

AMERICAN CHILDHOOD THROUGH THE YEARS: COLONIAL ERA, 18TH
CENTURY THROUGH EARLY 19TH CENTURY, AND PROGRESSIVE ERA

by

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ABSTRACT

This historiography examines the scholarly literature about American childhood over a period of 300 years. It will focus on three distinct eras in American history: the Colonial Era, the 18th and early 19th centuries, and the Progressive Era. Each era will highlight historians' viewpoints on the concept of childhood, relationship of children to their community, discipline and childrearing, children's work and play clothing, health, and education.

The historiography also addresses the following questions: How did society view children in each era? Have children in the past been well cared for and have they experienced an easy life? Have they been protected from the pressures and demands of society? Have families been stable and able to provide emotional support? How have the details of children's daily lives changed over time? Has education been a priority and if not why?

The final portion contains a teaching unit that translates the scholarly information from the historiography into teachable lessons for elementary students. The challenge is to make history accessible to young students by presenting tantalizing lessons that are engaging and age appropriate. Teaching children of today about children of the past is the perfect vehicle because it helps them recognize those commonalities between their own lives and lives in the past. It helps them to begin to understand that we all have stories and a place in time.

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INTRODUCTION

Until recently, historians have neglected the history of childhood. In 1960, Philippe Aries wrote his groundbreaking *Centuries of Childhood* in which he argues that childhood, as we know it, was non-existent in medieval times.¹ He further claims that it was not until the 16th and 17th centuries, and then only among the middle and upper classes, that the modern idea of childhood began to emerge as a distinct phase in life. Aries admonishes his readers not to confuse the idea of childhood with affection for children, but rather to correlate the idea of childhood with an awareness of the particular nature of childhood that distinguishes the child from the adult.²

In Aries' shadow, European and American scholars began to study childhood; some agreed with him while some did not. In disagreement, Karen Calvert explains that the concept of childhood is a social invention that is reinvented by every society and age.³ Furthermore, the question is not whether a given society at a given time has a concept of childhood, but rather what the concept is and the nature of its advantages and disadvantages. In *Huck's Raft, A History of American Childhood*, Steven Mintz asserts that childhood is not a biological phenomenon, but is better understood as a life stage that

¹ Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood, A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), 128.

² Ibid.

³ Karen Calvert, *Children in the House, The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 15.

is shaped by class, ethnicity, gender, geography, religion and historical era.⁴ If that is indeed the case, then Elliott West, in *Growing Up in the Twentieth Century*, is correct when he explains that telling the history of American children is impossible.⁵ What is true for some children may be “laughably false” about others, although it is possible to find some general points.

Despite the disagreement over the meaning of childhood and the diversity in experiences, most historians agree that prior to the twentieth century, American childhood, as we know it today did not exist. Children were important to families, but not in the same way as today. In the past, a child’s social worth was often determined in terms of their economic value to the family and community. The community held strong influence over families, as Helen Wall illustrates, and children were expected to take on adult responsibilities as soon as possible.⁶ John Demos states there was a strong tendency towards authoritarian childrearing.⁷ This changed somewhat by the end of the eighteenth century when children’s personalities became an important philosophical idea as described by John Locke in his influential essay, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.⁸ Thereafter, society recognized that children had their own needs

⁴ Steven Mintz, *Huck’s Raft, A History of American Childhood* (New York: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 2.

⁵ Elliott West, *Growing Up in Twentieth Century America, A History and Reference Guide*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), xii.

⁶ John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth, Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 136-138.

⁷ John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth, Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 136-138.

⁸ Locke, John, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*,” ed. By Peter H. Nidditch, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975).

separate from adults, but their value was still measured in terms of services that they performed. During the 19th century and on into the 20th century, Viviana A. Zelizer describes how children of working class families were valued for their economic contributions, while middle class children were sheltered from work and expected to focus on education.⁹ These divergent expectations were the catalyst for expansive reforms that affected childhood during the Progressive Era. Today, a child's social worth is understood in terms of emotional rather than economic value.

Some historians also agree that there has been a gradual improvement in the status and treatment of children throughout the centuries, possibly related to the concept of childhood in each era. As Aries notes, how adults viewed children and their roles in society affected how children were treated.¹⁰ Scholarly research on this topic has unearthed several divergent viewpoints. Historians especially offer varying explanations of adult expectations of children and adult child rearing practices in colonial America. This debate is the subject of the first historiographical category in this study.

By the 18th and early 19th centuries, children became less the objects of economic value and more the objects of sentimental value causing society to question the meaning of childhood. The debate over the changing concept in childhood and its effect on children's lives is the second historiographical category in this study.

Children's sentimental value became more widespread and subsequently, by the early 20th century, society witnessed vast reforms that affected children's welfare. The

⁹ Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child, The Changing Social Value of Children*, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1981).

¹⁰ Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, 128-133.

third historiographical avenue for debate discusses the way these reforms affected children, examines the motives behind the reformers themselves and asks if the reformers truly had the best interests of the children in their hearts? Inherent within this final debate is the question that has been argued within American society since the concept of childhood was initially recognized; should childhood be a separate domain unto itself or should children be drawn into a productive adult world? Even today we continue to grapple with this question.

AMERICAN CHILDHOOD IN THE COLONIAL ERA

More than three centuries ago, English colonists settled on the east coast of North America and brought with them their culture, religion, traditions, and beliefs about family and children. As Mintz and Kellogg demonstrate, the family was the fundamental economic, political and religious unit of society performing many functions which today we would expect to be handled by other institutions.¹¹ Patriarchal control was the norm, and family and community were intertwined. Children were important to the family and to the community because economic and religious survival depended on them. It was the children who would carry on and maintain their parents' religious beliefs and values. The colonists believed children were born with sin and it was a parent's duty to guide them towards salvation and break their will in the process. Thus, many historians contend that childhood was barely recognizable and that there was little sense that children were seen as a separate group with different needs.

Such adult potentiality was particularly evident in the Puritan family. John Morgan says this belief came from the Puritan's view of the divine order of the world, which was a hierarchy of all beings with God situated at the top.¹² God created his earthly kingdom in a pattern of superiority—old men to young men, educated to uneducated, husbands to wives, parents to children, ministers to congregants, master over servants, and rulers over subjects of state. In essence, subordination was the very soul of

¹¹ Steven Mintz, and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions, A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), xiv.

¹² Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family, Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth Century New England* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers 1944), 17-19.

order. In agreement, Karen Calvert states that children were positioned towards the bottom of this order, not far above the animal kingdom.¹³ Therefore, she continues, it was very important to the Puritans to express and seek the adult potentiality in children in order to move them higher to God and to salvation.

As a result, children were considered to be little adults. Babies were not allowed to crawl because that was considered bestial. Children were to be dressed as adults and given adult responsibilities as soon as possible. As John Demos notes, “the young boy appeared as a miniature of his father, and the young girl as a miniature of her mother.”¹⁴ There was no idea that each generation required separate spheres of work or recreation. Steven Mintz states, “In the Puritan eyes, children were adults in training who needed be prepared for salvation and inducted into the world of work as early as possible.”¹⁵ As evidence of this concept of childhood, Mintz draws our attention to a portrait of the Mason children, painted by an anonymous artist, known as the Freake-Gibbs Painter, in 1670.¹⁶ David and his sisters Joanna and Abigail stand in a very stiff pose looking like small versions of adults. They are holding objects from the adult world symbolizing status.

Studying portraits of children give us a window into their world. Philippe Aries uses paintings as a vital source of evidence in his research, stating they were documents

¹³ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 22-25.

¹⁴ John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth, Family Life in Plymouth*, 139.

¹⁵ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 10.

¹⁶ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 18. To view this portrait online, see, “Mason Children: David, Joanna and Abigail,” in *Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, the De Young*, <<http://www.thinker.org/fam/education/publications/guide-american/slide-1.html>> (4 March 2006).

of family history.¹⁷ Since medieval art depicted very few children, he concludes that the concept of childhood did not exist until the 16th century when children began to appear in paintings. Furthermore, Karen Calvert notes that paintings are superior to literary evidence because they reveal beliefs and attitudes about age, sex, social status, and family relationships that were so well understood and accepted that they were rarely verbalized.¹⁸ In portraits of children before 1750, she explains that there are no artifacts of children in the paintings to suggest play and all expressions are solemn. From this she determines that “childhood had no positive attributes of its own worthy of expression. A child was merely an adult in the making, and childhood, as a period of physical and spiritual vulnerability was a deficiency to be overcome.”¹⁹

In disagreement, Linda Pollock questions the wisdom of using paintings as major evidence because she wonders how far they actually represent reality.²⁰ She claims that the way children are portrayed in portraits throughout the ages have more to do with changes in art conventions rather than in the way children were seen. Instead, Pollock accesses diaries and autobiographies because she feels these are the sources closest to a child’s reality. Through her research, Pollock concludes that children are not seen as adults. In the past, parents were well aware of the individuality of their children and of their varying needs and dispositions. Parents took care of them when they were sick,

¹⁷ Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, 33.

¹⁸ Karen Calvert, “Children in American Family Portraiture, 1670-1810,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 39, no. 1, (January, 1982), 89-113.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children, Parent-child Relations from 1500-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 47.

mourned over their death, questioned the best way to deal with disciplinary problems, worried about the best way to educate them, and worried about their future.²¹ Similarly, Stephen Brobeck who examined 139 portraits of children claims that the absence of children in paintings had nothing to do with the concept of childhood.²² He surmises that children were difficult subjects to paint because they could not sit still for long and parents and artists did not have the patience to make them do so. But more importantly, parents probably did not commission paintings of children because they wanted future generations to remember them as adults. In agreement, Ross W. Beales Jr. challenges what he calls the “myth of miniature adulthood” which he says stems from the belief that children in colonial portraits appeared old and dressed in clothes like their parents.²³ He argues that Puritans were well aware of developmental differences between infants, youth and adults and treated children accordingly. And, like Linda Pollock he refers to journals, autobiographies and family manuals. In addition, he studies the language that is found in law and religious practice that describes distinction between the ages. He explains how Gilbert Tennent preached in Boston in 1741 about the New England concept of the “ages of man” which included old age, middle age, youth, and childhood. He argues that parents were aware of the immaturity of their children and recognized the individuality of their children and their varying needs.

²¹Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, 260-261.

²²Stephen Brobeck, “Images of the Family: Portrait Paintings as Indices of American Family Culture, Structure and Behavior, 1730-1860” *The Journal of Psychohistory* 5, no. 1 (summer 1977): 84-85.

²³Ross W. Beales, Jr., “In Search of the Historical Child: Miniature Adulthood and Youth in Colonial New England,” *American Quarterly*, 27, no. 4 (October 1975): 379-398.

Puritan children were expected at an early age to contribute to the economic survival of the family and embrace prevailing moral and religious values. This was a task that involved an expanding network of parents, kin, neighbors, church, and state. Steven Mintz, notes that the Puritans were the first group to state publicly that entire communities were responsible for children's moral development.²⁴ Moral reformation was important because it offered the key to establishing a godly society. Furthermore, Morgan asserts, since mankind was sinful, the family was insufficient to cope with all the evil in the world. Therefore, God arranged for the establishment of churches and states. The purpose of the church was to restore proper harmony between God and man with the state, or civil government acting as additional support to family authority in enforcing the laws of God.²⁵

In *Fierce Communion, Family and Community in Early America*, Helen Wall states community shaped society at every level.²⁶ The Puritans believed a well-ordered family created well-ordered communities, and from ill-ordered families sprang the ruin of church and country. Wall further notes that the Puritans clearly set standards more stringently and enforced them more zealously than other colonists. Their community helped define parental responsibilities, upheld parental authority, reinforced discipline and often provided child-care. Family life was subordinate to community life.

²⁴ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 12.

²⁵ Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 142-143.

²⁶ Helen M. Wall, *Fierce Communion*, ix.

Although the communities in the North and the South were very different, Wall explains that when it came to family issues, colonial families were more similar than different. The colonists valued order, stability, harmony, Christian cooperation, and they created communities that would uphold those values. Private life was subordinate to community concerns. Neighbors were expected to report any problems, enforce spousal responsibility, and raise children within the communal setting. All colonists, from New England to the Carolinas, accepted the preeminent right of the community to regulate the lives of its members and to measure individual acts by their affect on the community. Colonial life began by families deferring to the needs of the community. It ended when community started deferring to the individual ²⁷

Morgan gives examples of controls put in place by the community that helped to ensure that children were being “guided” in the correct way.²⁸ Every town had a group of selectmen who regularly inspected families to see if they were fulfilling their educational duties. If families were deficient in this area, their children could be taken away from them and placed with other more worthy families. In 1675, Massachusetts established a new group of officers called Tithingmen who were responsible for inspecting and reinforcing family government. They were given the power to arrest those who did not attend church on the Sabbath and they could also attend to any family disorder including drunkenness.

²⁷ Wall, *Fierce Communion*, ix-13.

²⁸ Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 149.

The down side to this “force” of community, according to Helen M. Wall, was the lack of privacy.²⁹ Even though people felt it was a right and a duty to intervene in the lives of people around them, this carried a heavy personal and psychological cost. Especially in New England, communities that prized harmony were often filled with personal conflicts such as accusations, malicious lawsuits, witchcraft accusations, and lots of church-related bickering.

The colonists believed that the community had a compelling duty to ensure that families performed their functions properly, yet it was believed that through the family, order could most effectively be created. Thus, discipline and child rearing became an important issue.

Discipline and Child Rearing in the Colonial Era

Morgan says that the first duty of a Puritan parent was to give food, shelter, and protection.³⁰ According to Wall, the first duty of a Puritan parent was to provide religious training for their children, which required them to teach their children to read and write.³¹ Parents were also expected to provide training in a skill that would make their children useful as adults. She further notes that the parent child relationship was a mix of indifference, affection, economics, and love. In agreement with Wall, Steven Mintz explains that since Puritans did not sentimentalize childhood, they saw children as

²⁹ Wall, *Fierce Communion*, 13-19.

³⁰ Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 65.

³¹ Wall, *Fierce Communion*, 86.

adults in training who needed to be saved from sin, trained as early as possible for life's work and disciplined.³²

Demos states that discipline started very early somewhere between one and two years of age.³³ This was necessary to restrain a child's stubbornness, so that more positive virtues would take hold. To the Puritans, a child's will was a clear manifestation of sin and the only appropriate response was a repressive one. However, Demos speculates that crushing the child's will left her/him with a lasting sense of shame that manifested itself in litigious behavior in Puritan culture through personal disputes and rivalries.³⁴ Morgan notes that while we often assume Puritans were very severe in their punishment and that many parents resorted to using a birch rod, there is no proof that Puritan parents used a rod more freely than their 20th century counterparts.³⁵ Furthermore, he notes that while parents decided for themselves the proper method of disciplining their children, they were counseled to use bodily punishment as a last resort. They were advised to win children to holiness by kindness. Mintz would agree with Morgan as he explains that despite the Puritan's strong belief to break the will of a child, most Puritan authorities were critical of harsh physical punishment because they believed it would only build resentment and rebelliousness in children.³⁶ Parents were advised to avoid excessive severity and to always explain the reasons for the punishment. Additionally, Pollock questions the severity of Puritan parents and suggests that

³² Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 3.

³³ Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, 136-139.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 103-104.

³⁶ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 19.

punishment was determined by the personality of the parent, not religious beliefs or perhaps an interaction of the two.³⁷

There is general agreement among historians that the basic building block of Puritan society was the patriarchal family, and that parental authority was strongly supported and reinforced by the church and the community. Morgan asserts that the father's authority in the family was a microcosm of the relationships of subordination and authority in society.³⁸ Mintz states that fathers, or the oldest male in the household had the authority to make all decisions and were responsible for teaching children to read and study scripture.³⁹ In fact, childrearing manuals were addressed to men and not to their wives. However, as an example of community control, if a father was not fulfilling his responsibility, the court could step in and reprimand fathers. In 1648, the Massachusetts General Court ordered that fathers provide spiritual training at least once a week to their children and their servants with threat of punishment if this order were not carried out.

There were variations in colonial childrearing. Lorena Walsh argues that colonists in Maryland brought over the same family traditions as colonists in New England, especially the concept of patriarchal authority.⁴⁰ However, demographic conditions were vastly different in both areas and it affected the lives of children. Since a higher percentage of women and children immigrated to New England, stable families

³⁷ Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, 155.

³⁸ Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 17-19.

³⁹ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 13.

⁴⁰ Walsh, Lorena S. "Till Death Us Do Part: Marriage and Family in Seventeenth Century Maryland," ed. Graff, Harvey J., *Growing Up In America, Historical Experiences* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 110-121.

were soon established and orderly communities supported those families. Families in New England tended to be larger and life expectancy was high. In Maryland, a high percentage of immigrants were men who came over as indentured servants. When they were eligible to marry, they were older, usually in their late twenties. Due to the high death rate, in part caused by the malarial environment, the life span was very short. Therefore, colonists in Maryland had a much shorter window to marry and procreate which resulted in smaller families of usually two or three children. Early death of one or both parents made it difficult to recreate traditional family norms and exercise traditional control in a family. If both parents died early, the community was then forced to step in and take on parental responsibilities, which usually meant putting the children to work in an apprenticeship.⁴¹

The Chesapeake planter families, according to Daniel Blake Smith, were deeply attached to their children and structured family life around them.⁴² He further notes that children provided an important source of pleasure and an emotional focus in the household. Referring to family letters and diaries, Smith suggests that children were not seen as beings whose will had to be tamed. Instead he argues, parents delighted in the innocence and playfulness of their children and often indulged and accepted their autonomy. Yet despite the pleasure they took in their children, parents did expect their

⁴¹ Walsh, Lorena S. "Till Death Us Do Part: Marriage and Family in Seventeenth Century Maryland," ed. Graff, Harvey J., *Growing Up In America, Historical Experiences* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 110-121.

⁴² Daniel Blake Smith, "Autonomy and Affection: Parents and Children in Eighteenth Century Chesapeake Families," in *Growing up In America*, eds. N. Ray Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 55-57.

children to develop self-discipline at an early age, which they believed would produce independent adults. This was a necessity because early death was a reality for many parents, leaving children as heirs of property and estates. Mintz explains that planter families were much more relaxed in childrearing because there were few work responsibilities for sons under the age of twelve and religious instruction was basically nonexistent.⁴³ But like the New Englanders, Chesapeake families relied on a wide network of kin and community to take on the responsibilities of caring for children, especially those children who became orphans. This supporting web of kin helped ease the transition from childhood to adulthood.

In the middle colonies, the Quakers established a family pattern that included the belief that children were born innocent. They lived in small nuclear families, isolated from other kin, and free from the type of community control that was found in New England. Unlike the Puritans, Quakers encouraged equality over hierarchy, gentle guidance, and early independence. There were strong emotional ties between children and parents. This “private family” as Mintz calls them, became the model for middle class families in the nineteenth century.⁴⁴

Helen Wall demonstrates that despite the variations between the colonies, the importance of a strong community remained consistent.⁴⁵ Everyone, including children was considered obligated to help maintain order, and in return, community was a network that offered support to families. Community order also depended on children’s work.

⁴³ Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, 40.

⁴⁴ Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, 48-50.

⁴⁵ Wall, *Fierce Communion*, 4.

Children's Work in the Colonial Era

Families utilized community support not only to help them raise their children but also to provide them with work. "Putting out" or also called, "choosing a calling," was one way that many Puritan families came to rely on the community to help teach their children good social conduct and a life-long skill. Children were sent to other families as an apprentice and those families expected a financial return from the child's labor. Most masters were also expected to teach reading and writing. Helen Wall explains that "putting out" was associated with poverty because parents couldn't afford to provide for their children.⁴⁶ By 1692 all colonial legislatures had adopted apprenticeship law exclusively for poor children. She also asserts that parents put out their children to reform their character. Morgan offers a different view, contending that Puritan parents put out children to avoid spoiling them with too much affection.⁴⁷ Puritans believed that children learned better manners in other homes because other people would not let affection get in the way of their teaching. Also, the custom already existed in England and it was easy to continue this custom in New England.

Mintz believes that children left home to alleviate crowded conditions to allow the community to take advantage of surplus labor.⁴⁸ Children left home between the ages of seven and twelve. And since this action affected the rest of the child's life, the decision process, which led to the placement of the child, was filled with much tension.

⁴⁶ Wall, *Fierce Communion*, 57-58.

⁴⁷ Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 77-79

⁴⁸ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 23-24.

Eventually, “putting out” caused a contradiction between an emerging private, affective family unit and a labor system that behaved with the characteristics of a family. What did it mean if a master performed all the functions of a parent? What role then did a parent have? Helen Wall asserts that this contradiction caused people to redefine community childcare arrangements, use of child labor and the scope of community involvement in families.⁴⁹ The family became more private and withdrawn from the larger society.

For those children who stayed with their families, they were expected to be useful in their own house. Mintz and Kellogg explain that the family was the main unit of production in society and each member was expected to contribute economically.⁵⁰ Older children were considered particularly useful because they could tend gardens, herd animals, spin wool and care for younger siblings. Yet despite the hard work that took place on a daily basis, children were able to spend some time in play.

Children’s Play and Clothing in the Colonial Era

Linda Pollock explains that childhood and play were inseparable, although colonial parents did not entirely approve of such behavior.⁵¹ Some examples of play that she found in her research include throwing snowballs, fishing, and playing with dolls, trap ball, and wicket on the common. Ambivalence is the term that Mintz describes when

⁴⁹ Wall, *Fierce Communion*, 127.

⁵⁰ Mintz, and Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions*, 6.

⁵¹ Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, 237-239.

talking about Puritan parents' reaction to their children's play.⁵² The dominant view was that it was a sinful waste of time and was not allowed on the Sabbath. However, Puritan children enjoyed swings, hobbyhorses, paper dolls, dollhouses, kites, toy boats, and rock collections, along with various pets like squirrels, cats, and dogs. While Ross W. Beales Jr. generally agrees with Pollock and Mintz, he also notes that Puritan parents probably sanctioned play as long as it did not lead to mischief or interrupt the Sabbath.⁵³ Smith finds a different attitude towards play in the Chesapeake families, noting that parents believed children thrived on companionship and vigorous play with other children and that confining them at home weakened their sociability.⁵⁴ With a slightly different view, Calvert explains that children did not indulge in much active play because the clothes that they wore inhibited their movement, which indeed was their function.⁵⁵

Clothes, according to John Demos, were an important measure of status and wealthier people collected them in large quantities.⁵⁶ Most fabrics were heavy and durable and clothes could be expected to last for many years. Children were dressed in the manner of their parents. Historians generally agree that both boys and girls, prior to the age of five or six, wore the same gowns including stays that molded their torsos in similar fashion. It is difficult to determine gender when looking at paintings and prints

⁵² Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 18.

⁵³ Ross, W. Beales, Jr., "The Child in Seventeenth Century America", eds. Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner, *American Childhood, a Research Guide and Historical Handbook* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), 31.

⁵⁴ Smith, *Autonomy and Affection*, 57.

⁵⁵ Calvert, *Children in the House, Children in the House, The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992) 48-49.

⁵⁶ Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, 57.

from the 17th and 18th century because both boys and girls wear skirts. Linda Baumgarten, the textile curator at Williamsburg, explains that skirts made it easier for mothers to take care of children who were not fully toilet trained, since children did not wear underwear.⁵⁷ Skirts also carried a symbolic value that represented dependence. People who depended on husbands and fathers wore skirts: wives and little children. People who wore pants were the dominant members of society. John Demos also notes that until the age of five or six, there is some evidence that children were clothed alike.⁵⁸ He describes their clothing as sort of a long robe, which opened down the front, similar to the dress of grown women.

The practice of swaddling infants was a common occurrence according to several historians. However because there have been no examples of swaddling cloths that have remained intact over the centuries other historians are hesitant to concur. Linda Baumgarten explains that swaddling was the practice used in many countries to wrap an infant tightly in long thin strips of fabric.⁵⁹ It immobilized the infant's arms and head, leaving the infant "as stiff as a log." Karen Calvert describes how an infant would remain completely swaddled for at least the first three months after which their arms were freed.⁶⁰ From six to nine months, swaddling would be discontinued and babies would be put into long gowns. She explains that swaddling was practiced because it was practical

⁵⁷ Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal, The Language of Clothes in Colonial and Federal America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 164.

⁵⁸ Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, 140.

⁵⁹ Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal*, 158.

⁶⁰ Karen Calvert, *Children in the House, The Material Culture of Early Childhood*, 22-23.

for mothers whose primary role was managing a household. Since infants were seen as insensible creatures that only needed rudimentary services, younger children would often take over the care of the infant. Swaddling made it easy to carry the infant around and could be put down on just about any surface, sometimes even hung on a peg or hook! It also protected the child from being bitten by domestic animals, pigs in particular. Additionally, swaddling was believed to mold a child's body and ensure that he or she would grow straight and tall. Rickets was a common disease and parents, not understanding the cause, believed that keeping the legs straight and bound would prevent bent legs. By keeping the infant in an erect upright position, it expressed the adult potentiality of the infant, making it more attractive to everyone.

Mintz and Beales claim that there is no direct evidence that Puritans swaddled their infants although Mintz does explain that babies in Europe were swaddled.⁶¹ And in agreement with Mintz and Beales, Demos describes the clothing of an infant, as light and not especially restrictive.⁶² They probably wore some type of linen smock and were covered with layers of woolen blankets.

When the swaddling bands were removed, babies were dressed in long gowns that extended a foot beyond their feet. According to Calvert, this prevented the baby from crawling because crawling was considered beyond the dignity of any human being.⁶³ Only beasts, savages, insane, and wild people crawled. Adults stood upright and wanted their children to do so also. Crawling was prohibited.

⁶¹ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 17; Beales, *The Child in Seventeenth-Century America*, 31.

⁶² Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, 133.

⁶³ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 32-33.

Stays were introduced to children, both boys and girls, even before the age of one. These stays were made from whalebone and leather, or sometimes corded or quilted, and worn under their gowns. Like swaddling, the stays were believed to encourage good upright posture. The stays forced the shoulder to droop down, shaped the torso at the waist and pushed the chest forward. Girls wore stays long into adulthood, boys stopped wearing them when they moved into breeches, anywhere between the ages of 4 and 8.

From studying the clothes of boys and girls in portraits of colonial children Calvert speculates on the status of boys and girls.⁶⁴ Prior to the age of five or six, both boys and girls were dressed in gowns that were very similar to women. However as boys became older and outgrew their insubordinate position, they changed into breeches, became dressed as their fathers and assumed the superior position in life along side of their fathers. Girls never made an outward change in their clothes. As Calvert explains, “subordination, femininity and childishness were tightly intertwined.”⁶⁵

The clothes of colonial children were restrictive and formal. Some parents believed swaddling was a healthy thing to do for their infants. The real threat to infants was death due to health issues.

Children’s Health in the Colonial Era

John Demos noted that illness was a real danger to infants.⁶⁶ The death rate for infants under a year old seems to have been higher than at any later age. Mintz also

⁶⁴ Calvert, *Children in Portraiture*, 94-95.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, 135.

agrees when he notes that the death of infants and children were common.⁶⁷ Almost all families experienced the loss of at least two or three children. Epidemics of smallpox, measles, mumps, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and whooping cough were especially dreaded. Linda Pollock also recognizes a high rate of infant mortality and explains that this caused anxiety in parents.⁶⁸ Furthermore, parents who had strong religious convictions and were expected to resign themselves to the will of God, found it difficult to maintain a state of Christian resignation when faced with the pending death of their own child.

In an opposing view, Beales claims that infant mortality in Plymouth Colony and Andover were no more than 25 percent, a figure that is lower than previously presumed, and much lower than the mortality rate in the Chesapeake Colonies.⁶⁹ However, death was a grim reality and although parents grieved for their children, their faith provided strong hope that their child would be saved. This provided a check on their emotions and consolation upon the death of their loved ones. Peter G. Slater also explains that Puritan parents expected to lose some of their infants and so were naturally concerned about what happened to them in the afterlife.⁷⁰ He asserts that Puritan parents struggled with the doctrine of infant damnation and struggled to achieve some equilibrium, which could in turn convince them that their infants had reached salvation. The duty of a Puritan parent

⁶⁷ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 14-15.

⁶⁸ Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, 128.

⁶⁹ Beales, *The Child in Seventeenth Century America*, 17-18, 28-29.

⁷⁰ Peter G. Slater, "From the Cradle to the Coffin", eds. N.Ray Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes, *Growing Up in America, Children in Historical Perspective* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 27-28, 43.

was to move their children closer to God so they could achieve salvation. Education was one such path to salvation.

Children's Education in the Colonial Era

For the first forty years in Plymouth Colony, John Demos explains there is no direct evidence to indicate that there were formal schools. In fact there is only indirect evidence to show that there was the intent to start schools. It was not until well into the 18th century that a widespread system of schooling took hold.⁷¹ Despite the lack of a formal school system, the Puritan community felt it was essential that children learn how to read. As Morgan describes it, the ultimate purpose of education was salvation and salvation could only be achieved if one could read and learn the scriptures.⁷² Teaching children to read prepared them for conversion. Morgan further notes a Massachusetts law passed in 1642 that required masters of families to teach their children and their apprentices how to read. Schooling took place in the house and Mintz claims that mothers were responsible for teaching reading and fathers taught writing.⁷³ By the end of the 17th century, a few schools had been formed, but there was no law that required attendance. Within these formal schools, literacy was gendered. Girls learned to read, boys learned to read and write. In the 18th century schools become more accessible.

In summary, historians view colonial childhood as a much shorter stage of life than childhood today. Children were expected to take on adult responsibilities at an early

⁷¹ Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, 143.

⁷² Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 90.

⁷³ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 23.

age. There is also little argument that families lived with patriarchal control, reinforced by church and community. Historians debate the concept that colonial children were viewed as small adults. While some historians assert this view, others disagree. They believe that parents were aware of the developmental differences between children and adults. Another argument centers on discipline. Most historians agree that New England Colonial parents introduced discipline at a very early age but the question deals with the severity of the discipline. Some scholars say parents were counseled to use physical punishment only as a last resort, while others say the birch rod was used often and freely. Historians also argue over the validity of using portraits of children as historical evidence of beliefs and attitudes about age, sex, social status, and family relationships. Some historians assert that portraits are valid documents of family history while others say art conventions of the time period negate honest portrayal of historical evidence.

Overall, more historical evidence exists about wealthy and middle-class families. There is very little source material for lower-class families, the poor, and the ordinary. Future historical research is required for more understanding on how class and occupation affect families and childhood, as well as how the roles of community, relatives, neighbors, and friends shaped a child's experience.

AMERICAN CHILDHOOD IN THE 18TH AND EARLY 19TH CENTURIES

By the mid to late 18th century, the concept of childhood slowly changed and families began to move away from the emphasis placed on a well ordered, father dominated, emotionally restrained family. The philosopher, John Locke was influential in changing the way families thought about children. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, he attacked the patriarchal family system and stated that parents should gently cultivate their children's natural talents through love and reason.⁷⁴ He is widely known for his belief that children were born without sin and when they came into this world, their minds were like a blank slate. With close adult supervision, without relying on corporal punishment, children could be socialized and raised to be productive adults. As a result, childhood was viewed in much more positive terms. As Calvert explains, childhood was now defined as a separate stage of development with its own needs, virtues and activities.⁷⁵

This new conception of childhood took root primarily in middle-class families and was largely a romantic notion. Parents, particularly mothers, became the gentle guides, protecting their innocent, pure, and emotionally expressive children from corruption. Nurture, not will breaking, was the advice given to parents. Childish behavior was accepted and children were seen as special beings with their own needs and interests.

⁷⁴ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (Ontario: Batoche Books, 2001).

⁷⁵ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 81.

As Mintz explains, this conception of childhood was confined at first to the urban middle-class and became a world for children free from labor and devoted to education.⁷⁶ Middle class mothers assumed exclusive responsibility for childrearing. Nancy Schrom and Daniel Blake Smith agree as they explain that families moved away from emphasis on patriarchal authority and emotional restraint towards an affectionate, self consciously private family life in which children became the focus of indulgent attention.⁷⁷ The mother became the guardian of moral and physical well being which gradually gave way to a more secular belief that the welfare of children laid in the hands of loving mothers, not God.

Along with this new concept of childhood came a change in the relationship to community. Helen Wall states that this new concept promoted a special place for children within the family and it gave a new and unique importance to the child/parent relationship.⁷⁸ Parents now held the greatest authority over children and as this relationship tightened, the relationship between family and community loosened. Betty Farrell claims the rise in the ideology of individualism further severed the ties between family and community.⁷⁹ The family was no longer seen as a reciprocal part of the community and the family became a private refuge from the world. Once again this trend

⁷⁶ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 76.

⁷⁷ Nancy Schrom Dye, and Daniel Blake Smith, "Mother Love and Infant Death, 1750-1920", *Journal of American History*, 73, no. 2 (September 1986) 330.

⁷⁸ Wall, *Fierce Communion*, 131.

⁷⁹ Betty G. Farrell, *Family, The Making of an Idea, and Institution, and a Controversy in American Culture* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 47.

can be seen in portraits. As Calvert notes, prior to 1770, only one percent of portraits depicted a nuclear family.⁸⁰ Most portraits were painted with mother and children together and father in a separate painting. By 1810, twenty-seven percent of portraits portrayed a nuclear family indicating this to be the composition of choice. More importantly, such composition makes a strong statement about the growing importance placed on the private nuclear family. With less patriarchal control, one might assume to find changes in discipline and child rearing practices.

*Discipline and Child Rearing in the 18th and
Early 19th Centuries*

According to some historians, the acceptance and development of this new concept of childhood did not change severe childrearing methods. As N. Ray Hiner states, attitude towards children was changing; however this did not necessarily result in changes in the way children were actually treated.⁸¹ Aries argues that since children were removed from adult society, they were in need of constant supervision and strict discipline, particularly in schools where parents felt it was a necessary part of a good education.⁸² Carl Degler says the idea of “breaking the will” of a child continued long into the nineteenth century.⁸³ He bases his statement on a large quantity of child advice books that were written at the time. They all stressed the need, “to subdue the child early

⁸⁰ Calvert, *Children in Portraiture*, 108-109.

⁸¹ N. Ray Hiner and Joseph Hawes eds., *Growing Up in America, Children in Historical Perspective*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 83.

⁸² Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, 333-334.

⁸³ Degler, Carl, N., *At Odds: Women and the Family in America From Revolution to the Present*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 86-91.

and at almost any cost.”⁸⁴ This concern to control the child at an early age also appeared in many letters of parents and was consistent with Lockean theory where the ideal was to instill in a child correct behavior at an early age so that correction would not be necessary later on in life.⁸⁵ Degler asserts that physical punishment was not abandoned, but with the new prominence of women within the family, other methods of control were often used first.⁸⁶ Children were shamed, made to feel guilty, or were deprived of company, food, or self-respect. If these methods did not work, then parents found it necessary to use physical coercion.

Linda Pollock recognizes an increased severity in discipline in the first half of the 19th century and credits it to the rapid changes in society.⁸⁷ However she asserts that there was a great deal of variation in methods of discipline. Philip Greven credits this variation in child rearing practices to religious convictions and family background.⁸⁸ He names three temperaments—evangelical, moderate and genteel—and describes how families of each group practiced discipline. Evangelical families were strict and controlling, widespread in the 17th century, and became increasingly in the minority in the 18th century. Moderates who became the model for childrearing practices in the 18th

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ John Locke, “The Use of Reason in Child Rearing,” in *Childhood in America*, eds. Paula S. Fass and Mary Ann Mason, (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 45-48.

⁸⁶ Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America From Revolution to the Present*, 86-91.

⁸⁷ Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, 202.

⁸⁸ Philip Greven, *Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience and the Self in Early America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 21-61, 151-191, 265-295.

century, focused on love and duty rather than love and fear. These parents worked to bend the will of their children instead of breaking their will. Genteel families preferred indulgence over discipline. Mintz agrees that child-rearing practices were closely linked to theological beliefs, but he sees it as a wide spectrum.⁸⁹ At one end of the spectrum were religious liberals who emphasized the power of maternal influence, rejecting corporal punishment in favor of psychological techniques. At the opposite end were orthodox Calvinists and evangelicals who stressed the importance of breaking the sinful will of a child and were willing to use physical punishment in order to instill obedience. But in general, as John Demos states, the child-rearing regime had moved from raising children with shame to raising children with guilt.⁹⁰ Whereas Puritans in the 17th century stressed shame over what children should do, parents in the 19th century stressed the hurt given to others by a child's misbehavior. Another form of parental control for some families was child labor.

Children's Work in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries

It was during this period that the gulf between middle class and working class children widened. Middle-class children were freed from work and were expected to devote their time to education while the vast majority of children from farm and urban families were expected to work and contribute to the survival of the family. In the 18th century, child labor became an important factor in household industries, as families

⁸⁹ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 81.

⁹⁰ John Demos, *Past, Present and Personal, The Family and The Life Course in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 14.

worked together to produce a product. During the first decades of the 19th century, the family as a self-sufficient economic unit began to disappear. With the rise of the factory system, children were removed from domestic settings and utilized in many mechanized industries.⁹¹ Many Americans in that era viewed child labor as a positive good.

Alexander Hamilton, in a report on manufacturers in 1795 wrote that child labor was central to the country's future prosperity.⁹² Sir Henry Moore, the governor of New York, declared child labor a moral service on the part of parents in building a strong economy.⁹³ Patriotism aside, children in laboring families worked because their labor was essential to their family's survival. Mintz explains that the vast majority of families living in urban working-class neighborhoods, in mill and mining towns, and in rural areas throughout the country relied heavily on their children's labor and wages.⁹⁴ Parents depended on the labor of their children, Fass and Mason explain, as they worked in fields, at home, in factories, and on the streets as peddlers or entertainers.⁹⁵ Children could begin work as young as five years of age and become full time workers with adult responsibilities by the age of ten.

The colonial system of apprenticeship diminished as children obtained other opportunities for work. Historians give various reasons for this demise, but overall agree

⁹¹ Mintz and Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions*, 50.

⁹² Alexander Hamilton, "Children and Manufactures," eds. Paula Fass, Mary Ann Mason, *Childhood in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2000) 248.

⁹³ Anita Schorsch, *Images of Childhood, an Illustrated Social History*, (New York, Mayflower Books, 1979), 145.

⁹⁴ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 135.

⁹⁵ Paula Fass, Mary Ann Mason, *Childhood in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 235.

that the vast changes that were occurring in American society did not support the system.

Mintz claims the American Revolution and economic uncertainties were responsible.⁹⁶ Many youths were not willing to enter into a relationship with a master that required deference to that master. Additionally, sharp fluctuations in demand for products caused masters to shorten the contract term of their apprentice and in many cases they preferred to hire other workers when demand was high. Colin Heywood says the concept of apprenticeship is a conservative idea that works well in a stable, agrarian society but not in a restless, commercialized urban society.⁹⁷ Therefore, industrialization and growth of American cities affected the apprenticeship model. With another view, Anita Schorsch mentions that the apprenticeship system failed because there was a colonial surplus of middle-class children along with a lack of public responsibility for the poor. Few masters were willing to take on children of the poor.⁹⁸ Interestingly, even though apprenticeship declined in popularity, Priscilla Ferguson Clement claims that the practice of fostering out, sending children to other families, persisted.⁹⁹ As boys and girls took their first jobs, they customarily boarded with another family whose house would be in walking distance to their place of employment.

For those middle and upper class children who were freed from work, toys and play became an important part of their lives.

⁹⁶ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 138.

⁹⁷ Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood, Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times*, (Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishing, Inc, 2001) 160.

⁹⁸ Schorsch, *Images of Childhood*, 144.

⁹⁹ Priscilla Ferguson Clement, "The City and the Child, 1860-1885," eds. Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner, *American Childhood, a Research Guide and Historical Handbook*, (Westport, Greenwood Press, 1985), 250.

Children's Play and Clothing in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries

As childhood came to be increasingly viewed as a separate stage of development, requiring less restriction, historians agree there a new attitude towards play made it more acceptable in children's lives. Calvert sites evidence of this acceptance as seen in portraits of children holding toys or posing in playful positions.¹⁰⁰ According to Schorsch, toys, by the 19th century, were being mass-produced in Europe and in America.¹⁰¹ However, she claims that only the middle, upper class and genteel parents responded positively to toys, games, and amusements. In slight disagreement, Constance B. Schulz claims children played as well as worked, and even among groups like the Quakers, toys and games were given adult approval.¹⁰² Calvert further explains that even though American society viewed play as necessary and beneficial to children's growth, play for pure amusement without any practical purpose was still considered suspect.¹⁰³ Adults had an ambivalent attitude towards toys. On one hand they recognized toys as an important element in their image of childhood as a carefree, special, innocent world, but on the other hand they feared overindulgence would spoil the child and destroy that innocence.

¹⁰⁰ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 80.

¹⁰¹ Schorsch, *Images of Childhood*, 92.

¹⁰² Constance B. Schulz, "Children and Childhood in the Eighteenth Century" in *American Childhood, a Research Guide and Historical Handbook*, eds. Joseph M. Hawes, N. Ray Hiner, (Westport, Greenwood Press, 1985), 71.

¹⁰³ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 118-119

Mintz agrees that play became more acceptable, but that on the other hand, a more rigid ideology of gender roles emerged.¹⁰⁴ Femininity was defined in terms of self-sacrifice and service, and masculinity in terms of aggressiveness and daring. Boys were freer to roam and their activities took place outside the home emphasizing physical play, prowess, self-assertion, stoicism and competition. Their activities included races, fistfights, sledding, skating, swimming, and ball games. Girls had less time to themselves because they had more responsibility indoors for childcare, sewing, and housework. Their play involved toys that helped them assume adult roles such as dolls, tea sets, music boxes, needle boxes, or books. Heywood agrees that girls were given toys that led them toward the adult world, but he also claims that many girls preferred vigorous outdoor play, such as sledding and skating, instead of playing with dolls.¹⁰⁵ He asserts there was nothing more that both boys and girls liked to do than roam unsupervised in fields or on streets around town.

A more active, carefree, play life required a change in clothing, and according to Calvert, clothing became less restrictive.¹⁰⁶ Mintz explains that this became clearly evident in infant clothing.¹⁰⁷ Many parents stopped dressing their babies in swaddling cloths or stiff corsets, although Calvert notes that lower class nurses who remained loyal to traditional ways and European immigrants who still practiced swaddling continued to

¹⁰⁴ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 84-85.

¹⁰⁵ Heywood, *A History of Childhood*, 92, 112.

¹⁰⁶ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 79.

¹⁰⁷ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 79.

swaddle their infants well into the first decades of the 20th century.¹⁰⁸ Younger children no longer wore clothes that imitated adult fashions with tight bodices and sleeves. Children appearing in portraits revealed these changes. Little girls wore simpler, lighter, and free flowing muslin frocks with empire waists. Little boys wore their hair simply, with shirts loosely gathered around their necks instead of a formal cravat.¹⁰⁹ But more importantly, much like boys, girls now wore frocks that would require a change in costume as they made the transition into adulthood. Calvert interprets this as a break between childishness and adult femininity because it visually announced a difference between adult women and female children.¹¹⁰ Differences between adults and children were further noted because children now sported hairstyles exclusive to children. Androgynous is the word Mintz uses to describe the hairstyles.¹¹¹ He further notes that children of this era were associated with a sexless innocence that was apparent in identical white dresses that both infant boys and girls wore.

Some parents felt that dressing their children in loose fitting clothes promoted good health. But, like swaddling cloths in the Colonial Era, loose fitting clothes did not prevent death from infectious diseases.

Children's Health in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries

In speaking about children's health during this era, historians generally agree that parents had new theories about how to prevent illness. Smith asserts that parents

¹⁰⁸ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 62

¹⁰⁹ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 79.

¹¹⁰ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 83.

¹¹¹ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 79.

followed the advice of John Locke by dressing their children in loose fitting clothes and allowing them plenty of time in the open air.¹¹² Calvert asserts that infancy was now viewed as a developmental stage that promised robust health.¹¹³ Parents believed infants would maintain health if they wore light clothes, used thin blankets, and took cold baths. If children were accustomed to cold from an early age, they would harden to it and remain far healthier than infants in an earlier time. If children got sick, parents began to view this as a result of too much coddling. Anne M. Boylan also feels that middle-class parents believed they could influence their children's health.¹¹⁴ Mothers breast-fed on demand, dressed babies in loose light clothing, permitted them to crawl, and encouraged them to stand and walk early. These practices, according to Boylan, helped reduce infant diarrhea and thus, infant death. Lower-class families who lived in cities encountered a lower level of care due to crowded conditions.

Despite these efforts to prevent illness, however, historians assert that infant and child deaths remained high even with the advent of smallpox inoculations that had eliminated this deadly disease from middle and upper classes.¹¹⁵ Mintz explains that in urban areas, infant mortality rates actually rose due to crowded conditions, poor sanitation, and polluted drinking water.¹¹⁶ Schulz describes epidemics of diphtheria and

¹¹² Smith, *Autonomy and Affection*, 54.

¹¹³ Calvert, *Children of the House*, 151.

¹¹⁴ Anne M. Boylan, "Growing Up Female in Young America, 1800-1860," in *American Childhood, a Research Guide and Historical Handbook*, eds. Joseph M. Hawes, N. Ray Hiner, (Westport, Greenwood Press, 1985), 160.

¹¹⁵ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 78-79.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

scarlet fever, which hit children almost exclusively and were often fatal.¹¹⁷ Children were also susceptible to yellow fever, respiratory diseases, fevers, intestinal diseases and influenza, measles, mumps, and whooping cough. Schulz further suggests that infant mortality in the Chesapeake area was slightly lower than other regions because nursing, which gave infants a temporary immunity to malaria, was the most common form of infant feeding.¹¹⁸ Upon weaning, the immunity was lost and children between the ages of two and four suffered a higher mortality rate compared to other regions. When children were not suffering from ill health or not working, they were able to attend school if their parents felt it was important.

Children's Education in the 18th Century and Early 19th Century

This era saw improved access to schools, but the system was haphazard. As Mintz finds it, "It was sporadic and unsystematic."¹¹⁹ Education consisted of apprenticeships, church schools, informal dame schools, district schools in smaller towns, Latin schools in larger cities, and private academies for the wealthy. In many cases, children needed to know how to read before entering and free school typically required payment, which limited attendance to those students who were taught to read by their parents and whose families could afford to pay. Teachers depended on rote learning, and often maintained order with a birch rod. Attendance was erratic. Schulz suggests for children over seven years of age, formal schooling was part of a daily routine, and took

¹¹⁷ Schulz, "*Children and Childhood in the Eighteenth Century*," 68.

¹¹⁸ Schulz, "*Children and Childhood in the Eighteenth Century*," 67.

¹¹⁹ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 90

place in three different types of settings: the common school, The Latin school, which taught classical languages; or the academy, which combined common school subjects with classical languages and collegiate courses.¹²⁰ Wealthy families also employed private tutors. Since all schools required fees, this kept the poor from attending. She further states, children in Southern Colonies had less opportunity to attend school than children in New England.

Heywood argues that working-class parents viewed literacy as a luxury that was of little use to many occupations, but were willing to send their children to school when they could on their terms.¹²¹ Children attended school if parents felt their children needed literacy skills for a craft or a trade, religious instruction, or the chance for social mobility. Barbara Finkelstein suggests parents sent children to school often at the age of two and three to rid themselves of the burden of their care and supervision.¹²² In agreement, Joseph F. Kett notes that summer schools provided education during the busy season of planting, haying, and harvesting, yet functioned virtually as a daycare for children under eight.¹²³ Boys over the age of eight stayed at home to work on the farm. They attended school primarily during the winter.

At the beginning of the 19th century, efforts began to educate poor children. Educational reformers, physicians, middle and upper-class women saw systematic

¹²⁰ Schulz, “*Children and Childhood in the Eighteenth Century*,” 71.

¹²¹ Heywood, *History of Childhood*, 166.

¹²² Barbara Finkelstein, “In Fear of Childhood: Relationships Between Parents and Teachers in Popular Primary Schools in the Nineteenth Century,” *History of Childhood Quarterly* 3, (1975-1976), 321-335.

¹²³ Joseph P. Kett, “Growing Up in Rural New England, 1800-1840,” in *Growing Up in America*, ed. Harvey J. Graff, (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1987) 176.

educational training as an instrument of social and moral order. In other words, as Finkelstein explains, if children learned to read and write, they would learn to be good.¹²⁴ Mintz argues that these efforts arose from the romantic vision of childhood in which it was believed that innocent children should be protected from adult realities.¹²⁵ However, this created a moral severity towards children who could not live up to the ideal. In 1790, according to Mintz, the establishment of Sunday schools was the first attempt to guide the lives of poor children.¹²⁶ Schorsch explains that Sunday schools were financed by private contributions, which came largely from the middle class.¹²⁷ These schools were free, and provided very poor children with religious, moral, and practical needs. In addition, attending school on Sunday allowed children to work during the week and kept the streets free and peaceful on Sunday. Schools in other settings began to emerge such as infant schools in factories, which served the children of factory laborers; free, highly structured schools in cities and low-cost schooling in rural areas. Finkelstein makes it very clear, that in their efforts, reformers wished to supplement, not displace parents as moral and cognitive nurturers, nor did they wish to reconstruct the nature of childrearing or the meaning of childhood.¹²⁸ This sort of work became the characteristic of reform efforts in the Progressive Era.

¹²⁴ Barbara Finkelstein, "The Reconstruction of Childhood in the United States, 1790-1870," in *American Childhood, a Research Guide and Historical Handbook*, eds. Joseph M. Hawes, N. Ray Hiner, (Westport, Greenwood Press, 1985), 120.

¹²⁵ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 77.

¹²⁶ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 90.

¹²⁷ Schorsch, *Images of Childhood*, 124.

¹²⁸ Finkelstein, "The Reconstruction of Childhood in the United States, 1790-1870," 122.

In summary, during this era, historians agree that the influence of John Locke and other philosophers changed the concept of childhood dramatically. In fact, Mintz refers to this era as the “birth of modern childhood.”¹²⁹ Parents viewed childhood as a separate stage of development and recognized that children had their own needs and activities. Children now had a special place in the family, causing a change in parent/child relationships. As a result, the community had less influence on families. Historians also agree that this idea took root largely among middle and upper class families. Children of working-class and poor families who had to work, did not have the luxury of time or money to enjoy an education.

One area of disagreement among scholars deals with the severity of discipline. Most historians agree that discipline did become more severe, but some argue that severity, or lack thereof depended on the family’s background and religious convictions. Another area of contention deals with apprenticeship and its demise. While most historians would agree that the vast changes in American society at that time did not support the system of apprenticeship, some gave specific reasons for its demise, such as a surplus of middle-class children, fluctuation in demand for products, and youths not willing to defer to a master. We also see contradicting views in regards to children’s play. Some historians say only middle and upper class parents accepted children’s play, toys, and amusements. Others say all children played, while still other historians say parents were ambivalent about a child’s play. Another area of contention is education. Although most historians agree education in this era was accessible to more children, the

¹²⁹ Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, 76.

system was haphazard and attendance sporadic. They disagree, however, about the parental motivations for sending their children to school. Some say school for the middle and upper class was a daily routine but not for the lower working classes. Others say some parents viewed literacy as a luxury and sent children to school only when it was convenient for the family.

As in the colonial era, with the exception of education and labor, historical evidence in this era tends to support the experience of children of wealthy and middle class families. More research needs to be done about the everyday lives of the poor and the ordinary, the working-class and families of color; how different occupations of parents affected the lives of children; and how the new relationship of community to families affected the lives of children.

In this era, two divergent views of childhood began to emerge. For middle-class families, children were allowed an education and were freed from work. For the working- class, immigrant and farm families, children were expected to work and contribute to the family's support. Eighty years later, in the Progressive Era, there was wide spread effort to ensure that every child had a right to a childhood free from labor with access to education.

AMERICAN CHILDHOOD IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

By the end of the 19th century, children's lives became more distinct from adult lives and childhood became more diverse than it had been during the colonial era. Indeed, during this era, it became difficult to generalize about American childhood. Farrell finds that school, work, and play differed greatly depending on class, region, ethnicity, race and gender.¹³⁰ These differences were due to the social and economic changes that took place in the 19th century such as westward movement, rapid growth of cities, increased industrialization and immigration, and commercialized farming. Further, middle-class family structure and purpose changed. Unlike the colonial families that had been the fundamental economic, welfare, political, and religious units of society, late 19th century middle class families divested some of these responsibilities to specialists and institutions. In exchange, families took more responsibility for the emotional and psychological needs of its members, especially the children. Susan Tiffin explains that adults looked to children as the nation's salvation from current social problems, but at the same time many children were also seen as victims of those same problems.¹³¹ Social order and national greatness, some people thought, would depend upon the care and protection of all children.

¹³⁰ Farrell, *Family*, 31.

¹³¹ Susan Tiffin, *In Whose Best Interest?* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982), 7,15.

David Macleod reminds us that by the turn of the century, the overall birth rate fell and brought about a shift in the balance between young people and adults.¹³² Early in the 19th century, young people outnumbered adults, but 100 years later, the reverse was true. Urban families averaged fewer children than rural families. Birthrates also seemed to be tied to income; families with husbands who worked in white collared professions had fewer children than families of skilled, unskilled and farm workers. Betty Farrell attributes this decline in birth rates to dramatic control over fertility by white urban and rural women and claims this was evidence of a new women's consciousness and power in controlling their reproductive lives.¹³³ David MacLeod claims the reasons for this decline in birth rates were less clear.¹³⁴ He wonders if perhaps smaller families offered more women more opportunities and that perhaps in families where children did not contribute to the family economy, children became a major economic drain. Yet, there was a strong correlation between family size and children's education. In those families where children were expected to become professional employees, parents limited their family size and concentrated their financial and emotional resources on just a few children. Mintz agrees with both Farrell and MacLeod, but also adds that the decline in birth rates represented a change in cultural ideas in which women rejected the idea that their purpose in life was to bear children and realized that children needed more care and attention than in the past.¹³⁵ Additionally, the reduction in birth rates drastically altered family relations. With fewer

¹³² David I. Macleod, *The Age of the Children, Children in America, 1890-1920* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 3.

¹³³ Farrell, *Family*, 33.

¹³⁴ MacLeod, *The Age of the Child*, 12.

¹³⁵ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 78-79.

children, siblings were closer in age and that resulted in families being clearly divided into two generations.

Mintz comments that at the same time that birth rates were declining, mortality rates remained high.¹³⁶ At the turn of the century, twenty percent of children died by the age of five. In direct response to the high infant mortality rate, Nancy Schrom Dye and Daniel Blake Smith state that attitudes of grieving mothers had changed.¹³⁷ They no longer viewed an infant's death as the will of God and the grief was not to be silently endured in private. Women in communities made the nation's high infant mortality rate a matter of public concern and demanded that doctors, public health officials, and government take action.

Both declining birth rates and high infant mortality resulted in smaller families. Some historians claim that fewer children reinforced the emotional value of each child, which brought about new concepts in childhood. Viviana A. Zelizer explains the emergence of two different concepts of childhood: the economically "useful" and the "useless" child.¹³⁸ The useful child was one, who from an early age, worked and contributed to the economic survival of the family. This concept was based on the idea that all family members, including children, should contribute to the family's economic well-being. Zelizer explains this was not really a new concept because children had always worked in and for their families throughout the colonial era. But, with industrialization, new jobs arose between 1870 and 1900, and estimates show an increase

¹³⁶ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 177.

¹³⁷ Dye and Smith, *Journal of American History*, 347.

¹³⁸ Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*, 59-60.

of over a million child workers, many between the ages of seven and thirteen.¹³⁹ These children provided extra income to families, especially those families who were dependent on daily wages and constantly threatened by illness, injury, unemployment, and even death. “Useful” children were integrated into the adult world of industrial, agricultural, and domestic work at an early age. In contrast, the “useless” child had become sentimentalized, was seen as innocent and vulnerable, and was protected from the stresses of the adult world, free from labor and devoted to education. They were economically useless, but emotionally priceless.¹⁴⁰

David MacLeod also recognizes similar concepts of childhood, which he claims caused a tug of war of values in society during this era.¹⁴¹ Children of farmers and the urban working-class integrated their children into family activities at an early age and expected them to be helpful and economically productive. Children of the urban upper middle-class were set apart and protected from the adult world, participating in age-graded activities. When writing about the children of the urban middle-class, David I. Macleod referred to their world as a “sheltered childhood.”¹⁴² This was the model for middle-class families where the mother was responsible for making a domestic shelter that was emotionally supportive for her children and her husband. The husband was the sole wage earner, spent long hours at work, and was able to make enough money to support the family. The middle-class did not require moral perfection in their children and they

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 8-10.

¹⁴² Ibid, 10.

recognized that play was an important part of development. But, according to Mintz, a sheltered childhood, which became more appealing to working class and farm families, required cultural commitment and economic resources.¹⁴³ Labor unions began to demand a “family wage” which would allow the male breadwinner to be the sole support of his family and in rural areas, successful farmers started to replace children with hired laborers. It took an organized effort on the part of middle-class social reformers, mostly women, who demanded that the same model of childhood apply to all families regardless of class, ethnicity, and region.

Historians agree about what reforms took place. For the first time in American history, government took an active role in the welfare of children. Day care nurseries and kindergartens were established for working parents. The first compulsory school laws were passed and the curriculum was extensively revised. Science, history, and nature study were included and learning became more active and investigative. Playgrounds were established for urban kids in the hope of removing them from the streets. The extension of high school provided more hours in a child’s education and legislation was passed to control children’s labor. Infant mortality was reduced through aggressive public health measures.

The argument among historians is whether this organized effort was a humanitarian endeavor on the part of the reformers, or the product of selfish interest that would insure the continuation of their way of life. Furthermore, historians ask, how much power did the reformers have? David MacLeod says their interest in changing lives

¹⁴³ Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, 152-153.

descended from the practice of 19th century agencies that combined relief with moral policing.¹⁴⁴ Reformers presumed that a sheltered childhood was natural and normal for all children and often conceived of changes and improvements to children's lives more clearly than the children or parents themselves. In addition, reform usually came from outside of the group that was being reformed often where the concept of a "sheltered childhood" was contested. So, in reality, they had limited power to change lives.

Anthony Platt believes that the reformers were mostly women who were typically upper middle-class crusaders whose intent to improve lives was not a humanitarian effort, but rather, to protect their way of life that was threatened by increased industrialization, immigration, and urbanization.¹⁴⁵

In sympathy with the reformers, but acknowledging their ineffectiveness, David Nasaw states that the reformers' goal was not to save children from physical danger, but rather to save them from too much freedom.¹⁴⁶ He treats the reformers with consideration but acknowledges that the children of the working poor were shrewd, street wise, and far more capable of living within their environment than the reformers realized. LeRoy Ashby states that overall, the Progressive Era was one of the most beneficial periods in American history for dependent and neglected children, although aid was offered without

¹⁴⁴ Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 27-29.

¹⁴⁵ Anthony Platt, *The Child Savers, The Invention of Delinquency* (Chicago: Chicago Press, 1969), 83.

¹⁴⁶ David Nasaw, *Children of the City, At Work and At Play* (New York: Anchor Press, 1985), 140.

assurance and under abundant supervision.¹⁴⁷ Ambiguity is the term Mintz uses to describe the efforts of the child savers as they tried to protect children from the dangers of society and protect society from dangerous children.¹⁴⁸ They were guilty of paternalism, class and racial bias, xenophobia, and double standards regarding gender issues. Reformers were willing to break up families for the good of the children yet isolated these children in repressive environments far away from kin. But, as Mintz continues, “one must balance the myopia of the reformers with their major achievement: a sustained public commitment to children’s welfare.”¹⁴⁹

In the colonial era, the community played a large part in shaping the moral values of children. This was a task that involved an expanding network of parents, kin, neighbors, church, and state. Families were subordinate to communities, were expected to contribute to the well being of their communities by keeping order in their families, and communities in return were expected to support the family’s endeavors. In the Progressive Era, family life had changed dramatically which included a change in the relationship to community.

As Mintz explains, by the beginning of the 20th century, the American middle-class had been relieved of many traditional economic, educational, and welfare functions which families previously had handled with support from the community.¹⁵⁰ While specialists and institutions now assumed these functions, family life did not become

¹⁴⁷ LeRoy Ashby, *Endangered Children, Dependency, Neglect and Abuse in American History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), 98.

¹⁴⁸ Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, 155.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Mintz and Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions*, 107-120.

easier. Parents were responsible for providing not only economic and environmental stability, but also fulfilling the emotional and psychological needs of family members. Realizing that families needed help, specialists such as educators, psychiatrists, social workers, artists, sociologists, and lawmakers initiated a variety of reforms to help the family. Government institutions, social welfare agencies, and schools had assumed community roles. As Tiffin explains, this also included aid to neglected and abused children.¹⁵¹ By 1900, there were over two hundred organizations that were concerned with child neglect, with probably the most famous being the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, (SPCC). Tiffin is quick to point out that most of the children who benefited from welfare organizations were exclusively children of working-class families.¹⁵²

Lasch however, claims that public policy which was designed to help families contributed to the deterioration of domestic life.¹⁵³ He explains that policy makers saw families, especially immigrant families who preserved their traditions, religions, and values, impeded American social progress. Thus, efforts were made to transfer the socializing functions from the family to the schools and other social agencies. This deprived the parents of practical experience and brought domestic life under the growing domination of outside experts, which in turn weakened parents' confidence and limited their practical experience that led to further deterioration.

¹⁵¹ Tiffin, *In Whose Best Interest?*, 40-41.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World*, 13-14, 171-172.

The creation of social centers within school buildings in both rural and city neighborhoods may have been one of the agencies to which Lasch referred. These centers were created to provide a wide variety of activity for the community. Community, as described by Edward W. Stevens, was synonymous with neighborhood and the concept of neighborhood was that of a family enlarged.¹⁵⁴ Stevens continues that because these centers arose from the idea of “social efficiency,” they became locations for social control that included efforts to restore family unity and provide proper use of leisure time. Center activities included clubs, social events, concerts, lectures, civic organizations, and they also served as polling places, centers for political rallies and Americanization institutions.

Community played a vital role in the colonial era in shaping the moral values of children. In the Progressive Era, despite the creation of social centers, discipline and child rearing was largely left to parents.

Discipline and Child Rearing in the Progressive Era

Colonial childrearing focused on moral development, physical survival, and obedience to patriarchal authority. With the advent of child psychology as an academic discipline by the end of the 19th century, Mintz explains that such emphasis on character development was replaced with “scientific mothering.”¹⁵⁵ This evolved from the “Child Study” movement, which was institutionalized by educators, physicians, and psychologists, which recognized developmental stages and set norms for weight, size, and

¹⁵⁴ Edward W. Stevens, “Social Centers, Politics and Social Efficiency in the Progressive Era”, *History of Education Quarterly*, 12, no. 1, (Spring, 1972).

¹⁵⁵ Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, 189.

cognitive development. In turn, these new scientific findings caused major changes in the way children were raised. As Mintz and Kellogg explain, proponents of “scientific mothering” believed children were not passive creatures waiting for their characters to be molded.¹⁵⁶ Rather, they saw children as active entities with special needs requiring special nurture. Therefore parents’ responsibility was to furnish stimuli and cues that would encourage proper growth and development. According to Mintz, the anthropologist, Margaret Mead attacked the child study movement because it downplayed the importance of cultural conditioning in the role of childrearing.¹⁵⁷

Childrearing advice focused on development of self-discipline and regularity of habits. Many writers published advice manuals that discouraged mothers from spoiling their infants by adopting strict feeding, sleeping, and toileting schedules. Mintz reports that the demand for regularity and conformity was strong.¹⁵⁸

Diane Richardson gives possible reasons as to why parents were so willing to accept this new method of mothering.¹⁵⁹ One reason was that science provided answers to the physical survival of children and infant mortality rates were decreasing. Another reason was the increasing emphasis on the change in women’s role from wives to mothers who were now seen as “saviors of the race”, charged with raising the future generation and the hope of society. Because this was such an important task, proper methods of infant care needed to be provided by experts with scientific knowledge. This made the

¹⁵⁶ Mintz and Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions*, 121.

¹⁵⁷ Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, 189-190.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 122.

¹⁵⁹ Diane Richardson, *Women, Motherhood and Childrearing* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), 30-31, 37.

role of mothering even more demanding because now they were responsible for their child's psychological development.

However, as Macleod points out, this scientific prescriptive method of childrearing was basically a class privilege because it required prolonging the stages of infancy and adolescence for richer development.¹⁶⁰ Poorer children often dropped out of school and entered the work force at a young age, unable to enjoy the experiences of a middle class adolescent. Richardson agrees by acknowledging that working-class women had fewer resources to meet the high standards, especially in terms of time, energy and finances.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, Macleod explains that child welfare reformers insisted that immigrant tenement families discontinue feeding on demand, swaddling, thumb sucking, pacifiers, and attention to crying—practices which had worked well for families living so close together.¹⁶² Such advice required middle-class spaciousness, since a baby needed a room to itself in order to sleep and cry undisturbed.

Some historians note that the definition of fatherhood narrowed during the Progressive Era. Mintz and Kellogg explain that women became wholly responsible for organizing and running the household, arranging the social life for the family, and caring for and disciplining the children.¹⁶³ The father's role shifted from an involved, authoritarian figure to a breadwinner. This was due to longer commute times that meant less time at home, and increased male resistance to traditional domestic responsibilities.

¹⁶⁰ MacLeod, *The Age of the Child*, 25.

¹⁶¹ Richardson, *Women, Motherhood and Childrearing*, 37.

¹⁶² MacLeod, *The Age of the Child*, 50.

¹⁶³ Mintz, Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions*, 117.

Historian Robert Griswold notes that the time men spent with wives and children was considered to be a “gift, and not a shared assumption of child rearing.”¹⁶⁴ MacCleod agrees that some fathers were distant, but on the other hand, he claims that the stereotype of the father as being simply a breadwinner is overstated.¹⁶⁵ Many adults remember being close to their fathers and fathers were able to give affection, intermittent attention, and furnish additional discipline.

Rising incomes, reduced stresses on parents, and recognition that mothers were the primary disciplinarians, legitimized lighter punishments. This applied especially to mainstream Protestant families. Outside of the mainstream, harsher traditions remained. Macleod argues that there is enough evidence to suggest that poor children received harsh treatment probably stemming from more immediate stresses within the family.¹⁶⁶ Linda Pollock explains that there has always been an enormous variation in the strictness of discipline imposed by parents of all classes and there is no century that was notably cruel or kind.¹⁶⁷ She explains that in the Progressive Era, discipline arose from parents’ attempts to control their children’s behavior in order to make them socially acceptable. Macleod asserts that despite the availability of published advice on discipline, parents diverged from this advice usually toward greater strictness.¹⁶⁸ Based on interviews with people who were children in 1910, Macleod discovered that harsh punishment was less

¹⁶⁴ Robert L. Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993) 6.

¹⁶⁵ Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 62.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 55-57.

¹⁶⁷ Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, 144, 202.

¹⁶⁸ Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 55-57.

severe when both parents shared discipline. However, mothers were the primary disciplinarians. When fathers did step in, they were more than likely to inflict severe punishment.¹⁶⁹ Children who worked were also controlled and punished by adults other than their parents.

Children's Work in the Progressive Era

Before the 19th century, children worked within their family or as an apprentice with another family, which gave them training in a skilled trade. With the rise of urban centers and industrialization, the world of work for children changed dramatically. As Mintz illustrates, children worked because their earnings were essential to their family's standard of living.¹⁷⁰

Viviana Zelizer claims that the 1900, U.S. Census showed one child out of six between the ages of ten and fifteen was gainfully employed.¹⁷¹ She claims, however, that this was underestimated because it did not include children under ten and other children helped their parents in sweatshops and on farms, before or after school. Working-class parents sent their children to work in mines, mills, factories, and in rural areas on farms which was the oldest type of child labor. As West illustrates, although middle class children were working less and contributing less to the family income, they too took on household chores and extra jobs to make money for themselves.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 60.

¹⁷⁰ Mintz and Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions*, 90.

¹⁷¹ Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*, 56.

¹⁷² West, *Growing Up in the Twentieth Century*, 32.

During the Progressive Era, public concern focused on the issue of child labor. Historians have different opinions about why this became a concern. Mintz explains that it was the increasing contrast between middle class and lower class childhoods, organized labor's fear that children were taking jobs away from adults, and the growing idea that all children were entitled to a sheltered childhood, devoted to education and play.¹⁷³ Macleod asserts that progressive reformers saw the child labor issue as a direct conflict between work and schooling.¹⁷⁴ Lasch sees the concern arising from Progressive Era reformers who were intent on removing children from family influence, particularly immigrant families, by removing them from the work force and enrolling them "under the benign influence of state and school."¹⁷⁵

Zelizer argues that the battle to remove children from the labor force was a difficult, prolonged struggle that lasted fifty years, from the 1870s to the 1930s.¹⁷⁶ The argument was not over whether children should work—even the most ardent child labor reformers were unwilling to condemn all types of child work - but instead about what constituted acceptable work for children. Child labor law reformers, explains Mintz, were in strong opposition to child labor in factories, mines, and street trades, but were not very vocal about farm labor, which was the single largest employer of children.¹⁷⁷ Reformers viewed farm work as valuable in building moral character. They also did not oppose part-time teen-age employment in service jobs such as delivery boys, soda jerks, or store

¹⁷³ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 181.

¹⁷⁴ Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 101.

¹⁷⁵ Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World*, 13.

¹⁷⁶ Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*, 57.

¹⁷⁷ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 181.

clerks. West notes that in 1900, even though only 16 percent of child workers were in manufacturing jobs, reformers placed a “disproportionate concern” on those jobs because the work was frequently difficult and dangerous.¹⁷⁸

Between 1900 and 1920, the amount of children working full time declined, but not, as West explains, because of legal campaigns, legislation, or compulsory school laws. Instead, the decline was due to shrinking farm population, decreasing birthrates, rising incomes that had reduced pressure on families, and the widespread belief that children were precious beings.¹⁷⁹ However, Zelizer contends that compulsory school legislation did push many children out of the labor force and into schools.¹⁸⁰ But this legislation was not the result of reformers, but rather the result of economic conditions in the country. Rising real incomes reduced the need for children’s wages, along with an increased availability of adult immigrant workers, and an increase in new technology, which usurped some children’s jobs. Less time at work meant more time for play.

Children’s Play and Clothing in the Progressive Era

According to David Nasaw, city children at the turn of the 20th century had more unstructured and had more unsupervised free time than generations before or after.¹⁸¹ On the street, which was their play area, children shared the space with adults, but they inhabited a play world that was separate from the adult world. Their play was controlled by a foundation of rules for each game that could be adapted but could not be ignored.

¹⁷⁸ Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 111.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 117.

¹⁸⁰ Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*, 63.

¹⁸¹ Nasaw, *Children of the City*, 24-29.

Older children took on the responsibility of teaching new children how to play the games. In the streets, children of different ethnic, language, racial, and religious groups played together, although little children were not allowed to participate in the games and girls usually played on the stoops as they babysat their younger brothers or sisters. MacLeod states that the Progressive Era saw a “modest convergence as girls’ play drew closer to boys’”.¹⁸²

Elliott West found that children in small towns and on farms played differently than children in the city.¹⁸³ On farms and ranches, play centered around horses, mules, and domesticated animals. Children enjoyed free time by roaming the countryside on their horses. However, MacLeod asserts that farm children lacked very little time for play or choice of companions because farm work took up the majority of time on weekdays.¹⁸⁴ On the weekends, children would accompany their parents to social functions such as country-dances, church socials, and Grange meetings. Because of these restrictions on their free time, the schoolyard became a central component in rural play. Small town children had fewer chores than farm children and boys were able to escape into nearby woods for swimming, fishing, and sledding in the winter. Girls stayed close to home and played games that imitated the adult world using dolls to play house and school.

Yet despite the differences in play between city kids and rural kids, there were similarities. Elliott West explains that similar games were played in city streets and in rural schoolyards throughout the country and that these “childhood games were among the

¹⁸² Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 120.

¹⁸³ West, *Growing Up In the Twentieth Century*, 20.

¹⁸⁴ MacLeod, *The Age of the Child*, 120-123.

most deeply rooted and widely spread features of national life.”¹⁸⁵ These games all were physical, required a good deal of room, usually required little or no equipment, and had simple rules. Some of these games included, *Fox and Geese*, *Ante Over* and *Run Sheep Run*. Playing these games provided a way for children to build and maintain their own communities.

Another form of entertainment that became widespread was the nickel movie enjoyed by children throughout the country. MacLeod states that in 1905 movie houses sprung up in urban centers, and that by 1908 8,000 to 10,000 operated nationwide in both large cities and small towns, with the core audience being young children.¹⁸⁶

Much like critics of television and movies today, reformers were alarmed by the things to which children were being exposed. MacLeod claims that reformers were concerned about the adult sexuality portrayed in the movies, which would “breach children’s wholesome ignorance.”¹⁸⁷ West explains that reformers not only objected to the content of the movies, but also objected to the theaters themselves where children gathered in dark places, learned foul language, and dangerous habits, and could be tempted sexually.¹⁸⁸

In an attempt to save children from city streets and provide them with alternative play choices, reformers built supervised playgrounds and opened schoolyards for after-school activities. The intention was to teach children to play properly, submit their will to

¹⁸⁵ West, *Growing Up in the Twentieth Century*, 21.

¹⁸⁶ MacLeod, *The Age of the Child*, 130.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁸⁸ West, *Growing Up in the Twentieth Century*, 24.

the welfare of the team, follow orders and established rules, and practice self-control. According to Nasaw, these playgrounds were not well received by children.¹⁸⁹ They enjoyed using the equipment but resented the adult supervision that came along with it. And since the city block was the basic unit of social organization for city kids, geography, not ethnicity, race, or religion determined membership. Therefore, children were reluctant to attend any playground outside their turf. Dominick Cavallo maintains that social reformers' efforts to provide playgrounds for children was really an effort to transfer control of children's play from families to the state and in the end, organized playgrounds never attracted enough children to make an impact on personality and behavior.¹⁹⁰

The recognition that play was important led to changes in children's clothing, although not necessarily in infant clothing. As in the Colonial Era, according to Macleod, children's clothing at the turn of the century was androgynous for the first years of life, but began to distinguish gender at an earlier age.¹⁹¹ Infants wore long gowns, moving into ankle length dresses at six months of age. White was the universal color for infants, pastels for toddlers with pink and blue being interchangeable. With the realization that children needed to play, light, free-moving play clothes began to appear. One-piece, gender neutral, loose fitting suits called "rompers" became widely available for toddlers and small children, and for older children, there were overalls.

¹⁸⁹ Nasaw, *Children of the City*, 32, 36.

¹⁹⁰ Dominick Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880-1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), xi, 15, 46.

¹⁹¹ Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 63-64.

A growing number of male leaders in communities worried about the “gender blurring” and feminization that was happening in homes, schools, and churches. As a result, boys began dressing in knee pants as young as three. Similar to girls in the colonial era, dresses linked childhood and womanhood, whereas pants for boys signified readiness to venture outside the home. Macleod found that after early childhood, girls who had been wearing gender neutral clothing had to return to skirts and dresses, which made dresses even more definite gender markers.¹⁹² Estelle Ansley Worrell agrees with Macleod as she notes that boys asserted their maleness through their clothes at a younger age.¹⁹³ But she credits the advent of rubber diaper covers as being responsible for this change because, for the first time, small boys could wear trousers before they were toilet trained. And since they were wearing trousers, the rest of their clothing became more masculine.

According to Macleod, middle and upper-class families had more money to spend on clothes but many families used clothing to train children in frugality.¹⁹⁴ Girls’ clothes were mostly made and refurbished, which meant that many wore hand-me-downs. Poorer children wore adult castoffs. And even with the rise of mail order through Sears Roebuck, cautious mothers ordered clothes too large, taking the delight out of receiving new clothes. In middle class families, clothes were well taken care of and children would change out of Sunday clothes or school clothes into older worn out play clothes on a daily basis.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Estelle Ansley Worrell, *Children’s Costume in America, 1607-1910* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1980), 193.

¹⁹⁴ Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 19-20.

Comfortable, appropriate clothing, which facilitated active play, may have contributed to the health of the child.

Children's Health in the Progressive Era

At the turn of the century, the mortality rate for infants and children was high. Betty Farrell notes that 18 percent of children died before reaching the age of five with the rates being highest among African American children, children living in cities, and children of immigrants.¹⁹⁵ The leading causes of death were respiratory diseases, infectious diseases, and gastrointestinal diseases. West explains that social class, poverty, and ethnicity affected the health of children.¹⁹⁶ African American and Native American children who lived in rural areas could expect one out of every three children to die before he or she was old enough to go to school. Additionally, regardless of where one lived, poor infants were more likely to suffer ill health than children of middle-class or affluent families. The causes were due to poor prenatal care, the ill health of the mother, no access to medical advice, inadequate diets, and exhausted, overworked mothers. West further explains that children were in danger because medical authorities were ignorant about the causes, nature, and treatments of these diseases, and millions of Americans had no access to licensed doctors.¹⁹⁷ Macleod claims that death threatened every family regardless of class although country children were safer than city children.¹⁹⁸ They had the opportunity to breast feed for longer periods of time, had a more varied diet, and were more isolated

¹⁹⁵ Farrell, *Family*, 34.

¹⁹⁶ West, *Growing Up in the Twentieth Century America*, 54-55, 57, 60.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. 55.

¹⁹⁸ Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 39-40.

from some germs because of the distance between farm families. Urban life was more dangerous because there was more poverty, crowding, and poor nutrition. These conditions especially affected immigrants who lived in crowded tenements.

Macleod found that between 1890 and 1920 children's chances of survival improved.¹⁹⁹ He notes that initially, reform efforts concentrated on cleaning up the urban environment, then gradually focused on infant feeding, and by 1910, moved on to educating mothers. While significant funding was spent on sewage and clean water projects, studies showed that there was no large reduction in infant mortality as a result of these efforts.²⁰⁰ Health advocates then turned to measures that directly affected infants which included encouragement of breast feeding, boiling or pasteurizing milk, and sterilizing bottles and nipples. Eventually commercial pasteurizing became widespread. Privately funded milk stations urged mothers to breastfeed, gave instructions on sanitary bottle-feeding, and provided nurses to teach home care. The Children's Bureau, a federally funded agency, also provided educational programs for mothers. Doctors were little help in treating or curing diseases, but they provided dietary and preventative advice. Macleod continues that all of these preventative measures are the most plausible explanation for the decrease in infant mortality.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 41-45.

²⁰⁰ "Public Health Measures and Mortality in U.S. Cities in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Human Ecology* 6 (1978): 41; K. Celeste Gaspari and Arthur G. Woolf, "Income, Public Works, and Mortality in Early Twentieth-Century American Cities," *Journal of Economic History* 45 (1985): 355-359.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

In slight disagreement, West contends that a broader understanding of the nature of diseases helped in the battle to reduce infant mortality.²⁰² By 1890, scientists with the advent of germ therapy had identified the germs that caused cholera, pneumonia, diphtheria, tuberculosis, typhoid and several others. The discovery of the serum that could prevent diphtheria was a major breakthrough. Families began to gain a better understanding about how diseases happen and began to focus more on hygiene and personal habits. But West notes that the most important factor in decreasing infant mortality was “the widespread acknowledgement that a child’s physical wellbeing was ultimately inseparable from the general quality of her or his life.”²⁰³ Another path to a child’s wellbeing was education.

Children’s Education in the Progressive Era

In the Colonial Era, children were mostly educated in their homes with the specific purpose of learning to read the Bible so that their souls would be saved. In the Progressive Era, most historians assert that the purpose of education was to prepare children to be productive and loyal citizens. In the words of progressive educator, John Dewey, “educate a child properly, and democracy will be assured.”²⁰⁴ In agreement, Betty Farrell explains that public education for all children was designed to promote the values and behavior needed to get along in an industrialist, capitalistic society.²⁰⁵

However, she continues, for middle-class children, it was assumed that schools would

²⁰² West, *Growing Up in Twentieth Century America*, 55-57.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁰⁴ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1910), 115.

²⁰⁵ Farrell, *Family*, 50.

simply supplement the values of the parents. For the children of the working-class and the poor, schools were “seen as the most effective means of wresting children away from lax supervision or bad influences of inadequate families and communities.”²⁰⁶ Nasaw also explains that schools were to prepare students for the future by educating, socializing, and Americanizing children, which included teaching manners and morals, citizenship duties, reading, writing, reciting, and arithmetic.²⁰⁷ For the working-class children, the goal was to take the child from the streets and the streets from the children.

With more emphasis on preparing the child for a place in the economy, Marvin Lazerson, in *Origins of the Urban School*, explains that after 1900, the schools major function was to fit the individual into the economy by teaching specific skills and behavior patterns that would produce better and more efficient workers and citizens.²⁰⁸ In disagreement, Katz argues that the driving force behind public education was middle-class anxiety, defined as fear of downward social mobility.²⁰⁹ He explains that the public school system existed to shape behavior and attitudes, alleviate social problems, and reinforce the social structure in an effort to control urban youth. Shaping moral character was a far greater concern than teaching cognitive skills.

Many educational reforms took place during this era. Tiffin explains that the purpose of educational reform was designed to produce industrious and cooperative

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Nasaw, *Children of the City*, 26.

²⁰⁸ Marvin Lazerson, *Origins of the Urban School: Public Education in Massachusetts, 1870-1915* (Cambridge: Mass, Harvard University Press, 1971), xi.

²⁰⁹ Michael B. Katz, “Education and Inequality: A Historical Perspective, in *Social History and Social Policy*,” eds., David J. Rothman and Stanton Wheeler, *Social History and Social Policy*, (New York: Academic Press, 1981), 81-84.

citizens of the future.²¹⁰ Furthermore, the area of education was an obvious example of the increasing entry of the state into the socialization of children. Progressive reformers pushed for improvements in public education and helped make school mandatory. Included in these reforms was the establishment of kindergartens and a massive expansion of high schools. Paul Violas, in *The Training of the Urban Working Class*, explains that in response to school reform, order and cooperation became the prime educational goals.²¹¹ As a result, seven educational innovations were put in place: compulsory school attendance, vocational training, vocational guidance, Americanization, play movement, extra curricular activities, and emergence of a professional school administration. All were designed to influence working-class children, because as Lasch explains, there was a belief among reformers that the family no longer provided for children's needs, which caused a breakdown in family morale.²¹² Schools were now charged with the responsibility of not only teaching knowledge, but also taking charge of the physical, mental, and social training of the child

Like children's play, school experience was diverse throughout the country. West, however, finds some general trends: more young people attended schools, the bureaucratic structure of schools expanded, and educators argued over the goals and methods of effective teaching. Schooling, he continues, "became one of the most common unifying

²¹⁰ Tiffin, *In Whose Best Interest?*, 282.

²¹¹ Paul Violas, *The Training of the Urban Working Class: A History of Twentieth Century American Education* (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Co., 1978), xii.

²¹² Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World*, 14.

experiences for American youth”²¹³ Macleod however argues that expansion of schools characterized the progressive era more than fundamental reform.²¹⁴ School attendance increased due mainly to more availability of schools, parents’ recognition that literacy was valuable, and declining employment of children. Surprisingly, he continues, mandatory attendance laws boosted enrollment by no more than two percent and universal enrollment occurred only within a narrow age range. By as late as 1920, only children from ages nine through thirteen maintained a ninety percent enrollment.²¹⁵ In other words, children got most of their education in elementary grades. West would agree with Macleod finding that by 1920, only 32 percent of children were enrolled in high schools, a figure that greatly increased from eight percent in 1900. He claims this was a dramatic development that showed a tendency of students to stay in school longer. Katz explains that this was one of the major accomplishments of public education.²¹⁶ By providing an institutional setting for adolescents of all social classes, it reduced massively, the problem of idle youth, and took kids off the street and out of the labor market.

In an effort to achieve efficiency in the schools, David B. Tyack states that business and professional elites turned the control of schools over to professional educators, which included university presidents, professors and progressive superintendents.²¹⁷ They, in turn, built up their own bureaucracies and made changes in

²¹³ West, *Growing Up In Twentieth Century America*, 42.

²¹⁴ MacLeod, *The Age of the Child*, 75-76.

²¹⁵ West, *Growing Up In Twentieth Century America*, 45.

²¹⁶ Katz, *Education and Inequality*, 88.

²¹⁷ David Tyack, *The One Best System, A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge: Mass., Harvard University Press, 1974) 30-32, 44-45.

the curriculum. The one-room schoolhouse was no longer considered effective and schools were organized into a system of grades through which children moved from year to year. Curriculum and testing became standardized. The disadvantages to this professionalized system, according to MacLeod, included regimenting teachers, cutting budgets, losing local autonomy that made it easier to categorize children, and assigning children to schools, which reinforced social inequality.²¹⁸ Ronald Cohen argues that most of the innovations were in the upper grades, denoting the growing concern for teenagers' present and future lives, particularly the children of the working class.²¹⁹ With this concern came the rise of vocational education. Mintz explains that vocational education came in response to the growing diversity of student enrollment but was introduced with great controversy.²²⁰ College educators wanted the curriculum to maintain a classical academic focus while public school educators called for a differentiated curriculum with tracks appropriate to students' abilities and career goals. This began an argument that continues on today.

Rural communities were encouraged to impose urban reform upon their schools. In 1913 half of the nation's public school students attended classes in one-room schoolhouses. West states that these were the "educational cornerstone in much of America during the earliest years of the century."²²¹ However, he continues, small rural

²¹⁸ MacLeod, *The Age of the Child*, 80.

²¹⁹ Ronald D. Cohen, "Child Saving and Progressivism, 1885-1915", eds. Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner, *American Childhood, a Research Guide and Historical Handbook*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985) 282-284.

²²⁰ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 197-198.

²²¹ West, *Growing Up in the Twentieth Century*, 49-51.

communities did not have the funding necessary to model their schools after the sprawling city schools designed by educational specialists. West views rural reform as a struggle between reformers and farmers—the farmers valued literacy, but had no desire to see schools take responsibility for their children’s socialization. Furthermore, they did not support consolidation of community schools because it would mean higher taxes and a long commute for children to get to and from school. Farmers, according to West, felt that schools had a certain function; to teach reading, writing, spelling and “figuring.”²²² Teaching children practical skills such as agriculture or domestic science caused resentment because of the implication that farmers were incompetent to teach their own children farming.

In summary, the Progressive Era was a time of major changes for children and society. Most historians agree that the two concepts of childhood rooted in the late 18th century continued into the 20th century. Children of middle-class and upper class families were “emotionally priceless” and were given a “sheltered childhood” free from labor and adult realities. Children of the working-class and poor families were “economically useful,” and were expected to work. However, there was a widespread belief that social order depended upon the care and protection of all children and as a result, government, for the first time took an active role in the welfare of children.

Arguments among historians revolve around the motivations of the reformers, those men and women who believed that every child had the right to a “sheltered childhood.” Some scholars say the reformers were selfishly protecting their own way of

²²² MacLeod, *The Age of the Child*, 86-88.

life, while others say the reformers were serving the best interests of the children. There are also varying views on discipline. With an increase in availability of childcare advice, some historians say parents became more strict while others say not necessarily so. There are also various interpretations among historians as to why society focused on child labor at the turn of the century. Some say organized labor was fearful that children were taking jobs from adults and that children were entitled to a labor free childhood. Others say society focused on the conflict between school and work, and still, others say the argument for society was over the definition of work for children. Finally, in this era historians debate the purpose of public education. Preparing children for a place in the economy was one interpretation while others say children needed to be educated in order to ensure democracy.

In the Colonial Era and the early 19th century, scholarly research mainly provides historical evidence for the lives of middle and upper class children. In the Progressive Era a wider scope of research is available that speaks not only for the wealthy and the middle class children, but also for the children of poor, working class, and immigrant families in both urban and rural settings. Less evidence was available for gender roles in all children. With the changing role of community, more historical research needs to be pursued on how such changes affected children's lives and about the extent of the influence of relatives, neighbors, and friends on children.

CONCLUSION

If one agrees with Karen Calvert that the concept of childhood is a social invention that is reinvented by every society and age, then the study of childhood through the ages encourages one to believe that childhood doesn't necessarily get better, it just gets different. West agrees that no matter what era, children and society cannot be understood apart from one another. Children are formed partly by their physical, cultural and emotional surroundings, which in turn are continually shaped and changed by children's choices and desires.²²³ The historical research herein illustrates this point.

It has only been since 1960 that historians have seriously studied the history of childhood. Initially there was much agreement among historians about various concepts of children's lives over time. However as more scholars become involved in the research and study of childhood, more disagreement emerges.

In the Colonial Era, most historians agree that the family was the fundamental, economic, political, and religious unit of society. Patriarchal control was the norm and children were expected to contribute to the economic survival of the family at an early age. They were also expected to embrace the prevailing moral and religious values of their community. The academic arguments center around the details of children's lives, such as severity of discipline, swaddling, reasons for "putting out" children, and whether or not children were really viewed as small adults.

²²³ Elliott West, *Growing Up in the Twentieth Century America*, xii.

By the beginning of the 19th century, most scholars agree that the concept of childhood was changing. Children largely were viewed as innocent, not sinful, and “nurture” not “will-breaking” became the accepted ideal in parenting. Childish behavior was accepted and development of personality was considered important. One academic controversy in this era centers around the severity of the methods of discipline. Some scholars assert that since there was an increased focus on the development of children, parents increased the severity of their discipline. Historians also disagree as to the reason for the demise of apprenticeships and argue about the motivation of parents to educate their children.

In the Progressive Era, most historians agree that childhood had become more distinct from adulthood, yet at the same time more diverse based on class, race, region, ethnicity, and gender. Some children continued to contribute to the family economic survival, while a number of children were seen as “emotionally priceless,” and lived within a sheltered childhood. A growing number of children were allowed to play and to be passive. Government took a far more active role in children’s lives. The scholarly disagreement for this era revolves around the intent of the middle class reformers who wanted to impose their ideal of childhood on every family and the effects of their reforms. Some scholars display admiration and sympathy for the reformers, while others say they only had selfish intentions. Some scholars say the reforms changed children’s lives for the better, while others say it adversely affected family life, particularly for the lower class.

Overall, changing concepts in childhood transformed aspects of children’s lives. Did this make life less distressing for children? In some areas, particularly those affected

by advancements in medical science, reform brought benefits to children's health and improved mortality rates; but in other areas, the benefits are not so clear. In each era, there were advantages and disadvantages to many of the changes in children's lives.

Colonial children had opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways to their community through family work and apprenticeships. The advantage was that it kept the community thriving and maintained cultural values. The disadvantage was that it required strict discipline with a very structured, ordered life, requiring children to take on adult responsibilities at an early age. Education beyond basic reading and writing was only available to the upper class families who sent their children to universities.

In the early 19th century, shifts occurred in the belief in the nature of childhood, particularly for middle-class children, and laid the foundation for the idea of a sheltered childhood in the Progressive Era. The advantage for children was the new recognition that they had their own needs and interests, and that they needed to be nurtured, which in turn made a child's place in the family more special. The disadvantage was that the relationship of children to their community became less important. Additionally, with more focus on children's development, some scholars argue that severe methods of child rearing did not change.

With the growth of the nation, Progressive Era childhood became more diverse depending upon class, race, gender, ethnicity, and region. The middle class ideal of a "sheltered childhood" became the norm and spread to lower-class families. The advantages were that school became compulsory, child labor was restricted, medical science advanced children's health, and play was encouraged. The disadvantage was that

the children had fewer socially valued ways to contribute to family wellbeing and community life. In addition, the idea of a “sheltered childhood” required cultural commitment and economic resources which made it difficult, if not impossible, to extend to all children.

According to Mintz, childhood in America has been redefined over the years as a special period in life that requires affection, freedom from work and separation from the adult world.²²⁴ However, common to all eras, is the fact that children were subjected to the pressures and demands of society. In all eras, not all children were well cared for. In all eras not all children were treated equally. This continues to hold true for children in America today.

²²⁴ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 383.

FIRST GRADE LESSON PLAN

Introduction

In order to set the stage for future years of historical education, first graders must understand that history is the story of continuity and change over time. Since the study of childhood is that story, of continuity and change over time, it is an excellent topic to illustrate this concept. Additionally, by centering lessons around children's lives, it makes the past come alive for children today. They recognize commonalities within their own lives and make the connection that all people have their own place in time.

In the California State Standards, the overall theme for first grade is "A child's place in time and space." This lesson plan speaks to that theme, but more specifically, it will illustrate that in children's lives, some things stay the same over time and some things change. Using the historiographical information in this thesis, teachers can help students compare and contrast children's lives in the Colonial Era with those of the Progressive Era in terms of clothes, play, work, education, and health. The following lessons are designed to instruct students on how children lived "long, long ago," (Colonial Era) and "long ago," (Progressive Era). Students compare and contrast various aspects of children's lives and by the end of the unit will be able to address this theme which is in the form of a focus question; how do children's lives change and stay the same over time?

According to the National Council For History Education, children who learn within an historical context early on have a significant advantage over children who do

not because they have learned to weigh evidence, identify causes and consequences, develop historical empathy, and separate the important from the unimportant.²²⁵ This unit will begin to build historical understanding and perspectives for first grade students and will help them begin to question that which we all seek answers to: what is the story of mankind and what is the story of my time?

It should take approximately three to four weeks to teach this lesson, depending on how much one wishes to extend each of the six topics: setting the stage for “long, long ago” and “long ago,” clothes, play, work, education and health. The conclusion includes a review lesson and assessment.

The challenge in teaching history to six and seven year olds is working with their developing sense of time. Using dates such as “1667” is meaningless to a first grade student. When teaching chronology, this lesson utilizes timelines with visual cues and will incorporate time language. “Long, long ago” or “300 years ago,” will refer to the Colonial Era. “Long ago” or “100 years ago” will refer to the Progressive Era. The past will also be brought alive by the use of source documents such as photographs, portraits, family records, and literature. All herein referred to are available online.

Prior Content Knowledge and Skills

Ideally, this unit should be taught late in the year when a first grade student’s sense of time is slightly more sophisticated. They should have some sense of the

²²⁵ National Council for History Education, Inc., *Building a History-Centered Curriculum for Kindergarten through Grade Four, Guidelines for Using Themes and Selecting Content*, (National Council for History Education: Westlake, Ohio, 2000).

significance of the past, hopefully developed through other history lessons that were taught prior to this unit. It would be helpful if students are familiar with the concept that people lived many years ago and they should have some knowledge of other communities from an earlier era such as the Wampanoags or the Pilgrims. Students should know how to put things in sequential order. They should know what a Venn diagram is and be familiar with the skill of comparing and contrasting. Familiarity and practice with time lines would also be helpful.

Lesson Hook

Materials

- Book; *Little House, Her-story*, Virginia Lee Burton²²⁶
- Long strip of white butcher paper, (approximately 10 ft. x 14in.),

In order for students to compare children of one era to children of another, they need to understand the concept of change. To introduce students to the concept of change over time, read the classic story, *Little House, Her-story*, by Virginia Lee Burton. This picture book describes a “little house” that stands and watches as things change around her. First the seasons change and then the surroundings change. The book shows the transformation of the “little house” from standing alone in the country to being surrounded by a huge city. This story will open up discussion about change over time and how it is measured and noticed. The culminating activity will engage all students in making a timeline of the “little house’s” life.

²²⁶ Virginia Lee Burton, *Little House, Her-story*, (New York: Puffin, 1993).

Teaching activities will proceed as follows. Show students the cover of the book and explain that the word “her-story” comes from the word “history” which means a story of things that happen over time. Have students make predictions about what they think will happen to the house over time. Explain that there will be many examples of change in this story.

Read the story and ask the following questions: What changes took place around the Little House? Does the Little House notice the changes? What caused the changes? Did these changes take place over minutes, days, or years? How many years? What do we use to measure changes in time in a day? (clock) In a year? (calendar) Over many years? (histories, pictures, photographs)

Activity Little House Time line. Explain to students that they will be making a time line showing changes the Little House went through. Prepare a long piece of white butcher paper, approximately ten feet long (or longer, depending on your class size) by 14 inches high. Go back through the story and have each student draw a picture of the Little House at different times in her life. Have the students glue the pictures onto the butcher paper in the order that changes occurred. Above each picture have the students add a thinking cloud with words they think the Little House would be saying to herself about all the changes.

Topic One: Setting the Stage for “Long, Long Ago” and “Long Ago”

Materials

- Prepare for each student a “History Journal” of approximately 10 to 12 pages of blank or lined paper. They will use this journal to write facts and draw images of children’s lives from the past.
- Computer with online capability -- all the photographs and portraits used in this lesson will be accessed online.
- Chart paper

Teacher Preparation

In the classroom set up a time line using the words, “Long, Long Ago, 300 Years ago” and “Long Ago, 100 Years Ago” As you proceed through the unit, add photographs appropriate to each era in the time line so that students will be able to visually experience change through time.

You will need to collect an assortment of images from the Colonial Era and the Progressive Era. These images can be found at the following sites:

- *Google Images*²²⁷
- *Online Archive of California*²²⁸
- *Library of Congress, American Memory*²²⁹

²²⁷ *Google Images* < <http://www.google.com/imghp?hl=en&tab=wi&q=> > (4 March 2006).

²²⁸ Regents of the University of California, “Images,” in *Online Archive of California*, (2006), < <http://oac.cdlib.org/search.image.html> > (3 March, 2006).

²²⁹ “American Memory,” in *Library of Congress*, <<http://www.loc.gov/index.html>> (3 March 2006).

- *Flag Day Festival*²³⁰

The following types of images are suggested. You will want to play and/or sing the two songs.

Colonial Era

Horse and carriage

Mayflower

Pen and Quill

13 star American Flag, 1777

Candle

Song: - *Yankee Doodle*

Progressive Era

Car

Titanic

Fountain pen

46 star American Flag, 1908

Light bulb

Song: - *America the Beautiful*

This lesson will build upon the concept of change through time by focusing on two particular time periods in the past. By showing images from the Colonial period and the Progressive Era, children will imagine those times and realize that change occurs. For example, show a picture of transportation in Colonial times and then show a picture of transportation in the Progressive Era. After the lesson, place these images onto a timeline. Students will then have a sense of the chronology and will be ready to learn more about the lives of children in the associated eras.

Explain to students they will see pictures of things from the past. Show the images in a random order. Now explain that some of these images are from “long, long ago,” (300 years ago), and some are from “long ago,” (100 years ago). Let’s look at them

²³⁰ “Flag Picture Gallery,” in *Flag Day Festival*
<http://www.flagday.com/history/picture_gallery/flag_picture_gallery.shtml> (17 March 2006).

again and see if we can sort them into the right time frame. Have a chart on the board with the two categories labeled: “Long, Long Ago,” and “Long Ago.” As you hold up each picture, have students decide where each image belongs. If necessary, guide the choice with simple explanations.

When the images are secured to the chart, ask the following questions: Name some things that have changed? What do you think was the most important change? Did all these changes make life easier? Why? Can you think of anything (that is not on the chart), that may not have changed?

Explain that they will be learning about children who lived in these two periods of history. They will learn how children’s lives changed and how children’s lives stayed the same over time. Elicit questions they might want to know about children from the past. Record these questions on chart paper and refer to them throughout the unit.

Topic Two: Children’s Clothes

Materials

- Books: *If You Grew Up With George Washington*²³¹
*If You Lived in Williamsburg in Colonial Days*²³²
- Chart Paper
- Venn diagram drawn on chart paper
- Images from various web sites as noted below.

²³¹ Ruth Gross Belov, ...*If You Grew Up With George Washington*, (Scholastic, Inc.: New York, 1982).

²³² Barbara Brenner, *If You Lived in Williamsburg in Colonial Days*, (New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2000).

Teacher Preparation

Access the following web sites for pictures and portraits for Day One:

- *Colonial Williamsburg*²³³
Portrait of Two Children, artist: Joseph Badger, Boston, Mass. 1755-1760.
- *Kent State University Museum*²³⁴
 Picture of a child's stay.
 Picture of a "boy's printed cotton dress," 1808
- *Colonial Williamsburg*²³⁵
 Picture of a child's shoes: 1730-1750
- *Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery*²³⁶
 Baby in swaddling
- *Worcester Art Museum*²³⁷

Portrait of *Elizabeth Clarke Freake and Baby Mary*

- *DeYoung Museum*²³⁸

²³³ Baumgarten, Linda, "Children's Clothing," in *Colonial Williamsburg*, <<http://www.history.org/history/clothing/children/child03.cfm>>, (3 March 2006).

²³⁴ Bissonnette, Anne, "Centuries of Childhood," in *Kent State University Museum*, " <<http://dept.kent.edu/museum/exhibit/kids/1750.htm>> (3 March 2006).

²³⁵ Baumgarten, Linda, "Children's Clothing," in *Colonial Williamsburg*, <<http://www.history.org/history/clothing/children/child05.cfm>> (4 March 2006)

²³⁶ "Blakesley Hall in Tudor Times: Robert," in *Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery*, <http://www.schoolsliaison.org.uk/2004/blakesley/resources/tudor_robert.htm> (4 March 2006).

²³⁷ "Unidentified artist Elizabeth Clarke Freake (Mrs. John Freake) and Baby Mary, about 1671 and 1674" in *Worcester Art Museum*, <http://www.worcesterart.org/Collection/Early_American/Artists/unidentified_17th/elizabeth_f/discussion.html> (4 March 2006).

Portrait of *Mason Children: David, Joanna and Abigail*, artist: Freake-Gibbs, 1670

Access the following sites for portraits and photographs for Day Two:

- *National Gallery of Art*²³⁹
Child in Straw Hat and Children Playing on a Beach, by Mary Cassatt
- *Garden of Praise*²⁴⁰
The Giant, by N.C. Wyeth (children in play clothes)
- *Online Archive of California*²⁴¹
Photograph of *Emrich Lorenz Hein Children* (includes picture of a baby boy in a dress)
- *Online Archive of California*²⁴² Photograph of First Grade Class, 1898

Since clothes are very important to children today, this is an excellent topic to help students make an immediate connection with children of the past. Students today

²³⁸ “Mason Children: David, Joanna and Abigail,” in *Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, the De Young*, <<http://www.thinker.org/fam/education/publications/guide-american/slide-1.html>> (4 March 2006).

²³⁹ “Mary Cassatt, American, 1844-1926,” in *National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.*, <<http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/psearch?Request=S&Name=Cassatt&Title=>>> (4 March 2006).

²⁴⁰ “*Giant*, by Newell Convers, (N.C.) Wyeth 1882-1945” in *Garden of Praise*, <<http://www.gardenofpraise.com/art23.htm>> (4 March 2006).

²⁴¹ Regents of the University of California, “Images,” in *Online Archive of California*, <<http://oac.cdlib.org/search.image.html>> (3 March, 2006). Search using the exact words, “Emrich Lorenz Hein Children.”

²⁴² Regents of the University of California, “Images,” in *Online Archive of California*, <<http://oac.cdlib.org/search.image.html>> (3 March, 2006). Search using the exact words, “Anaheim Central School” scroll down to picture number 3, “First Grade Class.”

can appreciate what is the same and be amazed at what is different. Once their curiosity is piqued, they will be ready to move on to other areas of childhood. By the end of this lesson students will understand that clothes in the Colonial Era were restrictive, tight, and in the early years of a child's life, not gender specific. In the Progressive Era, clothes were less restrictive and more suitable for active play. Infant boys and girls still wore similar clothes.

Background Information

Clothing reveals many things about the lives of people both today and in the past. Clothing can speak of wealth, status, occupation, cultural tastes, and social cohesiveness. By exploring the clothes worn in the past, we can better understand who the people were. Knowing that antique clothing touched the bodies of people in the past makes it an intimately human connection between past and present. The clothes that will be examined in this lesson are primarily clothes worn by middle to upper class Anglo American Colonists, such as the Puritans, who generally adhered to English styles.

The Puritans were constantly guiding children to become more like adults so that children could move towards God and take their place in the divine order of the universe. These efforts to bring children into an adult world at an early age can be seen in their clothing, beginning with the swaddling of babies. Swaddling immobilized the infant, kept the body straight and prevented the infant from crawling, which was considered a "bestial activity." When the baby was removed from swaddling, they wore stays, which

kept their posture upright. At that point, both boys and girls were dressed in long gowns, which also prevented crawling.²⁴³

When infants started walking, hemlines on the gowns were shortened. Both boys and girls wore the same garments including stays that molded their torsos in similar fashion. It is difficult for us to determine gender from paintings and prints from the 17th and 18th century because both boys and girls wore skirts. Skirts made it easier for mothers to take care of children who were not fully toilet trained, since children did not wear underwear. Skirts also carried a symbolic value that represented dependence. In other words, wives and little children, people who depended on husbands and fathers, wore skirts. People who wore pants were the dominant members of society.²⁴⁴

However, gender differences had nothing to do with the use of petticoats, lace, embroidery, flowers, silk or colors. The use of blue and pink for boys and girls did not appear until well into the 20th century. When little children started walking, they wore padded hats that protected their heads from falls. These hats were called pudding hats because they were shaped like the molds that pudding was made in. Shoes were ordered by the inches and there was no right or left. Prior to the 18th century, boys and girls shoes were the same.²⁴⁵

Around the age of seven, boys were allowed to wear pants instead of the gowns of young children. This was a very important ritual in a boy's life and it was accompanied

²⁴³ Karin Calvert, *Children in the House*, 23-31.

²⁴⁴ Baumgarten, Linda, 164.

²⁴⁵ Edward Warwick, Henry C. Pitz, Alexander Wyckoff, *Early American Dress, The Colonial and Revolutionary Periods*, (New York, Bonanza Books, 1965), 259.

with a celebration. After they were “breeched,” they assumed the superior position in life along side their fathers and started taking on more responsibility. For girls, there was not a visible transition but around the same age, they were also expected to take on more responsibility around the house. The style of their dress remained the same, which basically was very similar to what adult women wore.²⁴⁶

In the Progressive Era, people viewed childhood as a separate stage in life, and clothing began to echo this view. Clothes became less restrictive and more comfortable, appropriate for active young people. Dresses were made out of washable fabrics for boys and girls of all ages. Children’s fashions changed between 1890 and 1920 to facilitate active play, but as in the Colonial Era, children’s clothing remained androgynous for the first years of life, although clothes began to distinguish gender at an earlier age.²⁴⁷ Infants wore long gowns, moving into ankle length dresses at six months of age. White was the universal color for infants, pastels for toddlers with pink and blue being interchangeable. With the realization that children needed to play, light, free-moving play clothes began to appear. One-piece, gender neutral, loose fitting suits called “rompers” became widely available for toddlers and small children, and for older children, there were overalls.

Day One: Children’s Clothes

Students will be introduced to clothing of children in the Colonial Era.

²⁴⁶ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 85-56

²⁴⁷ Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 63-64.

Explain to students that you will be showing them pictures of children who lived “long, long ago,” and advise them to pay close attention to the clothes in the pictures. Advise them that they will be making some predictions about the children in these pictures.

The following portraits and photographs can be accessed online from the URL’s noted above in the “teacher preparation” section of this lesson. As you show each image, ask a leading question which will start the children thinking about each picture. Have them write their answers on paper, or keep the answers in their heads. After showing all the pictures, you will go back over each one and discuss the answers.

- Show the portrait of *Two Children*, by Joseph Badger.

Ask: How many girls do you see in this picture?

- Show the picture of a “boy’s printed cotton dress.”

Ask, who wore this, a little boy or a little girl?

- Show the picture of a stay.

Ask: What was this used for?

- Show the picture of children’s shoes.

Ask: Do these shoes belong to a boy or a girl?

- Show the picture of Baby Barbara in swaddling.

Ask, what is happening to this baby?

Now, go over each picture again and give a brief explanation.

In the *Portrait of Two Children* by Joseph Badger, (painted between 1755-1760), explain there is one boy and one girl in this portrait. The boy is holding a squirrel and has a masculine hairstyle. His gown has coat sleeves and cuffs that are similar to men’s

coats. His gown also has buttons and an open pleat in front. Girls' gowns generally opened to the back and did not have a front pleat. Explain long, long ago, boys and girls wore the same clothes until about the age of five or six. Boys would then start wearing breeches like their fathers and girls would continue to always wear dresses that looked very much like their mothers. Hold up the picture of a *Boy's printed cotton dress*. Explain this is another example of a dress that was worn by a little boy.

Turn to the picture of a child's stay. Explain stays were introduced to children, both boys and girls, even before the age of one. These stays, which were worn under their gowns, were made from whalebone and leather, and were corded or quilted. Stays were believed to encourage good upright posture. The stays forced the shoulder to droop down, shaped the torso at the waist and pushed the chest forward. Girls wore stays long into adulthood, boys stopped wearing them when they moved into breeches, anywhere between the ages of 4 and 8. Display the portrait of *Elizabeth Clarke Freake and Baby Mary*, artist unknown, but it was painted in Massachusetts in 1674. Mary is about 6 months old and is dressed in the long gowns of infancy. Her pose is stiff and doll like because she is probably wearing a stiff stay. The artist has eliminated or glossed over most of her babyish characteristics and tried to make her look as adult as possible in order to make her more appealing to the 17th century audience.²⁴⁸ Advise the class that Baby Mary is wearing a stay and that's why she appears to be standing so straight even though she is just an infant in this picture.

²⁴⁸ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 31.

Show the picture of the shoes. Explain these shoes could belong to a boy or a girl. Long, long ago, shoes were ordered by the inches and there was no right or left shoe.

In the last picture, explain that the baby is wrapped up in tight bands of cloth, called swaddling cloth. Many babies were wrapped like this for the first 6 or 9 months of their lives. Parents swaddled their infants because they thought it kept their bodies straight and helped their legs grow straight and strong. Swaddling probably kept the babies warm at night and made it easy to carry them around during the day.

Show the portrait of the Mason children as another example of clothes worn by children in the Colonial era. *The Mason Children: David, Joanna, and Abigail*, was painted by the Freake-Gibbs artist in 1670. The original is hanging in the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco. The children are wearing clothes that are suitable for adults and are holding objects that do not represent a playful childhood. David is holding gloves and a cane, which is a symbol of high status. Abigail holds a rose, which is symbol of innocence, and Joanna is holding a fan and a coral necklace believed to ward off disease. Have the class analyze the portrait by asking the following questions: Whom you see? Where do you think this portrait was painted? What are the children doing? What are they holding? Why do you think they are holding those items? How are they dressed? What can this picture tell us about clothes that children wore long, long ago?

Optional: read pages 16-19 in *If You Lived in Williamsburg in Colonial Days*. This sums up in “kid language” the concepts presented in the images above.

Have the class come up with three sentences that describe clothing for children in the Colonial Era. In their history journal, have them draw a picture of one item of clothing that they thought was interesting. Write a sentence about it.

Extension Ideas

Teach the following nursery rhymes and talk about the clothes that are mentioned in each.

Diddle diddle dumpling, my son John
Went to bed with his breeches on,
One stocking off, and one stocking on;
Diddle diddle dumpling, my son John.

Lucy Locket lost her pocket,
Kitty Fisher found it;
Nothing in it, nothing in it,
But the binding round it.

The following books have detailed pictures of colonial children, Sarah and Samuel, as they get dressed for the day. Use these pictures to point out different items of clothing.

*Sarah Morton's Day, A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Girl*²⁴⁹

*Samuel Eaton's Day, A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Boy*²⁵⁰

Day Two: Children's Clothes

Explain that yesterday we looked at pictures of children's clothes from "long, long ago." Today we will look at paintings and some photographs of children's clothes

²⁴⁹ Kate Waters, *Sarah Morton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Girl*, (New York: Scholastic Inc.1993).

²⁵⁰ Kate Waters, *Samuel Eaton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Boy*, (New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1996).

from “long ago.” Ask, what is the difference between a photograph and a painting? Why did we not see photographs yesterday? Explain when we finish looking at these pictures we will talk about something that has stayed the same in children’s clothing over time and something that has changed. Hopefully they will be able to recognize that clothes in the progressive era were less restrictive and more suitable for active play. However, infant boys still wore dresses although they changed into pants at a much younger age.

Post a chart on the wall with the following headings: “People,” “Age,” “Objects,” “Clothes.” As each painting or photograph is viewed, have students analyze each picture. As they note the details in each image, fill in appropriate words on the chart. All the images can be accessed online by using the URL’s as stated above.

- Show the Mary Cassatt paintings, *Child in Straw Hat* and *Children Playing on a Beach*. These two paintings show little girls in loose fitting clothes.
- Show the N.C. Wyeth painting, *The Giant*. Focus on the children at the bottom of the painting. This is an example of children in play clothes. You will see rompers, which became popular at the turn of the century.
- Go to *Online Archives of California* for a photograph of *Emrich Lorenz Hein Children*, taken in 1903. This photograph shows that infant boys still wear dresses.
- Show the photograph of a *First Grade Class, 1898*. This is an excellent group photo that shows the style of clothes worn by school children.

Discussion questions: Referring to the chart, have students tell you what they noticed about the clothes the children were wearing. How are these clothes different from the clothes we saw on children wore “long, long ago?” Why are these clothes different? What is the same about these clothes?

Post the Venn diagram on the wall and have the class help you fill it in. Start with one item in the “both” section and then fill in correlating items in “Clothes, long ago” and “Clothes, long ago”

Have students write in their history journal. They will write one sentence about clothes from long ago and draw a picture.

Refer to the questions that were recorded on the first day of the lesson. See if any of them can be answered at this time.

Topic Three: Children’s Play

Materials

- Books: *If You Lived in Williamsburg in Colonial Days*, Barbara Brenner

If You Grew Up With George Washington, Ruth Belov Gross

If the above books are not available, comparable information can be found at the following websites:

- *Stratford Hall Plantation*²⁵¹
“Leisure Times and Games”
- *Noah Webster House, Museum of West Hartford History*²⁵²

²⁵¹ “Leisure Times and Games,” in *Stratford Hall Plantation, the Birthplace of Robert E. Lee*, < <http://www.stratfordhall.org/ed-games.html?EDUCATION>> (3 March 2006).

“Amusements in Colonial New England”

- Chart paper with the headings: “Long, Long Ago” and “Long Ago”

Teacher Preparation

You will need to access images from the following sites:

- *National Archives*²⁵³

Photograph of kids playing baseball in the street in San Francisco, 1900.

- *Library of Congress, American Memory*²⁵⁴

Show the film clip, “Kindergarten Ball Game,” filmed in 1904. This is a thirty second-film clip of a kindergarten class bouncing balls.

A lesson on children’s play is a logical topic to follow a lesson on children’s clothes because changes in children’s clothes mirrored the increasing acceptance of play in a child’s life. By the end of this lesson students will understand that children played in both eras, but activities were slightly different. In the Colonial Era, games required less physical activity and fewer participants. In the Progressive Era, games were played with large groups of children in city streets. These games required a high degree of physical activity.

²⁵² “Amusements in Colonial New England,” in *The Noah Webster House Museum of West Hartford History*, <<http://noahwebsterhouse.org/amusements.html>> (3 March 2006).

²⁵³ “Pictures of the American City,” in *The National Archives*, <<http://www.archives.gov/research/american-cities/images/american-cities-063.jpg>> (4 March, 2006).

²⁵⁴ “America at Work, America at Leisure, Motion Pictures from 1894-1915,” in *Library of Congress*, <<http://www.loc.gov/index.html>> (3 March 2006).

Background Information

Very few toys have survived from the Colonial Era and few are mentioned in historical sources. However, activities such as play, sports and other amusements were considered acceptable. In Puritan New England adults viewed play with ambivalence but tolerated it as long as it did not lead to sin or interrupt the Sabbath. In the Middle and Chesapeake colonies, play was an important part of a child's life because parents felt it developed sociability. Children played tag, blind man's bluff, hide and go seek, hopscotch, raced, and enjoyed stilts, hoops, tops, and kites.²⁵⁵

In the Progressive Era, play became far more acceptable as parents recognized it as an important part of a child's development. This acceptance of play led to changes in children's clothes as noted in the prior lesson. Toys were now being mass-produced such as cast iron pull toys, electric trains, wagons, sleds and tinker-toys.²⁵⁶ In the cities children played games in the streets and on newly built playgrounds. In rural areas, children's play centered around horses, mules and domesticated farm animals. Common to both regions were active group games, which required little more than a wide space to play.

Day One: Children's Play

Explain to children that yesterday we learned how clothes changed over time. Clothes changed over time because play changed over time. Today we will learn what kind of games children played "long, long ago" and tomorrow we will learn what kind of

²⁵⁵ Calvert, *Children in the House*, 47-51.

²⁵⁶ Macleod, *The Age of The Child*, 67.

games children played “long ago.” Be thinking how these games are the same and how they are different.

On the wall, post a chart titled, “Play,” with the headings “Long, Long Ago,” and “Long Ago.” Explain that “long, long ago,” some parents (Puritans) did not entirely approve of play but allowed children to do it as long as it did not lead to trouble or take place on Sunday. However, the clothes they wore were heavy and tight which made it difficult to be very active. Children still found fun things to do.

Read, “What did children do to for fun?” pages 52-53, from *If You Lived in Williamsburg in Colonial Days*.

Read, “What did children do to have fun?” pages 15-18, from *If You Grew Up With George Washington*. If these two books are unavailable, you can find comparable information on the websites of *Stratford Hall Plantation* and *Noah Webster House, Museum of West Harford History*, as noted on the URL’s above.

Explain that we will play some games today that children played long, long ago. Teach one or two games from the following list: Hoop rolling races, (use plastic hula hoops), Hopscotch, Hide and Seek, London Bridges, Bowling, Marbles.

Afterwards, ask the following questions: What did you like about the games we played? What equipment did you need to play them? Were they easy to learn? What physical activity did each game require? How many children could play each game at the same time? Do you and your friends play any of these games at your house? Would it be difficult to play these games in the clothing that colonial children wore?

Have students write in their history journal. Write one sentence about a game that children played long, long ago and draw a picture to go with it.

Day Two: Children's Play

Explain that yesterday students learned some games that children played 300 years ago, which was “long, long ago.” Today we will learn some games that children played 100 years ago, which was “long ago.” Be thinking about what is the same and what is different about these games.

Briefly describe how city children played differently from country children. City children played group games in the streets. Country children had less time to play because they had many farm chores to do. When they had free time, they would roam the countryside with their horse, go fishing or swimming. However, all children enjoyed similar games. Play was considered an important part of growing up. Many games had simple rules and required a high level of activity, a lot of room, and little equipment.

Explain that they will be seeing a photograph of a group of children playing a game in a city street. The photograph, which is a picture of children playing baseball in the streets of San Francisco in 1900, can be accessed at the *National Archives* website as noted above. Have students analyze the image by asking the following questions. Who is in the picture? How old do you think these children are? Are there boys and girls? What kind of clothes are they wearing? What game do you think they are playing? Do you think children “long, long ago,” would play this game? Why?

Now explain that they will see a film clip of kindergarten students from “long ago,” who are learning to bounce balls. Go to the *Library of Congress* website as noted

above. This will take you to a short film clip of a kindergarten class bouncing balls in 1904. Ask, who is in the film? What are they doing? Why are they doing this? Did someone show them how to do this? Who do you think that would be? Why do you think it was important to teach children how to bounce balls in school? Do you think this happened with children “long, long ago?”

Today we will learn two games that many children played 100 years ago, (long ago.) The first game is called, “Run Sheep Run,” and the second game is called, “Ante Over.” Explain the rules for each game.

Run Sheep Run

This game is a kind of team "hide and seek." It is best played outdoors. You should probably have at least three members for each team, a total of 6 players or more. You need an even number.

Divide all the players into two equal teams and choose a captain for each one. One team starts as the Searching Team and the other one is the Hiding Team.

Choose a "goal" or "home" that the players must reach and decide how high the Searching Team must count before going to look for the Hiders. All the kids on the Searching Team stay at the goal and hide their eyes. While they count, everyone on the Hiding Team, except the captain, runs to hide.

After they finish counting the Searching Team goes looking for the Hiders. The captain of the Hiders goes along, or wherever he or she pleases. If one of the Searchers finds a Hider, he or she tells the Hiders' captain, who calls out, "Run, my good sheep, run!"

At that signal, all the Hiders race for the goal. The first one to get there without being caught by a Searcher, and before a Searcher gets there, wins for the Hiding Team. Then the teams change places and play again. If none of the Hiders gets to the goal without being caught, the teams play the same positions again.

The captain of the Hiders doesn't have to wait until one of the Searchers has found someone on his or her team before calling out, "Run, my good sheep, run!" The captain can call for them to run to the goal any time it looks like one of them can make it to the goal before a searcher without being caught.

Variation: All of the kids on both teams have to rush to the goal when the hider captain calls out, "Run, my good sheep, run!" The first team to have ALL its members touch the goal wins and gets to be the hidiers next time.

Ante Over

This game requires a ball to be thrown over a barrier. Two teams place themselves on either side of the barrier. The team who has the ball calls out "ante over" and then throws the ball. If someone on the other team fails to catch the ball, they throw it back over with the same call. If they caught it, however, they race around to the other side and the catcher tries to hit an opponent with the ball. Anyone struck joins the attacking team. One team wins when the other team loses all its members.

After returning to class, talk about how the game or games played today was different from the games played yesterday. Ask what kind of clothes would work best for playing games like today? What was the same about the games we played? What was different? What can you say about the way children played "long, long ago," and "long ago?"

Post a Venn diagram on the wall titled, "Games." Have the class help you fill in items for "Long, long ago," "long ago," and "both." Have students write in their history journal about the game they played today. Draw a picture to go with it.

Topic Four: Children's Work

Materials

- Books:

*Sarah Morton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Girl*²⁵⁷

*Samuel Eaton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Boy*²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Waters, *Sarah Morton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Girl*.

*Pilgrim Children Had Many Chores,*²⁵⁹

*Kids at Work, Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor*²⁶⁰

- Chart paper

Teacher Preparation

If the above books are unavailable, access similar information, at the following websites:

*Scholastic*²⁶¹

“Kate Answers Kids Questions, Children in Plimoth,”

- *Dr. Patricia Moseley Stanford*²⁶²

“Pilgrim Children Had Many Chores,” an online version.

You will also need to access images of children at work in the Progressive Era. Those images can be found at the following sites:

- *The History Place*²⁶³

Lewis Hine photographs

²⁵⁸ Waters, *Samuel Eaton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Boy*.

²⁵⁹ Gina Lems-Tardif, *Pilgrim Children Had Many Chores*, (Huntington Beach, California: Creative Teaching Press, 1996).

²⁶⁰ Russell Freedman, *Kids at Work, Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor* (New York: Clarion Books, 1994).

²⁶¹ “Kate Answers Kids Questions, Children in Plimoth,” in *Scholastic*, <http://teacher.scholastic.com/thanksgiving/interviews/ask_kate_children.htm>(4 March 2006).

²⁶² Pilgrim Children Had Many Chores,” in *Dr. Patricia Moseley Stanford*, <<http://www.quiknet.com/moseley/chores/chores.html>> (4 March 2006).

²⁶³ Child Labor in America, 1908-1912, Photographs of Lewis W. Hine,” in *The History Place*, <<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/>> (3 March 2006).

- *Multimedia Library*²⁶⁴

Lewis Hine photographs

*National Archives*²⁶⁵

“Young boy tending freshly stocked fruit and vegetable stand at Center Market in Washington D.C. 1915.”

- *National Archives*²⁶⁶

“Picking Cherries on an Oklahoma Fruit Ranch, 1900.”

It’s important for students to know that children in the past did not spend their life in play. Work was an integral part of many children’s lives and in many cases contributed to the survival of the family. By the end of this lesson, Students will understand that in the Colonial Era, all children worked to help their family survive on a daily basis. The jobs they did trained them for the work they would have to do as adults. In the Progressive Era, some children had to work to help their family pay for food and other necessities. Unlike children in the Colonial Era, they did not work at home, but handled difficult jobs on farms and in mines, mills, and factories. The nature of work changed dramatically. Other children went to school and did not have to work because their fathers made enough money to support their family.

²⁶⁴ Lewis Hine Photographs,” in *Multimedia Library*,
<<http://www.multimedialibrary.com/FramesML/IM12/IM12.asp>> (3 March 2006).

²⁶⁵ “Young boy tending freshly stocked fruit and vegetable stand at Center Market in Washington D.C., 1915,” <<http://www.archives.gov/research/american-cities/images/american-cities-072.jpg>> (5 March 2006).

²⁶⁶ “Picking cherries on an Oklahoma Fruit Ranch, 1900,”
<<http://www.archives.gov/research/american-west/images/101.jpg>> (5 March 2006).

Background Information

During Colonial times, a child's worth was understood primarily in terms of economic value and each child was expected to take on adult responsibilities as early as possible. Even young children were assigned simple daily chores that contributed to the survival of the family. Breeching marked the point in a boy's life when work responsibilities increased. At this point boys would either perform more chores for their family, or work as an apprentice for another family. Girls also took on more responsibility for household chores such as spinning, cooking, and gardening.²⁶⁷ Learning these skills prepared children for adulthood.

During the Progressive Era, as children's lives became more diverse, the experience of work for children mirrored that diversity. For middle and upper class families, where the father was the main wage earner, children were protected from work, and encouraged to play and to succeed in school. For those families who depended on their children's wages for survival, education and play became less important, if not non-existent. The greatest percentage of child laborers worked on farms although many children were also employed in mills, mines, and factories.

Day One: Children's Work

Explain to students that we learned that children "long, long ago" liked to play. But children "long, long ago" also had much work to do. All children worked everyday to help their family. You will be reading two books that will show how children helped their family everyday.

²⁶⁷ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 23.

Refer to the books: *Sarah Morton's Day* and *Samuel Eaton's Day*. Read the pages that show what each child did for their family during the day. Have the class help you make a list of the chores that Sarah and Samuel did on a daily basis. Label the chart:

Boys	Both	Girls
help build house	keep predators from the cornfield	cook and serve meals
hunt for food	shell corn	wash clothes
make wooden pegs	cook turkey on spit	make soap
gather wood	make mattresses from pine needles, feathers or corn husks	make candles
gather crops from field	gather thatch for the roof	feed the chickens
	dig for clams	milk the goats
	get water from the spring	muck the garden
		pound spices
		churn butter
		polish brass

Discussion questions: Do you think all children worked? Why? What do you think would have happened if children had refused to work? Do you think Sarah and Samuel were paid for working? Why was it important that Sarah and Samuel learn how to do all of these things?

Explain that the class will make a book about work that children did “long, long ago.” Have each student pick a chore from the chart. They will write a sentence about that chore and then illustrate it. For ideas, show the class some illustrations from a book that was made by another first grade class, *Pilgrim Children Had Many Chores* by Gina Lems-Tardiff’s first grade class. For an online version of this book, see notes from above.

Extension Ideas

Use this counting rhyme from the 17th century to help your class remember some of the children's chores from the past.

One, two buckle my shoe (get up early)
 Three, four, shut the door (shut the door to keep out the farm animals)
 Five, six, pick up sticks: (gather firewood and kindling)
 Seven, eight, lay them straight (stack wood neatly near the fireplace)
 Nine, ten a big fat hen, (gather eggs from the hen)
 Eleven, twelve, dig and delve, (help care for the garden)

Day Two: Children's Work

Explain to students that yesterday we learned that all children from “long, long ago,” 300 years ago, had work to do everyday. This work was important because it helped the family survive from day to day. However, 100 years ago, “long ago,” not all children had to work. Some children lived in families whose fathers made enough money to buy the things they needed to survive. Children in these families did not have to work. They could play and go to school. Many other children lived in families that had very little money. Children in these families had to work and give their wages to their family. They had no time to play and did not go to school. Today we will be looking at some photographs of some children from “long ago” who had to work.

Display five or six Lewis Hine's photographs from Russell Freedman's book or the websites cited above, that show kids at work in various jobs. Be sure to include farm labor. With the class, analyze each picture and make notes on a chart using the following headings: “People,” “Activity,” “Age.” To enhance their understanding of the details in each photograph, read the associated captions from Russell Freedman's book.

Some interesting choices with captions from Russell Freedman's book:

Manuel, a five-year-old Mississippi shrimp picker

Cotton-pickers ranging in age from five to nine, Bells, Texas, 1913

A raveler and a looper in a hosiery mill, Loudon, Tennessee, 1910

*A greaser in a coalmine carrying two pails of grease, Bessie Mine,
Alabama, 1910*

Sixth Street Market, Cincinnati, Ohio, 10:00p.m. August 22, 1908

After the class has viewed all the photographs, ask the following questions: Are these jobs indoor or outdoor jobs? Why are these children working? Are they working for their families? How are these jobs different from jobs children did long, long ago? How are they the same?

Have the class help you write three sentences about children's work during the progressive era. Have them write a sentence in their history journal describing a job that some children did. Illustrate their picture.

Topic Five: Children's Education

Materials

- Books: *Sarah Morton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Girl*²⁶⁸
- Pictures of a hornbook. Images can be found online at
*Google, images.*²⁶⁹
- Pictures of a *New England Primer* to be found online at

²⁶⁸ Waters, *Sarah Morton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Girl*.

²⁶⁹ "Google, Images," at <http://www.google.com/> (4 March 2006).

*Gettysburg College.*²⁷⁰

- Tag board or cardboard, 8.5x11 inches.
- Scissors
- Glue
- Stapler
- Copy of a report card from a fourth grade classroom in Blackwell, Oklahoma, 1908 (see appendix)
- Chart paper with Venn diagram

Teacher Preparation

- On the tag-board, trace the outline of a hornbook, one for each student.

For detailed directions and a template of a hornbook, go online to *The Pilgrims and Plymouth Colony: 1620*²⁷¹

Access images from the following web sites:

- Photograph of an East San Jose Classroom, 1898, available online at *Online Archives of California*²⁷²
- Photographs of rural and one room schoolhouses, available online at *Library of Congress, American Memory*²⁷³

²⁷⁰ Shannon, Timothy, J. "History 341, Colonial America Homepage," at Gettysburg College, <http://www.gettysburg.edu/~tshannon/his341/colonialamer.htm> (4 March 2006).

²⁷¹ Cline, Duane A., "The Hornbook Exercise," in *The Pilgrims and Plymouth Colony: 1620*, < <http://www.rootsweb.com/~mosmd/hornbk.htm>> (4 March 2006).

²⁷² Regents of the University of California, "Images," in *Online Archive of California*, <http://oac.cdlib.org/search.image.html> (3 March, 2006). Search with the exact words, "East San Jose Classroom, 1898."

- Video clip of a classroom of children exercising in unison, using clubs, 1904, available online at;
*Library of Congress, American Memory*²⁷⁴
- Photograph of a Chicago classroom in 1910, available online at
*Library of Congress, American Memory*²⁷⁵

In the past, when work did not get in the way, children were educated. In the Colonial Era children were taught to read and write either by their parents or another adult. In the Progressive Era, children went to schools and were taught to read and write by a teacher. The goal in this lesson is to have students understand that Colonial parents taught their children how to read and write at home. In the Progressive Era, teachers, not parents were responsible for educating children at schools. Teachers sent reports home to parents to let them know how their children were doing in school.

Background Information

In the Colonial era, schooling occurred at home. Children learned to read so that they could read the Bible. The purpose of education was salvation. A law was passed in New England in 1642 that required all masters of families to teach their children and

²⁷³ “Fred Hulstrand History in Pictures,” in *Library of Congress, American Memory*, <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/>> (4 March 2006). Click on “Culture, Folk life,” Click on “Great Plains-photographs 1880-1920,” click on “Fred Hulstrand History in Pictures,” click on “Schooling.”

²⁷⁴ “America at Work, America at Leisure, Motion Pictures from 1894-1915,” in *Library of Congress, American Memory*, <<http://www.loc.gov/index.html>>(3 March 2006). Click on “alphabetical search” and go to “Hyde Park School, Room 2.”

²⁷⁵ “Photographs from the Chicago Daily News, 1902-1933,” in *Library of Congress, American Memory*, <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/>> (4 March 2006). Search with the exact words, “Edmund Burke School, Portable School Building with children at desks.”

apprentices how to read. If the law was not followed, children could be removed from their homes. In 1647, any town with 50 or more families had to provide a school. However, mothers taught reading, fathers taught writing. Boys learned to read and write. Girls learned to read. By the end of 17th century, a few schools existed, but no law required attendance.²⁷⁶

Paper was so scarce that students learned the fundamentals of reading by using a hornbook. The hornbook was a wooden paddle with a piece of paper tacked to it. The paper contained the alphabet, simple combinations of vowels and consonants, and a prayer. A thin layer of cow horn covered and protected the paper. Students traced over the letters with a sharp stick until they memorized it. Upon mastery of the letters and prayers on the hornbook, children moved on to the *New England Primer*. This textbook was used by students in New England and in other English settlements in North America, published in Boston in 1690.²⁷⁷ It followed a tradition of combining the study of the alphabet with Bible reading. Each letter in the alphabet was introduced with a religious phrase and then illustrated with a woodcut design. Also included in the primer were prayers and a catechism of religious questions and answers. Kids learn to read as they learned to behave.

In the Progressive Era, the purpose of learning changed. The state became more involved in the socialization of children. Children were to be educated so that they would become productive citizens insuring that democracy would be preserved. School became

²⁷⁶ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 21-22.

²⁷⁷ "New England Primer" *Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition, 2001-2005*, <http://www.bartleby.com/65/ne/NewEngPrm.html> (23, February, 2006).

mandatory. Kindergarten and high school were added. Curriculum was expanded and testing became standardized. Schools were now responsible for social, physical, and mental training of children.

Day One: Children's Education

Explain we have learned that children from “long, long ago” had to do many chores to help their family. In between their chores, they were required to learn how to read and write because their parents wanted them to learn all the lessons in the Bible. At first there were no schools to attend so they learned to read and write at home. A law was passed that required fathers to make sure all the children in their house could read. Failure to do so would mean children could be removed from the family. Boys learned to read and write and girls learned to read. Using the picture book, *Sarah Morton's Day*, show the picture of Sarah learning her alphabet at home.

Continue to explain that paper was so scarce that students learned their fundamental skills by using a hornbook. The hornbook was a wooden paddle with a piece of paper tacked to it. The paper contained the alphabet, simple combinations of vowels and consonants and a prayer. A thin, transparent layer of cow horn protected the paper. Students traced over the letters with a sharp stick until they memorized each letter.

Show the class images of hornbooks. Go to “*Google*” and click on “images.” Search with the exact word, “hornbook.” Explain that they will make a hornbook. Each student will need a piece of tag board with the outline of a hornbook traced on it. Students can cut out the hornbook. Then they glue or staple a piece of paper to the hornbook. On this paper they will write information that is important for them to know,

such as simple math facts, spelling words, continents of the world, etc. They will then cover the paper by stapling a piece of wax paper over it. (This is the horn part).

Checking for understanding, ask the following questions: Did children “long, long ago” learn to read and write? Why? Who taught them? What did they use that helped them to learn?

Extension Ideas

Explain the use of the *New England Primer* and show pictures of an original copy. Images can be found online at Gettysburg College at the URL noted above. You could have the class read and write some of the original verses.

Day Two: Children's Education

Explain to students that yesterday we discovered children, 300 years ago, learned how to read and write at home. 100 years ago, schools had been built in many areas. Children, who did not work attended schools and were taught by teachers. Today we will look at different photographs of schools from “long ago,” and we will learn that students not only learned how to read and write but were also taught many other subjects. Be thinking about what is the same and what is different between how children learned “long, long ago” and “long ago.”

For students to get a taste of what schools looked like, access photographs of schools and classrooms from the websites noted above. As you show them the images, have them write down two objects they notice in each picture. This will help them to remember what they saw as you lead a quick discussion about their impressions of schools back then. After viewing the images, ask the following questions; who was in

the pictures? Where were they? What were they doing? What are some of the objects that you noticed in the photographs? Do you think these children had to work? Why?

Explain that since parents sent their children to school to learn, teachers were responsible for letting parents know how children were doing in school. Explain that report cards were sent home to keep parents informed. Briefly show the class a copy of their report card and review the subjects on the report.

Then, show the report card from Blackwell, Oklahoma. This report card belonged to my grandfather, Glen Scoles. He was born and raised in Blackwell, Oklahoma and moved to Long Beach, California in 1923. Explain what the numbers mean by reading the definition on the report card. Go over the subject areas for which students were graded. Ask the following questions: What subjects besides reading and writing were taught? Why do some subjects not have a grade? Are all subjects academic? What do you think “Department” means? How did the school know that parents saw this report? Did children 300 years ago receive a report card? Why?

Post a Venn diagram on the wall, with the title “Education,” and the headings, “Long, Long Ago,” “Long Ago” and “Both.” Have the students help you fill in the appropriate sections with correct words as you compare and contrast education in the Colonial Era to the Progressive Era.

Refer to the questions that the class came up with early in the lesson. See if any of the questions can be answered.

Extension Idea

Teach the class the song, “School Days.” Will Cobb and Gus Edwards wrote this song in 1907. It was the centerpiece of a Broadway musical with the same name.

School Days

School days, school days,
 Dear old golden rule days.
 'Readin' and 'ritin' and 'rithmetic,
 Taught to the tune of a hick'ry stick.
 I was your queen in calico,
 You were my bashful barefoot beau,
 And I wrote on your slate,
 'I love you, Joe,'
 When we were a couple of kids.

Take a field trip to a one-room schoolhouse or a local museum that has artifacts from classrooms long ago. After the field trip, ask students to help you fill in a “T-Chart,” with the labels, “Schools Long ago,” and “Schools Today.” Compare and contrast the one room schoolhouse to their school today. Using information from the “T-Chart,” have them write sentences, in their history journal and draw a picture to go with their writing.

Topic Six: Children's Health

Materials

- Online copy of *Muddy Jim and Other Rhymes: 12 Illustrated Health Jingles For Children*²⁷⁸

- Book:

*If You Lived in Williamsburg in Colonial Days*²⁷⁹

Teacher Preparation

Access the online copy of *Muddy Jim and Other Rhymes: 12 Illustrated Health Jingles For Children*. Choose three or four poems to read to the class.

In the Colonial Era, infant mortality was high due to epidemics of infectious diseases. At the beginning of the Progressive Era, infant death rates were still high but with the advent of scientific knowledge, people learned how to prevent some illnesses. This lesson will focus on efforts made in the progressive era to teach children good personal health practices. By the end of this lesson, students will understand that personal habits and proper hygiene helped prevent illnesses in the Progressive Era.

Background Information

In the Colonial Era, many infants died of illnesses such as smallpox, diphtheria, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, and whooping cough. Death rate for infants was higher than for any other age group. Personal habits and proper hygiene may have been a

²⁷⁸ “Emile Berliner and the Birth of the Recording Industry,” in *Library of Congress, American Memory*, < <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/> > (4 March 2006). Search with the exact words, “Muddy Jim and Other Rhymes.”

²⁷⁹ Benner, *If You Lived in Williamsburg in Colonial Days*.

contributing factor. Since colonial homes had no bathroom, septic system, or running water, wells for drinking water often became contaminated which caused many illnesses. Bathing on a daily basis was unheard of, because it was believed that a layer of dirt acted as protection against disease. When illness did strike, family members were treated at home with remedies using a variety of herbs, minerals, and animal products. After all home remedies failed, local barbers who were also surgeons would be called in and performed procedures such as bleeding bodies and pulling teeth.²⁸⁰

At the beginning of the Progressive Era, infant mortality was still high with the leading causes of death being respiratory, infectious, and gastrointestinal diseases. Death threatened every family regardless of class. Pasteurization of milk and a broader understanding of diseases helped to decrease infant mortality. The discovery of the serum that helped prevent diphtheria and a deeper understanding of germ theory were major breakthroughs in preventing the disease. Measures were also taken to teach preventative care to families, which included proper hygiene and personal habits.²⁸¹

Emile Berliner, (1851-1929), helped children learn good hygiene by writing and publishing a picture book of health jingles. Emile Berliner, a self-educated man, was truly a man with vision. Even though he was responsible for developing the microphone, the flat recording disc, and the gramophone, he had a wide interest in pasteurization of milk and other public health issues. His book, *Muddy Jim and Other Rhymes: 12 Illustrated Health Jingles For Children*, complete with colored illustrations can be

²⁸⁰ “Stratford Medicine and Health,” *Stratford Hall Plantation*, <<http://www.stratfordhall.org/ed-med.html?EDUCATION>> (21 February, 2006).

²⁸¹ Macleod, *The Age of the Child*, 41-45.

viewed online at the Library of Congress in the American Memory section.²⁸² Even though it was published in 1919, which is at the very tail end of the Progressive era, it still is an excellent example of one measure taken to help teach children preventative care.

Day One: Children's Health

Read the following nursery rhyme:

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.
Jack fell down and broke his crown
And Jill came tumbling after

So up Jack got and home did trot
As fast as he could caper,
To old Dame Dob, who patched his nob
With vinegar and brown paper.

Explain that long, long ago when children got sick or hurt they were taken care of by the women in their house. There were no doctor offices or hospitals to visit. Many children, especially babies, died from illnesses that we don't even think about today. People back then did not know about germs and how important it was to have clean food and water. They also did not have shots or medicine that we use today to make people well.

These concepts are described for children on pages 65-66 in *If You Lived in Williamsburg in Colonial Days*. After reading these pages, have students help you make a list of what they know about health in the Colonial Era. Save this list for tomorrow.

²⁸² "Emile Berliner and the Birth of the Recording Industry," in *Library of Congress, American Memory*, < <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/> > (4 March 2006). Search with the exact words, "Muddy Jim and Other Rhymes."

Have students write in their history journal about something they have learned today and draw a picture to go with it.

Day Two: Children's Health

Explain that yesterday we learned that many children “long, long ago” died from diseases. Today we will find out that children “long ago” still got sick, but not as many children died. Why do you think that was?

Explain to children that you will be reading to them poems that were read to children long ago. These poems were meant to teach children how to keep themselves healthy.

Access *Muddy Jim and Other Rhymes: 12 Illustrated Health Jingles For Children*, per instructions above. Look at the picture on the front cover. Read the title and ask: whom do you think this is a picture of? Why do you think he is called Muddy Jim? Move forward to image 6, which is the title page, and have the class read these words with you: “Read every rhyme and be healthy all the time”

Ask students what they think that means. Introduce the word, “advice” and explain its meaning. Have students listen to the advice in each poem. Choose 3 or 4 poems to read. After you read each poem have children write one sentence about the advice that was given. Choose from the poems as listed in the table of contents below:

1. Muddy Jim (benefits of bathing)
2. The Busy Sun (benefits of fresh air and sunlight)
3. When Liza Sweeps (danger of germs in dust)
4. The Horrid Fly (danger of germs on food)
5. The Gentle Cow (benefits of pasteurization)
6. Snaggle Tooth Susan (benefits of brushing your teeth)
7. The Farmhouse Well (danger of contaminated water)

8. King Nicotine (dangers of nicotine)
9. Polite Care (prevention of spreading germs)
10. Uncle Sam, M.D. (benefits of good posture)
11. Thoughts and Health (positive thinking)
12. The Silent Healer (benefits of sleep)

Discussion questions: Do you think this advice was important? Why? Was this advice given to children long, long ago? Why not? Is this good advice for today? Can you think of something that is the same about the health of children “long, long ago” and something that is different?

In their history journal, have students write a sentence about advice that was given to children long ago and illustrate their sentence.

Lesson Review

In preparation for the final assessment, spend one day reviewing the concepts covered in this lesson. Ask the focus question: How have children stayed the same over time and how have they changed?

Divide the class into five groups. Assign each group a topic: clothes, play, work, education, and health. Give each group a piece of chart paper. Each group will be responsible for answering that question in terms of their topic. They may write or draw the answers and will be responsible for reporting back to the class. Remind the children that they may refer to their history journals or any of the charts on the wall. After a period of time, gather the class back together and let each group share their answers.

EVALUATION

Informal assessment occurs throughout this lesson. Checking for understanding by using the focus question at the end of each day can verify the learning that took place. Various assignments such as drawings and written work in their journal can also serve to evaluate progress in this unit. A six-point rubric can be used for each activity.

- 5-6 student meets or exceeds mastery of the standard
- 3-4 student shows some mastery of the standard
- 1-2 indicates little or no mastery of the standard

Student work to be assessed includes:

- Picture of Little House with thinking bubble on time-line
- Entries in History Journal

To formally assess learning at the end of this lesson, have children write an answer to the following questions: Using the above rubric, score each answer.

Think of children from “long, long ago” and children from “long ago.”

Write 4 ways that children have stayed the same over time.

Write 4 ways that children have changed over time.

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APPENDIX A

Grade Level Standards

Grade Level Standards

The following California State Standards are addressed in this lesson.

California Standards:

- 1.4 Students compare and contrast everyday life in different times and places and recognize that some aspects of people, places and things change over time and others stay the same.
 - 1.4.1. Examine the structure of schools and communities in the past
 - 1.4.3 Recognize similarities and differences of earlier generations in such areas as work (inside and outside the home), dress, manners, stories, games and festivals.

APPENDIX B

Primary Documents

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Ex	FE	Average
Days Present	18	19	12	13	19	19	7	18	20			148
Times Tardy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Spelling	99	99	98	100	100	98	99	97	97	97		98
Reading	93	93	93	93	94	93	93	93	93	93		93
Penmanship	85	85	86	86	86	88	88	88	88	85		87
Arithmetic	90	95	95	96	96	96	93	90	95	91		94
Numbers												
Grammar	80	83	90	91	91	96	94	93	96	81		90
Agriculture												
Geography	86	90	92	90	93	91	90	90	92	93		91
U. S. History												
Physiology												
Olds History												
Rhetoric					90	90	90	92	92	86		90
Drawing					90	90	90	92	92	86		90
Music	85	71	80	83	80	85	89	90	92	64		82
Class Grade	88	88	91	91	91	92	92	92	93			91
Department	90	88	98	99	94	95	98	100	100			
Punctuality	92	92	92	92	96	96	88	100	100			
Average	90	89	92	94	94	93	93	97	97			
Standing	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A			
Neatness	88	88	88	88	87	89	89	91	91			
Interest	90	91	93	94	94	94	94	96	96			
Number in Class	28	31	36	36	35	37	38	37	33			
Rank												

This is to certify that Allen Koles is hereby promoted to Fifth Grade Class.

A. J. Lovett Supt. Lodema Abange Teacher.

Fourth grade report card from Blackwell, Oklahoma.

PARENT'S SIGNATURE.		PUBLIC SCHOOLS	
1	<i>[Signature]</i>	BLACKWELL, OKLA.	
2	<i>[Signature]</i>	REPORT OF	
3	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>Glen Leslie</i>	
4	<i>[Signature]</i>	Fourth Grade Class	
5	<i>[Signature]</i>	FOR SCHOOL YEAR	
6	<i>[Signature]</i>	Beginning <i>Sept. 7</i> 190 <i>8</i>	
7	<i>[Signature]</i>	Ending <i>May 21</i> 190 <i>9</i>	
8	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>Lodema Strange</i>	
9	<i>[Signature]</i>	Teacher.	

Pupils are graded on scale of 100.
 Grades below 75 are unsatisfactory and will lead to demotion.
 An average of 80 per cent in each branch is required for promotion.
 Parents are requested to consult the teacher and superintendent relative to the work of pupils.