

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/). Your use of this material constitutes acceptance of that license and the conditions of use of materials on this site.



Copyright 2011, The Johns Hopkins University and Robert Blum. All rights reserved. Use of these materials permitted only in accordance with license rights granted. Materials provided "AS IS"; no representations or warranties provided. User assumes all responsibility for use, and all liability related thereto, and must independently review all materials for accuracy and efficacy. May contain materials owned by others. User is responsible for obtaining permissions for use from third parties as needed.



JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG
SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC HEALTH

Section B

Adolescents in America

Parental Obligations in Pre-revolutionary America

- Have sufficient number of children to assure that enough will survive
- Supervise their children's placements between 7 and 21 years
- If financially able, give them a start in life (e.g., land)

Youthful Entertainment: 1700s Style

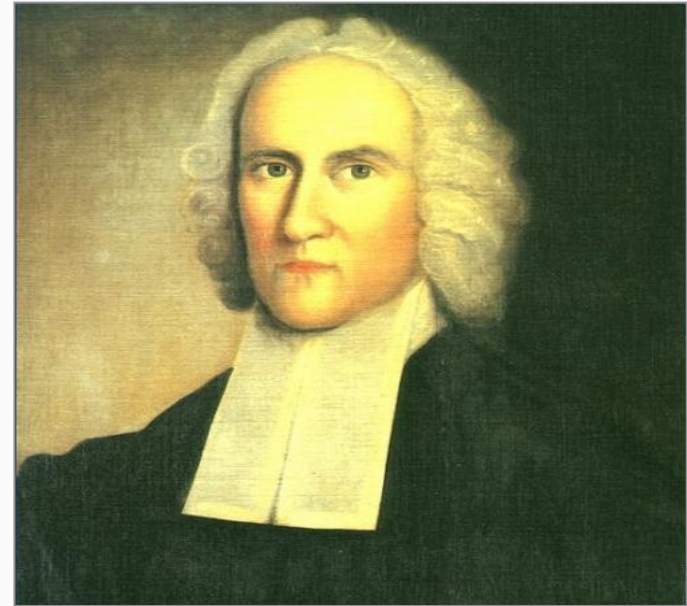
- Bundling, going to bed clothed with a member of the opposite sex, was a popular activity in Puritanical New England of 1760. Occasionally women became pregnant ... and men were excommunicated from the church.

The Bundling Maid

- *She'll sometimes say when she lies down
She can't be cumber'd by a gown
And that the weather is so warm
To take off clothes can do no harm*

The Great Awakening

- The Great Awakening: a conversion back to the original Puritan faith
 - By the 1740s there was a religious revival spurred on by the youth ... a movement that started in England
- “Licentiousness for some years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town ... [young people were] very much addicted to night walking and frequenting the taverns and lewd practices ...” — Jonathan Edwards, 1730

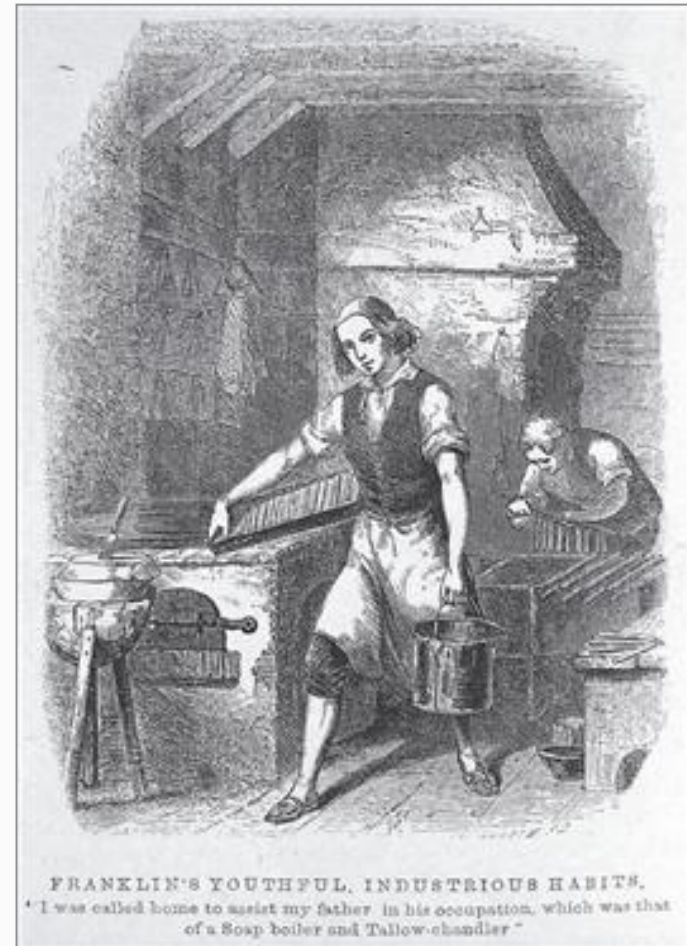


Apprenticeship System

- The apprenticeship system developed primarily in New England and in the mid-Atlantic—in the South, slaves served the same function

Apprenticeships at the Turn of the 1800s

- Most apprenticeships were short (less than 6 months)
 - Sometimes younger brothers were apprentices to older brothers (e.g., Benjamin Franklin)
- Semi-dependence
 - Apprentices of the early 1800s experienced both total subjugation to a master and complete freedom from parents



America in 1800 Was Young

- In 1800 the median age in the United States was 16 (compared to 30 in 1950)

The Story of W, 1835

- Expelled from college for participation in a duel
- Shot his antagonist
- Studied law
- Married
- Admitted to the bar
- Imprisoned for shooting for two months
- Father of a daughter
- Elected to State of South Carolina legislation

... all before the age of 22

American vs. British Youth

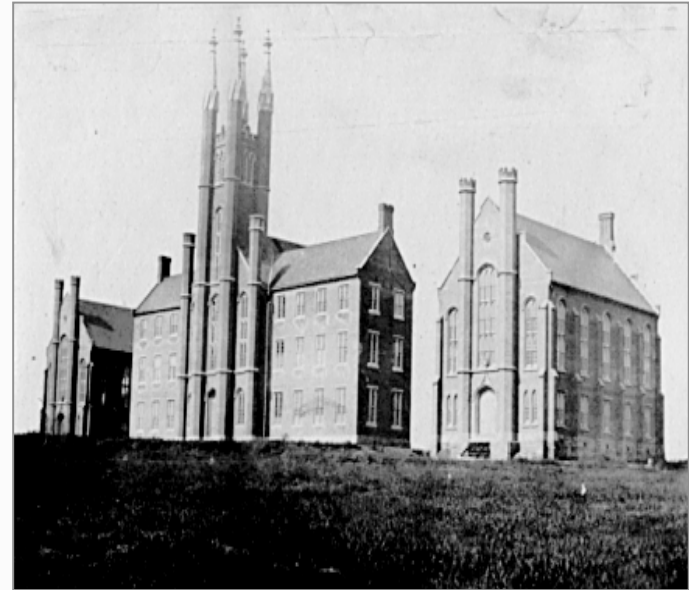
- By the mid-18th century, American youth were larger than their European counterparts
- American males averaged 5'8", while their British counterparts averaged 5'5"

The Gap between Rich and Poor

- The gap between rich and poor could be measured in height. By 1880, the average male was 1½” shorter than in 1830. College students’ heights were rising as army recruits’ heights were declining.

Rising Importance of Education in the 19th Century

- Among middle-class families, education became increasingly important by the mid-1800s



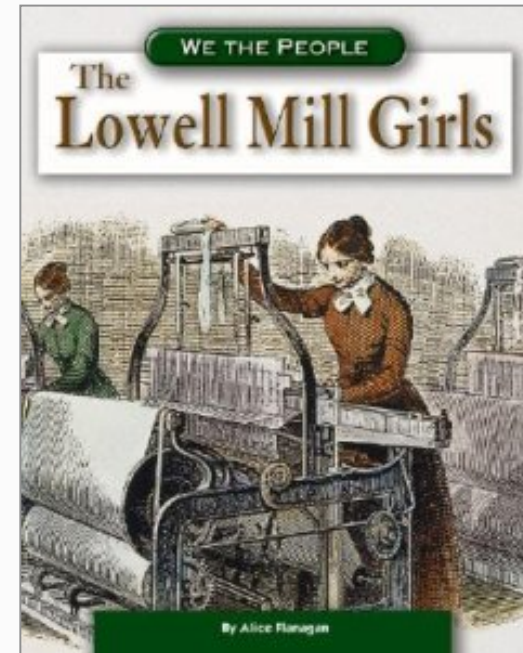
Female Employment and Smaller Families

- Female employment and smaller families in the early 19th century
 - Rise in female employment and education led to the desire for smaller families
 - ▶ Utica New York
 - In 1810 the average family had 5.6 children
 - In 1830 the average family had 3.6 children
- Abortion was available, as were “Golden Female Pills” to prevent conception



Francis Cabot Lowell

- Hired farmers' daughters to work the textile looms of Waltham, Massachusetts. By the 1830s, three-fourths of the 30,000 people living in the town were young women. Women's education flourished, and young women for the first time had earning power.
 - Gave rise to the girls' novels of the late 1800s



Cult of Domesticity

- 1840s-1850s
- Women as the guardians of moral virtue
- Declining birth rate
- Wider child spacing
- Women as teachers—schools as moral educator; moral persuasion rather than corporal punishment



Urban Life, Education, and Precocity among Girls

- There was growing concern about precocity that was attributed to urban life, especially among girls
- So, too, was there a prevailing notion that the education of women was too stressful and lead to precocious development

Concerns about Delinquency, Gangs, and Prostitution

- The rise of urban life in the 1830s and 1840s and the rise of immigration in the 1850s led to increasing concern about delinquency and street gangs
- There was also a rise in prostitution



Poverty Effects on Children

- In 1850 Horace Greeley advocated limiting child labor to 10 hours a day
- In the early 19th century, heavy drinking was common even among children 10 to 12 years old. Poverty was seen as the result of drunkenness.
 - New York riots of 1863
 - New York Children's Aid Society
 - Brice's *The Dangerous Class of New York*
 - Child Saver Movement



Poverty Effects on Children

- In 1850 Horace Greeley advocated limiting child labor to 10 hours a day
- In the early 19th century, heavy drinking was common even among children 10 to 12 years old. Poverty was seen as the result of drunkenness.
 - New York riots of 1863
 - New York Children's Aid Society
 - Brice's *The Dangerous Class of New York*
 - Child Saver Movement



The Potato Famine and the Rise of Urban America

- The Irish potato famine altered America with an influx of extremely poor immigrants who were willing to work for next to nothing
- In one year alone, 1852, the population of New York increased by 300,000—the ethnic mix ...
 - 40% Irish
 - 40% German
 - 20% British/other



Child Labor Was Often the Norm

- In the mid-1800s transition from childhood to adulthood was often abrupt. One day children were told to put away their books—that they were going to work.
- Children account for up to half of family income
 - In 1870, 20% of children between the ages of 10 and 15 were working jobs; by 1900, 26% of boys and 7% of girls were employed

Age of Consensual Sex

- Starting in the 1870s there was a push to raise the age of consensual sex (thereby increasing prosecutions for statutory rape)
 - In 1870 most states had set age 10 or 12 as the age of consensual sex ... in Delaware it was age 7

Development of a Working-Class Culture

- A working class culture developed—cheap theaters, amusement halls, dance halls, sports

Lost Economic Value, Shrinking Family Size, Clustering

- In the last third of the 19th century, children lost their economic value and parents started shrinking the size of families (also clustering children more closely together)