WORLDS OF FRAMEWORK KNITTERS IN LEICESTERSHIRE, *c.* 1600-*c.*1850

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Preface

When I attended the junior site at grammar school, every day in sight was Corah's St Margaret's Works, a primary hosiery factory in the city of Leicester. In those years, the inhabitants of Leicester could refer to the city as among those having the highest *per capita* income in Europe. After returning from WWII, my dad commuted from Leicester to Coalville to work on the coalface at Snibston Colliery for five years. He was afterwards employed as a builder's labourer. Finally, he moved inside to work at Bentley Engineering which manufactured knitting machines. For many years my mam was occupied in outwork by darning defective socks for Wolsey. At regular intervals, a large skip of socks would be delivered to the capacious porch of our council house. The working-class household economy was still, in the phrase of Olwen Hufton, 'an economy of makeshifts' (*The Poor of Eighteenth-century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974)).

No attempt to add to the history of the textile industry in the Midlands, however, small a contribution, cannot acknowledge the monumental foundation by Stanley Chapman as an historian, curator and polemicist, which came together in *Hosiery and Knitwear: Four Centuries of Small-scale Industry in Britain c.1589-2000* (Pasold Studies in Textile History 12, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

My usual *modus operandi* has been followed in the production of this small book: drafting with LibreOffice Writer (word processing); then recompiling in Lyx (text processing); exporting directly as a .pdf; and printing by Adlard of Ruddington. The print run is small, but the .pdf can be downloaded from davelinux.info/BOOKS/bookindex.html. I am grateful once again to the Linux and OpenSource world for furnishing my working materials.

Although organized in 'Chapters', the sections are actually free-standing 'articles' which therefore include some repetition, but which reminds the reader of the general context. The 'book' is intended for a mixed audience: local and academic.

Contents

Acknowledgments

Chapter 4 is reproduced from the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 93 (2019), pp. 221-40.

The base map for Figure 1 has been used courtesy of Freeworldmaps.

The plan of Hinckley at Figure 4 is taken from John Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of Hinckley in the County of Leicester Including the Hamlets of Stoke, Dadlington, Wykin, and the Hyde* (London: Nichols, 1782).

Abbreviations

CUP Cambridge University Press

Family Formation David Levine, *Family Formation in an Age of Nascent Capitalism* (London: Academic Press, 1977)

LC Leicester Chronicle

LJ Leicester Journal

LM Leicester Mercury

OUP Oxford University Press

'Peasants and stockingers' Rebecca Carpenter, 'Peasants and stockingers: socio-economic change in Guthlaxton Hundred, Leicestershire, 1700-1851', unpublished PhD, University of Leicester, 1994.

RBL VII G. Allen Chinnery, *Records of the Borough of Leicester Volume VII Judicial and Allied Records 1689-1835* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1974)

ROLLR Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland

TNA The National Archives, LondonF

Figures and Tables

1 Introduction

In 1989, the company of Corah & Son Ltd, of St Margaret's Works, Leicester, was divorced from the founding family and acquired by the Australian Charterhall Group. Almost immediately, the company was dismantled, marking the final stage of the manufacture of hosiery by a major company in the county. Although the Corah family originated in Birmingham, it had established Leicester as a foremost manufacture of hosiery in conjunction with Marks & Spencer and the St Michael brand.[1] Although the family business had migrated from the West Midlands to Leicester, the success of the company reflected a long tradition of hosiery in the county. Leicestershire constituted one of those locations which experienced incipient early-modern industrialization which was later transformed into modern industrialism, and therein lies its importance.[2]

In 1977, David Levine published his seminal dissection of the parish of Shepshed which from the early eighteenth century was dominated by the framework-knitting industry.[3] With the exception of a deeply analytical discussion of the parish of Countesthorpe by Rebecca Carpenter, the framework-knitting industry in Leicestershire has been has been neglected relative to recent examinations of industrial development in England.[4] One of the reasons is possibly that factory-based production was deferred in the framework-knitting areas of Leicestershire by comparison with earlier factory units in the cotton industry and in the Yorkshire woollen industry (see chapter 2). Domestic production persisted well into the nineteenth century in Leicestershire, including putting out by bag hosiers and frame rents. In the nature of this domestic-based production, however, the industry in Leicestershire had characteristics which were significant in the first phases of industrial activity. The entire household was involved in the enterprise including female operators of frames. The female members of the family were not confined to spinning, but worked the frames. Factory-industry introduced a measure of vertical integration. Household production from its inception relied

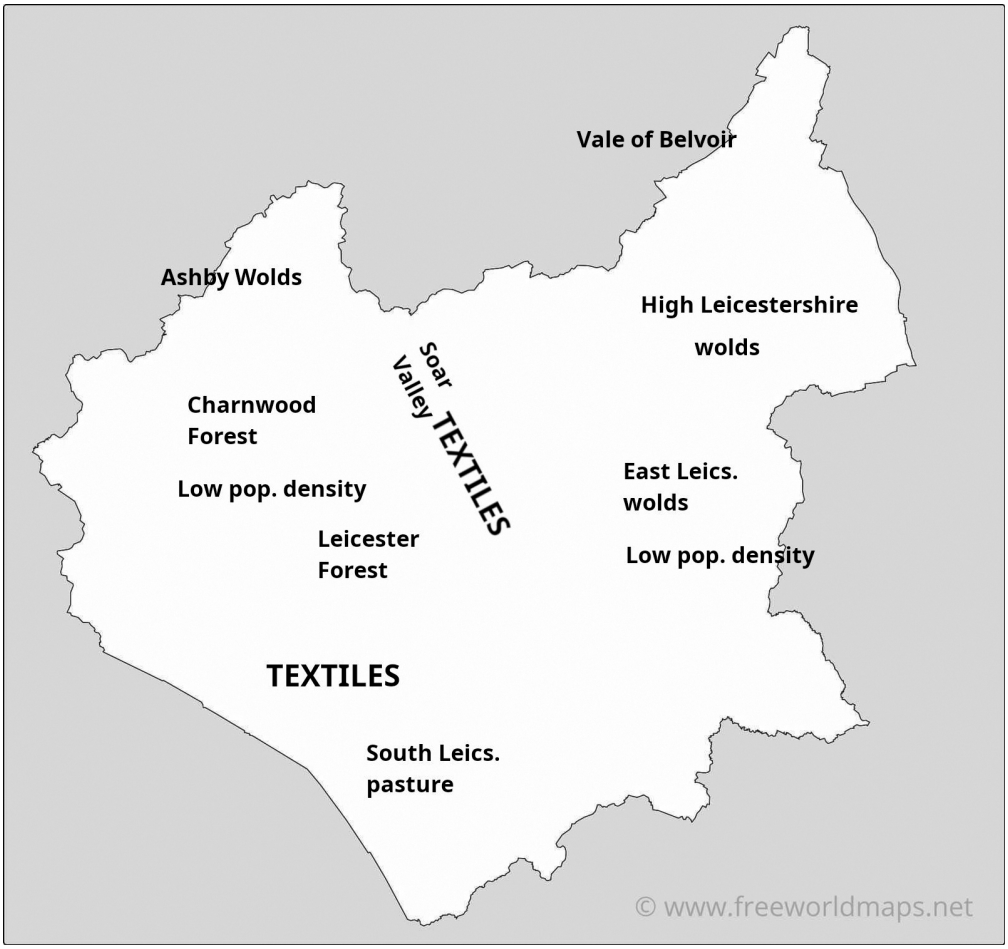
[1] Stanley Chapman, *Hosiery and Knitwear: Four Centuries of Small-scale Industry in Britain c.1589-2000* (Pasold Studies in Textile History 12, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 104, 287-8.

[2] Donald C. Coleman, 'Protoindustrialization: a concept too many?', *Economic History Review* 2nd series 36 (1983), pp. 435-48.

[3] *Family Formation.*

[4] 'Peasants and stockingers'; Chapman, *Hosiery and Knitwear*, pp. 39-45 outlines the early development in Hinckley and Leicester.

Figure 1: 'Regions' of Leicestershire



on the division of labour adumbrated later by Adam Smith. As well as separate households sorting and combing the wool before delivery to the hosiers, the mechanics of the manufacture depended on specialist framesmiths, setter-uppers, needle makers and sinker makers. Those specialized activities continued well into the late nineteenth century. At the heart of household production was the engagement of the whole family, including children from about the age of five. In this case, the industrious household was a consequence of landlessness and poor remuneration, not the drive to consumption.

The general perception of the county has largely been as rural and agricultural. The association with foxhunting has led to a caricature, with the professional football and cricket teams in recent times given the moniker of The Foxes (although those of us of a certain age always referred to them as The City and The County).

Much of the historical research conducted into the county has concentrated on the rural 'regions' of the county. John Goodacre, for example, focused on the southern pastoral district: the rural parishes around the small town of Lutterworth, one of the smallest urban places in the county.[5] The hinterland of another of the small towns, Melton Mowbray, was examined by David Fleming.[6] Recently, the development of Charnwood Forest in the north-west of the county has been resumed (including some of the industrial aspects).[7] Although the doyen of Leicestershire history, W. G. Hoskins contributed little on the later industrialization in the county. In his *magnum opus*, *The Midland Peasant*, he allocated only a few pages to framework knitting, understandably since peasant society was at the forefront of his concern.[8]

The revival of the Victoria County History for the county has redressed some

[5] *The Transformation of a Peasant Economy: Townspeople and Villagers in the Lutterworth Area 1500-1700* (London: Scolar Press, 1994); also Pamela J. Fisher and Andrew Watkins, *The Victoria County History of Leicestershire: Lutterworth* (London: University of London Press, 2022).

[6] 'A local market system: Melton Mowbray and the Wreake valley, 1549-1720', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leicester, 1980.

[7] George F. Farnham, *Charnwood Forest and its Historians and the Charnwood Manors* (Leicester: Edgar Backus, 1930); Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust: Charnwood Roots.

[8] W. G. (William) Hoskins, *The Midland Peasant: Economic and Social History of a Leicestershire Village* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, edn, 2008; originally 1957), pp. 272-6 ('The end of a peasant society'); Charles Phythian-Adams, 'Hoskins's England: a local historian of genius and the realization of this theme', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 66 (1992), pp. 143-59, esp. p. 158.

of the imbalance, with published research on the industrial background of Ibstock and forthcoming elucidation of industrialization in Loughborough.[9] A movement for the preservation of local heritage has illuminated the textile industry: the Hinckley Museum and the Framework Knitters' Museum in Wigston Magna. From 1906, the Framework Knitters' Company relocated its cottage housing from London to Oadby to provide housing for those with an association with this part of the textile industry.

[9]Pamela J. Fisher, *The Victoria History of Leicestershire: Ibstock* ((London: University of London Press, 2020) and forthcoming volumes on Loughborough after 1750.

2 The longest journey: industrialization and its precedents

More than sixty years ago, Joan Thirsk illustrated the early-modern development of industries in the countryside.[1] In this elucidation, Thirsk discounted the location of raw materials in the organization of industry: 'As wool was so easily transported, and since also it is doubtful whether there was any corner of England which did not have a wool-producing area in its vicinity, it can never have been a factor which made or marked a nascent industry'.[2] Although cautiously, Thirsk advanced some general attributes which induced the development of rural industry: population density; the predominance of small tenants; and a pastoral economy.[3]

This line of enquiry was pursued by Michael Zell for one of the regions mentioned by Thirsk: the Kentish Weald dependent on wool from Romney Marsh.[4] Here, the textile industry involved the production of cloth, dominated by affluent clothiers, supplemented by a host of smaller clothiers.[5] These handloom weavers had diverse resources and their wealth ranged widely, although they were preponderantly of the poorer sort. Most were engaged in husbandry to one degree or another. [6] This domestic production of cloth, however, declined during the seventeenth century: 'its long slow demise in the seventeenth century'.[7]

Prior to this examination of the Wealden textile industry, David Levine published his paradigmatic study of Shepshed in north-west Leicestershire.[8] In this locality, the textile industry which advanced through the eighteenth century relied on the coarser wool produced in Leicestershire. Levine promoted the concept

[1] 'Industries in the countryside' in F. J. (Jack) Fisher, ed., *Essays in the Economic & Social History of Tudor & Stuart England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1961), pp. 70-88.

[2] 'Industries in the countryside', p. 71.

[3] 'Industries in the countryside', p. 86. For Leicestershire, Dennis R. Mills, 'Rural industries and social structure: framework knitters in Leicestershire, 1670-1851', *Textile History* 13 (1982), pp. 183-203; more recently, Leigh Shaw-Taylor and Sebastian Keibek, 'Early modern rural by-employments: a re-examination of the probate evidence', *Agricultural History Review* 61 (2013), pp. 244-81 (south Lancashire).

[4] *Industry in the Countryside: Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994).

[5] *Industry in the Countryside*, p. 153.

[6] *Industry in the Countryside*, pp. 170-1, 174-5.

[7] *Industry in the Countryside*, p. 153.

[8] *Family Formation.*

of the pauperization or proletarianization of those engaged in the industry. Here, the stocking makers, framework knitters by this time, were mostly detached from the land. To combat poverty, framework knitting families were large to employ all hands for income. Levine emphasized these demographic aspects and the immiseration of the knitters.[9] Levine, indeed, made reference to 'these protoindustrialists'.[10] The proponents of the concept of 'protoindustrialization' adopted Levine's research as indicative of the potential of the idea. Houston and Snell, however, critiqued both the use of Levine's research and the detail of his investigation as to the demographic issues.[11]

The full conceptualization of 'protoindustrialism' was adumbrated at the same time. Some economic historians presented protoindustrialization as a category or defined stage of economic development.[12] Several reservations were advanced against the generalized conceptualization. Some of the industry in the countryside disappeared rather than transitioning to industrial society, as illustrated by the Kentish Wealden cloth industry above (sometimes designated 'de-industrialization'.[13] The linearity of the concept was doubted.[14] As importantly, the disjuncture between low capitalization in the peasant economy and higher capitalization in industrialization was foregrounded.[15] In the context of Leicestershire, these ambiguities have been explored by Rebecca Carpenter for the framework-knitting parish of Countesthorpe.[16] The notion of proto-industrialization as a phase in industrial advance still resonates as also its

[9] *Family Formation*, pp. 58-87.

[10] *Family Formation*, p. 84.

[11] Rab Houston and Keith D. M. Snell, 'Protoindustrialization: cottagers, social change and industrial revolution', *Historical Journal* 27 (1984), pp. 473-92.

[12] F. F. Mendels, 'Protoindustrialization: the first phase of the industrial process', *Journal of Economic History* 32 (1972), pp. 241-61; H. Medick, 'The protoindustrial family economy: the structural function of household and family during the transition from peasant society to industrial capitalism', *Social History* 1 (1976), pp. 291-315; P. Kriedte, Medick, and J. Schlumbohn, *Industrialization Before Industrialisation* (*Cambridge*: CUP, 1982). Perhaps the most informative discussion is now Pat Hudson, *The Genesis of Industrial Capital: A Study of the West Riding Wool Textile Industry c.1750-1850* (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), pp. 57-84; Donald C. Coleman, 'Protoindustrialization: a concept too many?', *Economic History Review* 2nd series 36 (1983), pp. 435-48 at p. 439.

[13] Coleman, 'Protoindustrialization: a concept too many?', p. 443; Houston and Snell, 'Protoindustrialization', pp.490-1.

[14] Robin A. Butlin, 'Early industrialization in Europe: concepts and problems', *The Geographical Journal* 152 (1986), pp. 1-8 at p. 3.

[15] For which, most cogently, Hudson, *Genesis of Industrial Capital*, pp. 57-84.

[16] 'Peasants and stockingers'.

connection to impoverishment.[17] 'In every case, protoindustrialization and proletarianization intersected.'[18] Some discussions of protoindustrialization did not dismiss the concept, but intended to change its parameters, for example, that it was not confined to pastoral economies.[19] Detailed investigation was stimulated into regional developments in industrializing localities to discover the local conditions which promoted industrial development.[20]

Hudson's examination of the origins of capital formation in the West Riding remains pertinent to any discussion of the transformation from domestic industry to large-scale industry. Referring to the step-changes in intensive industrialization in the cotton industry in Lancashire, Toms concluded that: 'The transition from model 2 to model 3 required a substantial increase in fixed capital...', even though weaving was still organised on a 'domestic outworking network'. The fixed capital requirement there occurred because of the necessity of factory units for the spinning process (although also at this stage 'working capital' eclipsed fixed).[21]

In fact, however, the concept of protoindustrialization has recently been placed on its head. Instead of proletarianization, the advocates of the 'industrious revolution' have portrayed the family and household industrial economy as a consumerist entity. Larger families engaged in the industrial process were concerned to enhance the standard of living and indulge in consumerism either through better living conditions or relaxation of conditions.[22] De Vries proposed a 'transformation of consumer desire' in the eighteenth century accompanied by an energetic family economy. Assuming the family as an integrated economic unit, De Vries indicated how the relatively autonomous household interacted with the market. Instead of demographic conditions reacting to impoverishment, the

[17] Patrick Joyce, *Remembering Peasants: A Personal History of a Vanished World* (London: Penguin Random House UK, 2024), pp. 53-4.

[18] Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A New History of Global Capitalism* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 184.

[19] Gay L. Gullickson, *Spinners and Weavers of Auffay: Rural Industry and the Sexual Division of Labor in a French Village, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), pp. 85-7, 195-205; and their 'Agriculture and cottage industry: redefining the cause of proto-industrializaion', *Journal of Economic History* 43 (1983), pp. 831-50.

[20] Maxine Berg, Pat Hudson, and M. Sonnenscher, eds, *Manufacture in Town and Country before the Factory* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983).

[21] Steven Toms, *Financing Cotton: British Industrial Growth and Decline* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2020), pp. 16, 24-32.

[22] Jan De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008).

change in the age at marriage allowed consumer activity.[23] This consumption is, following Scitovsky, divisible into two separate, but inter-related, strands: expenditure on comfort and disengagement from tedious work for pleasure.[24] This proposal of industriousness and consumer involvement was extended by Craig Muldrew to labourers in rural society, so that not only the industrial industrious but a wider and lower section of society participated in economic energy to satisfy desires.[25]

Perhaps illustrative of the framework knitters' engagement with pleasure was Joseph Woolley, knitter in Clifton in south Nottinghamshire, who not only purchased books, but also frequented alehouses and gambled for pleasure, although after family formation he restricted the extent of personal entertainment. Certainly, he seems to have escaped the monotony of time and work discipline suggested by Edward Thompson.[26] Mokyr, however, has designated this phase as 'industrialism' without industry.[27] The interpretation of the 'poor stockinger' portrayed in the production of class consciousness by social historians has been shaken.[28] By implication, if we accept the suggestions of De Vries, we should now be confronted by the acquisitive, consumerist stockinger. Now, however, from the evidence of the diaries of Joseph Woolley, a stockinger in Clifton (Nottinghamshire), we have before us the self-employed framework knitter more concerned with his neighbourhood and neighbours. Woolley was one man, but his diaries inform on local knitting society. A wider investigation of the position of stockingers in an industrializing society may be beneficial.[29]

Perhaps the paradigmatic study of a framework-knitting parish in Leicestershire remains David Levine's analysis of Shepshed. His depiction was modified by an examination of Countesthorpe (in the same county) by Rebecca Carpen-

[23] De Vries, *Industrious Revolution*, for the conceptual framework.

[24] De Vries, *Industrious Revolution*, p. 11.

[25] *Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness: Work and Material Culture in Agrarian England, 1550-1780* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011).

[26] Carolyn Steedman, *An Everyday Life of the English Working Class: Work, Self and Society in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), esp. pp. 187-200; Edward P. Thompson, 'Time, work discipline and industrial capitalism' repr. from *Past and Present* 38 (1967) in their *Customs in Common* (Pontypool: The Merlin Press Ltd, 1991), pp. 352-401.

[27] Joel Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy: Britain and the Industrial Revolution 1700-1850* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), p. 97.

[28] Perhaps prescient in Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Times* (London: Penguin Books, 2024; originally 1944), pp. 48-9.

[29] All these issues are discussed succinctly in Steedman, *An Everyday Life*, pp. 7-10.

ter.[30] In both locations, production was concentrated on woollen stockings. Both discussions began effectively with the introduction of frames apparently in the early eighteenth century. In this present undertaking a wider remit is adopted through two aspects. First, industrial activity in the whole county is considered and second the chronological span is extended. The first approach is intended to eradicate any wrinkles of difference between the two previously-inspected parishes by expanding the spatial arena. The second aspect provides a long perspective on the origins of industrial activity in town and countryside.

By expanding the geography, it is possible to highlight the importance of agglomeration.[31] This sort of agglomeration can perhaps be identified in the specifications under the will of John Mountney, a framework knitter of Loughborough, a small town in north Leicestershire, in 1789, by which he appointed as his trustees David Fox, of the same town, hosier, and the testator's two brothers, George of Barrow upon Soar, and Benjamin of Woodhouse. This arrangement reflected not just a kinship network, but a concentrated spatial organization: the small town of Loughborough and adjacent parishes as a specialized knitting area.[32] Consider also the will of Thomas Bombroffe senior, self-described in his will of 1758 as a woolcomber. He, nevertheless, left a legacy of a stocking frame in trust for the use of his son, but the frame was currently 'in the hands' of Thomas Upton of Long Whatton, a nearby village. (The frame, incidentally, was described as a Joseph Garton frame of 24 gauge). The testator, furthermore, directed another frame to his trustees, a 'Case Hardened' one, which was also in the hands of a villager in Long Whatton, Valentine Cash.[33] Prior to the development of framework knitting, handloom weavers existed throughout the county. The intensity of weaving and its concentration explains the development of framework knitting. By referring back to handloom weaving, a longer perspective is involved, which then suggests a sort of path dependence: from early pastoral conversion to sheep husbandry and long-staple wool in the area, through handloom weaving, to the transition to mechanical knitting of woollen stockings.[34] The conceptualizations of 'industry in the countryside', 'by-employment' and 'proto-industrialization' are thus placed within a framework of long-term development

[30] 'Peasants and stockingers'

[31] Masahisa Fujita, Paul Krugman and Anthony J. Venables, *The Spatial Economy: Cities, Regions, and International Trade* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999), p. 41.

[32] ROLLR probate file for 1789 (see below for a description of the sources).

[33] ROLLR probate file for 1758.

[34] For implication of path dependence, Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy*, pp. 96-8.

and concentration.

To illustrate the process, Shepshed can be revisited. There, between 1636 and 1647, a dozen weavers operated in the parish who were mentioned in the parish register at their marriage, for the baptism of their children or the burial of their spouse.[35] When William Jones was interred in November 1639, he was described as weaver and householder. The same epithet was entered in the register on the demise of Thomas Syson in September 1640. Later, in December 1649 and April 1650, both Thomas Peale and Robert Busby were accorded the same status as weavers and householders. These two men had been first entered in the register with their occupation as weaver in December 1636 and January 1638. There thus existed a concentration of weavers in the parish in the middle of the seventeenth century. Allusion was made to several of the weavers as householders reflecting their integration in the parish and its affairs.

Some of the weavers, nonetheless, had a marginal existence. Both John Watts and Robert Bennett inhabited the parish before the entry of occupations in the register. There is, however, a probate inventory for both on their death in 1623 and 1626. Watts had personal estate evaluated at £25 2s 2d with his looms and gears valued at £3 6s 8d (possibly two looms). The total of Bennett's estate amounted to £10 14s 8d, including one weaver's loom with gears and implements assessed at £1 and two stone of wool at 15s.[36] A successor to Robert Busby above, Thomas Busby's inventory described him as 'webster' with a total personal estate of £21 3s 2d in 1701. His occupational equipment comprised more than half of the total: 'Item In his Shop and all things belonging...'[37] Another 'webster', John Franks, composed his will in 1721 shortly before his demise. His inventory in early 1722 contained personal estate amounting to £24 8s 6d, but £20 comprised debts owed to him on bonds. He probably then operated a single loom.[38] Franks possibly immigrated into Shepshed as his will referred to his Lammas close in Willoughby on the Wolds (Nottinghamshire).

All these deceased weavers fit into the profile of the economic margin in terms of the value of their personal estate. At this stage, their looms consisted of low fixed-capital investment, with a single loom appraised at £1. Their inventories indicate no effective activity in husbandry. Their occupation was specialized and

[35] ROLLR DE394/1. The register recorded occupations between 1631 and 1651.
[36] ROLLR PR/I/ files for 1623 no. 8 and for 1626 no. 126.
[37] ROLLR PR/I/105 no. 124.
[38] ROLLR Wills file 1721.

comprised their whole livelihood. Their enterprise did not involve by-employment but their entire industry.[39]

Their 'proletarian' existence was not, however, the full representation of handloom weaving in Shepshed. When John Hucknall died intestate in 1722, the administration bond was accompanied by an inventory (describing him as webster). A total personal estate of £81 3s 6d included a considerable agricultural element of cattle (horned beasts) valued at £20 13s 4d, sheep at £9 10s 6d, and grain in the ground at £5 6s 8d. Debts owed to him accounted for £21 5s 0d, some of which probably derived from the sale of hose.[40] The character of handloom weaving in Shepshed is thus complicated.

Framework knitting was introduced into the parish by 1710. In that year, John Cook, framework knitter, composed his will which was proved in 1715. Cook occupied a cottage with two frames. He was sufficiently literate to sign his will. The will mentions in addition to his wife only a son and a daughter. Since no codicil exists, it is probable that his nuclear family consisted of four people at his demise, not the extensive nuclear family often associated with the industry.[41]

Between 1723 and 1765, the registers are replete with stockingers as the industry expanded in Shepshed. Small numbers of weavers continued, nevertheless, to operate in the parish: Robert Holland (1723; died 1728); Thomas Hucknal (1724); Edward Willimot (1725); Henry Busby (1729); Richard Hewitt (died 1731); William Underwood (1758); Robert Underwood (1761); Richard Harwood (1761); and Benjamin Busby (1763).[42] Not only did the earlier concentration of handloom weaving provide a precursor for the development of framework knitting, but their existence in the parish overlapped for a considerable time, although the number of stockingers overwhelmed the persistent weavers.

The principal sources examined consist of probate materials. The wills/testaments and inventories are arranged in different sequences.[43] The main sequence of wills is organized by year and internally by initial character of the surname. References to this sequence simply state the year of the file (for example, probate file

[39]The potential variety of status is addressed by Duncan Bythell, *The Handloom Weavers: A Study in the English Cotton Industry During the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: CUP, 1969), pp. 28-32.

[40]ROLLR administration bonds file 1722.

[41]ROLLR probate file for 1715.

[42]ROLLR DE610

[43]L. A. Parker, 'Hosiery' in W. G. Hoskins and R. A. McKinley, eds, *A History of the County of Leicester Volume III* (London: OUP), p. 7, cites a few examples of the wills.

for 1712) and testator's name. This sequence also includes some inventories and related papers. Another sequence of wills is contained in deposit DE73 PR/T class. References to these items have simply PR/T/item-number (the item numbers are the original ones employed when the items were in the registry). Most of the inventories are contained in class PR/I/ (and so references are to PR/I/item-number where the item number is that originally applied in the registry. The order is annual guardbooks with an original number (ink). Finally, administration bonds for intestate deceased (with some inventories) are filed separately in annual bundles. There is, however, a separate series of probate materials for the Peculiars of Rothley and Evington. Until towards the middle of the eighteenth century, from about the 1730s, the bonds are not productive, since they mainly do not include the occupation of the deceased (and nor do many of the inventories). It is important to note that the annual bundles and guardbooks conform to the Julian calendar and thus run from 25 March to 25 March, Old Style. Below, in the text, New Style is employed. There may then appear to be a dissonance: for example, a will dated in the text as 1712 will actually be located in the annual bundle for 1711 (that is, 1711/12). Secondly, parish registers have been examined for runs of occupations when incumbents or churchwardens were inclined to include this detail, which was rarely.

All probate items have been examined for the regions which later became associated with framework knitting. Additionally all probate material between 1712 and 1729 has been inspected. The rationale is mainly to discover the distribution of weavers before they were eclipsed by framework knitters. These eighteen years were critical as weaving was being displaced by framework knitters.

Information about hosiers is also drawn from probate material but is considerably supplemented by entries in the *London Gazette* (*LG*) for bankruptcies and partnerships. Although hosiers often operated alone for much of the eighteenth century, from the latter years of that century general partnerships dominated. The *LG* provides information about the bankruptcies of single hosiers in the eighteenth century and the dissolution of partnership from the end of the century.

One of the unfortunate consequences of non-survival is the lack of full militia lists for parishes. After the 1757 Militia Act, parishes were required to produce lists of able-bodied men of suitable age from which men were selected by lot to serve in the militia (subject to the appointment of substitutes). These original lists of male inhabitants provide excellent information about occupations. There

is no useable survival for Leicestershire, except for details of the men selected by lot and the substitutes.[44]

As implied above, the chronology extends from 1600 from when probate material for weavers survives. The concluding date is somewhat porous. The intention is to address the industrial process before factory units displaced framework knitting as a domestic system of putting-out by hosiers. There is obviously some overlap in this process which was somewhat protracted. The probate material has been considered through to 1857 before civil administration of probate. The chronology is influenced by but not bounded by the report of the commissioners of 1845. The rationale here is that the probate material through to 1857 represents domestic framework knitters rather than those employed in mills or factories.

The sequence considers first the conditions of handloom weaving in the seventeenth century. In this phase, fixed capital formation was low. Circulating or working capital was also minimal as hosiers who 'put out' the work were responsible for working capital. The second phase consisted of the introduction and expansion of framework knitting from c.1700 through to the middle of the nineteenth century. In this phase, weaving continued but in an attenuated degree and petered out. Framework knitting required a step-change in capital investment, but circulating capital varied according to the nature and size of the knitting shop. Finally, the hosiers are examined. There is ambiguity here too, because some framework knitters with numerous frames also leased their machinery. Alongside the hosiers, the 'setter ups' and framesmiths are discussed as some of those too needed considerable working capital.

The time of weavers

Sheep husbandry was a permanent element in medieval mixed farming, more dominant in some regions than others.[45] By the fifteenth century, tracts of eastern and north-eastern Leicestershire had been converted to permanent grass for sheep husbandry as depopulation occurred.[46] The boulder clay over the

[44]ROLLR LM4/1/1-5 and LM4/2.

[45]Rodney H. Hilton, *The Economic Development of Some Leicestershire Estates in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Oxford: OUPs, 1947), pp. 133-5; Eric Acheson, *A Gentry Society: Leicestershire in the Fifteenth Century c.1422-c.1485* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), pp. 62-66.

[46]H. S. A. Fox, 'The people of the wolds in English settlement history' in Michael Aston, David Austin and Christopher Dyer, eds, *The Rural Settlements of Medieval England* (Ox-

limestone was more conducive to pastoral than arable husbandry but did not have the nutritious components required for cattle. Elsewhere, the adoption of convertible husbandry or up-and-down rotation allowed the expansion of sheep flocks. Laying a considerable part of the open-fields to long leys, for up to seven years, promoted sheep husbandry.[47] The supply of wool in the county, a continuous feature, was thus expanded. Whereas the wool of the late middle ages in the county was of medium quality, during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, it became coarser.[48] The wool, also, consisted of a long staple, too coarse for the production of broadcloth associated with the finer staple of the wool used earlier in the manufacture of broadcloth in, for example, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire.[49] These conditions were the deep origins of handloom weaving in the county. Every village had a local supply of wool for making coarse fabric.

By the eighteenth century, flocks of considerable size were dispersed through east Leicestershire. In Illston on the Hill Thomas Dalby had a store of wool valued at £70 with a flock valued at more than £300.[50] About the same time, the flock of William Marston in nearby Rolleston consisted of 155 ewes and wethers accounting for £108 10s 0d and 77 lambs (£37).[51] The number of probate documents for graziers reflects the large sheep husbandry particularly in the east of the county. One example was William Tippler, grazier of Hungarton, who maintained a flock of 363 sheep valued at £274 10s 0d in 1728.[52] More modestly, John Stacy of Pickwell maintained a flock of 69 wethers, 67 ewes with lambs, and 103 hogs. He consequently had a store of wool valued at £30.[53] All three flocks (at Illston, Hungarton and Pickwell) grazed on the upland landscape in east Leicestershire. From the seventeenth through to the early nineteenth century wool was regarded as an important commodity employing the population in

ford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 77-101; C. C. Dyer, 'Deserted medieval villages in the West Midlands' , *Economic History Review* 2nd series 35 (1982), pp. 19-34, for the process.

[47] W. G. Hoskins, *Essays in Leicestershire History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1950), pp. 123-83; Eric Kerridge, *The Agricultural Revolution* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1967), pp. 181-250 (on his 'Midland Plain').

[48] Peter J. Bowden, *The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1962), pp. 28-9 (Figures 1 and 2) and 31-2.

[49] Bowden, *The Wool Trade*; George D. Ramsay, *The Wiltshire Woollen Industry in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1943), pp. 7-8.

[50] ROLLR probate file for 1722.

[51] ROLLR probate file for 1724.

[52] ROLLR probate file for 1728.

[53] ROLLR probate file for 1729.

industry. Considerable efforts were made to prevent its export, engendering confrontation between the relative interests of landowners and industry.[54]

Few weavers' probate documents exist before 1700 and those that do survive mostly pertain to the borough of Leicester.[55] At least 22 weavers plied their trade in Leicester in 1608, the sixth largest occupational category, just more than the number of bakers. Half had attained the freedom of the borough. They were dispersed throughout the borough, but with a concentration in ward 3 around the Northgate.[56] The probate material here suggests that considerable success could be attained through weaving. Thomas Palmer inhabited the Castle Yard liberty adjacent to the borough. His personal estate in 1670 amounted to more than £57, mostly comprising debts owed to him on bond (£10) and trust (£30). His four looms and ancillary equipment were valued at £5 3s 0d, probably £1 per loom, which was the normal rate at this time.[57] The inventory of Henry Mug in 1675 did not attribute him an occupation, but he possessed six looms with appurtenances assessed at £11 with a twisting mill and two tansey wheels at 14s. A chest and coffer contained stockings and yarn considered to be worth £8 and four tod of wool at £3. His total personal estate amounted to almost £52.[58] In 1612, Thomas Mosley had already diversified into real estate. His will recorded tenements in Red Cross (two), near St Martin's church, (two), and in Northgate (one), all leased to tenants. These premises were mostly in the central precinct of the borough and lucrative. Such disinvestment became characteristic of the most successful weavers (and later) framework knitters, as the fixed capital investment in the occupation was low. It made more sense to invest the circulating capital in real estate. That diversion of capital became critical in the transition from one economic stage to the next: the limit to capital investment in the industry and its diversion into real estate. This issue was already evident in the early seventeenth century.

Not all weavers in the borough, of course, were as successful. The returns var-

[54]Julian Hoppit, *Britain's Political Economies: Parliament and Economic Life, 1660-1800* (Cambridge: CUP, 2017), pp. 216-48; for schemes for employing the poor, Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c.1550-1750* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), pp. 174-91.

[55]See also David L. Wykes, 'The origins and development of the Leicestershire hosiery trade', *Textile History* 23 (1992), pp. 23-54 for consumerism and fashion in early Leicester hosiery.

[56]G. Allen Chinnery, 'The muster roll for Leicester of 1608', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 60 (1986), pp. 25-33, at p. 32 (Table 1).

[57]ROLLR PR/I/70 no. 104.

[58]ROLLR PR/I/77 no. 181.

ied and the range of personal wealth was diverse. More modest possessions were assessed for Edward Kirk in 1676, totalling only just over £28. His two looms, gears and tools accounted for £4 9s 8d, so £2 per loom, the accustomed rate at this time. His livestock and grain, however, were assessed at more than £11. Deducting his household possessions, his circulating capital was negligible.[59]

The borough was inhabited by a number of weavers with a range of personal estate. The successful ones had more than one loom. The cost of looms had apparently increased over the seventeenth century from £1 to £2, but the fixed capital investment remained low. Circulating capital was minimal too. Even at this early stage, some preferred to divert their capital into real estate as rentiers. Probate material survives for only a very small proportion of the weavers and it must be assumed that most without probate evidence were poorer.

A few of the weavers in Hinckley, a small town in the south-west of the county, left probate evidence. Hinckley later became a centre for the hosiery industry with framework knitters in the urban place and its hinterland towards Leicester. Although not attributed an occupation in his inventory, Richard Cox possessed weaving looms and gears in 1627 valued at £2, thus probably two looms. More than £7 of his total estate of just over £11, nonetheless, consisted of livestock.[60] Half a century later, Thomas Paine, weaver, operated three looms in his shop, appraised at £8 5s 0d with their accoutrements, and thus probably £2 per loom. Like Cox, however, he owned livestock valued at £14 in a total personal estate of barely more than £33.[61] On this evidence, weavers in Hinckley did not attain the higher levels of the borough of Leicester.

The most informative detail derives from the inventory of George Worsley of Loughborough, another small town, but larger than Hinckley, in 1636, although the total valuation did not attain £28.[62] This weaver's shop contained four looms with 29 gears, a warping vat with the bars and weights, balances, wheels and shuttles appraised at £6 10s 0d. Since his three cows and hay also accounted for £9, his working capital was insignificant. His dwelling was probably mean, comprising only the 'house' (living room), chamber, shop (weaving area), and milk house. In Loughborough also, the clothworker Richard Nicholas in 1659 possessed personal estate valued at just over £39. In fact, however, most of the

[59] ROLLR PR/I/78 no. 19.
[60] ROLLR PR/I/ file for 1626 no. 184.
[61] ROLLR PR/I/71 no. 212.
[62] ROLLR PR/I/38 no. 3.

householders in Loughborough were tenants (lessees) of the Hastings family, so Richard's inventory contains a valuation of £20 for the remaining years in his lease as well as £10 for his three cattle. His fixed and working capital were negligible.[63] Ten years later in the same town, John Tailor, weaver, had a total valuation in his inventory of slightly over £15, including £2 for the assessment of his loom and equipment and £4 for the residue of his lease.[64]

As mentioned in the introduction, hosiery production extended to the north of Leicester down the Soar valley and between Hinckley and Leicester. These two extents are defined here as the northern agglomeration and the southern agglomeration. There is a paucity of weavers' probate material in both areas.

In Quorndon in 1681, the clothworker (sic), William Phipps possessed 'In the Shoppe one lome three geares with other Lumber' which were appraised at only £1 10s 6d – a low value at this time for a loom. In addition, his estate included two cows, a calf, a mare, a filly, a cart, a share in a plough and harrow, half an acre of rye, and an acre and a half of peas and oats. The total personal estate amounted to £18 9s 9d.[65] Inventories survive for two weavers in Long Whatton, both with insignificant personal estate. Indeed, John Peate's estate in 1669 fell below the £5 level of *bona notabilia* which necessitated an inventory: £4 5s 10d.[66] The paltry amount suggests that he had no agricultural involvement. Slightly higher, the personal estate of Richard Lane (for whom no occupation was given) amounted to £12 11s 2d. The contents included in his shop weavers' looms (sic) and warping stock appraised at merely £1 10s 0d. He did, however, engage in some agriculture with two cows (£3 6s 8d) and grain in the ground (£2 10s 0d).[67] Closer to Leicester, in Sileby, Robert Craftes possessed a pair of looms in the shop in 1618 valued at 28s.[68] There half a century later (1679), Gabriel Spencer's 'Two Loumes for a weauer' accounted for £4 of his total personal estate of £5 19s 4d.[69] A decade later (1690), the loom of the weaver Matthew Sampson of Syston, must have been delapidated, considered to be worth merely 5s. His four sheep contributed 15s towards his total personal estate of £3 4s 2d.[70] Just

[63] ROLLR PR/I/57 no. 40.
[64] ROLLR PR/I/69 no. 112.
[65] ROLLR PR/I/83 no. 122.
[66] ROLLR PR/I/69 no. 97.
[67] ROLLR PR/I/52 no. 80.
[68] ROLLR PR/I/28 no. 52.
[69] ROLLR PR/I/81 no. 105.
[70] ROLLR PR/I/93 no. 139.

outside the borough in 1651, John Keene, a weaver in Belgrave, maintained two looms which with their implements were valued at £3 6s 8d.[71]

The pattern in the southern textile region was similar. In 1673 Thomas Smith, a weaver in Barwell, owned 'one Bascard Loome' which, with its gears, contributed 12s 8d to his total inventory of £2 19s 4d.[72] In Countesthorpe. Lazarus Milner (no occupation specified) had a loom and other implements in his shop worth no more than a mark (13s 4d) of his total value of £4 10s 2d. The inventory bore an additional comment: 'Lazarus milner deceased his wife an ould woman of 75 yeares of age is to be maintained out of theise goodes that are a fore mentioned: in this Inuentary'.[73] In Burbage, Elezar Bigges, weaver, possessed personal estate in 1668 to the full amount of £8 12s 1d, of which livestock and grain accounted for £7.[74] More prosperous, William Jacombs, a weaver in Wigston Magna, operated one loom valued at the accustomed value of a sound machine at £2. Agriculture, nevertheless, provided almost £18 towards his total effects of £34 18s 6d in 1671.[75]

Although the evidence is slender, it can perhaps be deduced that, although there were some highly successful weavers, the rural weavers in these regions later associated with framework knitting, were predominantly poor. Only some had an agrarian interest. Where they had this agricultural involvement, the income was modest, despite the grain and livestock being the largest complement in their inventoried valuation. The majority of the rural weavers seem, nonetheless, to have had no husbandry and to be specialized weavers with no other income. Although their fixed capital was minimal, they had little circulating or working capital. The value of their fixed capital increased over the seventeenth century from £1 to £2 for a loom. Their household effects consisted only of necessary items with little room for discretionary expenditure. Half the rural weavers had personal estate valued at less than £10. Indeed, several had a total inventory valuation below £10 and even £5. At the lower extreme, the weaver of Syston, Matthew Simpson, had effects to the total value of £3 4s 2d in 1690; his loom, moreover, was considered to be worth no more than 5s. His four sheep added 15s. As mentioned above, the total personal estate of Thomas Smith, a weaver

[71] ROLLR PR/I/52 no. 6 (inventory total £39 5s 0d).
[72] ROLLR probate file for 1673 no. 105; PR/I/74 no. 130.
[73] ROLLR PR/I/61 no. 109.
[74] ROLLR PR/I/67 no. 1.
[75] ROLLR PR/I/72 no. 13.

in Barwell, was under £3.[76] Their economic existence was marginal. The low valuations, moreover, suggest that most had no husbandry, which is confirmed by no enumeration of animals in many inventories. Perhaps also significant is the paucity of debts owed to the weavers. Many of the inventories did not itemize any debts in. John Talor had desperate debts of £4 in 1669.[77] The infrequency of debts owed to the deceased reflects both a lack of working capital and a quick turnover of a small amount of product.

Very few escaped this penury. The exception was Thomas Thickbroome, also of Barwell, whose inventory in 1691 exceeded £73, although he possessed only one loom and gears valued at £5. He had a substantial investment in husbandry, with 11 cattle appraised at £21 and 23 sheep at £12 10s 0d.[78]

This general level of wealth of the rural weavers contrasts quite strongly with the weavers in the borough of Leicester, although the numbers of inventories are few. The borough weavers had multiple looms. Their personal estate extended beyond £30. Thomas Palmer had accrued debts of £40, £10 of which was secured on bonds.[79] Thomas Mosley recorded in his will that he was owed £3 10s 0d from a debtor in London.[80] Their markets were different. The weavers in the borough not only supplied the local urban market, but markets further afield.[81] The rural weavers depended on a very localized demand.

Probate material furnishes some information about the economic condition of the rural weavers. For some parishes, it is possible to assess the concentration of weaving from parish registers. Here again, the evidence is sporadic, dependent on the interest of incumbents and churchwardens in the entries in the baptismal registers. This material is significant, however, in illustrating how agglomeration of weavers was a precursor to the proliferation of framework knitting. These weavers had children baptized and had different forenames and surnames so represented separate households. Stoke Golding is one example, in the southern agglomeration. The parish register records six different weavers between 1659 and 1686, followed by the first frameworks knitter in 1695 and 1700.[82] Between 1653 and the end of the century, at least two dozen different weavers were entered in

[76] ROLLR PR/I/74 no. 130 (£2 19s 4d).
[77] ROLLR PR/I/69 no. 112.
[78] ROLLR probate file for 1691 no. 54; PR/I/95 no. 72.
[79] ROLLR PR/I/70 no. 104.
[80] ROLLR probate file for 1611 no. 97A.
[81] Wykes, 'Origins and development'.
[82] ROLLR DE495/1-2.

the register for All Saints, Loughborough, at the epicentre of the northern region. (The minimum number is specified here because the register is partially illegible after p. 67).[83] Reference in the register to the first framework knitter occurred in 1701 and this father described as Mr (Rotherham).[84] In adjacent Hathern, five different weavers were inscribed in the register between 1637 and 1686.[85] In the vicinity, a dozen weavers occurred in the register for Diseworth between 1639 and 1650.[86] One couple, Christopher Marshall and Elizabeth Bramley, bachelor and 'maiden', married in Diseworth by banns, but were both from nearby Shepshed, in 1642. Their daughter, Mary, was baptized in Diseworth in 1644. These contingent recordings of occupations sporadically in parish registers illustrate the importance of agglomerations in the transition from handloom weaving to the introduction of framework knitting.

Since the rural weavers provided for a local market in cheaper goods, they continued to operate after the introduction of framework knitting, because the capital investment, fixed and circulating, return on capital and labour costs were lower.[87] Many weavers persisted into the late eighteenth century. In Barrow upon Soar, James Smith still operated his loom at his death in 1817.[88] Apparently, there too, Thomas Clarke still worked as a weaver in the middle of the nineteenth century, although he had also invested in two houses.[89] Similarly, John Hardyman had invested in three tenements in Great Glen, although in his will of 1839 he described himself as weaver.[90] Weavers maintained a living in Loughborough into the 1830s.

Many weavers' wills survive through the eighteenth century. Many do not have accompanying information on personal estate (although they significantly sometimes divulge details of real estate). There are, nevertheless, some inventories before the 1730s which provide appraised valuations of personal estate. As importantly, from the 1730s executors and administrators were required to swear to manage the estate under an estimated value for the estate. The valua-

[83] ROLLR DE667/2.
[84] ROLLR DE667/2 p. 234.
[85] ROLLR DE731/1.
[86] ROLLR DE394/1.
[87] 'Peasants and stockingers', p. 50, citing Stanley D. Chapman, 'The genesis of the British hosiery industry, 1600-1759', *Textile History* 3 (1974), p. 10.
[88] ROLLR PR/T/1817/185 (probate granted in under £100).
[89] ROLLR probate file for 1844.
[90] ROLLR PR/T/1840/75 (probate granted in under £200).

tions were approximate and incremental: under £5; under £20; under £50; under £100; under £200; under £300; and so on. These two sets of valuations, before and after c.1730, allow some indication of the prosperity of weavers in terms of their personal estate, effects and chattels.

Between 1712 and 1729 inclusive there are appraisals of the personal estate of 24 weavers dispersed around the county. The mean value was £62 (standard deviation 72.219) and median at £35 10s 0d. Ten of the weavers possessed effects and machinery assessed below £20. Conversely, five weavers' estates were valued at more than £100. After about 1730 until the late eighteenth century, slightly fewer values can be obtained (21). Two fell below £5; eleven under £20; seven did not exceed £100; and one beneath £300. By different approaches, two Hinckley weavers accumulated unusual prosperity. Ezekiel Barnit invested significantly in his weaving enterprise. In his shop were accrued tammies and cloth worth almost £20, fine and coarse yarn almost £19, a smaller amount of yard 'out att weaving' at £3 10s 6d, and long wool, short wool and 'Niles' appraised at just over £11. He operated three looms. In comparison his farming activity accounted for only £9. Debts owed to him, no doubt on account of cloth marketing, exceeded £15. The total of his inventory surpassed £87.[91] Similar wealth was achieved by John Dawson, tammy weaver: £81 18s 1d.[92] Dawson's grain in the ground accounted, however, for £30. He had also diverted capital into urban real estate, acquiring two messuages in the Castle End which he let, a messuage in Bond End, and a close of land. This diversification into real estate was later a recourse of some framework knitters. Capital investment and return on capital were limited in stocking production. Investment in real estate furnished a more reliable rentier income from a capital resource which was likely to increase in value, as well, perhaps, representing a social cachet denied to weavers and framework knitters.

An alternative was to lend money at interest. William Furborow of Frolesworth had put out £10 10s 0d at interest.[93] Perhaps significantly, his three looms, presumably battered, commanded only £2. Although self-described as a weaver, he might have been withdrawing from trade. Richard's debts included loans on notes and bonds amounting to £91 and desperate debts of £90. Money, bonds and bills accounted for more than £105 in the inventory of Daniel Proudman.

[91] ROLLR probate file for 1712.
[92] ROLLR probate file for 1733.
[93] ROLLR probate file for 1733.

The most successful weavers thus had some husbandry in the early phases and invested in real estate during the eighteenth century. Most of the weavers in Leicestershire, nevertheless, from the evidence of their wills and probate inventories, had little husbandry. Their occupation was specialized and apparently not a by-employment. Nor did most of the weavers indulge in the comfort suggested as an ambition by the proponents of industriousness.

Much discussion has revolved around the demographic context of the development of weaving and framework knitting. The 'pessimistic' perspective emphasized the immiseration of the family because of the parcellation of land, reduced resources, and thus the necessity to involve the entire family in domestic industry. On the other hand, the 'optimists' responded that engagement of the entire family was ambitious, to engage in the consumer economy of 'comfort', for increased household effects or relaxation.[94] Both explanations, however, indicate the expansion of family and household size. Attempts to define the demographic characteristics have usually had recourse to localized family reconstitution in a particular parish: Shepshed or Countesthorpe in the case of Leicestershire.[95] One issue with reconstitution is the complexity of homonyms and infant mortality. An alternative method is pursued here: the number of children at the death of the father. Only the children who survived the household life-course can be assumed to have been involved in industrial productivity. Reconstitution, moreover, may not take sufficient account of singleton weavers who did not produce offspring: the Silas Marners. Finally, family reconstitution does not take into account non-family members recruited into the household to operate machines for the head of household. Here, the concentration is on the weavers only; the framework knitters are examined in the next chapter.

'Single man by Trade a Weaver'. So ran the description of John Peal of Long Whatton in the preamble to his will in 1791. He died the same year.[96] In Long Clawson, William Leavers, weaver, had committed all his estate to his sister.[97] In Cosby, in 1720, the weaver William Brown bequeathed his house to his wife 'but if poverty does not oblige her to sell all or part of it I giue it after her decease to my brother Thomas Brown'.[98] About the same time, Samuel Everdine, a weaver of Buckminster, passed his messuage and three acres to his mother, his

[94] De Vries, *Industrious Revolution.*
[95] *Family Formation*; 'Peasants and stockingers'.
[96] ROLLR probate file for 1791 (sworn under £100).
[97] ROLLR probate file for 1718 (will 1717).
[98] ROLLR probate file for 1720.

sole executrix, with legacies of 1s to each of his six brothers.[99] In the year that he died, 1718, John Lee, weaver of Long Clawson, composed his will with two legacies to: 'my onely son William Lee' and 'my only daughter Mary'.[100] These examples indicate that some weavers died as singletons and that others had only small families. Both households, of course, could be dismissed as incomplete family formation.

Considering 66 weavers' wills from the two regions, north and south, seventeen were ostensibly singleton testators, about a quarter. The other 49 conceived families of varying sizes from a single child to nine children. Omitting the singletons, the mean number of children at the testator's death was 3.6 (standard deviation 2.36) and the median 3. In fact, twenty testators had one or two offspring at death. Seventeen had five to nine children.

The pattern is confirmed by 58 wills from around the county between 1712 and 1729 (Fig. 2). From the legacies, it can be inferred that 21 of the weavers were a singleton. Another 24 had one to three children. Only thirteen wills enumerated four or more children. Large households did exist but were by no means a norm. There existed then the potential for large families in weavers' households, but it was not always realized. One restriction might well have been that the weavers had only one or two looms in the shop.

There is an intimation of the transition from handloom weaving to framework knitting in the inventory of the personal estate of William Rayner, a weaver in Willoughby Waterless. In 1728, his effects included not only his two looms, but also a stocking maker's frame. The total value assigned to the three machines was £5 14s 6s from which it can be inferred that the frame was second hand and not in pristine condition. William might, nevertheless, have been attempting to adapt to the new mechanical industry.[101]

The critical era of the general replacement of handloom weavers by a proliferation of framework knitters was the early eighteenth century. The probate material for the 18 years from 1712 to 1729 indicate this process. Probate records survive for weavers in fifty different villages dispersed around the county. These weavers look preponderantly to be solitary weavers in the village. Their distribution is mapped in Fig. 2. It was only in the locations with multiple weavers that framework knitting flourished.

[99] ROLLR probate file for 1722 (will 1718).
[100] ROLLR probate file for 1718.
[101] ROLLR probate file for 1728.

The time of framework knitters

The tradition recounts that framework knitting was introduced into Leicestershire in Hinckley in 1640.[102] In July of 1692, John Bates was operating three frames for knitting stockings in the town.[103] John Stephenson might have migrated the short distance from Barwell into the town to pursue stocking frame knitting as his will (1698) reveals that he possessed a copyhold messuage and close in that rural parish.[104] By the early eighteenth century, framework knitting had insinuated into the two regions north and south-west of Leicester where it was to become predominant. In Shepshed, framework knitting became intense.[105] Some notion of its expansion in adjacent Loughborough is indicated by the parish register including the occupation of fathers between February 1749 and September 1759.[106] Over seventy fathers were described as stockingers and three as framesmiths. By the early nineteenth century, the numbers in the two regions had become consolidated (Table 1).[107]

The numbers for the decade 1813-22 inclusive are also extracted from the baptismal registers of the parishes which after George Rose's Act of 1812 included occupational identities of fathers.[108] The integrity of the Anglican registers may be ambiguous about this time if more Old Dissent and nonconformists avoided registration.[109] The numbers are then possibly an under-estimate. The importance is that the count is not in the traditional manner of the number of frames; rather, what is enumerated is the number of nuclear families with children dependent on income from framework knitting.

The transition to framework knitting involved a step-change in fixed capital

[102] 'Peasants and stockingers', p. 47 (citing *Victoria County History of Leicestershire volume III*).

[103] ROLLR PR/I/96 no. 78 (inventory total £29 7s 0d); L. A. Parker, 'Hosiery' in W. G. Hoskins and R. A. McKinley, eds, *A History of the County of Leicester Volume III* (London: OUP, 1955), p. 2.

[104] ROLLR probate file for 1698 and (inventory) PR/I/103 no. 144.

[105] *Family Formation*.

[106] ROLLR DE667/4 pp. 5-59.

[107] ROLLR DE411/9; DE610/12; DE557/6-7; DE727/5; DE933/4; DE1135/10; DE1287/6; DE1465/4; DE1653/11; DE2811/4; DE2844/5; DE3352/6; 17D64/A/II/1.

[108] Stuart Basten, 'From Rose's Bill to Rose's Act: a reappraisal of the 1812 parish register act', *Local Population Studies* 76 (2006), pp. 43-62; 52 Geo. III c.146.

[109] J. T. Krause, 'The changing adequacy of English registration, 1690-1837', repr. in D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley, eds, *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography* (London: Arnold, 1963), pp. 379-93.

Figure 2: Distribution of weavers' probate material 1712-29

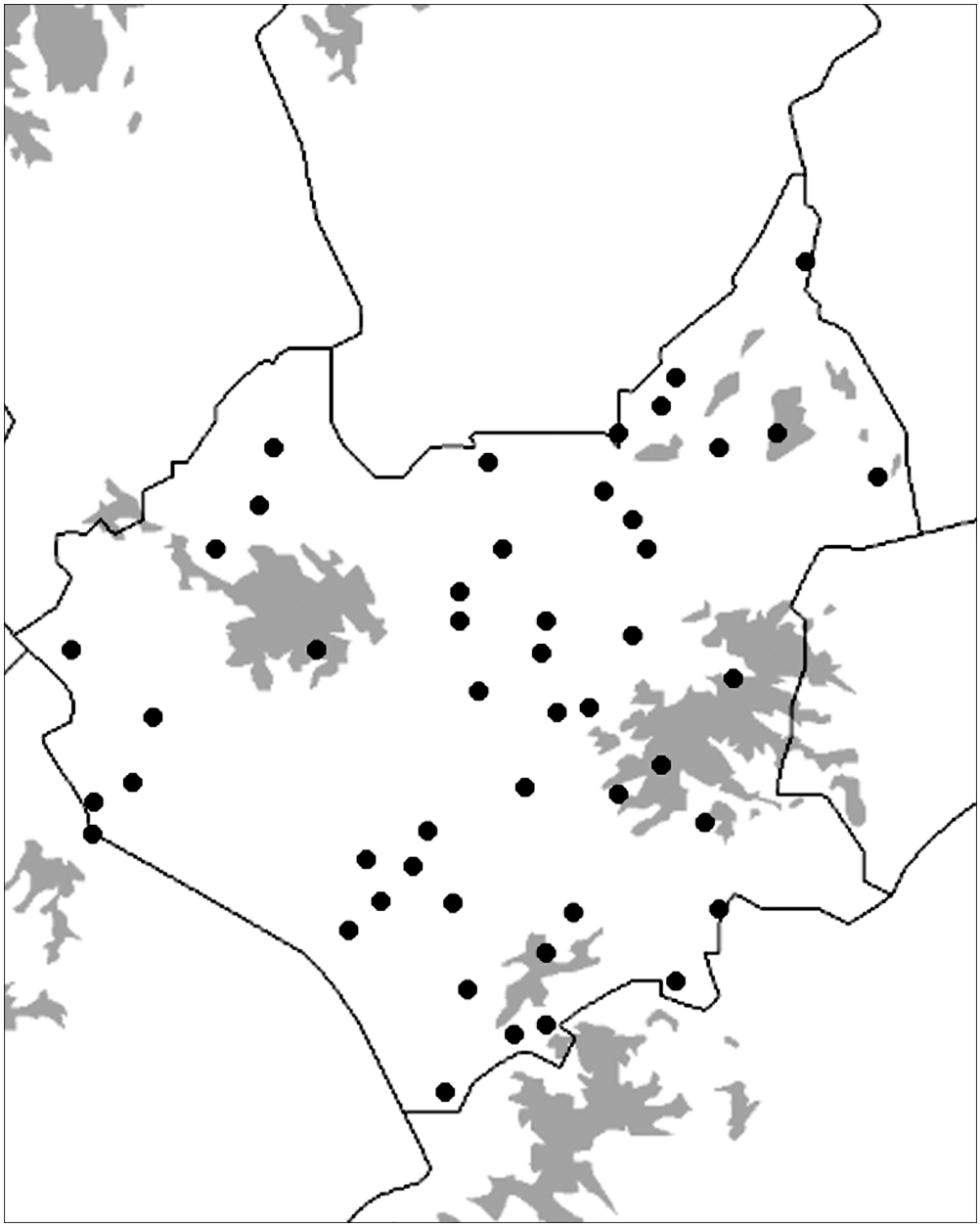


Table 1: Nuclear families engaged in hosiery, 1813-22

Selected parishes	Hosiers	Framework knitters	Needle makers	Sinker makers
Lower Soar Valley				
Loughborough (town)	6	130	6	2
Shepshed	0	237	3	2
Sileby	0	78	0	0
Syston	0	73	2.	0
Kegworth	0	73	0	0
Belgrave	1	64	1	0
Barrow upon Soar	0	63*	0	0
Long Whatton	0	57	0	0
Rothley	0	54	0	0
South-west region				
Hinckley (town)	11	341	12	4
Earl Shilton	0	122	0	0
Blaby	0	98	0	0
Countesthorpe	0	71	0	0
Narborough	1	45	0	1
Sapcote	0	45*	0	0

* Excluding fwks from other parishes in the house of industry or poorhouse.

formation. Whereas a handloom in the late seventeenth century cost £2, a frame required £10. In 1714, the Leicester knitter James Merry possessed ten frames with a total value of £100 in his total personal estate of £128 2s 0d.[110] The largest knitters were investing a considerable amount more than handloom weavers in their fixed capital, although circulating capital was in this case still minimal. In Birstall in 1721, George Lawson worked three frames with accessories worth £31. His working capital comprised £20 of wool and worsted.[111]

Depreciation occurred, of course, so that the single frame of Thomas Estlin the elder in Hinckley was appraised at £6 6s 0d in 1722.[112] Estlin, furthermore, had minimal working capital in his total personal estate of £17 19s 0d. The three frames owned by John Atkins in Aylestone commanded a valuation of £18. Since his total personal estate amounted to £21 10s 0d, he too had little working capital.[113] Although Henry Preston had acquired eleven frames in Hinckley at his demise in 1741, their value only just exceeded £55.[114] Of even lower value were the frames of Joseph Johnson of Barwell in 1708: 'For Four Frames at home and abroad [i.e. let out]' £16.[115] Half the value of the effects of Joseph Goosey of Burbage in 1711 was accounted by his single frame for £8.[116] The hosier in Hinckley, Richard Warner, in 1719 owned two old frames appraised at £10.[117] Indeed, they constituted his only frames which he presumably 'put out'. The single stocking frame of George Burrows in Loughborough in 1728 was valued at just £4. His four cattle accounted for another £8 of his inventory total of just over £16, so again his working capital was minimal.[118] The value of frames in inventories can be summarized between 1712 and 1729: five valued below £4; six between more than £4 to £5; six over £5 to £7; one £8; and one £12. It might also be inferred from these values that some frames had been bought second hand.

A market in second-hand and surplus frames existed. An auction at The Anchor in Loughborough in 1775 made available 38 frames, mostly in Randon's

[110]ROLLR probate file for 1714.
[111]ROLLR probate file for 1721.
[112]ROLLR probate file for 1721.
[113]ROLLR probate file for 1724.
[114]ROLLR probate file for 1741.
[115]ROLLR probate file for 1741.
[116]ROLLR PR/I/118 no. 100 (total £15 9s 7d).
[117]ROLLR probate file for 1719.
[118]ROLLR probate file for 1727; for 'amortisation' costs, Joan Robinson, *The Accumulation of Capital* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013 repr.; originally 1956), pp. 183-5.

and Cooper's warehouses. A variety of gauges and widths were itemized.[119] Suffering from ill health, the hosier Thomas Adams of Ashby de la Zouch, put 27 frames up for sale in 1779.[120] The demise of the hosier, Thomas Vann of Evington, was the occasion for the auction of 76 frames at the White Lion in Leicester.[121]

Abraham Coltman's two stocking frames in Wigston Magna in 1720 were appraised at £14 10s 0d of a total of £17 19s 10d, indicating again minimal working capital. Several framework knitters in Wigston in the early eighteenth century possessed stocking frames of lower value. The single frame of Richard David contributed £6 10s 0d of his total inventory of £7 15s 0d.[122] The appraisers valued William Jackson's single frame at £4 in an inventory total of just more than £7.[123] Three frames considered to be worth £16 accounted for half the effects of John Law.[124]

Framework knitting exploded in Wigston in the early eighteenth century, but many of the knitters were in competition, restricted to a single frame with little working capital. The frames were probably in continuous production which caused significant depreciation. Elsewhere, the depreciation in the value of frames was also associated with enterprises with single frames.

During the eighteenth century, the cost of frames increased further. In Wigston Magna in 1754, the ten frames of the framework knitter William Hooke had a value of £120.[125] This advance of price might have been anticipated by William Baines, a woolcomber in Braunstone, who in 1712 bequeathed £15 to his son Henry to purchase a stocking frame.[126]

In the borough, William Miles in 1715 was operating four stocking frames valued at £40. Miles, however, had invested considerably in working capital, since he had a warehouse and garrets containing wool, yarn and hose to the value of £258 13s 9d which expanded his total personal estate to more than £363. His household furnishings accounted for almost £50.[127] It is important

[119] *LJ* 17 June 1775 p. 2.
[120] *LJ* 28 May 1779 p. 3.
[121] *LJ* 1 February 1777 p. 3.
[122] ROLLR PR/I/117 no. 9.
[123] ROLLR probate file for 1712.
[124] ROLLR PR/I/113 no. 157A (1717: £31 15s 0d).
[125] ROLLR probate file for 1754.
[126] ROLLR probate file for 1718.
[127] ROLLR probate file for 1714.

to note here that Miles was not styled hosier, but framework knitter – and independent producer owning his own frames. Not only did he commit to high working capital, but also to comfort in his household. Nor is there evidence that he had invested in urban real estate.

There remains a serious problem with probate inventories. The appraisers were concerned only with personal estate: movables, household effects, chattels, livestock, grain and the materials of husbandry. The inventories inform about capital investment in machinery and stock (husbandry) and consumption in terms of household effects. What was omitted was any interest in real estate: land and buildings. In 1730, the inventory of William Dagley, a framework knitter in Hinckley, had a total of only £17 16s 6d.[128] Dagley's will, nevertheless, in which he defined himself as a framework knitter, itemized a close in Earl Shilton of four acres, three messuages in Hinckley which he let, another close in Hinckley, and a cottage in Narborough. The description of three old frames in the shop suggests that he had diverted his attention to rental income. Not a few framework knitters (and hosiers) followed this route.

Particularly in Hinckley, framework knitters invested in urban property as the town expanded rapidly. William Channing, knitter, acquired three messuages in Castle End.[129] The knitter Joseph Hurst accumulated four messuages in the town.[130] John Newton was probably another migrant from Barwell as he owned two copyhold closes there. In addition, he acquired two messuages in the Castle End in Hinckley which he let.[131] Four messuages in Bond End were in the possession of Garratt Venable, knitter, three of which he let out.[132] More explicitly, the knitter William Leader had purchased five cottages in Castle End from Garrett Dickinson and had acquired two more there, all of which he let to tenants.[133]

Even more acquisitive than many was Thomas Aldridge, knitter, who let to tenants two messuages in Castle End, one in Stockwell Head, and two in Duck Paddle, in the 1790s.[134] By this time, some framework knitters might have been desirous of exiting the trade as larger-scale units developed. In the early

[128]ROLLR probate file for 1730 (will and inventory).
[129]ROLLR probate file for 1753.
[130]ROLLR probate file for 1752.
[131]ROLLR PR/T/1758/157.
[132]ROLLR PR/T/1752/197.
[133]ROLLR probate file for 1762.
[134]ROLLR PR/T/1798/4.

nineteenth century, several knitters in Barwell had accumulated real estate., perhaps divesting from knitting. Seven had acquired two copyhold messuages each. By 1843, although self-designated a framework knitter in his will, William Bonser not only owned seven freehold messuages, and the messuage and Hackets Close, but also the Red Lion which he ran himself, and a butcher's shop which he had recently constructed.[135] About that time, another knitter there, Thomas Needham, controlled freehold land with three houses and two copyhold houses.[136]

Although he operated eleven frames, the knitter Samuel Tompkin entered into the property market in Countesthorpe so that 18 messuages and a bakehouse came into his ownership, eleven of which had been purchased through mortgages, the principal provided by a grocer in Leicester, Joseph Nunneley.[137] Numerous other knitters in the southern agglomeration followed this line. In Wigston Magna, Thomas Johnson maintained his eight frames, but also engaged in the rentier economy from four messuages.[138] Another knitter there, Walter Smith, owned six messuages, including his own residence.[139] Several other framework knitters in Wigston possessed two or three houses, some still subject to mortgage at their death. The same position obtained in Oadby and Great Glen. As these villages expanded with the increase in the industry, the temptation was to invest in real estate, particularly houses to let, and to rely for the most part on a stable rentier income.[140] As will be illustrated in the next chapter, hosiers too resorted to this diversification.

The same divestment occurred in the northern region of knitting. Although George Broughton still operated four stocking frames in Loughborough, he acquired five houses in Quorndon from where he had migrated.[141] Another four stocking frames in Loughborough belonged to Joseph Boott, but he also invested in three leased messuages in Fennel Street where he resided.[142] In Sileby three tenements were let out to tenants by the knitter Daniel Harley who bequeathed two frames to his son and namesake, Daniel.[143] There too, John Hutchinson

[135] ROLLR probate file for 1844.
[136] ROLLR probate file for 1844.
[137] ROLLR PR/T/1840/162.
[138] ROLLR PR/T/1814/132.
[139] ROLLR PR/T/1804/191.
[140] For the context, David Englander, *Landlord and Tenant in Urban Britain 1838-1918* (Oxford: OUP, 1983), esp. pp. 7-21.
[141] ROLLR PR/T/1818/21.
[142] ROLLR probate file for 1811.
[143] ROLLR PR/T/1835/91 (will 1828).

maintained four stocking frames as a knitter, but owned four houses adjacent to his own residence and shop.[144] In nearby Rothley, Thomas Armstrong senior, when he made his will in 1830, had accumulated eight houses for renting out which he divided among his five sons, including one in St Margaret's, Leicester, and some of which were still subject to mortgages. At this time, his shop contained at least five frames.[145]

The demographic implications of framework knitting are here explored in the same way as in the chapter on weavers. (Household expenditure is considered in Ch. 5). In his will of 1767, the framework knitter William Palmer of Loughborough bequeathed to his son, William:

> Two Frames or Engines to make Stockings in The One and Twenty Three Gauge being the Frame that I now Work in And the other a Twenty Four Guage being the Frame that my said Son William Palmers Apprentice usually Works in.

(William senior also directed two other frames to another of his four sons, Thomas).[146] In many cases, members of the family did enable the utilization of more machines: in his will of 1754, Theophilus Marshall made legacies to his sons William and Theophilus of the frames which they worked.[147] The ambivalence is increased by frames in other households: Abraham Coltman, yeoman of Wigston Magna, bequeathed two stocking frames to his two sons in 1720.[148] John Brewin there described himself as 'Yeoman and Framework knitter', although his personal estate was believed to be under £20. (He owned, however, three messuages in the village).[149]

'[T]o my Daughter & only Child Anne Kemp' comprised the sole legacy in the will of Benjamin Kemp, knitter in Mountsorrel in 1722. He died the same year.[150] William Jackson's will in 1712 specified: 'Item I giue unto my daughter Elisabeth Jackson my frame that I set to worke stockings in . . . ', the implication being that she was his sole offspring. He had only one frame valued at £4.[151]

[144] ROLLR PR/T/1837/121.
[145] Rothley Peculiar Probate Register 1832 pp. 82-5 and probate files for 1832-3.
[146] ROLLR probate file for 1773.
[147] ROLLR PR/T/1763/178.
[148] ROLLR probate file for 1719.
[149] ROLLR probate file for 1775 (will 1774).
[150] ROLLR probate file for 1722.
[151] ROLLR probate file 1712 (Wigston Magna)

The knitter William Berrington bequeathed his frame to his brother-in-law and his messuage to his father, Jennings, for life and then to his mother for life. He appointed his father as executor.[152] One of the frames of John Sheffield of Diseworth was left to Sarah Cooper for caring for him, the other legacies made to his brothers and sisters.[153]

Altogether there are 141 unambiguous observations about the size of framework knitters' families outside the borough of Leicester at the decease of the father. A quarter (35) had no children and were singletons. For the remaining 106 knitters, mean family size was 3.12 (standard deviation 1.756) and the median 3. The maximum size was nine, attained by several families. On the other hand, 64 households contained 1-3 children inclusive. Early catastrophe limited the number of offspring. It was recorded of the knitter in Leicester, James Merry, that his wife was pregnant with their first child when he made his will in 1714; he died in the same year.[154]

Finally, there is sometimes ambiguity about the precise character of framework knitters, apparently overlapping with the role of hosiers, since some knitters also let out frames. In his will in 1796, the knitter Jennings Berrington, devised a stocking frame which was currently let to James Tacy to his daughter Mary, another one to his daughter Ann, but that frame was let to John Chamberlin, one to another daughter, Jane, also let (to John Brown). He possessed another three frames let to Brown and William Marriott. He actually worked one frame himself, which he bequeathed to another daughter, Elizabeth.[155] With this ambivalence in mind, it is then possible to accumulate figures from the wills and inventories of the number of frames per household. By the middle of the eighteenth century, some knitters had established a large enterprise. In Hinckley, from his messuage in Castle End, John Iliffe operated sixteen frames, which he bequeathed to three of his sons.[156] There too, about the same time, Henry Preston combined eleven frames, probably old since valued at only £5 each, leaving four of his best ones to his son, Henry.[157] The wills and inventories of 79 framework knitters (outside the borough of Leicester) indicate the number of frames in the household. Six possessed ten or more frames. Forty-nine owned three

[152] ROLLR probate file for 1781 (will 1776).
[153] ROLLR probate file for 1720.
[154] ROLLR probate file for 1714.
[155] ROLLR probate file for 1796.
[156] ROLLR probate file for 1742.
[157] ROLLR probate file for 1741.

or fewer. The mean was situated at 3.76 (standard deviation 2.988) and the median at 3. The largest enterprises with numerous frames thus become almost indistinguishable from hosiers who let out frames.

Hosiers (and framesmiths)

When probate of the will of William Cartwright was granted in 1826, his executors swore to execute the estate in a valuation of under £1,000. Cartwright described himself as a hosier in his will and his residence was central in the town of Loughborough in the Market Place. He nominated as his executors dignitaries of the town: Thomas Cradock, F. R. Cradock and J. Amatt.[158] The Cartwright and Warmer company belonged to the new type of hosier: the scaled-up production employing thousands of workers. In fact, Richard Cartwright, hosier of Loughborough, when he died in 1797 intestate, had personal estate estimated at under £3,000.[159] By the middle of the nineteenth century these new-style hosiers had accumulated enormous wealth in Loughborough. The personal estate of Henry White in 1850 was assumed to be under £14,000, deriving at least in part from his hosiery partnership with William Paget.[160] Four years later the administrators of Charles White agreed to a valuation of his personal estate of under £10,000.[161]

The character of 'hosier' changed over time. Hosiers had organized the putting out to the handloom weavers in the seventeenth century.[162] It is not clear when hosiers became organizers of the framework knitting industry. Richard Aires, a hosier of Leicester, made his will in 1676, but was likely to have been involved with handloom weavers.[163] Whereas it had previously designated a middle man who put out work to knitters and in many cases furnished their machines on lease, by the late eighteenth century hosiers were constructing factory units. The hosiers continued to provide the circulating capital, but now also invested into fixed capital in buildings, concentrating the production in factory units. This step-change also impacted on the framesmiths in the concentration of capital and their capacity. Similarly, the occupation of setter up resulted from the change to factory units, these specialists too having a concentration of capi-

[158]ROLLR probate file for 1826.
[159]ROLLR PR/T/1797/40.
[160]ROLLR PR/T/1850/1777.
[161]ROLLR PR/T/1854/171.
[162]Compare Bythell, *The Handloom Weavers*, pp. 33-9, for the organization.
[163]ROLLR probate file for 1675 no. 75.

tal. In the borough of Leicester, entry to the occupation was controlled, so that recruitment was mainly confined to the more affluent rather than rising through the industry.[164] Hosiers were also divisible into two categories: the commercial hosiers located in the urban centres; and the bag hosiers who acted as middlemen between the commercial hosiers and the knitters.[165]

In the nature of their business, bag hosiers and knitters sometimes came into conflict. The bagman, Edward North, allegedly bought pairs of worsted stockings from John Shenton, a knitter of Whetstone. In fact, the material for the making up had been delivered to Shenton by the owner, Pitts Ward, hosier in the borough. In another case in the same session, North, now described as a victualler, was again accused of purchasing other pairs of stockings from James Juba, knitter of Ibstock. Again, the material for making up had been despatched to Juba by John Cartwright, hosier in the borough.[166] These cases illustrate the different status of commercial hosiers and bag hosiers and also the control over putting out to the framework knitters outside the borough, in the instance of Ibstock some distance.

From about 1730, grants of probate and administration had an estimate of the personal estate of the deceased. From this source, omitting Cartwright and the Whites above, there are 28 observations of the effects of deceased hosiers. Ten possessed personal estate below £100; three below £200; six below £300; three below £450; another three below £600; and three more between £1,000 and £2,000. Similarly, the personal estate of framesmiths varied widely. In 1815, Lemuel Holmes, framesmith of Loughborough, had estate amounting to under £300.[167] Framesmiths, as might be expected, had less wealth. From fourteen estimates, two had less than £20; six under £100; three under £200; two under £300; and one under £3,500.

An early exception to the limited accumulated wealth of hosiers was Samuel Craven of Hinckley for whom there is not only a copy will but also details of his financial situation at demise, including the accounts of his executors in 1819.[168] Craven controlled ninety frames. His personal estate on the Stamp Office legacy form consisted of £986 cash in his residence, book debts of more than £1,200,

[164] Stanley Chapman, *The Early Factory Masters: The Transition of the Factory in the Midlands Textile Industry* (Aldershot: Gregg Reprints, 1992, originally 1967), pp. 20-1.
[165] Chapman, *Early Factory Masters*, p. 26.
[166] *RBL VII*, p. 136 (no. 39.4).
[167] ROLLR PR/T/1815/102 (will 1814).
[168] ROLLR probate file for 1819 (will 1816).

mortgages in more than £2,041, bonds in more than £105, and stock in trade of almost £1,056. When Benjamin Brookhouse, the surviving executor, accounted, the cash in hand and in the bank remained the same, debts now amounted to £1,400, funds to £2,000, mortgages to £2,065, stocking frames to £250, furniture and cloth to more than £117, and stock almost £805. Expenses for his funeral extended to £28 12s 4d. His business dominated the trade in Hinckley.

Noticeably, Craven became a financier, investing in mortgages on real estate. Like the successful framework knitters, hosiers also diverted some of their capital into real estate. Craven also owned seven messuages in Castle Street which he let to tenants. As early as 1719, Richard Warner, hosier, had acquired two little messuages in Castle Street let out to tenants.[169] In Hinckley too, the hosier Thomas Parsons owned four messuages in Hog Lane in 1782.[170] With his own residence at The Lawns in Castle Street, John Payne, hosier, rented out four houses in Bond Street in the town.[171] A hosier in Barwell, John Parker, invested in seven messuages in Hog Lane in Hinckley.[172] Others had acquired one or two rental properties. George Ball, a framesmith in this small town in the early nineteenth century, invested in several messuages in the Borough and four in Stockwell Head. Since his personal estate was estimated to be below £100, he probably had little fixed and circulating capital tied up in his business.[173]

The most successful of the framesmiths, John Wood of Wigston Magna, adopted the same strategy of investment in real estate. His personal estate was reckoned as under £3,500 in 1805. In Wigston he owned The Plough and four other messuages. Extraordinarily, he had acquired two messuages in the Saturday market, three in Town Hall Lane, and two in Friar Lane, all in Leicester, and two in the parish of Knighton.[174]

By and large, hosiers in the putting-out stage have been considered for their success in monopolising the system. In the Leicestershire industry, there was some ambiguity about their position. First, there was some attrition. Although John Clarke designated himself a hosier in his will of 1724, when his inventory was produced after his death in 1731, he was reduced to a woolcomber. The contents of his combshop amounted to only £7 in value and his total personal

[169]ROLLR probate file for 1720.
[170]ROLLR PR/T/1784/144.
[171]ROLLR PR/T/1849/144.
[172]ROLLR PR/T/1857/121.
[173]ROLLR probate file for 1822 (will 1819).
[174]ROLLR PR/T/1805/191 (will 1803).

estate £18 10s 0d.[175] Bankruptcies recorded in the *London Gazette* indicate the extent of failure of hosiers.[176]

In 1755, Robert Lee of Leicester, a fugitive for debt, surrendered in King's Bench. His occupation was specified as woolcomber and hosier[177] Three years later, a commission in bankruptcy was authorized against John Swinfen, a hosier of Syston.[178] The following year again, the hosiers of Leicester, Thomas Jackson and Arthur Rickards were declared bankrupt, from which they were discharged in 1759.[179] Disastrously because of debt, Thomas Turner junior, woolcomber and hosier from Leicestershire, was imprisoned in the Wood Street Compter in London in 1761.[180] Significantly, in the context of the burgeoning framework knitting in Shepshed, a hosier there, Abel Oram, was proclaimed bankrupt in 1763.[181] Also relating to the expansion of the industry, in Hinckley, the hosier there, John Stephenson, was subject to a commission of bankruptcy in 1775. Significantly, the creditors' meetings were arranged at the Blackamoor's Head in Nottingham, a larger centre of the industry, over the succeeding three years.[182] His personal collapse might have been associated with the banking and credit crisis of this time.[183]

The following data is collected from the *London Gazette* for bankruptcies of hosiers from Leicestershire. The numbers are divided before and after 1815. Before that date, most of the hosiers were single agents or small partnerships of two men; after 1815, more complex partnerships and larger units appeared. Between 1755 and 1815, 28 hosiers in the borough of Leicester descended into bankruptcy. In 1794, the *Universal British Directory* recorded just over eighty active hosiers in the borough.[184] Thirteen bankrupts were declared in Hinckley between 1775 and 1815; creditors' meetings were scheduled mostly in Leicester, but one in

[175] ROLLR probate file for 1730.

[176] For textile bankrupts in general, Julian Hoppitt, *Risk and Failure in English Business 1700-1800* (Cambridge CUP, 1987), pp. 75-87 (and passim for the bankruptcy legislation).

[177] *LG* (Issue) 9496, p. 3.

[178] *LG* 9762, p. 4 (1758).

[179] *LG* 9893, p. 4.

[180] *LG* 1908, p. 7.

[181] *LG* 10278, p. 4; Levine, *Family Formation.*

[182] *LG* 11604, p. 8; 11683, p. 2; 11703, p. 2; 11871, p. 7; Roy Church, *Economic and Social Change in a Midland Town: Victorian Nottingham 1815-1900* (London: Routledge, 2014; originally 1966), pp. 26-57.

[183] Paul Kosmetatos, *The 1772-73 British Credit Crisis* (London: Palgrave, 2018).

[184] *The Universal British Directory* (London, 1791-), volume 2, pp. 66-8.

Nuneaton. One hosier went into liquidation in each of Stoke Golding, Whetstone and Blaby. Two were adjudged bankrupt in Shepshed. Bankrupts were ordered to appear before commissioners in the locality of their creditors. The creditors' meetings for the bankrupts from Blaby and Whetstone were convened in Leicester.[185] The hosier from Stoke Golding reported to Hinckley. One of the bankrupts from Shepshed, Richard Barlow junior, attended on the creditors at the Kedleston Inn.[186] Thomas Peach, the single bankrupt from Loughborough before 1815, met his creditors in Loughborough over at least a decade.[187] As addressed in more detail below, the location of the creditors' meetings provides some minimal information about the origins of at least some of the capital of these hosiers.

After 1815, single businessmen and small partnerships of two men continued and also collapsed. In the next five years, six more such bankruptcies were ordered in Leicester, and one each in Mountsorrel, Narborough and Hinckley. The formation of larger partnerships after 1815 stabilized the hosiery industry as it became concentrated and transferred to larger factory units.

General partnerships were significant in the hosiery trade. Partnership required no legal certification, just the agreement of the persons.[188] The dissolution of partnerships was recorded in the *London Gazette* to inform creditors. On the dissolution of the partnership of Thomas and John Coleman, trading as Thomas and John Coleman & Co. in Leicester, claims were directed to Thomas Coleman at his house in The Newark in 1799.[189] Between 1764 and 1846, the *Gazette* informed about the dissolution of 69 partnerships in the county. Fifty were located in the county borough. Fewer were recorded for the other principal locations of hosiery: Hinckley nine; Shepshed four; Loughborough three; Narborough two; and Ashby de la Zouch one. The borough thus maintained its monopoly over the industry. Partnerships of two or three hosiers were established for larger-scale business but also to feed capital into the enterprise. The norm, however, consisted of two or three partners. Notices in the *Gazette* from 1778 to 1819 convey information about the dissolution of those 84 partnerships: 69 comprised two partners and 15 three colleagues. Only two partnerships comprised four or

[185] *LG* 16433, pp. 1970-1971.
[186] *LG* 15949, p. 1131; 16007, p. 302 (discharge); 15528, p. 1479 (creditors met again 1812).
[187] *LG* 13685, p. 131; 16526, p. 1926; 16526, p. 1926 (final dividend 1811).
[188] Ron Harris, *Industrializing English Law: Entrepreneurship and Business Organization 1720-1844* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), pp. 28-9, 137-44.
[189] *LG* 15191 p. 1024.

more personnel. Dissolution happened for a variety of causes: the retirement of a partner; death; and bankruptcy of a partner.

The reason for the dissolution of the partnership between James Renwick and William Lee, both of Manchester, and Thomas Topham of Leicester, as hosiers and manufacturers was Topham's intention to go on alone, resulting in his illiquidity four years later.[190] The same circumstance affected the Cridland partnership in 1812; within a year Benjamin Cridland was insolvent.[191] Two years afterwards, Joseph Cridland was declared bankrupt and asked to report to the Guildhall in London to respond.[192] The same fate attended Thomas Brownson Harris in the same year (1820) that he withdrew from partnership. The *Gazette* specified his late partnership with John Green and William May in Hinckley.[193] The insolvency of Samuel Pickard Ogden was the occasion for the dissolution of the partnership of Ogden and Gregory Price in Leicester.[194]

On the demise of Edward Bankart, the *Gazette* reported the dissolution of the partnership of Bankart and Edward Higginson as hosiers in Leicester.[195] Upon the death of a partner, the partnership had to be dissolved and a new agreement entered.[196] Sutton, Weston and Oldacre in Leicester disbanded on the retirement of Weston as a partner.[197] The retirement of one partner was sometimes the occasion for the admission of another businessman. John and Joseph Bentley traded as John Bentley & Son. On John's retirement, Joseph introduced Gervase Cole Brown.[198]

Although most partnerships comprised local men, wider networks were occasionally established, In 1807, a partnership was dissolved which had consisted of John Adams of Bromsgrove, worsted manufacturer, John Pares, hosier in Leicester, James Heygate a City hosier, and Richard Jee, also of Bromsgrove and worsted manufacturer.[199] Hosiers in Leicester and London combined their efforts until their partnership was dissolved in 1819: William Hill, Leicester, and

[190] *LG* 11906 p. 3; 12271 p. 4.
[191] *LG* 16636 p. 2332; 16697 p. 194.
[192] *LG* 16948 p. 2091; Cridlands of All Saints, Leicester, ROLLR 1D63/7 (1803).
[193] *LG* 17642 p. 1944; 17465 p. 204.
[194] *LG* 17297 p. 2183; 17307 p. 2379.
[195] *LG* 15661 p. 1838.
[196] Harris, *Industrializing English Law*, p. 142.
[197] *LG* 17311 p. 2474.
[198] *LG* 18733 p. 1028.
[199] *LG* 15998 p. 164.

John Davenport of the Old Jewry, London.[200] Linking Nottingham, Leicester and London was the collaboration of Edward Hall (Nottingham), Smith Hall (London) and John Hall (Leicester). An adventurous partnership combined the knowledge of Edward Harris, of Moor Town, New Jersey, and Thomas Leach at the New Works in Leicester.[201]

The largest partnership evolved in Loughborough, trading from the town as Oliver Boden & Co., hosiers. Boden recruited in partnership the assets of Samuel Coldwell of nearby Hathern, framesmith, John Heathcoat (the lacemaker who migrated from Nottingham to Hathern and then Loughborough) and then a frame setter up, Richard Jelbeart, late of Loughborough, but now Leicester, gent., Thomas Simkin of Lockington. gent, and Thomas Barfoot Oliver, of Loughborough, hosier.[202] Oliver and Boden had engaged in an earlier partnership, dissolved in 1815.[203]

Partnerships involved recombination of members. In Shepshed, one of the principal hosiers was Smith Churchill who migrated from Nottingham to the village. In his first partnership in Shepshed he allied with Joseph Churchill and Benjamin Fleetwood (dissolved in 1800).[204] He subsequently entered into an alliance with William Joseph Fry (dissolved 1817).[205] The other hosiery business in the village involved Thomas Middleton and Thomas Barfoot Oliver, which was abandoned in 1803.[206] Both later combined with other partners operating out of Loughborough.

Obviously, some of the partnerships were composed of kin, often father and son or brothers such as the firm operated by Thomas, Robert and Charles Coleman.[207] Another partner, nevertheless, was often recruited to bring assets or expertise. John, Joseph and William Brown invoked William Drayton to trade as Brown, Sons & Drayton.[208]

As mentioned above, some little information is available about the provision of capital of the hosiers. Predominantly, finance was derived from within the hosiery

[200] *LG* 17526 p. 1854.
[201] *LG* 17270 p. 1628.
[202] *LG* 16044 p. 903.
[203] *LG* 17049 p. 1623.
[204] *LG* 15322 p. 1445.
[205] *LG* 17258 p. 1321.
[206] *LG* 15575 p. 439.
[207] *LG* 15942 p. 985 (dissolution 1806).
[208] *LG* 15791 p. 381.

region. Some investment was advanced by local financiers. During his trouble in 1797, Richard Gamble of Loughborough, worsted maker and hosier, assigned his real estate to Messrs Thorpe & Middleton, bankers in the town, John Toone, a local grocer, and William Dalby, a linen draper in London.[209] Nathaniel Estlin, a hosier of Hinckley, acquired investment in his business through Edward Thornley, a local money scrivener.[210] Both submitted to commissions of bankruptcy. In the bankruptcy of Estlin, the dividend was postponed as a consequence of a petition to the Lord Chancellor about 'a considerable debt' in 1815.[211] Some of the hosiers in Hinckley, as noted, had diverted profits into real estate rather than ploughing back into their business. In effect, the real estate acted as a store of capital which would not depreciate and was a stable investment, possibly with a higher return than from a small knitting affair. When he was pronounced bankrupt in 1814, William Jackson, a hosier in Hinckley, disposed of five messuages in the town to satisfy some creditors.[212]

Elsewhere, there were extreme variations in the capability of hosiers. When Ormestone Smith, hosier of Loughborough, expired in 1784, his personal estate was estimated to be below £40. This amount included, presumably, his circulating capital and debts inwards.[213] This slight amount might be compared with the affluence of Richard Warner, senior, a hosier in Hinckley, almost a century previously. His personal estate amounted to more than £251, including debts owed to him of (hopeful) £95 and (desperate) £15. [214] His residence consisted of the hall, parlour, four chambers, buttery, kitchen, workshop, mill house, mill chamber, and a glass case with sixteen books. Again, his quality of life might be contrasted with another hosier in Hinckley, John Wyatt the younger, who inhabited a building with a house, two chambers, a comb shop, and a buttery, containing personal estate of £9 7s 0d in 1711.[215]

It has been suggested that some of the Hinckley hosiers were subordinate to their counterparts in Leicester. Certainly, there was a network. The hosier of Hinckley, Edmund Iliffe, in 1746 appointed among his trustees his kin, John

[209] *LG* 14001, p. 343.
[210] *LG* 17156, p. 1443 (1816).
[211] *LG* 17022, p. 1122.
[212] *LG* 16923, p. 1593.
[213] ROLLR PR/T/1784/183 (will 1781).
[214] ROLLR PR/I/92 no. 49; probate file for 1689 no. 37.
[215] ROLLR PR/I/118 no. 136; probate file for 1711 no. 66.

and George Iliff, both hosiers of Leicester.[216] Another hosier in the small town, Samuel Law, selected William Paget, hosier of Leicester, as a trustee in 1743, the two related.[217] Similarly, John Boulton, hosier in Hinckley, invoked his brother, Joseph Boulton, hosier in Leicester, as his trustee in 1784.[218] In 1816, another hosier in Hinckley, nominated as his executors Benjamin Brookhouse, of Leicester, and Thomas Needham of Hinckley, both hosiers.[219]

The fixed capital of hosiers consisted mostly in the number of frames which they let. In the eighteenth century, the numbers were relatively small. By the early nineteenth century, however, fixed capital formation in frames expanded. The will of John Craven, a hosier in Hinckley, recounted ninety frames.[220] Before then, the slender data suggest much lower numbers of frames of up to twenty. The same differentiation and process obtained for the framesmiths. In his will of 1812, the framesmith of Hinckley, Edward Gunton, intended to distribute 180 frames among his wife, children and grandchildren.[221] Others, however, had in stock fewer than ten.

In the earliest decades of framework knitting, the most successful hosiers inhabited the borough of Leicester, from where they traded more widely. In 1717, the Leicester hosier Benjamin Gutheridge, had accumulated (silver) plate worth £16 and the remainder of his household effects exceeded £88. His stock comprised thirty dozen ordinary hose (£30), 27 dozen fine hose (£60), 357 yards of fine yarn (over £53), 222 yards of ordinary yarn (£25) and wool (more than £21). The debts owed to him amounted to £219 indicating both the geographical extent of his trade and also the amount of his circulating capital.[222] Less expansive, but still large, was the personal estate of Thomas Hammant, hosier in the borough, in 1725, amounting to over £121. His stock included 36 tod of wool (almost £20) and the inventory recorded £20 for wool dispatched to Nottingham, again reflecting the wider extent of his business and circulating capital. He incidentally had one stocking frame in his parlour.[223]

The fortune of Gutheridge was succeeded by the enterprise of the Vann fam-

[216]ROLLR probate file for 1746.
[217]ROLLR probate file for 1742.
[218]ROLLR PR/T/1790/28.
[219]ROLLR probate file for 1819.
[220]ROLLR probate file for 1819 (will 1816).
[221]ROLLR PR/T/1815/80.
[222]ROLLR probate file for 1717 (total personal estate £528 7s 0d).
[223]ROLLR probate file for 1724.

ily. The family acquired Belgrave Hall after the death of Edmund Cradock, another successful hosier in Leicester, who had erected the large house in 1709-13. Richard and James Vann had been born in Evington in respectively 1730 and 1746.[224] Their father, Thomas, still in Evington, put out at least 76 frames in Leicester and 22 villages both north and south of Leicester.[225] The brothers Richard, James and William migrated to Belgrave. William constructed Belgrave House, a fine polite building opposite the Hall.[226] When James died, his estate included £47,715 in equities and consols.[227] He elected to be buried back in Evington.[228] The last of the residents at the Hall, Hannah, widow of James, also specified burial in Evington next to her late husband in the chancel. She provided that the statuary in the garden of Belgrave Hall be considered heirlooms. Her bequests included £100 to each of the infirmary, the house for recovery from contagious diseases, the lunatic asylum, the National School, the SPCK, and the society for the relief of indigent old age.[229]

Those at the apex of the hosiers thus were capable of accruing considerable fortune. The range of wealth of hosiers, however, varied widely. The next section considers the life-style of the framework knitters employed by the hosiers.

Living in the hosiery industry

> That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Gentlemen, and Overseers, for the Exertions they have made (and are now making,) to enable the Framework Knitters to obtain the Necessaries of Life by their own Industry.[230]

From the second decade of the nineteenth century the fortune of the framework knitters entered into a period of vicissitudes. Their remuneration by the hosiers was constantly an issue as the trade suffered a decline. In the late eighteenth century, the knitters had formed an association by subscription and collective bargaining was vitally important, despite the Combination Acts.

[224] ROLLR DE1650/3 and 1650/4.
[225] *LJ* 1 February 1777 p. 3.
[226] ROLLR PR/T/1794/129 William's will 1793; probate 1794.
[227] Bank of England Wills Extract 1812.
[228] ROLLR DE1650/4 'from Belgrave'.
[229] TNA PROB11/2001/60 fos 58-.
[230] *LJ* 4 July 1817 p. 3.

The knitters had entered into a collective organization in the 1770s: the Associated Company of Framework-knitters of Leicestershire.[231] The organization convened meetings in various centres for the knitting villages: Shepshed (for Hathern, Belton, Diseworth, Long Whatton, Whitwick, Loughborough, Coleorton and Thringstone); Hinckley (for Stoke Golding, Burbage, Barwell and Sapcote); Narborough (for Croft, Huncote, Thurlaston, Enderby, Littlethorpe, Cosby and Whetstone); Wigston Magna (for Blaby, Countesthorpe, Glen Parva, Great Glen, Oadby, Newton Harcourt and Kilby); Leicester (for Humberstone, Belgrave, Birstall, and Anstey); Ullesthorpe (for Gilmorton, Willoughby Waterless, the Peatlings, Ashby Parva, and Dunton Basset); Syston (for Thrussington, Thurmaston, Barkby, and Queniborough); and Mountsorrel (for Barrow upon Soar, Rothley, Swithland, Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, Quorndon, Cossington and Sileby). Some of these villages contained only a small number of knitters. Knitters, however, if they subscribed, had an organization to represent them. Accordingly, 56 hosiery enterprises subscribed to the Association of Hosiers in 1792.[232]

There is no doubt that some knitters in the putting-out system experienced vicissitudes and lived on the edge of precariousness. In 1771, the stocking makers in Leicester addressed a petition to the hosiers respectfully indicating their situation because of the cost of living. The hosiers met immediately at The Cranes, but responded that they could not increase wages because of the condition of trade.[233] The knitters suggested that only a quarter of their company might obtain as much as 9s a week by 'close work'. From this income, deductions were expected of 9d per week for frame rent, the same amount per week for seaming, and 3d per week for needles. Winter required a further 9d per week for candles. The maximum income thus might at best total 7s 3d per week in summer, reducing to 6s 6d per week in winter, subject to whatever house rental.[234] When the knitters of Shepshed voiced their concern over prices for work relative to the cost of living, they attributed the decline of real wages to the entry of under-capitalized hosiers: 'complain of the trade being hurt by a number of men beginning their business with small capital...'[235]

The 'system' could also result in capricious actions. These issues were high-

[231] *LJ* 18 April 1778 p. 3.
[232] *LJ* 4 May 1792 p. 1.
[233] *LJ* 20 July 1771 p.3.
[234] *LJ* 13 July 1771 p. 3.
[235] *LJ* 10 September 1790 p. 3.

lighted by a letter to the editor of the *Leicester Journal* in 1831 complaining his wage had been arbitrarily cut. He had received the material for processing and expected the rate to be respected, but had to accept a haircut after the work was completed.[236]

Fluctuation in the trade in the early nineteenth century was particularly deleterious for the knitters, not least in the county borough. Here, the parish officials began to introduce framework knitting for the inmates of the poorhouses. The officers for St Martin's parish advertised in 1812 for a governor of their intended poorhouse with the qualification being 'a perfect knowledge' of framework knitting.[237] An advertisement for the appointment of a governor of the house of industry in Smeeton Westerby also required knowledge of the affairs of framework knitting.[238] This new departure affected the framework knitters by undercutting the cost of production. The framework knitters complained in 1817 and the overseers agreed to abandon the practice with some qualification.[239]

By this time (1817), collective bargaining had developed, the Association of Framework Knitters in the borough and county negotiating with the hosiers as a body. In 1817, the two bodies agreed a new set of prices: 4d to 23d per pair of women's worsted dumps; 7d to 14d per pair of ribbed worsted hose; and set prices for broad ribbed hose and men's plain hose.[240] In responding to the claim, the hosiers commended the peaceful petitioning of the knitters and applauded the cordiality of the process. By 1819, the situation had declined even further, so that subscriptions and donations were enlisted for the Framework-Knitters Relief Society.[241] Some knitters arranged for a friendly society to support them in adversity, as at Sapcote in 1791.[242]

From 1814, the wages of the knitters were seriously repressed. As a consequence of their action, an agreement was reached in 1817 on the principle by which wages should be determined: the Statement of 1817. The Statement became a reference point for all subsequent negotiation by the knitters. The knitters on several occasions withdrew their labour, as in the 'turn out' in 1824 when the

[236] *LJ* 8 July 1831 p. 4.
[237] *LJ* 1 September 1812, p. 4.
[238] *LC* 19 February 1820 p. 3.
[239] *LJ* 6 June 1817.
[240] *LJ* 6 June 1817 p. 3.
[241] *LJ* 26 November 1819 p. 3.
[242] ROLLR M1131.

knitters massed in Infirmary Square.[243] Knitters attended from Shepshed and Loughborough. The subsequent year, the magistrates of Leicester admonished the knitters about the conduct of their protests.[244]

As the trade slumped in 1814, the knitters issued a petition in the newspaper about the depression of prices in relation to the cost of living. The rhetoric of their petition emphasized the cost to their humanity:

> That under the present existing circumstances, it is a moral responsibility for the industrious framework-knitter to maintain his family ... The present prices allowed for labour in the art of framework-knitting is most distressing to the profession ...[245]

By 1827, the knitters of Leicester had organized throughout the borough. Deputies had been established in the knitting precincts: Jewry Wall; Wharf Street (two); London Road; Churchgate; Oxford Street (two); Bakehouse Lane; Barkby Lane; Sanvey Gate; Belgrave Gate (two); and Elbow Lane.

Despite the organization of the knitters, individual workers remained vulnerable in their relationship to the hosiers. The hosier of Leicester Richard Rawson (1768-1843), among others, accused several framework knitters of 'neglect of work'. When Rawson proceeded against William Bramley, framework knitter, for neglect of work, Bramley was remanded at his own request.[246] In these cases, the hosier had provided the material for knitting, but the framework knitter had not completed the work either at all or on time. The accused were brought before the police court or petty sessions.[247] Accused of embezzling materials and neglect of work by the hosier of Hinckley, John Mariott, the knitter John Summerfield of the same town, was ordered to pay £1 6s 8d damages and 14s for the costs of the court. The same knitter, Summerfield, was prosecuted by another hosier of Hinckley, Samuel Hykes, for neglect of work.[248] The unfortunate John Herbert, arraigned by Mrs Potter for the same delinquency, was consigned to a

[243] *LC* 26 June 1824 p. 3.
[244] *LC* 23 April 1835 p. 2.
[245] *LJ* 1 April 1814 p. 3.
[246] *LJ* 14 March 1834 p. 3.
[247] ROLLR 7D41/14 (burial of Rawson); *LJ* 15 April 1836 p. 1; *LM* 27 August 1836 p. 2; *LJ* 16 November 1838 p. 1; *LJ* 30 November 1838 p. 3; *LM* 1 December 1838 p. 2; *LC* 27 April 1839 p. 4; *LC* 11 May 1839 p. 4; *LM* 31 August 1839 p. 3; *LC* 26 October 1839 p. 4; 21 November 1839 p. 3; and many other entries.
[248] *LJ* 4 October 1833 p. 3.

month on the treadmill.[249]

Rawson also brought an action against the framework knitter of Anstey, William Evans. Evans had entered into employment with Rawson as a consequence of which Rawson furnished Evans with three frames. When Rawson requested the return of the frames, Evans declined on the grounds that Rawson had not paid 3d per week when the frames were idle: 'for standing room during the time they were not working'. Rawson recovered the frames at law.[250]

How to interpret this 'resistance' and 'neglect of work' by the knitters is difficult. Their 'delinquency' in not completing the work might have been the result of various excuses: withdrawal of labour; insufficient capacity to perform the work on time; simple forgetfulness. The differences between hosiers and knitters occurred, it seems, in the 1830s concurrent with the incipience of Chartism. Their inaction might have been a personal attempt to break shackles by 'foot dragging'.[251]

The training of the next generation of knitters depended on apprenticeships. Most derived from within the family or kinship. The parishes also, of course, passed out poor children to work for the knitters. In 1817, the officers of St Margaret's parish in Leicester, offered up ten boys and girls, several of whom had knowledge of framework knitting.[252] In the late eighteenth century, the parish officers of Evington, Burton Overy and Blaby placed many of their poor children as apprentices to framework knitters.[253] Compulsory apprenticeship was onerous in many cases. An apprentice in Belgrave, Arthur Pebody, had been so beaten by his master, John Palmer, to the extent of broken ribs.[254] Two apprentices of John Pickerd in Loughborough absconded.[255] Numerous apprentices ran away in the late eighteenth century.[256]

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[249] *LM* 17 February 1838 p. 2.
[250] *LM* 19 August 1837 p. 3.
[251] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1985); Scott, *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* trans. Stephen Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984).
[252] *LJ* 8 August 1817 p. 3.
[253] ROLLR 14D65/V/2-48 (Evington); DE2774/168-239 (Burton Overy); DE3352/185-217 (Blaby).
[254] *LJ* 18 January 1777 p. 3.
[255] *LJ* 21 December 1792 p. 3.
[256] *LJ* 4 September 1762 p. 4; 18 August 1770 p. 2; 5 January 1771 p. 2; 18 September 1773

The reception of apprentices into parishes was not always acceptable. The framework knitter in Sapcote, John Cook, received three apprentices from outside the parish. Parishioners expressed their fears that the apprentices might in due course become chargeable on the parish by obtaining settlement. In the event, seven male parishioners evicted Cook and the apprentices and smashed the frames.[257]

By and large, framework knitters did not indulge in consumerism for comfort or leisure. Their households were basic and they were parsimonious. Exceptions existed, of course, like John Townsend, a knitter in Burbage, who bequeathed six silver spoons to one daughter, Ann, and a silver shell and sugar bowl to another, Mary, although his personal estate did not amount to £50. He had three daughters and one son at the time of his will in 1825.[258] Robert Dagley was a second-generation framework knitter in Hinckley. Although he operated four stocking frames, their combined value was merely £16. On the other hand, he had obtained two houses in the town which he let. Since he possessed only three cattle, he had not engaged in husbandry. Although his total personal estate was appraised at £35 8d 6d, he had acquired luxury items for his household: a small silver cup; two small silver spoons; two small rings; a pair of silver clasps; and a pair of silver buckles. These items may, nevertheless, have been acquired specifically to pass on as legacies, which is, indeed, indicated in his will.[259] Another Hinckley knitter, Edward Fisher, accumulated similar items which he bequeathed to his daughter: silver tea spoons, tea tongs, tea chest, and silver cup. These items were intended to be passed on, but also reflected a trend to consumption of tea in the eighteenth century as a polite activity in view of the cost of tea.[260] George Gery, a knitter in Barwell, had also indulged in this new fashion, acquiring six silver spoons, a tea board and 'tea things', even though his total effects did not amount to £20.[261] The panoply constituted luxury items.[262] There was a dual purpose: luxury and legacy. In all cases, they were passed to

p. 3; 17 July 1788 p. 3; 19 June 1779 p. 1; 10 August 1792 p. 3; 20 September 1792 p. 2; 14 February 1794 p. 1; 9 May 1794 p. 3.

[257] *LC* 9 October 1813 p. 8.

[258] ROLLR probate file for 1826.

[259] ROLLR probate file for 1728.

[260] ROLLR PR/T/1763/109.

[261] ROLLR probate file for 1783 (will 1779).

[262] Jon Stobart, *Sugar & Spice: Grocers and Groceries in Provincial England, 1650-1830* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), pp. 157-60, 218, 236, 241-8.

daughters.

Most stockingers remained, however, parsimonious, either by design or circumstance. As in the case of the weavers, the valuations of personal estate is divided into before and after about 1730, the first phase based on valuations in probate inventories, and the second stage on the approximate valuation when the probate was granted (in increments). Before 1730 (and excluding the borough of Leicester, for which there are two high values), only eighteen observations can be aggregated. The mean value consisted of £40 (standard deviation 44.147) and the median £30 10s 0d. The personal estate of nine knitters was considered to be worth less than £30, including four under £10.

Between about 1830 and 1857, the personal estate of 215 framework knitters in the two regions, north and south, have been collected. Of these observations, 77 (36 percent) were estimated as under £20 (including eleven under £5). One hundred (47 percent) had such estate considered to be worth under £100. The estate of another 27 (8 percent) did not exceed £300 (a dozen under £200 and fifteen under £300). Five had estate under £30 and under £50 and six between under £400 and under £1,000. This estate had to account for household effects, fixed capital, and circulating capital (including debts owed to the deceased). Predominantly, the framework knitters had a frugal existence.

Some knitters lived on the edge of penury, of course, resulting in misery. William Eggington migrated from Market Bosworth to Stapleton, a more concentrated framework area, but ended up in the county gaol. Committed there too was a needle maker, Thomas Jeacock, who had also moved from Marton (Warwickshire) to Hinckley to benefit from the industrial activity there.[263] Consigned to gaol too in 1774, Thomas Godbear had worked as a knitter in Waltham on the Wolds.[264] Having failed in his enterprise in Shepshed, Thomas Hucknal was delivered to prison.[265] Other inmates later on included Thomas Coupland, a knitter of Whitwick, and Nathan Grimes, a knitter who had moved from Hinckley to Blaby, perhaps to escape creditors.[266] William Radford, a knitter of Wymeswold, from gaol petitioned for relief as an insolvent debtor.[267] In the borough, Thomas Coleman operated as a knitter in Southgate Street, but was imprisoned in Le-

[263] *LG* 16635 p. 1660.
[264] *LG* 11471 p. 5.
[265] *LG* 12223 p. 5.
[266] *LG* 15384 p. 82.
[267] *LG* 17289 p. 1850.

icester gaol for debt in 1755.[268] Several other framework knitters petitioned for relief: both Thomas and Samuel Humber of Quorndon, and John Marshall of Ashby de la Zouch.[269] Perhaps some personal deficit was responsible for their predicament, but there were also important structural issues about credit, debt and finance in the eighteenth century, such that imprisonment for debt was a 'common' outcome.[270]

This thriftiness is perhaps illustrated by William Clark, a knitter in Hinckley. He operated a single frame in the New Buildings. His executor swore to manage a personal estate reckoned to amount to less than £100. His will (1837) divulged that he had only a single frame, but had managed to accumulate £90 in the savings bank.[271]

For the most part, the housing of framework knitters was modest. Unusually, in Hinckley, the stocking frame knitter, John Stephenson, in 1692 inhabited a building with a house (living area), kitchen, pantry, parlour, three chambers over, and a garrett, with furnishings exceeding £20. (His will, moreover, consisted of a large parchment).[272] The knitters' workspace was normally a 'shop' constructed at the back of the house, usually accommodating only one to four frames.[273] In the early nineteenth century some speculative building developed. Several buildings for knitters were auctioned in Cosby in 1810, consisting of a messuage and shop for seven frames and four newly-built messuages each with a shop each having eight frames.[274] Similarly in Earl Shilton sixteen messuages with knitting shops were offered, each with 'spacious gardens thereto', an attraction for knitters for their own crops.[275]

At the end of the eighteenth century, the framework knitter, George Mount-

[268] *LG* 9484 p. 7.
[269] *LG* 17135 p. 900.
[270] Tawney Paul, *The Poverty of Disaster: Debt and Insecurity in Eighteenth-century Britain* (Cambridge: CUP, 2019), pp. 125-32.
[271] ROLLR PR/T/1837/45; L. Perriton & J. Maltby, 'Working-class households and savings in England, 1850-1880', *Enterprise & Society* 16 (2015), pp. 413-45; Maltby, '"The wife's administration of the earnings?" Working-class women and savings in the mid-nineteenth century', *Continuity & Change* 26 (2011), pp. 187-217.
[272] ROLLR PR/I/103 no. 144.
[273] Stanley Chapman, *The Early Factory Masters: The Transition of the Factory in the Midlands Textile Industry* (Aldershot: Gregg Reprints, 1992, originally 1967), pp. 34-7.
[274] *LJ* 3 August 1810 p. 4.
[275] *LC* 8 May 1813 p. 1.

ney, appended his signature to his will with a frail hand.[276] Estimates of the rate of basic literacy have relied upon signatures to wills.[277] Before 1800, 180 wills exist for framework knitters in the two regions of intensive production. About 62 percent were inscribed with a signature of the testator and 38 percent by mark. The wills with signatures are inflated by the predominance of signatures in the small town of Hinckley. By contrast, only 40 percent of the wills of weavers had a signature (Total number = 59; signatures = 23) (again, contained within the two regions). Between 1691 and 1725, there is a corpus of forty weavers' wills, only eighteen of which bore a signature. These forty weavers resided in 35 different parishes, many in east Leicestershire, and operated a single loom. During the early nineteenth century, the extent of literacy among the framework knitters improved. Between 1800 and 1858, 71 percent of the knitters' wills included a signature compared with 62 percent before 1800. There is probably a margin of error here, considering the relatively small number of wills, but some improvement might have been expected from changes in educational facilities. From the small numbers of weavers' wills after 1800, however, the level of (il)literacy remained stable.[278]

Some of the testators benefited from direct contact with schoolmasters. One of the trustees of the framesmith in Loughborough, Lemuel Holmes, was Edward Linthwaite, a local schoolmaster. (The other trustee was a grocer).[279] The trustees in the will (1797) of Thomas Aldridge, knitter in Hinckley, included the schoolmaster, George Ward.[280] The schoolmaster, William Ward, Thomas's predecessor, witnessed the will of William Wood, knitter of Hinckley, and probably wrote the document. Wood was able to sign his will.[281] William Ward acted as trustee under the will of John Hind, another knitter in Hinckley, this

[276] ROLLR PR/T/1799/129.

[277] David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1980); Roger S. Schofield, 'The measurement of literacy in pre-industrial England', in Jack Goody, ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: CUP, 1968), pp. 311–25; Schofield, 'Dimensions of illiteracy in England 1750–1850', in H. Graf, ed., *Literacy and Social Development in the West: a Reader* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), pp. 201–17; Rab A. Houston, *Literacy and Society in Scotland and England, 1600–1850* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984).

[278] Gullickson, *Spinners and Weavers of Auffay*, pp. 121-2.

[279] ROLLR PR/T/1815/102.

[280] ROLLR PR/T/1798/4.

[281] ROLLR PR/T/1789/199 (will 1784).

testator also signing his will.[282] William Ward probably performed this task for several testators in Hinckley. Before the Wards, the schoolmaster John Dalby acted as trustee of the knitters, Edward Fisher and John Russell the elder, who subscribed their wills.[283]

Occasionally, information about the educational ability of the knitters is revealed in wills. In 1839, the knitter in Barrow upon Soar, Thomas Matthews, bequeathed his single frame to one of his two sons: 'Also my frame to Keep for my Son Thomas Matthews to be Kept in good Repair...' In addition, the testator directed that his granddaughter should receive one magazine and a book, no doubt to encourage her training in reading. The rest of his books were destined to Thomas.[284]

One exception among the weavers was John Peabody of Great Glen. Desiring to make his will in 1707, Gilbert Swan 'sent for him [Peabody] to make his Will, he went accordingly and made him a Will agreeable to the instructiones...' Unfortunately, the will was torn to shreds by a child of the executor, Francis Hutchings. Upon this catastrophe, Peabody composed another copy of the will. Peabody and two others involved were required to swear to the authenticity of the copy in 1712. At the time of the testimonials, Peabody was 49.[285] Between 1696 and 1719, John composed the wills of nine other parishioners.[286] A schoolmaster had a licence in Great Glen in 1636, but there is no evidence of a school there thirty years later.[287]

John was the son of Francis Pe(a)body, a weaver in Great Glen, who had died in 1685, when his personal estate amounted to £41 4s 6d, £35 of which consisted of debts owed to him. His will of 1683 revealed that he had bought a close from William Godman and that his brother, William, owed him £20 on mortgage. Francis had one son. To his will, Francis appended his mark.[288]

Reporting the death of husband and wife Richard and Mary Suffolk in 1822, the *Chronicle* reported that Richard had attained the age of 88, during 55 years

[282]ROLLR probate file for 1776 (will 1769; personal estate under £5).
[283]ROLLR PR/T/1763/109; PR/T/1772/149 (will 1763).
[284]ROLLR PR/T/1853/103.
[285]ROLLR probate file for 1712.
[286]Laurence Bery 1696; Richard Mould 1699; Elizabeth Frift 1699; Thomas Reache 1699; William Palmer 1707; George Fox 1710; William Plummer 1710; Richard Naple 1716; John Green 1710 (in the probate files for those years).
[287]Brian Simon, 'Leicestershire Schools 1625-1640', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 3 (1954), pp. 42-58 at pp. 52, 56.
[288]ROLLR PR/I/1685 no. 31; probate file for 1685 no. 25.

of which he had had employment as a framework knitter. In fact, he and his father had also occupied the position of parish clerk for the last ninety years.[289] At a debate at the Political Union, Mr Iliff opined:

> In Leicester, forty years ago, a framework-knitter could give his son a good education. I was the son of a framework-knitter; my father sent me to the best schools; and I hope the time will come again when the framework-knitters of Leicester will be able to give their children a liberal education.[290]

Iliff himself was deeply involved in 'Sabbath School Instruction'. Shortly afterwards, however, 'Observer' suggested that, although Sunday schools were admirable in themselves, they were insufficient.[291]

Some scepticism was expressed about the notion of human capital promoting economic growth in the eighteenth century. Education, it was proposed, was not as important as pragmatic skill. Indeed, it has been suggested that education in England lagged behind several other countries and that English education was deficient in promoting science.[292]

It might be expected that many in the industry belonged to non-Anglican communities. The hosier of Hinckley, Thomas Alsop, made a legacy of £20 to the Independent chapel.[293] Another knitter in Hinckley, John Twiggs alias Pratts, left money to the trustees of the meeting of the Protestant Dissenters to assist the poor members, although his own estate was reckoned as under £20.[294] In Great Glen, Robert Kerby described himself in the preamble to his will as framework knitter and 'preacher of the everlasting Gospel'.[295] John Coulson, one of the knitters in Shepshed, attended the Wesleyan Chapel.[296] As mentioned, Nathaniel Estlin experienced a bankruptcy in his business as a hosier

[289] *LC* 28 October 1822 p. 3.
[290] *LC* 17 December 1831 p. 2.
[291] LC 17 November 1832 p. 2. See now Keith D. M. Snell, 'The Sunday School movement in England and Wales: child labour, denominational control, and working-class culture', *Past & Present* 164 (1999), pp. 122-68.
[292] Joel Mokyr, *A Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), pp. 123-6.
[293] ROLLR probate file for 1824 (will 1803).
[294] ROLLR PR/T/1772/187.
[295] ROLLR probate file for 1829 (will 1821).
[296] *LC* 15 May 1830 p. 3.

in Hinckley. He descended from a Presbyterian lineage in Hinckley.[297] Much of the donation for the relief of the framework knitters derived from nonconformist chapels.[298] The baptism register for the Great Meeting in Leicester in the 1820s and 1830s erratically recorded the occupation of the father. The fathers were overwhelmingly framework knitters, some ninety in all, mostly from the borough, but also from Countesthorpe, Anstey, and other villages.[299]

Sobriety was not, of course, the characteristic of all framework knitters. Despite organization of the knitters and the adherence to nonconformist religion, there were plenty of freewheeling framework knitters, on the lines of Joseph Woolley of Clifton.[300] Misfortune awaited John Shipley, a knitter in Whetstone. He walked into Leicester to collect his wage (£3) from his master, a hosier in the borough. He staggered back via public houses and his body was discovered in a field exposed to the cold. He was dead at the age of 41.[301] Two knitters of Thurmaston walked into the borough where they were caught drinking at midnight in the Three Cranes.[302] In this activity, they were no different from many of the population.

Conclusion

In the introduction a George Mountney was mentioned, whose will was proved in 1789.[303] His successor, another George Mountney of Loughborough composed his will in 1798. From the legacies, it can be discerned that his son, William, also a framework knitter, had migrated to nearby Gracedieu, his daughter, Elizabeth, had married John Start of Shepshed, another framework knitter, and another daughter, Ann, had espoused William Jones, another framework knitter in Enderby. Although his son and one daughter had remained within the occupation in the northern knitting region, Ann had moved to the southern knitting region, below Leicester. Through this single family, the concentration of the industry becomes evident. Agglomeration was significant.

The critical time of transition from handloom weaving to framework knitting was the early eighteen century. Between 1712 and 1729, the weavers were

[297] TNA RG4/3894, fos 16r, 65r; PROB11 1779 fos 88v-89v.
[298] *LC* 3 March 1821 p. 1; 17 March 1821 p. 1; 24 March 1821 p. 1.
[299] TNA RG4/2325.
[300] Steedman, *An Everyday Life*.
[301] *LM* 21 January 1837 p. 3.
[302] *LC* 21 March 1835 p. 3.
[303] ROLLR probate file for 1789

dispersed throughout the county. Predominantly, weavers had a marginal economy, although a minority did establish a not inconsiderable personal estate. A minority of the weavers engaged in agriculture; where they did, they invested in livestock for common pasturing. Most weavers possessed only one or two looms, especially outside the areas where framework knitting supplanted the weavers.

The transition from weaving to framework knitting involved a step-change. The fixed capital investment (looms and gears) for weavers normally amounted to £2-3; new frames, however, commanded a price of £10. Numerous framework knitters, nonetheless, had frames which had depreciated considerably; there existed also the possibility of purchasing second-hand or surplus frames. Although weavers resided in villages throughout the county, it was only in those locations where numerous weavers were operating that framework knitting ensued.

By the early nineteenth century some independent framework knitters were diversifying their capital investment, purchasing houses to develop a rental income. There was a natural inclination to transfer profits into buildings for a steady income in expanding urban places and to avoid the vicissitudes of trading, especially in stocking hose. A rentier economy, moreover, signified an elevated social position. It was also evident that the trade was being concentrated into the hands of industrialists with better resources of capital.

Handloom weaving and framework knitting were an occupational status, but not an economic position. There was immense variation in wealth and resources inside both those crafts. Some framework knitters, moreover, resembled hosiers, operating multiple frames in their shop and employing non-kin apprentices and workpeople.

The framework knitting industry advanced in Leicestershire in line with the agglomeration of handloom weaving. On the other hand, framework knitting was path-dependent on the concentration of handloom weaving. Stocking-making on frames developed only where there had existed an agglomeration of weavers in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

3 Human capital and industrialization: Leicestershire's hosiery industry, 1754-1870

The role of 'human capital' – in the restricted sense of an educated society – has most recently been dismissed as a formative influence on industrialization by one of the foremost investigators of the British Industrial Revolution.[1] This conclusion concurred with some modern economists' interest in cultural influences on economic growth.[2] This renewed interest in the role of 'human capital' in industrialization actually also revisits a difference of interpretation of the relationship between education and industrialization which was initiated in the late 1960s and continued into the early 1980s. On the one hand, the 'optimist', Edwin West proposed an expansion of educational facilities during and as a consequence of industrialization.[3] 'We conclude that in the early nineteenth century there is no evidence to show that education did not play some significant part in the industrial progress'.[4] Industrialization was, in this scenario, a spur to schooling. In contrast, Michael Sanderson suggested that educational opportunities were limited by: lack of leisure time because of the demands of the industrial regime; and the increase of population resulting in 'excess demand' which the system of day schools could not accommodate.[5] 'This is familiar, but

[1] Joel Mokyr, *A Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), pp. 123-27; also David Mitch, 'The role of education and skill in the British Industrial Revolution' in Mokyr, ed., *The British Industrial Revolution: An Economic Perspective* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2nd edn, 1999), pp. 241-79; contrast with Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), pp. 306-365.

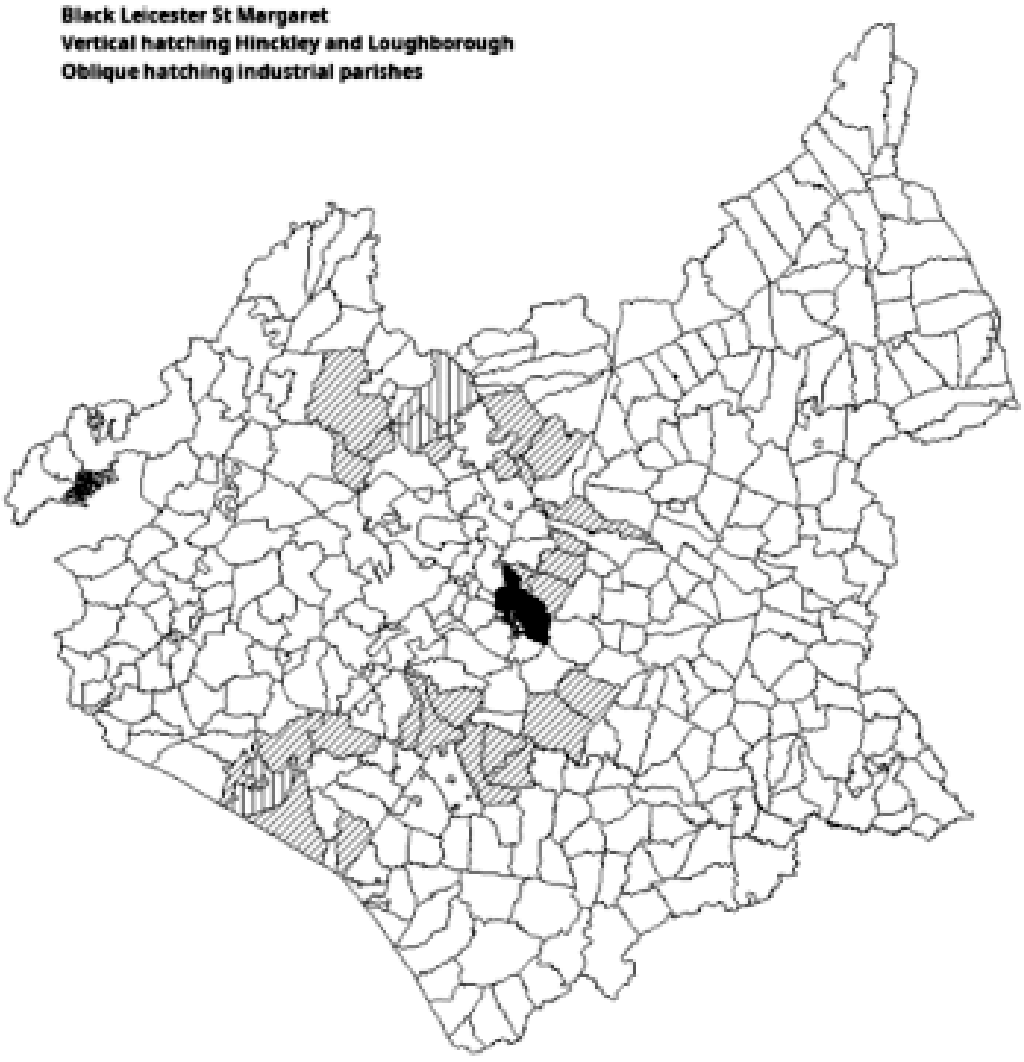
[2] For divided views on education for working people in the 1830s, Duncan Bythell, *The Handloom Weavers: A Study in the English Cotton Industry During the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: CUP, 1969), pp. 167-8.

[3] Edwin G. West, 'Literacy and the Industrial Revolution', *Economic History Review* 2nd series 31 (1978), pp. 369-83; *Education and the Industrial Revolution* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1975; repr. by the Liberty Fund Inc., 2001).

[4] West, *Education and the Industrial Revolution*, p. 256.

[5] Michael Sanderson, 'Education and the factory in industrial Lancashire, 1780-1840', *Economic History Review* 2nd series 20 (1967), pp. 266-79; 'Literacy and social mobility in Industrial Revolution England', *Past and Present* 56 (1972), pp. 75-104; *Education, Economic Change and Society in England, 1780-1870* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983). See also Thomas W. Laqueur, 'Literacy and social mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England', *Past & Present* 64 (1974), pp. 96-107 and *Family Formation*, pp. 28-9 – children not allowed to be diverted from work.

Figure 3: Industrial areas of Leicestershire



the effect was greatly to reduce the possibility of a lower-class child's being able to attend day school'.[6] This debate has continued and recently been revived about industrialization and education in England.[7] Deploying a massive dataset from ten Registration Districts after 1839, David Vincent re-examined the issue.[8] Although his general context was wider, he did also address the issue of literacy and industrialization. Did 'pure' educational development, such as literacy, contribute to industrial progress or was it irrelevant? Was pragmatic learning more effective in the industrial process than general educational attainment? It has, indeed, recently again been been asserted that this pragmatic learning distinguished England from parts of the continent.[9] Human capital varied in its applicability. There are two inter-related issues here. The first is whether there was educational development in industrial localities. The second is whether this educational advance had any impact on industrialization. The first question is more easily addressed than the second.

The ability to sign one's name in the past has been accepted as an index of basic written literacy.[10] Most previous analyses have considered aggregate ability to sign, regardless of occupation, class and social position. That approach is understandable since the marriage registers, on which the analysis is based, were not required to record that sort of information between 1754 and 1837. For the framework-knitting regions of Leicestershire, however, the registers of two parishes (Hinckley St Mary and Sileby) incidentally contain such information for some of the years between 1754 and 1837. From late in 1837, this information was compulsory and provides an insight into the literacy of the lower social groups from then until the first comprehensive education statute of 1870.

The intention here is to drill down into a local society in industrializing regions in the East Midlands. Textile production in Leicestershire has not been

[6]Sanderson, 'Education and the factory', p. 266.

[7]The earlier debate is discussed by David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), pp. 95-104.

[8]Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture*, pp. 281-5 (Appendix A: Marriage register sample).

[9]Mokyr, *Culture of Growth*, p. 126.

[10]David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1980); Roger S. Schofield, 'The measurement of literacy in pre-industrial England', in Jack Goody (ed.), *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: CUP, 1968), pp. 311–25; Schofield, 'Dimensions of illiteracy in England 1750–1850', in H. Graf (ed.), *Literacy and Social Development in the West: a Reader* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), pp. 201–17; Rab A. Houston, *Literacy and Society in Scotland and England, 1600–1850* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984).

considered in the discussion of industrialization. Its features are important because of the persistence over a long period of the 'domestic system' of the textile industry which consisted of framework knitters and stockingers working in their own households, often with rented frames, which involved the entire household in production. Industrial development in Leicestershire was concentrated from the late seventeenth century on framework knitting of stockings. Two regions were involved: a sequence of parishes between Hinckley, a town in the south-west of the county, and the borough of Leicester; and a corridor down the valley of the river Soar from Leicester to Loughborough (Figs 1 and 3). The economy of Hinckley was dominated by framework knitting. Framework knitting in Hinckley and adjacent parishes commenced in the late seventeenth century and continued as domestic (household) production into the middle of the nineteenth century. The adjacent parishes of Burbage and Barwell and the chapelry of Earl Shilton all also became dominated by the manufacture of stockings through domestic industry. The other town of Loughborough had a more diversified economy, although in the nineteenth century it gradually became dominated by textile production. The borough and county town of Leicester had the most diverse professional, industrial and commercial economy. The immense parishes of St Margaret's and St Mary's have been selected for this analysis as they became industrial and working-class location, the population expanding rapidly in the nineteenth century.

Apart from Hinckley, the present analysis is not concerned with aggregate data but concentrates on four occupational groups at the lower end of the socio-economic scale: framework knitters (male and female); labourers; and female servants. The intention is to assess how far down the social scale changes in educational provision penetrated. Framework knitting was at the forefront of industrial development in Leicestershire. Aside from Hinckley, the information about these occupations largely derives from the marriage registers between 1838 and 1870 inclusive. From the end of 1837, it was obligatory to include the occupation of at least the groom. In fact, some registers also state the employment of the bride. The marriage partners between 1838 and 1870 are divided into two cohorts: before and after 1851. One reason is the publication of the Mann Report on educational provision through England and Wales.[11] The division also corresponds with West's concentration on educational facilities between 1850 and

[11] *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Education in Great Britain Being the Official Report of Horace Mann ...* (London: George Routledge & Co., 1854).

1870 which was important for his conclusions.[12]

Educational Opportunities

Returning to the contentions of Sanderson and West, it is necessary to consider educational opportunities for the industrial working class. The intervention of the state influenced some of that provision. The first of these conjunctures is the Factory Act of 1802 which required qualifying textile factories and mills to offer some education.[13] The subsequent Act of 1833 had ambivalent consequences resulting in some hostility and evasion by factory owners.[14] The Act prevented children under nine years of age from working in factories; those aged between nine and thirteen were restricted to a 48-hour week with a maximum working day of eight hours; children under the age of thirteen should receive three hours of education daily; no child should engage in night work. Subsequent Factory Acts expanded on the injunctions. Additionally, from 1833 the state introduced grant in aid for schools.[15] In 1844, the hours of labour of those aged eight to thirteen were reduced to six and a half hours per day and women's hours were also limited.[16] By the statute of 1847, women and children under the age of eighteen were limited to a ten-hour workday. By the 1840s, there was concern about the educational and spiritual welfare of children which inspired the reduction in hours. In 1867 the Factory Extension Act applied to all institutions employing more than fifty people in work and the Workshop Regulation Act extended the provisions to workplaces with fewer than fifty employees.[17] The problem is that the framework knitting industry in Leicestershire until well into the nineteenth century was organized on the domestic level through the putting-out system, not in factories or mills. The question remains, however, whether the requirement for education in one sector might have had a wider impact in encouraging a general desire for educational attainment.

Theoretically, all these restrictions might have allowed time for some educational instruction for young children and women. By the 1840s hosiery production was being concentrated in larger units and the Workshop Regulation

[12] West, 'Schooling in England and Wales, 1850-70' in *Education in the Industrial Revolution*, pp. 95-110.

[13] 42 Geo. III, c. 73.

[14] 3 & 4 William IV c. 103; Sanderson, 'Education and the factory', p. 275.

[15] West, *Education and the Industrial Revolution,* p. 75.

[16] 7 & 8 Victoria c. 15.

[17] 27 & 28 Victoria c. 48 and 30 & 31 Victoria c. 146.

Act had an impact on framework knitting units if local authorities enforced the requirements strictly. Any effect on the level of literacy would come into view a decade after the legislation. In fact, it is suggested that the age at which boys started work fell after 1790, but was then fairly static at about ten, before rising again after 1850.[18]

From advertisements in the *Leicester Journal* Zena Crook and Brian Simon deduced that there existed 46 boys' schools in the county in 1780-99, eighty in 1800-19, and 76 in 1820-39. Many of them specialized in 'commercial' education to fit scholars for employment. Many consisted of boarding schools with high fees.[19]

Comprehending general attendance in school, however, is complicated.[20] In 1851, Horace Mann produced a report on education for the Registrar General.[21] Mann suggested that 10,893 scholars in the county belonged in Church Schools. In addition, 431 private schools existed in the county. Throughout the shire, only twenty evening schools operated[22] The borough of Leicester accommodated only 27 public day schools and 65 private ones, with a total capacity for 3,089 boys and 2,500 girls. Additionally, 33 Sunday Schools provided for 3,600 boys and 4.165 girls.[23] Mann remarked, however, on the difficulty of attracting children from industrial households into schools because of the loss of earnings.[24] He also admitted the difficulty of assessing the impact of evening schools and factory schools.[25]

When considering educational developments, it is necessary not only to ad-

[18] Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, pp. 176-8l; see also Roy Church, *Economic and Social Change in a Midland Town: Victorian Nottingham* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1966), pp. 87-8 for differences of application in factories and workshops in the lace industry.

[19] 'Private schools in Leicester and the county 1780-1840' in Brian Simon, ed., *Education in Leicestershire 1540-1940* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1968), pp. 103-130 at p. 118.

[20] W. B. Stephens, 'School attendance and literacy: 1750 to the later nineteenth century', in his *Education in Britain, 1750–1914* (London: Palgrave, 1998).

[21] *Education in Great Britain ...* For circumspection about this report, West, *Education and the Industrial Revolution*, pp. 23-7, 95-6.

[22] *Education in Great Britain*, pp. 52 (Table 18), 103 (Table I), 144 (Table S).

[23] *Education in Great Britain*, pp. 130 (Table P), 140 (Table R); Keith D. M. Snell, 'The Sunday School movement in England and Wales: child labour, denominational control and working-class culture', *Past and Present* 164 (1999), pp. 122-68, and compare with West, *Education and the Industrial Revolution,* pp. 11-12.

[24] *Education in Great Britain*, p. 19; Sanderson, 'Education and the factory'.

[25] *Education in Great Britain*, pp. 27, 62-3; in the case of factory schools, clarified by Sanderson, 'Education and the factory'.

dress whether educational institutions were expanding, but also the accessibility of those opportunities in terms of money (school fees) and time (diversion from work). In the later developments, it is important to consider whether the legislation included domestic industry in households and how stringently the regulations were enforced. Additionally, it is important to understand what educational facilities were available at least for some of the population, both informally and formally. The last issue is considered first because of changes in opportunities for education over the period 1750-1870 which theoretically at least affected the opportunities for education. Particularly from the 1830s and 1840s, concern about the educational and spiritual welfare of the working class resulted in some enhancement of those possibilities.

The sequence below examines educational opportunities in the various locations in which framework knitting was intensive. In the small town of Hinckley, in the south-west of the county on the border with Warwickshire, framework knitting dominated the occupational structure. For that reason, Hinckley is considered first. The industry had a considerable impact in the county borough of Leicester although the economy was more diversified. Knitting was especially concentrated in the parishes of St Margaret and St Mary. Loughborough also had a more complicated occupational structure than Hinckley, but had a significant framework knitting complement which developed into a substantial factory-based industry in the middle of the nineteenth century. Framework knitting extended between Leicester and Loughborough down the Soar valley and the parishes in this stretch sustained some educational changes in the early nineteenth century.

It is usually assumed that the ability to read was more extensive than the capability of writing. This difference might be discerned in the mark of the weaver Ezekiel Barnit of Hinckley on his will in 1711, which is a clear 'EB'. He could recognize and write the initials of his name.[26] The following discussion concerns this town and parish of Hinckley in Leicestershire. In 1841, the population of Hinckley had expanded to 6,356 with industrialization of the town. Until 1838, Hinckley consisted of a single parish, St Mary, with the town at its centre, comprising some 3,600 acres in extent. From 1838, another parish, Holy Trinity, was separated out in the south of the town.[27] Old Dissent and new nonconformity had a significant presence.

[26] ROLLR probate file for 1712 (probate 1712).

[27] *William White's History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Leicestershire ... 1846* (Sheffield: Leader & Co., 1846), p. 555.

There was a succession of schoolmasters in the town from at least the early eighteenth century. When he made his will in 1713, Thomas Blakeley referred to himself as a schoolmaster of Hinckley.[28] In 1732, the schoolmaster James Merry proclaimed his will. He died in 1735 when his inventory listed 'Some Godly books' valued at 5s. (He incidentally also possessed two stocking frames assessed at £8 10s 0d.) The meagre total of his personal estate amounted to £21 16s 5d.[29] John Dalby was active as a schoolmaster in Hinckley from about the time of Merry's death. In 1738, he was one of the obligees in the administration bond for the late Thomas Elly, establishing his occupation as schoolmaster.[30] He was interred in Hinckley on 20 August 1771 a month after composing his holograph will (23 July 1771).[31]

In the first month of 1786, Joseph Askham placed an advertisement in the *Leicester Journal* to invite ten young men to enrol at his boarding school at a tuition fee of ten guineas per annum. The course consisted of reading, writing, arithmetic, Latin and Greek, bookkeeping, 'guaging' and land surveying.[32] William Ward and his son George acted as schoolmaster in the town over the eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth century. William was interred in Hinckley parish in 1797.[33] He had made his will in 1789; when he died his personal estate was estimated not to exceed £300.[34] George, son of William and Elizabeth, was born in November 1774 and baptized in February 1775.[35] He composed his holograph will in 1798 with codicils up to his death in the town in February 1808. At his demise, his personal estate was assessed at under £2,000.[36] The preamble to this composition ran:

> In case I George Ward of Hinckley Schoolmaster should not make a Will in a more regular form I desire this Writing written with mine own hand may be accounted & taken as such ...

He bequeathed three copyhold messuages in Barwell to his brother John and cash legacies to his siblings Jonathan, Frank, Eliza and Sarah. He appointed his two

[28] ROLLR probate file for 1713.
[29] ROLLR probate file for 1735.
[30] ROLLR administration bond file 1738.
[31] ROLLR PR/T/1771/65; parish register transcript 1771 (described as schoolmaster).
[32] *LJ* 21 January 1786 p. 1.
[33] ROLLR DE1135/24.
[34] ROLLR probate file for 1792.
[35] ROLLR p. 122.
[36] ROLLR probate file for 1809; DE1135/24 p. 107.

sisters co- executrices, although Elizabeth pre-deceased him. The importance of these schoolmasters is not only that they educated some of the inhabitants of Hinckley but that they also performed the service of writing the predominant number of wills of the testators of Hinckley. Their positions, however, were discontinuous and also directed to the emerging 'middling sort' as it was transformed into a middle class.[37]

The same intermittence was associated with academies and private schools in the nineteenth century. In 1832, at least half a dozen such establishments offered education to the wealthier inhabitants of Hinckley: the boarding school of Charles Bourne in Stockwell Road; the Critchleys' academy in Castle Head House; the Misses Harris's school in Castle Street; Thomas Parker's academy in the same thoroughfare; the tuition offered by Joseph Small in the New Building; and the academy of the Reverend John Woods also in Castle Street; with additional day schools.[38] The directory of 1846 listed only the academies belonging to the Reverend James Cooper in Bond Street and William Johnstone in Stockwell Head, although inclusion was probably selective.[39]

In 1862, Miss Baker announced in the local press that her school in Elm Grove would open its doors on 21 January.[40] It is also possible that some of the incumbents engaged formally and informally in local education. The clergyman John Southwell in 1705 possessed books in his study valued at £10. Some incumbents operated informal library circles, loaning out books.[41] More clearly, the vicar, 'the reverend Mr Galloway', advertised in the press in 1778 that he would engage six 'young Gentlemen' as boarders under his tuition, at a fee of £25 per annum.[42] John Cole Galloway was instituted to the living in Hinckley in that year.[43]

There is also the possibility that the parish clerks extended their knowledge, although their parochial duties were heavy. Roger Ashby, however, seems to have been somewhat impoverished. When probate of his will was granted in October

[37] Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c.1760-1840* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995); Henry French, *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England 1600-1750* (Oxford: OUP, 2007).

[38] *Pigot's Directory* 1832 p. 119.

[39] *William White's History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Leicestershire ... 1846* (Sheffield: Leader & Co., 1846), p. 559.

[40] *The Hinckley News* 18 January 1862 p. 2.

[41] ROLLR PR/I/file for 1705 no. 142.

[42] *LJ* 23 May 1778 p. 1.

[43] Crook and Simon, 'Private schools', p. 115.

1759, his personal estate was reckoned not to exceed £5. He left his wife, Hannah, whom he had married in 1748, with three children.[44] His successor, John Poole, seems to have prospered more. In his will in 1773, he bequeathed legacies of £25 and some silver plate to his daughter, Elizabeth, £50 and plate to his son, Thomas, £25 and plate to his other son, Peter, and cash to his daughter Ann. He entrusted execution of his will to two hosiers, John Robinson and Richard Seller.[45] Poole was followed from 1775 James Merry. When Merry was interred in Hinckley in 1790, the vicar, Cole Galloway, was effusive about his service.[46] A yeoman, Nathaniel Smith assumed the role from 1790. On his demise in 1820, his estate was assumed not to exceed £200. In his will of 1815, he enumerated one stocking frame.[47] Another yeoman, Thomas Orton, replaced Smith.[48] As well as assiduously witnessing most of the weddings at St Mary's, all these parish clerks had their own household economies which were probably disrupted by their parochial responsibilities. Poole and Merry bore witness to almost all the marriages. Smith was conscientious, but between 1813 and 1819 his involvement in witnessing declined, attesting to only half the weddings. All continued to witness marriages up to their death. Whether they had time or inclination to instruct in handwriting is moot.

How pragmatic knowledge had an impact on advances in industry is perhaps illustrated by the patent received by John Ward of Hinckley in 1779 for the application of 'basket work' on stocking frames. John, nevertheless, was literate and a son of a schoolmaster.[49]

More permanent educational institutions were denominational rather than secular. The National School attached to the Anglican church of St Mary was founded in 1820 and was complemented by another when Holy Trinity church was consecrated. In 1846, St Mary's consisted of two rooms, one for seventy boys and the other for fifty girls. The school connected to Holy Trinity was initially opened as a Sunday School attended by about three hundred children, but in the early 1840s was expanded as an infant school.[50] The dissenting and nonconformist denominations convened an annual union meeting in Hinckley but for a larger

[44] ROLLR probate file for 1759; DE1135/6 (burial register).
[45] ROLLR PR/T/1775/ 155 (probate 1775).
[46] ROLLR DE1135/24 under 1790.
[47] ROLLR DE1135/25 no. 629; PR/T/1820/164.
[48] ROLLR PR/T/1840/118.
[49] *LJ* 10 July 1779 p. 3.
[50] *White's History, Gazetteer, and Directory... 1846*, p. 555.

catchment area than the parishes in Hinckley.[51] A more detailed perspective is provided by the local press on the celebration of the marriage of the Prince of Wales. All the schoolchildren participated: 'The number of scholars was over 2000 ...' The schools involved comprehended: the two National Schools; the Greencoat School; the Baptist Free School; the Primitive Methodist School; the Wesleyan Methodist School; the Unitarian School; and the Independent School.[52] The report, however, is ambivalent about the origins of the schoolchildren as a whole. Two of the schoolteachers, William Geatorex, and Fanny Orrill, married in Hinckley in 1837.[53]

In the adjacent parishes, two schoolteachers in Burbage married in 1847, John Lowis and Martha McKeown.[54] There too, in 1865, two marriages involved male grooms who were schoolmasters, both sons of framework knitters.[55] In Barwell, Thomas Smith, a local schoolmaster, married in 1839, and later in 1869 John Jelley, another teacher in the parish, entered into the matrimonial state in 1869.[56] It is probable that Mary Ann Chapman left Narborough when she married a spouse from Wigston Magna in 1856. She might, nevertheless, have contributed to education in the parish as she was aged forty at her espousal.[57] Katherine Crisp, schoolmistress in Sapcote, also married out of the parish in 1856.[58] The son of a local labourer, William Jones was engaged as a schoolmaster in Countesthorpe on his marriage in 1842, as was John Collins when he married there in 1864.[59] Several schoolteachers married in Wigston Magna: Emma Clarson (who married out of parish in 1856); Richard Knight and Mary Ross, both in the occupation in the parish; and Edwin Hurst.[60] In Oadby, John Swan, schoolmaster, married in 1848 and in Sharnford another professional, Arthur Howse in 1860.[61]

Two espousals of teachers have some significance for attitudes towards literacy. In 1837, the schoolmistress, Catherine Hurst, of Wigston Magna, married a framework knitter from Countesthorpe. She was mature, aged 36, and he was

[51] *The Hinckley News* 3 September 1864 p. 2, for example.
[52] *The Hinckley News* 14 March 1863.
[53] ROLLR DE1135/19 no. 20.
[54] ROLLR DE3367/16 no. 134.
[55] ROLLR DE3367/16 nos 367, 371.
[56] ROLLR DE1330 no. 39 (1839) no. 364 (1869).
[57] ROLLR DE644 no. 127.
[58] ROLLR DEDE2599/3 no. 97.
[59] ROLLR DE1465/7 nos 32, 174.
[60] ROLLR DE2127 nos 267 (1856), 359 (1864), 430 (1870).
[61] ROLLR DE1136/9 no. 77; DE4410 no. 99.

a widower, aged 43. While she signed the register, he placed his mark. Another schoolmistress in that parish, Elizabeth Screaton, married a local tailor in 1847. Again, although she signed, he made a mark.[62] No stigma, apparently, attached to the association of a literate bride and a non-literate groom.[63]

When he initiated the local newspaper, *The Hinckley News*, J. Baxter of King Street in the town, remarked in the first issue (5 October 1861) that he acted in response to the desirability of meeting the needs of the 'humbler classes' in their desire for improvement. 'Education was never more easy of obtainment than at present ...'[64] This and subsequent issues included reports of lectures at the YMCA and the Independent chapel.[65]

A sequence of main writers of wills can be detected. The writers are identified by their signature as a witness compared with the handwriting of the will. The numbers below are thus minima since some of the writers were probably responsible for other wills which they did not sign, but whose hand looks identifiable. These writers composed most of the wills between the early eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. Their compositions were simple, not complex, usually consisting of a single sheet or, at most, two. Unusually, the will of the framework knitter, Thomas Lee, consisting of four pages, was composed by George Ward in 1806. Ward was the last in this sequence of writers (further below).[66] George Ward also wrote a three-page will for John Marston, cordwainer, in 1805.[67] From the early nineteenth century, they were displaced by solicitors: for example, in 1807, the will of Thomas Hurst, hosier, was witnessed by Charles Jervis and his clerk, W. Davies, so that the former probably composed the will.[68]

The activity of George Ward in writing wills for local testators is confirmed by a deposition of 17 February 1795 by George Ward, schoolmaster, of Hinckley, and Nicholas Barwell and Thomas Cramp, both of Barwell, framework knitters. They deposed that on 21 June 1793 Richard Marson, a victualler in Barwell, had called for Ward to visit Marson to compose his will. Ward did as requested and

[62] ROLLR DE2127 nos 2, 130.

[63] Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (New York: Free Press, 1968).

[64] The Hinckley News 5 October 1861 p. 1.

[65] Andrew Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England 1855-1900* (London: OpenBook Publishers, 2018).

[66] ROLLR PR/T/1809/125.

[67] ROLLR PR/T/1806/139.

[68] ROLLR PR/T/1809/108 (probate 1809).

Table 2: The writers of wills in Hinckley

Occupation	John Bagott	John Dalby	William Ward	George Ward
Fwk/weaver	14	14	12	11
retail	6	4	9	5
farmer	8	5	9	0
women	17	2	9	7
craft	15	9	7	6
labourer	3	2	0	1
hosier	4	1	6	5
gentle	3	1	1	2
Total	70	38	53	37

read the will back to the testator. Marson died on 8 February 1795.[69]

John Bagott senior and junior composed wills for 70 testators. Born probably in 1708, John junior was baptized in February 1711/12 when his father, Isaac, brought all his children to be christened.[70] In 1729, the widow of the gentleman, Nathaniel Shenton, Elizabeth, appointed him, maltster, as sole trustee of her considerable personal estate valued at more than £312.[71] In similar vein, another widow, Anne Frone, designated Bagott, maltster, as the overseer of her will.[72] John junior died in 1753, very shortly after making his holograph will, in which he described himself as a maltster. His will makes no mention of a wife or children.[73] The schoolmaster, John Dalby, composed a few wills in the 1730s, but between 1742 and 1770 obliged 38 testators. Another schoolmaster, George Ward, was responsible for wills for 53 testators between 1758 and 1790. His successor, his son George, another schoolmaster, composed wills for 37 testators between 1793 and 1808. George had initially witnessed wills collaboratively with his father, William.[74]

The contours of literacy in the borough of Leicester between 1780 and 1870 have been delineated by Elaine Brown who also elucidated the formation of

[69]ROLLR PR/T/1795/119.
[70]ROLLR DE1135/3.
[71]ROLLR probate file for 1729 (a large parchment).
[72]ROLLR probate file for 1729 (will 1723).
[73]ROLLR probate file for 1753.
[74]ROLLR PR/T/1795/9 (will of Christopher Bailey, grazier: will 1790; probate 1795).

educational institutions for infants, juveniles and adults.[75] Some of what follows is extracted from that thesis, but additional material has been adduced. The concentration here is on the two parishes of St Margaret and St Mary. Brown considered the entire borough.

The overall provision of day schools can be elucidated first. The earliest consisted of the dissenting Great Meeting charity school established about 1748. The Great Meeting, however, serviced not only the borough but a wide hinterland. The first parochial day school was established in St Mary's parish in 1780. Both these institutions provided Sundays School from 1783 and 1788 respectively.[76]

In 1780, the charity school was established for St Mary's parish in Leicester. The school was supported by subscription but was intended for the education of the lower social groups. Initially, its remit was '... to have the children of the poor inhabitants of that parish taught to read ...' as well as to inculcate the habits of cleanliness and probity. Every subscriber who contributed 10s 6d per annum acquired the right to become a governor and to 'nominate' a scholar.[77] The number of scholars attending the charity school fluctuated between about 120 and 150 through the first four decades of the nineteenth century.[78]

Educational provision expanded in St Margaret's parish in Leicester from the foundation of the Charity School in 1807, with its provision for a hundred boys and seventy girls, although in 1811 it was reported that one hundred children attended.[79] Initially, the educational instruction conformed to the Madras System.[80] Several ecclesiastical districts were separated out from the immense parish in the early nineteenth century. Each new district founded a day school: St George (1827); Trinity (1838); and Christ Church in the highly-populated, but poor, Christ Church district (1839).[81] In the mother parish, a British School was formed in 1832, but few nonconformist schools existed at this time.[82] Ultimately, from 1839, these Anglican schools were supervised by the Leicester Archidiaconal Board of Education.[83]

[75] Brown, 'Working-class education and illiteracy'.
[76] Brown, 'Working-class education and illiteracy', pp. 12, 23, 180-1.
[77] *LJ* 26 August 1780 p. 3.
[78] *LJ* 12 April 1816 p. 3; *LC* 1 April 1820 p. 1 and 11 April 1829 p. 3; *LJ* 20 April 1832 p. 3.
[79] *LJ* 30 August 1811 p. 3; Brown, 'Working-class education and illiteracy', p. 186.
[80] *LJ* l 7 November 1817 p. 4; Brown, 'Working-class education and illiteracy', pp. 61-2.
[81] Brown, 'Working-class education and illiteracy', pp. 88-92, 191.
[82] Brown, 'Working-class education and illiteracy', p. 180.
[83] *LJ* 6 October 1848 p. 4 (report on its first decade).

From 1828, the provision in the two parishes of St Margaret and St Mary was augmented by the formation of the Leicester Infant School Society.[84] The society maintained two schools in Oxford Street and Metcalf(e) Street with a proposal for a third in Belgrave Gate (St Margaret's parish). The scholars were instructed by two mistresses supervised by regular lady visitors. The purpose was the instillation in 'the humbler ranks of life' morality, decency, cleanliness and neatness, and, where possible, the capacity of reading. In 1837, the governing body reported: '... a considerable proportion of them have attained a knowledge of reading ...'[85]

More advanced education was offered by the Leicester British School, first proposed in 1831 and opened in 1832. Here, the scholars were informed in not only reading, but also writing, arithmetic and geography. Not all the patrons considered these academic abilities the most important. Several at each annual meeting opined about the prevention of crime by instilling good citizenship. W. E. Richardson stated forcefully, citing Proverbs 22:6: 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it'.[86] The education, nonetheless, was proficient. In 1833, it was reported that in the half-yearly demonstration of proficiency: 'The elder boys had copy-books, and the rest wrote on slates'.[87] In 1845, a display of 'penmanship' was organized.[88] The schools off Humberstone Gate in Sandpit Lane in St Margaret's parish maintained an average attendance of three hundred boys and 190 girls in that year.[89]

For other dissenters, the Great Meeting in Leicester opened day schools, but there is little information about the curriculum and the Great Meeting served a wide hinterland outside the borough.[90] In 1834, the Meeting advertised for a mistress for the girls' day school at a salary of £20 per annum with accommodation.[91]

The managers of most of these schools in the borough demanded that scholars also attend Sunday School, sometimes regardless of denomination. In 1831,

[84] *LM* 28 July 1848 p. 12 (twentieth annual report); Brown, 'Working-class education and illiteracy', p. 188.
[85] *LC* 2 September 1837 p. 1.
[86] *LC* 20 April 1833 p. 2.
[87] *LC* 9 November 1833 p. 3.
[88] *LC* 6 September 1845 p. 3.
[89] *LC* 6 September 1845 p. 3.
[90] *LC* 12 May 1849 p. 3.
[91] *LC* 29 March 1834 p. 3.

many providers of Sunday Schools combined to form the Leicestershire Sunday School Union. By 1840, the managers of the Union considered that about four thousand pupils were attending Sunday Schools in the borough of Leicester in the twenty venues supported by 658 teachers.[92] The extent to which Sunday Schools imparted a lay education is ambiguous. Many of the clergy involved in the management of the Union insisted, like the Reverend J. P. Mursell, that Sabbath instruction be limited 'strictly to religious subjects'.[93] Yet it was noted in 1842 that: 'Writing classes are now formed in most of the schools'.[94]

The grammar school had existed in Loughborough since the sixteenth century but by its nature was highly selective. Other continuous educational institutions did not arrive until the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. The two National Schools had provision for 250 boys and 80 girls and the British School (Baptist) (established in 1844) had a capacity of a hundred scholars. In 1846, White's Directory itemized the grammar school, the two National schools, two British schools, two free schools with limited accommodation, a Catholic school, four infant schools, and three private schools.[95] The British School of the Baptists had been accompanied in 1844 by a Wesleyan day school capable of instructing 78 boys and with the prospect of a school for girls.[96]

An assessment of the adequacy of the education of working people requires an analysis of the quantity and quality of provision and the reactions of the working people. In 1831, 'Cato', a proponent of the British School system, observed: 'I think it will be manifest that six schools are very insufficient for this purpose [education of the children of the poor]'.[97] For the whole borough, he enumerated: St Margaret's Charity School with 110 boys and fifty girls; St Mary's equivalent with eighty boys and forty girls; St Martin's similar with 150 boys and eighty girls; St George's Charity School with 94 boys and 113 girls; the National School with 284 boys and 102 girls; and Alderman Newton's school with a hundred children. From these numbers he deduced that there was provision for 1203

[92] *LM* 25 September 1841.

[93] *LM* 16 March 1839 p. 3. For the debate about Sunday schools, Thomas W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working-class Culture, 1780-1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976); more recently, K. D. M. Snell, 'The Sunday School movement in England and Wales'.

[94] *LM* 24 September 1842 p. 1.

[95] *White's Directory ... 1846*, pp. 277-8, 284; Brian Simon, 'Local grammar schools' in *Education in Leicestershire*, pp. 130-55 at pp. 131-4.

[96] *LC* 6 January 1844 p. 2.

[97] *LC* 2 July 1831 p. 4.

children of the poor in the borough.[98] In 1839, the proposal for a school for the new parish of Christ Church, separated out from St Margaret's parish, lamented that the three schools in St Margaret's parish were inadequate for the population. The intention was for a new school with provision for 170 boys and 130 girls.[99] No doubt the statement was *ex parte*, but the claim resonated in the press.

It is possible to estimate the quantity of provision in regard to the population. In the borough of Leicester, it is purported, there was provision for 1,300 children in 1818 and 2,550 in 1835.[100] By 1860, accommodation existed for 4,784 children in day schools, more than two-thirds of which constituted Anglican juveniles (3,206). Dissenters accounted for 29 percent (1,378) and infants of all denominations 655. In 1841, the borough had comprised 6,374 children under the age of five and 5,432 between the ages of over five and under ten.[101]

Addressing education in St Margaret's parish, the local press reported early in 1834 on the extent of provision. The five day schools (St Margaret's charity, St George's charity, British, and the two infant schools in Archdeacon Lane and Metcalf Street) had a combined accommodation for 777 boys and 260 girls: a total of 1,037 children. Additionally, Sunday Schools were attended by 1,187 boys and 1,252 girls, numbering in all 2,439 children.[102] In 1831, the parish consisted of 5,210 families.[103]

Accounting for the day schools in Loughborough in the 1840s, perhaps five hundred pupils could be accommodated. In 1841, Loughborough registration district contained 1,273 children under the age of five and 1,276 over five and under ten.[104]

Equally ambivalent is the extent to which adult learning might compensate for lack of early education. In 1822, Mr Bown informed through the pages of

[98] For confirmation of the number at Newton's school, an ancient charity, *LC* 13 July 1830 p. 4. The school aligned with the National system and instructed in reading, writing and arithmetic. Its admission increased from eighty in 1826 to a hundred in 1828 by design. For St George's day schools. *LC* 24 October 1829 p. 3. St George's was newly created as a Millenium Church in 1818. By 1829, it was instructing a hundred girls in reading, writing and preparation for work.

[99] *LJ* 1 November 1839 p. 2.

[100] Brown, 'Working-class education and illiteracy', p. 196.

[101] *Abstract of the Answers and Returns ... Enumeration Abstract M.D.CCC.XLI* (London: HMSO, 1843), p. 142.

[102] *LC* 4 January 1834 p. 3.

[103] *RBL VII*, p. 502.

[104] *Abstract of Answers and Returns ...*, p.144.

the local press that he would be opening a school on weekdays between six and seven-thirty in the evenings 'for the instruction of Adult persons, whose early initiation has been neglected, defective, or forgotten; and who feel earnestly solicitous to acquire, improve, or revive, a knowledge of the more useful branches of education'. The numbers admitted were, however, highly limited and, it would seem from the phrasing, only those demonstrating high commitment would be accepted.[105]

Some of the larger rural parishes with industry, like Barrow upon Soar, had endowed free schools, but they usually provided only for a small number of poor children. Twelve poor boys were instructed in the three Rs by the free school in Mountsorrel; only ten poor boys at Hathern's; twenty poor boys at Barwell's and Earl Shilton's; and thirty poor children at Enderby's.[106] The numbers of scholars were limited and mostly male.

The expansion of provision improved by the establishment of parochial schools through the early nineteenth century: National Schools, especially in the 1830s. The National School at Shepshed, founded in 1846, had accommodation for 140 boys and 123 girls and some provision for infants. The childhood population of Shepshed registration district, however, consisted of 543 under five and 492 over five and under ten years of age. The earlier foundation in Sileby made provision for 75 boys, 45 girls, and fifty infants.[107] Seventy children could attend the National School in Mountsorrel.[108] The directories are less assiduous in recording British Schools.

Writing to a local newspaper in 1831, Mr Whetstone of the local Political Union recognized the progress made by the charity and Sunday schools, but nonetheless deplored the 'limited nature of the instruction conveyed' and their numerical inadequacy, 'particularly in villages...'[109] He continued that 'it must be manifest to every observer, that more efficient means were required.'

In his proposal above, Whetstone suggested that if working men renounced their ale, they could afford to send four children to school at a school fee of 2d per capita per week. Two respondents, working men, Messrs Seal and Sansome indicated the impossibility of Whetstone's suggestion about school pence. The

[105] *LC* 26 October 1822 p. 3.
[106] *White's Directory ... 1846*, pp. 312, 318, 344, 538, 544, 567-8.
[107] *White's Directory ... 1846*, pp. 320, 325, 358, 420, 458, 555, 581; *Abstract of Answers and Returns* ..., p. 144.
[108] *LM* 28 July 1849.
[109] *LC* 17 December 1831 p. 2.

father of four children, Seal had been obliged to place his offspring at work at the age of five.[110] Eighteen years later, 'J. O. (A working man') also lamented the incapacity of defraying school fees.[111]

> The poor stockinger from his miserable pittance of 5s or 6s a week, even by relinquishing his half pint of ale, cannot afford to give his four children this good education and maintain them while receiving it.

The problem, of course, was constant attendance. Although sponsored by subscribers, the schools still required weekly payments from the pupils' families. The Leicester Infant School Society repeatedly referred to decline in payments during the frequent periods of economic disruption in the borough.[112] The management committee of the Leicester British School remarked on the level of absenteeism in 1845.[113]

Working men remained, moreover, critical of the quality of education offered. J. O. was relentless in his criticism of the charity school which he had attended at age ten. His experience had been unrewarding, particularly since between one and two hundred children had been instructed by a single, unsympathetic master.[114] Ten years previously, 'A working man' condemned the British School system for an insufficient number of masters to supervise the monitors.[115] Another dissatisfied correspondent, 'An operative', desired a local system of secular education financed by the corporation of Leicester maintaining twenty schoolrooms accessible from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.[116] For this writer, day schools were inappropriate for working people. Although two hundred pupils had enrolled at the British School in St Margaret's parish, merely 27 were the sons of framework knitters, doubtless because of the school fee of 2d per week.[117]

Reports on inspection confirmed these issues. When Mr Muggeridge reported on the condition of the framework knitters, he reiterated that children were placed in work from the age of five or six. 'With regard to education, there is unfortunately but little afforded deserving of the name'.[118]

[110] *LC* 17 December 1831 p. 2.
[111] *LM* 27 January 1849 p. 1.
[112] *LC* 9 July 1842 p. 3; *LM* 29 July 1848 -. 2.
[113] *LC* 6 September 1845 p. 3.
[114] *LM* 27 January 1849 p. 1.
[115] *LM* 7 September 1839 p. 1.
[116] *LC* 22 July 1843 p. 1.
[117] *LM* 5 October 1839 p. 1.
[118] *LC* 14 June 1845 p. 1.

To a large extent, the acquisition of literacy in late life depended on organizations such as Mechanics Institutes. By the 1840s, that institution in Leicester appears to have become moribund. A 'poor man' and 'a working man and abstainer' complained in the local press, in response to Mr Ellis, another correspondent, that they were excluded from the Mechanics Institute in Leicester because of the level of the subscription.[119] Another letter explained how the cost of subscription was an impediment and that in general these institutions were 'but seldom attended with success, and but rarely supported by the class whose names they bore...'[120] In deploring the failure to expand educational facilities in the borough, the *Leicester Mercury* lamented in 1846 that since its establishment thirteen years previously, the Mechanics Institute had declined: 'its classes have virtually ceased to exist'.[121]

An urban place dominated by knitting: Hinckley

The population of Hinckley doubled from about 2,250 in 1717 to about 4,500 in 1780. In 1801, it had advanced further to 5,767 and within a decade from then to 6.058.[122] In 1851 almost 70 percent of male inhabitants were employed in the textile industry.[123] In his analysis of 'literacy differentials' between 1837 and 1870, Royle found that just over 40 percent of grooms and just over 56 percent of brides were still illiterate.[124] Below, a longer-term perspective of literacy is taken and the class or occupational basis of illiteracy explored in more granularity. For much of the nineteenth century before the wider introduction of a factory-based hosiery industry, the economy of the domestic industry suffered considerable vicissitudes and periods of extreme dislocation.[125]

[119] *LM* 13 January 1849 p. 1.
[120] *LM* 5 February 1848 p. 4.
[121] *LM* 5 December 1846 p. 3.
[122] Stephen Royle, 'Aspects of the social geography of Leicestershire towns, 1837-1871' unpublished PhD these, University of Leicester, 1976, pp. 47, 49 and Table 2.4.
[123] Royle, 'Aspects of the social geography', p. 42 and Table 2.2.
[124] Royle, 'Aspects of the social geography', pp. 369-71.
[125] Royle, 'Aspects of the social geography', p. 51.

The tradition recounts that framework knitting was introduced into Leicestershire in Hinckley in 1640.[126] In July of 1692, John Bates was operating three frames for knitting stockings in the town.[127] John Stephenson might have migrated the short distance from Barwell into the town to pursue stocking frame knitting as his will (1698) reveals that he possessed a copyhold messuage and close in that rural parish.[128] In the baptismal register for Hinckley for the Anglican Church of St Mary between 1813 and 1822, 341 fathers were engaged in hosiery, as well as eleven bag hosiers, a dozen needle makers, and four sinker makers.[129] Unfortunately, the baptismal register of the Presbyterian Great Meeting at Hinckley largely omits fathers' occupations. It does divulge, however, half a dozen stocking weavers in Hinckley.[130]

The conventional sources for discovering the extent of literacy in the age of industrialization are marriages registers after 1754 and wills.[131] Real differences, however, exist between them. Wills were composed towards the end of life and thus represent an earlier generation than contemporary marriage partners. Testators' possible access to education mainly occurred earlier in life. The testators as a consequence of infirmity might have also lost the ability to sign their will. Accordingly, whereas signatures on the register are accepted as an accurate indication of ability and thus used quantitatively, the wills are here explored only for qualitative evidence. The objection to reliance on marriage registers of the Church of England is that from 1837 licences were extended to non-Anglican institutions for the certification of marriages.[132] The problem is addressed in part below by comparing the number of marriages performed in Anglican churches with those in non-Anglican institutions. Elaine Brown, indeed, has also made a comparison for the borough of Leicester of rates of literacy deduced from the Anglican registers with the same provided in the statistics in the reports of the

[126]'Peasants and stockingers', p. 47 (citing *Victoria County History of Leicestershire* volume III).

[127]ROLLR PR/I/96 no. 78 (inventory total £29 7s 0d); L. A. Parker, 'Hosiery' in W. G. Hoskins and R. A. McKinley, eds, *A History of the County of Leicester Volume III* (London: OUP, 1955), p. 2.

[128]ROLLR probate file for 1698 and (inventory) PR/I/103 no. 144.

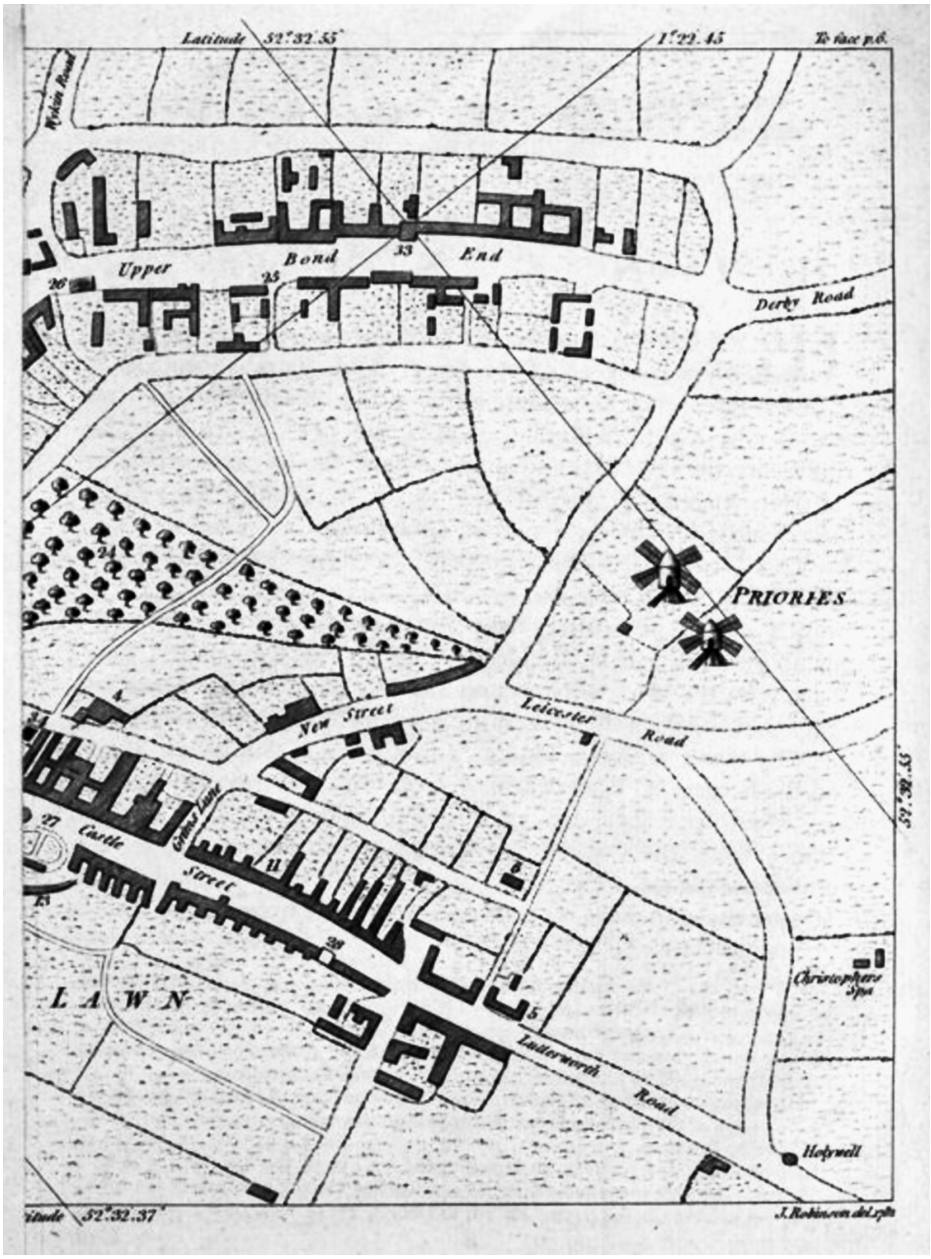
[129]ROLLR DE1135/10.

[130]TNA RG4/1438, fos 50-55v, 57=58.

[131]Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture,* pp. 3, 20, citing Roger S. Schofield, 'Dimensions of illiteracy in England 1750-1850' and Laurence Stone, 'Literacy and education in England 1640-1900'.

[132]6 & 7 William IV c. 86.

Figure 4: Hinckley in 1782

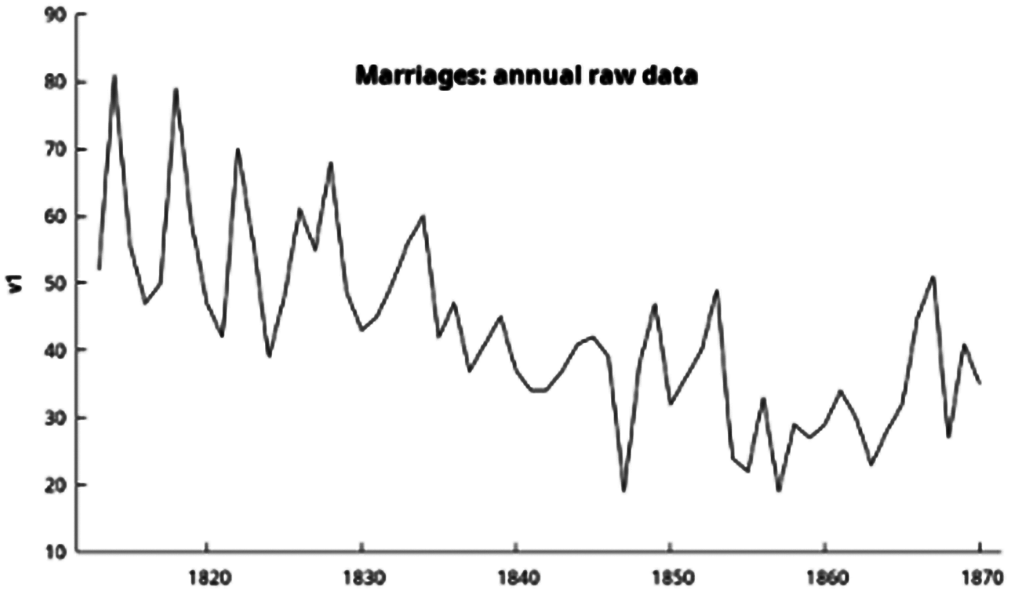


Registrar-General.[133] The trend is the same. The decadal figures of marriages in the Registrar-General's report for 1851-60 illustrate that non-Anglican marriages constituted 11 percent in the registration district of Barrow-upon-Soar, 18 percent in that of Loughborough, 21 percent in the same of Hinckley, and 24 percent in Leicester.[134]

Until the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, Hinckley consisted of a single parish, St Mary. In 1838, a chapelry or ecclesiastical district was separated off in the south of the parish to form Holy Trinity. This district was swiftly elevated to parochial status and celebrated marriages from late in 1843, but only two marriages were performed in that year. From 1844, the first full year of weddings, to 1870 inclusive, 167 marriages were performed in Holy Trinity.[135] The data for Holy Trinity and St Mary are combined from 1844, to provide a total number of marriages in the Anglican congregations in Hinckley. The analysis concerns the ability of bride and groom to sign the register.

[133] Brown, 'Working-class education and illiteracy', Figs 3.1 and 3.2.
[134] *Twenty-third Annual Report of the Registrar-General* (London: HMSO, 1862), p. 188.
[135] ROLLR DE1224/5.

Figure 5: Raw data of marriages in Hinckley



Some of the marriage partners were exogamous, that is, from outside Hinckley. For the most part, their characteristics replicate the pattern of the endogamous partners. In the case of male partners, they did not remain in Hinckley as most marriages were uxorilocal, in the bride's parish, the couple then returning to the groom's parish. A small proportion consisted of middle-class grooms, but these men conformed to the middle-class ratepayers in Hinckley.

Throughout, most of the exogamous grooms were of humble status, often subscribing with a mark in the register. Thomas Robinson of nearby Sharnford, placed his mark in 1833.[136] So also did Edward Brown from Claybrooke Magna and William Chamberlain from Broughton Astley, for example.[137] The boatman

[136] ROLLR DE1135/18 no. 226.
[137] ROLLR DE1135/18 nos 351, 380.

Figure 6: Five-year moving average of marriages in Hinckley

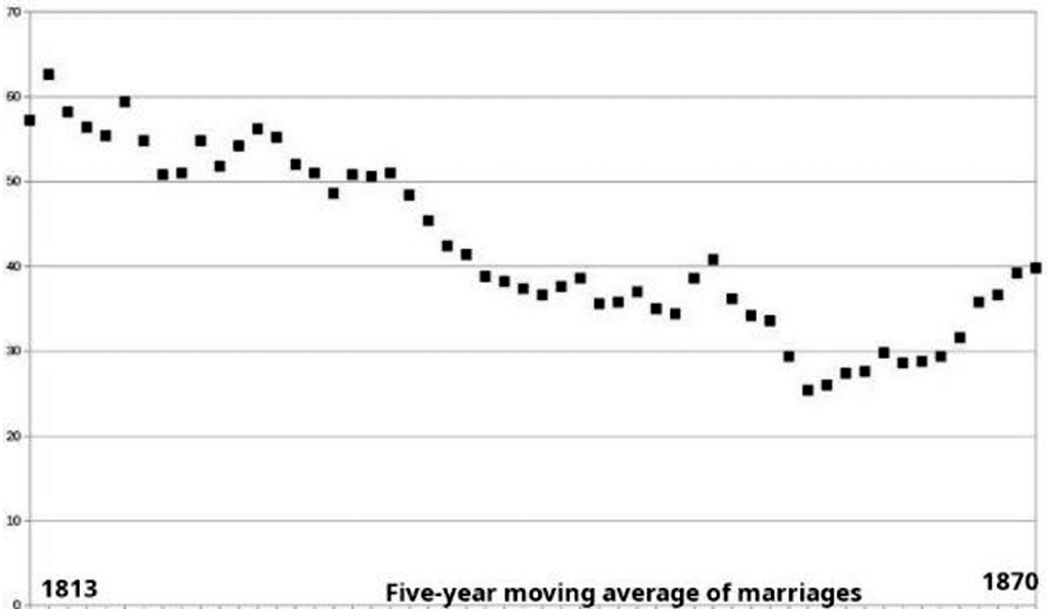


Table 3: Exogamous partners in Hinckley marriages, 1754-1870

Parish/date	Exogamous grooms	Exogamous brides
St Mary 1754-1812	190 (9%)	54 (3%)
St Mary 1813-27	81 (9%)	11
St Mary 1828-37	39 (9%)	4
St Mary 1838-51	39 (8%)	7
St Mary 1852-70	55 (11%)	6
Holy Trinity 1844-70	8	3

from Nuneaton, Thomas Smith, relied on his mark when he espoused a stocking maker from Hinckley in 1850.[138] Nuneaton exceeded Hinckley in size and probably had more educational facilities. The labourer from Markfield, William Grimbley, applied his mark as late as 1852.[139]

This section addresses the registers of St Mary from 1754 to 1812. The data from these registers are agglomerated to form a pattern of literacy in the late eighteen century and approximately the first decade of the nineteenth century when framework knitting was expanding in the town. Marriage registers after 1754 contain the signatures or marks of the bride and groom.[140] The signature has been adopted as a minimum level of literacy as the ability to write. The register of St Mary, Hinckley, the single Anglican parish,from 1754 to 1775 (here register 1) has further importance in that the parish clerks entered, haphazardly, the occupations of the grooms.[141] The following registers (here register 2-3: June 1775-June 1791 and July 1791-December 1812) do not include this information, which was not necessary under Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753.

Register 1 (1754-75) contained 560 weddings. Sixty-three percent of the grooms (354) entered their signature; only 37 percent (206) placed a mark. Only 176 brides signed the register; the vast majority placed their mark. By Register 2 (1775-91) the number of grooms subscribing with a signature had diminished to 54 percent in 574 marriage events. Similarly, the number of brides inserting their signature had decreased to 26 percent from the previous 31 percent. Between 1791 and 1812 (Register 3), the percentage of grooms who could sign recovered to 58 percent, while the number of brides with the facility remained stable in the high 20s.[142] The numbers are consistent with a fall in educational attainment in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly from the late 1770s.

Predominantly, the witnesses to marriages in this time in the parish church were male. The following data relate to Register 1 (1754-75). Within their number in Register 1, only twenty-one male witnesses appended their mark.

[138] ROLLR DE1135/19 no. 450.
[139] ROLLR DE1135/20 no. 27.
[140] The Clandestine Marriages Act 1753 (26 Geo. II c. 33) (Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act); R. B. Outhwaite, *Clandestine Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London: Hambledon Press, 1995); Rebecca Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009).
[141] ROLLR DE1135/14.
[142] Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, pp. 308-9 cites the previous estimates.

Table 4: Signatures and marks in St Mary's marriage registers, 1754-1812

	Signature	Total partners
Register 1		
Grooms	354 (63%)	560
Brides	176 (31%)	560
Register 2		
Grooms	308 (54%)	574
Brides	148 (26%)	574
Register 3		
Grooms	610 (58%)	1,047
Brides	308 (29%)	1,047

In short, the witnesses to marriages consisted almost entirely of literate males. There was obviously a predilection for males and literate males. There was very little attesting weddings by female witnesses on behalf of brides. There was moreover, little correlation between surnames of witnesses and those of marriage partners. It seems that there was a strong attachment for male signatories, perhaps organized by the parish clerk.

There existed, thus, an aversion to recruiting women as witnesses to marriages at the time. Fewer than twenty women subscribed Register 1 of marriages as witnesses, mostly once each. Exceptionally, Mary Hemp and Elizabeth Stoney acted as the two witnesses to one marriage, although the reasons are not obvious.[143] Significantly, only three appended their mark. The majority had the capability to sign. The ability to sign was apparently a desirable feature, as mentioned above. The only woman to attest to a marriage more than once was Elizabeth Poole, the daughter of the parish clerk, who signed the register in testimony a dozen times, always in collaboration with her father or brother, Thomas, in the 1770s.

On 16 May 1812, the conjoining of John Anderson and Mary Pratt was witnessed by Samuel Everett and Ann Yardley, who both inscribed their mark in the register. Similarly, the bride and groom made their mark.[144] Towards the close of the eighteenth century, there was some decline in the ability to sign.

[143]ROLLR DE1135/14 no. 263.
[144]ROLLR DE1135/16 p. 253.

From 1813 onward to 1870 inclusive, the data are examined as annual statistics. The rationale is to chart the level of literacy at key points.

For a short period, Register 1 from 1754 recorded occupations of grooms and, erratically, brides. The numbers are not extensive. In the categories of stockingworker, stockingmaker and framework knitter, 77 grooms (56 percent) signed and 61 made their mark. Labourers remained mostly unable to write their names; only two of 22 managed it. Since the numbers are limited, perhaps not too much weight might be attached to them. Similarly, the register for Stoke Golding erratically registered groom's occupations in 1754-61 and 1773-1800. Here eight of seventeen framework-knitting grooms signed the register and two of four labouring grooms.[145]

The registers for the adjacent parishes do not include occupational information, apart for a few years after 1769 for Burbage. The numbers involved are small: five grooms as framework knitters signed, three others made their mark, one labourer signed, and two placed their mark.[146] No significance can be placed on these data.

Fig. 5 presents the raw data of the number of marriages in the Anglican churches in Hinckley between 1813 and 1870. In Fig. 6, the same data are converted to five-year moving averages to smooth the kurtosis. The spikiness occurs in the graph because poor people tend not to marry when the economic circumstances are unpropitious. Framework knitters and stocking makers were especially vulnerable to changes in the terms of trade. In downturns, much unemployment or idle time affected their income. From 1815, regular dislocation of the trade recurred. It has to be emphasized that these marriages were all conducted in the Church of England. After the introduction of civil registration from 1838, the data are therefore partial. Before then, the Anglican church was responsible for the registration of all marriages. From 1838, the data omit all civil marriages and weddings performed in non-Anglican chapels and churches. This transition explains the decline in the number of marriages from 1838. It is always possible that nonconformists, for example, had a different rate of literacy. The data before 1838 are thus comprehensive and representative, but from 1838 perhaps partial.[147] In total for these 58 years there are 2,479 marriages, with an

[145] ROLLR DE495/2.
[146] ROLLR DE3367/13.
[147] *An Act for Registering Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England* (6 & 7 William IV c. 86).

Table 5: Signatures of grooms in Loughborough marriage registers, 1838-70

Parish/date	Signatures	Total partners
All Saints[148]		
1838-51		
fwks/stockingers	54 (42%)	130
labourers	48 (43%)	112
1852-70		
fwks/stockingers	64 (46%)	138
labourers	54 (59%)	92
Emmanuel[149]		
1839-51		
fwks/stockingers	37 (49%)	76
labourers	17 (32%)	53
1852-70		
fwks/stockingers	77 (57%)	135
labourers	29 (41%)	70

annual mean of 43 (standard deviation 13.614) and median of 42.

Caution is necessary in the analysis of wills. Quite evidently wills did not constitute a representative sample. Although inhabitants of varying levels made wills, including many framework knitters, the decision to make one was personal; wills were made by only a proportion of the local population, most of whom died intestate (without having made a will).

Working people in a heterogeneous urban place: Loughborough

The occupations of brides are omitted in these registers.

Working people in the borough: the parishes of St Margaret's and St Mary's, Leicester

Consisting of six ancient parishes, Leicester as a borough and the county town, had a diverse economy of professions, retailers, industrialists and workpeople. By the early nineteenth century, industrial development and its associated workforce

[148]ROLLR DE667/17-20.

[149]ROLLR DE2594/15-17; Emmanuel was consecrated in 1838.

Table 6: Numbers of families in the larger Leicester parishes, 1801-31

Parish	1801	1811	1821	1831
St Margaret	1225	2138	3313	5210
St Mary	780	823	1157	1441
All Saints	620	791	680	677
St Martin	691	635	568	564

was concentrated in St Margaret's parish. Table 6 illustrates the number of families in the four principal parishes in the early nineteenth century. Although the most affluent parish in the centre of the borough, St Martin's had a declining population. All Saints, although the locus of some industry, was demographically stagnant. The number of inhabitants of St Mary's parish increased after the enclosure of the South Field and accommodated some industrialization.[150] The Enclosure Act for the South Field had received royal assent in 1804, but the process of enclosure was prolonged. Additionally, part of the parish had become 'polluted' by the erection of the county gaol and the infirmary, restraining expansion there.[151] In an initial phase of expansion of the built area, middle-class housing extended up to those two institutions. Thereafter, working-class housing and industry developed.[152]

By the 1840s, the inhabitants in Leicester were already being employed in factories as warp hands. From 1845 the marriage registers of St Margaret's recorded 'Factory women' and 'warehouse woman'.[153] The analysis concentrates first on St Margaret's with its more homogeneous structure.

Between 1838/51 and 1852/70, the literacy rate among framework knitters in St Margaret's increased by ten percentage points, but some of this progress

[150] *RBL VII*, pp. 496-502.

[151] David Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[152] Richard A. McKinley, ed., *Victoria History of the Counties of England : A History of Leicestershire Volume IV: The City of Leicester* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 372-4; R. M. Pritchard, *Housing and the Spatial Structure of the City: Residential Mobility and the Housing Market in an English City Since the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: CUP, 1976), pp. 44-5.

[153] ROLLR 24D65/D.18 nos 238, 333, 368, 381, 404, 410.

[154] ROLLR 24D65/D.15-31

[155] ROLLR DE1683/13-20

Table 7: Signatures in St Margaret's and St Mary's marriage registers, 1838-70

Parish/date	Signatures	Total partners
St Margaret[154]		
1838-51		
Grooms fwks/stockingers	312 (43%)	722
Grooms labourers	116 (44%)	267
Brides fwks	10 (15%)	65
Brides servants	30 (42%)	71
1852-70		
Grooms fwks/stockingers	486 (53%)	917
Grooms labourers	217 (46%)	470
St Mary[155]		
1838-51		
Grooms fwks/stockingers	110 (60%)	185
Grooms labourers	62 (50%)	125
1852-70		
Grooms fwks/stockingers	235 (69%)	343
Grooms labourers	125 (60%)	210

resulted from the inclusion of elastic web weavers in the numbers. The employees in this new industry were largely literate and signed the marriage register.

By the late 1860s, the shoe industry had made major advance in the parish. Its level of employment deserves some brief analysis: the character of the employees in the year 1870. The employees had become specialized: shoemakers; shoe rivetters/nailers; clickers; and shoe finishers. The shoemakers, the rivetters and the clickers were preponderantly literate, although not exclusively. In contrast, 16 of the 25 shoe finishers placed a mark in the register. As a consequence, 24 of the 54 employees in the trade in 1870 remained 'illiterate'.

Industry expanded in St Mary's parish after the enclosure of the South Field, but more rapidly from the 1830s. Many of the larger hosiers also resided in St Mary's parish. Factory-based textile industry was evident by the 1830s: a loom hand was married in the parish in 1837.[156] By comparison with the knitters in St Margaret's parish, those in St Mary's already had a high level of literacy (sixty percent) by the late 1830s. The increase by another nine percentage points after 1851 can also be attributed to the inclusion in the numbers of elastic web weavers as in St Margaret's. Elastic web weaving was a newer industry. Before 1851, half of the labourers had the capacity to sign the marriage register. In the next generation, the proportion had increased by ten percentage points.

Working people in non-urban knitting parishes

In the case of the parish of Sileby, occupational data for grooms was inserted in the register between 1813 and 1837.[157] There at that time, 59 percent of framework-knitting grooms (N=100) signed the register, but only a dozen of 41 labouring grooms. A subsequent decline in the literacy of grooms occurred: in 1838-51 to 49 percent and in 1852-70 50 percent of knitting grooms. Conversely, the literacy rates of labouring grooms improved. (Numbers are in the Appendix). The question remains how reliable are the numbers from a single parish? Sileby looks anomalous in the aggregate levels for non-urban knitting parishes.

Class and gender

In 1730, John Robinson, yeoman, had personal estate valued at £57 15s 6d, over £54 of which consisted of the valuation of his apparel with bonds and bills owed to him. On his will, he made a mark.[158] Richard Burditt also described

[156] ROLLR DE1683/13 no. 30.
[157] ROLLR DE2844/11.
[158] ROLLR probate file for 1730.

Table 8: Signatures of marriage partners in non-urban parishes, 1838-70

Cohorts	Signatures	Total partners
1838-51		
Grooms fwks/stockingers	466 (47%)	998
Grooms labourers	169 (32%)	522
Brides fwks	192 (24%)	805
Brides servants	50 (26%)	192
Total	877 (35%)	2,517
1852-70		
Grooms fwks/stockingers	554 (56%)	994
Grooms labourers	311 (45%)	688
Brides fwks	185 (34%)	547
Brides servants	108 (56%)	193
Total	1,158 (48%)	2,422

himself as a yeoman in his will of 1720, although the inventory of his personal estate referred to him as a husbandman. The personal estate amounted, nonetheless, to £125 10s 0d. His will, however, carried only his mark.[159] Fourteen years later, the tammy weaver, John Dawson, signed his will, which was witnessed by Sarah Bagott and John Bagott, the latter having also composed it.[160]

The reversal of expected abilities in those selective incidences needs further investigation of the influence of class and industry on levels of literacy. For the majority of the years between 1754 and 1870, it is impossible to associate levels of literacy with class. There are two opportunities at either end of the chronological range. In Register 1 of Hinckley (1754-1771), the incumbent or parish clerk recorded occupations, although it was not a requirement. From 1838 it was a necessity to specify the occupation of the marriage partners, although the bride's position was registered less diligently than the groom's. The following discussion concentrates on working-class capability with, where possible, some elucidation of female ability.

Table 9 depicts the proportions of some grooms of working-class status who

[159]ROLLR probate file for 1720.
[160]ROLLR probate file for 1734.
[161]ROLLR DE1135/19-20

Table 9: Signatures in Hinckley, 1838-70

Cohort	Signatures	Total partners
St Mary[161]		
1838-51		
Grooms fwks/stockingers	107 (43%)	247
Grooms labourers	22 (37%)	61
Brides fwks (1838-46 only)	25 (16%)	156
Brides servants (1838-46 only)	6	16
1852-70		
Grooms fwks/stockingers	90 (40%)	224
Grooms labourers	19 (30%)	63
Holy Trinity		
1844-70		
Grooms fwks/stockingers	27 (42%)	65
Grooms labourers	9	23

were capable of signing the marriage register between 1838 and 1870 in Hinckley. Here, two occupations are selected: framework knitters/stockingers and labourers. The analysis is split into two chronological sets for St Mary, according to the registers for the time-frame. The first cohort comprehends January 1838 to December 1851. During 1838-51, the proportion of grooms who subscribed their signature was persistently low but with some improvement in the end of the 1840s and incipient 1850s. Additionally just over 150 brides worked as framework knitters or stockingers, 25 (16 percent) of whom signed the register, before 1862. There was a high degree of occupational endogamy of framework knitters/stockingers, both groom and bride involved in that work. The ability of grooms to sign was maintained through the 1850s, but deteriorated in the 1860s. Unfortunately, the incumbent or parish clerk omitted brides' occupations in the later register for St Mary.

The pattern is replicated at Holy Trinity between 1844 and 1870. Well under a half of grooms, both framework knitters/stockingers and labourers, had the capacity to sign the register. Until 1850, the incumbent or parish clerk included the occupation of brides. Thirty were occupied in framework knitting and stocking making, six of whom entered their signature in the register.

The gendered distinctions can be more clearly observed in some of the framework-knitting villages. The marriage registers between 1838 and 1870 of ten of these parishes substantially contain the occupation of brides. In all registers, the level of written literacy of brides who were framework knitters fell considerably below their male counterparts. Between 1838 and 1851, the level ranged from 6 percent to 25 percent and between 1852 and 1870 between 20 and 59 percent. The educational attainment of female knitters was ignored most drastically in two parishes particularly suffused with this domestic industry: Wigston Magna and Shepshed. In Shepshed, the occupational information of brides was assiduously noted. There, the written literacy of female knitters stood at 18 percent between 1838 and 1851 and 20 percent between 1852 and 1870. This neglect is also visible in the capacity of the brides who were employed as seamers in the parish: in 1838-51, only seven out of 63 bridal seamers signed the register and in 1852-70 eight out of fifty. There are two salient points here: in the framework knitting parishes, the education of young females was considered less important even than the low levels of attainment of their male counterparts; and, since these females were engaged in framework knitting as much as the young men, written literacy did not contribute to the progress of domestic industrial development.

The problem of relying on marriage registers is that they obscure the potential later education of young people. It is always possible that a marriage partner who placed a mark in the register in their relatively young years later acquired the ability to sign through local institutions such as Mechanics' Institutes in the middle of the nineteenth century. What can be asserted is that they did no have the benefit of schooling at a young age.

During the nineteenth century, new opportunities developed in the larger urban centres for people with the skill of writing. Warehousemen in the borough of Leicester were universally required to have the ability to write. The introduction of a professional police force also demanded men with the ability to write. In the textile industry, almost all the framesmiths and many of the needlemakers and sinker makers had acquired the skill of writing to manage their self-employed businesses. In the new factory-based elastic web weaving developing from the 1860s in the borough of Leicester, most of the employees could sign their name.

Appendix

Signatures of working-class marriage partners in non-urban parishes, 1838-70

Hinckley to Leicester

Burbage[162]
1838-1851
Grooms fwks/stockingers 52 (47%) of 110
Grooms labourers 21 (38%) of 56
Brides fwks 47 (33%) of 141
Brides servants 4 (19%) of 21
1852-70
Grooms fwks/stockingers 42 (59%) of 71
Grooms labourers 34 (40%) of 86
Brides fwks 36 (32%) of 114
Brides servants 21 (50%) of 42

Barwell[163]
1838-1851
Grooms fwk/stockingers 45 (58%) of 78
Grooms labourers 6 (23%) of 26
Brides fwks 27 (29%) of 94
Brides servants 11 (25%) of 44
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 44 (63%) of 70
Grooms labourers 20 (33%) of 61
Brides fwks 8 (22%) of 37
Brides servants 2 of 7

Earl Shilton[164]
1838-1851
Grooms fwks/stockingers 12 (67%) of 18
Grooms labourers 6 of 13
Brides fwks 2 of 4

[162] ROLLR DE3367/16.
[163] ROLLR DE1330
[164] ROLLR DE727/11: rarely records female occupations. At no. 178 December 1861: 'Parties refussed to sign'.

Brides servants 0 0
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 49 (53%) of 93
Grooms labourers 30 (53%) of 57
Brides fwks 1 of 3
Brides servants 2 of 3

Narborough[165]
1838-1851
Grooms fwks/stockiness 17 (48%) of 35
Grooms labourers 7 (18%) of 38
Brides fwks 9 (23%) of 40
Brides servants 1 of 15
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 8 (53%) of 15
Grooms labourers 14 (48%) of 29
Brides fwks 3 of 13
Brides servants 3 of 4

Countesthorpe[166]
1838-1851
Grooms fwks/stockingers 14 (28%) of 51
Grooms labourers 7 (23%) of 31
Brides fwks 0 of 1
Brides servants 0 of 1
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 35 (61%) of 57
Grooms labourers 12 (55%) of 22
Brides fwks 1 of 2
Brides servants 1 of 1

Sapcote[167]
1838-1851
Grooms fwks/stockingers 14 (54%) of 26
Grooms labourers 6 (33%) of 18

[165] ROLLR DE1653. Occupations of brides rarely provided after 1851.
[166] ROLLR DE1465/7. Occupations of brides rarely provided.
[167] ROLLR DE2599/3.

Brides fwks 0 of 4
Brides servants 0 of 1
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 12 (48%) of 25
Grooms labourers 15 (36%) of 42
Brides fwks 1 of 1
Brides servants 1 of 1

Wigston Magna[168]
1838-1851
Grooms fwks/stockingers 27 (29%) of 93
Grooms labourers 8 (14%) of 56
Brides fwks 6 (10%) of 62
Brides servants 1 of 10
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 75 (67%) of 112)
Grooms labourers 25 (53%) of 47
Brides fwks 12 (25%) of 48
Brides servants 7 (33%) of 21

Oadby[169]
1838-1851
Grooms fwks/stockingers 33 (59%) of 56
Grooms labourers 1 of 13
Brides fwks 17 (32%) of 54
Brides servants 4 (20%) of 20
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 30 (81%) of 37
Grooms labourers 9 (35%) of 26
Brides fwks 13 (59%) of 22
Brides servants 19 (79%) of 24

Blaby[170]
1838-1851
Grooms fwks/stockingers 24 (41%) 58 (100%)

[168]ROLLR DE644.
[169]ROLLR DE1136.
[170]ROLLR DE3352/18.

Grooms labourers 5 (24%) 21 (100%)
Brides fwks 6 (10%) 58 (100%)
Brides servants 2 4 (100%)
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 16 (35%) of 46
Grooms labourers 16 (38%) of 42
Brides fwks 24 (30%) of 80
Brides servants 3 of 7

Leicester to Loughborough

Belgrave[171]
1838-1852
Grooms fwks/stockingers 30 (47%) of 64
Grooms labourers 11 (36%) of 31
Brides fwks 6 (15%) of 40
Brides servants 1 of 2
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 30 (51%) of 59
Grooms labourers 26 (59%) of 44
Brides fwks 6 (43%) of 14
Brides servants 6 of 7

Syston[172]
1838-1851
Grooms fwks/stockingers 23 (58%) of 40
Grooms labourers 15 (46%) of 33
Brides fwks 0 of 0
Brides servants 1 of 1
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 18 (50%) of 36
Grooms labourers 28 (61%) of 46
Brides fwks 1 of 2
Brides servants 0 of 0

Barrow upon Soar[173]

[171] ROLLR 17D64/A/IV/4.
[172] ROLLR DE2811/12.
[173] ROLLR DE2933/19.

1838-1851
Grooms fwks/stockingers 18 (42%) of 41
Grooms labourers 25 (33%) of 75
Brides fwks 6 (35%) of 17
Brides servants 2 of 2
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 21 (53%) of 41
Grooms labourers 25 (37%) of 68
Brides fwks 23 (38%) of 60
Brides servants 18 (49%) of 37

Sileby[174]
1838-1851
Grooms fwks/stockingers 43 (49%) of 88
Grooms labourers 25 (43%) of 58
Brides fwks 27 (27%) of 99
Brides servants 15 (33%) of 46
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 47 (50%) of 95
Grooms labourers 22 (55%) of 40
Brides fwks 46 (46%) of 100
Brides servants 14 (74%) of 19

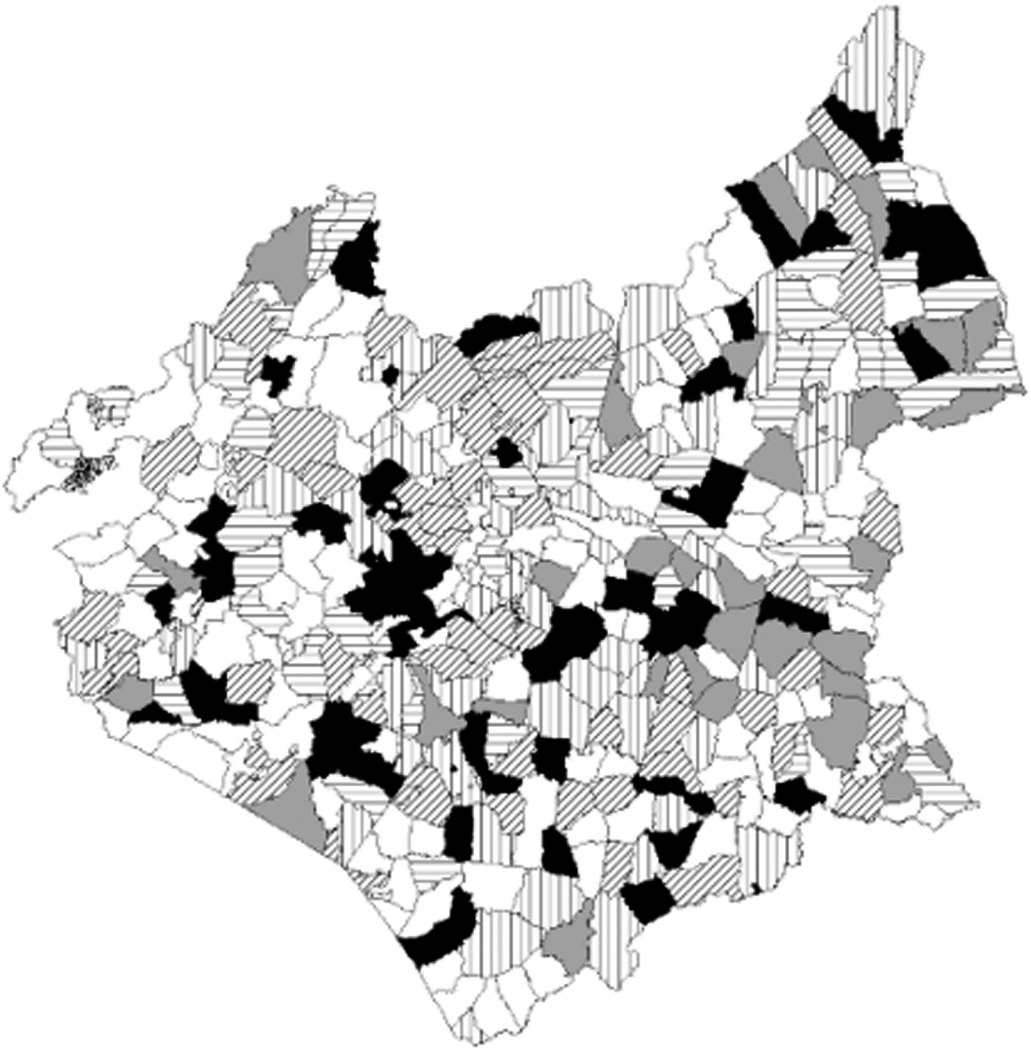
Shepshed[175]
1838-1851
Grooms fwks/labourers 114 (44%) of 240
Grooms labourers 26 (51%) of 51
Brides fwks 35 (18%) of 191
Brides servants 8 (32%) of 25
1852-1870
Grooms fwks/stockingers 127 (54%) of 237
Grooms labourers 35 (45%) of 78
Brides fwks 10 (20%) of 51
Brides servants 11 (55%) of 20

[174]ROLLR DE2844/12.
[175]ROLLR DE610/20-21.

4 Mothers of circumstance and illegitimacy in the early nineteenth century

Black = more than 71 per 1,000; horizontal fill = 51-70; vertical fill = 31-50; oblique fill = fewer than 30; blank/white = no data.

Figure 7: Rates of bastardy in parishes



> At all events there was a major rise in the illegitimacy ratio between the mid seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. It moved in sympathy with changes in marriage age and was on a sufficient scale to have substantial impact on overall fertility. In the second half of the seventeenth century the ratio stood at about 1.5 per cent, but by the early nineteenth century had risen to 6 per cent.[1]

Research into the demographic impacts of bastardy has a solid foundation. Substantial examination resulted in substantive results about Britain more than forty years ago.[2] The conclusions were drawn from analyses of selected parishes and locations. Twelve geographically dispersed parishes were the subject of a longitudinal study, whilst east Kent was adopted as another project.[3] Wrigley and Schofield expanded the sample considerably, but also relied, of course, on the earlier conclusions for the rate of illegitimacy (as note 1). Understandably, research into rates of illegitimacy has been focused on sample populations to produce notions of aggregate levels.

Much of this increase occurred in the course of the eighteenth century which has recently been the focus of a number of additional regional studies.[4] The magisterial studies of English demography have been concerned with the aggregate level, although recognizing that different parishes might have been affected by varying influences.[5] In an endeavour to understand the varying propensity for illegitimacy, some recent research has turned again to further intensive local and regional studies. Some narratives from East Sussex have been considered by Falcini, who also recites Nutt's examination of illegitimacy in Essex.[6] In particular, Muir has concentrated on 36 parishes in Wales in the eighteenth century, elucidating the variation in local levels of illegitimacy to 1800. Perhaps predictably,

[1] E. A. (Tony) Wrigley and Roger S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* [*TPHE*] (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), p. 266 (referring to research by Peter Laslett)..

[2] Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith, *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London: Arnold, 1980), esp. section I 'Britain', pp. 71-246.

[3] Oosterveen, Smith and Susan Stewart, 'Family reconstitution and the study of bastardy: evidence from certain English parishes' and Anthea Newman, 'An examination of bastardy recordings in an east Kent parish', in *Bastardy and its Comparative History,* pp. 86-157.

[4] Wrigley and Schofield, *TPHE*, p. 350.

[5] Wrigley and Schofield, *TPHE*, p. 424; most recently, Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams, *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005).

[6] Louise Falcini, 'Accounting for illegitimacy: parish politics and the poor' in Peter Collinge and Falcini, eds, *The Old Poor Law 1750-1834* (London: Open Press, 2022), ' (esp. p. 30).

because of its source material, London has attracted further attention.[7] There is a recognition that the influences on the rate of illegitimacy were multiplex and complex, and differed according to local circumstances and conditions.

In the founding research into illegitimacy, only one industrializing community was considered: Shepshed in north-west Leicestershire with its burgeoning domestic stocking-making.[8] Widely-dispersed parishes were selected in the sample. A different approach is taken here, analogous to Muir's concentration on a region, but with some differences. The 'region' is, in fact, an entire county with its varying internal *pays* or 'regions'. The sample is purposive, but geographically concentrated. Especially, the examination addresses strongly industrializing localities extending the inspection from Shepshed to the entire domestic industry in this compact location. The analysis also moves from the eighteenth century to the apogee of domestic-based industrialization in the early nineteenth century before the consolidation of the industry into factory units. The concern here is to try to establish how those local variables operated in a critical decade between 1813 and 1822 inclusive.

The discussion unfolds in three sections. In the first part, after an initial introduction to the data on which the analysis is based, the spatial contours are explained and justified. The description of the county and its regions focuses on the domestic industry of textile production (woollen stockings) before this household economy was completely eclipsed by factory units. The areas of low population density are also elucidated. The chronology is established as 1813-1822 inclusive, comprehending a decade of baptisms after the introduction of printed baptism registers from 1813. An important part of the first section confronts some methodological issues, in particular the difficulty of religious dissent and nonconformity in the analysis of rates of bastardy from Anglican parish registers. Another complication examined is the relationship between population size (through total numbers of baptisms) and the level of bastardy. The final part in the first section addresses the context and framework of bastardy. Some fur-

[7] Angela Muir, 'Illegitimacy in eighteenth-century Wales', *The Welsh Historical Review* 26 (2013), pp. 351-88; Muir, 'Courtship, sex and poverty: illegitimacy in eighteenth-century Wales', *Social History* 43 (2018), pp. 56-80; Muir, *Deviant Maternity: Illegitimacy in Wales, c. 1680-1800* (London: Routledge, 2020): Barry Reay, 'Sexuality in nineteenth-century England: the social context of illegitimacy in rural Kent', *Rural History* 1 (1990), pp. 219-47; Samantha Williams, *Unmarried Motherhood in the Metropolis, 1700-1850* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[8] *Bastardy and its Comparative History*, p. 70; *Family Formation*, pp. 127-45.

Table 10: Descriptive statistics of the data

Event	Number	Total parishes	Mean (sd)	Median	Min-max
Baptisms	44,305	209	212 (28.5)	110	3-4,785
Illegitimacy	2,208	209	10 (1.3)	5	0-168

ther background is added to the local circumstance by examining the conditions of unmarried mothers and illegitimate children. The second section presents the quantitative data on bastardy: first, the 'urban' rate in the county borough of Leicester; followed by the level in the small, unincorporated towns; and finally the 'rural' comparison, that is, between villages of varying size, character and locality. The succeeding part considers the local circumstances of illegitimacy. The final section draws together the features and variables in a conclusion, elaborating the features specific to the early nineteenth century.

The data

In this Table, pars = parishes, sd= standard deviation; min=minimum, and max=maximum

The data are accumulated from the baptismal registers from 209 Anglican parishes in Leicestershire, comprising over 40,000 baptisms and involving over 2,200 bastard children. Information has been collected for all parishes for which the registers are accessible. (In some instances, the registers are closed because still in use or contain information less than a hundred years old). The issue of the baptisms of dissenters and nonconformists is addressed below in the section on methodological considerations.

Spatial contours: the regions of the county

Fig. 1 illustrates the principal pays or regions in the county, also denoting the areas in which textile production predominated. This industry developed from the seventeenth century and had become considerable by the early nineteenth.[9] It was constituted as domestic framework knitting for the production of woollen stockings. One line of production ran down the Soar valley from the centre in Leicester, through Loughborough, and, indeed, extended into south Nottinghamshire towards Nottingham. The other region, to the south-west, of industry

[9]Pat Hudson, *The Genesis of Industrial Capital: A Study of the West Riding Wool Textile Industry* (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), pp. 57-84, discusses the notion of 'proto-industrialization'.

Table 11: Hosiery entrepreneurs in 1822

Place	Hosiers	Needlemakers	Framesmiths	Sinker makers
Ashby de la Zouch	3	0	0	0
Hinckley	17	5	4	0
Leicester	109	17	16	5
Loughborough	6	5	2	3
Market Bosworth	2	0	1	0
Mountsorrel	3	1	2	0
Wigston Magna	0	1	4	1

extended between Leicester and Hinckley.[10] The industry entailed production in both urban and village households.[11]

Unfortunately, the *Universal British Directory* of 1791 addressed only Ashby de la Zouch and Leicester.[12] The small industry in Ashby consisted of three woolcombers, five (bag) hosiers, three worsted manufacturers, and two framesmiths. In contrast, Leicester contained 88 hosiers with seven agents, fourteen framesmiths, fourteen woolstaplers and 67 worsted manufacturers.

More important, perhaps, is the number of families which depended on the hosiery industry. The potential number of such families is deduced (approximately) from the father's occupation on the baptism of children in the parish registers for selected parishes in the industrial districts. The emphasis is on nuclear families, not households; it is possible that there were extended households of framework knitters, but the concern here is with the maintenance of the nuclear family.

The Hinckley register also contained eight framesmiths and, perhaps significantly, four 'setter-ups' of frames who probably constructed the equipment in the

[10] 'Peasants and stockingers', for the south-west.

[11] Stanley Chapman, *The Early Factory Masters: The Transition of the Factory in the Midlands Textile Industry* (Aldershot: Gregg Revivals, 1983), pp. 18-19, 35-7. For Hinckley, William Felkin, *A History of the Machine-wrought Hosiery and Lace Manufactures* (1867), p. 119. For the character of the industry, Church, *Economic and Social Change*, pp. 26-57, and Caroline Steedman, *An Everyday Life of the English Working Class: Work, Self and Sociability in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), pp. 201-24.

[12] *Universal British Directory* volume 2 (London, 1791), pp. 66-8.

[13] Excluding those from other parishes in the workhouse.

Table 12: Nuclear families engaged in hosiery, 1813-22

Parish	(Bag) hosiers	Fwks	Needlemakers	Sinker makers
Lower Soar Valley				
Loughborough	6	140	6	2
Shepshed	0	237	3	2
Sileby	0	78	0	0
Syston	0	73	2	0
Kegworth	0	73	0	0
Barrow-upon-Soar[13]	0	63	0	0
Long Whatton	0	57	0	0
Rothley	0	54	0	0
South-west				
Hinckley	11	341	12	4
Earl Shilton	0	122	0	0
Blaby	0	98	0	0
Countesthorpe	0	71	0	0
Narborough/Huncote	1	45	0	1
Sapcote	0	43	0	0
Dadlington	0	12	0	0

larger enterprises. Although there existed no needle or sinker makers in Sileby, four framesmiths had business there. Perhaps a reflection too is that the framework knitter, William Chamberlain, acted as parish clerk through this decade in Earl Shilton.[14]

In Loughborough, fifteen framesmiths plied their trade and two in Shepshed. The character of the textile industry in the county was illustrated by the nineteen woolcombers in Loughborough and the eleven combers in Shepshed. Thomas Mottershaw acted as a frame setter-up, indicating the development of larger-scale units.[15] In Loughborough, however, lacemaking had advanced some way, as in Nottingham.[16] Robert Whitehall was employed as the overseer of a lace factory.[17] Included among the fathers baptising children in the parish were 86 lace makers. Some, indeed, of the framework knitters moved into lacemaking. In adjacent Shepshed, nevertheless, lacemaking had made no advance. Here, cotton mills had appeared with four fathers in the baptismal register from 1816 attributed the occupation of 'cotton mill man'.[18] Domestic textile production was becoming eclipsed.

Many other villages contained a few framework knitters or stocking makers. Although removed from the main agglomerations of textile production. Market Bosworth sustained a small industry. In the baptismal register between 1813 and 1822, fathers comprised two (bag) hosiers, a framesmith, and 26 stocking makers.[19]

In terms of occupations, however, women were restricted to framework knitting, on frames with smaller gauges. No unmarried women have been identified involved as framesmiths, needle makers, sinker makers or woolcombers.

Conversely, two regions contained parishes with low population density: the wolds, in the east, and Charnwood Forest, in the north-west. Since Charnwood Forest was undergoing enclosure between 1808 and 1828, there might have been a temporary influx of population to undertake the work of enclosure.[20] Most

[14]ROLLR DE727/5, nos 28, 149, 297, 482, 593.
[15]ROLLR DE667/6, no. 329.
[16]Church, *Economic and Social Change*, pp. 58-104.
[17]ROLLR DE667/6, no. 1336.
[18]ROLLR DE610/12 nos 313, 374, 407, 420.
[19]ROLLE DE2680/6.
[20]J. D. (David) Chambers, 'Three essays on the population and economy of the Midlands' in *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography* ed. D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley (London: Arnold, 1963);George F. Farnham, *Charnwood Forest and its Historians* (Leicester: Edgar Backus, 1930).

of the parishes in the east of the county had diminished populations.[21] At the extreme, the deserted village of Great Stretton witnessed only three baptisms in the decade.[22] Other villages with limited populations had the characteristics of 'closed' parishes, such as Scraptoft.[23]

The north-west boundary of the county was indeterminate. The boundary fluctuated so much in its earlier formation that some parishes straddled the counties of Leicestershire and Derbyshire. These parishes have been omitted from the analysis.

Chronological aspects

The first entry in the baptism register for Blaby in January 1813 concerned a father, William Hunt, 'By Trade a Framework knitter By Profession a Soldier'.[24] From January 1813, Anglican parish registers of baptisms were required to record consistently the 'Quality, Trade or Profession' of the father as a consequence of 'George Rose's Act'.[25] By 1813, the outbreak of Luddism and machine-breaking was subsiding and production of machine-wrought textiles recovered.[26] From 1812 through to 1815, the demands of the war economy stimulated the stocking industry in the East Midlands. After the return to a peacetime economy after 1815, the industry suffered from a relative slump in demand.[27]

The analysis finishes in 1822, not purely to capture a decade of data. By 1822, domestic industry was being superseded by factory units in the major centres of production like Hinckley, Loughborough, Shepshed and Barrow upon Soar (including Quorndon). The constitution and economy of households and the character of employment were then transformed. The decade selected, as well as being marked by unambiguous and complete data, thus coincided with the apogee of domestic industry before the major advent of factory units.

Methodological considerations

[21] Fox, 'The people of the wolds in English settlement history'.

[22] ROLLR DE1667/1.

[23] Sarah Banks, 'Nineteenth-century scandal or twentieth-century model? A new look at 'open' and 'closed' parishes', *Economic History Review* 2nd ser. xli (1988), pp. 51-73.

[24] ROLLR DE3352/6 no. 1.

[25] 52 George III c. 146.

[26] Church, *Economic and Social Change*, pp. 44-6 for Nottingham; *Family Formation*, p. 60 for Shepshed.

[27] *Family Formation*, pp. 21-2.

Since the analysis depends almost exclusively on Church of England baptismal registers, there is a question of their accuracy in including children of nonconformists and dissenters: the propensity or reluctance of nonconformists to register children in the Anglican registers. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, it has been suggested, the completeness of registration had declined as dissenters and nonconformists withdrew from registration in the Anglican registers.[28] Even so, the registration data are still robust enough, with correction, to estimate some demographic movements, approximate rates of bastardy per thousand live births.[29]

For security, nonetheless, extant nonconformist baptism and birth registers for places in the county have been examined.[30] Some of these are not particularly useful. The register of dissenters in Isley Walton, for example, concerns only one family there, the Bennetts.[31] The register of the Baptist Meeting House in Thurlaston seems to contain two illegitimate children, but both entered after 1823: Henry Weston the son of Mary Weston born (1824) and Elisha Hancock the son of Mary Hancock (1830).[32] The register of the Independent chapel in Newton Burgoland included, in 1816, John Tebbett son of Martha Croxall.[33] Ullesthorpe circuit comprised eight other parishes, but the register contains no illegitimate children.[34] In the register of the Methodist Chapel for Anstey were entered the children of framework knitters, but no bastards.[35] The numbers of baptisms involved are not considerable. Some Methodists may have persisted in registering in the Anglican forum. In 1821, indeed, a child was baptized in Blaby parish church, the offspring of Charles Kemp, framework knitter and Methodist preacher.[36] A Methodist preacher, Thomas Graham, had two daughters enrolled in the baptism register in the Anglican church in Hinckley in 1819 and 1820.[37]

More importantly, however, the registers for Hinckley, the location of textile industry, present a problem: the issue of old dissent. The register of the Indepen-

[28] J. T. Krause, 'The changing adequacy of English registration', in *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography*, pp. 380, 384, 387-8, 392.

[29] Wrigley and Schofield, *TPHE*.

[30] In addition to the items below, TNA RG4/1435 (Fleckney, General Baptist).

[31] TNA RG5/99 nos 75-.

[32] TNA RG4/1695, fos 30r, 37v.

[33] TNA RG4/2327, fo. 7A recto.

[34] TNA RG4/2328, fos 1-6.

[35] TNA RG4/1295, fos 1-5.

[36] ROLLR DE3352/6 no. 311.

[37] ROLLR DE1135/10 nos 927, 1144.

dent meeting in Hinckley includes about 190 baptisms between 1813 and 1822.[38] (Only one of which seems to have involved a singlewoman: Ann daughter of Ann Harris baptized in 1820).[39] Most of the congregation inhabited Hinckley, but some lived in the surrounding villages. The issue is that most of the baptisms were probably not entered in the Anglican register. A spot check has been undertaken. The same difficulty obtains in the register of the Presbyterian Great Meeting, which consists of another ninety or so baptisms (again with no real evidence of bastardy).[40] From the information in the Anglican registers only, the rate of illegitimacy amounts to 59 per thousand live births. Including the dissenters, however, reduces the rate to 49 per thousand.

For Market Harborough, the issue is more serious. The Anglican register enumerated only 292 baptisms. The register of old dissent, however, contains almost as many children.[41] In fact, 61 of the baptisms concern children from Northamptonshire and many others from Leicestershire villages, including 24 from Great Bowden. Accordingly, 175 were denizens of Market Harborough. Taking these old dissenters into account, the rate at Market Harborough subsides from 35 to 21 per thousand.

Both Hinckley and Market Harborough were located on the 'edge', on the county boundary. Old dissent tended to flourish on the periphery. In the case of Market Harborough, the edge was compounded by its position close to Rockingham Forest and also its position as a chapelry of Great Bowden for a prolonged period.[42]

Old dissent had also been established in the county borough. The Presbyterian Great Meeting in Leicester included some families from rural villages: Thurnby, Knighton and Rearsby. In effect, however, the 110 baptisms at the meeting between 1813 and 1822 do not materially affect the data for Leicester as a whole.[43] The Independent meeting house at Kibworth Harcourt also provided for members in the surrounding villages: Burton Overy; Fleckney; Great

[38] TNA RG4/1297-1298.

[39] TNA RG4/1298, fo. 41v (no. 386).

[40] TNA RG4/1438 fos 50-56.

[41] ROLLR DE1587/6; TNA RG4/1631.

[42] Alan Everitt, *The Pattern of Rural Dissent: The Nineteenth Century* (University of Leicester Department of English Local History Occasional Papers 2nd series, 4, 1972); Keith. D. M., and Paul S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: The Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), pp. 93-120.

[43] TNA RG4/3189 fos 87-121.

Bowden; Great Glen; the Langtons; Laughton; Medbourne; Tugby; as well as those in Market Harborough (and some locations in Northamptonshire). Since the total number of entries only just exceeded a hundred spread over numerous villages, again the impact on the quantitative data is minimal.[44]

The second question about the Anglican registers is the wide variety in the number of baptisms performed in each parish in the decade. In particular, the question arises: what is the minimum number of baptisms for significant conclusions? In this instance, the decision has been made that fifty christenings is a minimum number to have any real efficacy. Parishes with fewer than fifty baptisms are thus excluded from the geographical distribution of bastardy by parish. There are 33 such parishes. Additionally, the registers of a dozen parishes comprised between 51 and 60 baptisms, but these are included in that analysis.

On the other hand, the parishes with fewer than fifty baptisms are integrated into the Spearman's rank correlation of the number of bastards and the number of baptisms. One obvious question is whether the number of bastards was related to the size of the population of the parish. For this purpose, Spearman's rank correlation (rho) was run for the number of baptisms against the number of bastard children. The result is r^2 amounted to 0.72348 (p (two-tailed) = 0), suggesting a high degree of association between the two variables (baptisms/bastards). The correlation, however, does not explain some important variation in the number of bastards per thousand baptisms elucidated below.

One imponderable for the local urban centres is the effect of troop movements, especially before 1816.[45] Loughborough had been a place of billeting, as the innholders in July 1765 petitioned the Earl of Huntingdon to mitigate the impact: 'your Petitioners are frequently Subjected to the Quartering of Soldiers'.[46] Between 1813 and 1822, 32 legitimate children of soldiers were baptised in All Saints, Loughborough.[47] A child of a 3rd Dragoon guardsman was baptised in 1816 'On March through Loughborough'.[48] Later, indeed, a 'small barracks' was constructed in the town.[49] Troop exercises also impacted on Hinckley, where 25

[44]TNA RG4/1441 pp. 13-40.

[45]Jennine Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army in the Long Eighteenth Century: 'the girl I left behind'* (Oxford: OUP, 2014)..

[46]Huntington Library, San Marino, (HL) HAM Box 33 fldr 1.

[47]ROLLR DE667/6.

[48]ROLLR DE667/6 no. 570.

[49]William White, *History, gazetteer, and directory of Leicestershire* (Sheffield: Leader, 1846), p. 274.

legitimate children of soldiers were christened in the same decade.[50] The register for Ashby de la Zouch contains the baptisms of 15 legitimate children of soldiers deployed there from the West Essex and Middlesex militia and the Dragoon Guards and, perhaps oddly, the children of five French prisoners of war.[51] In the Lutterworth register was entered the baptism of a child of a 'Private in the West Kent Militia on his March to Maidstone in Kent' in May 1816 on demobilization.[52] These military movements mainly affected the county borough and some of the small towns on principal routes. It is evident that bastard offspring could be the result of encounters with billeted soldiers. Edward Rowley, a sergeant in the Leicestershire Militia, was the alleged father of the child carried by Jane Wilson of St Martin's parish in Leicester, after their several sexual liaisons.[53] Exactly how far those sojourns may have resulted in illegitimate children is not resolvable.

One of the most difficult aspects of registration of baptisms of illegitimate children is the variability of the information provided by the incumbents. The tendency not to complete the column concerning status and occupation of the unmarried mother is explored further below. Suffice it to comment that the references at the sessions of the justices to petitions for the maintenance of single mothers usually furnish no further information. Although the occupation of the alleged father is specified (no doubt to establish their means), mothers are comprehensively just defined as 'singlewoman'.[54]

Fig. 7 represents these variations in the rate of bastardy in different locations. (The geodata for the map have been obtained from the ESRC Data Archive at the University of Essex. For Leicestershire, there are probably some anomalies. The map should therefore be interpreted as only an approximate representation of the distribution of rates of bastardy).[55]

Bastardy's background

In 1817, Ann Paling conceived a bastard child in Thorpe Arnold. On regis-

[50] ROLLR DE1135/10.

[51] ROLLR DE1013/4 nos 30, 63, 95, 135, 497.

[52] ROLLR DE2094/4 no. 15

[53] *RBL VII,* p. 117.

[54] *RBL VII*, pp. 66, 71, 74, 76, 92, 100-1, 104, 110, 119, 121-2, 125, 131, 133, 137, 139, 142, 144, 146, 152-3, 155, 158, 172, 174, 176, 183, 199, 206, 209-14, 216, 219, 221-4.

[55] R. J. P. Kain and R. R. Oliver, R. R., Historic parishes of England and Wales: an electronic map of boundaries before 1850 with a gazetteer and metadata. [data collection]. UK Data Service. SN: 4348 (2020.

tering the baptism, the incumbent of the parish added a comment to the entry: 'during the absence of her Husband Richard Paling a Soldier'.[56] The incumbent was probably exercised by the matter lest the burden of the child's maintenance fall on the parish despite the legal requirement to save the parish harmless.[57] Until 1834, bastardy cases were delegated to petty sessions through orders of affiliation against fathers for provision for the child. Such instructions often met with resistance and neglect.[58] Thus Thomas Cross was sentenced to hard labour for failing to provide maintenance.[59] Failure to recompense parishes for maintenance resulted in hard labour for other reputed fathers.[60] Conversely, 'a bold-looking woman' named Green of Belton, in the north of the county, sought affiliation in 1823, but the child had been delivered in 1819 and she had four other illegitimate children.[61] Parish officers thus had an interest in pursuing bastardy cases which may also have stimulated some incumbents, their churchwardens and parish clerks to be assiduous in recording illegitimate children in the baptismal register. Similarly, their language might have been sharpened.

The fiscal motive was complemented by social attitudes which were perhaps represented in the language which incumbents deployed in annotating the registers. Many officiants, nonetheless, made no comment in registering the baptism of the child, through any of a benign, disinterested or uninterested position. The child was thus unmarked. The christened child was not marked by the officials in the registers of Burbage, Markfield, Packington, Ratby, Thurcaston, Whitwick, and Worthington, for example, where numerous illegitimate children had been entered in the register.[62] Other incumbents stigmatized the child through descriptions in the first column along with the child's baptismal name. The epithets ranged through 'natural, 'spurious', to illegitimate, bastard, and perhaps most damning 'base-born'. The vicar and curate of St Martin's, Leicester, respectively E. J. Vaughan and John Davis, designated the child as natural. In contrast, Joseph Jones AB designated a child 'A Base Child'.[63] The incum-

[56]ROLLR DE774/ , no. 17.

[57]6 George III c. 31; Bridget Hill, *Women Alone*: *Spinsters in England, 1880-1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 112-13.

[58]Samantha Williams, 'Unmarried mothers and the new poor law in Hertfordshire', *Local Populations Studies* 91 (2013), pp. 27-43., esp. pp. 27-8.

[59]

[60]*LJ* 30 April 1813 p. 3.

[61]*LC* 12 April 1823 p. 3.

[62]ROLLR DE980/4, DE994/3, DE1416/4, DE1729/3, DE1760/13, DE2499/2, DE3367/5.

[63]ROLLR DE2416/2 no. 1.

bents of Ibstock and Sharnford among many availed themselves of the term 'base-born'.[64] In Ashby de la Zouch and All Saints, Leicester, the earlier clerics made no comment about the status of the child but their successors consistently applied the term bastard.[65] The question, of course, is how far these were individual's opinions and how far they reflected wider social concerns and variation in those anxieties across parishes and localities.[66] Were the epithets part of a shared language of social discipline? The more intense definition of 'base-born' implies stigmatization and ostracism. The condemnation seems to have been directed not at failed arrangements for marriage but some other culpability. If the 'bastardy-prone sub-society' did not exist, there may have been an anxiety about its possibility.[67]

Urban rates of illegitimacy

Leicester comprised the only incorporated borough in the county. In 1801, the borough contained 3,205 inhabited houses with a population of almost 17,000, far exceeding any of the other towns in the shire, all of which remained unincorporated. By 1821, the number of inhabited houses had doubled to 6,085, now supporting more than 30,000 denizens. The expansion had largely occurred in St Margaret's parish and through the enclosure of the South Field in St Mary's.[68]

The unexpected anomaly here is the low rate of illegitimacy in the expanding built-up area of St Margaret's parish, which had until recently been a liberty of the bishop of Lincoln. The number of baptisms reflects the rapid explosion of population there. Although there was a small concentration of illegitimate births in Churchgate (thirteen) and more significantly Belgrave Gate (23) which led northwards out of the borough, the unmarried mothers were widely dispersed through the parish. (The incumbent specified street addresses). In contrast, the high rate in St Martin's parish, in the ancient centre, seems paradoxical. (St Martin's had been the 'borough' church and later became the cathedral).

[64] ROLLR DE1717/9 and DE2401/1.

[65] ROLLRDE1013/4 (W. Donall, vicar) and1D63/14 (J. Haytor, vicar).

[66] William I. Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 193-205.

[67] Laslett, 'The bastardy-prone sub-society' in *Bastardy and its Comparative History*, pp. 217-246; Steven King, 'The bastardy prone sub-society again: bastards and their fathers and mothers in Lancashire, Wiltshire and Somerset, 1800- 1840' in Levene et al., eds, *Illegitimacy in Britain*, pp. 66-85.

[68] *RBL VII*, 496-501.

[69] ROLLR 7D41/7 and 24D65/B2, 11D62/12, 1D63/14, DE1564/3

Table 13: Urban characteristics: the borough of Leicester

Parish[69]	N Baptisms	N illegitimate	N per 1,000
All Saints	1,049	56	53
St Margaret	4,785	168	35
St Martin	691	49	71
St Mary	1,745	47	27
St Nicholas	488	19	40

Table 14: Urban characteristics: small towns

Place	Total baptisms	Illegitimate	N per 1,000[70]
Ashby de la Zouch	1,200	110	92
Hinckley	1,481	87	59
Loughborough	1,818	91	50
Lutterworth	453	14	31
Market Harborough	286	10	35
Melton Mowbray	893	55	62

This centrally-located parish contained many high-status buildings and many professional households. It is significant, therefore, that a number (twenty) of the illegitimate mothers were servants as well as 23 'singlewomen'. Much of St Mary's parish, although it was expanding, consisted of middle-class households, especially the liberty of the Newarke near the parish church. The low rate of bastardy here no doubt involved significant familial discipline. In short, the levels of illegitimacy varied across the borough, with two surprising 'anomalies': St Margaret's and St Martin's.

Market Bosworth later became the administrative centre for a Poor Law union, but is excluded here. Including its numerous chapelries, it accounted for 334 baptisms, but it is, nevertheless, included in the rural section.[71] Equally, Castle Donington declined in importance in the later eighteen century.[72]

By the eighteenth century, the character of the small towns had diverged.

[70]ROLLR DE667/6, DE745/8, DE1135/10, DE1013/4, DE1587/6, DE2094/4.

[71]ROLLR DE2680/6.

[72]Pamela Fisher and J. M. Lee, *The Victoria History of Leicestershire: Castle Donington* (London: University of London Press, 2016), 43.

Some (Lutterworth and Market Harborough) remained market towns. Meanwhile, Melton Mowbray began to develop as a service centre for the hunting company, illustrated by the 59 grooms who had families in the town between 1813 and 1822.[73] In the north-west of the county, the Earl of Moira had grand designs for Ashby de la Zouch. For centuries dominated by the Hastings family, the town gradually emerged as a focus of gentility as well as a market centre. From c.1815, the earl devised his plan to elevate the town, an aspiration completed (if not permanently) by the establishment of the Ivanhoe Baths in 1822.[74] The spa and billiard room temporarily raised the status of the town. By contrast, both Hinckley and Loughborough emerged as centres of industry, with industrial formation in the towns and in their hinterlands.

Detailed comparison across these small urban centres is difficult because of the varying attitudes of incumbents to the status and occupation of the unmarried mothers. In the registers for Loughborough, Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray, the column for recording status and occupation was left blank for single mothers. The incumbents of Ashby de la Zouch, Hinckley and Lutterworth were meticulous in assigning a status or occupation.

In Ashby de la Zouch 82 of the 110 single mothers were described as servants. Small textile production accounted for two dozen other unmarried mothers (including twelve calico and eight cotton weavers). In contrast, in Hinckley the comparative numbers involved 25 servants and 57 textile workers (55 of whom were framework knitters), with a few others. The profile in Lutterworth was completely different again. Although there were five servants, most of the mothers had descended into poverty. Of the five defined as paupers, three had been remitted to the house of industry in the town. Three textile workers with illegitimate children also resided in that institution. The composition of the unmarried mothers thus reflected and was structured by the character of the urban place. Surprisingly, the genteel Ashby de la Zouch had the highest rate of illegitimacy, associated with female servanthood. In this respect, it mirrored St Martin's parish in the borough of Leicester.

'Rural' comparisons

Some of the influences on the incidence of illegitimate births can be illus-

[73] ROLLR DE745/8 (baptism register); Mandy de Belin, *From the Deer to the Fox: The Hunting Transition and the Landscape, 1600-1850* (Hertford: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2013).

[74] HL, HAM Box 6, fldrs 38 and 41, Box 7, fldrs 7-14, 16-20, 22, 24-26.

trated through information for parishes with especially high rates. This section is concerned with those illustrative parishes. As explained above, the description 'rural' is not entirely appropriate as locations of industrialization developed in the county. The term 'rural' is simply applied here to differentiate these places from the borough of Leicester and the small towns of Ashby de la Zouch, Hinckley, Loughborough, Lutterworth, Market Harborough, Melton Mowbray.

Foremost is the parish of Shepshed, an industrializing location in the eighteenth century, with pronounced domestic stocking production. The development of this framework knitting has been explicated by Levine. Here, 76 of the 953 baptisms involved illegitimate children: a rate of 80 per thousand.[75] Both the Reverend Charles Allsopp, the vicar, and his curate, Thomas Thorpe, neglected to complete the column for 'Quality, Trade or Profession'. From evidence in other parish registers, however, it is probable that most of these unmarried mothers were engaged in framework knitting.[76]

Framework knitting dominated Barrow upon Soar, which included manufacturing in the northern part of Mountsorrel, where 41 of the 439 children baptised had a single mother: 93 per thousand. Indeed, other single mothers had been despatched from Sileby, Rothley and Syston, also places with large hosiery production, to the poorhouse in Barrow where their children were baptised.[77] As at Shepshed, the vicar, William Easton, declined to specify an occupation for the single mothers. The same socio-economic characteristics defined Earl Shilton. In that parish 39 of the 614 children baptised were illegitimate: 64 per thousand.[78] In nearby Stoke Golding, also characterized by hosiery and framework knitting, thirteen of 179 baptisms involved illegitimacy: 73 per thousand.[79] In the Barwell register, a parish close to Earl Shilton and Stoke Golding, in the region of hosiery production around Hinckley, 32 of the 448 baptised infants (72 per thousand) had unmarried mothers, sixteen of whom were attributed the occupation of framework knitter (and fifteen as servants, for which further below).[80]

Returning to Barrow upon Soar, initial entries in the register illustrate how unmarried mothers supported themselves. In 1813, the single mothers Mary

[75] ROLLR DE610/12.

[76] Joyce Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), p. 42, for women as handloom weavers.

[77] ROLLR DE2933/6.

[78] ROLLR DE727/5.

[79] ROLLR DE495/6.

[80] ROLLR DE1330/4.

Shenton, Ann Lovett and Mary Ferrin were all described as framework knitters. Elizabeth Read, another framework knitter and single mother, was 'reputed to be about 14 years'.[81] Thereafter, however, the entries fail consistently to record the status or occupation of unmarried mothers. The continuation is, nonetheless, represented by Mary Ferrin who was defined as a framework knitter in 1813. Mary was the daughter of Mary Ferrin of Sileby.[82] She migrated to the adjacent parish of Barrow., where, in 1810, she had illegitimate issue, Ellen.[83] Between 1813 and 1822, she produced six more illegitimate offspring, more or less at two-year intervals.[84]

At the other extreme are baptismal registers of twenty parishes which record no illegitimate children with an aggregate number of 1,045 baptisms. Thirteen contain fewer than fifty baptisms, of which five fewer than twenty. Some of these parish registers, however, consist of many more baptisms: Cossington (57); Ashby Magna (71); Old Dalby (76); Swithland (93); Thurlaston (197); Thrussington (110); and Great Bowden (176).

Circumstances

Illegitimacy has long been associated with pre-nuptial pregnancy, that is 'bridal pregnancy'; couples intending marriage had a child before the ceremony.[85] Sometimes, the incumbent indicated this circumstance in the register. In Saltby, the register contains the entries: 'Ann Towers widow married to John Rawlings the day before' and for Elizabeth Tipping 'now Allen of Sproxton Lodge see Marriage Register of 1826' (22 June 1825).[86] In the register of Braunstone in 1813, the child of Mary Cramp, a 'maid servant', was entered, the incumbent specifying that William Smith was the 'reputed father'. Mary and Smith, of Aylestone, were conjoined in her parish soon afterwards.[87]

These liaisons can be examined further when the incumbents infrequently furnished this sort of information in the register. The descriptions are varied. Some simply identified the reputed father as above. A few attributed a surname

[81] ROLLR DE2933/6, nos 39, 40, 43, 121.

[82] ROLLR DE2844/4 (12 March 1780 and thus perhaps illegitimate).

[83] ROLLR DE2933/5 (15 April 1810).

[84] ROLLR DE2933/6, nos 43, 154, 159, 260, 329, 435.

[85] Richard Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); Steven King, 'Fractured courtships in Britain in the long nineteenth-century', *Family and Community History* 26 (2023), pp. 27-48.

[86] ROLLR DE1207/5 nos 8, 111.

[87] ROLLR DE2185/4 no. 7, DE2185/10 no. 2.

to the child different from the mother's surname. Thus in Countesthorpe the register referred to Joseph Lathom son of Ann Johnson and Patience Coleman daughter of Mary Herbert.[88] In fewer instances, the register identified the father and mother as the acknowledged parents of the child: so in the register for Ratcliffe Culey Mary Ann bastard child of Thomas Bostridge, labourer, and Elizabeth Arnold, servant.[89] In a sample of twenty-seven such registrations from thirteen rural parishes, only two liaisons resulted in marriage.

Like Mary Cramp, Mary Pyner probably married the father of her first illegitimate offspring. In 1818, the register of Narborough recorded that Mary had introduced her son, Joseph, for baptism. The register noted that she was '(now Clark)' and that Joseph was six years old. Mary had indeed married Joseph Clerk, husbandman, in 1814. The two subsequent entries to that of Joseph concerned Mary, daughter of Joseph and Mary Clark, aged three, and William, son of the same couple, newborn.[90]

In contrast, Mary Gadsby, who had a child by Joseph Burton, subsequently married Thomas Henney.[91] Similarly, Ann Hook did not espouse John Cockerill, the father of her illegitimate child, but William Foster.[92] It is possible that some of the mothers became 'common-law' wives. The singlewoman, Mary Cox, had children christened in 1815 (Hannah) and (Thomas) 1816. In 1822 and 1825, still designated a singlewoman, she had baptised two more children, Frederick Wadland and Susanna Wadland.[93]

The majority of such encounters did not result in marriage in Leicestershire in the early nineteenth century. As will be demonstrated below, illegitimate offspring in the early-nineteenth century were frequently not the progeny of subsequent marriage and family formation. For the most part, the mother remained a singleton. Detailed examination of the single mothers in Shepshed confirms this different situation in the early nineteenth century.[94] Only thirteen of the mothers married immediately after the baptism of their illegitimate child. There is no evidence for marriage by another twenty-eight. Most only married several

[88] ROLLR DE1465/14 nos 136, 138.
[89] ROLLR DE1621/18, no. 10.
[90] ROLLR DE1653/10 no. 18, DE1653/11 nos 108-110.
[91] ROLLR DE4564/4 no. 59, 4564/9 no. 38.
[92] ROLLR DE1369/9 no. 14.
[93] ROLLR DE1556/4 nos 39, 69, 162, 200.
[94] *Family Formation*, pp. 127-145: 'Illegitimacy: marriage frustrated, not promiscuity rampant'.

years after the baptism of their child. Additionally, three single mothers had two illegitimate children at intervals before marriage. Mary Warner, for example, arranged the baptism of her daughter, Ann, in 1813, another daughter, Sarah, in October 1815, and her son, John, in November 1815, all 'base born', before her marriage in 1816.[95] Two others produced two bastards without marrying, one of whom was Sarah Gee who had illegitimate children baptised in 1813 and 1815.[96] This hiatus might suggest that they had their own means of livelihood, probably in textile production, but the incumbent, Charles Allsopp, and his curate, John Goodacre, constantly failed to ascribe any status or occupation to the mothers of 'base-born' children.[97]

The same exercise can be conducted for Barrow upon Soar, also dominated by the framework knitting industry. Here, the unmarried mothers in the Barrow poorhouse must be excluded since they were unlikely to marry. About a third of single mothers married locally within a short time of the birth of their child. The entry in the register indicated in a couple of places that an immediate marriage had occurred. In the case of Elizabeth Hall, a framework knitter, the incumbent noted 'now Morris'. Elizabeth had, indeed, espoused William Morris in October 1815.[98] For the baptismal entry of the child of Sarah Deakin, he added 'now Giles'. Sarah was conjoined with William Giles in June 1817.[99]

In the vicinity of Hinckley, Barwell too had a strong textile industry. The register recorded thirty-two single mothers, seventeen of whom were described as framework knitters and fourteen as servants. Nine of these women married after the baptism of their child, comprising five framework knitters, three servants, and a widow. Six entered into marriage fairly quickly after the baptism, but three after four years or so.[100] Again one framework knitter had several bastard issue and apparently remained unmarried. Elizabeth Grewcock was described as a framework knitter on the baptism of her illegitimate children in 1815, 1818 and (twins) 1822.[101]

In contrast, the seven unmarried framework knitters who had children in

[95] ROLLR DE610/12, nos 3, 258, 270; DE610/13 no. 113.
[96] ROLLR DE610/12, nos 85, 222.
[97] Comparison between ROLLR DE610/12 (baptism register) and DE610/13 (marriage register), but see *Family Formation*, p. 141.
[98] ROLLR DE2933/6, no. 126 and DE2933/18, no. 28.
[99] ROLLR DE2933/6, no. 274 and DE2933/18, no. 53.
[100] Comparison of ROLLR DE1330/4 and DE1330/10.
[101] ROLLR DE1330/4, nos 100, 293, 465.

Countesthorpe all married, although only two immediately after childbirth. Four entered into marriage two or three years after delivery. One apparently did not marry for about eight years (Sarah Smeeton).[102] Although the child of Hannah Wittall was registered as Josiah Johnson in September 1815, Hannah espoused Thomas Richardson in 1818.[103] In adjacent Blaby, three framework knitters took husbands soon after childbirth, but five others did not. There, a female servant, Alice Woodman, gave birth to illegitimate children in 1813 and 1815, but did not marry in the parish. The licence for the marriage of William Kirkland and Alice Woodman (she aged 21), both of the parish of St Mary, Leicester, on 28 December 1816, suggests that she had migrated, which was probably the route taken by many unmarried mothers.[104]

What may have been operating in Countesthorpe was familial and 'community' pressure for single mothers to enter into matrimony. It seems to be anomalous. For example, the incumbent of Kegworth, the Reverend J. Jones, initiated the new Rose baptism register by attempting to record the names of the 'reputed fathers' of bastard children, although he relapsed in 1814. None of the five unmarried mothers married the putative fathers.[105] Unfortunately, these parishes are self-selecting. The attitudes of incumbents and curates towards the entry of status or occupation of unmarried mothers varied. The register for Earl Shilton consistently described them as singlewoman. The clerics of Stoke Golding and Burbage simply neglected or declined to fill the column, leaving it vacant.[106]

Turning to the other major sector of unmarried mothers assigned an occupation, the marital rate here too seems to be low. Analysis can be conducted for three parishes in which the registers consistently enumerated servants. The total comprises 26 servants in Bottesford (eight), the Sheepys Magna and Parva (thirteen) and Waltham on the Wolds (five).[107] Again, the baptismal register has been connected to the marriage register. None of the servants with illegitimate children in Bottesford and Waltham married in the parish. (Jane Browns, however, had illegitimate issue in 1815 and married in 1828 in Waltham, possibly

[102]ROLLR DE1465/4 no. 74, DE1465/6 no. 76.
[103]ROLLR DE1465/4 no. 58, DE1465/6 no. 38.
[104]ROLLR DE 3352/6 (nos 22 and 88 for Alice); Ervin Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (1968 edn) for 'passing' stigma, which was not available for mothers with children.
[105]ROLLR DE1287/6 and 17 compared.
[106]ROLLR DE495/6, DE727/5, DE3367/5.
[107]ROLLR DE625/5 and 13, DE839/7 and 14, DE1621/6-7.

the same person).[108] In the Sheepys, four married in the parish, one immediately after childbirth, but two several years after that event. Mary Hartnell is interesting because, although she married a couple of years after childbirth, her marriage is not in the register but on a certificate interleaved in the book. In fact, the marriage took place in her parish (uxorilocally) to Samuel Baxter of Clifton Campville (Warwickshire).[109]

In the small town of Hinckley with an expanding hosiery industry, the occurrence of marriage of unmarried mothers demonstrated the same characteristics. Of just under ninety (87) unmarried mothers, both framework knitters and servants, only 19 found a partner in marriage in the parish.[110] Four of them had a delayed marriage up to three years after the baptism of their child.

In Waltham, Catherine Carter produced children for baptism in 1814 and 1817, on both occasions described as a servant.[111] Two children brought for christening in Sheepy in 1818 were stigmatized as bastards in the register. These progeny of Hannah Wylks, servant, were aged ten (Ann) and six (William).[112] In the same parish, Jane Cope, servant arranged baptisms for her illegitimate children in 1821 and 1822.[113] (Her condition is ambiguous because a Jane Cope, singlewoman, had married a John Tabberner in 1815 and the burial register does not contain a note of him).[114] Even some servants, then, if the annotation in these registers is accurate, continued as singletons having had issue. Some, of course, may have migrated from the parish.

Such a recourse was not available in all localities, reflected in the consignment of many single mothers to institutions. Most of these mothers in Lutterworth inhabited the local house of industry.[115] Several such mothers from surrounding parishes were despatched to the Whetstone house of industry.[116] Thirty-nine of the unmarried mothers in Barrow upon Soar were confined in the poorhouse there, numerous despatched there from other parishes.[117]

[108] ROLLR DE625/5 no. 46 and DE625/13 no. 64.
[109] ROLLR DE1621/6, between pp. 7 and 8.
[110] Comparing ROLLR DE1135/10 and 17.
[111] ROLLR DE625/13 nos 27, 102.
[112] ROLLR DE1621/7 nos 72-73.
[113] ROLLR DE1621/7 nos 128, 129, 155.
[114] ROLLR DE1621/7 no. 5.
[115] ROLLR DE2094/4, nos 11, 333, 334, 362, for example.
[116] ROLLR DE933/4, nos 6, 33, 55, 92, 112, 113, 123, 124, 125 (Sapcote, including servants and stocking makers).
[117] ROLLR DE2933/6.

This situation was as likely to occur in urban parishes and in the case of servants, the most vulnerable of singlewomen.[118] Despoiled servants were almost inevitably released.[119] Thirty-eight unmarried mothers in St Margaret's parish in Leicester had been consigned to the parish workhouse. The number in All Saints in Leicester was eight of 56 single mothers. In St Martin's parish, the preponderance of single mothers comprised servants and most of them had been relegated to the workhouse. Another nine single mothers in the institution had no ascribed occupation. Two confined there had been stocking maker and lace runner.

At the other end of the spectrum are those rural parishes in which illegitimacy remained occasional. Between 1813 and 1822, no christenings of illegitimate children were performed in Cossington (of 57 baptisms), Swithland (93) and Ashby Magna (71). In Great Bowden only one bastard's baptism intruded into the other 176 and in Thrussington two of 110.[120] The period, of course, is restrictive. Immediately in January 1823, an illegitimate child was baptised in Cossington (and two others before the end of 1830).[121]

The ability of framework knitters to continue alone or in their extended families should be considered only a very limited 'agency'.[122] It was a solution forced upon them by circumstance, although it might have been a recognizable contingency. Dismissal and forced migration by servants also hardly constituted 'agency'.

Some conclusions

As can be inferred from the discussion above, the unmarried mothers seem mostly to have consisted of framework knitters and servants: the population most at risk. The data are not quite conclusive because of varying attitudes of incumbents towards the details of registration. In seventeen parishes, the cleric made no annotation about the status or occupation of the mother. In another fifteen he entered either singlewoman or spinster. The incumbent of Thurcaston just defined all the mothers of bastard children as 'singlewoman'.[123] Some others

[118]References as above.

[119]Robert Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1800* (Harlow: Longman, 1998), p. 74.

[120]ROLLR DE437/1/7, DE1998/7, DE3896/1, DE 2664/2.

[121]ROLLR DE3896/1, no. 58.

[122]Manon Van de Heijden, Ariadne Schmidt, and Griet Vermeesch, 'Illegitimate parenthood in early modern Europe', *The History of the Family* 26 (2021), pp. 1-10.

[123]ROLLR DE1416/4 nos 1, 21. 24, 27, 41, 44, 49, 59, 74, 76, 86.

entered descriptions erratically. Perhaps a quarter of the registers are thus deficient for this purpose. These lacunae are significant. None of the incumbents of Leicester St Margaret, Leicester St Mary or Loughborough remarked on status of occupation, leaving the column blank. The incumbent of Earl Shilton simply denoted 'singlewoman'. The numbers of, for example, unmarried framework knitters would be considerably augmented.

We can, nevertheless, illustrate the composition from parishes which included the information, concentrating here on the non-urban parishes. In aggregate, 215 servants and 88 framework knitters were entered as single mothers in the baptism registers. It is apparent that only a minority of both the servants and the framework knitters married in their own parish. Since the place of marriage was usually uxorilocal, in the bride's parish, the conclusion looks robust for stayers. Others might have migrated and married elsewhere, of course. In June 1815, May, the daughter of Elizabeth Peal was baptized in the parish church of Barrow upon Soar. The incumbent remarked of Elizabeth: 'Framework knitter said to be about 14 years of age'. No marriage for Mary took place in Barrow, but an Elizabeth Peal did celebrate her marriage when resident in nearby Hoton in December 1824.[124]

The difference between the two sets of at-risk women was their social position. The framework knitters could often rely on their kinship for support and so remain somewhat integrated into local society. By contrast, servants often had no local kinship networks and were isolated in their adopted households. Their status also left them vulnerable to dismissal as they brought opprobrium on the employer. The incumbent of Orton on the Hill was more accurate or perspicacious in entering the unmarried mothers as 'late servant'.[125]

Pre-nuptial pregnancy, in the sense of a relationship prior to an impending and consummated marriage, was, nevertheless, a limited feature. Preponderantly, these unmarried mothers did not marry in their parish after childbirth. It is equally evident that many of the framework knitters maintained themselves through industry.[126] Either they sustained themselves as singletons by their own hand or they were still integrated into their natal families as (with their child) extended families.[127] (The question of 'common-law' marriage cannot be addressed

[124] ROLLR DE455/1/7 no. 69; DE2933/6 no. 121.
[125] ROLLR DE1554/6 nos 22, 90, 100.
[126] Emma Griffin, 'Sex, illegitimacy and social change in industrializing Britain', *Social History* 38 (2013), pp. 139-61, esp. pp. 156-7.
[127] Analogously, *Family Formation*, p. 48.

here). By comparison more of the servants were destined for the poorhouses or migration.

Domestic industry allowed a higher level of female labour-force participation as part of the household economy. Incidentally, its growth permitted single women to maintain a livelihood, often, it might be suspected, within their natal households. If we accept the definition of 'framework knitter' applied to single mothers in baptismal registers as specific, then these unmarried mothers were not confined to the ancillary tasks of domestic textile production such as spinning and as seamstresses. By contrast, they were involved in mechanized production.[128]

> Courtship behavior, sexual activity, and the expectation of marriage occurred within a circumscribed perimeter which was itself constantly changing. It is this dialectic of change, the interaction of personal experience and material trends, that must be consulted when we examine the social context of illegitimacy.[129]

It is now almost fifty years since Levine made that observation when comparing four parishes, two of which (Bottesford and Shepshed) are located in Leicestershire. More examinations have investigated the local conditions of bastardy. As Levine suggested, the impact of domestic industrialization was important and perhaps its impact was most particular just before the phenomenon was eclipsed by production in factory units. In this paper, Levine's research into two parishes in the county has been expanded to embrace the entire county and its regions but with a focus on the tail-end of the processes which he delineated.

[128] Carmen Sarasúa, 'Rural manufactures' in *The Whole Economy: Work and Gender in Early Modern Europe* ed. Catriona Macleod, Alexandra Shepard and Maria Ågren (Cambridge: CUP, 2023), pp. 115-135., esp. pp. 134-5.

[129] *Family Formation*, p. 145.

5 'Forty years on':[1] Revisiting Shepshed and the transition to industrial society

> One of the most effective and immediate ways for work-forces to increase real income has been the further commodification of their own labour. They have often sought to substitute wage- labour for those parts of the household production processes which have brought in low amounts of real income, in particular for various kinds of petty commodity production.[2]

One of the cogent criticisms of a concept of 'proto-industrialization' is the failure of some places to achieve the transition from 'proto'-industrialism to full industrialization. In this scenario, the industrial process was aborted and the 'proto' was a dead end; industry in the countryside or rural industry did not make the leap to capitalist production.[3] The same problem may obtain in explaining the transition from 'an industrious society' to an industrialized economy.[4] The further question has been posed of the character of the transition from Phase I to Phase II, from 'proto' to industrial. One of the places which did make this transformation from 'proto' to industrial was Shepshed. The first phase of

[1] Alan Bennett, 'Forty Years On' (first performance 1968).

[2] Immanuel Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism* (London: Verso, repr. 2011 (originally 1983), p. 36.

[3] Donald C. Coleman, 'Proto-industrialization: a concept too many?', *Economic History Review* 36 (1983), pp. 435-48; Pat Hudson, ed., *Regions and Industries: A Perspective on the Industrial Revolution in Britain* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), pp. 24-68 (Hudson) and John K. Walton, 'Proto-industrialization and the first industrial revolution: the case of Lancashire' in Hudson, ed., *Regions and Industries*, pp. 41-68 ; Martin Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare: An Economic and Social History of Britain 1851-1951* (Oxford: OUP, 2007). For the concept, P. Kriedte, H. Medick, and J. Schlumbohn, eds, *Industrialization Before Industrialization: Rural Industry in the Genesis of Capitalism* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981). For a critical assessment, Rab Houston and Keith D. M. Snell, 'Proto-industrialization? Cottage industry, social change, and Industrial Revolution', *The Historical Journal* 27 (1984), 473-92. For the initial approach to industry in the countryside, Joan Thirsk, 'Industries in the countryside', in F. J. Fisher, ed., *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1961), pp. 70-88.

[4] Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008); Craig Muldrew, *Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness: Work and Material Culture in Agrarian England, 1550-1780* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011); E. A. (Tony) Wrigley, *The Path to Sustained Growth: England's Transition from an Organic Economy to an Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: CUP, 2016).

industrialization at Shepshed has been fully explained and analyzed by David Levine.[5] Levine's discussion finished in 1851, effectively before the final development of a fully-fledged industrial capitalism. The explanation is that Levine was interested mostly in two aspects: in redefining the 'proto' as a phase towards industrial capitalism, eschewing the concept of 'proto-industrialization'; and secondly, as the title of his book demonstrably indicates, in the relationship between family formation, pauperization, and the capitalist process. Fundamental to this development were female age at marriage, longer fertility, immiseration through the industrial process, and the consequent household economy (the full engagement of all in the household in the industrial enterprise).[6] 'In every case, proto-industrialization and proletarianization intersected.'[7] The concern with the effect of the industrial advance on household structure was seminal also in the investigation of Preston in the middle of the nineteenth century by Michael Anderson and in the Potteries by Marguerite Dupree.[8] What were the characteristics of local industrial society in Shepshed forty years after 1851 as factory industry intruded and partially replaced frame shops?[9]

The following re-investigation of Shepshed does not ignore the implications of industrialization for family and household structure and organization, but places it within a more advanced situation of industrialization. The focus is 1891, forty years after the *terminus ad quem* of Levine.[10] First, however, it is necessary to recapitulate the character of the first phase of industrial development in Shepshed which by the early nineteenth century had become 'the most intensively industrialized village' in Leicestershire.[11] The census of hosiery frames in 1812 supports this contention. In Leicestershire, Shepshed, with 900 frames, appeared

[5] *Family Formation* (1977), so just over forty years ago (at the time of the original publication of this article). For a comparative region, Pat Hudson, 'Proto-industrialization: the case of the West Riding wool textile industry in the 18th and early 19th centuries', *History Workshop Journal* 12 (1981), pp. 34-61.

[6] *Family Formation*, pp. 11-12; for the general impact of population expansion in the western half of Leicestershire between 1761 and 1851, Wrigley, *Energy and the English Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), p. 168 (Figure 6.5).

[7] Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A New History of Global Capitalism* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 184.

[8] Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth-century Lancashire* (Cambridge: CUP, 1971), p. 1; Marguerite Dupree, *Family Structure in the Staffordshire Potteries, 1840-1880* (Oxford: OUP, 1995).

[9] *Family Formation*, p. 33 for frameshops.

[10] TNA RG12/2516, f.110-RG12/2517, f. 67.

[11] *Family Formation*, p. 16.

third only to the county town (1650) and the small industrializing town of Hinckley (1,500). The number of frames in this county accounted for 39 per cent of the total complement of frames in Great Britain, another 32 per cent concentrated in Nottinghamshire. Nottingham, with 2,600, had an impact on Loughborough and its locality.[12]

The initial evidence of industrial activity in the village is mention of the 'silk-stocking wever' Thomas Trowell in 1655. In the first decade of the eighteenth century, four percent of entries in the parish registers referred to framework knitters, which had increased to a quarter by 1730.[13] The incursion of industry in this local countryside had been enabled by the freehold landholding associated with a poor environment which resulted in the relative poverty of agrarian income. This combination fostered the expansion of framework knitting as a household economy, engaging the whole family. Local household structure consisted of 'coresident wage earners', the largest households concomitant with framework knitting and the related textile processes (seamers). These family groups experienced a 'culture of poverty'. The persistence of outdoor relief supplemented low wages and underemployment.[14] The mean household size connected with the hosiery households extended to 4.73, co-resident children engaged as soon as possible in hosiery work.[15] By the 1831 census, 553 heads of household were employed in 'manufacturing', 123 in retail and craft enterprise, and 138 agricultural labour.[16] Family formation and its associated employment was predominantly endogamous, Shepshed comprising 64 percent of places of birth in the 1851 census.[17]

When incomers were accepted, they derived invariably from the proximate villages, which consistently had an agrarian economy. This analysis implicitly paints a portrait of Shepshed as an industrial island in a sea of rurality. Perhaps here there is a slight misrepresentation of Shepshed. One formative interpretation has insisted on the importance of the region in industrialization, such that:

[12] Stanley. Chapman, *Hosiery and Knitwear: Four Centuries of Small-scale Industry in Britain, c.1589-2000* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), p. 56 (Table 2.3).

[13] *Family Formation*, p. 19.

[14] *Family Formation*, pp. 27-32.

[15] *Family Formation*, pp. 46, 49.

[16] *Family Formation,* p. 17 (Table 2.1).

[17] *Family Formation*, p. 44 (Table 3.5). Levine's thesis has more detailed analysis of the 1851 census: 'The demographic implications of rural industrialization: a family reconstitution study of two Leicestershire villages, 1600-1851', unpublished PhD, Cambridge, 1975.

'In the first half of the nineteenth century industrialisation in Britain was even more than in the eighteenth a regional phenomenon ...'[18] Although some of the villages immediately surrounding Shepshed had a predominantly agrarian economy, Shepshed was at one extreme of a domestic hosiery industry which extended north from Leicester down the Soar Valley to Loughborough and thence to Shepshed.[19] Indeed, the proximity of Loughborough introduces another intervening variable, as the unincorporated town (which was created a borough in 1888) was transformed industrially from lace making to hosiery production.[20] The significance of Loughborough is reflected in the activity of a Shepshed brewer: '8 January 1800 William Starts money put in Middeltons Bank £115 0s. 0d.'[21] This bank was the foremost in Loughborough, although it succumbed, like many others, to later failure.

When the parish clerk of Loughborough temporarily noted occupations in the parish registers in the middle of the seventeenth century, the industrial complex can be perceived. On 7 September and 7 October 1653, John Browne and William Lowe, both weavers, were interred.[22] Between then and 1658, sixteen other weavers were mentioned in the register, with additionally a combmaker and two clothworkers. Then again, between 1664 and 1713, 27 weavers were entered in the registers.[23] More significantly, the daughter of Mr Folgamm, 'stocking weaver' was baptized on 25 April 1687. Considering the title accredited to him, the status of hosier (putting-out merchant) seems appropriate. On 13 February 1690/1, John the son of John Sharpe 'Silkeweaver', was baptized, reflecting some

[18]Hudson, *Regions and Industrialization*, p. 28.

[19]For the south of the county, extending from Leicester, 'Peasants and stockingers'; W. G. (William) Hoskins, *The Midland Peasant: Economic and Social History of a Leicestershire Village* (London, 1957; repr. Chichester: Phillimore, 2008), pp. 227-9 (Wigston Magna).

[20]The earlier development is discussed by Peter Clark, 'Elite networking and the formation of an industrial small town: Loughborough, 1700-1840' in Neil Raven and Jon Stobart, eds, *Towns, Regions and Industries: Urban and Industrial Change in the Midlands, c. 1700-1840* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 161-75. For a cognate development of a smaller town in the county, Penny Lane, 'An industrializing town: social and business networks in Hinckley, Leicestershire, c.1750-1839' in Stobart and Lane, eds, *Urban and Industrial Change in the Midlands 1700-1840* (Leicester: Centre for Urban History, 2000), pp. 139-66; for Hinckley's later development, Stephen Royle, 'Aspects of the social geography of Leicestershire towns, 1837-71', unpublished PhD, University of Leicester, 1976 (Coalville, Hinckley, Lutterworth and Melton Mowbray).

[21]ROLLR 21D60 (neither foliated nor paginated).

[22]ROLLR DE667/2.

[23]ROLLR DE667/2, 667/3.

diversity in textile production. Ten years later (22 December 1700), the son of the 'Jersey=Comber', James Dickinson, was christened. Finally, Mary, the daughter of 'Mr Rotherham' 'Framework knitter' was received into the church on 5 August 1701, perhaps also intimating a putting-out hosier. Of equal importance, first references are made to 'stockingers' in 1721-8.[24] When a later parish clerk resumed the references to occupations, of fathers of baptized children, during the effective decade between January 1748/9 and October 1759, 62 stockingers were entered in the register. That particular contingent represented only part of the textile workforce, men in households still producing children. This male workforce was complemented in the register by seven combers, four framesmiths, one specific framework-knitter, two stocking weavers, and three generic weavers.[25]

As might be anticipated, given the adjacency of the parishes, the chronology of industrial development in Shepshed and Loughborough was coeval. However, it is defined, this type of industrialization had already become a formative process in Loughborough by 1754. The significance of this association between Loughborough and Shepshed cannot be over-emphasized.

Firstly, the changes in Shepshed between 1851 and 1891 should be clarified. The demographic expansion which Levine depicted in the early nineteenth century was not sustained. The population of 2,627 in 1801 had increased to 3,872 by 1841. Thereafter, however, several decades of stagnation occurred through mid century, so that the population amounted to 3,759 in 1851, 3,626 in 1861, recovering slightly to 3,784 in 1871. In the next two decades, expansion resumed to 4,437 in 1881 and 4,416 in 1891. The mid-century demographic hiatus was consistent with the general trend throughout the country.[26] In Shepshed, however, the stagnation of population might have been exacerbated by the absence of immigration and some degree of out-migration. Some of the mid-century difficulty might have resulted from out-migration, not least to Loughborough. There in 1851, heads of household who had originated from Shepshed included 44 framework knitters, 28 other textile workers, 14 labourers, eight retailers, and 19 female heads.[27] (This explanation is rather cursory as the author intends to examine the late-nineteenth-century demography of Shepshed in greater depth).

[24] ROLLR DE667/3 29 April 1721, 1 February 1724/5, 27 September 1728.

[25] ROLLR DE667/4.

[26] Robert Woods, *The Population of Britain in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), p. 18 (Figure 2). In general, Woods, *The Demography of Victorian England and Wales* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000).

[27] TNA HO107/2085, ff. 7-363v.

As Levine indicated, the industrial character was significantly altered in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The general trend in the textile industries to concentration in factories occurred after 1850, but more particularly in Loughborough, adjacent to Shepshed and thus probably a local stimulus, in the 1850s and 1860s.[28] In particular, new factories in Shepshed impinged on the production of hosiery manufactures, not least stockings: William Cotton & Sons (Charnwood Works, Navigation Street); the Cooperative Hosiery Manufacturing Company; Harriman Brothers; Beer & Sons (Queen Street); and Thomas White/Whyte. Complementary in character were some boot and shoe manufactures, such as George Shuttlewood and Joseph Shuttlewood and the Cooperative Industrial Stores. Bag hosiers still inhabited the village, but were increasingly superseded.[29] The bag hosier, Thomas Pallett, of Charley Way, Shepshed, was declared bankrupt in 1888.[30] Thomas had succeeded his father, George, hosier, in this trade, operating from Charley Way.[31] The expansion of stone quarrying at Neverscliff provided new opportunities for the workforce, if limited in extent, at the Charnwood Granite Quarry Company (or Garendon and Charnwood Granite Company).[32]

The industrialization of Shepshed has been putatively ascribed to the poverty of agricultural income in the locality and the proliferation of smallholdings. It is therefore necessary to consider the structure of landownership in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The parish was dominated by the lordship of the Phillips/DeLisle family, lords of the manor, at Garendon Hall. The estate (6,857a. 1r. 7p.) was, however, located to the east of the village, although over 2,500 acres were leased in 1823.[33] In general, however, the estate intruded little on the central township.[34] Excluding this estate, 57 inhabitants in the village owned land in 1873 which extended to more than one acre. These owners were resident in the parish. It is possible, but unlikely, that their real property

[28]Chapman, *Hosiery and Knitwear: Four Centuries*, pp. 118, 124, 126.

[29]S. Barker & Co., *General Topographical and Historical Directory for the Counties of Leicestershire, Rutland &c* (Leicester, 1875), pp. 243-4; C. N. Wright, *Commercial and General Directory of Leicester and Fifteen Miles Round* (Leicester, 1884), pp. 472-4.

[30]*LG* Issue 26004, p. 7404.

[31]ROLLR DE610/22, p. 74 (no. 147) (1888).

[32]Barker, *Directory* (1875), p. 243; Wright, *Directory* (1884), p. 473.

[33]ROLLR DE2736/2 (survey and valuation of the parish of Shepshed in November 1823 by Granvile Smith, land surveyor, for which see below).

[34]*The Return of the Owners of Land 1873 Volume I Leicester* (London, C.-1097, 1875), p. 10.

included land elsewhere in the county. The mean acreage amounted to 16 acres (standard deviation 3.73), but the mode and median were more representative at two and five acres. Indeed, 28 owners possessed fewer than five acres, including 11 with fewer than two acres.[35] At the apex, with more than a hundred acres, were the Peach family, farmers, and the Rev. C. Phillips, incumbent, of the family of the manorial lords. Fully 38 owners had, however, acquired under ten acres. Earlier, however, the fragmentation of landownership had been more extreme, represented in a survey of the parish undertaken by the land surveyor Granvile Smith in 1823 (which will be explored in more detail elsewhere).[36] Then well over a hundred freeholders possessed less than one acre, often substantially less, numbered in perches. A considerable number owned just an acre or two. Confirmation is afforded by the Poll Books for the Parliamentary elections for the county, the franchise consisting of freehold land valued at 40s. per annum. The poll in 1830 enumerated 82 voters, mainly enfranchised through 'house and land' (including 27 framework knitters, 2 needle makers, a sinker maker, and four engaged in silk production); that of 1857 78 (living in the parish); and in 1865 109.[37]

The ownership of land does not necessarily correlate with the size of farms. The census returns of 1881 reveal some particulars about farm size, extending from a farmer of merely four acres to Thomas Merriman's seven hundred acres.[38] Although not quite all farm sizes were itemized, details of the acreages of 24 were recorded.[39] Only two graziers possessed fewer than twenty acres. Ten farms exceeded a hundred acres, with maximum extents of three hundred (two), 570, and seven hundred (two) acres. If meaningful, the mean farm size amounted to 156 acres (standard deviation 211.23), although the median and mode resulted in 55 and 21 acres. Certainly, some farm sizes had become consolidated. The stimulus by the late nineteenth century, despite agricultural depression, was probably the proximity of the cattle market in rapidly expanding Loughborough.[40] The exis-

[35] *Return of Owners of Land, Leicestershire.*

[36] ROLLR DE2736/2.

[37] *The Poll at the Election of Two Knights of the Shire ... 1830* (Leicester, 1830), pp. 62-3; *The Poll Taken on Friday, the 3rd of April, 1857* (Leicester, 1857), pp. 37-9; *The Poll Taken on Monday, the 24th July, 1865* (Leicester, 1865), pp. 45-7.

[38] TNA RG11/3147, ff. 56, 59v, for Merriman; RG11/3146, f. 102-3147, f. 60.

[39] TNA RG11/3146, ff. 105v, 111v, 116r-v, 125v, 130r-v, 135v; RG11/3147, ff. 13r-v, 14, 18, 48v, 55, 56, 59r-v, 60.

[40] G. and M. W. Green, *Loughborough Markets and Fairs* (Loughborough: Borough Council, 1964), pp. 48-52.

tence of at least seven cattle dealers in Shepshed in 1881 affords confirmation.[41] Among these, the Merriman family, father and two sons in the same household, were perhaps pre-eminent.[42]

The social and economic organization of the parish thus exhibited those characteristics which complicate the binary division into close and open parishes.[43] Landownership was dominated by a single lordship, of high gentry status, although two aristocratic landowners held small amounts of freehold land. (The Duke of Rutland possessed 26a. 3r. 36p. and the Earl of Stamford almost a hundred acres).[44] The freehold landownership was, in contrast, otherwise fragmented among a multitude of occupiers. The local economy depended on a vibrant textile industry, not by-employment but engaging the full household in industrial output. On the other hand, immigration was circumscribed, either because the inhabitants were non-receptive or the economy insufficiently attractive, not least in the later-nineteenth-century context of the competition from Loughborough.

From the census of 1891 all the details of 941 heads of household are legible, comprising 830 male heads and 111 female (mostly widows) (Table 15). Reflecting first on engagement of heads of household in textile production, the number of heads designated framework knitters declined between 1851 and 1891, from 366 to 209, but in the 1891 census an additional 86 heads were described as 'stocking makers'. The discrepancy in the designations causes some concern, but overall there was a decline in the households headed by a knitter. As elucidated below, part of the decline can be attributed to the infiltration of new factories and other sources of employment, like the stone quarries. There is also a difference in the description of the framework knitting between 1851 and 1891. In 1851, 185 were assigned to cotton framework knitting, a hundred to worsted, 37 to angola, 31 to silk, seven to merino, and three to thread framework knitting (three others are ambiguous).[45] In 1891, the designations are simply hosiery or stocking framework knitting, without reference to the material. (The marriage registers contain only one reference to silk, a silk warper in 1866).[46] The

[41] TNA RG11/3146, ff. 111, 117v, 129v; RG11/3147, ff. 24v, 41v, 49.

[42] TNA RG11/3147, f.49.

[43] Sarah Banks, 'Nineteenth-century scandal or twentieth-century model? A new look at "open" and "close" parishes', *Economic History Review* 2nd series 41 (1988), pp. 51-73.

[44] ROLLR DE2736/2.

[45] TNA HO107/2085, ff. 384-505v.

[46] ROLLR DE610/21, p. 122 (no. 244, the groom).

Table 15: Principal occupational status of heads of household in 1891

Occupation[47]	Male	Female	Total
All textiles	377	49	426
Of which framework knitters	204	5	209
Of which 'stocking makers'	84	2	86
Of which 'factory hands'	33	0	33
Labourers	154	0	154
Of which quarrymen	56	0	56
Of which agricultural	36	0	36
Farmers	53	0	53
Retail	111	8	119

Table 16: Age profile of FWKs as household heads, 1851 and 1891

Age cohort	% 1851	%1891
20s	15	15
30s	25	26
40s	19	23
50s	24	18
60s	10	14
70s/80s	7	4
Total N	358[48]	204

cotton hosiery factories in 1891 certainly concentrated on cotton hosiery. The imputation is a conversion entirely to lower-quality products.

[47] The sub-sets of numbers in 1 do not comprehend all the textile workers or labourers.
[48] Ages of eight illegible

The principal demographic characteristics of early industrial expansion in Shepshed before 1851 consisted of early age at marriage of both partners, a consequently longer period of fertility, and large family size engaged in industry with several incomes compensating for low wages. As factory organization impinged on, but did not replace, domestic framework knitting, what happened to family formation? Indeed, as new sources of income—such as stone quarrying—provided another avenue for income, were there any changes in household structure? (In 1881, the quarries were in the possession of William Lowe, the District Surveyor).[49] The progress of factory organization is reflected in the appointment of Certifying Surgeons for the Shepshed District under the Factory Acts by the late nineteenth century.[50]

The census of 1891 furnishes data of effective fertility, estimated from the age of the eldest surviving child and the age of the mother. The following analysis concerns 228 households in which the wife's age was below forty and in which children were normatively less likely to have departed the household. There will, of course, be a margin of error, but not a significant one. (Ten households contained no children, the ages of the wives extending from 21 to 38, thus comprehending those who had not yet procreated and those who would not reproduce). (The marriage registers are defective in that for considerable extents the entries record only whether the partners were of 'full age', 21).[51] In all textile-related families, comprising 141 mothers, the range of age at delivery of the first surviving child extended from 16 to 34. The mean age cohered around 22.1 years (standard deviation [sd] 2.973), however, and the mode and median at 21, this establishing a precise and significant age. The comparative number for labourers' wives is quite slender, just 30, including all of agricultural labourers, bricklayers' labourers, road and rail workers, and those in iron foundries. A range of 18 to 32 disguised the mean of 21.2 years (sd 2.614) and mode of 20 and median of 21. The stone quarry labourers have been treated separately as a distinct and novel cohort, but rather a low number at 17. Wives' effective fertility here began between the ages of 19 and 25. The mean age, however, occurred at 21.6 years (sd 2.002) with a mode of 20 and median 21. Considering the mode and the median, there is little difference of effective fertility (and the deduced age of nuptiality) in the three different occupations. Age at female marriage was low and fertility

[49] TNA RG11/3147, f. 47.
[50] *LG*, Issue 27439, p. 3605; Issue 27443, p. 3977.
[51] ROLLR DE610/20-22 (1837 onwards).

commenced at an accordingly low age, regardless of occupational cohort.

The resultant family size was invariably high, probably four or five children by a wife's thirtieth birthday. Nor was family size limited by later first procreation. For example, a platelayer's wife, who had her first surviving child at age 25, had by her 41st year six children.[52] The wife of a stone quarryman began her effective fertility at age 25, but had five children by age 32.[53] The first surviving child of a bricklayer's wife was delivered when she was 28, but she had five offspring when she was 39.[54] An engine driver acquired his first child when his wife was 21, but by the time she was 34, she had produced five children.[55] Another bricklayer's family followed a similar pattern, first surviving child at wife's age 22, but six children by her age 33.[56] An agricultural labourer had seven children by the time his wife attained the age of 33, the first arriving when she was 21.[57] The wife of another agricultural labourer produced their first surviving child at 19 and by age 41 had ten offspring.[58] These are illustrative examples of the potential large family formations across occupational groupings with consistency of size regardless of age at first procreation and female age at marriage. What is visible is the persistence of a tendency or predilection for large families which reflected the traditional household size in Shepshed even though the sources of income and occupation were being transformed. Nor was there any impact of a fertility check at this stage.[59]

In the earlier phase of industrialization, co-residence comprehended the extended family. In 1891, multi-generational households existed, but constituted only a minority. One or both parents were accommodated in 36 households, grandmothers in two (retired hosiery seamers).[60] Married and unmarried children, some with their children (the head's grandchildren) remained in 81 households. Unmarried daughters with their children featured occasionally.[61] More characteristic of this extended household was that headed by Robert Tomlinson,

[52] TNA RG12/2516, f. 125v.
[53] TNA RG12/2516, f. 126v.
[54] TNA RG12/2516, f. 127.
[55] TNA RG12/2516, f. 117v.
[56] TNA RG12/2516, f. 117v.
[57] TNA RG12/2516, f. 129v.
[58] TNA RG12/2517, ff. 43-43v.
[59] Simon Szreter, *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain, 1860-1940* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002).
[60] TNA RG12/2517, ff. 25v, 73.
[61] TNA RG12/2517, ff. 5v, 6v.

a sinker-maker aged 75, and his wife, aged 73, who provided accommodation for their son, a widower, and his two sons (their grandsons) as well as their daughter and her husband (their son-in-law) and this couple's six children (the head's grandchildren).[62] Multi-generational families thus accounted for about 12.5 percent of all households in 1891.

Household size might be augmented too by provision for lodgers or boarders, especially in default of lodging houses in the parish. This extension of hospitality served potentially two purposes: as a first point of arrival for incomers; and as an extra source of income for families.[63] In fact, only just over six percent of households included a lodger. Almost two-thirds of these lodgers or boarders were natives of Shepshed. Six of the sixty lodgers comprised medical, educational or religious professionals, all from a distance. The preponderance of lodgers and boarders thus consisted of local people without accommodation, such as two unmarried women with their child.[64] In some cases, factory hands and their families were compelled to seek lodging.[65] By 1891, Shepshed had declined as a destination for incoming families and local families experienced some hardship in accommodation.

Separating the different strands of textile households presents a problem. As employment in factories as 'factory hands' was a recent development, there are only 15 households headed by a factory hand. These households, moreover, in their nature headed by young partners, were not fully developed. With the possibility of stochastic variation because of the small number, the mean age of a wife at effective procreation was 22.8 (sd 0.87), but the mode of 21 and median of 22 might be more significant. The remaining larger number of households were divided between 'stocking maker' and framework knitters, the latter mostly engaged in mechanical stocking production and a little other hosiery goods. The wives of the stocking makers produced offspring at a mean age of 22.2, but mode and median of 21. The wives of framework knitters were delivered of their first surviving child at a mean age of 22.4 years (sd 0.33) and mode and median both of 22. The difference of at most a year between the three textile sectors suggests that early family formation prevailed, even among the recent factory

[62] TNA RG12/2517, f. 9.

[63] Robert Tressell (Robert Noonan), *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* ed. P. Miles (Oxford: OUP, 2005) (c.1906), pp. 177-81; Jack London, *The People of the Abyss* (London, 1903), pp. 24-9.

[64] TNA RG12/2517, ff. 11, 22.

[65] TNA RG12/2517, f. 25, 44v.

workforce. The economic circumstances both enabled and necessitated early household formation and size. By the late 20s and 30s of age, the household of a factory hand commonly consisted of three or four children (but the numbers of this advanced stage are small). This size of family was consistent with those of stocking makers and framework knitters. It is also probable that a tradition and custom of early family formation persisted. This persistence can be observed outside the stocking and hosiery sector. A head of household, Jabez Waring, subsisted as a glove maker, aged 34, his wife Mary, his senior at age 37. Their children, aged six months to 16, numbered six.[66]

Whatever the problems of consistency in occupational nomenclature between the enumerators in 1851 and 1891, it is incontrovertible that in 1891 factory hands in the stocking and hosiery factories were drawn from the younger heads of household. Of the 29 heads of household enumerated as factory hands, 17 were in their twenties and another five their thirties. The aged factory workers (66, 71) were employed as warehousemen. This cohort represents the difficulty of the youngest obtaining a foothold in skilled trades outside the factory and their effective proletarianization. The same situation obtained with the smaller number of factory hands in the shoe factories.[67]

The transformation in employment is, therefore, best represented by considering the occupational destinations of offspring in the households in the census of 1891. Predominantly, the young people over the age of twelve in households in 1891 entered into the factories, usually described as factory hands. (A few 11-year-olds were engaged as winders and Griswold hands. By the existing legislation, education delayed entry into work only until the age of ten, increased to eleven in 1893 and elevated to twelve in 1899, with the exemption of part-time working. The factory workforce in Shepshed seems to have been universally at least twelve.)[68] The hosiery factories engaged 211 and the shoe factories 129. The numbers for the hosiery factory hands excludes those simply described as linkers, seamers, menders and winders, without the qualification of factory-based, but many of those too were probably situated in factories as well as household.

This change is significant. In 1851, whole households were enumerated in

[66] TNA RG12/2517, f. 44v.

[67] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, p. 185; for the 'culture of the factory', Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), pp. 114-41.

[68] TNA RG12/2517, ff. 26, 31, for example.

which all the offspring, of both gender, were described as framework knitters.[69] The principal occupational recourse of sons and daughters was as framework knitters within their own households. There was a succession in the occupation. By 1891, that whole process had been undermined and offspring predominantly found their opportunities for employment only in the factories.

The age profile of the factory workers who were dependants in households was distinctive. That distinction was not just attributable to their being dependants or the numbers of young women who were employed in the factories until marriage, particularly in the shoe factories in which only a fifth of workers who were dependants were female. Young people entered into the factories as soon as they were eligible.[70] The mean age of the hosiery factory hands who were dependants in households was 19 (standard deviation 4.77) in 1891, with the mode at 17 and median 18. More than a tenth were aged between 12 and 14. More than 71 percent had not reached their majority (21). Among the 129 dependants employed in shoe factories, fully 114 had not attained the age of majority. Fifty-five were aged between 12 and 14. Although the mean age was 16 (sd 3.33), the mode at 14 and median at 15 years were significant. Girls of 13 were operating machinery in the hosiery factories. One of the operators of the Griswold knitting machines was a daughter aged 14, another reportedly 11.[71] Boys of 13 and 14 commonly acted as shoe rivetters.

Only 58 managed to become framework knitters. Fifteen of this number had passed the age of 30. Forty-three were beyond the age of majority. These framework knitters who were dependants in households had a large mature element.

Employment in the stone quarries was the prospect for another 33 whilst 43 were engaged as agricultural labourers. The 'inducement' of the factories can be illustrated by the family of George Bennett, a builder. His eldest son (20), Frank, became a stocking factory hand, the other son (18), George, a shoe hand (rivetter), and the 15-year-old daughter, Agnes, a stocking factory hand.[72] Less surprising is that the five daughters of James Neale, himself a hosiery factory hand, followed their father as hosiery factory hands, aged 16-

[69]For example, TNA HO107/2085, ff. 388, 390, 393r-v, 395v, 406, 410r-v, 420, 421v, 422r-v, 426v, 428v, 430v, 434r-435r, 436, 437, 438v, 439r-440v, 443r-v.

[70]TNA RG12/2517, f. 31 (11-year-old winder in a factory). For the legislation, Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-class Children in Nineteenth-century England* (Manchester: MUP, 1994), pp. 219-25.

[71]TNA RG12/2517, ff. 26, 44.

[72]TNA RG12/2517, f. 4v.

23.[73] Approximately a third of young people in households thus entered into hosiery factories and a further fifth into shoe units. (Strangely, the Anglican marriage registers do not include any references to shoe hands until the early 1890s).[74] There existed a residue who might also have been located in factories, but whose precise situation is ambiguous, including 28 stocking makers, five sinker or needle makers, forty female seamers, 17 menders, eight linkers, 15 winders, and two spinners. The stocking makers were usually male and followed the father's occupation. Thus William Hall, aged 45 in 1891, stocking maker, had four sons of employment age (13-20), who were also stocking makers, as well as four other sons under the age of employment and a daughter.[75] Unusually, his wife also contributed as a stocking maker. Incidentally, this household reflects the continuation of domestic industry, the engagement of the whole family, and the persistence of large household formation for aggregate household income.

The demand for labour in the stone quarries (and, indeed, agricultural labour) was less flexible than the requirements of the hosiery and, to some extent, shoe factories and required different physical attributes. Young males did enter almost immediately into the occupation, from the age of 14 (three of the youngsters in households). The mean, median and modal ages of these young male dependants was consistent at 22, only a dozen being below the age of 20. The demand for agricultural labour was equally restricted. The three sons (aged 17-24) of Elijah Wortley, aged 61, agricultural labourer, found their employment as factory hands (two) and granite quarryman.[76] (A quarrymen first appeared as a groom in the Anglican marriage registers in 1868, followed next by another in 1872, but not frequently until the early 1890s).[77] The opportunities for labourers on the land were limited by the size of farms, the normative income from agriculture in the vicinity, but also by the impact of agrarian depression.[78] Only fifteen of the agricultural labourers who were dependants in households had followed their fathers into the occupation. Twenty-eight were recruited from non-agricultural families, including from outside the parish. The age profile extended from 13 to

[73] TNA RG12/2517, f. 30v.

[74] ROLLR DE610/22, pp. 98 (no. 195), 104 (no. 208), 106 (no. 212), 128-9 (nos 256-258).

[75] TNA RG12/2516, f. 129.

[76] TNA RG12/2517, f. 5.

[77] ROLLR DE610/21, pp. 155 (no. 310), 202 (no. 404), DE160/22, pp. 112 (no. 223), 114 (nos 227-228).

[78] Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare*, pp. 44-58; P. J. *Perry, British Agriculture, 1875-1914* (London, 2013).

39, half a dozen in their thirties. Fifteen had passed the age of majority. These singleton labourers included a large proportion of mature males.

The sexual division of labour was complicated, not entirely binary, transected by age and status in the case of women.[79] Stone-quarry work, agricultural labour and other heavy tasks were occupied exclusively by men. Domestic and factory hosiery, however, were not the preserve of men, but provided employment for both sexes. Young women dominated the hosiery factories, their involvement reflecting the general sex ratio.[80] In particular, they operated as machinists. Their presence in the shoe factories was less pronounced, comprising some fifth of the young workforce. They were engaged in particular as machinists and fitters, whilst rivetting was exclusively a male operation. The difference was that the young women tended to leave the factory on marriage. Women's inclusion in the factory workforce was confined between ages 13 and their early twenties.[81] Married women of the older generation tended to be occupied, as in 1851, as seamers alongside their framework-knitting partners. Framework knitting was not the exclusive domain of men, however, as the smaller frames for stocking work allowed women to operate the frames as well. The female famework knitters (wives, widows and daughters) were a small number, but were engaged in the operation. Examples included the unmarried daughters Mary Brotherhood, aged 28, Emily Whitehall, aged 23, and Anne Wortley, aged 17, who all operated stocking frames in the domestic setting.[82]

The difficulty in eliciting the full implications of the sexual division of labour emanates from the laconic recording of wives' occupational status. In different sections, enumerators differed in their approach to wives' positions.[83] Several sections of the 1851 census for Shepshed leave the occupational column for wives blank. One enumerator, however, was more diligent in recording wives' employment conditions. This enumerator inscribed framework knitting as the occupa-

[79]Jane Rendall, *Women in an Industrializing Society: England 1750-1880* (London, 1990); C. Turbin, 'Beyond dichotomies: interdependence in mid-nineteenth century working class families in the United States', *Gender and History* 1 (1989), pp. 293-308.

[80]Robert Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London: Longman, 1998), p. 167.

[81]Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, p. 192.

[82]TNA RG12/2517, ff. 7v, 24v, 40.

[83]Edward Higgs and A. Wilkinson, 'Women, occupations and work in the Victorian censuses revisited', *History Workshop Journal* 81 (2016), pp. 17-38 for a recent examination of the previous debate.

tional status of thirty wives and hosiery seamer for another 67.[84] The details in the 1891 census appear to be more consistent throughout the sections. This consistency imputes that wives were now concerned with the household, represented by constant blanks in their occupational column. Household income was now conceived as the breadwinner's wage combined with important income from offspring entering the factories at the earliest opportunity.[85]

Concerning first the wives of framework knitters, 17 were also described as framework knitters, 25 as hosiery seamers, and eight others by various engagements. Only five wives of male factory hands were ascribed particular occupations, one as a factory hand and four as seamers. Just five wives of stocking makers were also accorded the occupational status of stocking maker and eight others as stocking seamers. Four others were engaged in other occupational roles. The same position obtained with wives of stone quarrymen, five of whom were seamers and two dressmakers. The wives of other labourers (agricultural and building) had even less opportunity, it seems, three as seamers and one as a dressmaker. Whilst for the most part the position of the others was left blank rather than attributed to household responsibility, it does seem that the emphasis had become placed on the breadwinner's wage in the partnership, importantly supplemented by the wage labour of the offspring.[86] The preference was for wage income from the children of the household rather than the wife/mother.[87] During family formation, the breadwinner's wage was paramount, but the persistence of large family size contributed to the household income after the adolescence of the offspring. The income generation of the family thus conformed with the Chayanovian household cycle, if in an industrial rather than a rural context: initially small with dependence on the breadwinner's wage; expanding in the

[84] TNA HO107/2085, ff. 410-470.

[85] Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berekeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995); C. Creighton, 'The rise of the male breadwinner family: a reappraisal', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38 (1996), pp. 316-37; Wally Seccombe, 'The construction of the male bread winner wage norm in nineteenth-century Britain', *Social History* 11 (1986), pp. 53-76; S. Horrell and Jane Humphries, 'Women's labour force participation and the transition to the male-breadwinner family', *Economic History Review* 2nd series 48 (1995), pp. 89-117.

[86] Occasional references to 'housework' and 'household duties': TNA RG12/2516, ff. 121, 123v.

[87] Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Europe Since 1500* (London, 1995), p. 89; also for the consequences for childhood, pp. 84-9. For an earlier cohort, Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Oxford: OUP, 2010).

middle phase with consolidated income; narrowing again in the later stages with reduced sources of income.[88] This modification to the breadwinner's wage is important because the supplementary income of the offspring guaranteed the future liquidity of the household. Significantly also, the withdrawal of married women from the labour force occurred at a particular conjunction: the transition to factory-based production.

Female participation in framework knitting receives confirmation from the Anglican parish marriage registers. Between July 1837 and 1858 237 of the 586 brides were described as framework knitters.[89] Perhaps significantly thereafter brides were generally not attributed an occupation, possibly reinforcing the concept of the breadwinner's wage.[90] The mothers of some bastard children in mid-century were assigned the occupational description of framework knitter.[91]

The potential for engagement of females in framework knitting depended on the size of the frames. The account book of Thomas Abell, framesmith of Shepshed, divulges the details of the sizes of frames.[92] Between 1855 and 1863, Abell supplied frames to a large number of the local knitters in Shepshed, Long Whatton and Sutton Bonington. The width of the frames varied from 13.5 ins to three feet. In 1859, for example, he constructed frames of 13.5 to 17 ins for Hallam, Pallett, and Cotton, at a price of £5 to £5 5s. 0d. Frames of 14 and 16 ins were furnished for Lakin and Corbett in 1855. The 'Prices of New Insides' were graduated for 15 ins to 30 ins. He offered 'Carcase Widening from 16 to 20 inches.' In 1863, Parker received a frame of 15 ins. Interestingly, Abell advertised the 'Prices of setting up Silk frames', the evidence of which had diminished elsewhere. These frames could be erected as 16 to 18 inches or for 'Extra width silk' 19 to 30 ins. Other frames, however, exceeded 20 ins and much of his income probably derived from widening frames as offspring in households matured. The proffered 'Warp Frame & Machine', indeed, extended to 45 ins in width.

In 1851, the industrial households of Shepshed were largely endogamous, the heads born in the parish, as Levine concluded. There are some aspects of in-

[88] A. Chayanov, *The Theory of Peasant Economy* (Madison, WI, 1986).

[89] ROLLR DE610/20-21.

[90] ROLLR DE610/21, pp. 43 ff. and into DE610/22. Eilihd Garrett, 'The trials of labour: motherhood versus employment in a nineteenth-century textile centre', *Continuity and Change* 5 (1990), pp. 121-54.

[91] ROLLR DE610/14, pp. 192 (nos 1532-1533, 1536), 193 (no. 1537).

[92] ROLLR DE404 (neither foliated nor paginated).

migration which do not accord with the conventional expectations. The first aspect which deserves comment, however, is the decline in the reception of textile workers between 1851 and 1891. Although the preponderance of framework-knitting heads of household in 1851 had their origins in Shepshed, about 31 percent had migrated into the village. In 1891, merely 12 percent can be categorized as in-migrants. The number of households headed by a framework knitter had diminished between 1851 and 1891, from about 366 to 204 (legible details). In 1891, 86 or so households were headed by a 'stocking maker'. Just ten of these stockingers' households were headed by an in-migrant. Overall, then, combining the framework knitters and stockingers as heads of households, in 1891 in-migrants constituted just 12 percent. The attractiveness of in-migration for textile work in Shepshed declined significantly in the forty intervening years.

The respective origins of these in-migrants is analyzed further below, but first some consideration must be devoted to some countervailing tendencies which seem contrary to the normative movements of people. The paradoxical points are the large elements of in-migration not just of retailers, but farmers and labourers. Farmers in particular might be expected to be a stable element, especially if freehold landowners.[93] In 1851, 28 of the 46 enumerated farmers and graziers had their origins outside Shepshed. The majority derived from within a radius of ten miles, but some longer-distance migrants originated in Northamptonshire and Birmingham. Nineteen of the 54 labourers, mostly agricultural workers, were attracted from outside the parish. Of just under 120 retailers of various kinds, 59 were in-migrants. In 1891, the numbers of in-migrants was similar: 27 of 53 farmers and graziers; 39 of 119 retailers of various types; and 26 of 96 agricultural and builders' labourers. In addition, the railway workers were almost exclusively from outside. In the new enterprise, stone quarrying, ten of the 52 workers had origins outside the parish. As in 1851, the immigrant farmers mostly derived from within a radius of ten miles, but with longer-distance origins in Huntingdon, Crich (Derbyshire), and Gressington (Yorkshire).

Returning to the framework knitters' origins, the 113 (just under a third of all fwks) in 1851 whose birthplace was not Shepshed derived from almost seventy different places. The vast majority emanated from within ten miles, but some travelled much longer distances from Newcastle under Lyne, Tewkesbury, Manchester, Norwich, Devon, Waterford (Ireland), Coventry, Wolverhampton,

[93] Colin Pooley and J. Turnbull, *Migration and Mobility in Britain Since the 18th Century* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 62-3.

Gloucestershire, and Northamptonshire (all one migrant). Over a third were received from the immediate locality from Loughborough (fifteen), Thringstone, Whitwick, Long Whatton, Kegworth, Sutton Bonington, Hathern, Belton, Swannington, and Coleorton. Additionally, another dozen in-comers supplied the needles and sinkers, all from the familiar places, including four from Loughborough.

By 1891, hosiery had become less attractive to migrants as it was transferred into factories. Only 24 of 204 framework knitters had entered the parish from elsewhere. Only one (from Worcester) had derived from outside ten miles. Eleven had origins in the customary local places, Belton, Hathern, Long Whatton and (five) Loughborough. The ten outsiders engaged as 'stocking makers' followed the same pattern, from Loughborough, Thringstone, and Whitwick. The incomers from long distances were now factory managers, particularly in the shoe operations. As a reminder, it should be specified that the above were all male heads of household and that other members of households are discussed elsewhere.

The economic consequences of the industrial reorganization to frame shops and then factories are elusive. The business entrepreneurs were unsurprisingly successful, at least in the short run. When Thomas Whyte, hosiery manufacturer of Shepshed, died in 1903, his estate was valued at over £1170.[94] More successfully, Samuel Harriman's estate, established as hosiery manufacturer, amounted in 1897 to £5499 1s. 0d.[95] In 1873, he possessed 2a. 1r. 12p. of land, presumably the site of his works.[96] Even grander was the estate of £19,975 14s. 5d. left by William Cotton, the other principal cotton hosiery manufacturer, probate of which was granted to his two youngest sons, Henry Geary and Samuel Geary Cotton.[97] As might be expected, only a small proportion of Shepshed inhabitants were included in the probate calendar after 1858, a total of 233 before 1903. About a third (71) related to the estates of women (spinsters and widows, supplemented by wives after the Married Women's Property Acts).[98] Their occupational status is obviously not immediately apparent. Among the male deceased were 16 framework knitters. Before 1881, estates were described as under a certain level.[99] The five framework knitters who died before 1881 had

[94]National Probate Calendar (NPC), 1903, Udall-Zweiniger, p. 151.

[95]NPC, 1897 Haarhoff-Jutson, p. 50.

[96]*Return of Landowners Vol I Leicestershire*, p. 14.

[97]NPC, 1894, Cabban-Dytch, p. 140; TNA RG12/2516, f. 124.

[98]Succinctly, Susan Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 251.

[99]W. D. Rubinstein, *Men of Property: The Very Wealthy in Britain Since the Industrial*

personal estate assessed at under £20 (two), under £100 (two), and under £200. The mean value of estates of deceased framework knitters after 1881 approached £110, with a mode of £63 and median of £72 (although again the numbers are small). The estates of bag hosiers, evidently in decline, were comparable, two under £100 before 1881 and six between £33 and £270 after 1881 with an outlier of £415. The estates of three framesmiths before 1881 amounted to under £100 (two) and under £200. One needle-maker bequeathed only under £20 before 1881, but two after 1881 had amassed £253 and £1061, whilst a solitary sinker-maker's estate did not exceed £58 after 1881. For comparative purposes, there were estates of bricklayers of under £20 and under £100 before 1881 and £15 and £81 after 1881, but higher amounts for quarrymen after 1881 (£114 and £161).

Like most of their workforce, Cotton and Harriman had their origins in Shepshed.[100] Cotton probably first appeared in the census of 1841 as a framework knitter in Forest Road, aged about thirty (the census of 1841 rounded ages to the nearest five), his wife Ann aged about 25.[101] Ann was the widow of Thomas Newbold (1808-37), whom she had married in 1830. That marriage had been solemnized in the presence of William Cotton and Sarah Newbold.[102] Cotton was conjoined with Ann shortly after her widowhood.[103] On his marriage, Cotton was assigned the occupational status of framework knitter, the son of Thomas, a shoemaker. By 1851, he had established himself as a worsted hosiery manufacturer employing sixty people. Aged 39, his premises were located in Navigation Road, where they remained. This and subsequent censuses confirmed that he was a native of Shepshed. At this stage, his family entailed a daughter, the eldest of the offspring, and four sons.[104] By the time he had attained 59 in 1871, his enterprise employed 62 men, 75 women, and 23 girls.[105] Within another decade, the number of employees was recorded in the census of 1881 as four hundred.[106] His two youngest sons, Henry and Samuel, aged respectively 35 and 33 and still in the household, assisted him as hosiery manufacturers.[107]

Revolution (repr. London: Social Affairs Unit, 2006), pp. 18-24.

[100] TNA RG12/2516, f. 124; RG12/2517, f. 34.

[101] TNA HO107/596/6, f. 50.

[102] ROLLR DE610/19, p. 189 (no. 566).

[103] ROLLR DE610/20, p. 31 (no. 61).

[104] TNA HO107/2085, f. 478v.

[105] TNA RG10/3258, f. 17.

[106] TNA RG11/3147, f. 31.

[107] Also 1891: TNA RG12/2516, f. 124.

The third child of seven of William Harriman, needle-maker of Field Street in Shepshed, Samuel when aged 14 in 1861 was still in education, not commandeered into employment.[108] Apparently he initially by age 24 entered the trade of beerhouse keeper on Navigation Road, adjacent to the new location of factories.[109] Ten years later, however, by his 34th birthday, he had established his hosiery factory on Tickhill Lane.[110]

The exception—but an instructive one—was Thomas Whyte, originally from Loughborough, thus illustrating the synergy between the two places. Ambiguously, the enumerator in 1871 described Whyte as 'hosier', with the implication of bag hosier, although he employed 28 men and eight boys.[111] The succeeding enumerator in 1881 attributed to him (aged 52) the full status of hosiery manufacturer employing 35 men and five boys, his premises also located on Navigation Road.[112] The premises were subsequently allocated to Charnwood Road by the enumerators.[113]

[108]TNA RG9/2275, f. 111v.
[109]TNA RG10/3258, f. 17v (1871).
[110]TNA RG11/3146, f. 111; RG12/2517, f. 34.
[111]TNA RG10/3258, f. 14v.
[112]TNA RG11/3147, f. 33v.
[113]TNA RG11/3147, f. 33v.

The scaling up of the units of production threatened the existence of the small producers, little masters, who survived in 1881, such as George Bott and his son, located in the centre in Pick Street.[114] In Nelson's Yard, Mary Nelson persisted as a hosier employing nine men and two boys.[115] In the central district too, in Queen Street, Joseph Lester, hosier (wool), provided employment for six men.[116] Table 17 presents the details of the other small masters surviving in 1881. The eclipse of these small employers was a part of the industrial transformation, the progression from a small-scale industry to factory units, affecting employment, workers' income, and some spatial transfiguration of the parish.

[114] TNA RG11/3146, f. 107v.
[115] TNA RG11/3146, f. 136.
[116] TNA RG11/3146, f. 146.

Table 17: Small hosiery masters in the 1881 census

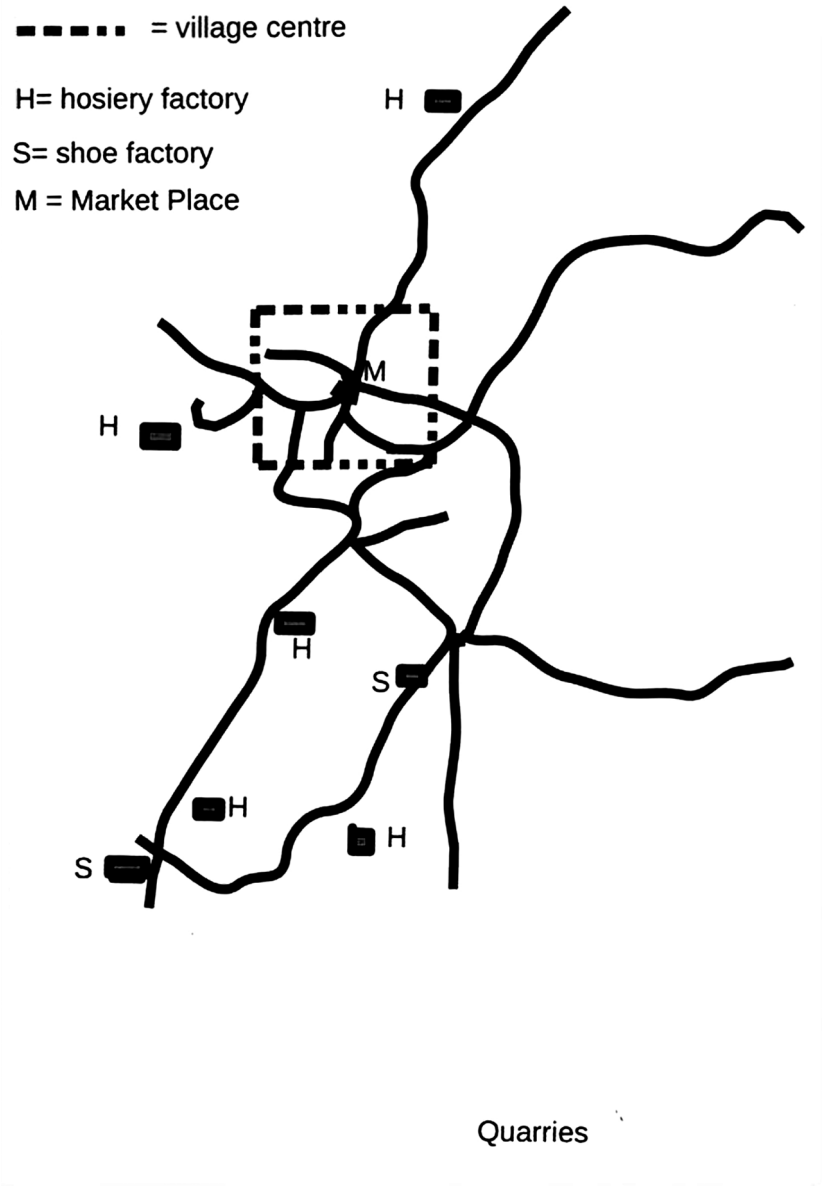
Master	Location	Description	Census ref. (TNA)
Joseph Onion	Pick St.	Hosier	RG11/3146, f. 106v
Michael Smith	Pinfold St.	Hosiery master, 12 men	RG11/3146, f. 125
Charles Harriman	Field St.	Hosiery mfr (wool, cloth), 24 people	RG11/3146, f. 138
John Beer	Queen St.	Hosiery man, 6 men + 7 women + 37 girls	RG11/3146, f. 145v
Benjamin Jaques	Forest St.	Bag hosier (aged 38)	RG11/3146, f. 153
William Beer	The Lant	Hosier	RG11/3146, f. 155v
George Pallett	Navigation Rd	Hosier, 22 men	RG11/3147, f. 33v
John Parker	The Lant	Hosier, 20 men	RG11/3147, f. 34v
Ames Dexter	The Lant	Hosier, 10 men	RG11/3147, f. 35
Henry Start	Kirk Hill	Hosiery mfr	RG11/3147, f. 36v
Joseph Wood	Kirk Hill	Cotton hosier, 12 men	RG11/3147, f. 37
Joseph Angle	Kirk Hill	Hosiery mfr, 5 persons	RG11/3147, f. 37
James Whitworth	Kirk Hill	Hosiery mfr, 15 hands	RG11/3147, f. 38
Samuel Cook	Sullington Rd	Hosiery mfr, 3 men	RG11/3147, f. 40v.

One consequence of the factory-based industrial reorganization was a partial spatial reconfiguration of the village and parish (Fig. 8). As traditionally, the central precinct—Market Place and Bull Ring—remained the retail core, with butchers, grocers, a printer, but a few interspersed framework knitters. Customarily also, framework knitters and stockingers inhabited the village nucleus, especially in places like Hall Croft, Field Street, Bridge Street, and Moorfield Place. The new factories, however, were located outside the traditional built-up area, on the periphery of the village, not least Cotton's factory adjacent to Charnwood Villa, to the south. Closer towards the centre, but still outside, was another factory on Charnwood Road. Also to the south was the factory on Sullington Road. Factory Street was constructed on the western perimeter. To the north, the hosiery factory on Brook Street was as distant from the centre as Cotton's factory. Boot and shoe factories were also built outside the traditional centre, to the south, on Sullington Road, and in the vicinity of the railway station. The decisions to build in these places was no doubt partly influenced by the availability of land, but perhaps also to prevent noxious new developments in the centre. Two consequences ensued. New building extended to the south in particular. Industrial and domestic housing developments insinuated into the previously rural character. Stockingers and a few quarrymen became housed along Ring Fence and Sullington Road. Domestic dwellings were constructed for framework knitters and some labourers in the Cotton Mill houses adjacent to Cotton's factory.[117] Although stone quarrymen inhabited various places in the village, they were concentrated in Worley Lane, Ashby Road, and Moscow Lane, constituting a separate neighbourhood.[118] To some extent there evolved then a polyfocal spatial division of the parish with elements of residential segregation. Established framework knitting continued in the central location interspersed among retail units. The new factories and at least part of their workforce relocated to the periphery of the parish. The agricultural element, separate since enclosure in 1777, was joined on the south by the new quarry workforce.

Understanding the transformation of the industrial economy of Shepshed may have wider implications. It was one of those industrial locations which achieved the transition from 'proto-industrial' or 'proto-capitalist' enterprise to factory-based industrial organization. The 'stages' conceptualization of Rostow has been

[117] TNA RG11/3147, ff. 14v-17, 44-45; ROLLR DE160/22, pp. 24 (no. 48), 30 (no. 59), 47 (no. 94).
[118] TNA RG12/2517, ff. 57ff.

Figure 8: Diagrammatic representation of spatial changes in Shepshed



abandoned long ago.[119] Emphasis has been placed in recent years on 'regional' industrial development, although still on sectoral economies. Although surrounded by predominantly rural parishes, Shepshed did occupy a place in an industrial spatial spectrum which extended from Leicester through Loughborough to Shepshed. The spatial conjunction with Loughborough in particular produced a minor 'agglomeration' which was at once beneficial and detrimental.[120] In 1851, employers in Loughborough had recruited 44 framework knitters from Shepshed.[121]

> Broadly speaking, all these concentrations form and survive because of some form of agglomeration economies, in which concentration itself creates the favourable economic environment that supports further or continued concentration.[122]

The industrial organization of Shepshed followed on from a cumulative process which enabled transition from domestic production through frame shops to factory production. The entrepreneurs were local and endogenous. In that sense, there was an organic transition from household industry to factory-based industrialization. Despite this relocation of the workplace, the importance of the household economy persisted, with customary large families at one life-cycle stage of the household expanding household income through factory working.

[119] W. W. (Walt) Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: CUP, 1960).
[120] M. Fujita, P. Krugman, and A. Venables, *The Spatial Economy: Cities, Regions and International Trade* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), p. 1.
[121] TNA HO107/2085, ff. 7-363v.
[122] Fujita, Krugman, Venables, *Spatial Economy*, p. 2.

6 Landholding in Shepshed

Landholding in Shepshed in 1823

'Survey and valuation of the Parish of Shepshed ... November 1823'[1]
by Granvile Smith, land surveyor

The plots are named, but the intention here is simply to represent the structure of landholding. The entries finish at p. 102. The entries are in a rough alphabetical order of owner.

Rev. Charles Allsopp plots of 14a 1r 13p, 1-0-2, 29-3-30, 47-1-34, 19-3-17, 1-0-35, 68-1-36
Thomas Allsopp Trust 3-0-39
Elizabeth Allsopp widow 3-2-17
Elijah Allsopp 18-3-16, 0-0-37
John Alt jnr 0-0-11, 7-2-4
Ann Alt snr 0-0-11
John Allwood 0-0-6
Mrs Armstrong 0-3-16, 2-0-0
John Alt snr 56-3-14, 1-0-6
Ashby School 2-3-0
Mrs Allen 2-3-15
Ann Almey 0-0-12
William Bramley 1-1-31, 18-3-9, 5-1-5, 4-0-12, 150-0-30, 122-1-20, 2-3-28
George Bramley 6-3-18, 172-3-14, 4-2-30
Elizabeth Bramley widow 0-0-4, 12-1-0
Sick Club 0-0-33
John Bramley 11-2-35
Mary Bramley 4-3-20, 15-0-10
Thomas Bentley illegible, 18-2-7
Robert Bentley 0-1-19, 1-2-14
John Bull 0-0-20
Loughborough Baptist Society 0-1-0
Baptist Particular Society 0-3-27
" (burial ground) 0-0-24
Baptist General Society 0-0-6

[1] ROLLR 2736/2.

Lucy Barker 0-0-4
Thomas Barker snr 0-0-10, 3-2-33
Thomas Barker gardener 8-3-36
Henry Barker 3-2-2
John Beer snr 0-0-10, 2-2-25
John Beer jnr 0-0-27
Nathaniel Berrington 0-2-7, 0-1-28
William Beer 0-1-4, 0-1-15, 11-0-6, 10-2-11
Thomas Barratt 0-2-8
John Burbidge 0-0-18
Thomas Berrington 5-2-22, 0-3-0
Phoebe Bosworth 0-0-39, 0-1-11
Rev. Bosworth 24-2-16
George Bennett jnr 1-0-18
Catherine Bennett 0-0-6
George Bennett snr 0-0-22, 0-2-15
Joseph Beckworth 0-0-5
Joseph Bywater 0-0-39
Thomas Bywater 3-3-34
Edward Burton 2-2-26
Almey Brooks 23-3-31
George Beeby 10-1-20
John Bakewell 0-1-24
William Buckley 0-2-0, 0-0-19
Edward Bailey 2-3-13
George Buck 0-0-13
Rev. Babington 2-0-18
Mrs Blackenbury 7-0-30
Thomas Babington esq. 8-3-37, 113-0-21
Peter Brealey 0-1-8
Thomas Brears 0-1-16
Thomas Bird 0-1-17
Thomas Bull 2-2-8
Joseph Bostock 8-0-30
Thomas Barrow 0-0-26
Bess Trustees 3-0-16

John Beadsmore 0-1-0
Breedon School 1-0-0
Rev. Barber 0-3-32
John Blood snr 0-0-30, 1-1-2
Bosworth 0-0-30
Smith Churchill 11-0-14, 4-1-31, illegible (mansion house at p. 24);
Benjamin Churchill 1-0-24 (cotton mill at p. 24)
Joseph Churchill 1-0-22
William Carr 0-0-12
Joseph & John Chester 86-0-14, 2-3-4
Catherine Chester 0-0-28, 11-2-37
William Corbett 0-0-33, 0-2-17
Thomas Chester 5-1-18
Joseph Crapper 0-0-9
John Chatterton 0-2-18, 4-0-16
Miss Chatterton 5-0-8
Robert Cumberland 0-0-37
Charles Cumberland 1-1-25
Thomas Cumberland 11-1-29
Thomas Cotton 1-1-2, 33-2-35
Joseph Cluer 0-1-34
Nathaniel Corah 0-0-2
Ann Christian 1-0-31, illegible
Henry Cooper 11-3-13
Rebecca Coulson 0-0-34
Chapel Trustees 111-2-12, 10-1-20
Miss Cowlishaw 3-0-22
Canal Company 14-0-32, 14-3-16
Wigley Clarke 0-0-7
Richard Cheslyn 2-0-3
Commissioners 5-2-33
Chamberlain Trust 8-3-20
Edward Dawson 58-3-12, illegible
Thomas Denning 38-2-32
Sarah Deverill 0-1-24, 2-0-16
Edward Dean 12-1-14

William Danvers 0-2-0
William Dickenson 6-3-4, 2-2-38
William Draper 4-2-8
Thomas Dexter 0-0-11
Elizabeth Dexter 1-1-6, 0-0-7
William Dexter 0-0-6
Henry Eddowes 0-2-18
Janes Ellas 21-3-28
Mistress Earl 0-0-28
Mary Emmerson 0-0-6
Swift Foxon Trust 2-0-28, 0-1-19, 1-2-8
Charles Foxon 0-0-7
John Flavel 0-0-24
Elizabeth Frith 0-2-28
Friers' Trust 1-0-0
William Fenton 19-0-32
Thomas Freeman 0-0-22, 3-1-20
William Freeman 0-0-22
Thomas Gadd 0-0-8
Mistress Green 15-1-37
Robert Greaves 3-0-36
Thomas Griffin 2-2-7
Thomas Gisbourn 58-3-14
Thomas Gimson 3-0-22
Garland 0-2-6
Edward Hall 2-2-12, 6-1-2,
Samuel Hall 0-0-16
Samuel Hoult 0-1-2
William Hoult 2-2-4
Francis Hibbert 3-0-24, illegible
John Harriman of Lockington 1-1-18
John Harriman (Oxley) 1-3-4
John Hadden 0-1-17
John Hudson jnr 1-0-10
John Hudson snr 1-1-27, 0-0-25
Robert Hewitt 0-0-36

Charles Hewitt 0-0-2
John Handford 0-0-2
James Hardware 0-0-15
John Harris 0-0-29, 22-2-13
Thomas Harris 0-0-7
Rev. Hardy 26-2-22, 32-2-17
Thomas Hopkins 2-2-18
William Henderson 0-1-36
Stephen Hood 0-1-35
Lemuel Holmes 0-0-35
James Hashold 1-0-8
William Jaques snr 2-1-36, 7-3-5 (warehouse at p. 44)
William Jaques jnr 7-1-19, 2-1-27
Richard Jaques 0-1-21
Richard Joins 0-0-15
John Jones 1-0-6
Rev. Johnson 17-2-33
Jesus College [Cambridge] 0-1-35
Independent Society 0-0-27
John Knight 0-1-32
Thomas Kidger 0-0-11, 0-1-3
John Kirk 0-0-23
Henry Lowe 2-3-15
Luddows' children 4-0-32
Thomas Lakin & son 1-2-37
Mary Lakin 3-0-20, illegible
John Lambert 26-1-38
Edward Lord 0-1-14
Leicester Hospital 0-0-35
William Lester 0-0-6
George Lacy 0-0-3
Lagard & Judd 4-1-27
John Meakin 0-0-12
William Merriman of London 0-0-30
William Merriman of Shepshed 18-1-32
Mistress Merriman 4-3-21

William Morley 0-3-36
George Moorley 5-1-30
Thomas Moult 2-0-32, 0-2-28
William Mee 0-0-12
William Mills 1-1-22
Catherine Mills 9-0-25, 10-2-28
Henry Mansfield 0-0-14
Thomas Mills 3-2-34
John Miller 11-3-5
Richard Morgan 0-0-6
Methodist Society (Shepshed) 0-0-8
Methodist Society (Loughborough) 0-1-27
John Mackie 0-1-10
William Marshall 0-2-9
Benjamin Moseley 2-2-28
Mason 0-0-3
John Newham 0-0-33
Daniel Newham 5-0-22
Robert Nicholson 3-0-19
Ann Noon 1-2-34
Tobias Needham 0-0-17, 5-3-37
Samuel Orringe 3-1-16
Abel Oram 0-2-2
John Pares 92-0-25
George Pratt illegible, 12-2-3
John Pratt snr 0-3-5
Thomas Pagett 7-2-36
Thomas Poyner 0-1-28
William Prier 0-0-34
Joseph Potter 0-0-28
Samuel Peters 0-0-17
Samuel Peach 0-0-9
Edward Pepper 1-2-20
William Palmer 3-2-10
Charles Pack 4-2-6

Charles March Phillips 15-1-10, 1-0-18, 19-3-33, 3-0-6, 33-3-23, 16-1-18, 4-0-28, 1-1-11, 13-0-7, 78-0-29, 19-0-3, 186-3-20, 1-1-35, 11-2-31, 2-3-8, 6-2-20, 30-3-12, 200-2-9, 221-2-34, 85-1-30, 4-1-17, 110-2-2, 7-2-22, 145-3-23, 174-2-26, 8-2-9, 69-3-6, 40-2-24, 4-2-32, 5-1-39, 1-8-1, 489-1-1, 97-1-9, 54-3-23, 10-0-12, 35-1-19, 9-0-2, 2-3-18, 7-0-33, 170-3-26, 70-3-11, 9-2-20, 1-1-10, 115-1-15

Duke of Rutland 26-3-36

William Robinson 0-1-16, 0-0-16

John Riley 0-0-12

Mary Ragg 0-0-31

Thomas Roome 0-0-26

William Rose 3-3-37

Shepshed parish 10-0-31

Shepshed Feoffees 0-2-0, 1-3-14

William Smalley 14-3-16

Joseph Smalley 13-2-33, 1-1-12

Thomas Shayler 20-3-2

Storer's Charity 3-0-10

John Slack 0-0-1

Richard Swain 0-1-0, 7-2-38

Thomas Staniforth 0-0-6

John Staniforth 0-1-33

John Staniforth grocer 0-0-37

Mary Staniforth 0-0-14

John Start 1-0-9

William Start 0-3-29, 0-0–34

Joseph Start illegible, 3-3-39

Thomas Start 0-0-8

Thomas Slater 0-0-20

Thomas Smith 1-2-37

Samuel & Thomas Smith 0-1-6

Benjamin Smith 2-1-6

Daniel Smith 0-0-9

William Smitham 1-2-23

Summers 3-2-12

Sawley Poor 0-3-12

John Skermer of Belton 7-2-34

John Skermer labourer 4-0-22
John Stone 0-0-3
Thomas Simpkin 0-0-32
The Earl of Stamford 91-1-20, 14-1-17
Philip Storey 17-2-32, 0-3-15
William Sherwin 0-0-8
William Swift 0-1-4
John Swan 0-1-0, 0-2-34
Hathern Surveyors Morley Stone Pit 1-2-0
Loughborough Surveyors Fenny Hill Stone Pit 1-1-18
Belton Surveyors Hanging Hill and Great Hole Stone Pits 2-3-21
Diseworth Surveyors Hanging Hill Stone Pit 0-2-25
Mary Staniforth 0-0-21
Thomas Thorp 11-3-34, 11-0-29, 2-2-7
Thomas Trussell 5-1-39, 0-0-10
Jane Thorpe 0-0-12
Robert Thompson 3-2-17, 20-2-16
Sarah Thompson 0-0-3
Miss Tate 16-0-8
John Trigger 1-3-38
John Thoresby 5-1-32
late Joseph Trigger 12-0-18
Rev. W. R. Tyson 28-3-3
Thurcaston School 0-2-0
William Townley 3-2-8
Samuel Towers 0-2-25
'Throne' 0-1-12
Vann's Trustees 11-0-24
Thomas Westhead 0-0-27
John Wooton 0-0-17
John Taft 0-2-11, 84-2-11
John Ward 0-0-24
Joseph Ward 0-1-6
William Ward 1-0-1, 0-0-7
Richard Wale 1-3-34
Henry Wale 5-3-1

Edward Wale 0-3-12

Elizabeth Wale 5-3-1

William Whittley 0-0-28, 1-3-4

Samuel Whittley 28-0-12

Francis Warner 0-3-22

Thomas Warner 10-3-8

Mary Walker 0-1-0, 2-3-22

Daniel Woollatt 5-3-20

Richard Wilson 10-1-19, 0-1-1

John Woollatt 0-0-24

Anthony Webster 3-1-27

Wymeswold Charity 0-0-20

H. W. Whatton 6-0-5

Richard Wright 0-0-11

Mary West 0-2-28

John Wortley 4-3-25

7 Conclusion

In the Introduction, the main point suggested is the importance of the genesis of Leicestershire's framework-knitting industry which over several centuries progressed from a domestic industry to a factory-based enterprise, from 'proto' industry, often located in the countryside, to industrialism in larger units based in urban centres.[1] From distributed locations and household basis, the industry became concentrated, but importantly it continued and was transformed.[2] In the transmutation, the industry was altered from a low-end product (stockings) to higher-end clothing. The early agglomeration of industrial location was significant.

A second significant aspect, as adumbrated by Levine, was the engagement of the entire household in production. There was no differentiation by gender. Women and girls operated the machines.[3] They did so to the extent that in some households in the middle of the nineteenth century, a wife and children alone were occupied in the activity. In Bridge Street in Barrow upon Soar, the head of household, William Scott (aged 28), was employed as a labourer. It was his wife, Ann, of the same age, who acted as a framework knitter while caring for their daughter aged 7.[4] In the same village, George Hubbard (41) was engaged as an agricultural labourer, while his wife, Mary (38), at home managed as a framework knitter and supervising their four children aged from two to 13.[5] Hannah Freer (35) in Hinckley looked after four children aged from one to 15 and operated as a framework knitter. Her husband and head of household, James (35) had a business as a brazier.[6]

Predominantly, framework knitters and stockingers were at the lower end of the economic scale. Their investment was small, both in fixed and circulating capital. Their lives seem in Leicestershire at least to have been mainly frugal, not

[1] Donald C. Coleman, 'Protoindustrialization: a concept too many?', *Economic History Review* 2nd series 36 (1983), pp. 435-48

[2] Stanley Chapman, *Hosiery and Knitwear: Four Centuries of Small-scale Industry in Britain c. 1589-2000* (Pasold Studies in Textile History 12, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)..

[3] *Family Formation*; Catriona Macleod, Alexandra Shepard and Maria Ågren, eds, *The Whole Economy: Work and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: CUP, 2023),.

[4] TNA HO107/2087 fo. 159.

[5] TNA HO107/2087 fo. 158v.

[6] TNA HO107/2082, fo. 249.

consumerist.[7] By the early nineteenth century, the industry suffered frequently from disruption and low remuneration. The number confined to workhouses in the nineteenth century, however, appears to have been small. They must have relied on the support of relatives. In the Loughborough workhouse in 1851 were consigned many more labourers than textile workers. Only about a dozen framework knitters were incarcerated and those for the most part aged in their 60s and 70s.[8] The profile was similar in Hinckley workhouse, but here the inmates included also eight female stockingers and several seamers.[9]

Part of this process of female involvement in production was the capacity of some women to engage in sexual encounters without marriage and to support their children. Other unmarried mothers in the framework-knitting districts might be the unfortunate bearers of illegitimate children, but were integrated into the household economy after childbirth. They acquired income through framework knitting.

The productive capacity of framework knitters did not require literacy in the ability to write.[10] While almost all framesmiths and many sinker-makers and needle-makers, in managing their own business, were able to write, framework knitters continued to have a low level of participation in formal education. Their poverty made the school fees an issue and the time diverted from work was inconvenient. The rate of the ability to write remained even lower among female framework knitters whose education was ignored even more than their male counterparts'.

[7] *Pace* Jan De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008).

[8] TNA HO107/2085 fos 360-.

[9] TNA HO107/2082 fos 347v-.

[10] Joel Mokyr, *A Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), pp. 123-27; also David Mitch, 'The role of education and skill in the British Industrial Revolution' in Mokyr, ed., *The British Industrial Revolution: An Economic Perspective* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2nd edn, 1999), pp. 241-79.

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