

Factory Life: Exploring the Industrial Revolution in Hillsborough

Grades 6-8

Lesson

Become a muckraking journalist! Students will write a letter to Samuel Gattis, who represented Orange County from 1899-1903 in the North Carolina General Assembly, about working conditions in Hillsborough's mills and factories. Students will be encouraged to use inspiration from Lewis Hine, Upton Sinclair, Ida Tarbell, Jacob Riis, Ida Wells, and Booker T. Washington to influence their letters for change.

North Carolina Standards

8.C & G.2.1 Summarize the strategies and societal reforms used to address discrimination and oppression in North Carolina and the nation.

8.C & G.2.2 Assess the effectiveness of reforms in terms of the impact on individuals, policies, and institutions in North Carolina and the nation.

Background

During the Industrial Revolution, Hillsborough saw a growth in its mills and factories, which were located on the Western side of town and right outside of town limits, in an area called Hillsborough's "mill seat." By 1896, Hillsborough's first cotton mill, Eno Cotton Mill, was established. The success of the mill was quickly followed by the opening of Bellevue Manufacturing Co, which was chartered by Shepperd Strudwich and T. Norfleet Webb, in 1904. Bellevue manufactured yarn and cloth, while Eno Cotton Mill made broadcloth shirting and corduroy. By 1939, Eno Cotton Mill employed over 600 people, half of which were women. During World War II, the Mill switched to producing cloth for the Army, which exempted many of its workers from the draft. Due to technology and changing markets, the Eno Cotton Mill shut its doors in 1984 and Bellevue Manufacturing Co. closed in 2000.

Muckrakers (1890s-1920s) were journalists, writers, and photographers who sought to expose corruption and social hardships caused by government and big business. Their extensive exposes brought about legislation that had a lasting impact on businesses; such as breaking up Standard Oil's monopoly, passing of the first child labor laws (1916), and the creation of the Pure Food and Drug Act (1906).

While Hillsborough did not have tenement housing, factory life was hard. Working conditions would have been similar to other factories in the United States: long working hours, little to no safety equipment, young children working alongside their parents, and subsistence on little pay. While farming was still a large part of Orange County life, many people turned to factory work at the turn of the century.

THE ALLIANCE FOR HISTORIC

HILLSBOROUGH

Learning Objectives

- Students will think critically about how journalists impact legislative change
- Students will explore the growth of local factories in Orange County and Hillsborough, North Carolina
- Students will use primary sources to create their own letters for change

Activity

Students will research either on their own or from instruction by their teacher about the Progressive movement, muckrakers, and factory life. Students will also learn about the work of Ida Tarbell, Lewis Hine, Booker T. Washington, and Jacob Riis and the impact they had on instituting change through laws and legislation. After understanding the Progressive movement, students will write a letter to Samuel Gattis in the manner of a muckraking journalist from the early 1900s. In their letters, students will ask for change in Hillsborough factories and mills, citing real information from their research. This information can include names, business operations, working conditions, etc.

Questions to discuss

- How did the assembly line change production in the United States?
- What technological advances occurred during the Industrial Revolution and how did such advances affect the US?
- What changes occurred in society based on inventions created during the Industrial Revolution?
- What were conditions like in factories during the Industrial Revolution?
- What were the roles of women and children in the workplace?
- How did life in the cities compare and contrast to life on farms?
- What was factory life like in North Carolina? Was it different from other parts of the country?
- How did Hillsborough change after the Civil War?
- Hillsborough had both - factories and farm life - how did these two ways of life impact one another?
- How was the growth of Hillsborough impacted by factories?
- Why did Hillsborough's cotton mills open in the late 1800s/early 1900s?
- Discuss ways that farming and factory work have influenced Hillsborough in ways that are still visible today.

THE ALLIANCE FOR HISTORIC

HILLSBOROUGH

Research Links

History of Mills and Factories in Hillsborough:

<https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~orangecountync/history/places/mills/mills.html>

<https://www.enorivermill.com/history>

https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~orangecountync/history/places/cotton_mills/cn1.html

<https://openorangenc.org/tours/bellevue-manufacturing-company>

Samuel Gattis:

[https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/gattis-samuel-](https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/gattis-samuel-mallett#:~:text=Gattis%20resumed%20the%20practice%20of,was%20speaker%20of%20the%20house.)

[mallett#:~:text=Gattis%20resumed%20the%20practice%20of,was%20speaker%20of%20the%20house.](https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/gattis-samuel-mallett#:~:text=Gattis%20resumed%20the%20practice%20of,was%20speaker%20of%20the%20house.)

Muckrakers:

<https://www.studentsofhistory.com/muckrakers>

https://www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/Ida_Tarbell.pdf

<https://pbsnc.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/muckrakers-image-gallery/journalism-in-action/>

Lewis Hine:

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/hine-photos>

Factories and Industrialization in North Carolina:

<https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/industrialization-north>

<https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/factories-and-mill-villages>

<https://randolphhistory.wordpress.com/2020/05/28/a-family-tradition-working-more-than-175-years-north-carolinas-textile-industry/>

[https://web-](https://web-clear.unt.edu/course_projects/HIST2610/content/05_Unit_Five/16_lesson_sixteen/04_text_mills.htm)

[clear.unt.edu/course_projects/HIST2610/content/05_Unit_Five/16_lesson_sixteen/04_text_mills.htm](https://web-clear.unt.edu/course_projects/HIST2610/content/05_Unit_Five/16_lesson_sixteen/04_text_mills.htm)

THE ALLIANCE FOR HISTORIC

HILLSBOROUGH