School Minute Books are exceptional in documenting a very high proportion of admissions and discharges, usually giving the reason for leaving. The trustees seemed to fill vacancies immediately indicating a probable demand for places, and the data include three-quarters of all children admitted from 1762, so that the average is likely to be reasonably accurate. The three and a half years average attendance at Romford confirms that the time some children stayed at school was significant enough to provide them with the ability to read, and possibly to improve their position relative to their peers.

Wolverhampton also reported lengthy periods of attendance for their pupils, averaging nearly four years. Yet despite a detailed record, the trustees did not record dismissals regularly. Thus they might have tended to note exceptional situations. The range of reported lengths of attendance was quite wide (one month to eight years eight months), but 71 per cent stayed three years or more. Less than 10 per cent were reported as leaving before the first year was up, although the fate of many pupils is unknown. The contrast is even stronger for the period 1750-97, when three-quarters stayed for three and a half years or more, but only 2.5 per cent were reported as leaving after less than one year. Either Wolverhampton Charity School had a very consistent, permanent
enrolment, or the trustees were lax in recording discharges, particularly those who stayed very briefly. With the employment opportunities available in the Black country, the latter seems more probable.

A notable feature of Table 4.2 is the tendency for girls to attend school longer than boys overall. At Chelmsford, the duration of stay was essentially the same for both sexes, and at Witham day school boys outstayed girls, but at Romford, Wolverhampton and Penkridge the trend is clear. In Staffordshire, girls remained at school on average a quarter longer, and in Essex about two months longer than boys. Additionally, in each school, the individual students enrolled longest were girls staying half to three-quarters of a year longer than the boys in the same school. And more girls than boys stayed four years or more in the three larger schools, Romford, Wolverhampton and Chelmsford. At Penkridge and Witham where no pupil stayed that long, more girls than boys stayed three years or more.

While features of the labour market probably contributed, the reasons also lie in what awaited children upon leaving school. For example, boys were expected generally to take up an apprenticeship, so that once they found a place, they left. In other words, schooling may have been seen as a stage in boys’ education, preliminary to their obtaining a trade. This view is borne out by Defoe’s and Campbell’s advice on apprenticeship, and by the school regulations which aimed to prepare boys for apprenticeship. In addition to the schools’ intentions, the practice of boys leaving when they obtained an apprenticeship support this view of schooling, as do charities, which specifically apprenticed charity school boys to a trade such as Nagg’s.

8 [Defoe], English Tradesman, 1, 6-16; Robert Campbell, The London Tradesman (London: 1747), p. 20.

9 E.R.O., T/A 613; S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1, D204/1, ‘Tamworth, Rawlett’s Trust, Trust Deeds and Title Deeds,’ D3720/1, hereafter cited as S.R.O., D3720/1.
Table 4.3. Longest Staying Pupils recorded at Day Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chelmsford</td>
<td>6.0 years</td>
<td>5.0 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romford</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witham</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penkridge</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4. Proportion of Recorded Pupils staying at least Three or Four Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staying 4 years:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelmsford</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romford</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staying 3 years:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penkridge</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witham</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: As Table 4.2.

On the other hand, service was perceived as the future of many charity girls, as borne out by tract literature and the schools’ policies. Therefore, schooling may have been seen as girls’ major and, perhaps sole, educational experience, so that they were encouraged to stay on longer, to give as much preparation as possible before entering into another’s home. Also, of course, the slightly older girl, better able to read and perhaps write, more skilled in needlework and potentially more polished in her manner may have obtained a better place in service than her younger less educated counterpart.

This argument also rests on the belief that spending longer in school produced children who learned more or who consolidated their knowledge and skill. Children staying on for substantial periods of time could have achieved a reasonable reading standard as well as knowledge of writing and arithmetic. The evidence suggests that on
average boys learned to read and perhaps gained some ability in writing and arithmetic, while girls were in fact more likely to stay on long enough to achieve a higher standard. Those girls who had an opportunity of learning the ‘three Rs’ may have received a lasting education. And a higher proportion of girls than boys stayed the three or four years that historians believe was necessary to do so.

In two of the parishes girls also benefitted from a ‘two stage’ schooling. At Witham, which has a detailed register, both boys and girls began at the day school, and then moved on to the Sunday school where they could have improved and reinforced their proficiency. As shown in Table 4.5, children stayed about a year and a half at the day school, but over four years at the Sunday school. Also, 87 per cent of day girls and 79 per cent of day boys continued at the Sunday school, averaging well over six years in the two schools. Although girls tended to leave the day school quicker than the boys, they compensated somewhat by staying longer at the Sunday school. As we do not know what was taught at either school, it is pointless to speculate about the content of their education, except that the day school probably imparted the rudiments of reading, while the Sunday school curriculum consisted of religious reading and catechism. If a child learned to read in twelve months, some of Witham’s poor could have done so at day school and reinforced that skill over the next four years at Sunday school. Only 40 per cent of the total intake of Witham schools had the prospect of that two-stage education, however, because many children attended only the larger Sunday school.
Table 4.5. Average Length of Attendance in Parishes with both Day and Sunday Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Witham</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day School</td>
<td>1787-54</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday School</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total*</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>6.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gt. Yeldham</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry School</td>
<td>1789-12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday School</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total*</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Totals achieved by tracing actual pupils rather than totalling averages, therefore Total N of cases is not consistent since some pupils were not traceable in both schools.

Sources: E.R.O., D/P 30/1/2A; D/P 275/28/2.

At Great Yeldham a different pattern emerged, with only girls enjoying the benefits. The initial stage was the Sunday school, followed by a girls’ industry school. The schools’ admissions and rules provide a clear idea of the education afforded by the two schools. The Sunday school was instituted in May 1788 and the industry school one year later. Great Yeldham had an endowed day school where the master taught ten free boys with additional paying boys. His wife taught girls. In 1788, they were also made responsible for the Sunday school which accommodated forty-eight children aged between six and twelve. Children, who could read, read over the collect, Gospel and Epistle before church, and learned them by rote afterwards. Those who could not read learned their letters, spelling and catechism. All children attended church twice on Sunday accompanied by the master and mistress.

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10E.R.O., D/P 275/28/2, see Appendix 3.3.4. Great Yeldham, Sunday School Rules.
Upon reaching twelve years old, girls recommended by the Sunday school trustees were admitted to the industry school. They attended on weekdays from 9 am to 2 pm, sewing, knitting and reading from the New Testament, Sellon’s Abridgement or Trimmer’s Servant’s Friend. They learned and said the collects and repeated their catechism weekly. The rules allowed them to stay three years (later four) and during the last two years (later three), in turns of six weeks at a time, they cleaned the mistress’ house and the schoolroom, prepared her food and did other housework for her. In return, the mistress provided the girl with food and drink for that period.

Of the fifty-two Sunday school girls between 1788 and 1792, all but ten of them, 81 per cent, went on to the industry school. They might have spent three or four years in the Sunday school, learning the rudiments of reading, followed by three or four years at the industry school, learning elements of housewifery and improving their reading. The schools emphasised work and religion, while the potential for expanding their reading existed within the limitations of available books.

The actual record appears less optimistic since, as Table 4.5 shows, the girls averaged only four years in the two schools combined. However, the industry school’s record of discharges was clear for only twelve girls, though it implied that most of the others stayed full time. Those twelve probably underestimated the total length of attendance in two ways. The first eight were admitted on the opening of the school and though most of them stayed in the industry school for their full three years, they had also been part of the initial intake of the Sunday school only a year earlier. Most girls stayed at the Sunday school far longer than one year. Therefore the combined total average for these girls probably would have been untypically short. Only four other girls’ departures were recorded; three were expelled and the fourth died after eighteen months. If these four were exceptional as the record suggests, they lead to further underestimation. Also in 1793, when the next group of girls completed their allowed time, the period of stay was extended to four years. Therefore a large portion of the girls, if they stayed full time would not yet have left when the record ceased in 1797.
This example has been cited in detail because it gives an insight into the way that a parish could have created a two-stage education. The first school provided the rudiments of reading and religion and encouraged cleanliness. The second gave vocational training and the opportunity for girls to improve, or at least sustain, whatever level of literacy they had achieved. The orientation to needlework and housekeeping at the industry school also illustrated what skills the trustee and probable founder, Mr. Way, and his wife felt were appropriate for the girls to learn. Except for three girls, two of whom were taken into his service, no mention was made of the school’s occupational aims.

No similar school for boys existed in Great Yeldham. Symonds school, the day school mentioned above, provided for ten free boys, but it had an age range similar to the Sunday school’s and taught ‘reading, writing and vulgar arithmetic.’ Thus, short of apprenticeship or other schools for those beyond the age of twelve, boys’ education may have ceased with the Sunday school. Throughout its history, girls filled the majority of Sunday school places, averaging 29 girls to 19 boys. In Great Yeldham then, it appears that girls acquired more schooling than their brothers. Possibly, parents were more prepared to pay for boys’ education, or girls may have been more easily spared from work than boys. Great Yeldham was in a fairly prosperous part of Essex which combined progressive farming, hops growing and spinning for Bocking weavers. This last occupation, involving girls more than boys, was in decline, particularly by 1788 when these schools began. Thus there may have been work for boys, while prosperity could have created a demand for female domestic servants.

The purposes of schooling and its relationship to work, service and apprenticeship might be clarified by an examination of the reasons given for leaving school. The recorded discharges show that by far the largest proportion of children stayed their ‘full time’ or to the maximum age which the rules allowed (Table 4.6). However, individual schools showed

11Deed of 1727, quoted by Charities Commission, Reports, 32, pt. 1, 795.
12Brown, Essex at Work, pp. 37, 48, 113.
significant variation from this pattern. At Chelmsford, children of both sexes were far more likely to leave early, for a variety of reasons including service, absence, expulsion or removal by parents. At Colne Engaine and Wolverhampton, boys were far less likely than girls to stay their full time. Witham day school children usually continued at the Sunday school, where no definition of ‘full time’ has been found.

The next largest group was taken out by their parents, usually without the trustees’ consent, before they completed the period allowed by the regulations. This group is distinct from those recorded as going to work, but it is reasonable to suggest that the family required their labour either contributing directly or working for someone else for wages. Again at Colne Engaine and Wolverhampton, parents took more boys away early than girls.

The same number left for service or apprenticeship as were taken away by their parents but comprising a slightly higher proportion of girls than boys. Far more girls went to service than apprenticeship; boys were evenly split between them. Service has to be seen as embracing a range of activities including farm service as well as domestic service. Also domestic service was described broadly, not fitting into a narrow definition of well-placed servants in homes of the wealthy. Again children’s destinations were coloured by school variations. At Romford more children went to service with only a few to apprenticeship, but a much higher proportion of girls left school for service than boys. At Chelmsford both outcomes figured strongly, but with clear sexual differentiation: girls went to service and boys to apprenticeship. Also at Wolverhampton, boys were more likely than girls to be placed out as apprentices. Thus service was more likely than apprenticeship to absorb girls, and it was more likely to be a girl’s destination than a boy’s on leaving school.
### Table 4.6. Reasons Given for Leaving School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day Schools</th>
<th>Time / Taken</th>
<th>Expelled/Sunday</th>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Age/Parents</td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romford Charity School</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>58% 11% 10% 3% 6% 9% - - 5%</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>41 10 32 2 - 4 1 - 10</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelmsford Charity School</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>16 26 - 23 3 13 19 - 1</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>10 28 20 - - 30 5 - 8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witham Day School</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>- 5 - - - 7 - 81 7 57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>- 3 - - - 1 - 88 7 69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colne Engaine</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>33 67 - - - - - - 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>70 30 - - - - - - 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Yeldham Industry School</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>- - - - - - - - - -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>38 - 23 - - 8 23 - 8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>23 27 - 25 - 18 - - 7</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>43 18 3 4 - 12 6 - 14</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penkridge</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>76 - - - - 24 - - - 25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>91 - - - - 9 - - - 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Day Schools</td>
<td>Both Sexes</td>
<td>40% 14% 10% 4% 2% 10% 3% 10% 7%</td>
<td>1063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>44 15 6 6 4 10 2 8 4</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>36 13 13 2 - 9 4 12 11</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Schools</td>
<td>Witham Sunday</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>3 8 37 1 2 23 7 - 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>- 23 50 - - 8 - - 14</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coggeshall</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>82 2 - - - 8 - - 8</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>87 4 2 - - - - - 6</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gt. Yeldham</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>56 33 - - - 11 - 0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>80 10 10 - - - - - 0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Sunday Schools</td>
<td>Both Sexes</td>
<td>30% 12% 29% - - 11% 2% - 12%</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>29 7 25 1 1 18 5 - 14</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>30 17 34 - - 5 - - 11</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Includes ‘gone away,’ ‘dead,’ ‘to the workhouse,’ ‘unclean’ among others.

<sup>b</sup>A very high proportion of the girls stayed to age 12 when they went to the Industry School, at least 81%

Sources: As Table 3.1.
Given the numerous avowals that apprenticeship and service were the goals of many charity schools, the figures seem small. A case in point is Wolverhampton, whose rules and minute book entries stressed apprenticeship for boys. Only 25 children were recorded as finding a place, but in 1745 the trustees returned the following to the SPCK:

| Boys put apprentice | 221 |
| Girls put apprentice | 116 |
| Boys to service      | 2   |
| Boys to sea          | 1   |
| Girls to service     | 45  |

Probably many children who stayed full time and left with permission, keeping their clothes and books, went to a position in either apprenticeship or service. Also the use of the terms, apprenticeship and service, was often vague. Some children were apprenticed to housewifery or husbandry, while others went to service for more or less the same purposes. So the school records relating to apprenticeship or service should be taken as suggestive rather than definitive.

About ten per cent of children were dismissed for absence though in some cases like at Penkridge, or boys at Wolverhampton it was a much more significant problem. Further comments in the minute books suggest that vigilance was required to keep some children in attendance. Often the main concern was absence for going ‘leasing’ or ‘hop picking’ though some schools like Wolverhampton regularly gave time off for this. The schools probably underreported absence, but it seems to have been less significant than historical comment has indicated. Behavioural problems caused anxiety which is apparent in the records, but resulted in expulsion for only a few children. Frequently it was parents, not children, who were called to account for their behaviour. At Chelmsford 1746, Mrs. John Carden in was summoned to apologize for insulting the

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13S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1, at back

mistress before her daughter could continue in the school. Similarly at Wolverhampton, in 1731, Humphrey Gould was ordered to ‘come and be sorry for abuse to the mistress’ or else his two daughters would forfeit their clothes and be dismissed. Rebecca Carden returned to school, but the Goulds were not mentioned again.

A similar leaving pattern occurred at three Sunday schools, although the large Witham school overwhelms the totals. An important variation at Witham was the great proportion of children going to service. At Great Yeldham most children stayed full-time, with several leaving early and a handful of girls going to service. Most of the girls continued at the industry school as described earlier.

Whether or not the duration of charity children’s attendance changed throughout the century is an indication of the importance of schooling to families, at a period when contradictory pressures were at work. The data for the two largest schools, Wolverhampton and Romford, are concentrated in different halves of the century making comparison between them and continuous comparison across the century difficult. The other large group of records, for Witham, was confined to the very end of the century as were Penkridge and Great Yeldham, similarly confounding a comparison of trends. (Appendix 4.1) Thus only an impression of a decline in length of attendance from mid-century is possible from averaging this data (Figure 4.2). Before 1760 Wolverhampton girls averaged over four years at school, with both sexes going over five years in the 1750s. By the last twenty years of the century, only Romford remained over four years, and by the last decade no school produced average lengths of attendance for either sex at that level. While on average girls stayed longer than boys, their length of attendance fell below boys, and had been falling more rapidly from 1770.

15 E.R.O., T/A 461.

16 S.R.O., D 1157/1/5/1.
High rates of staying on at school during the early part of the century are consistent with the flush of enthusiasm for charity schooling. Before mid-century the data are primarily from Wolverhampton which was established as a Blue Coat School, corresponding with the SPCK. The school remained vital when the SPCK’s interest moved in other directions, but there was a significant drop in attendance which appeared to recover quite dramatically. Probably vigorous recording noted a higher proportion of children then since well over a quarter of all entries were made in that decade. The trustees also criticized falling rolls and attendance, accusing parents of taking children out, and instituting sanctions such as ‘parents who take children out and will not consent to rules will have no more children admitted.’\(^{17}\) Between July 1728 and October 1731, there were at least nine admonitions recorded about poor attendance, spread throughout the three years. There is no other reason given, except a reference to parents sending children ‘a leasing.’

Similarly there is no obvious reason for the significant overall rise in attendance in the next two decades unless it was a continuation of previous trends. The gradual decline after mid-century could be explained by growing opportunities for employing children.

\(^{17}\) S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1, 6 August 1730.
in work processes which were less likely than earlier ones to allow release for schooling. Though that thesis may be essentially true, it overlooks regional features. Essex was not a county which benefitted greatly by new industrial occupations. On the contrary, there was a drop in employment in the cloth trade. This could restrict the opportunities for child employment. However, agriculture expanded in the second half of the century employing some of the new techniques. The transition from old to new style farming was increasingly labour intensive, as were new crops like turnips. The gradual but clear decline in the length of time girls attended Romford charity school corresponded with a significant rise in the number of girls who went to service on leaving:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1764-73</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774-83</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784-93</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793-99</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools, on average, admitted children from age seven or eight and allowed them to stay until fourteen years old. But few children went to day school for seven years, most staying, on average, three years and five months. Girls were more likely to stay longer than boys and also were more likely to approach the maximum six or seven years at day school. Thus girls may have received more formal schooling than is frequently thought. In this study over ten per cent of girls, but less than two per cent of boys stayed for six years or more. Nevertheless, three years was a substantial period of time to attend school for an age in which we regard child labour to have been all pervasive and when the length of the school day left only small amounts of time for part-time work. Across the century there appeared to be a slight decline in the length of time spent at school, with a possibility that girls’ attendance dropped imperceptibly more than boys.’ However, throughout the century and for both girls and boys, those who attended the charity schools were attending long enough to acquire an ability to read and to have reinforced that skill. Curricular differences between girls’ and boys’ schooling meant

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that proportionally fewer girls learnt to write and to do arithmetic and thus their achievement of full literacy and numeracy would have been hampered. But those girls who did receive a fuller curriculum were staying long enough to achieve good comprehension in reading, and some competence in writing and arithmetic.

Length of attendance is not the sole factor in measuring educational enthusiasm or participation. The number of girls taken into school over time could have increased, thus giving more of them an opportunity of schooling. Also charity schools may have been a superior kind of school catering for a particular group of children, so that three years or more in school was true for a select portion. Ultimately what we want to know is the extent of schooling or the access which children of the working classes had to schools. Comparing the number of children in Brougham’s weekday schools, with the age group likely to be in school (5-14) suggests that about 23 per cent of children in Essex and 21 per cent in Staffordshire were in school in 1819. At the same time, perhaps eighteen and 22 per cent of Essex and Staffordshire children were enrolled at Sunday schools (See Appendix 3.1).

Because the places available for pupils can be extracted only as a fixed quantity, the proportion of the age group which could have attended school depended upon the length of time students spent there. For example, if 20 per cent of the 5-14 age group were in school at a given time, and they continued in school for two years each, because the age range of 5-14 is ten years, one hundred per cent of children could in theory have had some schooling. Penetration of schooling is a concept created for this study to assess how many children could have gone to school over time and to allow comparison between boys and girls. This term is defined as the proportion of children reaching age fifteen who could have been to school.19 Because of the data available, the calculation must include duration of attendance as a variable. Therefore penetration of schooling considers the size of the male and female student population, the size of the age group

19 Few children were admitted to these schools after fifteen, fourteen being the age at which most left, and the age that many embarked on apprenticeship and service. Also Wrigley and Schofield conveniently provide a projection of the 5-14 age group, Population History of England, p. 529.
likely to be in school (i.e. 5-14) and the average length of time spent in school. The resulting percentage should indicate that proportion of females who could have attended the free schools in this study, and should allow comparison to boys in their town or parish. (See Appendix 4.2)

First, penetration was calculated using the three national reports discussed earlier, Brougham, SPCK and Charities Commission, which reported countrywide data. In applying it to the parish case studies, additional assumptions have to be made. We know far less about eighteenth-century parish population so that applying back projections to the proportions of school age children could be invalid. But, even to attempt to assess the potential of schooling in these parishes, the generalization that population changed similarly everywhere had to be accepted.

Also the calculation only works if we assume that male and female population grew equally throughout the period in both counties, and that the number of males and females was equal. There is some evidence, reported by Wrigley and Schofield, to suggest that nationally a one to one sex ratio held for both children and adults in the early years of the nineteenth century. So except for the ever-present difficulty of parish by parish variation, that assumption holds up reasonably well.

The data collected in the case studies indicated the average duration of day school attendance was 3.4 years. Reworking the Essex and Staffordshire figures from Brougham then indicates that 67 and 61 per cent respectively of children aged fifteen could have experienced schooling. Since Brougham included all schools which the committee could identify, we would expect the proportion excluded from school to be mainly poor children. King estimated that half the population was decreasing the wealth of the country and were, therefore, poor. Likewise, a derivation from Colquhoun suggests that half the population could be considered unable to pay for schooling. If we assume that all non-poor children were in schools given by Brougham, then the third of

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20Wrigley’s and Schofield’s reweighting of early nineteenth-century census returns shows the ratio of males to females was nearly 1:1 in 1801, staying roughly the same to 1831. Similarly the ratio of males to females for the ages 0-9 in 1821 was essentially 1:1, Ibid., pp. 590-94.
the children excluded from school would have accounted for up to two-thirds of poor children. That leaves a minimum of one-third of poor children for whom there were places. But, probably more than a third were attending by 1816, because some non-poor children were educated at other schools or at home, while some may have received little formal instruction.

The SPCK and Charity Commissioners underestimated the probable number of students, while the Brougham report reflects nineteenth-century increases. The three reports together, despite their flaws, suggest a lower and upper limit for the availability of places for poor children. The SPCK and Charity Commissioners’ reports, at mid-eighteenth century, implied that a quarter of the labouring classes had the opportunity of attending school compared to the third suggested by Brougham. Because of the tremendous growth in the young population in the last half of the century, educational provision had to increase to maintain the mid-century level. However, the process of averaging obliterates any important local variations, and implies that all the schools were equally vital at the same time.

A potentially more enlightening method of dealing with the question is an examination of penetration in each of the parishes described earlier. In some of these parishes there also were fee charging schools of varying size and quality. Whether or not parents could have afforded them, there are no records which allow them to be considered. Thus the penetration figures may underestimate the extent of schooling, but not necessarily the schooling of the working classes.

The extent to which schooling reached the children of the six parishes is summarized in Table 4.7. The average penetration of charity day schools at the end of the century intimates that approximately a fifth of the age group attended those schools. If only poor children attended them, then 40 per cent of the poor children in those parishes could have had access to a free day school. Educational opportunity depended very much upon local variation, and the period from which the figures are taken. Average school penetration ranges from 40 per cent in Romford at mid-century to 7.6 per cent in Wolverhampton by 1801.
Witham, with both its day and Sunday school, illustrates another feature of educational provision. While the small day school accounted for 31 per cent of the age group, nearly 23 per cent of the age group attended the Sunday school. Notwithstanding the criticisms of Sunday school education, the conjunction of the two schools meant that as many as 54 per cent of the children in Witham could have experienced schooling. In fact, because many children took up places in both schools fewer than 54 per cent had that opportunity.

As described earlier, fewer places usually were allocated for girls in the schools. This affected the extent to which they entered school. Girls, on average, stayed longer than boys so that vacancies for girls were created at a slower rate than for boys. This also restricted their admission. Logically a smaller proportion of girls than boys could have attended these schools, as confirmed by Table 4.7. Witham was an exception because the day school admitted equal numbers of boys and girls, and the girls stayed a shorter period of time. The other school where girls appeared to benefit more than boys was at Great Yeldham where other factors, discussed above, indicate that charity education catered better for girls than for boys. In addition to girls’ advantage over boys in those two schools, their penetration level is significantly higher than the rest of the parishes in 1801. A maximum of eighteen per cent of the female population could have attended the other schools in the last decade of the century.

With population growth during the century, unless schools expanded they catered for a smaller proportion of the population by 1801 than they had on their founding. In fact, most of these maintained a static or declining number of places, in the face of a rapidly growing young population. To illustrate this effect, Table 4.7 gives the penetration percentages for Chelmsford, Romford, and Wolverhampton at intervals during the century for comparison with later figures for the same schools. Romford and Chelmsford tended to retain their full complement of pupils, as opposed to Wolverhampton which contracted, and yet the level of penetration fell in all three because of the increasing numbers of potential pupils. At Romford, for example, though the female population was smaller in 1762 than in 1799, girls stayed in the school much
longer, 4.4 years in 1762 compared with 3.8 years. Therefore, the two trends, population growth and shorter duration of stay, partly compensated for each other, keeping the Romford penetration results relatively close together across the last half of the century. This allowed a slightly higher proportion of girls to experience schooling than could have done so if the length of stay had remained at the 1762 level.
### Table 4.7. Penetration of Schooling by Sex, Six Case Studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Date of Calc.</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Penetration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chelmsford</td>
<td>1740-49</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>22.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>47.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1790-99</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>17.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>25.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1716-99</td>
<td>Av.</td>
<td>18.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witham Day</td>
<td>1787-1801</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>32.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>29.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Av.</td>
<td>31.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witham Sunday</td>
<td>1787-1801</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>17.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>28.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Av.</td>
<td>22.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penkridge</td>
<td>1779-98</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>20.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>32.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Av.</td>
<td>25.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
<td>1729</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>11.72</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>14.34</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1716-99</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Av.</td>
<td>7.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romford</td>
<td>1762</td>
<td>G</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>55.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1790-99</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>14.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>38.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1762-99</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>13.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>36.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Av.</td>
<td>24.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gt Yeldham IS</td>
<td>1789-1801</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>78.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gt Yeldham SS</td>
<td>1789-1801</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>91.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>84.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Av.</td>
<td>88.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Day</td>
<td>1801</td>
<td>Av.</td>
<td>21.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note that for averages across decades, 1810 population data was used.
†Great Yeldham was taken to include Little Yeldham as well. Because of the shortness of the data run, those girls who stayed at the Sunday School for one year and went directly to the Industry School were removed from the average length of attendance because they tended to distort the data.

Sources: E.R.O., D/P 18/12/3, D/P 18/12/4, D/P 18/11/3, D/Q 8/3, D/Q 8/1, T/A 461, D/Q 24/2, D/P 30/1/2A; S.R.O., D260/M/F/120, D1157/1/5/1; Charities Commission, Reports, 4, 357-60; 5, 569-70, 588-89, 594-97.
By 1801, between 6.5 per cent and eighteen per cent of girls could have had attended day schools in these parishes. In some, like Witham, up to a third of the females, or rarely three-quarters in a small parish like Great Yeldham, had access to the free school. If about half the population were poor, probably between a sixth and a third of poor girls received charitable education in parishes with a charity school. In Great Yeldham virtually all poor girls were accommodated in one of the schools. In fact, girls whose parents were tradesmen and artisans were also taught in the two schools. Additionally Toppesfield and other parishes sent a few girls to the schools on payment of five shillings.\textsuperscript{21} Similarly at Witham, where a larger portion of the female population was taught in the day school than in other parishes, the fathers were frequently craftsmen and tradesmen as well as husbandmen and labourers. The daughter of the village beadle also attended the Sunday school.\textsuperscript{22}

As the population grew, because the schools did not increase their provision of places and relatively few new schools were founded, a smaller proportion of the population would have had access to schooling. From the calculation for the penetration of schooling, it is clear that proportionally few girls and boys were receiving a charity education by the end of the century. Girls’ chances of learning to read was also hampered by the fact that most schools provided fewer places for girls than boys. But for girls, the situation created by growing population was partly offset by them not staying as long at school, thus creating vacancies quicker than earlier in the century. So while girls at the end of the century may have had as much as eighteen months less schooling, on average, than their mothers or grandmothers, a larger absolute number of girls would have experienced schooling.

\textsuperscript{21} E.R.O., D/P 275/28/2.

\textsuperscript{22} E.R.O., D/P 30/1/2A.
B. The Relationship between Female Schooling and Literacy

The relationship between schooling and literacy is not necessarily causal or direct. It depends on the nature of the schooling available and access to it, as well as upon the perceived need for literacy by a group or society as a whole. The motives for achieving literacy may be as important as the formal structures for diffusing it. That does not necessarily imply a correlation between literacy and kind of work since other factors could have provided the motive. As an ability to read spreads, it alters and enhances communication patterns. At the same time it can increase an awareness of new opportunities and of alternative ways of doing things.23

Schofield charted a gradual improvement in the diffusion of literacy during the eighteenth century based on a national sample of signatures on the marriage register.24 For the same period, historians who note the increase in printed materials postulate a growth in the reading public.25 The motives for the acquisition of literacy, reasons for any increase and the method of acquisition are central issues to this study. Women’s ability to participate in a more literate society could be influenced by their own acquisition of literacy. In an effort to measure the extent of girls’ educational opportunities and to evaluate the quality of that experience, the female situation must be compared with overall trends.

An ability to read could enhance participation in eighteenth-century society where the printed medium was expanding and supplanting oral tradition. The term ‘literate culture’ describes a society that was becoming more dependent on printed matter in all forms, and it corresponds to a gradual weakening in the oral tradition of diffusing knowledge, information, history, heritage and even entertainment through the spoken

23 See the discussion of education, literacy and economic change and the derivation of economic models to relate one to another, in Bowman and Anderson, ‘Human Capital and Economic Modernization in Historical Perspective.’


25 Altick, English Common Reader, pp. 30-41; Kelly, Adult Education; Neuberg, Popular Education; Webb, Working Class Reader.
word. Ballads, the stories which found their way into chapbooks, as well as information about work and community practice form part of this means of transmitting culture. In an institutional sense, apprenticeship functioned in this way. By the eighteenth century, it was not yet essential to be able to read in order to share fully in society and remnants of the oral tradition continued to operate. Also an illiterate frequently benefited from readers who provided a bridge to the printed word through reading aloud. Similarly various forms of debating clubs and societies provided a link as well as the stimulus and opportunity to learn to read. However, the oral tradition probably was dying out throughout England.  

As long as no social stigma is attached to illiteracy and insofar as inability to read is no handicap either occupationally or culturally, there is no clear reason for anyone to learn to cope with the written word. But as society becomes more dependent on printed matter in all forms, the demand for literacy grows. By the end of the eighteenth century, England was becoming a literate culture in the sense that broad social literacy as opposed to occupation specific literacy was more prevalent. Numerous contemporary accounts claimed that England was becoming a nation of readers. Among the upper and middle ranges of society, reading for pleasure and information was becoming widespread. The argument is more circumscribed with regard to the masses. Webb believes the working-class reading public was larger in the eighteenth century than generally thought. However, reading was not easy nor habitual for most working people. For many, their entire reading experience consisted of simple, poor quality


27Johnson’s remark that ‘general literature now pervades the nation’ (1779) and Lackington’s assertion of widespread literacy are debated by Altick, English Common Reader, pp. 39-41. See also the foreign visitor who wrote ‘All Englishmen are great newsmongers’ (1726) quoted in Neuberg, Popular Education, p. 102.
material. Thus Webb characterizes it as a ‘potential reading public.’ But certainly it existed as did many opportunities to read and improve a nascent reading skill.

The decline of the oral tradition was more likely in the urban areas where the prevalence of the written word, combined with the demands of trade and commerce put a higher premium on literacy. Thus the need for literacy was concentrated amongst the trading classes and within the larger trading centres. Similarly these trends affected women, creating a dichotomy between the urban and rural woman, between the commercial and the labouring woman, and the middle and working-class woman.

A primary problem facing historians is developing a satisfactory definition of literacy. The phasing of schooling meant that far more children were taught to read than to write. But the historian has only indirect and imprecise measures of reading ability such as evaluating the outpourings of printing presses. The only direct measurement of historical literacy is to count signatures such as those on the marriage register after 1754. Obviously this measure hinges on sustained writing ability, which was achieved by fewer than the number who could read. Some probably could write only their name. Enumerating signatures necessarily underestimates readers but also overestimates true literates, described by Stone as those who had the ability to use the written word as a means of communication. Instead we do not know and may never know the precise relationship between the ability to sign one’s name and true literacy. The number able to sign is probably less than the number able to read and greater than those who could write.

\[\text{28} \text{Webb, Working Class Reader, p. 20.}\]

\[\text{29} \text{Hardwicke’s Marriage Act required couples to sign the marriage register from Lady Day 1754, thus allowing comparison between male and female literacy and between towns, regions and counties. See Schofield, ‘The Measurement of Literacy’ on the merits of the two approaches.}\]

\[\text{30} \text{Lawrence Stone, ‘Literacy and Education in England, 1640-1900,’ Past and Present No. 42 (February 1969), 98. Hereafter cited as Stone, ‘Literacy and Education.’}\]

\[\text{31} \text{Nineteenth-century studies indicate that those claiming a basic reading ability were twice the number who could sign, but the proportion able to sign corresponded to the proportion who could read fluently; Webb, Working Class Reader, p. 17, David Cressy, ‘Levels of Illiteracy}\]
to indicate a parallel but not necessarily proportionate change in the numbers able to read.\textsuperscript{32}

For many girls, reading was the only ‘academic’ skill taught. Thus the purpose of education is a critical factor in evaluating any link between schooling and literacy. In most of the schools discussed above, religious knowledge and behavioural strictures lay behind the teaching of reading, and reading for its own sake probably was not an important consideration; writing was even less so. Data presented earlier showed that schools were twice as likely to teach reading as writing to girls. Yet the reasons for providing such instruction may have been incongruent with the incentives of girls who sought schooling. At the same time, forty per cent of the schools did teach girls to write, and on average, those girls who attended school were likely to stay on long enough to learn to do so.

Laqueur argues that the foundation of schools was inadequate to explain how literacy became so widespread.\textsuperscript{33} Essex and Staffordshire data presented earlier show that the penetration of day schools probably decreased for both sexes across the century, at the same time as literacy increased. Also, calculations based on Brougham’s findings in 1816 suggest that schooling, including Sunday schools, reached between only one and two-thirds of the labouring people.

Yet the evidence for Witham and Great Yeldham suggests that the Sunday school, especially when combined with a day school, might have been an important factor in improving reading ability.\textsuperscript{34} In both parishes and in Coggeshall where a joint

\textsuperscript{32}Stone, ‘Literacy and Education,’ p. 98.


\textsuperscript{34}The role of the Sunday school in sustaining literacy during industrialization is the subject of debate. For a synopsis of the issues see Michael Sanderson, \textit{Education, Economic Change and
Anglican/Dissenter Sunday school programme for 200 children was established, the lengths of attendance were substantial, averaging four years for girls (Appendix 4.3). The penetration of schooling ranged from a quarter of the age group in Witham to over eighty per cent in the other two parishes. In some schools, with regular attendance for such a length of time, substantial numbers of children could have learned to read competently. However, frequently writing was discouraged actively; Coggeshall and Great Yeldham taught reading alone.\(^{35}\) Therefore, if Sunday schools sustained or improved literacy, it was probably not measurable by counting signatures. So, signings data could significantly underestimate the reading public after 1780.

Frequently studies of reading, popular literature and literacy take as their starting point the relationship between instruction and ability to read or write.\(^{36}\) The very rapid improvement in nineteenth-century literacy correlates well with improvements in educational provision. But for the eighteenth century, much less well-documented and with a much less clear correlation, alternative routes to literacy may help to explain the trends. There are numerous accounts of erratic and varied individual patterns of education, often lasting throughout a lifetime. The stories of James Lackington, Francis Place, William Hutton and John Clare all are recited as evidence that working men’s acquisition of literacy was not directly related to their schooling.\(^{37}\) Their informal instruction included teaching by family, friends, workmates and sons of an apprentice’s master. Similar evidence also is found among ecclesiastical visitation records.\(^{38}\)


\(^{36}\)For example, Cressy, ‘Education and Literacy’, Spufford, Small Books; Neuberg, Popular Education; Sanderson, ‘Literacy and Social Mobility.’

\(^{37}\)See Laqueur, ‘Cultural Origins,’ pp. 251-61, for example, while Spufford gives examples for an earlier period, Small Books, pp. 3, 27-32.

Additionally, the development of working men’s groups aimed at self-help, especially in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries gives credence to this explanation. A difficulty in describing the loci of education as formal or informal lies in the casual, temporary and non-established nature of many schools until well into the nineteenth century.\footnote{Covering self-help, adult and working-class educational movements is Kelly, \textit{Adult Education}. See Chapter 6 for further discussion of informal education.}

Regardless of the mode of learning, there had to be a motive to do so. Even if schools’ purpose was not primarily to teach reading for its own sake, they were important diffusers of literacy. But children had to be sent to school. It was not compulsory and cost parents either directly or indirectly, so that parental cooperation was essential. The prevalence of informal acquisition of literacy implies that the motivation to acquire at least some of the benefits of schooling existed amongst the labouring orders.

That England was becoming a nation of readers figures in historical accounts from Margaret Spufford’s on the seventeenth century, through Victor Neubergh’s on the eighteenth to Robert Webb’s and Richard Altick’s on the nineteenth. Similarly it is central to Laqueur’s work on popular literacy from 1500 to 1850. These historians cite as evidence a growth of book ownership, large print runs of popular titles such as Paine’s \textit{Rights of Man} (claimed circulation 1.5 million), and an increase in the numbers of newspapers, almanacs, chapbooks, novels, pamphlets etc.\footnote{Laqueur reports surveys of book ownership in ‘Cultural Origins,’ pp. 263-65; on publishing see Webb, \textit{Working Class Reader}, pp. 23-45, but note his reference to the ‘hearing public,’ p. 34; on the chapbook trade see John Ashton, \textit{Chapbooks of the Eighteenth Century}, (London: 1882, reprint ed. 1969) and Neubergh, \textit{Popular Education}, pp. 115-26; on newspapers see G.A. Cranfield, \textit{The Development of the Provincial Newspaper, 1700-60}, (Oxford: 1962), hereafter cited as Cranfield, \textit{Provincial Newspaper}; and Kelly, \textit{Adult Education}, pp. 83-85. A good overview of this approach is Altick, \textit{English Common Reader}. Also see Elizabeth Eisenstein, \textit{The Printing Press as an Agent of Change} (Cambridge: 1979) on the role of the printer and the press in their social and historical context; hereafter cited as Eisenstein, \textit{Printing Press}.} For example in 55 provincial towns, 140 new newspapers appeared between 1700 and 1760. The number of stamped newspapers rose from 7.3 million in 1750, reaching nearly 11 million in
By 1780 the annual sale of stamps had reached 14 million and in 1793, 17 million, in spite of rises in duty in 1757, 1776 and 1789, increasing the cost of the papers. After another rise in 1797, the duty alone was 3 1/2d. Popular novels might sell up to 9000 copies; Fielding’s, *Joseph Andrews* (1742) sold 6500 copies in thirteen months, and his *Amelia* (1751) sold out its first edition of 5000 in a week. But instead of selling more copies of specific titles, the novel reading public was increased by publication of far more individual titles and by the growth of circulating libraries. Thus there was more reading material at a variety of ranges of literacy, and the reader, both novice and experienced, would have had the opportunity to sustain the skill.

Availability of reading material hinges significantly on its cost. Some was free in that newspapers were posted at the printing office, and available in clubs and coffeehouses. While circumstances might put many clubs out of working men’s reach, for women that option did not exist. After the duty rise in 1757, Cranfield estimated the weekly country newspaper still cost only 2 1/2d each. Since he estimated the average unskilled worker’s earnings at 1s per day and skilled workers’ at 1s to 2s per day, the purchase of a newspaper was ‘within the reach of most pockets’.

The diffusion of literacy was class, occupation and gender specific in various degrees. However, the major area of debate centres on the interplay between industrialization and literacy in the second half of the eighteenth century. On the one hand we must ask what level of literacy was necessary for industrialization, and on the other what effect did industrialization have on the diffusion and acquisition of literacy. The importance of literacy in promoting the changes is a question outside this study.

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41 Cranfield, *Provincial Newspaper*, pp. 175-76.
43 Ibid., pp. 49-50.
44 Cranfield, *Provincial Newspaper*, 188.
However, the relationship between women, their work and literacy is of significance in evaluating the experience of eighteenth-century women.

In Essex and Staffordshire, women were involved in commercial activities where literacy and numeracy might have been an advantage. The Wedgwood correspondence includes numerous women shopkeepers transacting business via letters.46 Because of Wedgwood’s clientele, prices and marketing practices, probably these women were of good social standing. But shopkeepers could demand literacy from their female assistants, as an advertisement for a shop maid at a Colchester grocery indicates.47 Domestic service probably did not require literacy, but as suggested earlier, schooling might have been an advantage. Schools encouraged behavioural norms and a sense of responsibility expected by the employing classes, while certain educational standards for servants might have become more important in polite houses. The Edgeworths and Cappe suggest as much in their concern about untutored servants in charge of children.48

There is little other evidence that women’s work in these two counties required them to become literate. The impression in Essex is that as long as cloth trading existed, spinning engaged the overwhelming majority of women and girls. As that declined, they turned to straw plaiting, silk throwing or domestic service for employment. Seasonal work in agriculture also was important to them, but less well-paid as the century progressed.49 In Staffordshire, women were engaged in the Black Country

46 For example, Wedgwood Archives, 11-9330, 11-9483, 11-9602, 11-9797 and 11-10074. In the last case Grace Bates was clearly acting for another.

47 Cited in Brown, Essex at Work, p. 67.

48 Edgeworths, Practical Education, 1, 124, and Cappe, Account of Charity Schools, pp. ii-iii. Using nineteenth-century evidence, Ivy Pinchbeck claims that schooling was discouraged for service since it gave girls a taste for finer work than was required, and quotes ‘the least educated are the best servants,’ from Annual Reports British and Foreign Schools Society (1840) in Pinchbeck, Women Workers, pp. 107-109. However, she is commenting mainly on the problem of supplying farm and dairy servants, not housemaids.

49 See Brown, Essex at Work, for overall economic change, and Snell, ‘Agricultural Seasonal Unemployment,’ on the effects of agricultural reorganization on women in Essex.
mining and metal trades, especially nailmaking. The work was hard, and while girls were generally healthy from the exercise, they were also fatigued. The work did not require literacy, and observers’ comments indicate that it positively discouraged schooling.50

The effects of work on women’s opportunities to learn to read and write were mixed. In mining and the metal trades hours were long and the work was continuous, putting leisure time at a premium. However, Staffordshire was one of two areas which enforced set rest and eating times for miners.51 Agricultural work on the other hand was sporadic with varying hours, and domestic service also could create the time and place to learn. Work at the potteries, whether at Wedgwood’s or smaller concerns seemed to allow time for learning, but since hours were curtailed for lack of light, that probably restricted reading opportunities.52 Similar constraints may have applied to spinners though children could have been taught by a mother who spun whilst they carded. Ironically, wages for women were higher in those trades which least afforded the time, excepting pottery. Thus they might have been able to buy reading material, but not to use it.53 Women facing unemployment or underemployment, particularly as spinners or agricultural workers, were least able to afford materials.

50Hutton’s description of women in the metal trades in 1741, and Young’s in 1770, suggest hard and time consuming labour for women, William Hutton, An History of Birmingham, 6th ed. (London and Birmingham: 1835) p. 192 and Arthur Young, A Six Months Tour through the North of England, (London: 1770) 3, 306-342; hereafter cited as Young, Northern Tour. Young also indicated large numbers of unemployed women and children in the villages, for example, ‘Idleness the chief employment of the women and children: All drink tea, and fly to the parishes for relief, at the very time that even a woman for washing is not to be had.’ (near Newcastle-under-Lyme), 3, 317. Though Young’s view of the poor may have been coloured by the increasing rates which farmers in the area were paying, it also suggests the opportunity for learning to read, if the motivation existed.

51Pinchbeck, Women Workers, p. 256.


53For wages in the potteries see Young, Northern Tour, pp. 308-309; for the metal trades see the Commons Journals, 1759 and Annals of Agriculture, vol. 16, p. 534 where Young claimed wages for women were ‘Higher than any place in Europe,’ quoted in Pinchbeck, Women Workers, p. 280. However, some metal trades which particularly employed women, such as buttonmaking, Robert Campbell regarded as pauper trades. He claimed the number of women
There was encouragement for women to learn to read, if not to write or cast accounts, from another direction. As mothers’ responsibility for their children’s upbringing was more firmly enunciated, it became more important than formerly for mothers to read. Because they were to be good examples to their children they were provided with advice literature, particularly regarding female role and behaviour. Advice literature stressed the role of mother either explicitly or implicitly. At the same time, guides to parenting were directed to women. Mothers would have to be able to read if they taught their children such things at home. How far these ideological pressures reached down the economic scale is difficult to assess. They probably had some effect amongst aspiring families, and those where a first generation had acquired some literacy and where time and money created the opportunity.

Religious encouragement for women to read came from Protestantism and the Reformation with the belief in revealed religion and the centrality of the Bible. Some women may have learned to read solely because of this encouragement, but any direct relationship between literacy and religious belief needs to be handled cautiously. Coincidental rather than direct links are easier to establish. For example, in the eighteenth century, Methodism encouraged Bible reading, Wesley saying that ‘Reading Christians were knowing Christians.’ It has been claimed that Methodists were in the button trade had reduced it to small profits and reputation, The London Tradesman, p. 152.


56 Altick, English Common Reader, p. 35.
amongst the most literate sects, but little substantive evidence has been put forward.\(^{57}\) It was desirable for girls and women to be able to read their Bibles, religious tracts, and strictures on moral behaviour. This motivated many founders of schools, trustees, and the religious tracts societies, including the SPCK.

Both indirect and direct measures indicate that female literacy levels improved during the century. An upper and middle-class female readership had existed for some time, but in the eighteenth century, a variety of printed materials became more widely available. Changes in taxation and reduced costs of production made them cheaper, while publishers anxious to improve their profits directed material to a female market. In this way, ‘female readers’ came to be identified and treated as a monolithic whole by publishers and authors, creating a so-called ‘feminine’ press. Its existence resulted more from the discovery than the creation of a female market. Nevertheless, there was a significant growth in literature for and by women from the 1640s.\(^{58}\) Novels, women’s magazines, advice literature and recipe books increased in number and more women turned to writing novels, plays, diaries and letters for pleasure or profit. Finally, women were important supporters of circulating libraries and subscription publications.\(^{59}\)

This publishing boom was directed primarily to those females who could aspire to the leisured life and adopt the trappings of refinement. To distinguish what the poorer woman was reading from her husband or sons is practically impossible. Some advice literature, such as Trimmer’s The Servant’s Friend was intended specifically for girls going into service as was Eliza Haywood’s Present for a Servant Maid (1743) or Jonas

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\(^{57}\) Kelly, Adult Education, pp. 71, and Altick, English Common Reader, pp. 35-36 who claims that by 1789 the Wesleyans represented the largest group of lower-class readers, numbering some 56,000.

\(^{58}\) Patricia Crawford, ‘Women’s Published Writings, 1600-1700,’ in Women in English Society, ed. by Prior, pp. 211-16.

\(^{59}\) Women and reading is surveyed in Halsband, ‘Women and Literature in Eighteenth-Century England,’ and ‘The Female Pen.’ He argues a concurrent rise in the number of female readers at the same time as it became respectable for women to write. Evaluating the female author is Horner, ‘English Women Novelists.’ Adburgham’s Women in Print is a comprehensive description of the women’s magazines and of women as authors of all types of materials. Descriptive rather than statistical, it nevertheless depicts extensive female involvement as readers and writers.
Hanway’s Advice from Father Trueman, to his Daughter Mary, upon her going into Service.\textsuperscript{60} Also Trimmer’s Family Magazine was written for cottagers and servants. Manuals on health care such as Buchan might have reached them, as might recipe or housekeeping advice books.\textsuperscript{61} Of the cheap literature, tracts and chapbooks, we can do little more than speculate that in as much as this literature was widely available, women had the same access to it as men did. There is debate over whether the tracts had a real readership or whether they were produced by well-meaning persons because they were ‘good’ for the poor.\textsuperscript{62} While the Religious Tracts Society and the SPCK predicated publication on the assumption that the poor could read, we cannot take their dissemination as proof of this. Reading for many members of the working classes, women included, was not easy nor habitual, so that much of the material would have been beyond their ability.

Counting signatures partly tests the existence of a female reading public and is the only way to make a relative study of the two counties, and individual parishes. The most extensive use of signings as a measurement of literacy was Roger Schofield’s national study based on a sample of 274 English parishes (Figure 4.3).\textsuperscript{63} His results demonstrated little or no change for males while female illiteracy decreased slightly by 1800. Thus there might have been a large market for the ‘feminine’ press, justifying publishers’ approach. However, other studies suggest that literacy was very much dependent on

\textsuperscript{60}Published in 1796 and 1800, Advice from Farmer Trueman was abridged from Virtue in Humble Life, containing Reflections on the Reciprocal duties of the Wealthy and Indigent, 2 vols. (London: 1774).

\textsuperscript{61}Moss, Management and Nursing of Children (1781), Theobald, Young Wife’s Guide, and William Buchan, Domestic Medicine (London: 1798) were some of the more important though by no means the only ones of their type. Several cookery books date from mid-century, two of long-standing popularity: Hannah Glasse, The Art of Cookery made Plain and Easy (1747, 20th ed. in 1791) and Maria Elizabeth Rundell, A New System of Domestic Cookery, 64th ed. (1809). One specifically included the servant maid in its audience, The Accomplished Lady’s Delight in Cookery; or the Complete Servant’s-Maids’ Guide (Wolverhampton: 1780).

\textsuperscript{62}See Neuberg, Popular Education, pp. 127-38, and Webb, Working Class Reader, pp. 27-28. Altick suggests that Methodist tracts for which a small charge was made were regarded more respectfully than free ones, English Common Reader, p. 36.

local factors. Assessing national literacy across what was not a homogeneous nation disguises regional differences and possibly important trends. Also the nature and extent of urban as opposed to rural literacy is obscured. Nevertheless, women’s literacy appears in all places to have lagged behind men’s throughout the eighteenth century. The trends are not always parallel however, suggesting that different influences shaped male and female literacy patterns, as the summary data from Essex and Staffordshire illustrate.

Transport and commerce stimulated a recovery and expansion in Essex after mid-century, so that the county might have been expected to show a pattern of improving literacy. On the other hand, Staffordshire which relied heavily on industrial processes, might have been expected to show the opposite. Summary data for fifteen Essex parishes, however, show male literacy to have gradually deteriorated over the period 1754-1814, though it was more or less stagnant after 1780. The proportion of men able to sign their names was worse than that in Staffordshire from 1765. Male literacy in Staffordshire showed initial improvement, deterioration from 1770-80 and then a levelling off, but ending the period better than it had begun. By way of contrast, female literacy in Essex showed little distinctive change. An initial improvement quickly disappeared followed by deterioration and stagnation, but from about 1780 the trend is toward a slightly better level of literacy. Female levels in Staffordshire showed the clearest gains, progressing irregularly from 77.2 per cent to 70 per cent unable to sign. Because it was the worst group to begin with, inroads may have been easier to make. For both sexes and for both counties, the levels are appreciably worse than Schofield’s national sample.

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65 The ‘Marriage Register Summary Analysis: Illiteracy’ for Essex and Staffordshire were kindly lent by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure.
Figure 4.3 Illiteracy by Sex, 1754-1814.

Essex data are from much more rural areas than those for Staffordshire, with only Writtle and Romford with more than 1800 inhabitants in 1801. The Staffordshire data are from five urban parishes, all larger than 1800 inhabitants; Sedgley contained nearly 14,000 people in 1801. Indirect measures suggest that urban literacy was probably higher than rural levels, so that Cipolla described two cultures developing side by side: an urban culture which was essentially literate and a rural culture which was essentially
illiterate.66 This goes part way in explaining the higher level of male literacy in Staffordshire but contradicts the female levels in the two counties implying that different factors affected male and female literacy.

However, an examination of the urban centres contained in the data, Writtle and Romford in Essex and Sedgley, Cheadle and Stone in Staffordshire, suggests that this explanation of literacy may be too simple for the late eighteenth century. For women, illiteracy remained above 55 per cent in virtually all instances, whether urban or rural. In Staffordshire, Sedgley women showed a high level of illiteracy, significantly more so than the other centres. It is probable that the nature of the urbanization contributed to this difference, for Sedgley was a nailmaking district in which women and children were heavily engaged. Both their opportunity and need for literacy were probably less than in the other towns. High levels of illiteracy amongst women were characteristic of Sanderson’s and Laqueur’s studies of industrial Lancashire as well.67

Romford’s levels were only a marginal improvement on more rural Writtle’s, despite being a market town and trading centre. Both had charity schools, Romford being included in the case studies presented earlier. Brougham, however considered Writtle’s poor to have the means of education while Romford’s children were without. This judgement was apparently based on the fact that Writtle, less than half the size of Romford, also had three day schools and a large Sunday school; Romford only had a Dissenters’ Sunday school of indeterminate size.68 In neither parish was the level of literacy impressive, though women seem to have fared a little better in relation to the men than in Staffordshire.

Romford provides an interesting highlight to the relationship between level of penetration of a charity school and literacy data. Figure 4.4 compares Romford with

66Cipolla, Literacy and Development in the West, p. 55.


68Education of the Lower Orders, 3, 266, 278.
Schofield’s national and Essex sample. Overall, Romford women were more literate than their national counterparts, while the opposite was true of the men. In terms of the overall trend, whereas the national data, particularly for women, show a slight improvement in literacy, the Romford data tend to show a decline, especially for men, and particularly for those educated from 1770. That was just after the charity school reduced the school leaving age for boys from 14 to 12 years old. Thus boys discharged from Romford charity school after 1768, would have left at least fourteen years before they married and signed the register on which the data are based.

The attendance data for Romford showed an average length of stay at the school of over three and a half years. In 1762, forty per cent of the age group could have attended the school, and by the end of the century thirty per cent still could have. Except for 1800-1809, both Romford’s men’s and women’s ability to sign the register remained above the Essex level, suggesting that there was somewhat better provision of education in Romford than in many other Essex parishes. Additionally, the length of stay at school helped promote abiding literacy in Romford and perhaps similarly in the other sample parishes. In this case, the presence of a charity school probably aided the improvement of literacy, as was shown by comparison with parishes without one.

69 The dates at school were derived by using the mean age at first marriage of 26.4 for men and 24.9 for women. Wrigley and Schofield, Population History of England, p. 255.
With the increase of printed material available and with much of it priced and produced to appeal to the masses, women would have been provided with the medium through which to practice their reading once the ability was gained. Women could have shared in the general improvement in literacy, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Because available data are not distinguished by social classes, great strides in literacy in one group have the effect of averaging out less progress or decline in others. Female...
literacy probably became far more prevalent among the upper levels in society during the century, reaching the levels which males had achieved much earlier. Indirect evidence in the form of novels, magazines and circulating libraries which catered more for the middle and upper-class woman would tend to substantiate this. Literacy among poorer women probably increased less strikingly and less evenly. Since the overall level of literacy rose, and because the poorer social groups constituted the bulk of women, literacy probably improved at all levels of female society. Among poorer women, the economic circumstances, the provision of education, the work they were doing, and whether or not they felt any need to read, were strong factors in deciding whether or not women learned to read and retained that ability. To achieve literacy, women needed both the desire to read and the opportunity to learn.

In many of the expanding industries, including agriculture, women had little need of literacy. They may have had to learn new skills, but these were of a practical nature to which reading was largely irrelevant. Occupation specific literacy for women did not especially increase during this period, and a more important influence might have been the general state of culture and reliance on the written word. Additionally, women’s domestic responsibilities may have been more of a stimulus to their learning to read, than work was. Many of women’s activities were dominated by managing the domestic arrangements of their households. In the course of those duties they were responsible for controlling their families’ financial resources, an activity which could involve a high degree of sophistication. But more needs to be known about the interrelationship of these two factors, literacy and domestic responsibility.

A major distinguishing feature of female literacy is that though the level remained worse than male literacy, women were closing the gap. The underlying suggestion is that women were less affected by the factors which caused a trough in male literacy at the end of the century. Additionally, something was propelling women, ever so slightly, forward while male levels were stagnant. As suggested before, women as a group had more room for improvement, and so were more likely to do so in a prevailing literate culture. But possibly women relied less on the formal structures for imparting literacy.
If the failure of educational provision was a major cause of the trough in male literacy, it would lend credence to the suggestion that women learned to read by less formal means. Home-centred education and female ‘self-help’ will be explored later to see if a pattern of female ‘collective’ education existed.
Chapter 5: Apprenticeship

A. The Nature of Apprenticeship

The locus and pattern of eighteenth-century upbringing varied from the modern one which relies on the centrality of school. Occupational training and experience in other households were far more important. Although schooling gained ground during the century, transmission of knowledge and values from one generation to the next through ‘placing out’ remained an important mode of preparing children for adult life. Apprenticeship was one such route to adulthood which supplemented schooling or provided the entirety of a child’s formal education.

Primarily, the purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the role of apprenticeship in educating, training and preparing girls for the adult world. No attempt has been made, except where relevant, to describe apprenticeship in terms of labour experience and industrial relations.\(^1\) The chapter first discusses the origins and nature of apprenticeship. Second, it explores changes which had occurred by the eighteenth century in the classic model patterned on guild apprenticeships. The third section focuses on female participation in apprenticeship. An understanding of female apprenticeship requires an evaluation of two separate but intrinsically related characteristics. First, apprenticeship was intended to provide skill and training for adult work. Second, during apprenticeship the values and behaviour which society considered important were transmitted to the embryonic adult. The operation of apprenticeship and the relative weight assigned to these two aims within male and female apprenticeship illustrate the divergent attitudes toward education and occupational opportunities for each sex.

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\(^1\) For this reason a number of fascinating but tangential problems have had to be put aside. For the history of apprenticeship, particularly regarding legal and economic relations, the classic work is Dunlop and Denman, *English Apprenticeship*. A discussion of the changes in eighteenth-century apprenticeship, its problems and debates can be found in Rule, *Experience of Labour*, pp. 95-123. George relates apprenticeship to its London context and trades and includes useful interpretations of the special problems of parish apprenticeship in *London Life*. Dorothy Marshall in *The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century* (London: 1926), pp. 181-206, places parish apprenticeship in the changing context of poor relief; hereafter cited as Marshall, *English Poor*. 
Throughout the early modern period, English children were sent to homes other than their families’ for work, service and vocational training and for the acquisition of manners and patterns of behaviour. So, children from all levels of society frequently left home, usually between the ages of seven and fourteen, to become part of another household. Substitute adults took on the responsibility for bringing up and training them. For their part, the children served the family in positions which depended on their social status; likewise their integration into the host family varied.

This practice, considered uniquely English by foreign observers, has been ascribed to several causes. A frequently quoted sixteenth-century Italian attributed it to lack of familial love, and a desire by parents to obtain better service than their own children would give:

The want of affection in the English is strongly manifested towards their children; for having kept them at home till they arrive at the age of seven or nine years at the utmost, they put them out, both males and females, to hard service in the house of other people, … few are born who are exempt from this fate, for everyone, however rich he may be, sends away his children into the houses of others whilst he, in return receives those of strangers into his own.2

Stone suggested that sending out older children was partly to lessen the ‘oedipal and other tensions which inevitably arise between parents and adolescent children struggling to assert their independence and master the problems of their budding sexuality.’3 An English response to the Italian observer, ‘that their children might learn better manners,’4 implies a conscious intention to place children out, not so much to serve, as to learn, although the mechanism of instruction was the serving of others. The learning comprised not only ‘better manners’ but a range of educative experiences encompassing behaviour, vocational training, morality and adult roles.


3Stone, Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 108.

The stage of life between childhood and adulthood coincides with the period of preparation for adult life. Primarily during those years, children learn the values, beliefs and roles which underwrite the social system in which they participate. This is the pre-adult stage following childhood which Gillis calls ‘youth’ and which modern Europeans distinguish as two separate ones: adolescence followed by youth.\(^5\) Ariès suggested that the pre-adult years were regarded ambiguously, so that childhood was confused with adolescence while the relationship between them and youth remained vague.\(^6\) However, the practice of placing out children suggests that eighteenth-century people identified a life cycle stage between childhood and adulthood. Kett also shows how the language of age implied such a stage of development.\(^7\) From the timing, character and language of schooling, service, apprenticeship and ‘placing out,’ they appeared to associate it with learning. It was a transitional period, characterized as semi-dependent in contrast to the complete dependence of childhood and the independence of adulthood. The modern terms of adolescence and youth were merged into a single stage during which the essential transmission of culture as well as training in the economic skills needed to make a living took place.

Apprenticeship coincided with this stage of ‘youth’ for eighteenth-century children. For some, it encompassed the entire period, for others only the latter part of it. Trade apprentices were normally expected to begin a training at age 14, which lasted for 7 years, ending when they reached 21, or adulthood. Charity schools also usually placed children out at age 14. Parish apprenticeship however followed a very different pattern. Half of the children placed out by parishes were apprenticed before age 10.\(^8\) Thus parish

\(^{5}\)See above, Chapter 1C. The evolution of the idea of youth is discussed in Gillis, Youth and History, pp. 1-9; Ariès, Centuries of Childhood, pp. 23-30 relates adolescence to both youth and childhood. See also Joseph F. Kett, ‘The Stages of Life,’ in The Family in Social-Historical Perspective, ed. by Michael Gordon, pp. 166-91.

\(^{6}\)Ariès, Centuries of Childhood, p. 27.

\(^{7}\)Kett, ‘The Stages of Life,’ pp. 166-68.

\(^{8}\)See below, Figure 5.3.
apprentices had a far longer term of service than trade apprentices, beginning at least five years earlier for half of them. Structurally distinct from domestic and farm service, formal apprenticeship tied master and apprentice by a written contract, an indenture, to a certain term of years and conditions. In contrast, servants engaged in verbal or tacit contracts, typically of one year. Additionally apprentices, their parents or guardians paid the master for training while servants were paid for working, and could to save to set up on their own in a way apprentices could not.

Apprenticeship as a formal system of vocational training in crafts and trades originated in the guild system of medieval times. Ideally a master agreed to train a child in a trade for a specified term of years and to board and house the child. In return the master was paid the agreed premium and the child contracted to faithfully serve him and keep his secrets. Rule listed the essential features of guild apprenticeship as follows:

1. The binding by indenture and the due recording of the article of agreement therein.

2. A minimum term of seven years to be served before a trade could be independently exercised.

3. The binding to be a personal linking of the apprentice to a specific master, and to involve a close supervisory control over private life as well as over training. In fact a ‘loco parentis’ relationship was implied including the right to inflict corporal punishment.

4. The normal age of binding was to be the early teens.

5. The completion of an apprenticeship would confer an exclusive right to exercise that trade.

6. No remuneration other than support was required.\(^9\)

\(^9\)For clarification of the relationship between domestic and farm servants, and apprentices see Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, p. 4; Kussmaul’s use of formal coincides with mine in that the contractual nature of indentured apprenticeship is regarded as formal, while the customary relationship between servants and employer is referred to as informal. This does not, however, deny the significance and regularity of the second relationship. For the contractual elements of domestic service, see Hecht, Domestic Servant, especially pp. 72-4. Also Blackstone, Commentaries, 1, 425-27 explains late eighteenth-century legal definitions of servants and apprentices.

\(^{10}\)Rule, Experience of Labour, p. 97.
Before the eighteenth century, the institution was modified by legislation on artificers and poor law and by changes in the economic structure of society. The Statute of Artificers, 1563, added legal regulation of apprenticeship to the customs and rules of the guilds.\textsuperscript{11} At the same time the Act extended to urban England the guild practices of the City of London and other corporate towns. Children aged ten to twenty-four could thereby be apprenticed to husbandry or divers other trades. The Act required apprenticeship of seven years before setting up in certain crafts and provided legal remedies for either party in cases of misconduct.

Significant to apprenticeship was Tudor adoption of the institution as a means of removing pauper children from the parish poor rates. Predating the Statute of Artificers, the Poor Law of 1536 provided parish officials with the authority to put ‘single’ children aged between five and fourteen with masters of husbandry or other crafts or labours. They were to be taught so that they could support themselves as adults.\textsuperscript{12} The Elizabethan poor laws supplemented this act, extending parish apprenticeship to the children of beggars and ultimately to children whose parents the overseers of the poor thought unable to maintain them. Boys could be apprenticed to age twenty-four whilst girls were initially released at eighteen, but the age was raised to twenty-one in 1597.\textsuperscript{13}

As a result, a variety of apprenticeship patterns existed by the eighteenth century, based on the guild model and practices, but diverging from it in purpose and emphasis. The three most typical forms were private craft or trade apprenticeships, charity apprenticeships and parish apprenticeships. Of these three, private apprenticeships most clearly resembled the model in that training was undertaken by a master in exchange for a premium and a specified term of service by the child, usually seven years. Those emanating from private charity adhered to similar conditions and terms but the premium was paid by the charity and the trades and premiums tended toward the more

\textsuperscript{11}5 Eliz. I, c.4.

\textsuperscript{12}27 Henry VIII, c.25.

\textsuperscript{13}14 Eliz. I, c.5 (1572); 39 Eliz. I, c.3 (1597); 43 Eliz. I, c.2 (1601).
modest end of the scale. Yet charity apprenticeship was most variable, resembling either private or parish schemes. Poor law officials arranged the details and paid any premium for parish apprentices, often putting out children with more regard for the rates than for the child’s benefit. Thus, the conditions and purposes of the system could and did vary widely.

Central to the idea of apprenticeship was the expectation that children should receive training in a craft or trade. Indentures specified not only the trade but carried the stipulation

That the said [Master/Mistress] the said Apprentice in the Art of [trade] which s/he now useth shall teach and Instruct or Cause to be taught and Instructed in the best way and Manner that s/he can. (See Appendix 5.9.)

Defoe stressed this element, for a boy’s ‘apprenticeship is, and ought in justice to be [his emphasis], a school to him, where he ought to learn everything that should qualify him for his business.’ He acknowledged that proper training frequently was not provided and they were ‘so much employ’d to worse purposes, that Apprentices do not come out of their times better finished for business and trade than they did formerly.’

Adam Smith built his case for abolition of apprenticeship on what he saw as the fallacy that apprenticeship produced a skilled and industrious workforce, underlining the contemporary belief that learning a skill was a prime function of apprenticeship. The thrust of his attack was precisely that few trades required extensive skills to practice them.

Long apprenticeships are altogether unnecessary. The arts, which are much superior to common trades, such as those making clocks and watches, contain no such mystery as to require a long course of instruction. The first invention of such beautiful machines, indeed, and even that of some of the instruments employed in making them, must, no doubt have been the work of deep thought and long time, and may justly be considered as among the happiest efforts of human ingenuity. But when both have been fairly invented, and are well understood, to explain to any young man, in the compleatest [sic] manner, how to apply the instruments, and how to construct the machines, cannot well require more than the lessons of a few

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14Defoe, English Tradesman, 1, 14.

15Ibid., p. 16.
weeks. ... In the common mechanic trades, those of a few days might certainly be sufficient.\textsuperscript{16}

If skill were the most important aspect of apprenticeship, most apprentices’ terms could have been far shorter.

The character of training was blurred by the question of vocational knowledge. Apprenticeship indentures refer to the ‘mysteries’ and ‘practices’ of trades, not to skills. Thus the language of apprenticeship itself suggests that vocational training embodied passing on the practices and behavioural patterns expected of one who carried out the trade. In other words, the training had less to do with expertise and rather more to do with the status carried by the trade. Within this construction were the seeds of a regulated method of social advancement. In an age which made fine social distinctions between artisan and labourer, between master and journeyman, access to apprenticeship, particularly in a ‘good’ trade was seen as enhancing a child’s opportunities. In practice, of course, these distinctions were becoming blurred, and a glut of journeymen made this more an ideal than a real solution.\textsuperscript{17}

Historically, the function of apprenticeship was not restricted to vocational training. The terms and usages of apprenticeship were applied to other forms of education including universities as exemplified by the term ‘master of arts’.\textsuperscript{18} Likewise, Ariès’ evidence supports the view that in order to obtain initiation in a trade of any sort whatever - whether that of courtier, soldier, administrator, merchant or workman - a boy did not amass the knowledge necessary to ply that trade before entering it, but threw himself into it; he then acquired the necessary knowledge through everyday practice, from living and working with adults who were already fully trained.\textsuperscript{19}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{16}Smith, Wealth of Nations, pp. 139-140.
\textsuperscript{17}See Rule, Experience of Labour, p. 33. A useful discussion of social distinctions in London trades can be found in George, London Life, pp. 159-66.
\textsuperscript{18}Smith, Wealth of Nations, p. 136-137.
\textsuperscript{19}Ariès, Centuries of Childhood, p. 186.
\end{flushright}
Reminiscent of placing children in other households, this implies a broader view of the expectations of apprenticeship than simple training. Indeed, Ariès described any such period a child spent in another house as apprenticeship.\(^{20}\)

The contract itself specified that the master would regulate the apprentice’s conduct. (See Appendix 5.9.) Even where vocational teaching was important, the duty of providing moral training, to act in loco parentis, was manifestly expected by society. Defoe made this explicit, explaining that in their first years of apprenticeship children could not understand the trade, but were to be taught submission to family orders, subjection to their masters and dutiful attendance in their shops and warehouses. Throughout the remainder of their terms, in addition to preparation for work, they were to be instructed ‘in such things as may qualify them best to enter upon the world, and act for themselves when they are so enter’d.’\(^{21}\) For many children, the apprenticeship system, the formal mechanism for transmitting skills in English society, clearly was intended to answer the wider needs of bringing up children.

Apprenticeship also carried within it an inherent contradiction. On one level, it served as an initiation to the heavy responsibility of citizenship and adulthood. Corporation organization suggested this most strongly since apprenticeship frequently led to becoming a freeman with civic rights and responsibilities. On another level it was radically different from adulthood. For example, it imposed a ban on marriage, and legally described a dependent status so that apprentices lacked the economic and social rights of adults. The legal rather than moral restrictions on behaviour which were contained within apprenticeship meant that the institution could not and did not provide preparation for certain aspects of adult life including freedom of movement and decision-making.

Apprenticeship of paupers had additional functions which overlapped, and in certain respects further blurred, the original purposes of the institution. Although

\(^{20}\)Ibid, p. 278.

\(^{21}\)Defoe, *English Tradesman*, 1, 6.
following many of the same forms, children were put out to relieve the parish poor rates from the burden of their support. Vocational training was less prominent, while support of the child became paramount. Frequently, pauper apprenticeship was criticized for providing ratepayers with cheap labour. Undoubtedly this was true in certain respects, though by the end of the eighteenth century the development of ‘outdoor’ apprenticeship made this criticism more valid for the system as a whole.

Parish apprentices were more prevalent in poorer trades, such as cordwaining and weaving, than in prosperous ones, which lends weight to their being cheap supplementary labour instead of receiving meaningful training. Yet in jobs like husbandry or housewifery, the line between training and work was obscured by the nature of the task. In occupations requiring highly sophisticated skills a formal training was more justified, but where expertise was acquired by association with experienced workers, the training is harder to define. England remained primarily agricultural, so that many children, as adults, would be employed in agriculture. In these cases, apprenticeship provided them with useful knowledge and experience. But, as long as pauper apprentices were concentrated in poor or overstocked trades, the industrial training itself was of less economic value. Also the value of parish apprenticeship may have varied by its application in urban as opposed to rural trades.

These then were the dominant features of apprenticeship as an institution as it moved into the eighteenth century. In many respects they remained valid throughout the century. However, economic and social changes altered and influenced the shape of eighteenth-century apprenticeship and brought it under attack. Also its application to girls operated in often quite different ways from its use in boys’ education. These issues are the focus of the next two sections, which rely on a sizeable body of quantitative data derived from eighteenth-century material.

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Records of apprenticeships were kept by a variety of institutions including central and parish administration, corporations and guilds, and private firms and individuals. In theory, Inland Revenue records of apprenticeship should be complete for all non-parish indentures. They recorded payment of duties on apprenticeship indentures which came into force from 1st May 1710 to January 1811.\(^\text{24}\) Pauper indentures did not need to be, and usually were not registered nor were those where no money changed hands. The duty was payable by the master or mistress at six pence in the pound for those premiums up to £50 and one shilling in the pound for those over £50. When the master refused, the parents or apprentice paid the duty in order to avoid prosecution and to ensure a legal apprenticeship for the child.

The records are not comprehensive, but the extent to which children, and especially girls, are under-represented is unknown. Because these records were created for the purpose of collecting duty, circumvention is to be expected. Similarly, given the administrative weakness of the system, a fair amount of successful avoidance was likely.\(^\text{25}\) The expense of formally putting out a child because of the premium and tax may have outweighed the advantages to be gained in status and adult position. The importance of registration probably varied with the status of the trade and the social position of the apprentice or the master or mistress. Although average premiums were not very high and many menial, low status trades were registered, the perceived obligation to register may have been taken more seriously as one moved up the social scale. The likelihood of under-registration was greater for girls since certain of the advantages were not in fact obtainable. They usually could not gain the freedom of the corporation, nor did apprenticeship necessarily enhance their trading or political position as it did with boys.\(^\text{26}\) They were largely restricted from guilds and the

\(^{24}\)Enacted by 8 Anne, c.5, 1709; repealed by 44 Geo. III, c.98 (1814).

\(^{25}\)The only estimate of under-registration which I have found was from a conversation between Ludmilla Jordanova and Joan Lane in which the latter estimated under-registration to have been about 25 percent in areas she knew well.

\(^{26}\)See Prior, ‘Women and the Urban Economy,’ pp. 102-104.
advantages of a collective work group, and women often were seen by men not as trading partners but as threats to their own position. Since they had less to gain from the formalities of indenturing, their families may have been less interested in fulfilling all obligations.

As the century progressed, other pressures operated to undercut apprenticeship both in new trades and the less established trades which could not fight for exclusive rights. On the one hand there were those like Adam Smith who argued against apprenticeship on economic grounds, as a restrictive practice. On the other, for many new trades, ‘on the job’ or limited periods of training sufficed. Also new trades were regarded as legally outside the Statute of Artificers. Together these considerations may have diminished the reliance on apprenticeship for training, or at least vigorous adherence to the formalities of indentured service. Similarly, many new trades fell at the lower end of the status range, and being concentrated outside corporate areas, pressures for following guild traditions were weaker. If status were an important feature of registration, these factors operated to lessen further the sense of obligation to register.

The poor law and charity indentures and the overseers’ account books comprise the other major body of records. The accuracy and completeness of this material is coloured by the standard problem of historians, survival of material. Certainly the records of Essex and Staffordshire are not complete, and so represent a sample imposed by the vicissitudes of time. The quantifiable data from the records were processed by a computer program which allows apprenticeship variables to be compared with each other, e.g. sex to trade, to length of service or to premiums required for apprenticing a

27In many cases the records simply do not exist, such as Romford’s. This is particularly unfortunate since other materials including the charity school have proven so valuable and reliable. An interesting case is Gnosall, Staffordshire where the overseers’ records turned up by accident in an old chest in the early years of this century. Even amongst existing collections, it is clear that damage and loss have taken their toll. Such a case is Enville, Staffordshire where despite plentiful indentures before and after, there are only three for the years 1720 to 1740. A similar thing happens in Shenstone in the 1750s. In contrast, in several Essex parishes few records survive after the first half of the century such as Tolleshunt D’Arcy after 1727, Chigwell after 1744 and Canewdon after 1750. It is possible that apprenticeship fell off at that time, but the usual historical view is that parish apprenticeship was employed more frequently in order to offset rising poor rates. Loss of records is a more plausible explanation in view of the existence of large groups of records for the later period for parishes all over Essex, such as Walthamstow and Bocking. In some cases like Burstead Magna, it is the early years which are missing.
child. A detailed classification of trades was devised to evaluate and to combine the hundreds of trades into meaningful groups. This permits regrouping in order to discover the relationships which best describe the form and function of female apprenticeship. (See Appendix 5.) The quantification and subsequent analysis of the records is a way of building up a picture of the sexual differentiation of work and of the assumptions made by contemporaries about the need for girls to be trained for their economic roles. Comparing premiums and terms of service allows an estimate of the status of trades and possibly their skill requirements. Evaluating the level of female involvement in the apprenticeship system and women’s participation in the trade hierarchy helps to locate their economic role in its historical context.

The use of data which are essentially quantitative poses the problem of assessing the content of apprenticeship, i.e. what a child actually was taught. The situation is most unclear with regard to parish apprentices, where the system was created primarily for purposes other than training. Most records indicate the master’s trade but do not specify whether the child would be taught that trade. The assumption of historians is that boys would be instructed the master’s trade, but that girls would not. Instead, historical accounts usually report that girls were primarily cheap domestic servants who were taught nothing beyond household tasks.28

Sometimes the nature of female training within apprenticeship can be deduced from other information, including judgements about the nature of male and female work during the period. When the trade appears to be a ‘female’ one such as millinery, mantuamaking or housewifery, it is a fairly safe assumption that the girl would have been taught the trade by virtue of the sexual differentiation of trades. It also seems a fair estimate that a mistress would share her trade with her female apprentices, especially since most mistresses were also engaged in ‘female’ trades. But in mixed trades, such as

28 Marshall, English Poor, p. 195; Pinchbeck and Hewitt, Children in English Society, 1, p. 242; Lane, ‘Apprenticeship in Warwickshire, 1700-1834’ p. 120; George recognizes the ambiguity of female apprenticeship, London Life, p. 231, as do Dunlop and Denman, English Apprenticeship, pp. 151-52. Pinchbeck argues that it was frequently ‘simpler to turn the girls out in the fields than to give them any training in domestic duties,’ Women Workers, p. 18.
weaving, or where little corroborative evidence is available, the problem may be
insurmountable. Potentially, settlement examinations can shed light on the female
experience of apprenticeship, though they are not necessarily typical and relate only to
those claiming relief.

The analysis of the premiums required for each trade may provide a form of
corroboration. Where the range of premiums for girls coincided with the range for boys,
there is greater likelihood that the training was similar. However, there is still a difficulty
in the case of low skill and status trades. Similar premiums may mean that the training
and prospects for both sexes was the same, though the girl may well have been in effect
a household servant. In the case of boys, the position is not always clear-cut either.
Apprentices of both sexes probably split their time between domestic and manual tasks
and their training.

The premiums serve as a rough guide to the status of a trade, and frequently to its
prospects of providing a livelihood at the end of service. Clearly higher premiums
represented profitable trades like ironmongery, or professions like law; likewise low
premiums usually indicated either low skilled work, or overstocked trades, poor future
prospects and low status such as cordwainers, weavers, nailers and housewifery. The
fee was also determined by whether or not a child brought the tools of the trade to the
apprenticeship. Where the master supplied such requisites, it raised the premium. This
is implied where the Inland Revenue recorded a divergence between the actual duty
paid and what the law required, an indication that the value of goods brought into the
relationship had been included in the assessment.

The length of terms of service are also revealing. Terms greater than or less than
the popular seven-year term might have been an indicator of the length of training
thought to be required for the trade. Instead, long terms of over seven years often
represented a poor trade such as bucklemaker. Short ones were usually found in
conjunction with a large premium which was typical of prestige occupations and
possibly ‘finishing’ education, such as millinery and school teaching. Indentures
involving relatives could alter the pattern by adopting either incongruously small premiums or short terms.

The relationship between the length of a child’s term and the premium which parents or officials paid is most productive in assessing the form and function of a particular apprenticeship arrangement. A low premium alone suggests several possibilities, but a low premium in conjunction with a long term almost invariably indicated a trade with relatively poor prospects and status. This was true of weaving and several small metal trades such as bucklemaking, nailmaking and locksmithing. Similarly a high premium with a short term regularly occurred where masters prepared boys for medicine, law or similar professions and girls for millinery. High premiums with long terms or low premiums with short terms were exceptional, though the latter appears regularly in arrangements between family members.

Careful evaluation of trades, premiums and terms can help to assess the relative position of women and men with respect to work and training. By comparing premiums and terms of service as they relate to individual trades, some estimate can be made of their status and possibly their skill requirements. Women’s range of opportunities and role in the economy can be further located while gaining a fuller idea of the practices in training girls.

The inherent limitation of the data used here means that they alone cannot resolve the issues of the content of apprenticeship and its value to the participants. Other material, such as settlement examinations, could be brought to bear to help describe the content and purposes of female apprenticeship more fully. Also reliance on this data ignores the large number of girls who did not want, need or have a trade apprenticeship or who were not pauper children subject to the overseers’ dictates. Apprenticeship was only one form of educating girls for adult roles, and a great many children, especially girls, did not experience formal apprenticeship. For them other forms of education and upbringing such as family, schooling, work or informal arrangements were more significant.
B. Eighteenth-Century Apprenticeship

In the last half of the eighteenth century, legal and political opinions about apprenticeship shifted. An acceleration in industrial productivity coupled with the realization that changes in work organization could facilitate profit-making led to a challenge to the institution of apprenticeship. At the same time, the increasing numbers of poor and the application of parish apprenticeship to reduce rising poor rates, especially from the 1770s, led to legal changes in that system as well. Shifts in attitudes and economic conditions operated together to effect changes throughout the institution with regard to terms, premiums, trades and its sexual configuration.

For the most part, eighteenth-century legislation operated to amend but not significantly alter parish apprenticeship. The terminal age was reduced for London boys in 1767 and for all others in 1777 to twenty-one years old.29 The long period of parish indenture to age twenty-four had become recognized as a period of legalized slavery. It may have controlled vagrancy or prevented marriage when the Elizabethan legislation was passed, but its depiction by Hanway as more damaging than beneficial led to the reduction.30 At the same time a minimum premium of £4, payable in two instalments, was established. The staged payment was intended to procure better masters and provide an incentive for improved treatment. Eden believed that these two measures saved many lives, though on balance George was less certain.31

Late seventeenth-century legislation enabled overseers to compel householders to take parish apprentices, which could increase the children’s vulnerability to abuse by a reluctant master. Moderate correction of an apprentice was lawful, but as case records

297 Geo. III, c.39 and 18 Geo. III, c.47.


31 Eden, State of the Poor, 1, 338-39; George, London Life, pp.236-38; Marshall, English Poor, pp.201-203.
show this was interpreted broadly. Subsequent legislative changes aimed to provide more protection for the parish apprentice, in response to the ill-treatment reported in Quarter Sessions records and chronicled by historians of apprenticeship. Since the Statute of Artificers, apprentices could be discharged on reasonable cause by either their own or their masters’ application to Quarter Sessions. Initially apprentices in trades whose premiums were less than £5, especially parish apprentices were not protected. Then, in 1747, the law was extended, allowing their application to the justices on the grounds of ‘any Misusage, Refusal of necessary Provision, Cruelty or Ill-treatment.’ If the justices thought it reasonable, restitution of a proportion of the premium was also granted. In 1792 and 1793, further protection was extended to parish apprentices, and where the apprentice was discharged due to misconduct of the master, the master had to deliver up the apprentice’s clothing and pay up to £10 to have the child apprenticed to another master. Additionally from 1793, the errant master could be fined. That this legislation did not resolve the problem is testified to by continued cases and criticism of the system by contemporaries such as Catherine Cappe.

The growth in statutes protecting the poor apprentice in itself suggests that abuses in their treatment occurred at a level sufficient to draw legislative attention. In the settlement examinations for Northfield, Worcester, part of the Black Country nailmaking area, two of the twenty-three apprentices claimed to have left their place due to mistreatment, one being discharged by Quarter Sessions. The most apparent feature

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320 Geo. II, c.19 (1747).

3432 Geo. III, c.57 (1792), 33 Geo. III, c.55 (1793); see also Blackstone, Commentaries, I, 426.

35Cappe, Observations on Charity Schools, p. 45.

36Birmingham Diocesan Record Office, St. Lawrence, Northfield, Examinations re: Settlement, 1699-1800, DRO 14, Overseers of the Poor, Bundle II, hereafter cited as B.D.R.O., Northfield Settlement Examinations.
was the large number of parish children who were sent, or allowed, by the legal master
to go to work for another person, often for very short periods of time. Thus despite the
legalized nature of apprenticeship, frequently the arrangement was fairly casual. None
of the former parish apprentices referred to receiving any instruction and described their
service only in terms of work. This is in keeping with Marshall and George who
emphasize the labouring rather than training functions of parish apprenticeship.37
These examinations mainly dealt with the last half of the century, concentrated in the
1770s and 1790s, and may reflect economic conditions which placed greater pressure on
those on the poorer end of the economic scale.

Changes in the economic structure during the century, particularly the decline of
some industries and the rise of new ones, reshaped apprenticeship and its role in
economic and social life. The number of cases and disputes involving untrained
workmen or inadequately prepared apprentices suggests that adherence to formal
apprenticeship was challenged by the employers, and that the challenge was resisted by
their artisanal workforce. The arguments about apprenticeship centred on the need of
capitalism for an unrestrained form of labour. In response, the craftsmen used the
Statute of Artificers in repeated attempts to retain control over their trade, and over their
ability to set wages and prices.38

Legal opinion, as well as the economic frame of mind, increasingly tended to reject
apprenticeship as inhibiting the basic common law right to exercise a trade. Blackstone
explained:

At common law every man might use what trade he pleased; but this Statute
[of Artificers] restrains that liberty to such as have served as apprentices: the
adversaries to which provision say, that all restrictions … are pernicious to
trade; the advocates for it allege, that unskillfulness in trades is equally


38 See the table of disputes in C.R. Dobson, Masters and Journeymen: A Prehistory of
and Journeymen; also Rule, Experience of Labour, pp. 109-119; Dunlop and Denman, English
Apprenticeship, pp. 226-36.
detrimental to the public, as monopolies. … However, the resolutions of the courts have in general rather confined than extended the restriction.39

Confirming this stance Judge Sir Michael Foster in 1758, criticized the system of apprenticeship:

In the infancy of trade, the Act of Queen Elizabeth might be well calculated for public weal, but now when it is grown to that perfection we see it, it might perhaps be of utility to have those laws repealed, as tending to cramp and tie down that knowledge it was first necessary to obtain by rule.40

The Statute of Artificers was enforced by complainants bringing cases before the courts, thus the onus for compliance rested on injured parties. Rule points out that remarkably few prosecutions were brought during the century with a general absence of litigation from mid-century. While there were regional variations in this trend and certain trades were more likely to maintain apprenticeship regulations, he argues that ‘case law had clearly established the equivalence of seven years’ working to a fully indentured apprenticeship.’41

The build up of practice and case law established two fairly clear interpretations which held throughout the last half of the eighteenth century. In view of industrial changes during the century, the Statute of Artificers was not held to extend to trades which were not in existence when it was passed in 1563. Thus many of the industries of the period, including cotton manufacture and many Black Country trades, were regarded as exempt. Similarly, contemporary acceptance of a period of seven years as equivalent to indentured apprenticeship undermined the strength and supposed universality of the institution. A third and less certain restriction of the Statute was the claim that it only extended to corporate and market towns.42 In Essex and Staffordshire,


40Quoted in Dobson, Masters and Journeymen, p. 130. See E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, pp. 302-304, for some of the context to this case. Elizabethan courts had ruled that in unskilled trades such as husbandry, brickmaking and milling an apprenticeship was not essential, J.H. Clapham, An Economic History of Modern Britain, 2nd ed., 3 vols., (Cambridge: 1930), 1, 370.

41Rule, Experience of Labour, p. 109, see also pp. 106-114.

42Smith, Wealth of Nations, p. 137.
with the growth of rural industry since the sixteenth century, this view of the Act could have significantly altered the role of apprenticed labour in those counties.

The Statute was not a ‘dead letter,’ and in the early years of the nineteenth century it became the centre-piece of arguments between masters and men for control of working practices and wages. Importantly it retained viability during the eighteenth century simply because of its existence in that the threat of prosecution may have affected observance of the Act’s provisions. Likewise, it was used to justify direct action by craftsmen instead of court action to force adherence to apprenticeship regulations. While few appeals were made to the courts, apprenticeship issues were given as the cause of about five percent of industrial disputes according to Dobson, the number rising as the overall number of disputes rose.43 As Behagg pointed out for the nineteenth century, ‘Maintenance of apprenticeship regulation was central to any trade’s defence of its situation.’44 During both centuries, this defence was based on the Statute of Artificers, and where possible, on supplementary legislation relating to the specific trade, such as hatters and silk weavers.45

Economic opinion which favoured removal of trade restrictions was aggressively opposed to apprenticeship. Adam Smith’s classical statement of this position gave theoretical force to views which were already widely held. He argued that apprenticeship restricted entrance to certain employments, by limiting the number of apprentices allowed each master. Lengthy training, which increased the expense of education, restrained it indirectly. Similarly apprenticeship obstructed the free circulation of labour from one employment to another, by requiring seven years training in any craft or trade before it could be practised. Long apprenticeships, he wrote, were no guarantee of good workmanship nor did they encourage young persons to industry.

43Dobson, Masters and Journeymen, pp. 154-70.

44Clive Behagg, ‘Custom, class and change: the trade societies of Birmingham,’ Social History, 4, 3 (October 1979), 467; hereafter cited as Behagg, ‘Custom, class and change.’

45Rule, Experience of Labour, p. 111.
Most trades, especially the ‘common mechanic trades,’ could be learned in a few days or, occasionally, weeks. Skill obtained through experience would be pursued more diligently if the apprentice were paid for the work, paying in his turn for the materials.\textsuperscript{46}

A journeyman who works by the piece is likely to be industrious, because he derives a benefit from every exertion of his industry. An apprentice is likely to be idle, and almost always is so, because he has no immediate interest to be otherwise.\textsuperscript{47}

Smith saw apprenticeship as a deliberate attempt by craftsmen to restrain competition, and protect their own position and earnings. In the economic climate of free ebullient competition, with the abolition of apprenticeship ‘the publick [sic] would be a gainer, the work of all artificers coming in this way much cheaper to market.’\textsuperscript{48}

In opposition to the forces of free trade stood the skilled workers who wished to protect their position within a trade and the trade’s position within the economic and social structure. Smith argued that apprenticeship regulations offended against the property each worker had in his own labour. In contrast to this, skilled workers maintained that apprenticeship conferred a particular property right to the exclusive exercise of their trade. Their seven year service was thought to have purchased this right for them, enhanced in the better trades by sizeable premiums which guaranteed admission to a trade with status and prospects.\textsuperscript{49} In addition to providing a ‘closed shop,’ the right to control numbers of apprentices helped to prevent dilution of the trade thus maintaining its levels of prices and wages.\textsuperscript{50} These depended, however, on economic conditions, and in the growing number of disputes about wages, apprenticeship was usually only a contributory factor. The fundamental issue was that


\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., p. 139.

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., p. 140.


\textsuperscript{50}See the cases cited in Dobson, \textit{Masters and Journeymen}, pp. 56, 114, 134, and George, \textit{London Life}, pp. 233-34.
craftsmen believed they had earned an exclusive property right to exercise their trade, while economic pressures backed by ideological debate were pressing for the individual’s natural right to employ his labour. The irony is that in appealing increasingly to the terms of the Statute of Artificers in the early nineteenth century, craftsmen focused attention on it, which led to repeal of the apprenticeship sections in 1814.51

Nevertheless, apprenticeship remained the premier method of providing formal vocational training in the eighteenth century. Even repeal in the next century removed only the compulsion and did not abolish apprenticeship.52 George emphasized its continued role in London though in certain trades such as brewing it was less significant, while in others parish apprentices were the norm.53 Throughout the century it was a valuable system of general training and technical instruction. But here, too, its position was challenged. With growing interest in schooling, the position of apprenticeship in the typical life cycle of the child gradually altered, often being removed altogether. School preparation for the professions was increasingly common for middle-class boys while eighteenth-century writers on apprenticeship indicated that certain basic schooling should precede the learning of a trade. Campbell’s 1747 guide to apprenticeship dealt with the whole range of urban trades. He saw reading and writing as so useful for all trades ‘that we need not, it is presumed, use many Arguments to recommend Children being well founded in these before they are bound.’54 Additionally he recommended arithmetic and drawing as useful skills to acquire before entering upon an apprenticeship.

5155 Geo. III, c.96.

52For example, see Behagg, ‘Custom, class and change,’ pp. 467-68, on the continued importance of apprenticeship controls in trade disputes in nineteenth-century Birmingham.


54Campbell, The London Tradesman, p. 20.
The charity school movement at the beginning of the eighteenth century and Sunday schools coupled with Evangelical and Methodist educational activity at the end provided alternative forms of education for many children of the labouring orders. The pattern of bequests also suggests an important change in the value of apprenticeship as a form of education. The publication of charitable donations in 1787-88 for Essex and Staffordshire showed that the proportion of educational charity for apprenticeship fell from 43 percent before 1699 to 22 percent during the eighteenth century with very few new donations for apprenticeship after 1750. This decline was partly the result of and offset by a rise in the number of donations for schooling.55 These figures illustrate the change in emphasis from apprenticeship to school which took place in children’s upbringing. The intention of many charity school foundations showed that schooling was being interjected into the educative cycle, preceding apprenticeship. Colchester Charity School, from 1714, taught boys to write a ‘fair hand to suit them for apprenticeship,’ while Wolverhampton included the ‘Grounds of Arithmetic to fit them for Service or Apprenticeship.’56 Also in many schools the children were staying on to the maximum age allowed rather than leaving early to take up a position.57

One of the key questions about apprenticeship during the eighteenth century is, ‘Did it decline as a practice?’ The implication of the pressures described above are that it did. Yet the available data suggest a rising number of children were placed as apprentices until after 1790 (Figure 5.1). After an increase in private apprenticeship in the 1750s, the number of indentures remained fairly stable though linked to an underlying rise. Parish apprenticeship rose consistently from 1760 to 1790 but in the decade which produced the Speenhamland decision, the number of parish apprentices returned to the level of the 1770s. The very small number of charity apprentices show a

55Charitable Donations, 351-390, 1117-1160.

56E.R.O., T/A 613, p. 9; S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1. A similar stipulation was included in the charitable bequest in the Will of Humphrey Perye of Bilston in Wolverhampton, Charities Commission, Reports, 5, 597.

57See above, Chapter 4.
different pattern, in which the peak and drop occur a decade earlier than the other two types. The overall pattern demonstrates a relatively stable use of apprenticeship, rising slowly until the last decade.

![Figure 5.1. Number of Parish and Private Apprentices, 1750-1799](image)

When compared to the population growth in the two counties, the proportion of apprentices remained fairly stable from 1750, though dropping off from 1791. (Figure 5.2) But by comparison to the age group, which grew more rapidly than the overall population, apprentices clearly were a declining proportion from 1771, with a fairly steep drop from 1786. Private apprentices began to drop relative to the age group from 1771 while parish apprentices did not until 1786. (See Appendix 5.4.4.) Thus the data do not suggest a dramatic decrease in the use of formal apprenticeship but the decline in the proportion of the relevant age group placed as apprentices is notable. While more children were apprenticed, clearly the institution did not keep pace with the increasing numbers of children, exhibiting yet another factor putting pressure on the system. This was particularly true for the traditional apprentices, put privately to trades, who were the largest group.

Even allowing for lost indentures, avoidance of tax and poor recordkeeping, a remarkably small proportion of children appear to have experienced apprenticeship. An average of 0.4 percent of the age group (5-14) were placed as apprentices in any one year.
in the two counties. With an average term of 7.4 years for all apprentices, at any one time about three percent of the children in those counties were serving as apprentices. Thus formal apprenticeship was part of

![Figure 5.2. Apprentices as a Proportion of the Population and 5-14 Age Group, Staffordshire and Essex](image)

(Full Data in Appendix 5.4)

the life cycle experience of remarkably few children. This does not invalidate the further study of apprenticeship for several reasons. It was perceived as important to contemporaries either as training or as a means of relieving the poor. It was also a model of the social relations between adults and young. As many as 3000 children at a time could have been serving out their indentures in Essex and Staffordshire. If these figures hold for the whole country, some 56,000 children could have been serving apprenticeships at one time. For some areas the figures were probably higher, such as London. Formal apprenticeship is only the tip of the iceberg, since historians of domestic and farm service, household economics, labour and apprenticeship recognize the importance of less formal forms of apprenticeship-like service.\footnote{Laslett’s figures for servants are significantly higher. Whether or not he included apprentices is not clear. See his discussion on the life cycle of servants, \textit{Family Life and Illicit Love}, p. 34.}
From mid-century, Essex children consistently made up a higher proportion of apprentices than those from Staffordshire. (Appendix 5.4.3.) After 1790 this reversed. It could be an indicator of the industrial changes taking place in the two counties. In Essex, the main industrial occupation of clothmaking had very nearly disappeared replaced by mainly agriculturally and commercially based activities. These did not provide trade apprenticeships on the same scale as the clothmaking processes. In the 1790s Essex apprentices dropped by a quarter from the previous decade total. In contrast, metal trades and pottery were on the increase in Staffordshire. Thus the shift was caused by changes in both counties. As Staffordshire developed a growing industrial workforce which was more likely to resort to apprenticeship for training or labour, those opportunities declined in Essex. This provides a reminder of the regional nature of industrial changes, and particularly in the application of apprenticeship.

The county comparison also suggests that an examination of the general characteristics of apprenticeship rather than concern with an overall decline may be a more useful way to understand how apprenticeship responded in the last half of the century. Comparable data for the first half of the century have not been collected despite the use of Inland Revenue records by a number of historians, and at a later date, it would be useful to do so. The following parameters of late eighteenth-century apprenticeship in the two counties were most significant: the types of apprenticeships to which children were put, the trades which figured in each type and the terms and premium values reflected in the indentures. Where possible, trends across time were identified and evaluated.

As described earlier, most private apprenticeships coincided with the period of adolescence, lasting from age 14 to 21. The parish apprentice’s experience was usually

quite different beginning earlier and therefore lasting longer. Most pauper children were put out between ages seven and nine and only six percent were indentured at age fourteen (Figure 5.3). Certainly the early age of indenturing could imply the use of cheap labour, although they probably began their apprenticeship as a liability. They were too young to work well and frequently spoiled materials. However, these child apprentices were far more useful at the end of their lengthy terms than initially, particularly where little skill was involved.

Such young apprentices also reflected the parsimonious desire to remove children from the rates, which was very much in keeping with the general administration of the poor laws at that time. An additional application of parish apprenticeship was to ‘improve’ children by removing them from the baneful influences of pauper parents into the ‘good’ homes of ratepayers. Cappe saw apprenticeship as working in a contrary direction, primarily because people who applied to take apprentices were not the sort who were competent or disposed to faithfully discharge their trust. Her concern that those individuals were motivated by greed and an ‘undue love of authority’ indicates clearly her belief that apprenticeship of poor children was not activated by altruistic motives or even concern for the child. She argued that apprenticeship could destroy
even good people since by its very character it ‘calls into practice latent vicious propensities.’

The length of terms also varied by the type of apprenticeship to which a child was indentured. The traditional guild term of seven years was clearly the most popular, although parish apprentices were most frequently placed ‘to age 21’ or ‘to age 24,’ accounting for sixteen percent of the total. Practice could and did vary however, since about 1.5 percent of children put out via private indentures were placed for these long terms, while six percent of parish apprentices were bound for terms which were more like the private model. Despite the relative stability of the seven-year term, over the century it gradually eroded. Though 61.5 percent of children were bound for seven years, the average period of service (excluding those put to 21, to 24, etc.) dropped from just over seven years in 1700-1709 to 6.3 years by 1790-99 (Figure 5.4). The decline is clearest from 1750 where evidence includes private apprentices and is therefore more reliable than in the first half of the century. Though a slight change, the trend does support the contention that traditional controls over apprenticeship loosened throughout the last half of the century.

Premiums paid with a child’s indenture averaged £17 16s but rose consistently at the same time as prices rose during the last half of the eighteenth century. From just under £14 in 1750 the average premium by 1799 was over £23 showing a 45 percent increase while consumer prices rose 64 percent.61 Premiums ranged from nil to £500, but the great mass of them, 85 percent, were £25 or less. Where a premium was indicated, 70 percent of masters received less than £15 with £5 and £10 the most popular. No premium was recorded for 27 percent of apprentices, primarily parish children where almost certainly £5 or less was paid. These data undercut somewhat the idea that charity apprentices, with a premium of £5 or £10, were in a less favoured position than privately indentured children. Sixty percent of all children were apprenticed with £10 or less, and a third with £5 or less. Thus there was less differentiation amongst the great mass of apprenticed trades than might have been expected. The data also imply that for the great majority of trades, the premium alone was not particularly likely to purchase them a secure niche in life.

To evaluate the 545 individual trades revealed by the records so that similar trades and related processes could be grouped together, a trade classification was derived which is described in Appendix 5.3. The first grouping was made by the raw material used in the process. Clustering the trades in this way produced a surprisingly even distribution across the major occupational categories shown in Figure 5.5. The evenness of the pattern is partly because apprenticeship did not reflect the economic structure well. Indeed the data tell us more about how apprenticeship was used than about the economic organization of society. Agriculture, which probably employed the largest number of people in the economy, was less likely to use apprenticeship for training than the craft-oriented sectors of the economy such as metal, wood or leather trades. Trades, such as husbandry, were well-represented in the data partly because of numerous parish apprentices. Also other agrarian based trades such as millers, butchers and bakers took

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61Prices from Peter Mathias, First Industrial Nation (London:1968), p. 69, based on Schumpeter-Gilboy price indices, 1696-1823. These averages do not consider those cases for which no premium was indicated, although most of them were parish apprentices placed out with very small premiums.
large numbers of non-parish apprentices. The leather trades were the single most popular craft area representing over one-fifth of apprentices, followed by agriculture, timber trades and then textiles. The leather trades included cordwainers, the largest single craft taking apprentices in Essex and Staffordshire accounting for eleven percent of all apprentices. (Table 5.1) Tailoring, the second largest trade, included over one-third of textile apprentices. Husbandry ranked third in the overall number of apprentices.

Figure 5.5. Distribution of Indentures by Trade Groups, 1750-1799

(Full Data in Appendix 5.5)
Table 5.1. Most Common Trades by Type of Indenture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Apprenticeship</th>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Charity</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cordwainer</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husbandry</td>
<td>1052</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewifery</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelwright</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>433</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayweaver</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaver</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>Surgeon</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoemaker</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantuamaker</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joiner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumber</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Shoemakers</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2054</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Farmers</td>
<td>1166</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Woollen Weavers</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>939</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Appendix 5.6.

Of course the trade pattern of apprentices is dependent upon the type of indenture. Private apprentices comprised sixty-two percent of the 18,309 apprentices, while parish children accounted for thirty-six percent. The remaining 2.5 percent were charity apprentices. In trade apprenticeship, leather and related crafts rise to nearly a quarter of the whole, followed by timber, comprising just over one-fifth (Figure 5.6). Again, the general pattern is fairly even. Parish apprenticeship contrasted sharply with private apprenticeship in that twice as many children were placed in agriculture and three and a half times as many in services: the areas which included husbandry and housewifery. The other two areas which took a significant number of parish apprentices were textiles and metalworking, the main economic activities in Essex and Staffordshire. Indeed the
data illustrate the growth in metal trades and the relative decline in textiles as destinations for parish apprentices over the century.

Initially, textiles and metalwork appear to be similar in taking both parish and private apprentices. The difference lies in the individual crafts involved. Where tailoring was important for trade apprentices, it was joint sixth with blacksmithing for parish apprentices, taking less than three percent of them. By comparison 16.5 percent of parish apprentices were placed with weavers. Similarly cordwainers took only three percent of parish apprentices whilst they were the most common trade for private apprentices (14.3 percent). Blacksmithing was a popular trade for apprentices of all types, but none of the other small metal trades appear prominently amongst trade apprentices while locksmiths and bucklemakers figured amongst the fifteen most likely trades for parish apprentices.

The difference between these two patterns of apprenticing is not simply that parish apprentices were put to poor overstocked trades since many of the children put out by private indenture also went to unpromising trades. Instead, the patterns suggest that independently of prospects, some trades were considered appropriate for ‘real’ apprentices and others for paupers. As Table 5.1 shows, the four most popular pauper
trades contained only negligible numbers of children whose parents placed them in apprenticeships. Similarly tailoring and cordwainers which appear at the top of the trade list for private indentures drew relatively few paupers. Indeed the correlation in the rank order is not very high at all. Not surprisingly there were no paupers placed to grocers, mercers, surgeons, ironmongers, saddlers, cabinetmakers and attorneys; both the status and premium made these an impossible choice for poor children and the overseers.

Forty percent of children placed out by the poor law officials were sent into housewifery or husbandry with farmers, yeomen or husbandmen. This reflects, in part, the rural character of the two counties, and England as a whole. It also demonstrates the willingness to board children out to relieve the rates. However, as explained earlier and underlined by Marshall, in these rural communities, the work upon which they were set was preparation for the life they could expect as adults. Their position as adults would probably be little different from others in the rural community.62

Interestingly, the rank order and pattern of charity apprentices matches that of private apprentices better than it does the parish pattern. Potentially these children were selected as ‘deserving’ poor who would benefit from a craft apprenticeship. They may or may not have been paupers. In most cases, the charities were attached to a charity school from which a deserving boy was chosen. The proportion of these children in agriculture was untypically low, implying that charity apprenticeship was used specifically to put poor children to a trade rather than husbandry, the pauper apprenticeship ‘catchall.’ The proportion put into service also matched the private pattern rather than the pauper one. On the other hand, the high proportion of charity apprentices in textiles suggests it was the alternative to agriculture for a poor but deserving child.

As with trade categories, pauper and private apprenticeships created two distinct patterns when the stage of processing to which children were apprenticed is considered.

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Three-quarters of trade apprentices engaged in secondary production, while pauper apprentices were strongly situated in primary processing (Figure 5.7). The strong link between private apprentices, production of goods and the so-called traditional trades implies an emphasis on skill. Most trades related to agriculture, heavy and preparatory trades and clothmaking were classed as primary production, while secondary manufacturing included finishing work, the hardware trades and making artefacts and clothing. Thus apprentices in secondary processing usually worked in trades which created finished products. This in itself could not be characterized as more skilled work than that in the primary stages. More probably many of the trades in this category were associated in social perceptions with the traditional guild model of craftwork. From this ensued the identification of these trades with the appropriate status and role for a boy whose parents could afford to pay a premium. Thus the distinction in placing private and pauper apprentices probably had more to do with perceptions of status and position than with the actual skills involved, or even the potential prospects.

Few apprentices of any type appear in the distributive sector primarily because identifying retail and wholesale workers is very difficult with this sort of data. For example, bakers made and sold their goods as did a number of other trades. Thus this category reflects little of the merchandising which took place. Mainly victualling trades, cloth merchants and others where the sales activity was specified, e.g. leatherseller, comprise the group. Because capital was required to establish oneself in this area of activity, logically far more trade apprentices than others were recorded as sellers.
In contrast, pauper apprentices outnumber others in the service sector. This results from the large numbers of pauper girls put to housewifery and other domestic services. The trade apprentices in the ‘services’ were usually found in professions including law and medicine. Attorneys and surgeons alone accounted for over half of those placed in the services by their parents. This sector illustrates the distinctions in standing which can occur throughout the trade classification. Prosperous occupations carrying good prospects and prestige were found side by side with overcrowded poor trades. Though these disparities are disguised by statistical averages, the apprenticeship system operated in large part to preserve lines of demarcation and a sense of status. Most of these apprentices came from the lower levels of society, but moving up the social echelons the more prestigious trades appear, carrying with them status and prospects.

Their standing was identifiable by the premiums and terms which they commanded, because of course the levels of premiums and terms were affected by the trade to which a child was apprenticed. The services and chemicals groups drew very large premiums, over £40, primarily because they contained the professions like surgeon, apothecary, attorney, etc. Only the timber and leather products groups with average premiums of just above £10 fell well below the average of £18.11s 2d. The large number of carpenters’, wheelwrights’, cordwainers’, shoemakers’ and glovers’ apprentices with premiums under £10 contributed to this. Together they included a
quarter of all apprentices and nearly one-third of private apprentices, so that they held down the average premiums in those sectors of the economy. The discrepancy between premiums paid by parishes and charities and those for private apprentices illustrates the disparity between upper and lower ends of some trade groups. (Figure 5.8) Textiles, for example, included mercers and milliners who could demand over £30 regularly, and weavers who received an average of £3 to £4 for taking an apprentice, regardless of who paid the premium. Similarly metalwork contained jewellers, clockmakers and ironmongers who could ask high premiums and blacksmiths, bucklemakers and locksmiths who averaged premiums between £5 and £6. Even within one trade, such as tailoring, there were differences between those at the top end asking something like £77 with an apprentice and those at the sweated end taking only £1 15s.

![Figure 5.8. Average Premiums by Trade Group and Type](image)

The predominance of the seven-year term throughout the period meant that little difference was found on a selective trade by trade basis. Metalworking which took on many pauper children and required small premiums had the longest terms on average (Appendix 5.5). Particularly long terms could be served by children in bucklemaking and locksmithing. Services tended towards shorter terms, but the calculations exclude those indentured until they turned twenty-one, removing most parish apprentices in
domestic service. The professions required relatively short terms, and two or three years was quite common. A low average in textiles also reflects the fact that the prestigious end of the trade included mercers, drapers and milliners who frequently kept apprentices from two to five years.

The clearest differences in the use of apprenticeship appear between parish and private indentures. Parish children were apprenticed younger for longer and for smaller premiums on average than children whose parents attended to their indentures. The areas of the economy to which each were apprenticed also differed. Parish children were more prominent in agriculture and services and in the primary stages of manufacture. Privately placed children were most likely to be put to the leather trades, but otherwise were fairly evenly spread over the first five trade categories, encompassing most of the crafts. They were engaged primarily in secondary manufacture. On a trade by trade basis, there was little correlation in that trades which were heavy in private apprentices took relatively few parish children and vice versa. Only cordwaining ranked in the top five trades of both types of apprentices. These differences are partly a manifestation of the different purposes and perceptions which underpinned parish and private apprenticeship. Private apprenticeship carried with it the sense of skill, training, status and the mystery of the craft. This was true even if many children were put into trades which were already overcrowded and might bring small returns. Parish children were seen by contemporaries as cheap labour, as objects of pity or in need of inculcating in hard labour, and apprenticeship was a useful way to shift the burden of the poor. The issue is less one of skill and expertise than of status and social position.
C. Female Apprenticeship

Historians usually treat apprenticeship as a male preserve. Either female participation is regarded as negligible or the question is sidestepped or ignored. This treatment depends to some extent on the type of apprenticeship under discussion, because girls are more frequently mentioned when parish apprenticeship is studied. Those who acknowledge female involvement, nevertheless, continue to perpetuate the impression that the important historical questions are those which involve boys. It has been left mainly to authors concerned with female work and its economic implications, such as Ivy Pinchbeck, Alice Clark and Eileen Power, to deal with the issues arising from female apprenticeship.63 The other notable exception is Jocelyn Dunlop and R.D. Denman in English Apprenticeship and Child Labour, who dedicated a chapter to putting women into context.

The impression that apprenticeship was almost exclusively male is given credence by some records, notably those of guilds and corporations, which did not actively encourage female involvement. However, apprenticeship as a system of training applied to girls as well as boys during the eighteenth century. Inland Revenue and parish records demonstrate that girls were a significant proportion of the apprentices though the level of their participation depended upon the form of the apprenticeship undertaken. Similarly, though in fewer numbers, guild and corporation records refer to females as mistresses and apprentices.64 The gender differentiation of trades indicates that female experience of apprenticeship diverged markedly from male. The nature of trades open to girls, the terms of service and the levels of premiums suggest a devaluation of female work and female status, and reflect a narrowing of occupational opportunities. Yet, occupational training may not have been the most significant feature

63 Pinchbeck, Women Workers; Clark, Working Life of Women; Eileen Power, Medieval Women (Cambridge, 1975).

64 Dunlop and Denman, English Apprenticeship, pp. 150-51.
of female apprenticeship. As a regulated system of upbringing, apprenticeship taught both girls and boys the values and behaviour expected of them.

The terms of the Statute of Artificers applied equally to both sexes and frequently it was invoked to restrain unapprenticed women from practicing a trade. In these disputes, craftsmen regarded the employment of women as a means of introducing untrained cheap labour. However, traditionally guilds allowed wives and daughters of members to work in a trade and to continue as full guild members after husbands’ or fathers’ deaths. Also, many women gained their trading position because contemporaries accepted seven years experience as equivalent to apprenticeship, although not within the terms of the Statute. Often girls were taught during service with their parents or others in an informal arrangement. Additionally, some work, which was seen as traditionally female, usually did not take apprentices. Such a case is spinning, a common female occupation which Morant claimed employed the majority of Essex women in the 1740s. Only eight wool spinning apprentices were recorded from both counties for the whole century while parishes sent only twenty-six cotton spinning apprentices to factories. Thus, apprenticeship records are not a true indication of the extent and nature of women’s work nor do they necessarily accurately reflect their training opportunities.

Much female work was subsidiary to and supportive of men’s work, particularly in domestic industry, and they combined household tasks with their industrial activities. They were less likely than men to be seen as working in their own right, and their social and economic position was defined by the men with whom they were linked. As a result, apprenticeship training was less likely to be regarded as a part of a girl’s life. Yet the

65 Dobson, Masters and Journeymen, p. 63; Pinchbeck, Women Workers, pp. 160-161.


68 Cited in Brown, Essex at Work, p. 2.
lack of enforcement of the Statute affected women in two ways. Through casual untrained labour, large numbers of girls were employed who otherwise could not have been. But where they were not apprenticed, their work remained casual and subordinate; they were not qualified at law and in effect could work only as assistants to male relatives.

This is not to say that they were not apprenticed nor that they did not receive similar training. Some girls who worked for their fathers were no doubt as carefully taught as boys. Others were apprenticed on the same conditions as brothers and served a formal term. When they completed their apprenticeship, they could set up as independent mistresses, legally the masters’ equivalent, and take apprentices themselves. In Essex and Staffordshire, three percent of those taking apprentices were women acting alone, another half a percent were couples. Nevertheless as a training scheme, apprenticeship affected girls less systematically and less formally than boys.

Girls comprised nine percent of apprentices in Essex and Staffordshire during the last half of the eighteenth century. They accounted for just over four percent of the private apprentices recorded at the Inland Revenue.69 (Figure 5.9) Children placed out by charities were only about three percent females. Parish indentures showed a strikingly different pattern since almost thirty percent of pauper apprentices were girls. Also sixty percent of all female apprentices were placed out by the parish rather than by their parents compared to about an eighth of boys (Figure 5.10). Girls’ increasing prominence in parish apprenticeship has particular significance in conjunction with the trade structure of apprenticeship as discussed below. Overall the evidence confirms that apprenticeship was preponderantly male, but that girls constituted an important element.

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69 They comprised two percent in Warwickshire and about five percent in Wiltshire; Lane, ‘Apprenticeship in Warwickshire, 1700-1834,’ p. 122; Dale, Wiltshire Apprentices and their Masters, 1710-60, p. xv.
The records of charity schools in the two counties corroborate female participation in apprenticeship. Unfortunately, the minute books did not distinguish clearly between ‘apprenticeship’ and ‘service’ when recording reasons why pupils left.\(^{70}\) According to the rules, many who completed the stipulated period of attendance were found a place, 

\(^{70}\)See above Chapter 4 and Table 4.4.
but often the transaction was not recorded. Nevertheless, nearly a quarter of those children specifically minuted as ‘going apprentice’ were girls. The proportion of girls rises to a half, when the number leaving for ‘service’ and ‘apprenticeship’ are combined.

Frequently bequests establishing charity apprenticeships, such as Ann Johnson’s in Chelmsford in 1775, did not distinguish between boys and girls. Interest on her bequest was ‘for and towards the placing out to proper Trades or Employments such of the Children that shall from time to time be taught and belong to the Charity School.’® Yet no girls were recorded as apprenticed by the charity while boys frequently were. However, these records were kept erratically and such information could have been omitted. A similar bequest by Mrs. Saunders c.1757 relating to the Colchester Charity School likewise seems to have resulted in no girls sent as apprentices. Romford Charity School Minutes, which were meticulously kept, recorded only three girls out of 155 children put as apprentices between 1762 and 1799. But in the same period only nine boys were put out.®

At other schools, like Wolverhampton, the record was not so dismal, yet girls were far more likely to leave to go into service. Some donations specified that girls going to service were to be assisted in a manner similar to a charity paying boys’ apprenticeship premiums.® At many schools, girls were to find a place in service before they were allowed to leave.® The distinctions between service and apprenticeship were blurred in the case of girls, because apprenticeship often was another way of entering service. Many girls were placed in housewifery while for others the trade they were likely to

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72 E.R.O., T/A 461, D/Q 8/1, D/Q 8/3; D/Q 24/2; T/A 613. Many similar bequests can be found in the Charities Commission, Reports.

73 Two Staffordshire examples are the Envil Free School for Girls where they were prepared for service and the governors were required to find an appropriate place for them, and in Stafford, Isaac Walton’s Charity of 1698 set aside £5 annually for maid servants, Charities Commission, Reports, 5, 617; 11, 602-603. These reports frequently used the terms ‘service’ and ‘apprenticeship’ interchangeably.

74 See for example, S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1, 1730.
learn was unspecified. The suspected informality of training arrangements further obscures any clear line between apprenticeship and service.

It is worth remembering that only a small proportion of children of either sex underwent formal indentured apprenticeship. Many gained experience and any ‘training’ through annual hirings as servants. Settlement examinations from Harborne in Staffordshire and Northfield illustrate how apprenticeship could become a series of hirings or how a hiring could turn into apprenticeship. The line between formal and informal modes of training was very thin indeed.

Not only were girls less likely than boys to be apprenticed, but the structure and characteristics of their indentured service varied significantly from the male pattern. There are clear implications that girls’ training was perceived differently from boys.’ For girls, the economic educative functions seem to have been devalued and their situation seen as inferior. From another viewpoint, girls’ apprenticeship may have satisfied different aims which had value in its own right. Apprenticeship did not mirror accurately the economic roles and divisions in society, and roles were constructed along gender divisions, so that male and female apprenticeship should have reflected differences as well as similarities.

The length of terms for girl apprentices demonstrate two different patterns. Though the seven-year term remained stable, especially for boys, a significant proportion of girls served shorter terms of service. (Appendix 5.5.) Private female apprentices served on average only 4.8 years with half of them serving four years or less. Only 5.4 percent of private male apprentices served four years or less. These proportions partly disguise what was happening, since sixty percent of female apprentices, including some private ones, served until the age of twenty-one or marriage (Figure 5.11) Privately apprenticed girls then, served appreciably shorter periods than female parish apprentices and most boys.

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75 Birmingham Diocesan Record Office, ‘St. Peter, Harborne, Settlement Examinations, 1752-1807,’ DRO 61/7/12; B.D.R.O., Northfield Settlement Examinations.
The shortness of these terms suggests that the institution played a different part in girls’ lives than in boys. Perhaps the trades to which they were apprenticed required little training, but the more probable reason was that the acquisition of status through apprenticeship was far less significant for girls than for boys. Short terms held throughout private female apprenticeship, not just in trades with fairly good premiums. Thus girls were not following the ‘traditional’ guild model which carried with it certain prestige and rights. Also girls apprenticed for short terms were available for work up to two years earlier than boys. While they were able to earn sooner than boys, perhaps saving for a dowry, their ultimate prospects both financially and socially were potentially diminished. These girls’ situation was distinctly different from those whose apprenticeship, though of short duration, could be identified as providing ‘finishing’ and status.
On the other hand, only an eighth of boys served the long periods associated with parish apprenticeship while three-fifths of girls did. Half of parish children were placed out before they reached ten years old, girls being apprenticed on average slightly younger than boys. (Figure 5.12) Thus a parish girl apprenticed at the average age of ten would serve eleven years, far longer than the vast majority of boys. A number of pauper boys obtained apprenticeships averaging seven years (16 percent), but many girls apprenticed privately served until they reached twenty-one (five percent). This emphasizes the disparity and also demonstrates that two different models were perceived as appropriate to girls’ and boys’ apprenticeship. Different purposes and end results were construed within each model reinforcing perceptions of adult gender roles. Again girls’ apprenticeship carries with it the image of cheap labour as opposed to training, suggesting that girls’ prospects were of little consequence.
Similarly premiums diverged by sex, averaging nearly £14 for girls and £18 for boys (Figure 5.13). Overall, a wider range of premiums existed for boys whilst on a trade by trade basis girls’ premiums were regularly lower. In the most common apprenticed trades, girls’ premiums averaged more than boys’ in only four instances which were statistical anomalies, resulting from a small number of cases (Figure 5.14). Two, mantuamaking and millinery, were predominantly female trades. Girls’ premiums averaged two-thirds of boys’ in the remaining trades, but ranged from 40 to 84 percent. They were closest in tailoring where girls’ premiums averaged five-sixths of boys.’
Premium values were a function of trade, which were themselves sexually differentiated. Girls were bound to trades throughout the economy, as constituted by the trade groupings employed in this study. Clearly women were regarded as able to do heavy and unpleasant work, and despite the sexual differentiation of trades, women and girls were regularly engaged in work which a later generation would have distinguished as distinctly non-female. From 1750, 46 percent of girl apprentices were in the services, mainly housewifery, while 40 percent worked in various textile trades. (Figure 5.15) The small mining and chemical groups were almost exclusively male. Although timber and leather trades accounted for well over a third of all apprentices, they included only minute numbers of girls mainly in carpentry, wheelwrighting and cordwaining. The large agricultural and metal groups together accounted for a tenth of apprenticed girls, primarily to farming and smithing of various sorts. The pattern indicates that certain areas of work were considered to be more appropriate for female participation, and that others were difficult for them to enter. Yet, the presence of girls across the spectrum underlines the extent of their activities, and the lack of a rigid definition of female work, at least for those social groups from which apprentices primarily were drawn.
Pauper boys had a wider range of opportunities than girls, being spread more evenly throughout the trade areas whilst three-quarters of pauper girls were apprenticed to the services, virtually all to housewifery. Girls apprenticed privately fared somewhat better in that three-quarters went into textile trades while the rest were a little better spread between the sectors of the economy. (Figure 5.16) The high proportion in textiles was caused by two ‘female’ trades, mantuamaking and millinery, taking nearly two-thirds of these girls. The boys’ pattern mirrors that discussed earlier for private apprentices as a result of male dominance amongst private apprentices.
The private apprenticeship data used in this thesis are concentrated in the second half of the century, so that shifts over the whole century cannot be studied. Parish apprenticeship, which can be, reveals that girls became even more concentrated in the services, resulting from an increase in housewifery (Figure 5.17, 5.18). Other sectors showed a corresponding decline in female apprentices, except for a tiny rise in the metal trades. The comparison with parish boys is revealing. They outnumbered girls except in the services. Boys’ patterns also illustrate the decline that beset domestic textile working in Essex and the growth of the Staffordshire metal trades. Otherwise the boys’ pattern remained much the same as before with slight rises in trade areas other than agriculture.

Within trade groups, individual trades show an even more marked sexual differentiation since those commanding higher premiums, and offering better returns usually were exclusively male adult trades (Appendix 5.7). For example, within agriculture, millers and grocers demanded premiums averaging £23 and £42 respectively. Yet only one girl, a pauper, was placed with a miller and none with grocers. The same was true of cabinetmakers, plumbers and curriers to name but a
few. The exclusion of females from those trades further suggests that women’s work and training was devalued. In those agricultural, textile and metal trades in which women were best represented, husbandry, locksmithing, bucklemaking and weaving, their premiums were low, averaging £2 to £5. The terms tended to exceed seven years, while the skill required to practice the trade was minimal suggesting that they were cheap labour.
The largest number of privately indentured females was in the textile trades where they figured throughout the group. The character of their participation was coloured by the numerous apprenticeships to milliners and mantuamakers, commanding good premiums and permitting short terms. Consequently the average premium for girls in textiles was close to the boys’. (Figure 5.20) Millinery and mantuamaking were almost exclusively female with terms averaging four years. Millinery drew higher premiums of
£25 to £75, while mantuamaking required £12 on average, still a relatively good premium. (See Appendix 5.8) The few girls apprenticed to drapers, mercers and haberdashers also served short terms and paid fairly exceptional premiums up to £45.

Millinery as a prestige occupation for girls was recommended to girls of ‘good family.’ It was a skilled trade and offered scope for women, attracting those with capital and some social standing. Good profits could be made by those with the ability and finance to establish themselves once their apprenticeship was complete. Contemporary commentators such as Campbell thought a woman could begin business with capital ranging from £100-£1000, but he stressed the need for parents to be able to provide adequately for their daughters since wages for underworkers were very poor. In spite of ‘vast profits’ made by the mistresses, they ‘yet give but poor, mean Wages to every Person they employ under them.’

For the top end of the trade and the well-capitalized employer, it could be a good business enterprise, but for the less fortunate and especially for the employees, prospects were much less optimistic. Mantuamakers, usually capitalized with under £100, likewise were known for paying poor wages. According to Campbell, their journeywomen

may make shift with great Sobriety and Oeconomy to live upon their Allowance; but their Want of Prudence, and general Poverty, has brought the business into small Reputation.

He warned that the pay was frequently so low as to make prostitution their alternative form of employment. Certainly such a life was a problem for women in seasonal urban trades where they were subject to periods of slack employment and low wages. Premiums varied considerably for mantuamakers’ apprentices from £2 to £31, illustrating the range within the occupation.

In all likelihood milliners’ and mantuamakers’ apprentices obtained training and a trade through apprenticeship in a way in which many girls probably did not. Also by apprenticeship to a trade with the potential of good status, girls conceivably expected to

77 Ibid., p. 227.
learn the polish and ways of a social class into which they might hope to marry. The apprenticeship of girls to mercers and drapers suggests this likelihood even more forcefully. It could have been a form of ‘finishing’ similar to boys who were apprenticed to gentlemen for similar sums and terms. In such cases, the wife probably took responsibility for the girls’ education. This characteristic of female apprenticeship is also a clear reminder of the social class distinctions represented within apprenticeship, invalidating any attempt to treat it as a monolithic form of training with a single function.

Female apprentices to mercers, drapers and clothiers could, in fact, have been learning some aspect of the trade but girls were often excluded from trades which required capital investment. The data on the retail trades substantiate this since girls were poorly represented, comprising only three percent of the group. Since the group as a whole is quite small, the few girls apprenticed to mercers and drapers probably were in a favourable position with their large premiums and short terms. But clearly those in retail trades do not represent a significant proportion of girls. In most instances, these girls probably served as shop assistants for the vintners, victuallers, pawnbrokers and shopkeepers, and as barmaids to the innholders, particularly as most were parish apprentices. Thus, their prospects of setting up on their own must have been slim, given the capital which would have been required. Even remaining an assistant would not have been particularly lucrative or promising.

It might have been expected that more women shopkeepers would have been identified. Clark suggested that women were more likely to be apprenticed to retail than guild trades during the seventeenth century. For the following century, Pinchbeck argued that a decline in apprenticeship and nonenforcement increased considerably the proportion of women retail traders.78 However, the retail trades probably involved capital out of the reach of most women. Those with financial resources were the same ones who began to withdraw from the labour force as the ideological pressure embodied

in the domestic ideal of women began to have greater impact. Women also may be hidden as shopkeepers working in partnership with husbands. In any case as already explained, data based on indentures and trade names do not clearly identify the retail trades.

Service occupations comprised a large proportion of girls because of the inclusion of household service. Within this group, the sexual differentiation is marked. Service professions requiring large premiums, such as law and medicine, were exclusively male. Another profession to which children were apprenticed with a good premium, teaching, was split between the sexes, but girls dominated two to one and had average premiums two and a half time greater. Virtually all girls apprenticed to school teachers were indentured after 1780 but with large premiums. Boys were placed with schoolmasters throughout the century but with significantly smaller premiums. (Appendix 5.8) At the other end of the group, domestic service was virtually all female with small premiums except one at £40. Most were parish apprentices. Importantly the services represent the variation between menial and professional service. Females ranged from teacher to housewife with an average premium of £12.83, still below their overall average of £14. The difference between the standard deviation for females’ premiums (£15.04) and males (£67.54) illustrates the wide spread of boys’ premiums within the services compared to girls’. The clear sexual differentiation within the sector, which grouped girls at the menial end of the range, suggests in part that apprenticeship remained a respectable form of training for middle-class boys where professions were important while many middle-class girls were less likely for social reasons to seek apprenticeship.

The relationship of apprentice to master is further evidence of sexual differentiation. Apprentices were overwhelmingly put to masters instead of mistresses. Clearly, it was usual to apprentice boys to men: 99 percent of those in this study were. Girls also were apprenticed regularly to males since fewer than four percent of indentures mentioned a mistress, either alone or with her husband. Girls apprenticed to housewifery often were apprenticed formally to men, but wives or other females in the household may have taken charge of them. Part of the reason may have been that men
were more likely to be legally responsible for any apprentice, since wives were restricted by law from making contracts as femme coverts.\footnote{Blackstone, Commentaries, vol. 1, pp. 442-444.} There is little evidence to clarify the experience of girls in this situation.

The three one half percent of apprenticeships involving mistresses illustrate the gender divisions of trades even more markedly than the apprentices do, because they indicate areas in which women were more likely to take up an occupation. Bonnetmaking, pencilling and silkwinding were all female corresponding to the strong female presence in textiles, as does their overwhelming preponderance as mistresses and apprentices in millinery, mantuamaking and even ribbonweaving. Housewifery and husbandry also were conducted by numerous mistresses, reflecting the importance of these areas to parish apprenticeship and to female apprenticeship. Several mistresses took only boys, probably where they carried on a husband’s trade. This was especially true where the trade was pre-dominantly male, such as fishing, chandlery and glazing. But in some heavily ‘male’ trades, women took girl apprentices as hatters, mercers, drapers, perukemakers, glovers and millers. Interesting contradictions appeared with female grocers taking only boys, but women victuallers taking only girls. Grocers could get high premiums so that these women could have been bringing up boys, perhaps even a relative, to a lucrative trade. The girls, on the other hand may have been shop assistants, as suggested earlier. In other trades like plumbing, oyster dredging, printing and gardening women appear only with their husbands. Mistresses’ trades show marked sexual differentiation in that they were overwhelmingly in ‘feminine’ trades. Again, this indicates the limited prospects for the journeywomen. Large numbers of women were undoubtedly ‘hidden’ by joining forces with husbands, but the likelihood of the girl becoming mistress in her own right, especially in a trade outside of the female trades was very slim.

As described above, the stage of processing involved varied significantly by the type of apprenticeship, with two divergent patterns suggesting a skill/status
differentiation between trade and parish apprenticeship. Private apprentices were strongly associated with the traditional crafts, production of goods and the secondary stages of processing, all aspects which could claim an emphasis on skill, but which were closely associated with the idea of status and the ‘mysteries’ of a closed group. Parish apprenticeship contrasted sharply with the above pattern in that the majority were split between agriculture and services and it was very strongly biased to the primary stages of processing. The implications for girls are crucial. If parish apprenticeship was seen to provide less training and less prosperous occupations, it devalues parish apprenticeship. Thus the relatively strong female involvement in parish apprenticeship implies that girls were subject to an inferior occupational training proportionally more than boys. Rarely did a female parish apprentice find herself put to a trade with good prospects. While a similar trend is also true for boys, parish apprenticeship could operate as an avenue to a trade with a financial future and good status for a poor boy. Once again, this relationship implies a diminished regard for girls’ training implying that apprenticeship primarily fulfilled other functions for girls.

Apprenticeship was not intended as solely industrial training for either sex. Passing on values and behaviour from one generation to the next was a significant component, as numerous apprentice-master relations suggest. Apprenticeship also may have promoted girls’ mobility, because training or ‘finishing’ in a respectable female trade could enhance their social position. Where emulation was an important feature of the initiation to adulthood, apprenticeship could be quite important. Frequently, non-pauper girls were apprenticed to trades which they probably never carried out. Girls apprenticed to farmers, mercers, drapers or even housewifery with large premiums suggest that ‘finishing’ or transmitting values and behaviour may have been a significant part of their education. In such cases, the purpose of apprenticeship may have been provision of general education and discipline, rather than teaching a trade. Aspiring females, whose families could afford the premium, may have seen such apprenticeships as a means of improving their status and prospects, possibly with an eye to marriage within the trade or at least the social group.
A finishing education also was available at a wide range of schools for middle-class girls. Within the social structure which was layered into overlapping strata, apprenticeship and schooling were utilized by individuals for their own ends. Where the pauper girl had little choice in the nature of her apprenticeship, lower middle-class parents may have seen a suitable apprenticeship as an attainable means of achieving improvement in their daughter’s status and position in society. For some, schools were still too expensive, for others a good apprenticeship seemed preferable to a poor school. Two millinery firms consecutively in Colchester regularly apprenticed young women, keeping two on the premises, and increasing the premiums over time. Their reputation was sufficiently respectable to attract regular applicants.80 One Chelmsford firm required over £70 as a premium after 1790. While the practice of apprenticeship was concentrated amongst the girls of the labouring orders, it certainly reached into the middle classes, at certain points overlapping with schools to provide the sort of education and preparation wished for.

Similarly, large numbers of female parish apprentices were maintained and probably given general education in addition to any technical instruction they might have received. There were economic and political reasons for apprenticing pauper girls, but the female advice literature of the last half century made it clear that girls’ moral upbringing was of paramount concern to the middle classes. For girls lower down the scale, education in demeanour, propriety and sobriety could be derived through apprenticeship.

The system was sometimes seen as a means of raising children in an appropriate environment. Many contemporaries thought that the poor benefited if children were taken away from miserable and depraved parents and placed with a better sort of person who provided an example to emulate.81 Avoiding the patronizing tone of those writers,  

80See Appendix 5.8. See also Pinchbeck’s comments on the standing of milliners and mantuamakers, Women Workers, pp. 287-90. 

81Trimmer, The Oeconomy of Charity, pp. 11-15; Cappe, in Observations on Charity Schools, pp. 19-20, makes this argument but later argues against apprenticeship as a solution.
socialization, as education in the values and behaviour expected by society, probably was an important element of female apprenticeship. In an age which was redefining the female character, that motive may partly explain the increasing number and proportion of female apprentices.

Training was the primary aim of apprenticeship, and girls shared in gaining industrial skills in this way. However, occupational skills were probably a less important element than transmission of cultural values. Apprenticeship as an institution was socially constructed so that it reflected the values of eighteenth-century life. Distinctions of class and status were integral to an understanding of the relationships of the time, and individuals’ roles and positions were determined less by ability and more by the niches into which they fit. As such, whereas skill and training for an occupation were explicitly regarded as central to the experience of apprenticeship, the period of learning was implicitly used to perpetuate status distinctions. Thus a crucial element of apprenticeship as preparation for life was the role of the master in transmitting culture and acting as a status model for the novice to emulate. Similarly, apprenticeship embodied gender distinctions which reflected socially determined evaluations of women’s status and value. Division of labour throughout the economy was sexually constructed so that although women made a vital contribution to the economy, their status and position was usually devalued.

The elements of apprenticeship described above suggest that the nature of many trades to which girls were apprenticed and the training component of their term of service were given less weight less than was the case with boys. The shorter terms of girls have been taken to suggest that less training was likely to be provided for them, while boys’ apprenticeship more clearly matched the pattern established by guild tradition. The sexual differentiation of trades meant that girls with high premiums found their way to ‘female’ work, while the wide range of professional and profitable trades were largely restricted to boys. School teaching was one modest exception. Boys also dominated the middle range of ‘respectable’ trades while girls were involved in those requiring less skill, training and prestige. Girls were more likely to be found in the
‘general’ categories of production, which because of the ways the groups were constructed, meant that less complex tasks were required. They were poorly represented in trades like cutlery or the manufacture of mechanical devices which imply a greater skill component. Although the range of girls’ opportunities were not limited to female trades, girls do not appear throughout the trade groups equally with boys.

In instances like mantuamaking and millinery, girls probably were taught the trade, both because it was a ‘female’ trade and because frequently girls were apprenticed to a mistress. A similar case could be made for the schoolteachers. But with those significant exceptions, girls were in largely overstocked or menial trades with low premiums, such as weaving and the small metal trades. And even mantuamaking and millinery were seen as overstocked by contemporaries. Similarly, the relationship between parish apprenticeship, the content of trades, and sex likewise suggests that girls were more likely than boys to obtain inferior training. This is not to suggest that women’s work was not skilled or important, but that it was not recognized as such through apprenticeship. Nor does it mean that no occupational training was provided. While numerous girls were educated through apprenticeship, their experience diverged markedly from boys.’

Though the concept of status is fraught with dangers, the overwhelming feeling is that girls’ opportunities were sharply limited. They were most likely to be found in the low status occupations carrying with them modest future prospects. They were left in an economically vulnerable position, restricted to menial and overstocked trades, a situation which reflected and further bolstered their subordinate social position. The construction of apprenticeship for girls owed less to any feminine ideal and rather more to a status evaluation which described girls and women as subordinate and their work, albeit economically valuable, as inferior in status to male work.
Chapter 6: Further Structures for Education

A. Patterns of Education, Adult Education and In-service Training

The education discussed thus was ‘formal’ in that apprenticeship and schooling were established institutions with an accepted form and structure. Broadly, they encompassed an accepted period of time, followed specified patterns and employed particular structures to carry out their purposes. Other less formal educational situations existed during the eighteenth century. These included various ‘in-service’ or ‘on the job’ training, such as domestic and farm service or industrial training. Probably the most important ‘informal’ influence was the home. The family shaped behaviour and attitudes as well as explicitly imparting knowledge about tasks with economic value.

This chapter focuses on the ways culture, including knowledge, skills and behavioural expectations, was passed from one generation to the next, outside of schooling and apprenticeship. Three broad areas are examined: adult education, in-service training and home-based learning. They often supplemented schooling or apprenticeship, but in a large number of cases replaced them altogether. Adult education bridged the more formal mode of schooling and the informal one of lectures and self-help groups. In the other two areas, the pattern of education was not formalized, contained no established structure and arose mainly from a perceived need or customary practice. The educative function was only incidentally linked to an institution, such as farm service, rather than the institution having been generated for that purpose.

The terms ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ imply a clear division in design. Interpreted broadly, this is so. But apprenticeship and schooling each embraced patterns which ranged from the highly structured and regulated to the relatively unstructured. Compare, for example, the well-organized and maintained grammar school with the dame school, or the guild apprentice with the farm labourer’s son put to husbandry. Nevertheless, both schooling and apprenticeship were formal institutions in that they were, in contemporaries’ eyes, identifiable and readily accepted patterns, broadly encompassing or approximating acknowledged rules and expectations.
Parallel to these were others which were educationally informal, though the structures were formalized by custom or law. Their primary purpose was not to educate but to provide workers. Such were domestic and farm service, which provided occupational training, and incidentally education in behaviour and values. At times they included instruction in numeracy and literacy. Similarly, the industrial workplace provided various types of training, both explicitly and implicitly while creating more skilled workers. Employers intended this education to develop the working ability of the employee. Nevertheless, it was a constituent part of the patterns of education available to the eighteenth-century labouring classes.

Exercising the most important influence in the upbringing of children and the formation of young adults was the household within which they were raised. The role of the family during the formative years is widely accepted today as a crucial factor in socialization and the passing on of culture. It was also true of eighteenth-century family life, and was accepted as true. Middle-class adoption of Lockean ideas of childhood and of children’s understanding throughout the century testifies to their belief that the influence of the home was crucial. In turn they promulgated these views for the consumption of the lower classes. While ideology may not have dictated action, the importance of socialization during the early years of a child’s life was widely recognized. The belief was independent of the nature of relationships, not inevitably motivated by close affection, nor was it necessary for the household to be the familial home. The important elements were that childhood and youth were seen as formative years and that the home, however defined, had a significant role to play in shaping the nature of the influences of that period.

1 See Chapter 2; these ideas were extended to the lower classes through the educational foundations, the school books employed and sermons delivered in aid of charity schools, such as Burton, Religious Education of Poor Children Recommended, Chapman, Ends and Uses of Charity Schools and Furneaux, Importance of Education.
Most children lived in their familial home for at least the first ten to fifteen years of their life.\(^2\) After that a variety of patterns emerged, so that several stages between birth and adulthood and several routes are identifiable. Figure 6.1 illustrates typical educative life cycle routes for working-class children, which approximate the most likely points of change. Girls were more likely to follow the cycles shown in columns A, D and E while all six patterns represented typical avenues for boys.

| Figure 6.1. Educativ Life Cycles, c.1780 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | B | C | D | E |
| Birth | Home | Home | Home | Home | Home |
| 7 years | | | School | School | Work |
| 10 years | | Parish | | | Work |
| 14 years | | Trade | Trade | Work | Work |
| 21 years | Work | Work | Work | | |
| 23.5-24.5 years | Mean female age at marriage, residence change, childbearing | | | |
| 26.5 years | Mean male age at marriage | | | |

Evidence presented above suggests that a larger proportion of boys than girls went to school and apprenticeship. Probably the majority of girls from labouring families followed the pattern described in column E, spending the early and formative years, and much of their early working life in the familial home. Many would have left home by fourteen, going into farm or domestic service, parish or trade apprenticeship or non-apprenticed work. But still one-third to a half probably remained until marriage. This did not diminish the importance of other patterns of education such as schooling,

\(^2\) Wall, ‘The Age at Leaving Home,’ pp. 190-191 and Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, pp. 70-72 suggest the end of the range while data cited in Chapter 5 illustrate that half of parish apprentices were indentured before they reached the age of 10; see also Laslett, Family Life and Illicit Love, pp. 34, 44.
apprenticeship or forms of service, but it does emphasize the contribution which the home made to girls’ upbringing. The patterns followed were determined by a number of factors, but the significant issue is that girls more than boys were subject to less formal and less institutionalized forms of education.

There were gaps in the formal structures of education; not only was a great deal of knowledge excluded but many children never came into contact with them. While this does not undercut the sometimes surprising inroads they made through formal education, other avenues of gaining knowledge and information about the adult world were significant. The oral tradition had survived from time immemorial as a means of passing on knowledge and culture through face-to-face contacts. In this context, widespread reliance upon written material for instruction was relatively new. The oral tradition remained the fundamental mechanism of transmission of values, work practices, customs and entertainment, despite the gradual emergence of a so-called literate society.

Closest to the forms of education already described, adult education often was attached to existing schools or other institutions. However it could be structurally very informal relying on ‘leisure’ activities which were ‘improving.’ Indeed the line between entertainment and instruction was as ill-defined as in today’s extramural and evening classes. The patterns of adult education were not always consonant with ‘current usage [which] nearly always implies a measure of formal instruction, a relationship of teacher and taught.’ Normally the nineteenth century is considered as the first period of adult education, but there were important eighteenth-century developments for women as well as men. Four main areas existed: adults attending charity and Sunday schools, self-education groups, lecture series and debating societies.

No school teaching only adults is documented before 1798, with all provision attached to children’s schools. Early in the century, SPCK correspondence responding

to a circular letter revealed several adults’ evening classes. In 1700, Mr. Taylor of Wigan wrote of his intention to teach servants at night while the following year, Mr. Margetts of Bedfordshire reported that

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  twice in the Week [John Pierson] meets’ [sic] another Company of Adult Persons (about 8 in number) in the Town, and hears them read, and train’s [sic] them up in Bishop William’s Exposition of the Church Catechism. [John Reynolds] instructs’ [sic] gratis another Company every night at his house, in the Catechism, in Reading and Serious Principles, and indeavours [sic] to bring them to an awful sence [sic] of God and man.4
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The enthusiasm did not appear to continue in England, despite the SPCK publicly encouraging adult evening schools in 1711.5 John Wesley, establishing a charity school at Kingswood in 1739, planned to teach adults ‘in the inner rooms, either early in the morning, or late at night, so that their work may not be hindered,’ but there is no evidence that the scheme came to fruition.6 In 1799, the Congregational Union in Essex broached a plan for teaching ‘lads going to daily labour and young women in service’ to read.7

The main adult teaching was in Wales, and to some extent in Scotland. Itinerant teachers, or circulating schools, were used to reach the sparse populations. They lasted only a short time usually during slack months so that people missed little work. These provided for both child and adult learners.8 In 1739, Griffith Jones, reporting on the progress of the Welsh circulating schools claimed

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  In most of the schools, the adult persons do make about two thirds of the number taught in them. … I am informed of two or three women aged about sixty, who knew not a letter before, did attend constantly everyday, except
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4SPCK, ‘Early Eighteenth-Century Archives, Part C: Letters and Memorials, Abstract Letter Books (Correspondence received and sent)’ 1699-1701, vol. 1, 8 March 1700/01, see also frequent letters on ‘private instruction of the colliers.’

5Kelly, Adult Education, p. 65.


7E.R.O., D/NC 9/1.

8Griffith Jones, Selections from the Welch Piety, ed. by W. Moses Williams (Cardiff, 1938), p. 32. See also Jones, Charity School Movement, pp. 297-300.
sometimes when they were obliged to seek abroad for a little bread; ... and lamenting that they had not an opportunity of learning forty or fifty years earlier.9

The Vicar of Trelech near Monmouth reported similar developments in 1754.10 The tenor of such accounts indicates an enthusiastic response by poor unlettered people to the opportunity provided. Similarly the local clergy appear to have been won over by the tact of Griffith Jones and the ‘noticeable alteration in the habits and behaviour of the peasantry.’11

Sunday schools presented another opportunity for channelling the enthusiasm of adult learners. In the North of England and Wales, adults attended alongside children, while in some places, adult schools were established in connection with children’s Sunday schools. For example, Wadsworth cites Manchester Sunday schools which taught reading to adults on Sunday evenings.12 By 1813 in Bristol, there were 21 such schools containing 540 men and 23 with 708 women.13

Notably more women than men attended them Jonas Hanway also commented that:

In some [English Sunday schools] young women learn to read. As to men, they do not appear to have any such ambition. If they have not been taught in their childhood they prefer ignorance.14

The first fully documented English adult school, founded in 1798 in Nottingham, was intended for young women employed in the lace and hosiery factories,

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9Ibid., p. 35.


11Jones, Charity School Movement, p. 300.


14Jonas Hanway, A Comprehensive View of Sunday Schools for the Use of the more Indigent Inhabitants of Cities, Towns and Villages, through England and Wales, p. 32, quoted in Jones, Charity School Movement, p. 319n.
It was a thing understood in the old-fashioned Quakerish economy, that all
the shop assistants, male and female--they were principally female--should
help at the Adult School on First Day morning ...\(^\text{15}\)

It was a Sunday school for Bible reading, but taught women ‘the secular arts of writing
and arithmetic.’\(^\text{16}\) These are clear indications that women were offered and sought
further forms of education. The evidence is too scant for comparison with the extent of
men’s opportunities, but enough to substantiate female interest in at least basic
knowledge.

The adult Sunday school idea blended with self-help attempts by the working
classes to improve their education. The bulk of the evidence describes male ‘mechanics’
groups, but here and there are glimpses of women’s involvement. Probably the most
concerted effort along this line was the Birmingham Sunday Society created in 1789. The
Sunday school teachers formed it to instruct young men in writing and arithmetic after
they left the schools. Later geography, bookkeeping and drawing were added.
Education was extended by forming a branch of the society for mutual improvement in
useful knowledge including mechanics, hydrostatics, electricity, pneumatics and
astronomy. This led to members giving lectures to others of the working classes on
mechanics and other branches of natural philosophy, and ultimately generated an
Artisan’s Library from 1795. After the 1791 riots, the best pupils were selected to qualify
as teachers and gave their services free. The society went through several forms, and the
links between each arm of its activities are somewhat difficult to unravel, but clearly in
Birmingham there was a vital network of adult education and self-help improvement
activities.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{15}\)Quoted in Kelly, Adult Education, p. 80.

\(^{16}\)Ibid.

\(^{17}\)The prime sources for its history are by one of the founders, James Luckock, Moral
Culture, to which is appended an account of the origin, progress and success of the Birmingham
Sunday Society, 1816, and his ‘Narration of Proceedings relative to the erection of the Old
Meeting Sunday Schools, Birmingham,’ MS c.1832 and by a co-member from 1792, William
Matthews, A Sketch of the principal means which have been employed to ameliorate the
intellectual and moral condition of the working classes at Birmingham (London: 1830), hereafter
cited as Matthews, Sketch of the Means.
Both the Old and New Meeting Sunday schools in Birmingham provided places for girls, with paid female teachers working under the direction of voluntary visitors. However, one of the founders of the Society, James Luckock, claimed that ‘it does not appear that any eligible extension of the plan suitable for the girls, could be adopted, similar to that in use for boys.’ Thus, unless women were able to join the men and share lectures, adult provision seems to have eluded them despite the apparent interest and activity in male adult education in Birmingham.

These activities were unusual in being chronicled and in embracing a well-integrated network. The Birmingham and the Nottingham efforts, and others cited in histories of adult education indicate that while a ‘movement’ hardly existed, there was a multiplicity of local, casual attempts to provide some further education in basics and more sophisticated branches of knowledge. From 1796, the Birmingham Society became the Birmingham Brotherly Society, with friendly society and education roles. So far it has not been possible to link any female friendly societies with education. The Rules of the ‘Original Female Friendly Society’ formed in Lichfield, Staffordshire in 1794, are those of a straightforward sick club. Catharine Cappe joined the two concepts in her tract on charity schools, but the question bears more investigation.

The Birmingham Sunday Society lectures were attended by women as well as men, as Matthews described:

The admission to all these lectures was gratuitous, and as the style of the lecturer was remarkably simple, his manner earnest and unassuming, and his illustrations particularly felicitous, the interest which they excited

18 Luckock, Moral Culture, pp. 273-74.


20 ‘Rules, Orders and Regulations for the Original Female Friendly Society;’ Cappe, Observations on Charity Schools.
occasioned them to be very numerously attended by persons of both sexes ... 21

Lecture series were offered in many English towns throughout the century, varying in quality and level of knowledge. Most were open to women, even offering concessions. It was reported in 1803 that ‘Even some ladies talk with facility about oxygen ... hydrogen and the carbonic acid.’ 22 Some lecture series were little different from evening classes such as those in mathematics started from the 1750s in Newcastle, Salford in 1772, Leicester in 1788 and London, Soho in 1789. 23 Many of the intellectual activities may have been predominantly middle class, charging fees which the worker could not afford, and existing as part of a cultural milieu separate from the working classes. Yet the Birmingham example provides clear evidence that working people of both sexes attended many of the lectures which were offered in an atmosphere of scientific curiosity and free enquiry.

Ladies were similarly encouraged at both of the Birmingham debating societies set up in 1774, The Robin Hood Free Debating Society and the Amicable Debating Society. In their notice in Aris’s Birmingham Gazette of 2 May 1774, the Robin Hood Society spelt out the following provisions:

Resolved, That as this Society is intended to be of general Advantage that such Ladies who choose to hear the Debates shall be admitted. --The President therefore gives Notice that the Upper Part of the Room will be railed in for the Reception of Ladies, that they may sit without interruption, but no Gentleman is to be permitted to sit within side of the Rail. --The Ladies will be admitted without Expense. --Admittance 6d. each Gentleman. 24

Later that summer, the Robin Hood Society went still further, spelling out that ladies were to be allowed to speak to the proposed questions. 25

21 Matthews, Sketch of the Means, p. 15.


24 Birmingham Gazette, 2 May 1774, p. 3.

25 Ibid., 6 June 1774, p. 3.
The ‘Gentlemen’ referred to in the advertisement included artisans or other working men. As one critic wrote to the paper later that summer, ‘A Question is proposed, up starts a poor Mechanic, or an Apprentice Boy, and commences Orator.’ After criticizing their lack of style, the same writer condemned their apparel,

Besides the outward Garb of many of those who spoke was rather indecent; a clean Shirt and Stock should surely be procured for this night, even though Sunday went unprovided; the Ladies are permitted Gratis, and Cleanliness is a Compliment due to the Sex everywhere.26

Similarly craftsmen, tradesmen and mechanics attended the earlier Robin Hood Society in London (1742-73).27 Whether ladies were always ‘ladies’ is not possible to tell from the above account, the only one which offers any description. Contemporary comment about the extent to which servant girls emulated their employers, the practice of giving ‘cast-offs’ to servants and the servants’ own interest in fashion tended to blur visual marks of class distinction.28 If working men attended, working women may well have done so. Most other references to debating societies and clubs are sufficiently unconscious of gender as to leave the issue to speculation.

The four strands of adult education described above illustrate that there were viable self-education developments amongst the eighteenth-century working classes. Certainly they represented different levels of knowledge, and different levels of social access. Such activities were more likely to take place in urban rather than rural areas.29 Additionally, the intellectual activity seemed to emanate from and to be directed toward the upper echelons of the working classes. Therefore rural workers and labourers were unlikely to come into contact with more than evening schools attached to charity

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26Ibid., 20 June 1774, p. 3.

27Kelly, Adult Education, p. 93.


foundations. Females may have been further restrained by familial responsibilities so that the influence was probably nominal on the typical working-class woman. Women were interested in the opportunities provided however, and single women and those whose responsibilities were not too onerous took advantage of those opportunities which sprang up on an ad hoc, temporary basis around the country.

‘In-service’ training embraced domestic and farm service and industrial instruction at the workplace. The main aim in these instances was to provide workers. The education which took place created more experienced and more skilled workers, and probably enhanced the worker’s chance of a better post and occupational advancement. At the same time, it was not always certain that the employee was learning occupationally relevant skills. Examples exist of reading and writing being taught amongst workmates, where those skills were personally valuable to the learner, but of little consequence to the workplace.30

In addition to taking charity and Sunday school girls, domestic service was important in itself as a medium of instruction. The learning that went on depended on the nature and requisites of the household as well as her position within it. The main methods of transmission were prescriptive instruction, experience and emulation. These modes necessarily overlapped, and no one type of knowledge was exclusive to any one of them. Occupational knowledge was transmitted by all three patterns. The nature of a servants’ work determined her nominal rank in the service hierarchy. For example, the lady’s maid whose work comprised personal service to the mistress held first rank among women servants followed by the housekeeper whose work was supervisory. The inferior ranks of female servants, such as the chambermaid, who cleaned rooms and prepared beds, and the other maid servants were more utilitarian. Their work centred on the actual physical maintenance of the household. The primary distinction was between upper servants whose work was mainly supervisory and required long

30For examples, see above Chapter 4B.
experience and frequently specialized training, and lower servants whose work was
directed by others and was relatively unskilled and manual in nature.

A girl’s upward movement in this hierarchy depended primarily on her experience
and on emulation of those above her. Certain positions, such as chambermaid,
housemaid and the lower women servants, required few skills to start, and usually built
upon knowledge previously gained at home. Though the work of the laundry or
dairymaid was more specialized, contemporaries believed that it too was easily acquired
and lay within what a girl frequently would have been brought up to. Experience was
valued as a teaching agent within domestic service, enhancing a girl’s knowledge. In
particular, the work practices of a household had to be acquired in addition to the
mechanics of a task. Defoe acknowledged the importance of experience in the
acquisition of knowledge when he advised on how to set servants’ wages:

a young inexperienced servant should have forty shillings per annum, til she
qualifies herself for a larger sum; a servant who can do all household work
... should have four pounds per annum; and those who have lived seven
years in one service should ever after demand five pounds per annum.32

Not infrequently preferment was the result of specific training or preparation for
a new post. Hecht cites the case of Nancy Bere, taken from the poorhouse by the
Hackmans of Lymington to weed their garden. Then they moved her to the kitchen, and
eventually to lady’s maid, after Mrs. Hackman ‘had her carefully instructed in all the
elementary branches of education.’33 The supposed autobiography of Ann Cook, herself
a cook, relates the story of Abigail, which repeatedly emphasized the importance of
experience combined with the training received from superior servants.34 Abigail was

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31See Hecht, Domestic Servant, pp. 35, 60-69 on the work expected of female domestic
servants and the hierarchy. As this is the major work on relationships within domestic service,
much of this discussion necessarily relies upon it.


34Ann Cook, Ann Cook and Friend, ed. by Regula Burnet (London: 1936); though
ostensibly an autobiography, the tone and character are much more like a novel, and it is treated
here with suspicion.
promoted to lady’s maid and housekeeper from her position as cook, and was asked to find a replacement cook. She claimed her own assistant was ready for the post:

In this Servant I beheld a generous soul full of Industry and Gratitude, and took great Pleasure in communicating to her my Instructions and Advice; she has been so quick of Apprehension, that she improved what I taught her, has instructed her Sister, and you’ll find her exceed me; having now in her Possession all I could teach her, besides a fruitful Head of her own. 35

So by prescriptive instruction, emulation and the forge of experience, girls in service learned the requisite skills and methods.

As Nancy Bere’s example illustrates, servants were taught reading, writing and accounts. Several were sent to school by their masters and mistresses whilst others were taught by their employers or other servants. 36 Similarly Abigail’s story claimed that she was educated by the mistress, taught to sing and play the spinet. Furthermore the editor argued that like Richardson’s Pamela, ‘It was not at all unusual at the time for a lady living in the country to take some servant girl and educate her into being almost an equal of herself.’ 37 Both Pamela’s and Abigail’s story are probably fanciful, nevertheless they express contemporary ideas about the mistress/servant relationship, and occasions did exist when mistresses or their daughters educated servant girls for their own reasons. Servants were drawn from throughout the social hierarchy from the gentry down. It was not unusual for governesses, lady’s maids and housekeepers to come from the daughters of clerics, widows and unprovided for daughters, such as Clara Reeve, educational author cited earlier. 38 In these instances, the disparity between servant and

35Ibid., pp. 35-36.


37Cook, Ann Cook and Friend, xii; Richardson has Pamela say at the beginning: ‘as my lady’s goodness had put me to write and cast accounts, and made me a little expert at my needle, and otherwise qualified above my degree, it was not every family that could have found a place that your poor Pamela was fit for …’ Samuel Richardson, Pamela (1740) (London: 1914), vol. 1, p. 1.

38H.M.C. DuCane, p. 238, quoted in Hecht, Domestic Servant, p. 18.
mistress was not very great, and could encourage a relatively close relationship in which the employer might have taken an interest in improving the servant’s prospects.

It is not clear how typical the learning of letters whilst in service was, but larger households almost certainly contained upper servants, able to read and write, who could have taught others. Also a handful of ‘literary domestics,’ including Anne Yearsley, Elizabeth Hands and Mary Leapor, gained some eminence from their poetry. Some like Robert Dodsley and Stephen Duck turned their skill to advantage and through patronage left service. Of others such as Mary Collier less is known.39 Dodsley benefited from literary contacts in houses where he served. His early biographer claimed that, ‘it was doubtless from behind the chair of [Dartineuf that, he] first beheld the pleasures of literary life.’40 In 1728 he was footman to Lady Jane Lowther, who according to tradition placed her library at his disposal. His biographer, Straus, suggests ‘probably she had found Dodsley scribbling in his pantry and shown his callow verses to her friends.’41 Some of these poets probably benefited from an eighteenth-century fashion for untutored genius rather than because of the intrinsic merit of their work, John Clare being a notable example.

Emulation of both the employer class and of others in the servant hierarchy served to instruct the willing servant in dress, speech, manners and expectations.42 Dodsley wrote:

For whilst I unregarded stand
With ready salver in my hand,
And seem to understand no more
Than just what’s call’d for, out to pour;


40 Quoted by Straus, Robert Dodsley, p. 11.

41 Ibid., pp. 15-16.

42 See Hecht, Domestic Servant, chapter 8, pp. 200-28.
I hear, and mark the courtly phrases,
And all the elegance that passes;
Disputes maintain’d without digression,
With ready wit, and find expression;
The laws of true politeness stated,
And what good breeding is, debated.43

Dumb waiters were adopted at the end of the century to exclude eavesdropping servants. As Dodsley’s case suggests, and contemporary comment attests, servants also emulated the reading habits of employers. Hanway gave ‘as proof of how servants imitate their master or mistress’ that he had often ‘seen on the kitchen dresser, volumes of fictitious tales.’44 Others refer to servants borrowing books, or sharing in the newspapers and periodicals purchased by the household.

Employers encouraged a certain level of emulation in dress, cleanliness and manners, because it reflected favourably on their household. At the same time, many recognized the responsibility of the employing classes for providing moral example and regulation of the household. Defoe emphasized the central role of master and mistress in ensuring good government and moral behaviour within the family. Their failure was the cause of bad servants. They had a duty to instruct and improve their servants, to see that the Lord’s Day was properly observed and that servants attended family prayers.45

Farm service similarly performed an educative function though the body of knowledge imparted was largely occupational. Young’s wage rates for Staffordshire farms implies a form of hierarchical structure amongst men’s work, but all ‘maid’s work’ was paid at essentially the same rate.46 Agricultural tasks, from the fields to the dairy, would have been acquired early since farm servants usually came from agrarian homes. Imitation and experience again would have been the means of developing more sophisticated skills and techniques, supplemented by demonstration and instruction

43 Quoted in Straus, Robert Dodsley, p. 18.


when necessary. In a rural community farm service was generally a stage in the life cycle, concentrated on the 15-24 age group. 'They left their parents as children and departed from service as adults,'\(^\text{47}\) during that time acquiring the skills needed to be farmers themselves. In her detailed study of farm servants, Kussmaul identifies a hierarchical order similar to that in domestic service, and in which upward mobility meant moving to a more responsible position, or to a larger or better run farm. The *Commercial and Agricultural Magazine* underlined the importance of learning whilst in service, counselling young people to move from place to place to learn a wide variety of farming techniques in a variety of geographical settings.\(^\text{48}\)

Farm service was less likely than domestic service to provide the opportunity for learning reading or writing, except in the communal spirit of a household, once work was finished for the day. Most evidence suggests that literacy was lowest amongst labourers so that there would have been fewer persons in this cultural milieu who could have taught farm servants.\(^\text{49}\) It was amongst the people of rural England that the oral tradition remained strongest, and certainly instruction was at its most informal in this situation.

A third locus for in-service training was the workplace, ranging from shops and small workshops to works like Wedgwood’s, employing 200 to 400 workers. Once again, experience was expected by contemporaries to play an important part in the process of improving oneself. Authors like Defoe emphasized the need to acquire knowledge which was relevant to successful working. Both the apprentice and the fledgling tradesman were advised to get an education in the world, through conversation with others in other trades.

This acquainting himself with business does not intimate that he should learn every trade, or enter into the mystery of every employment, that cannot

\(^\text{47}\)Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry*, p. 70.


well be; but that he should have a true notion of business in general, and a
knowledge how and in what manner it is carried on; that he should know
where every manufacture is made, and how bought at first hand; that he
should know which are the proper markets, and what the particular kinds
of goods to exchange at those markets; that he should know the manner how
every manufacture is managed, and the method of their sale.\textsuperscript{50}

It is useful to emphasize the importance of experience, practice and emulat
on as agents of learning in the context of education as a whole, and to recognize that contemporaries,
too, valued it. Apprenticeship was a formal recognition of its significance, but in many
trades and in unregulated areas, including towns like Birmingham, or rural parishes,
aprenticeship often was by-passed by simple hiring agreements.

Josiah Wedgwood’s pottery works provide a good example of the role of training
which took place at work outside of apprenticeship. By the 1760s in the pottery towns
of north Staffordshire, the small family units using relatively unspecialized work
practices, had grown into firms employing 40 to 50 workers supplying an improved
product. Wedgwood, in particular, set an example for others, with the introduction of
Creamware in 1764.\textsuperscript{51} An important contribution was Wedgwood’s introduction of
specialization and division of labour into the manufacturing process of pottery. These
are often associated with de-skilling of work, frequently to tap a female or child labour
force, but they also made possible an improved or new product in many industries.\textsuperscript{52}

Such was the case in the potteries under Wedgwood’s leadership.

Each worker was expected to become expert in one stage or process, and as new
designs and glazes were developed and as techniques were refined, training was
required. Wedgwood used both apprenticed and hired labour, but in both instances
provided training. Young identified boys who worked until they reached the age of
apprenticeship, but who ‘learn nothing’.\textsuperscript{53} Hiring arrangements or apprenticeship

\textsuperscript{50}Defoe, \textit{English Tradesman}, vol. 1, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{51}Young, \textit{Northern Tour}, vol. 3, p. 306. See Neil McKendrick, ‘Josiah Wedgwood and

\textsuperscript{52}See the discussion of skill and division of labour in Berg, \textit{Age of Manufactures}, pp. 129-
58, 310.

\textsuperscript{53}Young, \textit{Northern Tour}, vol. 3, p. 309.
frequently followed. Some of the hiring agreements, such as Ann Keeling’s of 1781, are very similar to apprenticeship in that Wedgwood promised to feed, clothe and house her and paid wages of only £3, £4, and £5 for the three years. In 1784, Keeling was paid 15s a week or the piece rate for journeymen painters.\textsuperscript{54} Wedgwood also referred in his letters to training girls as painters.\textsuperscript{55} In an agreement of the 1780s Wedgwood promised to ‘teach the said John Pennington or cause him to be taught the art or mystery of engraving in Aqua Tint upon plates of copper for the purpose of printing upon china or earthenware.’\textsuperscript{56} He was to be allowed an hour each day for the purpose of improving in drawing. This young man’s case may have been unusual, but there is no doubt that the nature of the work at the pottery and the necessary level of expertise required training. The indications are that frequently children were brought into the works, trained, and as they grew up and gained experience, moved into the adult processes as skilled workers.

Thus once in the world of work, the age of learning was not necessarily finished. Contemporaries expected young workers to imitate their superiors and gain experience, and they recognized this as a useful and important agent of learning. Where it was perceived as necessary, or possible, specific training in work related practices was given. That ranged from acquiring mechanical skills to learning business practices, accounts and organization. Girls and young women also fitted into this pattern of education, in so far as they had access to work, trades and shopkeeping. In the pottery industry women were found in the manual processes carrying out fine work and as shopkeepers marketing the goods, each requiring knowledge fitted to the position. Women in other industries and trades would have had similar needs, and much of the knowledge would have been passed on in the same ways.

\textsuperscript{54}Wedgwood Archives, nos. 133-26816; 133-26818.

\textsuperscript{55}Josiah Wedgwood, ‘Letters,’ Wedgwood Archives, xi, pp. 130, 146.

\textsuperscript{56}Wedgwood Archives, no. 133-26834.
B. Home-Based Education

Whereas there is some tangible evidence of the forms of education already discussed, in the case of home-based education, the evidence and conclusions are much more speculative. First of all records are scant and concentrated in the middle and upper classes. Personal accounts only very rarely are supported by administrative records of the sort which help to identify the character of apprenticeship and schooling. Secondly, even when women wrote accounts of their lives, they were less likely than men to describe their upbringing in an ‘educative’ sense. Thirdly, the accounts which do exist are more likely to describe academic education than general formative influences. Nevertheless, circumstantial and suggestive evidence allows some insight into the part played by the home in working-class girls’ formative years.

The earliest education of all children took place in the home where the mother was responsible for the care of the children. Eighteenth-century ideology accentuated the period of childhood and heightened the emphasis on early formation of character. As a corollary, the child’s upbringing gained in importance, and that upbringing was placed ideally within the parental home. So early childhood education, at least, became a family responsibility, and in conjunction with the evolution of female domestic ideology, mothers became primarily responsible for child care and nurture. In the middle classes, mothers became accountable for the early education of children of both sexes, to about age seven. Mothers were perceived as the natural educators of children by virtue of their ‘circumstances’ and their frame of mind. This was spelt out by Horne who claimed that because women were more within doors, with more time to spare, they were best acquainted with their children’s tempers. Also their own temperament made them more apprehensive of danger and therefore more concerned for children’s everlasting welfare. Being of a mild disposition, they could correct children with tenderness, and being
patient they would know whether the teaching was being understood. Thus tracts on education were regularly addressed to them.  

Mothers had a particular responsibility for the education of daughters in the eyes of contemporaries. This was due to their commonality of sex, and to the implications of female character for the whole of society. In other words, women were the central arbiters of morality and virtue, answerable for the education of the adults of posterity. Thus, it was of paramount importance that mothers had a special role in transmitting values, behaviour and morality to their daughters, by both precept and example. It followed that the obligation of early childhood education had special meaning in the case of daughters.

Nicholas Hans analysed the educational locus of 120 eighteenth-century women included in the Dictionary of National Biography. His sample specifically included only those women who were mentioned in their own right for ‘published works or intellectual and social eminence.’ For the purposes of the present study, his work has a number of limitations, not the least of which is the rationale itself. However, his work confirms a high incidence of home education for girls with over half educated there. The trend is most pronounced amongst middle and upper-class girls, 61 of 94 girls compared with 26 educated at school. Middle-class girls accounted for only 36 percent of his sample but for 70 percent of those educated at home. Sixty percent of the middle-class girls, were taught by their family.

In contrast to girls, just over a quarter of his entire male sample and only just over ten per cent of both upper and middle-class boys were taught at home. Thus girls were more likely than boys to be home educated, and middle-class girls in particular spent

57 Horne, Forming the Female Character, p. 9; Trimmer, Oeconomy of Charity, p. 21; Moir, Female Tuition; and Sarah Cartwright, Letters on Female Education addressed to a Married Lady (London: 1776).


59 Ibid.

60 Ibid., pp. 32-33.
their formative years there. Hans suggests that the daughters of squires and peers were probably taught by governesses or tutors. His middle-class girls, accounting for 28 of the 30 for whom he had details, were mainly taught by fathers (14) and only three by mothers, all of whom were outstanding women themselves.61

There are a number of reasons which might have contributed to this pattern. Girls more than boys were expected to spend their life in the world of house and home while their brothers could anticipate a life of work, politics and public affairs. This contrast between male and female expectations was probably more pronounced in middle and upper classes than amongst the labouring sectors of society. The importance of love and affection for one’s young and the perceived need to shelter and protect young women may have contributed to the tendency to keep girls at home. Thus, ideology and expectation may have operated together to encourage home education where a daughter was under her mother’s care. Also, many boarding schools had an unsavoury reputation which probably restrained some parents from sending daughters unless they could financially ensure their health and well-being. This might explain why more middle than upper-class girls were kept at home.

Certainly Hans’ study is only suggestive of middle-class trends, relying as it does on a very restrictive sample, and confronted by questions about the recording of educational detail. Particularly it is probable that both the Dictionary of National Biography and Hans defined education in the narrower sense of academic knowledge, whereas this study is concerned with a wider concept of education. Also in his analysis, the first years of the child’s life appeared to have been overlooked in defining the locus of education, which is in itself revealing of the way we tend to circumscribe education today.

In order to examine where and by whom girls were being taught, diaries, autobiographies, letters and memoirs of a group of eighteenth-century women were

61Ibid., p. 195.
Initially these materials were collected to discover ordinary women’s reactions and responses to their education, so literary women, peeresses and other exceptional women were not sought out. This exclusion resulted in material on 22 women whose experience could shed light on the problem. Though the women included were probably more ‘ordinary’ than Hans’ sample, they were still predominantly middle class, and about half were Quakers, often by conversion. The characteristics of this group suggest that they probably more literate than most women, but that does not necessarily affect the locus of their prime educational experience. Though a very small group, it is suggestive of where and by whom girls were educated. Appendix 6.1 gives a listing and breakdown of the women who were included.

Predominantly academic education could be identified from these accounts since the women tended to chronicle learning to read and write, followed in many cases by other subjects commonly taught at schools. But a whole range of educative factors were described including physical exercise, learning ‘the first lessons of parental obedience,’ being ‘educated … in industry’ or being ‘brought up strictly in … religion.’ Other references were more vague, crediting parents or mothers with ‘tenderness and solicitude for … [my] best welfare.’

Ruth Fellows in her brief reference to her early influences wrote only that, ‘my dear parents taught me, both by example and precept,

62 See Linda Pollock, Forgotten Children: Parent-child Relations from 1500 to 1900 (Cambridge: 1983), pp. 70-91 on the problems of using this kind of material including the class orientation of diaries and the constraints on contents.

63 Originally accounts of 35 women were examined but of these, 13 were far too vague about their upbringing to be of real value.


to live a sober and godly life. Thus it was possible to identify educational influences which these women perceived other than academic learning.

This examination showed more evidence of daughters taught by mothers than Hans’ research did. Mothers were explicitly mentioned in the education of 13 of the 22 women, but because several referred only vaguely to the parental home, or only specified school education, the total is probably higher. Other women, excluding schoolmistresses, instructed eight of the women. This suggests interesting female networks since they include Methodist servants, friends, a neighbour, an uncle’s housekeeper, an aunt, and a female household of relatives. These women tended to supplement home instruction, but in two cases they practically replaced it. Elizabeth Ham was sent away from home to an aunts’ house which she alternated with spells at home or school. The family financial situation meant also that two sons were sent to uncles; one was eventually adopted. The other instance was Margaret Lucas, orphaned at age seven, who was partly reared by her uncle’s housekeeper.

None were taught solely by men, since it is unlikely any of the schools was only staffed by men. At schools they usually filled the supplementary roles of French, dancing, music or drawing masters. But fathers played a significant role in the education of Ann Gilbert, Mary Alexander and Mary Fletcher. Mary Alexander, whose mother died when she was young, credited her early education to her father’s particular concern for her correct education. But she claimed that most of her learning was self-taught. Mary Fletcher did not mention her mother, referring only to her father’s or her grandmother’s house. She too may have lost her mother while young. Ann Gilbert however provided a valuable case study. Both parents were well-educated, but for health reasons her father reverted to his trade as an engraver, working from home. He


undertook to teach his trade and academic education to all of his children, including the daughters, together with apprentices and pupils. As the girls became older, they took turns learning drawing and engraving from their father, and domestic skills from their mother. The educational climate of the home was exceptional in many respects; several family members published autobiographies while her mother wrote ‘Present to a young Servant’ amongst other titles.

Women remained the strongest influence even for those women whose mothers died while they were young. Elizabeth Fry was taught by her mother until age twelve, and then by a governess. Margaret Lucas, as mentioned above, was taken in hand by her uncle’s housekeeper until sent to school at about age twelve or thirteen. Sarah Grubb whose mother died before she was five, praised her stepmother whom her father married when she was about ten, for her ‘care and regard’ and wrote that she was instrumental in the ‘watchful and religious education’ she received. As described above only Mary Alexander commented on her father’s influence.

Half of the group were taught exclusively at home and another seven were taught at home for some of their education. Just three credited their education exclusively to schools. Of the eleven who went to school, four went relatively late, one at eleven and the rest after fourteen years of age. Only two received finishing education in the commonly regarded sense. None appeared to start before age seven, leaving the early years to whatever instruction household members were able and inclined to give.

Martha Young died within months of going to school for the first time and her father condemned himself for sending her.

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Oh! What infatuation ever to send her to one. In the country she had health, spirits, and strength, as if there were not enough with what she might have learned at home, instead of going to that region of constraint and death, Camden House.71

For several of the others, school was either a short-lived or haphazard experience. Elizabeth Ham attended seven different ones with frequent breaks between and during attendance at any one of them. Writing when she was sixty-six, in 1849, she commented on the poor qualifications of her teachers and the paucity of her school education,

It is astonishing how little qualification was thought on in these days. Not one of the Governesses it was my fate to be placed under knew as much of education as could now be found in any Mistress of any village Charity School.72

All of the schools charged fees, and the curriculum varied from an evening writing school to a boarding school with an extra dancing master. Largely though, her experience was of unpretentious day schools, of the village or dame variety, with a curriculum typical of charity schools. Similarly Margaret Lucas attended a number of schools or took occasional lessons.73 Eliza Fox experienced day schools with a broader curriculum including history, geography, French and dancing which her father insisted she study in order to have a ‘good carriage.’ Her parents felt she had to learn ‘to behave like a “young lady”’ ... It was proper I should leave off being a “Tom-boy” at age seven!74

These examples support the view that middle-class girls frequently received all or part of their education at home, and certainly the early years of it. In comparison with Hans’ results for boys, girls were far more likely than their brothers to receive education from their parents. In Hans’ research, the male relatives who taught the girls tended to be teachers, clergy or scientists by profession which implies something of special circumstances. In the above evidence drawn from diaries and autobiographies female

71Bentham-Edwards, Arthur Young, p. 263.
72Ham, Elizabeth Ham, p. 42.
74Fox, Memoir, p. 6.
relatives, usually mothers, appear significantly more frequently than males as responsible for their daughters’ upbringing.

It is hard to extrapolate from this to include working-class girls. Their experience and situation were in many respects different, and in ways which would directly affect their opportunity for education. In terms of academic learning, which Hans’ research and most of the autobiographies referred to, working-class girls were constrained by opportunity and social expectations. Frequently their labour was required at home, and if they could be freed, access to even charity foundations or day schools could have been restricted either by lack of provision or finances. They were less likely than middle-class girls to have someone at home to teach them. Ultimately, the type of formal education to which they had access was limited by social expectations of their class and sex.

The central role of home-based education for middle-class girls suggests another way of looking at working-class girls’ formative years. It is clear from the above evidence, that home was an important locus for the upbringing of the former, and there are good reasons for expecting it to play a similar role for girls further down the social scale. It was not a case of emulating their betters, but a natural development of the living and working patterns of the lower classes. Hans included thirteen women whom he classed as daughters of farmers, craftsmen and workers, two of whom were educated at home and seven of whom were self-educated.75 Of the initial group of 35 personal accounts described above, possibly six were working class. Three gave no details about their education, two were educated predominantly at home and one attended several schools.76 Though concrete evidence is slim, what is known about the circumstances of the labouring classes strongly suggests a home-based tradition.

Many educative influences were situated in the domestic setting. In both apprenticeship and service, children and young people were attached to a household


76A. W. Matthews, ed., Elizabeth Mascall (London: 1902); Ham, Elizabeth Ham; Cook, Ann Cook and Friend; Elizabeth Ashbridge, ‘Some Account of the Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge,’ The Friends’ Library 4 (1840), hereafter cited as Ashbridge, ‘Some Account.’
where they learned various skills and behaviour. Even some schools were not far removed from a home-like setting. Most dames’ schools were held in the woman’s home. In other schools, the girls were expected to make clothing for the other pupils, assist with the cleaning and cooking, and often pupils lived in. Lacking only the formal character of these arrangements, many children were surely taught similar things in their own home by their parents, by relatives or by servants in the household. For example, Ann Gilbert and her siblings were taught at home amongst neighbour children and apprentices who learnt engraving and other studies from her father.

Mothers were the most constant early contact of many girls. As a group they were probably limited by time and knowledge from teaching literate skills, but some were clearly able to do so, and did pass this on to their daughters. Neuberg, in sketching the early education of several prominent eighteenth-century men born into the labouring orders, cites the central role of mothers in either teaching them their letters, or in ensuring that they received some schooling. Several of the female autobiographers described above, whose origins are indistinct, though potentially artisan, were taught to read by their mothers. Some girls did acquire an ability to read and knowledge of religion in this way. As the century progressed, with indications of a higher level of literacy, more mothers could have been able to teach reading.

As part of their normal daily working, most mothers or other females in the household would have transmitted to the younger ones the skills and knowledge which they believed girls should know. Within domestic industry and farming households, children’s and women’s work was intertwined, as was the upbringing of the children with women’s domestic and productive role. As Maxine Berg writes,

Women trained and supervised the younger members of the family production unit; they passed on ‘skills’ to the next generation of the

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77 For example, see E.R.O., D/P 275/28/2; S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1.


industrial workforce and they cared for their children, all as part of one process.\textsuperscript{80}

Responsible for organizing their work, mothers trained their children in the processes required in domestic textile industries. Radcliffe, inventor of the dressing frame, remembered how

My mother taught me [while too young to weave] to earn my bread by carding and spinning cotton, winding linen or cotton weft for my father and elder brothers at the loom, until I became of sufficient age and strength for my father to put me into a loom.\textsuperscript{81}

Historians widely associate the care and training of the children with the usual course of activities undertaken by mothers in performance of their other responsibilities. Similarly the children, and especially girls, were expected, from an early age, to assist the mother in her work by performing simple but necessary tasks. As they grew older, more able, and more experienced, the tasks could grow more complex under the supervision of the mother. 'When she worked at home a daughter served a kind of apprenticeship to her mother, learning the domestic, agricultural, or technical skills she would need as an adult.'\textsuperscript{82}

It was the nature of female work and knowledge, their proximity and relationships to the young, and the trends in domestic organization which operated to create networks of women which directly related to their importance in passing on skills, knowledge and cultural values to the young, and especially to girls. Mothers or other females were expected to pass on to the girls in the household, whether servant, apprentice or relation, knowledge of the tasks required. Similarly work practices were handed down, as well as the understanding of the strategies necessary for organization of working and living.

\textsuperscript{80}Berg, \textit{Age of Manufactures}, p. 157.


\textsuperscript{82}Tilly and Scott, \textit{Women, Work and Family}, pp. 32-33; see also Malcolmson, \textit{Life and Labour}, pp. 42-43, 57; Alice Clark credits mothers with the natural responsibility for children's training, but acknowledges that whilst men worked at home, they may have shared in the process, \textit{Working Life of Women}, pp. 95, 159, 242, 286-7, 295.
In this way, girls’ roles, knowledge and status were transmitted through home-based instruction and emulation of the other women in the household.

Neuberg has described the chapbook as representing an ancient oral tradition which became petrified in print, a vital link in popular culture, a window into the lives of the common people two centuries ago. In a largely rural society, oral tradition still held an important place. For most people in the villages, and many in the towns, their understanding of the world was still local, and their knowledge of the way things were done rested on verbal communication and established custom. In this context, women established and maintained their own communication links and networks. In conceptualizing female upbringing in the household context, the oral tradition plays a central role. It was via an oral network that many girls were taught the work practices they would need and the roles they would fill as adults.

In rural society women’s activities linked them to each other in ways which could be seen as networks. For example, childbirth was exclusively a female activity amongst the lower orders of society, with midwives, ‘wise women,’ or simply other women grouping together to help one another. Knowledge about the process was also passed on in this way. Women’s role in popular politics emanated from their collective experiences in managing strategies for household provision. Chaytor argues that Ryton women in the late sixteenth, early seventeenth century occupied a separate culture in which reputation, gossip and social power were intertwined, suggesting another way in which female experiences were linked. Similarly, Berg demonstrates the ways in which community networks and controls based on neighbourhood rather than kin were

83Neuberg, Popular Education, p. 122.

'enforced in the cooperative contexts in which some parts of women’s household and industrial work took place.'

Much of what a girl learned about the life she was to lead as an adult was similarly acquired from the women around her, thus forging another link in the female network. Almost all of the women autobiographers cited earlier pay homage to their mothers in having passed on knowledge, skills or moral training. Girls were seen by contemporaries and historians as assistants to their mothers, whilst female work practices served to link them directly to their daughters and other females. Patterns of sociability were also gender linked. It is not clear whether the ideology of woman’s role and responsibility for daughters’ upbringing had permeated the working classes, but their day to day experiences and living and working practices operated to create a female network of education and upbringing.

All children gained knowledge in this way, at home. However, it was particularly important for girls. Because females were less likely than males to be exposed to the formal educative influences of school and apprenticeship, they were more likely to rely on informal avenues of transmission at both home and work. Descriptions of their education gained from diaries and autobiographies emphasize the importance of these informal modes and stress the role of females in teaching others. Several of the diarists became teachers or governesses; one was taught by her sister, two others by their aunts; two by servants; two by friends, all female, in addition to those taught by mothers, step-mothers, governesses or at schools run by women. Patterns of informal education, whether ‘academic’ or ‘vocational’ were an important part of the female tradition and female sphere, regardless of class. Limiting discussion of girls’ education to schooling, or even to schooling and apprenticeship, is to ignore the fact that many girls received their most formative education in other less formal but equally recognizable ways.

85Berg, Age of Manufactures, p. 165; see also Tilly and Scott, Women, Work and Family, p. 56, Chaytor, ‘Household and Kinship,’ pp. 49-50. Thomis and Grimmett point out some of the weaknesses in women’s concerted action in the introduction to Women in Protest, 1800-1850.

86See Shorter, Making of the Modern Family, pp. 206-12.
Conclusion

The transitions of the eighteenth century meant that the society’s expectations of women and the purposes for which they were educated also changed. Yet the influence of these changes on women is problematical. Economic change and increasing industrialization which may well have loosened English society, seemed to have the immediate and ultimate effect of undercutting woman’s economic position. Enlightenment thought was in many respects little concerned with women, though the period coincided with an upsurge of feminist and female writers, not all of them from the privileged classes. At the same time environmentalist thinking tended to restrict women’s options by linking their education to their children’s benefit and not necessarily their own. With new economic and intellectual perspectives, consequent alterations in social patterns ultimately had an equivocal impact on women as well. The development of the companionate marriage, for example, instead of creating a freer more equal role for women could have tended to subsume women under men with a resultant loss of identity.

The impact of these changes on images of women was central to their educational opportunity and achievement. The level of debate at the end of the eighteenth century about popular education in general, and female education in particular reveals the underlying tensions in eighteenth century society. Not only does it indicate a period of change but also a lack of consensus about how and why women should be educated. The character of the debate illustrated the forces of liberal radicalism and the threat it posed to the conservative view of society and to a perception of woman’s place within it. Nevertheless, where girls of the labouring orders were concerned their education was shaped very much by perceptions of class and status, and the need for the poor to be educated in certain ways for the good of society as a whole.

Schooling for the poor, where it existed at all in eighteenth-century England, was intended as basic, elementary education. It had limited goals, in that it was not seen as a prelude to secondary and further forms of formal education but as an end in itself. If
schooling led to anything, it was a precursor to industrial training, apprenticeship or domestic service. The extent to which this functional relationship appeared to be the case depended on the sex of the child. The level of academic attainment likewise was expected to be limited; in no way did it represent education in the broadly liberal sense of the word. The skills taught were meant to be functional, useful acquisitions. Reading was commonly taught as a means of access to the appropriate catechetical and religious works; writing was taught only when reading had been mastered and often not at all. Instruction in ciphering or accounts was specifically provided to be of use to boys going into trade, and to girls at an appropriate level for domestic servants, housewives or tradesmen's wives. Additionally, vocational skills like gardening and needlework usually supplemented, and sometimes dominated the curriculum.

But if the skills taught in schools were predominantly utilitarian in the ways described, behaviour modification was often the motive for providing schooling in the first place. Well-meaning persons of the middle and upper classes felt, for their own as well as the labouring orders' sake, that poor children ought to be taught their place in society and the demeanour expected of them. An important aspect of this training was to accept the drudgery of hard laborious work. Thus the academic content of schools for the poor was also shaped by the fear that too much and the wrong kind of knowledge would prove dangerous to the established order of things. Rules, regulations and a very strong element of in loco parentis made up the day to day operation of the schools.

Though schooling for children of the labouring classes had its own distinctive form, it was part of the wider changes which were taking place in attitudes to education and children in the last half of the eighteenth century. Increased trade and the impetus of industry placed new demands on the educative process. Likewise philosophical re-evaluations of education influenced by environmentalism and utilitarianism altered both the form and function of schooling in eighteenth century life, as well as the position of children. Although there were countervailing pressures at work, modest literacy was becoming more useful and desirable.

Within that context late eighteenth-century schooling for girls of the labouring
classes aimed to prepare them to lead both a useful and a moral life. Like boys of their social class, girls were being prepared to fulfil their expected place in menial occupations, largely serving the more prosperous groups in society. The adult roles which these educational goals anticipated were influenced by the middle classes' image of women's role. Thus there was a consistent regard for training poor girls to fit into the mould established by middle class ideals of status, role and behaviour.

On the surface the criteria for schooling girls appear much the same as those applied to boys. But the educational process was also defined in terms of the gender roles which children were expected to fill. The academic content for girls was more likely to be restricted, while greater emphasis seems to have been put on their moral and religious education. The practice of practical tasks, in particular needlecraft, were included while significantly less emphasis was put on work for boys. The injunctions which surrounded the whole structure of girls' schooling were intended to mould good domestic servants, housewives and mothers. Even where it was argued that it was necessary to teach skills to make the girls able to support themselves, 'feminine' skills were chosen, thus reflecting assumptions about female work.

Schooling reflected these preconceptions in that the curricula in charity schools was limited to basics, like reading, writing and arithmetic. Girls' studies were often even more restricted. But significantly where a girl had a chance of schooling, two-fifths could have learned to write and a quarter to do arithmetic. Certainly access to schools was more restricted for girls than boys since usually fewer places were kept for them. Girls took advantage of the opportunities where they were offered, however, tending to stay on longer than boys in schools throughout the two counties. They also stayed long enough, 3.5 years on average, to have acquired reading and writing skills which could have remained with them throughout their lives. Over a third of those who could be traced, were recorded as having stayed their 'full time' in school, taking full advantage of the opportunity. Despite the fact that the size and number of schools did not keep pace with population growth, slightly lower attendances in conjunction with some new schools meant that at least a larger number of labouring families' daughters experienced
schooling at the end of the century as compared with 1750.

Also within apprenticeship, girls' opportunities were more limited than boys' were in that they were less likely to be put out as craft apprentices. To a very great extent, this position reflected the role of women in society both legally and economically. Apprenticeship for women did not carry with it the rights and privileges it did for men. Nor was their work regarded in the same light. Because of their position as wives and mothers their work was usually regarded as casual and supplementary albeit economically valuable. Having said this, females constituted thirteen percent of all apprentices. They were concentrated in parish apprenticeship and in less prosperous trades; but so were many boys. Premiums for both sexes were low, under £10, and the most common trades for all apprentices were overstocked or with modest prospects. The main divergence came with professions and other very lucrative, prestigious occupation from which girls were usually excluded.

For both boys and girls, a key function of apprenticeship was the transmission of cultural values. Although vocational training was explicitly part of the purpose of apprenticeship, a crucial element of the system was as preparation for life. Within eighteenth century England, where distinctions of status and class were integral to understanding social life, the role of a master or mistress in transmitting culture and acting as a status model for the apprentice to emulate was a fundamental purpose of apprenticeship. Thus as an institution, it reflected the status and gender divisions of eighteenth-century life.

Many girls acquired the knowledge, skills and behaviour they would require as adults in patterns of learning which were outside of the formal institutions of school and apprenticeship. Occupational training gained whilst at work was valuable for children of both sexes, but potentially more so for girls since they had less access to schools and apprenticeship. The patterns of upbringing and training could have involved home, workplace and adult venues of learning such as lectures and evening classes. An important feature of these avenues is that they were more likely in some respects to be generated by the labouring orders themselves. Where the ideologies about women and
children were most significant to working class culture was in the effect they had on the formal structures of education. Control of apprenticeship and schooling by the middle classes meant their values would be transmitted through educative institutions external to the working class. The ethos of workplace and plebeian home-based learning was an integral part of the living and working pattern of the labouring orders.

For women much of their activity linked them together, particularly mothers to daughters, in situations where they would share and pass on the knowledge required to function in the adult world. The knowledge would encompass the whole range of female experience and thus prepare girls for the lives their mothers led. In this respect, a girl’s upbringing could become a creative experience for the labouring woman, in the sense that she was active in structuring that learning.

The patterns of working-class girls’ education and training in eighteenth century England were varied and diverse. Throughout the formal institutions of schools and apprenticeships, and the less formal media of 'in-service' training at home or work, girls and their families were active in taking advantage of and shaping their education. They took advantage of schooling, staying on, frequently for longer than many historians have indicated. They sought out informal avenues of learning. Overall the extent and quality of their education, though sharply restricted in some respects by social strictures and preconceptions, was far greater than earlier images would have suggested.
Appendices

Appendix 1. Geographic Distribution of Records and Data, Essex and Staffordshire

Key to Maps:

- Eighteenth-century Records of Schools (including Minute Books, SPCK)
- Eighteenth-century Records of Parish Apprenticeship (Inland Revenue Records cover all of both counties)
- Eighteenth-century Records of both Schools and Parish Apprenticeship
- Literacy Data from the Cambridge Group for the Study of Population and Social Structure (Striped)
- Nineteenth-century Records of Schools Only (e.g. Brougham, Charity Commissioners, E.R.O., Archdiacanal Returns)
- Nineteenth-century Records indicating an Eighteenth-century School
Appendix 3.1. Schools and Pupils in Essex and Staffordshire from the Brougham Commission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION DATA</th>
<th>Essex</th>
<th>Staffordshire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (1811)</td>
<td>248,920</td>
<td>294,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Poor (1815)</td>
<td>32,625</td>
<td>22,063</td>
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ENDOWED SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
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<th>Staffordshire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>112(^a)</td>
<td>144(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>5225</td>
<td>5198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Size of School</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>36.1</td>
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</table>

DAY SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>404(^c)</td>
<td>345(^d)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>9,219</td>
<td>10,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Size of School</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>30</td>
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SUNDAY SCHOOLS

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>208(^e)</td>
<td>150(^f)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
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<td>Average Size of School</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>109</td>
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Source: *Education of the Lower Orders, Digest*, 3, 288, 4, 876.

\(^a\)Includes 2 dames’ schools, and 24 on the new plan.

\(^b\)Includes 7 dames’ schools, and 6 on the new plan.

\(^c\)Includes 80 dames’ schools, and 37 on the new plan.

\(^d\)Includes 122 dames’ schools, and 20 on the new plan.

\(^e\)Includes 23 schools on the new plan.

\(^f\)Includes 9 schools on the new plan.
Appendix 3.2. Case Studies: Digest of Information from All Sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Pop. 1801</th>
<th>Pop. 1815</th>
<th>Date 1745</th>
<th>Date 1745-1809</th>
<th>Date 1810</th>
<th>Date 1814</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>No. of Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essex</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashdon</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>1745</td>
<td>1745-1809</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30+?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chelmsford</td>
<td>3755</td>
<td>1634</td>
<td>[1713]</td>
<td>1807/8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1+2*</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>130+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romford</td>
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<td>300</td>
<td>1710</td>
<td>1710-1803</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1724</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>90+</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1719</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[1787] 1787-1806</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1788-1798</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48+8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10+50</td>
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<td>Staffordshire</td>
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<td>105</td>
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<td>1719,1779-98</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>[Bilston]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Wednesfield]</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>[Willenhall]</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>503</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*under new plan.
Appendix 3.3: Samples of School Organization, Rules, Regulations and Minutes

3.3.1 Wolverhampton Charity School

The Orders and Rules of the Charity-School for Boys,
In the parifh of Wolverhampton

1. The Master to be Chofen for this School shall be,
   1. A Member of the Church of England, of a Sober Life and Conversation and not be under the Age of 25 Years.
   2. One that frequents the Holy Communion.
   3. One that hath a good Government of himself and his passions.
   4. One of a meek Temper and humble Behaviour.
   5. One of a good Genius for Teaching.
   6. One who understands most the Grounds and principles of the Christian Religion, and is able to give a good Account thereof to the Minister of the Parifh, or Ordinary, on Examination.
   7. One who can write a good Hand, and who understands the Grounds of Arithmetick.
   8. One who keeps good orders in his Family.
   9. One who is approved by the Minister of the parifh (being a Subscriber) before he be presented to be Licensed by the Ordinary.

2. The Following orders Shall be observed by the Master and Scholars, &c.
   1. The Master shall constantly attend his proper Business in the School during the Hours appointed for Teaching, viz. from 7. to 11. in the Morning and from 1. to 5. in the Evening, the Summer Half-Year: and from 8 to 11. in the Morning, and from 1 to 4 in the Evening, the Winter Half-Year.
   2. To the End the Chief Design of this School, which is for the Education of poor Children in the Knowledge and practice of the Christian Religion as professed and Taught in the Church of England, may be the better promoted; The Master Shall make it his chief Business to Instruct the Children in the principles thereof, as they are laid down in the Church Catechifm; which he shall first teach them to pronounce distinctly and plainly, and then, in order to practifh, shall explain it to the meanest

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87 As far as possible, spelling and punctuation throughout this Appendix is as per the original documents.

88 S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1.
Capacity by some good Exposition approved of by the Minister. and this shall be done constantly twice a week, that everything in the Catechism may be the more perfectly repeated and understood; and afterwards shall more largely inform them of their Duty by the Help of the Whole Duty of Man, &c. or some other good Book. And the Master shall discourage and correct the Beginning of Vice, and particularly, Lying, Swearing, Curfing, taking God’s Name in Vain, and the profanation of the Lord’s Day, &c. At the Same time minding them of such parts of the Holy Scriptures and of the Catechism, where these Things are mentioned as forbidden by God, and the contrary Thing as commanded. And in general, the Master (in the Bufinefs of Religion) shall follow the Directions of the Minister.

3. When any Number of the Children can say the Catechism, the Master shall give Notice thereof to the Minister, in order to their being Catechised in the Church.

4. The Master shall teach them the true spelling of Words, and Distinction of syllables, with the points and stops.

5. As soon as the Boys can Read competently well, the Master shall teach them to Write a fair legible Hand, with the Grounds of Arithmetic to fit them for service or Apprenticeship.

6. The Master Shall bring ye Children to Church twice every Lord’s-Day and Holy-Day; and shall teach them to Behave themselves with all Reverence which they are in the Houſes of God, and to join in the publick-services of the Church. For which purpose they are always to have ready their Bible and Common-prayer books.

Extract from Wolverhampton Charity School Minute Book: 89

April 7th 1757

Admitted Jos: Son of Jos: Taylor By Mr. Cradock.
Admitted Eliz: Daughter of Danl Darby By Mr. Jn Snow.
Admitted Mary Daughter of Jn Whitey By Mr. Molineux.
Admitted Mary Daughter of Jn Madeley By Mrs. Pearson Bilson Sf.

Dismiſt Sarah Guest for not coming to School.
Esther Perkins for not coming to School.
Rebecca Slater for not coming to School.
Jn Hancher for not coming to School.
Jn Adderley for not coming to School.

Tho: Son of Tho: Hum being the third Child of the said Tho: Hums and all taken out by him when Stay’d about half their time in the School he hath Spoke to Mr. Wightwich in King Street for to get another Boy of his into the School.

At this meeting it is Resolved that those Parents who have had Child or Children in the School and have taken them out before Staying their full time

89 S.R.O., D1157/1/5/1, p. 172.
shall never be Allow’d to have any Child or Children Admitted into this School.

And it’s Refolved that if any Boy or Girl shall be Dismissed this Shool by the Trustees that they shall never be Admitted into this School again by any Petition whatsoever.

We the Trustees do order that the Six Uppermost Boys shall take it Weekly as their turns beginning with the Uppermost Boy first for to Mark such Boys or Girls who shall not come into School by the Ringing of the Bell both Morning and Evening every Week Day. And on Sundays and Holydays we do order that every Boy and Girl shall be in the School a Quarter of an Hour before going to Church to be mark’d for such fault shall have Six Blows with a Birch Rod by the Boy that marks them And the Girls to be Whipped for the same faults and the same Boy se whether all the Boys are Wash’d and Comb’d and Examin that their Cloaths Shoes and Hose are Mended.

And let all the Parents know that they must not cut nor Alter the Childrens Cloaths Nor let any of their other Children Ware any of the Cloaths, which are Lent the Children by the School. For they are not given them But lend And if they be taken out of the School before they have Stayed their full time They shall be Stript of all the Cloaths and every thing that is lent them by the School let them be ever so bad and shall be given to tho’ Children which shall be in most want in the School.

The present State of the Charity Boys School is 34.
The present State of the Charity Girls School is 25.
3.3.2 Blencowes Charity

Blencows Charity

Name of the Charity for the Education of the Children of Writtle and Roxwell in the Religious Worship of God according to the established doctrine of the Church of England.

Visitor of the Parishes of Writtle and Roxwell are exempt within the Jurisdiction of New College Oxford. The Reverend the Warden of St Mary Winton College in Oxford commonly called new College in Oxford for the time being shall be the sole Visitor of the above named Charity to whom alone all appeals shall be made and whose determination in all things shall be final.

Trustees Chelmsford and Widford are adjoining Parishes to Writtle. The Vicar of Writtle and the Churchwardens of Writtle and Roxwell for the time being Thomas Berney Bramston of Skreens in Roxwell Esq Richard Birch of Roxwell Clerk William Birch of Writtle Esq Charter Long of stisted in the Parish of Writtle Esq Samuel Lucas Bumpsted of Chelmsford Gentleman and Richard Crampfornes of Roxwell aforesaid Gentleman shall be Trustees of this Charity and as often as the number of such Trustees shall happen to be reduced to six or under such vacancy shall be filled up by the surviving Trustees and out of proper persons resident in Writtle or Roxwell or within Five Miles thereof.

The Trustees shall within three months after their appointment meet and settle such Regulations as shall be approved by the Majority of them respecting the Salary’s to be given to the Master and Mistreffs, the number of Children to be admitted and such other matters as they in their direction shall think necessary for the establishment of the Charity and the application of the Trust Money in the most eligable manner so as to answere the beneficient Intentions of the Donor subject neverthelesfs to the approbation of the Visitor whose approbation being signified in writing such Rules shall then be binding and conclusive and not otherwise.

The Trustees or any six of them shall from time to time in case of irreligious immoral or improper demeanour have it in their power to remove the Master or Mifstreffs to be chosen as is hereafter directed from their respective officer and in such case to proceed to the election of others according to the Rules and in manner as is hereafter directed and shall likewise have powers from time to time to make such further Rules Orders and Regulations with respect to the said Charity as may in their opinion best conduse to perpetuate and improve the same as well as answer the beneficient intent of the Donor Subject neverthelesfs to the Controol of the Visitor.

That the Trustees shall meet annually on the Tuesday in Whitsun Week to Audit the Accounts and for such other purposes as may be needful --

That the Trustees shall appoint a treasurer or Receiver.

The Election of the Master & Mistreffs] As this Charity is intended for the Poor Children of both sexes there shall be a Master and Mistreffs appointed to preside over it who shall be elected by a Majority of the Trustees present of which Election publick Notice shall be given twice in a Newspaper published in the County of Essex at least ten day before the election and the respective Offices shall be filled up within one month after the Vacancy shall have happened The Advertisement shall be

90E.R.O., D/P 50/25/42 (c.1785).
inserted by the Vicar of Writtle or in his absence by his Curate and the expence of the Advertisement shall be defrayed out of the Fund.

Qualifications of the Master and Mistrefs. The Master and Mistrefs at the time of their Election must not be less than 25 Years of age nor more than 45, the former must write a Good hand and understand vulgar Arithmetick the latter must be able to Instruct the Girls in reading in English and plain work, they must be members of the Church of England and must have received the Sacrament according to the Church of England within six Months before their Election.

That the Schoolmaster and Schoolmistrefs shall attend divine Service at the Church of Writtle with their Scholars both in the Morning and afternoon on Sundays except at the times appointed for the Holy days or breaking up of the Children.

Illness shall be the only excuse allowed for absenting themselves from their attendance at Church.

Regulations for the Children] That no Child be admitted into the School but those whose parents, if living do, or, if dead did in their life time belong to Writtle or Roxwell.

2. That any Child who shall be absent from the Church or School at the School hours hereafter mentioned six times in a Quarter/except Ill or by the leave of two Trustees under their handwriting shall be expelled the School.

3d That the children shall publickly say their Catechism in the Church of Writtle at such times as the Vicar of writtle or his Curate for the time being shall think proper.

4th That a fortnight at Christmas and a fortnight at Whitsuntide be the stated times for breaking up of the School, and that such Children be permitted to go a Gleaning in the Wheat and Barley Harvest and to pick Hops in the Season as their Parents if living or their friends with whom they shall live or reside shall think proper with the Consent of one or more of the Trustees signified in writing.

5th That the Children constantly attend the School from the Hours of 7 to 11 in the Morning and from one to Five in the Evening in the Summer half year And from 8 to 11 in the Morning and from 1 to 4 in the Evening the Winter half year.

6th That no Boy shall be kept in the School above the Age of 12 years nor Girl above the Age of 10 Years

7th That no Child having any communicative or infectious disorder shall be admitted into the School

8th That a Fire shall be kept in the School from the 1st November to the 25th march during the School Hours at the Expence of the Trust.

9th That the Trust too, shall be at the Expence of Pens Ink Paper and necefsary and proper Books for the Instruction of the Children, and there shall be given to each child on leaving the School (unlefs expelled) a new Bible a common prayer Book and whole Duty of Man at the discretion of the Trustees.

10th That the Master shall from time to time report to the Trustees at their Meeting the conduct and behaviour of the Children, and that the Trustees … occasion expell any of the Children for misbehaviour.
3.3.3 Birmingham Protestant Dissenters’ Charity School Minute Book

The order and Manner of Spending their Common Time to be observed by the Children belonging to the Charity School refered to above

1st The Children are to rise at Six every Morning in the Week, Except Lord’s Day Morning

2 As soon as They ar dre福德ed they are to be put upon saying such short and easy forms of Prayer as shall be thought suitable to their Age.

3 Having gone through their private prayers, with decency and seriousnesės. they are to attend Family Worship, which is to be carried on by the Master’s, or one of the Children’s reading a Chapter out of the New Testament, or some Practical Book of the Old, and repeating the Morning Prayer for the Day, out of Mr Bourn’s Family Prayer Book, or such other form as the Committee for the time being shall direct to the use of

4 Family prayer being over the Children are to attend their Schooling ‘till Eight

5 At Eight they are to Breakfast, and after Breakfast they may play ‘till nine. The master taking Care that they do not exceed Their Bounds, nor use profane or any indecent Language, or be otherwise guilty of Rudeness or Immodesty

6 From Nine till Eleven the Children are to Work, when Work can be had, and then go into the School for one Hour [?] till Twelve. But when no work is to be had they must attend the School from nine ‘till Twelve.

7 From Twelve ‘till Two they are to Dine and Play under the restrictions mentioned in the Fifth Head of Instructions.

8 From Two ‘till Four, and from Four ‘till Five, the same regulations take places as from Nine till Twelve.

9 From five till six they may be left to chuse their own Employment, provided they are not guilty of any Abuses.

10 At Six the Children are to Sup, and immediately after supper to attend upon Family Worship, which is to be carried on in the same Manner as in the Morning.

11 After Family prayer they are to be at liberty till they go to Bed, except so much time as shall be required for Reading a Short Psalm, and saying their private Prayers

N. 12 The Children are none of them to be out of Bed after Nine o’Clock, but such of them as chuse it may go to Bed sooner.

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91 Birmingham Reference Library, Local Studies, ‘Minute Book of the Committee of the Protestant Dissenting Charity School, Birmingham,’ vol. 1, 1761-1779, MS No. 471911 ZZ70B.
Rules to be Observed By the Children of the Sunday School

On Sunday mornings all the Children are to be at the School at Nine o’Clock.

They are all to be clean as the Circumstances of the Parents will admit, particularly their hands and faces washed, their Hair combed, and clean Linen put on.

From Nine o’Clock till the proper time to go to Church, those Children that can Read are to find out the Collect, Epistle, Gospel and Psalms for the Day, and to read them over before they come to church, that they may be Enabled to follow the clergyman in them, and at times to have the whole Service explained to them.

Those children than cannot Read, are to be taught their Letters, to Spell, and to Read, as the First Book Explains.

The Children are all to go to Church, two and two in the Morning and the Afternoon; the Boys under the Care of the Master, and the Girls of the Mistreʃs; and if any behave improperly there, the Master or Mistreʃs must acquaint the Trustees.

They are all to return after Morning Service to the School with the Master and Mistreʃs, and then to be dispersed home to their Families to Dinner.

They are all to Return to School against two o’Clock in the Afternoon, to do the same as in the Morning ’till they go to Afternoon Church, and when that is over, each Child to its respective Task, Namely: The Great ones to learn their Collects and Catechism, and the Little ones to their Letters, Spelling and Catechism.

If they have all done their Tasks properly, they are to be dismissed at Six o’Clock in the Summer, and at Five o’Clock in the Winter; but those that have not done their Tasks, are to be kept ’till they have.

Any Boy or Girl behaving improperly in Church or School, telling a Lie, or Swearing; shall be represented to the Trustees, who will Disgrace them according to their Faults.

Such Children as do not attend constantly, unleʃs prevented by bad health, or having Leave of absence from the Master, Mistreʃs, or one of the Trustees; are to be turned out of the School, their Books are to be returned to the Schoolmaster, and no Reward to be given them.

Those Children that behave well, are to be Rewarded twice a year, according to their merit, by the Trustees.

All Faults are to be Marked against their Names.

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92E.R.O., D/P 275/28/2.
### Appendix 3.4. Ratio of Boys to Girls in Selected Schools.

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<th>Day Schools</th>
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*These three charity schools showed wide fluctuations in numbers of students across the century, although in Wolverhampton and Chelmsford the same ratio was maintained. In Colchester, the enrolment appears much more erratic, probably because the quality of the record was much poorer than the others.*

Sources: As for Table 3.1.
### Appendix 4.1. Trends in Years Attended at Day Schools by Date of Admission.

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Appendix 4.2. The Derivation of Penetration

Penetration is a concept which allows comparison between the numbers admitted to schools in a parish or county, the size of the school-age group and the average period spent in school based on available records. It can suggest the proportion of children who could have gone to school over the period covered and thus throw some light on the extent of school attendance. It relies on available information so that it is most accurate for individual parishes for which good records have survived. The situation in other areas could therefore vary significantly. Population data from Wrigley and Schofield have had to be applied uniformly at parish level which could distort the figures if, as is likely, national trends did not describe local situations well. At the same time, the countywide population growth in Staffordshire and Essex was roughly proportionate to the national growth. Despite these handicaps, it does allow some comparison of the schooling opportunities which each sex had, and develops some sense of the magnitude of participation in schooling.

The derivation of penetration includes the following variables:

\[ x = \text{number of students in school} \]
\[ y = \text{average duration of schooling} \]
\[ z = \text{the number in the age group 5-14} \]

and the nonvariable element, the number of years in the age span 5-14, or 10.

The equation which expresses the proportion of students in the age group, that is penetration, would be students per year \((x/y)\) divided by children per year \((z/10)\). Converting this to percentage produces:

\[
\%\text{age penetration} = \frac{100 \times \frac{x}{y}}{\frac{z}{10}}
\]

Simplifying this expression algebraically:

\[
\%\text{age penetration} = \frac{1000x}{zy}
\]
The number in the age group 5-14 can be calculated using the proportion of the population given in Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, p. 529. Also where necessary, their population back projections from the same table were used.

Applying the equation to the Essex figures for students in day schools from Brougham:

\[
\text{%age penetration} = \frac{(1000)(14444)}{62438 \times y} = 231.33
\]

If \( y = 2 \), then penetration = 116%
\( y = 3 \), then penetration = 77%
\( y = 5 \), then penetration = 46%

For Staffordshire: penetration = \( \frac{210.70}{y} \)

so if \( y = 2 \), then 105% penetration
\( y = 3 \), then 70% penetration
\( y = 5 \), then 42% penetration.

Because of the inverse relationship between the number of places available in school (\( x \)) and the length of time those in school stayed (\( y \)), the longer children remained and kept their place, the fewer new children could have been admitted. Thus as length of attendance declined in an area, the greater the opportunity for attending arose. But even this trend was offset by the growth of the number of young in the population (\( z \)).
Appendix 4.3. Sunday Schools

After 1780, Sunday schools provided the potential for schooling some poor children who either could not attend day school because of the need to work, or because the opportunity had not been available before. At the Witham Sunday School introduced in the text, though a small school, a number of children took advantage of the opportunity; in the twenty years of the records, 238 children were admitted. In a community of about 2000, only a proportion of which would have wanted to send their children, the Sunday school could have provided for about a quarter of school age children, most of whom left between 12 and 13 years of age, often to go to service. What is striking is the length of time spent in the Sunday school, 4.38 years on average, especially when attendance at the corresponding day school was very much shorter, 17 months. Indeed, the average length of attendance at all of the day schools in these case studies was shorter.

Another Essex Sunday school was founded at Coggeshall at much the same time, December 1788 until 1800. But there is a marked contrast between Coggeshall and Witham. In Coggeshall, a joint effort of the Anglicans and Congregationalists initially set up eight Sunday schools, providing for 200 children, which was far more than Witham. A dispute, however, caused the two religions to go their own way, with a Dissenting Sunday School Society being formed in December 1789. The Anglican schools appear to have continued, but little else is known about them. The Dissenters, however, soon found it necessary to expand to cater for 125 pupils (instead of 75). A decline set in about 1793, when they contracted the schools to 101 pupils, and in December 1799, the minute book recorded that as the schools were very badly attended, the trustees were going to consider a charity school instead. So in Coggeshall, a parish of similar size to Witham, Sunday schools were provided possibly for as many as 250 children at one time, whereas Witham only taught 50 at Sunday school. But in Coggeshall, the length of attendance was much shorter, averaging 2.38 years, the girls staying on average a year longer than the boys.
Between May 1788 and 1792, Great Yeldham, a parish one-fifth the size of Witham or Coggeshall, provided a Sunday school for 48 pupils, i.e. similar in size to that in Witham. Direct calculation from the records shows that 83 children attended that Sunday school for about three years each. However, the records only span four years with no indication of why they ceased. If the school also ended then, the calculations are probably valid. If however, the school continued, that figure of length of attendance is surely an underestimate. Great Yeldham, like Coggeshall, prepared lists of pupils which showed 48 children still in the school when the records ended. Because of the nature of the calculation used for finding the penetration of schooling, if the length of attendance is underestimated, then the level of penetration is overestimated. For example, the penetration of the Great Yeldham Sunday school based on three years attendance is well over 100 percent. Yet if we assume that those children who were still on the list left the school at the same age as those who were discharged, most children would have stayed six years or more. Penetration at that assumption would have been about 80 percent. The same problem exists in the Coggeshall figures where, if the children in the Anglican schools were added to the calculation, the number of children with access to Sunday school also would have been over one hundred percent. (See table A4.2.) In both cases, it is possible that the catchment areas of the schools was larger than the immediate parish thus increasing the size of the school age group. But the data suggests, at best, that the length of attendance is an underestimate, so that the penetration has been overestimated.

Because children could work and attend Sunday school, it would not be surprising if children attended them longer than day schools. Of the three schools, the Witham records are more likely to accurately reflect the length of time children attended. It would appear, however that potentially a substantial proportion of the age group had access to Sunday schools, wherever they were formed. However, curricular limitations as well as the periodic nature of their instruction would suggest that they were more useful in reinforcing skills learned previously, as at Witham day school, than in teaching children to read.
### Table A4.3: Sunday School Penetration and Length of Attendance

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Sources: As for Table 3.2.
### Appendix 4.4. Penetration of Schooling

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*Note that for averages across more than one decade, 1801 population data has been used.
### Appendix 4.5. Prices for Selected Publications

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<td>Chap books</td>
<td>Free or 1/2d to 1d and up 1d</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodist Tracts/Hymns</td>
<td>e.g. Instructions for Children</td>
<td>1d and up 3d</td>
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<td>‘Popular and Patriotic Tracts’</td>
<td>- anti-Jacobin</td>
<td>1/2d to 3d</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single sheets, e.g.</td>
<td>‘Maria Martin and the Red Barn Murder’</td>
<td>3d per dozen to hawkers</td>
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<td>Independent Religious Tracts, e.g.</td>
<td>Rev. T. Green, ‘Instructions for the Poor,’ 5th ed., 1759</td>
<td>3d 4d</td>
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<td>Thomas Paine, The Rights of Man, ‘Cheap Edition’</td>
<td>(estimated circulation: 1,500,000) original edition</td>
<td>6d per volume 6s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France</td>
<td></td>
<td>3s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Milner, published classics and popular fiction at</td>
<td></td>
<td>6d or 1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamphlets - up to 50 pages</td>
<td></td>
<td>6d 1s, 1s6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- longer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book prices - quartos and folios</td>
<td>(depending on binding)</td>
<td>10s to 12s 2s to 3s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- octavos or 12 mo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirate copies of popular titles</td>
<td></td>
<td>6d to 5s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 These data are extracted from Altick, *Common Reader*, pp. 48-53, and Neuberg, *Popular Education*, pp. 128-132, 142-49.
Appendix 5.1. Apprenticeship Data

The purpose of acquiring data on apprenticeship was to examine the structure and extent of the system as it related to the education of girls. Parish and charity indentures used in conjunction with the Inland Revenue registers at the Public Record Office, Kew, were the most useful source for this kind of information. Further detail, particularly with regard to the failures of the system, can be found in Quarter Sessions records and Settlement papers housed in the county record offices, but these have played only a minor role in this study.

Some of the difficulties in using this material has already been described in the text, such as under registration, and the loss of records. Another element which restricts the researcher is the level of recordkeeping. After mid-century, the Inland Revenue registers deteriorate in quality so that virtually nothing is known about the apprentices except their names and sex. Since this research relied primarily on those volumes from 1750, it was impossible to find out anything about the social origin of the children except what conjecture about the premium suggested. Parish indentures were little better, except that at the time of apprenticing the children were paupers. Sometimes their ages were given, but the use of a printed form in both counties throughout the century produced little original detail. It meant that collecting data in a consistent form, though time consuming, was relatively easy, but gave very little feel for the character of apprenticeship.

A series of computer programs was designed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) based on the variables listed in Appendix 5.2. The tables in the text were generated based by the manipulation of the data using these programs. This made it possible to find out simple things like how many of each sex were apprenticed, how many parish/trade apprentices there were, etc. It also became possible to compare variables and conduct complex analyses. The use of a computer to carry out these calculations and tabulations permitted testing out and exploring relationships which would have been impossible with only manual means. One approach was to group and examine the trades based on the trade classification devised for the study and displayed
in Appendix 5.3. This allowed a comparison of apprenticeship to the sectors of the economy.

The structure of the data is given below in order to describe the character of the information on which the conclusions were based. Only parish and charity apprenticeship data were collected for the whole century. The Inland Revenue records were used only for 1710-11, for comparison, and from 1750-1800. Thus most tables and calculations are for the period from 1750, since parish and charity apprentices are overrepresented for the period before. Where tables are intended to cover the whole century, this is indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A5.1. Record Office where Data was Collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Inland Revenue Records)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A5.2. County in Which the Child was Apprenticed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A5.3. Type of Apprenticeship to Which Children were Indentured

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whole Century</th>
<th>From 1750</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity Apprentices</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish Apprentices</td>
<td>5,106</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade/Private Apprentices</td>
<td>12,834</td>
<td>70.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Ascertainable</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,309</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A5.4. Sex of Apprentice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whole Century</th>
<th>From 1750</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2,052</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16,212</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Ascertainable</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,309</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A5.5. Sex of Master or Mistress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whole Century</th>
<th>From 1750</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male and Female</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>17,687</td>
<td>96.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Ascertainable</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,309</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A5.6. Sex of Master or Mistress by the Sex of Apprentice for the Whole Century

Sex of Apprentice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of Master</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Both Sexes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male and Female</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1,595</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>16,059</td>
<td>99.1</td>
<td>17,654</td>
<td>96.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,046</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>16,201</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>18,247</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 5.2. Apprenticeship Data Collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>SPSS Variable Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Record Office</td>
<td>RO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence number of case</td>
<td>ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex of Master of Mistress</td>
<td>SEXM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex of Apprentice</td>
<td>SEXA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Apprentice</td>
<td>AGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade of Master Listed First*</td>
<td>TRADEM1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade of Master Listed Second*</td>
<td>TRADEM2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade of Apprentice Listed First*</td>
<td>TRADEA1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade of Apprentice Listed Second*</td>
<td>TRADEA2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Indenture, or its Recording</td>
<td>YEAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County to which records refer</td>
<td>COUNTY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Apprenticeship Term</td>
<td>TERMYR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship limited by marriage</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional months in term, where part year is indicated</td>
<td>TERMMO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pounds in Premium</td>
<td>PREML</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shillings in Premium</td>
<td>PREMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pence in Premium</td>
<td>PREMD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Apprenticeship Record (Parish, Charity, Trade)</td>
<td>TYPE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Trades were coded so that the first digit corresponds to the Raw Material Facets in the Trade Classification. Various calculations and ‘Recodes’ were carried out in order to decimalize terms and premiums and to classify trades by the trade classification in Appendix 5.3.*
Appendix 5.3: Trade Classification

The logic of the trade classification was derived in order to link similar trades and activities and from a need to be able to move across the economic sectors to try to identify patterns within apprenticeship. It was decided to assign four characteristics to each trade (called facets), describing:

1. the raw material used in the trade,
2. the stage of processing in manufacture,
3. the trade’s retail status, and
4. the service characteristics of the trade.

The first facet (FACA) allowed all trades which appeared in apprenticeship indentures to be distributed throughout nine categories which more or less linked occupations in economic groups. (See following list) This roughly followed a format employed currently by numerous statistics gathering bodies such as the Census (U.K. and U.S.) and the U.S. Department of Labor, as well as a number of statistical publications. Clearly, some adaptation was required for the unique characteristics of the eighteenth century and due to the inapplicability of some divisions in modern trade codes, e.g. electrical workers.

The second, third and fourth facets (FACB, FACC, FACD) were intended to break down the actual process of work in the apprenticeship trades, thus dividing them between manufacturing, retail and service. Within the processing facet (FACB), primary and secondary stages were distinguished, each being further subdivided to help in identifying similar work and to facilitate consistent coding of the data. The list which follows shows the results of these divisions. FACC and FACD were easily divided on fairly logical lines of demarcation, reflecting in the case of FACD the structure of eighteenth-century society and the professions.

Throughout the trade classification, no attempt was made to establish a hierarchy, since the main purpose was to create a tool which could be used to identify and classify occupations by function and economic sector, not status or prospects. This
meant that some odd partnerships were created in that trades of very dissimilar status could be grouped together in FACA but usually the other facets adequately distinguished trades so that there was an internal logic to the outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facet</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Variable Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Raw Materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dairy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Foodstuffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seafoods (fish, oysters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Live animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other land based natural resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td>Iron and steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brass and copper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other mixed metals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other metals (e.g. lead)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>Animal Products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leather/hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tallow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other Animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td>Textiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cotton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fustian (Cotton and Linen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td>Silk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other Textiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>Extractions, e.g. mining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td>Salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sand (e.g. glass)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other Extractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chemicals/Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td>Salt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### A. Raw Materials (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Drugs and Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Other Chemicals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Mixed Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>No Data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B. Processing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Primary Processing - General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Supervisory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1st Stage Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2nd Stage Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Finishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Making/manufacturing not otherwise identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Secondary Processing - General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Supervisory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>1st Stage Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>2nd Stage Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Finishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Other Secondary including Making/manufacturing not otherwise identified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C. Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sales, not ascertainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wholesale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Wholesale and Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Installation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Not Ascertainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>No Data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### D. Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Gentleman, Widow, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Domestic Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other Household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Personal Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Not Ascertainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>No Data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5.4. Demographics of Apprenticeship

Table A5.4.1. Proportion of Parish and Charity Apprentices Placed Out in Each Decade, 1700-1799.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Charity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1700-1709</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1710-1719</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720-1729</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730-1739</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740-1749</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750-1759</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760-1769</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770-1779</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780-1789</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-1799</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure A5.4.1. Proportion of Parish and Charity Apprentices Placed Out in Each Decade, 1700-1799.
### Table A5.4.2. Proportion of Each Type of Apprentice Placed Out in Each Decade, 1750-1799

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Parish Number</th>
<th>Private Number</th>
<th>Charity Number</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1750-1759</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>2,303</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760-1769</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>2,613</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770-1779</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>2,640</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780-1789</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>2,749</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-1799</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>2,381</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3,011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table A5.4.3. Proportion of Apprentices for Each Decade by County, 1700-1799

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Essex</th>
<th>Staffordshire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1700-1709a</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1710-1719a</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720-1729a</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730-1739a</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740-1749a</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
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<td>1750-1759</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
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<td>1760-1769</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770-1779</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780-1789</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-1799</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aFor 1700 to 1749, the data are comprised mainly of parish apprentices.*
### Table A5.4.4. Apprenticeship as a Proportion Population and Age Group in Essex and Staffordshire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Population</th>
<th>All Apprentice s</th>
<th>Private Apprentice s</th>
<th>Parish Apprentice s</th>
<th>% of Age Group</th>
<th>All Apprentice s</th>
<th>Private Apprentice s</th>
<th>Parish Apprentice s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1750-1755</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>1756-1760</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761-1765</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1766-1770</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771-1775</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1776-1780</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>1781-1785</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786-1790</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1791-1795</td>
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<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796-1799</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.23</td>
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</table>

Source: The population and age group figures were arrived at by a rough calculation using data in Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England*, p. 529. An estimate of the population of Essex and Staffordshire was derived by applying the compound annual growth rate to the 1801 census figures for these counties. The age group proportions were then applied to create an approximation of the number of children aged five to fourteen.

---

**Figure A5.4.4a. Apprentices as a Proportion of Population, 1750-1799**

![Graph of Apprentices as a Proportion of Population](chart.png)
Figure A5.4.4b. Apprentices as a Proportion of the 5-14 Age Group, 1750-1799

Table A5.4.5. Apprenticeship by Type and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentage of Type</th>
<th>Percentage of Sex</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>96.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>76.1</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentage of Type</th>
<th>Percentage of Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>91.6</td>
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</table>
### Table A5.4.6. Parish Apprentices by Age at Indenturing

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Girl Apprentices</th>
<th></th>
<th>Boy Apprentices</th>
<th></th>
<th>Boys and Girls</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>144</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
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<td>65</td>
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<td>6.4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>5.4</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>406</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>709</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,115</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Average Age</strong></td>
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<td><strong>10.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.0</strong></td>
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</table>
Appendix 5.5. Apprenticeship Terms

### Table A5.5.1. Decline in Terms, 1700 to 1799

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Average Term</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
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<td>1700-1709</td>
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<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1710-1719</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720-1729</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730-1739</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740-1749</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750-1759</td>
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<td>2,329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760-1769</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770-1779</td>
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<td>2,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780-1789</td>
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<td>2,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-1799</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2,418</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole Century</td>
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### Table A5.5.2. Term by Type of Apprenticeship, 1700 to 1799

<table>
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<th>% of Boys</th>
<th>% of Both</th>
</tr>
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<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>66.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>61.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to age 17-20</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to age 21</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to age 22-23</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to age 24</td>
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<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.1</td>
<td>100.8</td>
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<td>Example Trades</td>
<td>Average Term (Yrs)</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
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<td>Agriculture</td>
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<td>Butcher</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Husbandry</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Miller</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Wood</td>
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<td>Cabinet Maker</td>
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<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>6.8</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bucklemaker</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ironmonger</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Locksmith</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
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<td>Collarmaker</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Shoemaker</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Woollen weavers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mercer</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mantuamaker</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weaver</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Bayweaver</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>6.5</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Materials</td>
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<td>Attorney</td>
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<td>Barber</td>
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<td>Housewifery</td>
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<td>Surgeon</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Gardener</td>
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<td>All Trades</td>
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Figure A5.5.4. Length of Term by Sex of Apprentice
Table A5.5.5. Average Term by Sex of Apprentice for the Most Common Trades, 1700-1799.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Average Term in Years</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cordwainer</strong></td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tailor</strong></td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Husbandry</strong></td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carpenter</strong></td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housewifery</strong></td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wheelwright</strong></td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Butcher</strong></td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blacksmith</strong></td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baker</strong></td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bayweaver</strong></td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miller</strong></td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grocer</strong></td>
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<td>7.1</td>
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<td><strong>Cooper</strong></td>
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<td>6.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7.6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Locksmith</strong></td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milliner</strong></td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farmer</strong></td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schoolmistress/master</strong></td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ribbon weaver</strong></td>
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<td>6.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Shoemakers</strong></td>
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<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Woollen Weavers</strong></td>
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<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Farmers</strong></td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All other Weavers</strong></td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table A 5.6.1. Trade Distribution of Apprentices by Type of Apprenticeship

#### 1700-1749

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Timber</th>
<th>Metal</th>
<th>Leather</th>
<th>Textiles</th>
<th>Extractions</th>
<th>Chem/Paper</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charity %</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish %</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private %</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>144</td>
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<td>30.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>2252</td>
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</table>

#### 1750-1799

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<th>Timber</th>
<th>Metal</th>
<th>Leather</th>
<th>Textiles</th>
<th>Extractions</th>
<th>Chem/Paper</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charity %</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish %</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>2637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private %</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>12636</td>
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<tr>
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<td>17.5</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>15528</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table A5.6.2. Distribution of Trades by Sex, 1750-1799.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Boys No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Agricultural trades</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>2673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Timber trades</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Metal trades</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Leather trades</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Textiles</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>2095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Mining trades</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals/Paper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Materials</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>1027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Cases | 1305 | 100 | 14223 | 100 |

Table A5.6.3. Distribution of Trades by Sex and Type of Apprenticeship.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls%</td>
<td>Boys%</td>
<td>Girls%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
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<td>39.9</td>
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<td>Timber</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metals</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals/Paper</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Materials</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Cases | 525 | 1485 | 761 | 1876 | 536 | 12100 |
% of Cases       | 26.1 | 73.9 | 28.9 | 71.1 | 4.2 | 95.8   |

Appendix 5.6.4. Distribution of Types of Apprenticeship by Economic Sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Apprenticeship</th>
<th>Processing Primary</th>
<th>Secondary Retail</th>
<th>Service N of Cases</th>
<th>*%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Types</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages do not add to 100 because some trades were involved in two sectors.
Table A5.6.5. Types of Apprenticeship as a Proportion of Economic Sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Apprenticeship</th>
<th>Processing</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>N of Cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>4697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>13247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Types %</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Types N</td>
<td>4269</td>
<td>10602</td>
<td>1378</td>
<td>2059</td>
<td>18308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A5.6.6. Girls as a Percentage of Trade Groups by Decade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Material Group</th>
<th>% 1750-59</th>
<th>% 1760-69</th>
<th>% 1770-79</th>
<th>% 1780-89</th>
<th>% 1790-99</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timber</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metals</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals/Paper</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Materials</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Cases</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>281</td>
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</table>

Table A 5.6.7. Girls as a Percentage of Apprentices in each Decade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>All Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1700-09</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>insufficient data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1710-19</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>insufficient data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720-29</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>insufficient data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730-39</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>insufficient data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740-49</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>insufficient data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750-59</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760-69</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770-79</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
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<td>1780-89</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-99</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
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</table>
Table A 5.6.8. Percentage of Apprentices in each Sector of Economic Activity, by Sex and Decade.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1750-59 F%</th>
<th>1750-59 M%</th>
<th>1760-69 F%</th>
<th>1760-69 M%</th>
<th>1770-79 F%</th>
<th>1770-79 M%</th>
<th>1780-89 F%</th>
<th>1780-89 M%</th>
<th>1790-99 F%</th>
<th>1790-99 M%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some columns add to more than 100% because some trades could have been coded in two sectors of the economy.
Table A 5.6.9. Apprenticeship to Trade Categories by sex--whole century

**FACA--Raw Material Facet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facet</th>
<th>Category Name</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Total</th>
<th>N Girls</th>
<th>N Boys</th>
<th>N Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Agriculture, general</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>1226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Grain</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Meat</td>
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<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>621</td>
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<td>Foodstuffs</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Seafoods</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Live Animals</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Other Agriculture</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Agriculture</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
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<td>3284</td>
<td>3446</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Wood</td>
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<td>17.1</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2733</td>
<td>2753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Grasses</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Other Wood</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Timber</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2774</td>
<td>2795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Metal, general</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Iron and Steel</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>1494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Brass and Copper</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Tin</td>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Mixed Metals</td>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Other Metals</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>12.7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2213</td>
<td>2263</td>
</tr>
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<td>Leather</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3024</td>
<td>3039</td>
</tr>
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<td>Tallow</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Bone</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Hair</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Other Animal Prod.</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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continued ...
Table 5.6.10. Most Common Trades by Half-century and Sex, continued.

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<td>Miller</td>
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Appendix 5.7. Apprenticeship Premiums.\(^1\)

Table A5.7.1. Premium by Sex of Apprentice.

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<th>Boys</th>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
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<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2311</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>2473</td>
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<td>3847</td>
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<td>£10.00-14.99</td>
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<td>109</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>2909</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>3018</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>£15.00-19.99</td>
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<td>767</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>804</td>
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<td>954</td>
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<td>1004</td>
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Table A5.7.2. Average Premia by Trade Group and Type, from 1750.

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<td>5.53</td>
<td>11.07</td>
<td>11.02</td>
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<td>4.34</td>
<td>14.82</td>
<td>14.32</td>
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<td>5.08</td>
<td>10.57</td>
<td>10.45</td>
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<td>4.41</td>
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\(^1\) Small numbers of cases are the result of parish apprentices for whom no premium was indicated in the indenture. These cases are, therefore, largely private apprentices.
Table A5.7.3. Summary of Premiums by Sex for Trade Groups.

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<th>Trade Group</th>
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<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>2677</td>
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<td>36</td>
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<td>18.15</td>
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<td>14.96</td>
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<td>14.63</td>
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Table A5.7.4. Premiums by Trade Group with Selected Trades

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<td>95</td>
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Table A5.7.5. Average Premiums by Sex for Most Common Trades.

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<tr>
<td>Cordwainer</td>
<td>5.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husbandry</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>6.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewifery</td>
<td>5.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelwright</td>
<td>13.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>5.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>8.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayweaver</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocer</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaver</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantuamaker</td>
<td>11.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milliner</td>
<td>27.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeoman</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribbon Weaver</td>
<td>5.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>8.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolmist/mast</td>
<td>34.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucklemaker</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locksmith</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgeon</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| All Farmers             | 5.19 | 20.00| 14.25| 26    | 41   | 67    |
| All Shoemakers          | 5.08 | 7.67 | 7.66 | 8     | 2109 | 2117  |
| All Wool. Weavers       | 3.81 | 13.11| 11.96| 18    | 127  | 145   |
| Other Weavers           | 5.06 | 22.07| 15.01| 22    | 31   | 53    |

Includes the top ten trades overall and the top ten female and male trades.
Appendix 5.8. Mantuamakers, Milliners and Schoolteachers.

Appendix 5.8.1. Mantuamakers and Milliners

In several cases, firms of mantuamakers and milliners run by women were identified in the apprenticeship records. These demonstrated the pattern of apprenticing followed in these trades, regularly apprenticing new girls and keeping at least two on the premises. Notably only one of the apprentices in these firms appeared in the records as a mistress taking on apprentices, though marriage could have made them impossible to trace. They also showed the trends in rising premiums but continued short terms. From this material, however, it is not possible to determine either the origins or cause of demise of the firms. Overall these cases illustrate the overwhelming female character of the trades. Campbell called millinery ‘no Male Trade’ and commented that ‘the Fair Sex … are generally bound to this Business,’ while the mantuamaker was ‘Sister to the Taylor.’\(^1\) Below are some examples of the firms and their apprenticing patterns:

**Colchester, Essex:**

**Gibbons, Milliners:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Took/Noted By</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Premium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1753</td>
<td>Mary Gibbon</td>
<td>Tryphosa Smith</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>£25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td>Mary Gibbon</td>
<td>Mary Wood</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>£25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Drusilla Colman</td>
<td>2 or 3 yrs</td>
<td>£30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>Mary Gibbon</td>
<td>Ann Barnard</td>
<td>7 yrs</td>
<td>£30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1758</td>
<td>Mary Gibbon</td>
<td>Ann Yeats</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>£31/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>Mary Gibbon</td>
<td>Sarah Wood</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>£21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>Mary Gibbon</td>
<td>Elizabeth Reeves*</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>£31/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761</td>
<td>Mary Gibbon</td>
<td>Elizabeth Hawkins</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>£31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761</td>
<td>Mary Gibbon</td>
<td>Henritta Colman</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>£31/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761</td>
<td>Mary Gibbon</td>
<td>Sarah Newman</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>£31/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*May have been of same family as Lucia Reeves, below. Note also the two Colman and Wood girls, possibly sisters.

\(^1\)Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, pp. 206, 227.
Reeves, Milliners.

1761 Lucia Reeve took Ann Slapp for 2 yrs £20 Milliners
1762 Lucia Reeve took Sarah Child for 3 yrs £30 Milliners
1762 Lucia & Hannah Reeve took Charlotte Hopsack for 7 yrs £20 Spinners/Mantuamakers
1765 Lucia Reeves and Co. took Isabella Wilkinson for 3 yrs £30 Milliners
1765 Lucia Reeves and Co. took Fanny Bateley for 3 yrs £31/10 Milliners
1767 Lucy Reeves took Frances Humphrey for 4 yrs £42 Milliners
1768 Lucia Reeves took Susannah Saranke for 4 yrs £40 Milliners
1768 Lucia Reeves took Ann Eliza Dennis for 3 yrs £42 Milliners
1769 Lucia Reeve and Co. took Eliza Drage for 3 yrs £42 Milliners
1770 Lucia and Sarah Reeve took Sarah Baker for 4 yrs £52/10 Milliners
1771 Lucia Reeve took Ann Francis for 4 yrs £45 Milliners
1775 Clara Reeve and Co. took Charlotte Dunkely for 5 yrs £42 Milliners

Priors, Milliners/Mercers:

[1750 Ann Salmon took Mary Prior (?) for 6 yrs £2/2 Mantuamakers]
1786 Ann and Hannah Prior took Sarah Surridge for 3 yrs £40 Mercers
1787 Ann and Hannah Prior took Elizabeth Baker for 4 yrs £40 Milliners
1789 Ann and Hannah Prior took Deborah Vesey for 3 yrs £40 Milliners, etc.
1790 Ann and Hannah Prior took Ann Fisher for 3 yrs £40 Milliners, etc.
1792 Ann and Hannah Prior took Mary Daniels for 3 yrs £40 Milliners/Mercers
1794 Ann and Hannah Prior took Mary Keymer for 3 yrs £30 Mercers
1794 Ann and Hannah Prior took Sarah Leason for 3 yrs £40 Milliners
1797 Ann and Hannah Prior took Ann Josselyn for 3 yrs £40 Milliners
1798 Ann and Hannah Prior took Hannah Hines for 2 yrs £30 Mercers

Firm may have continued into next century.
**Wolverhampton, Staffordshire:**

**Anslow, Mantuamaker:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dorothy Anslow</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td>took Jane Levett</td>
<td>for 3 yrs</td>
<td>£15/15</td>
<td>Mantuamaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td>took Mary Gould</td>
<td>for 4 yrs</td>
<td>£10/10</td>
<td>Mantuamaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>took Sarah Horton</td>
<td>for 3.5 yrs</td>
<td>£16/16</td>
<td>Mantuamaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>took Anne Sparrow</td>
<td>for 2 yrs</td>
<td>£4/4</td>
<td>Mantuamaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>took Esther Loxton*</td>
<td>for 3 yrs</td>
<td>£16/16</td>
<td>Mantuamaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>took Elizabeth Harley</td>
<td>for 4 yrs</td>
<td>£10/10</td>
<td>Mantuamaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>took Elizabeth Bennett</td>
<td>for 5 yrs</td>
<td>£16/16</td>
<td>Mantuamaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Firm may continue into next century.

*Possibly sister of Maria Loxton, apprenticed to Phebe Moreton.*

**Moreton, Milliners:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pheebe Moreton, wife of John</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>took Ann Bradley</td>
<td>for 2 yrs</td>
<td>£21</td>
<td>Milliners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>took Margaret Adams</td>
<td>for 3 yrs</td>
<td>£21</td>
<td>Milliners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>took Mary Perry</td>
<td>for 2.5 yrs</td>
<td>£26/5</td>
<td>Milliners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>John Moreton and Phebe</td>
<td>took Mary Mayer</td>
<td>for 3 yrs</td>
<td>£26/5</td>
<td>Milliners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Phebe Moreton</td>
<td>took Mary Felton</td>
<td>for 2.5 yrs</td>
<td>£26/5</td>
<td>Milliners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>Phebe wife of John Moreton</td>
<td>took Margaret Bagnall</td>
<td>for 7 yrs</td>
<td>£25</td>
<td>Milliners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Phebe wife of John Moreton</td>
<td>took Maria Loxton*</td>
<td>for 4 yrs</td>
<td>£24</td>
<td>Milliners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Firm may continue into next century.

* Possibly sister of Esther Loxton, apprenticed to Dorothy Anslow.*
Appendix 5.8.2. Schoolteachers

Children apprenticed to schoolteachers with adequate premiums to imply that they were to be trained as teachers appear relatively late in the century, mainly from the 1780s. They were overwhelmingly girls from Essex. Those boys who appeared in the records served longer terms and paid significantly smaller premiums, on average, than the girls (or their parents) did. The level of girl's premiums placed this among the more prestigious occupations for girls, one which might have suited those of the lower middle class and one which compared very favourably with millinery. It had the additional ‘advantage’ of appealing to women’s ‘natural propensities’ as carers of children. The details of those children apprenticed to teachers appear below:

**Schoolteachers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Premium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1746</td>
<td>Boy aged 11</td>
<td>to Schoolmaster</td>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
<td>£10/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>to Schoolmaster</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>to Schoolmaster</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1782</td>
<td>Sarah Ward</td>
<td>to Marsha Maddox</td>
<td>Layton, Essex</td>
<td>£20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>Maria Hall</td>
<td>to Dorothy Hart</td>
<td>Lichfield, Staffs.</td>
<td>£30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>Sarah Prickett</td>
<td>to Mary Coates</td>
<td>Woodford, Essex</td>
<td>£25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>Charlotte Jackson</td>
<td>to Ann Down Milton</td>
<td>Walthamstow, Ex.</td>
<td>£28/17/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>Harriet Jackson</td>
<td>to Ann Down Milton</td>
<td>Walthamstow, Ex.</td>
<td>£28/17/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>to Schoolmaster</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>£10/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>to Schoolmaster/Cordwainer, Essex</td>
<td>for 7 yrs</td>
<td>£28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>Jane Lamb</td>
<td>to Mary Goodchild</td>
<td>Waltham Abbey, Ex.</td>
<td>£28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Margaret Coughin</td>
<td>to Dorcas Curtis</td>
<td>Layton Essex</td>
<td>£42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Margaret Dean</td>
<td>to Margaret Caley</td>
<td>Walthamstow, Ex.</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>Maria James</td>
<td>to Mary Combs</td>
<td>Walthamstow, Ex.</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>to Schoolmaster</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>Hannah Taylor</td>
<td>to Ruth Kent</td>
<td>Billericay, Essex</td>
<td>£25/5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5.9.1 Mary Walker, parish apprentice of Harbourne, Staffordshire, placed with Thomas Rudge of Harbourne, Yeoman, to 21 years or marriage, in the Art of Housewifery, 1766.
Appendix 5.9.2. Sarah Osbourn, parish apprentice of Harbourne, Staffordshire, placed with Mark Pearsall, Bucklechapemaker of St. Martin’s Birmingham, Warwickshire, to 21 years, in the Arts of Housewifery and Chapepolishing and filing, 1781.
Appendix 5.9.3. Anne Jarvois, daughter of Sarah Jarvois of Harbourne, Staffordshire, with her mother’s consent put herself apprentice to Hillery Wattmore of Feckenham Worcester, to 21 years, in ‘all sorts of Business’, for the sum of fifty shillings paid by her mother, 1717.
Appendix 6.1: Summary of Details for Women Autobiographers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Father’s Occupation</th>
<th>Mother’s Occupation</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Taught at home by</th>
<th>Other training</th>
<th>Notes/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary Alexander</td>
<td>Memoirs</td>
<td>1760-?</td>
<td>Elder, Minister</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quaker</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Self-taught</td>
<td>Mother died whilst young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Ashbridge</td>
<td>Autobiography</td>
<td>1713-?</td>
<td>Sea Surgeon</td>
<td>Stocking Weaver</td>
<td>Quaker</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td>Married at age 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy Cameron</td>
<td>Autobiography</td>
<td>1781-?</td>
<td>Vicar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sister of Mrs Sherwood, in DNB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Capper</td>
<td>Memoirs/Autobiography</td>
<td>1755-?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Dudley</td>
<td>Memoirs/Letters</td>
<td>1750-?</td>
<td>Minister</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quaker</td>
<td>Father, servant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Fletcher</td>
<td>Autobiography</td>
<td>1739-?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Father, servant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Father's Occupation</td>
<td>Own Occupation</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Type of School</td>
<td>Ages of Schooling</td>
<td>Taught at home by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Florry</td>
<td>Diary</td>
<td>1744-?</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>10 to learn to write</td>
<td>Mother?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Follows</td>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>1717-1809</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>Quaker</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Fothergill</td>
<td>Memoirs</td>
<td>Early 18th Century</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quaker</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliza Fox</td>
<td>Autobiography</td>
<td>1793-?</td>
<td>Barrister</td>
<td>Prison reformer</td>
<td>Presbyterian/Quaker</td>
<td>Boarding</td>
<td>7-16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Fry</td>
<td>Memoirs/Journal</td>
<td>1780-?</td>
<td>Banker</td>
<td>Prison reformer</td>
<td>Quaker</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother, governess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Taylor Gilbert</td>
<td>Autobiography</td>
<td>1782-1866</td>
<td>Minister, Engraver</td>
<td>Poetess for children</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbour girl</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sarah Grubb
Source: Journal/Memoirs
Dates: 1756-?
Religion: Quaker
Taught at home by: Step mother
Notes/Comments: Mother died when she was 5

Mary Hagger
Source: Autobiography
Dates: 1758-?
Father's Occupation: Minister; mother was an elder
Religion: Quaker
Type of School: Boarding
Ages of Schooling: 15-17
Taught at home by: Parents?

Elizabeth Ham
Source: Autobiography
Dates: 1783-?
Father's Occupation: Yeoman, Malster
Own Occupation: Governess, author
Type of School:
Ages of Schooling: ?-14
At other home by: Aunts

Lucy Hutchinson
Source: Autobiography
Dates: 1620-c1675
Husband's Occupation: Colonel
Own Occupation: Authoress
Religion: Puritan
Notes/Comments: French by her nurse, Latin by father's Chaplain; appears in DNB

Catherine Hutton
Source: Autobiography
Dates: 1756-1846
Father's Occupation: Bookseller, Topographer
Own Occupation: Writer
Religion: Dissenter
Type of School: Day
Ages of Schooling: 7-14
Taught at home by: Parents?
Notes/Comments: Appears in DNB

Margaret Lucas
Source: Autobiography
Dates: 1701-?
Father's Occupation: China Shopkeeper
Own Occupation: Shopkeeper, Minister
Religion: Church of England, then Quaker
Type of School: Went to school, type unknown
Ages of Schooling: 12+
At other home by: Uncle's housekeeper
Notes/Comments: Orphaned at age 7
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Father's Occupation</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Taught at home by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane Pearson</td>
<td>Autobiography</td>
<td>Died while young</td>
<td>Quaker</td>
<td>Mother, Schoolmaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catharine Phillips</td>
<td>Autobiography</td>
<td>Copper Mining</td>
<td>Quaker</td>
<td>Mother?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1733?-? (autobiography); 1727-1794 (DNB)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Minister, Quaker writings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Routh</td>
<td>Memoirs/Autobiography</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Quaker</td>
<td>Teacher at age 17, teacher at 19; appears in DNB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1743-1817</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Ann Young</td>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>Agricultural Journalist</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sister?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1783-1797</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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