

During the period from 1700-1800, many changes occurred throughout Europe. These changes included living conditions, working conditions and the food that the Europeans ate. The major changes during this era were a direct result of the Industrial Revolution, which changed the form of labour and its implications for years to come. The labour institutions throughout Europe had negative impacts on early rural European life and the new urban lifestyles of the Industrial Revolution.

Rural European lifestyles had a drastic change when the Industrial Revolution began to take its course. Living conditions for rural Europeans were very difficult, especially for young children. Many humans shared their residences with livestock, including cows and sheep (DWP, 101). Furthermore, many large animals added their body warmth to their residence in the winter, but the insects and germs infested the homes and posed serious health risks for humans (DWP, 101). It is very clear that the living conditions for rural Europeans was rough. In contrast, urban European living conditions remained normal during the early phase of the Industrial Revolution, but the main difference was the fact that the citizens were living in the cities rather than on farms. Another major part of European lifestyle was their ability to read. Most rural Europeans in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries were illiterate or barely literate and consequently, they left very little conventional written letters (DWP, 95). Relative to the rural literacy rates, those employed in mills and mines often were illiterate (DWP, 147). Having the ability to be literate was detrimental during these times because the people could not read and write, nor could they understand why the working conditions were unacceptable.

Maintaining proper health was crucial in order to survive during the rural European era. Many epidemic diseases struck all areas of Europe during this era,

especially the bubonic plague, which had no cure and killed many Europeans during the 14<sup>th</sup> century (DWP, 101). Disease was very common in early modern Europe, as were famine conditions. When disease coincided with agricultural failure many Europeans would starve themselves in order to pass the disease. This was an unhealthy practice and as a result many rural Europeans died. In comparison, during the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, factories were had an atmosphere build up smoke. Girls, who worked in the factories breathed this atmosphere in and as a result many had lung problems (DWP, 170). Furthermore, industrial workers would frequently consume alcohol in excess as an escape from their tedious work lives (DWP, 146). This alcohol problem resulted in many other problems within the family, but more especially, it added to the poor conditions within the industrial factories.

Poor working conditions were a serious issue during the rural and urban eras. For most Europeans the type of the work changed from an agrarian style to an industrial style, the conditions itself remained the same. Source one of *A statistical view of European Rural Life*, portrays a typical plough, which was constructed of wood and was tied to a bull that would pull the plough through the fields (DWP, 104). It is very clear that many of these early modern farmers had little understanding of the basic principles of modern scientific farming. Furthermore, weather factors often effected European farming resulting in diminished agricultural yields (DWP, 100). Insufficient or excessive rain fall, abnormally low temperatures and any other abnormal climatic phenomena, all influenced the harvest for that year (DWP, 100). It was a major struggle for rural Europeans to depend on their harvest for survival. Poor harvest just compounded the many problems that rural Europeans faced. In contrast to the difficult agrarian working

conditions, the new industrial age brought harsh factory conditions. On the other hand, industrial labour brought all those employed in the new mills, factories and mines a new style of work that will have an effect on many years to come (DWP, 145). Unfortunately, the working hours remained long and the work years was interrupted by fewer holidays because factory owners could maximize profit by using the plants and machines to their fullest (DWP, 145). Rather than the whole family working on an individual farm in the old agrarian style of work, the family moved out into the factories. Husbands endured heavy and tough labour in the textile mills, the wives remained at home to take care of the house and the children went out to work in mills with the men (DWP, 146). Labour took up so much of the family's time that little remained for other daily activities. It is very clear that the Industrial Revolution brought about many new changes in the way of work. Factories, mills, and mines allowed Europeans to escape from their rural, agrarian lifestyle and move to an urban, industrial lifestyle. Unfortunately, the poor working conditions from the agrarian style of work carried over to the industrial style of work.