

TEXTILES -- LUDDITES

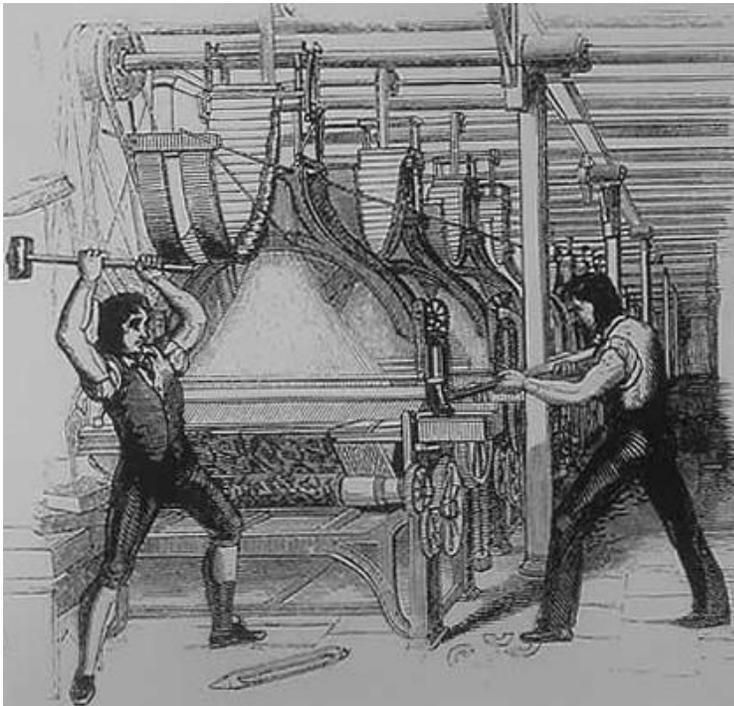
LANCASHIRE textile workers were notorious for their mistrust of progress and for their violent reaction to anything which they considered threatened their livelihoods.

Men like John Kay, James Hargreaves and Samuel Crompton all suffered at the hands of neighbours fearful that new inventions would ruin their lives.

Hargreaves, in fact, left Lancashire to set up a small spinning business in Nottingham, partly because he felt that that city's attitude to new technology was considered to be more enlightened. The same reason took Richard Arkwright and his (stolen) water frame there in the same year, 1767. So it is perhaps surprising that the biggest revolt against machinery had its beginnings in Nottingham rather than in the textile towns of Lancashire.

It was early in 1811 that Nottingham stocking manufacturers began to receive letters signed by "General Ned Ludd and his Army of Redressers." Ludd probably did not exist, although there is some suggestion that the name was derived from that of a Leicestershire farm labourer who had destroyed some stocking frames about 1782. The legend that grew up about him was that he was a Nottingham youth who had his headquarters in Sherwood Forest, like a latter-day Robin Hood.

Real or not, Ludd had a startling effect on industry in the Midlands. Soon, workers who had seen their wages reduced and their jobs threatened by unskilled rivals began breaking into factories and destroying machines.



Their main targets were the new, wide frames operated by unapprenticed workers, which produced poor quality but cheap stockings. In just three weeks, more than 200 of these frames were destroyed and 400 special constables had to be sworn in to protect the factories.

The Prince Regent offered a £50 reward for information about the Luddites and in February, 1812, as the problem spread North, Spencer Perceval's Government passed the Frame-Breaking Act, which carried the death penalty, and ordered 12,000 troops into the affected areas.

Two "Luddite" men using a sledgehammer and crow-bar to destroy a power looms (Machines used in the textile industry)

Textile Video “Revolution in the Textile Industry” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0j3HtRs_4HU

IMAGE #1

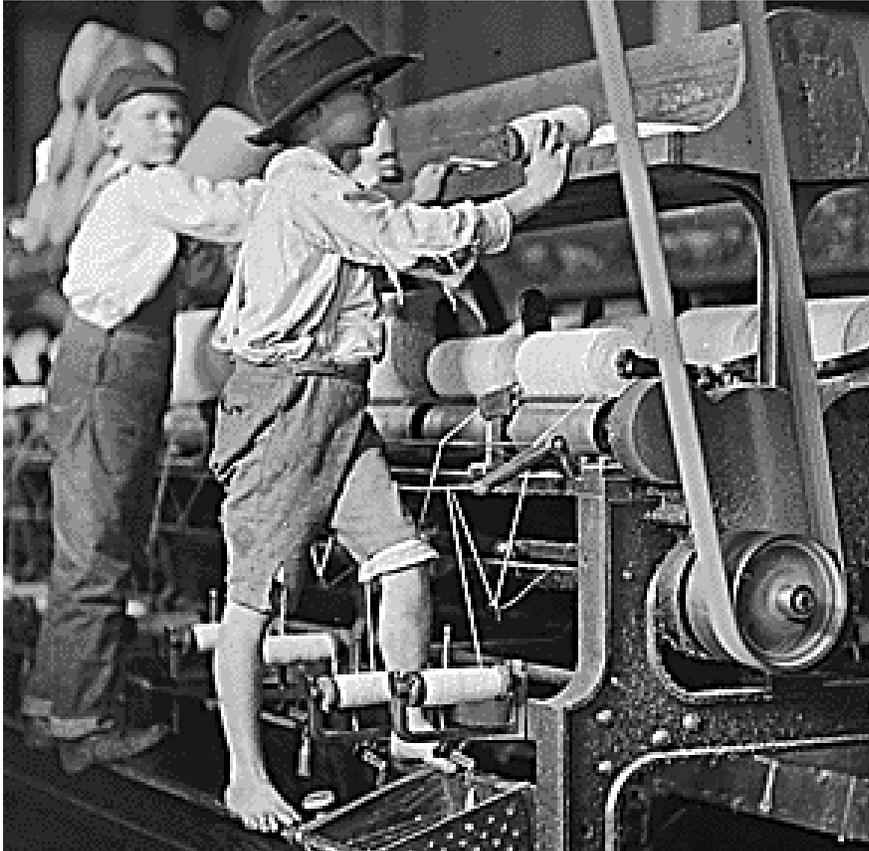


Image #2

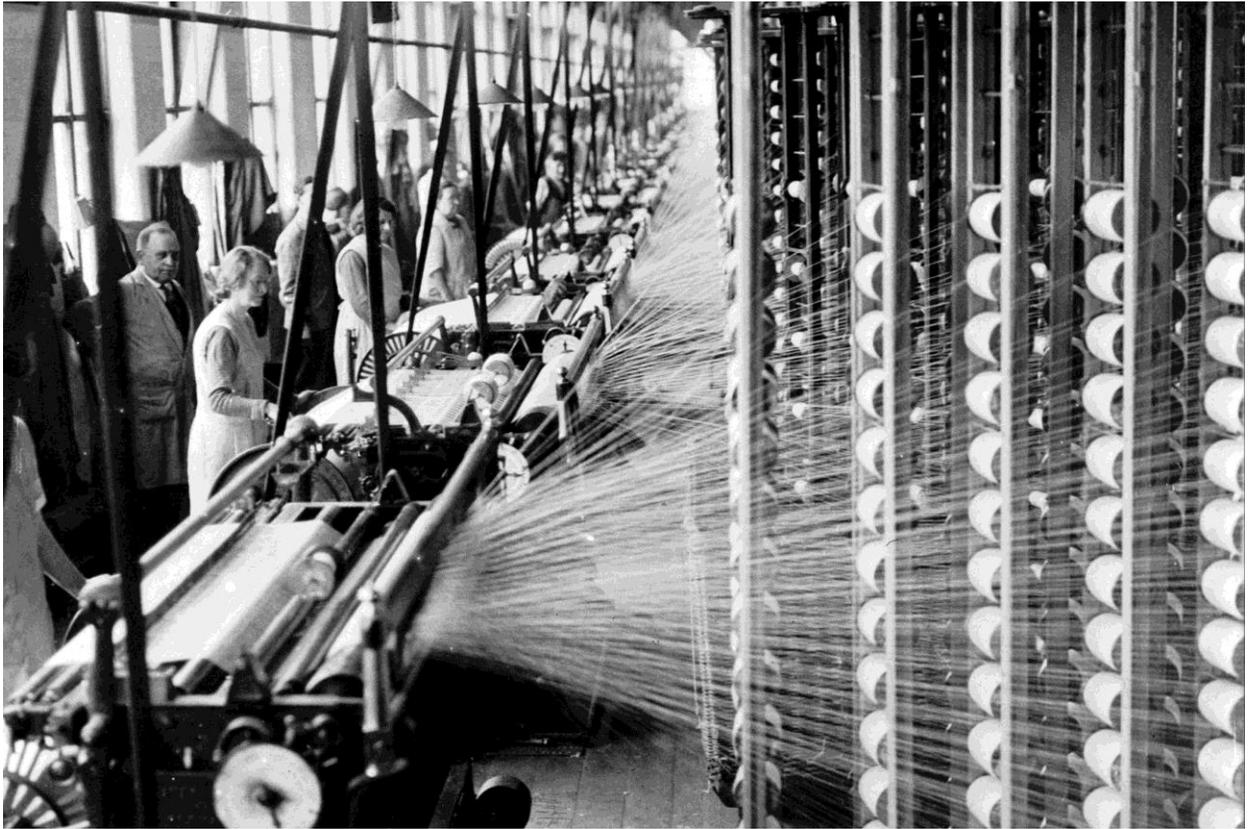


Image #3

