4b: 17th/18th Century Economy and Society

Kagan p 493 – 497, Spielvogel p 561 - 562 (Agricultural Revolution)
Spielvogel p 563 – 564 (Early or "proto-Industrialization", the Cottage System),
Spielvogel p 569 – 571 (Early Urbanization)
Spielvogel p 558 – 561 (Population growth, Family and Children)

Use space below for notes

I. **The Agricultural Revolution** (17th and 18th centuries)
   A. The state of agriculture in 1700 (context)
      1. Peasants had the same standard of living as in the Middle Ages.
         a. Most people battled hunger and lacked sufficient clothing/housing
         b. Agriculture had changed little since the Middle Ages.
      2. 80% of western Europe's population were farmers; higher in the East.
         a. The Netherlands was exception; more urban and mercantile.
      3. Agricultural output was very low compared to modern standards.
         a. The medieval open-field system was predominant.
         b. Harvests failed once or twice a decade, resulting in famines.
         c. People were malnourished, more susceptible to disease.
         d. Science = theology, had not been applied to agriculture.
      4. **Subsistence agriculture** and the **open field system**
         a. Subsistence agriculture: farming for the purpose of survival, not for selling food commercially.
            - Most farming on common lands was done for subsistence purposes for the village.
         b. Common lands were open and strips of land for agriculture were not divided by fences or hedges.
         c. Open fields were farmed as a community.
            - Rural agriculture changed little between generations; it was based largely on traditions.
         d. The exhaustion of soil was a common problem.
            - 1/3 to ½ of land was allowed to lie fallow on any given year so that the soil could recover.
            - This was known as three-crop field rotation in northern Europe and two-crop field rotation in the Mediterranean.
         e. Villages maintained open meadows for hay and natural pasture.
         f. Peasants were often taxed heavily.
         g. Serfs in eastern Europe were far worse off than farmers in western Europe.
   B. Features of the **Agricultural Revolution**
      1. In the 18th century, England, the Netherlands and France became leaders in agriculture, industry and trade that resulted in population growth.
         a. Increased crop and animal yields could feed more people.
         b. New methods of cultivation
         c. Crops were grown on reclaimed wastelands and uncultivated common lands.
         d. The selective breeding of livestock led to better cultivation as a result of healthier animals.

C. Scientific Revolution and technology was applied to agriculture

1. The Low Countries led the way.
    a. increased population meant that finding new methods of agricultural became necessary.
        - The growth of towns and cities created major markets for food produced in the countryside.
        - Regional specialization in the Netherlands resulted: certain areas were used for farming, certain regions for fishing and shipping; towns and cities for mercantile activities.
    b. By the mid-17th century, the Dutch enclosed fields, rotated crops, employed heavy use of manure for fertilizer, and planted a wide variety of crops.
        - Its free and capitalistic society provided profit incentives for farmers to be productive.
    c. Drainage
        - Much of Holland had once been marshland or covered by ocean waters.
        - The Dutch became world leaders in reclaiming wetlands through drainage.
2. England
    a. By 1870, crop yields had tripled since 1700 with only a 14% increase in people working the land.
    b. **Charles "Turnip" Townshend** pioneered crop rotation.
        - he witnessed Dutch use of nitrogen-rich crops such as turnips and clover to replenish soil to avoid fallowing.
        - He employed crop rotation: turnips, peas, beans, clover and potatoes.
        - Enriched soil provided more food for livestock.
        - Manure was used for fertilizer.
    c. The increased food for livestock meant mass slaughter of animals was no longer needed prior to winter.
        - Animal feed was now available to sustain livestock through the winter.
        - People ate more fresh meat rather than preserving surplus meat through salting.
    d. By 1740, new agricultural techniques had become popular among much of the English aristocracy.
    e. **Jethro Tull** (1674-1741)
        - His innovation is an example of how the empiricism of the scientific revolution was applied to agriculture.
        - His **seed drill** allowed for sowing crops in a straight row rather than scattering it by hand.
    f. **Robert Bakewell** (1725-95) pioneered selective breeding of livestock also applying scientific methodology.
        - Larger and healthier animals were developed
        - It resulted in the increased availability of meat, wool, leather, soap and candle tallow.
        - More manure became available for fertilizing.

D. The **Enclosure Movement** in England

1. The enclosure of fields intensified in the 18th century.
   a. the first enclosures had earlier began in the 16th century.
   b. effectively ended the open field system on common lands.
   c. Landowners consolidated their scattered holdings into compact fields that were fenced in.
   d. Common pasture lands were also enclosed.
   e. Wealthy landowners enjoyed freehold tenure, the ownership and control of lands indefinitely thus restricting the use of the village common.
   f. Enclosure did not spread significantly beyond England.
2. This resulted in the **commercialization of agriculture**.
   a. Large landowners prospered and invested in technology (machinery, breeding, and new cultivation methods).
   b. This increased the number of large and middle-sized farms.
   c. Parliament passed over 3,000 enclosure acts through the early 1800s that benefited large landowners.
3. Enclosure's impact on the peasantry
   a. Many were forced off lands that had once been common.
   b. Many became impoverished farm laborers on large farms.
   c. In some cases, enclosure freed men to pursue other economic opportunities, such as the cottage industry.
   d. Later, many moved to towns or cities looking for work since work was less available in the countryside.
      - Many found work in factories or in poor houses.
4. Impact on women
   a. In traditional rural communities, women had been an indispensable part of a household's economic survival.
      - Women farmed, raised animals and oversaw important functions of the household.
   b. Enclosure of common lands meant that women (and men) were forced off the land.
      - Economic opportunities for women thus decreased.
      - Many families w/daughters were eager to get them out of the house as they were an extra mouth to feed.
      - Young women increasingly went to towns or cities where they became domestic workers, or in many cases when there were no alternatives, prostitutes.
   c. Families who were able to get by in the countryside often supplemented their income through the cottage industry, or putting-out system (mostly for spinning or weaving)
   d. Women played an important role in spinning and weaving.
5. A strict hierarchical system emerged
   a. A few landowners (nobles and gentry) dominated the rural economy and politics.
   b. Strong and prosperous tenant farmers rented land from the large landowners (yeomen farmers).
   c. A huge number of peasants became wage earners on farms or in the cottage industry.

d. Struggles between landowners and peasants occurred.
   - Game laws passed on behalf of landowners forbid the hunting of any animals on owners' vast estates.
   - Hungry peasants would risk severe punishment if they were caught hunting for food on an owner's land.
   - Revolts sometimes broke out in response to increasingly oppressive conditions for landless peasants.

E. Impact of the Agricultural Revolution

1. It led to Europe's population explosion in the 18th c (see below).
2. The Enclosure movement altered society in the countryside.
   a. changed traditional village life.
   b. Women were adversely affected.
   c. The cottage industry emerged to supplement a rural incomes.
3. Widespread migration to cities resulted in urbanization.
   a. Cities faced problems with sanitation and poverty due to the influx from rural areas with many people resorting to begging or prostitution out of desperation.
   b. Local govt establish workhouses to provide for poor
      - Must work for small amount of food
      - Removes poor from parish charity rolls
4. Economically, the increased supply of food resulted in lower food prices that enabled middle and upper class people to spend more money on consumer goods (Consumer Rev.)

II. Population Explosion

A. Limits on population growth existed prior to 1700.
   1. Famine, disease, and warfare kept pop. growth in check.
      a. The **"Little Ice Age"** during the late-16th and early-17th centuries imposed limits on agricultural production.
   2. Population growth reached a plateau between 1650 and 1750 but began to grow dramatically after 1750.
      a. Euro pop. increased from 120 to 190 million during 1700s.

B. Causes for population growth after 1700
   1. Agricultural Rev. made food available to larger populations.
      a. New foods such as the **potato** became a staple crop for the poor in many countries (e.g., Ireland).
         - Impact of the Columbian Exchange
      b. Improved food transport due to better roads and canals.
      c. Better diets resulted in stronger resistance to disease.
   2. The average life spans of Europeans increased from 25 to 35 years during the 1700s.
      a. public health techniques improve after 1750 (Sci. Rev.)
         - Improved practices in sanitation.

C. Medical improvements
   1. bubonic plague had largely disappeared from Europe in 1600s
   2. conquest of smallpox = greatest medical triumph of 1700s.
      a. 1600s: 25% deaths in Britain was caused by smallpox
      b. 80% of Europeans contracted it; many were scarred for life
      c. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu introduced a Turkish technique of inoculation in the 18th c. but it was roundly criticized.
         - infect with weak form of disease to create immunity
      d. **<u>Edward Jenner</u>** <u>(1749-1823)</u>
         - <u>In 1778, he created the foundation for the science of immunology with his vaccine for smallpox.</u>
         - He discovered inoculating patients with harmless cowpox would control the onset of small pox.

III. Proto-Industrialization: the Cottage Industry ("Putting-Out" System)

A. Rural industry became a major pillar of Europe's growing economy in the 18th century.
   1. The rural population was eager to supplement its income.
   2. Merchant-capitalists were eager to use cheap labor in rural areas rather than paying guild members in towns higher fees.
   3. Thus, EARLY industrial production was "put out" into the countryside: the "putting-out system."
   4. Manufacturing with hand tools in peasant cottages came to challenge the urban craft industry.

B. Cottage industry
   1. Merchant-capitalists provided raw materials (e.g., raw wool) to a rural family who produced a finished or semi-finished product and sent it back to the merchant for payment.
      a. Cottage workers were usually paid by the number of pieces they produced (piece-meal).
      b. Merchants would sell the finished product for a profit.
   2. The Cottage industry was essentially a family enterprise.
      a. The work of four or five spinners was needed to keep one weaver steadily employed.
      b. A husband and wife constantly tried to find more thread and more spinners.
         - "Spinsters" were widows and unmarried women who spun for their living.
      c. Sometimes, families subcontracted work to others.
   3. Problems with the cottage industry
      a. Constant disputes between cottagers and merchants occurred over weights of materials and quality of cloth.
      b. Rural labor was unorganized and usually difficult for merchants to control.
      c. Merchant-capitalists' search for more efficient methods of production became profound resulting in growth of factories and the industrial revolution.
         - Backlogs in the production chain were fixed by the development of mechanized solutions.

C. The cottage industry flourished first in England.
   1. spinning and weaving of woolen cloth was most important.
   2. In 1500, 1/2 of England's textiles were produced in the countryside.
   3. By 1700, that percentage was much higher.
   4. The putting-out system in England spread later to Continental countries (e.g., France and Germany).

D. Examples of proto-industrial technology (prior to horse power, water power, and the steam engine)
   1. In 1733, **John Kay** invented the **flying shuttle** which enabled a weaver to throw the shuttle back and forth between threads with one hand.
   2. In 1764, **James Hargreaves** invented the **spinning jenny** which mechanized the spinning wheel so that eight spools of thread could be spun simultaneously.

IV. Life in the 18th Century

A. Marriage/family patterns prior to 1750 checked population growth.
   1. nuclear family was most common in pre-industrial W. Europe.
      a. Young married couples established their homes apart from their parents.
   2. On average, the age of marriage was higher prior to 1750, especially for the lower classes.
      a. Late 20s or older for both men and women
      b. Couples could not marry until they could support themselves economically.
      c. Peasant sons often had to wait until their father's death to gain land through inheritance.
      d. Peasant daughters and family had to raise a small dowry to help future husband to buy land or build a house.

B. New patterns of marriage and legitimacy emerged after 1750.
   1. The cottage industry with its increased income resulted in more people marrying for love instead of just economic reasons.
      a. people didn't have to wait as long to become financially independent.
      b. Arranged marriages for economic reasons declined.
   2. An explosion of births was caused by increasing illegitimacy:
      a. Illegitimacy rates were as high as 33% in certain areas.
         - Fewer girls abstained from premarital sex and fewer boys married girls they impregnated.
         - Mobility encouraged new sexual and marital relationships which were less subject to parental and village pressure.
      b. Foundling hospitals (orphanages)emerged.
         - Many poor women left babies on doorsteps of churches.
         - By 1770, 1/3 of all babies born in Paris were immediately abandoned to the foundling home; 1/3 of those came from married couples.
         - Only 10% of children lived past age 10 in foundling hospitals
            - ½ of all babies died w/in a year.
            - social critics claimed foundling hospitals promoted "legalized infanticide."

C. Attitudes toward children began to change during the 18th century
   1. Child care and nursing
      a. Poorer women generally breast-fed their infants for much longer periods than in the 20th century.
         - this was also a form of birth control.
         - Infants were more likely to survive on mother's milk than on artificial foods.
      b. Women of the upper-middle classes seldom breast-fed.
         - also true of wives of artisans who lived comfortably.
            - Practice believed to be crude and "common."
            - Wet-nurses were hired to breast-feed their children.
               - Many babies were often sent to countryside.
   2. Child-rearing
      a. often treated indifferently and with strict physical discipline.
         - Because of such high mortality rates, parents were reluctant to become too emotionally attached.
            - Doctors often declined to care for sick children believing there was little that could be done.

b. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" – term was coined by novelist Daniel Defoe
    - Many believed the task of parents was to break their will to make them obedient.
c. Humanitarianism and Enlightenment optimism regarding human progress emphasized better treatment of children.
    - Increasingly, parents grew closer to their children.

3. Work Away from Home
    a. Many young people worked within their families until they could start their own households.
        - Boys typically ploughed and wove (cottage industry).
        - Girls spun thread and tended to the animals.
    b. Increasingly, many boys worked away from home.
        - Boys in towns might be apprenticed to a craftsman to learn a trade and perhaps be admitted to a guild.
            - They were not allowed to marry during this period.
    c. Many girls also worked away from home at an early age.
        - Opportunities were more limited than for men.
        - Domestic service in another household most common
        - Most hoped to save money for parents and for marriage.
            - Also helped parents who had one less mouth to feed.
        - Servant girls had little real independence.
            - Girls were subject to physical/sexual mistreatment.
            - If girl became pregnant she was quickly fired.
            - Prostitution and petty thievery often became the only alternatives.

D. Rising prosperity increase material well-being (remember the Commercial Revolution)
    1. Associated with increased literacy, education and cultural lives
    2. This was largely confined to the middle and upper classes
    3. Offset by increasing numbers of poor throughout Europe.

E. Education
    1. The beginnings of formal education for the masses took root; largely inspired by Protestantism.
        a. The wealthy had a two-century head start beginning in the 16th century with special colleges, often run by Jesuits.
        b. <u>"Little schools" of elem. educ. began to appear in 1600s</u>
        c. boys and girls from age 7 to 12 were instructed in basic literacy and religion.
        d. The Church of England and "dissenting groups" such as the Puritans founded "charity schools" to instruct poor children.
        e. Scotland created a network of parish schools for all citizens to teach reading of the Scriptures.
        f. France established Christian schools starting in 1682 which taught religion as well as reading and writing.
    2. 1717, Prussia led way w/universal compulsory education.
        a. This trend was inspired by the old Protestant idea that every Christian should be able to read the Bible.
        b. Education also seen as way to make the population effectively serve the state.
    3. Literacy by 1800:
        a. Almost 90% of the Scottish male pop.; only 1 in 6 in 1600.
        b. 2/3rds males in France; only 1 in 6 in 1600.
        c. Over 50% of male Brits; only 25% in 1600.
        d. Women increasingly literate but lagged behind men.