

AROUND AND ABOUT NEW JERSEY

TEACHERS GUIDE

PROGRAM TWO

SILK CITY

by

David S. Cohen

NJN Public Television

and the

New Jersey Historical Commission,

Department of State

Trenton, N.J.

Revised, 2006

I. SYNOPSIS

The program begins at the *Great Falls*, where the Passaic River drops through a gap in the Watchung Mountains. The *Great Falls* is the reason for Paterson's location. Alexander Hamilton, who was secretary of the treasury when George Washington was president, encouraged a group of businessmen to build a factory center. They looked for a site near a city, where products could be sold, and near a river, where waterpower was available.

For many years, the factories in Paterson made a variety of things; but in the late nineteenth century silk became their most important product, and Paterson was known as *Silk City*. By that time the machines in most factories were powered by steam, not water. Jack De Stefano, director of the Paterson Museum, demonstrates how a power loom works. He informs us that in the early days of the silk industry in Paterson children as young as ten worked in the factories.

Then we visit Lambert Castle, the mansion of a factory owner named Catholina Lambert, located in the mountains overlooking Paterson. Mr. Lambert wanted to impress people with his wealth and power. In contrast, we visit the house of Pietro Botto in the streetcar suburb of Haledon. Mr. Botto was a skilled weaver from Italy. Bunny Kuiken, Mr. Botto's granddaughter, explains that her grandfather rented out apartments upstairs and took in boarders to make ends meet.

II. KEY WORDS

Fiber - a very fine thread

Skein - a length of fiber wound into a coil

Bobbin - a spool on which thread is wound

Loom - a machine for weaving thread into cloth

Weaving - to interlace threads to form cloth

Shuttle - a device in a loom that carries the crosswise threads through an opening made in the lengthwise threads

III. NEW JERSEY CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS

6.1: ALL STUDENTS WILL UTILIZE HISTORICAL THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND RESEARCH SKILLS TO MAXIMIZE THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF CIVICS, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND ECONOMICS.

Building upon the knowledge and skills gained in the previous grades, by the end of Grade 4 students will:

A. Social Studies Skills

5. Distinguish between an eyewitness account and a secondary account of an event.
6. Distinguish fact from fiction.

STANDARD 6.2 (CIVICS) ALL STUDENTS WILL KNOW, UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AND THE RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND ROLES OF A CITIZEN IN THE NATION AND THE WORLD.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 4, students will:

B. American Values and Principles

3. Describe how American values and beliefs, such as equality of opportunity, fairness to all, equal justice, separation of church and state, and the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights, contribute to the continuation and improvement of American democracy.

STANDARD 6.4 (UNITED STATES AND NEW JERSEY HISTORY) ALL STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE OF UNITED STATES AND NEW JERSEY HISTORY IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND LIFE AND EVENTS IN THE PAST AND HOW THEY RELATE TO THE PRESENT AND FUTURE.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 4, students will:

A. Family and Community Life

2. Compare family life in a community of the past to life in a community of the present.
3. Discuss the reasons why various groups, voluntarily and involuntarily, immigrated to America and New Jersey and describe the problems they encountered.

B. State and Nation

6. Discuss the experiences of immigrants who came to the United States and New Jersey, including reasons for immigrating, experiences at Ellis Island, and working and living conditions in America.
7. Describe the population shift from the farm to the city in New Jersey.

STANDARD 6.5 (ECONOMICS) ALL STUDENTS WILL ACQUIRE AN UNDERSTANDING OF KEY ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES.

By the end of Grade 2, students will:

A. Economic Literacy

1. Identify the basic goods and services a family needs for everyday life.
2. Explain how the products individuals eat, wear, and use impact their health and safety and the environment.

Building upon the knowledge and skills gained in the preceding grades, by the end of Grade 4, students will:

B. Economics and Society

2. Describe products and services that are developed, manufactured, or grown in New Jersey.

STANDARD 6.6 (GEOGRAPHY) ALL STUDENTS WILL APPLY KNOWLEDGE OF SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND OTHER GEOGRAPHIC SKILLS TO UNDERSTAND HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN RELATION TO THE PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 4, students will:

A. The World in Spatial Terms

1. Use physical and political maps to identify locations and spatial relationships of places within local and nearby communities.

3. Estimate distances between two places on a map using a scale of miles.
4. Identify the major cities of New Jersey, the United States, and the world.

B. Places and Regions

1. Identify the physical and human characteristics of places and regions in New Jersey and the United States (e.g., landforms, climate, vegetation, housing).
2. Explain changes in places and regions over time and the consequences of those changes.
3. Describe the geography of New Jersey.
4. Discuss factors involved in the development of cities (e.g., transportation, food, marketplace, religion, military protection).

D. Human Systems

1. Describe the development of transportation and communication networks in New Jersey and the United States.
2. Identify the distribution and characteristics of populations for different regions of New Jersey and the United States.

IV. THEMES

- A. Location** - Paterson was a good location for factories.
- B. Working Conditions** - Working in a factory a hundred years ago was very hard.
- C. Lifestyles** - The lifestyle of the workers was extremely different from the lifestyle of the owners.

V. CORE ACTIVITIES

A. LOCATION

1. Objective

Students will explain why certain activities are located where they are.

2. Before Viewing the Program

Ask students whether there are any factories near where they live. Tell them that one of the themes of this program is why factories were built in Paterson. Ask them to pay particular attention to why Paterson was a good location for factories.

3. After Viewing the Program

Distribute the map of Paterson in the "Supplementary Materials" section of this guide. Ask the students to note the location of the Passaic River, the Great Falls, the Botto House, and Lambert Castle. Then ask the students to draw on their maps the probably location of Paterson's silk mills. Analyze the completed maps in terms of the factories' proximity to the river and whether they are upstream or downstream from the Great Falls.

B. WORKING CONDITIONS

1. Objective

Students will describe working in the past.

2. Before Viewing the Program

Ask the students if any of them receives an allowance? Do they have to work for the money? Discuss with them the differences between an allowance from their family and having to work to contribute to the family's income. Tell them that this program shows how some children had to work in factories a hundred years ago.

3. After Viewing the Program

Ask the students to write a fictional diary entry of a fictional boy or girl who worked in a factory in Paterson one hundred years ago. It should describe the working conditions, hours of work, and how it must have felt to be working instead of going to school.

C. LIFESTYLES

1. Objective

Students will differentiate between the life styles of different classes in the past.

2. After Viewing the Program

Divide the class in half. Ask half the class to plan a dinner at Lambert Castle (including some or all of the following: the guest list, the invitation, the kinds of food, how it will be served, and the entertainment) and the other half to design an advertisement for room and board at the Botto House (where it is located, how many rooms, how much rent, how many meals, how much per meal, what kinds of food). You may replay the segments of the program that deal with this theme.

VI. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

A. ACCOUNT OF A "MILL DOLLY"

1. Objective

Students will analyze a primary historical document.

2. After Viewing the Program

Reproduce and distribute the "Account of a Mill Dolly" in the "Supplementary Materials" section of this guide. Read it aloud, while the students follow along. Ask the class to discuss some of the following questions: Who is the writer of this account? What did the writer think of working in a factory? Why did the mother want her daughter to work rather than go to school? Was the girl's mother cruel to want her daughter to work in a factory?

B. FIELDTRIP

Take the class on a fieldtrip to Paterson and visit the Botto House, Lambert Castle, and the Paterson Museum.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. FOR STUDENTS

Adler, Irving and Ruth. *Fibers ("Reasons Why")*. New York: John Day Company, 1964.

Explains the difference between natural and manmade fibers; describes spinning, weaving, and knitting; explains how the silk worm produces silk and has a map of the silk trading routes.

Kelly, Karin. *Weaving*. Pictures by George Overlie. (An Early Craft Book). Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1973.

Describes and illustrates how to make a simple handloom using only cardboard, scissors, a ruler, yarn, a ball of string, a tapestry needle, and plastic beads.

Knox, Albert. *Cloth (An Easy-Read Fact Book)*. New York and London: Franklin Watts, 1976.

Describes how cloth is made up of warp and weft threads; discusses the difference between natural and manmade fibers; defines spinning, spindle, bobbin, carding, weaving; and illustrates silk worm cocoons, hand spinning, a spinning jenny, spinning mills, carding machines, a loom harness, and different weaving patterns.

B. FOR TEACHERS

Bischoff, Henry. "A Walking Tour of an Immigrant Neighborhood, Dublin: A Neighborhood in Paterson, New Jersey (With a Teacher's Guide)." Mahwah: Ramapo College, 1985.

A good capsule history of Paterson, changes in the sources of power for the factories, and the change from workers and owners living near the factories to streetcar suburbs.

Fisher, Leonard Everett. *The Factories* (Nineteenth Century America Series). New York: Holiday House, 1979.

Tells the story of how Samuel Slater came to Rhode Island at the close of the eighteenth century to establish a cotton mill in Rhode Island and discusses the factory town of Lowell, Massachusetts.

Herbst, John A. and Catherine Keene. *Life and Times in Silk City: A Photographic Essay of Paterson, New Jersey*. Haledon, New Jersey: American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark, 1984.

Photographs and text showing the raceways, the factories, the steps in manufacturing silk textiles, and the lives of the owners and the workers in Paterson.

Holland, Ruth. *Mill Child: The Story of Child Labor in America*. New York: Crowell-Collier Press, 1970.

Describes cottage industries, the factory system, child labor, settlement

houses, reformers, strikes, and state and federal laws regulating child labor. Contains illustrations of a spinning jenny, a spinning mule, a cotton gin, and a steam engine for a rotary machine and photographs of girls and boys working in mills, factories, and mines.

Macaulay, David. *Mill*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1983.

Describes the establishment of a water-wheel driven mill, a water-turbine mill, and a steam-power mill in Rhode Island. Drawings showing the design and building of the waterwheel, a typical power train, the plan of the factory, and the steps in wool textile production.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

AN ACCOUNT OF A "MILL DOLLY"

June 1918--I was almost twelve years old. I graduated from grammar school. We all had to have white dresses for the graduation ceremony. I recall Mother making me a white dress and trimming it with the fringe from old curtains. I just hoped no one would notice the curtain fringe. . . . I was sorry to finish school. Now I wanted to go to high school.

Finally I realized that it was no use to coax her (my mother). She would not let me go to high school. She said, "I have fed you long enough. You don't need book learning. You will go out and work." She had to lie about my age to get my working papers, but she got them. She even got me my first job in a silk mill. The mill was on the same street where we lived, a few blocks down.

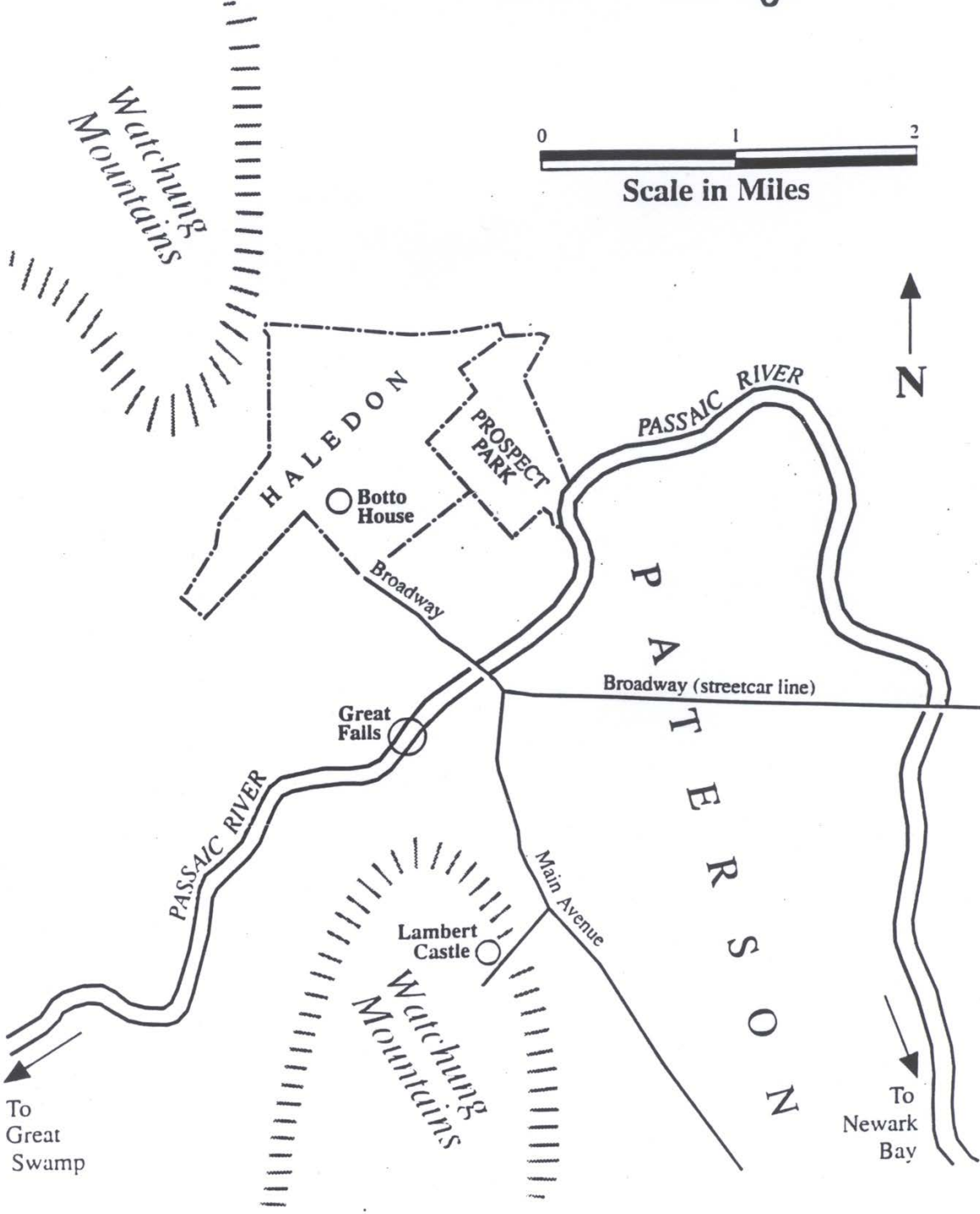
Very early in life I had learned not to expose my fright to anyone. It was useless. Yet I really was scared that first day in the mill. Machines roared. Belts whirled. Workers shouted at one another over the noise of the clacking looms. The spools that I carried got heavier and heavier as the day dragged on.

The winder kept the skeins twirling. When a thread broke she would run to tie it. The warpers demanded filled bobbins to make the warp. I was the link between them, the bobbin girl. Bobbins bright with silk thread to the warpers and empty bobbins back to the winders. All day long, ten hours a day, six days a week, I carried bobbins, bobbins, bobbins. I could not see why I had to give every cent I earned to my mother. It was my back that felt as if it were breaking. I demanded part of my earnings. I got blows, but also the promise of five cents on every dollar I earned. This gave me thirty-five cents a week, which was all mine.

However, life was easier. I was home only evenings and Sundays. I much preferred the good-natured shouting and teasing of my co-workers to the angry yells of Mother. Such a mixed-up child I was. I wanted to go to high school. I could not give up the dream. I was ashamed of being a "mill dolly" and despised myself for being ashamed.

Lini de Vries, *Up From the Cellar*
(Minneapolis: Vanilla Press, 1979)

Paterson and Vicinity



To Great Swamp

To Newark Bay