

The Journeyman Weavers' Story



Mrs Fanshawe's Dress



The Huguenots

- A name meant as an insult and given to French Protestants by Catholics in France 500 years ago
- They were Britain's first refugees
- Their skills transformed Britain
- They were rich or poor depending on their job

The Silk Trade

- Industry founded 4,000 years ago
- Supplies from the Levant & Italy
- Industry relocated to Spitalfields
- Wool, leather, linen and silk
 - 3x stronger than Flax
 - almost waterproof
 - Not easily soiled or burned

The Silk Weavers' Story

Many Huguenot settled in Spitalfields as they were weavers. Silk weaving involved a lot of jobs including:

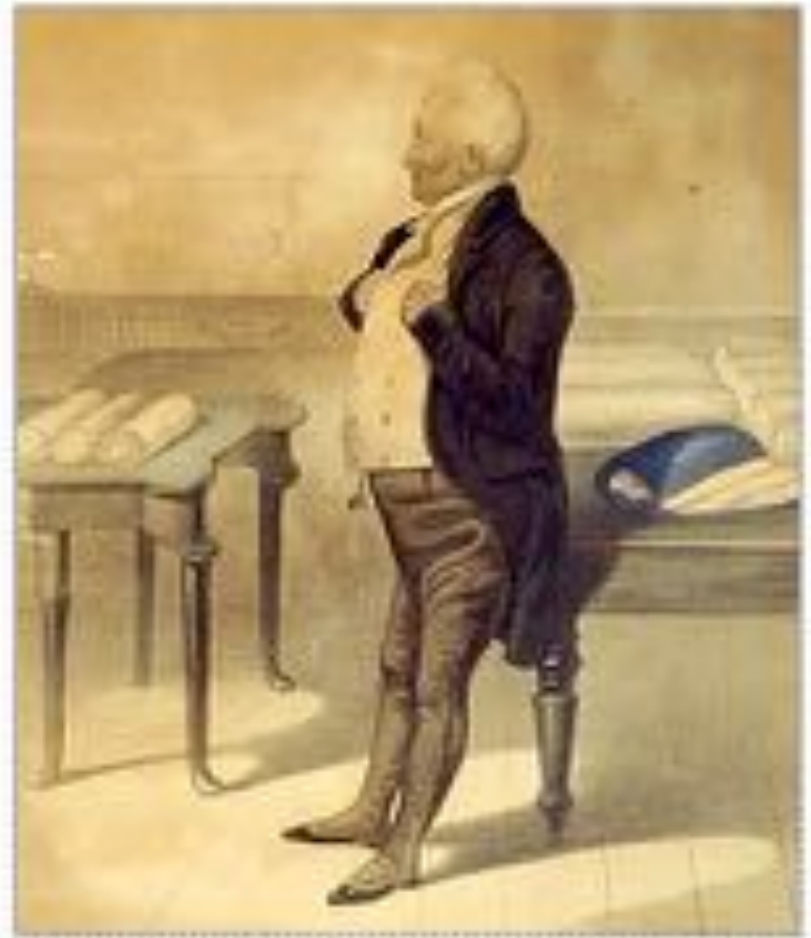
- Silk Importers and Merchants
- Throwsters and Winders
- Pattern makers
- Dyers
- Journeymen Weavers
- Master Weavers
- Mercers

A Master Weaver's house in Spitalfields (rich). A Master Weaver needed to entertain wealthy clients and would have servants as well as his family .



Master Weavers

They wove silk clothes for the Royal Family.



Portrait of Thomas Osborn Springfield, silk merchant, Bridewell Museum

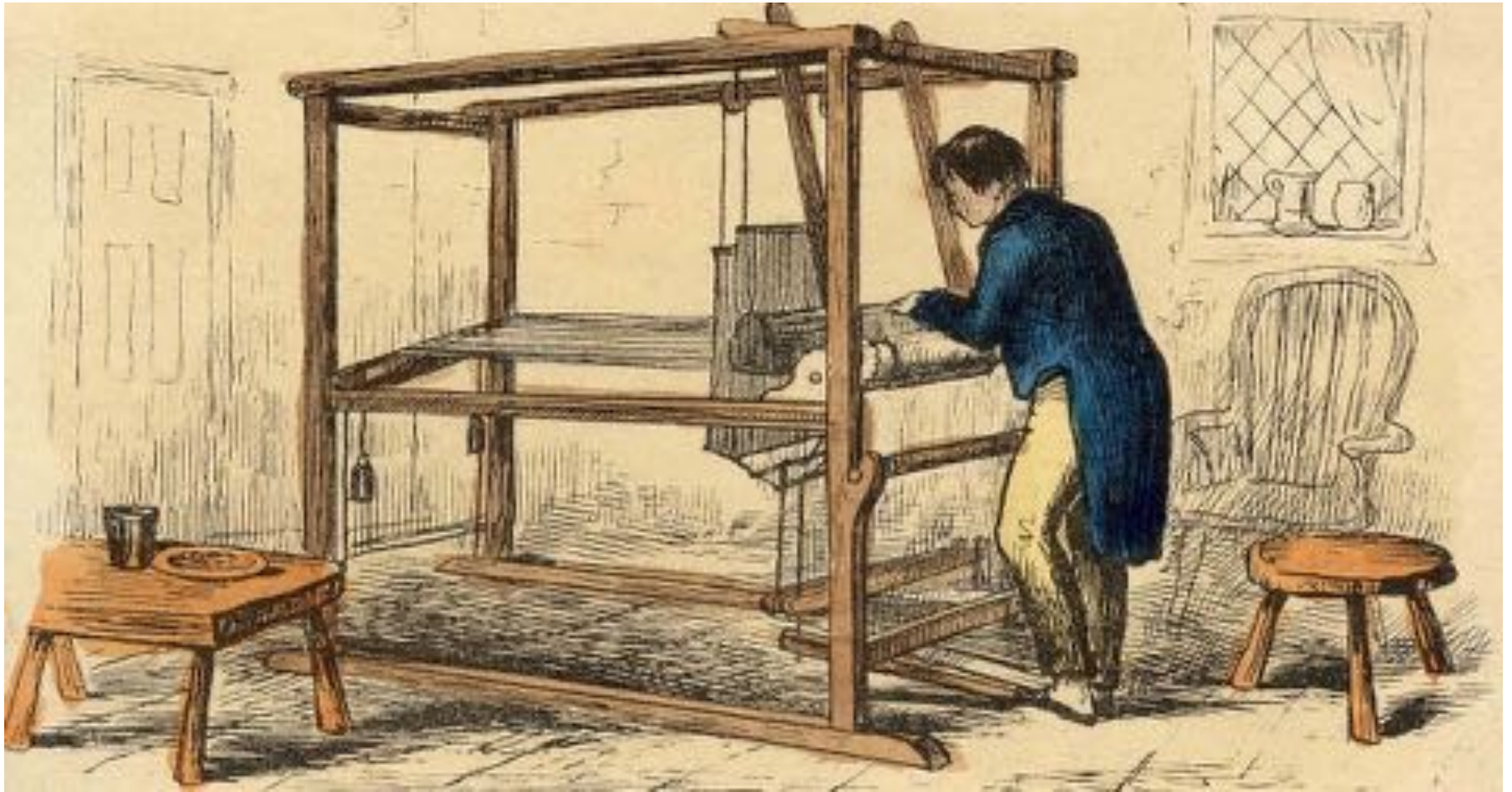
A journeyman's house in Spitalfields (poor). They would work in the attic and live in this house with their family. They were often very crowded houses.



The making of Mrs Fanshawe's Dress



Journeyman weaver at his loom





Completed Silk

The Master Weaver weighs it and then commissions a seamstress to make the dress.



Making the Dress – Act it Out

- Master Weaver shows the customer (Mrs Fanshawe) the design of the material and style on the doll.
- Mrs Fanshawe says ‘Yes!’
- Master Weaver employs a Journeyman Weaver to make the silk. He weighs the silk and pays by the day.
- The Journeyman Weaver weaves the fabric for the dress every day for 4 months.
- The completed silk is given to the Master Weaver, who weighs it to check it is the same amount.
- The Master Weaver employs a seamstress (dressmaker) to sew the dress in 1 week.

Life as a Journeyman Weaver

A weaver had to serve at least a seven-year apprentice. They would start this apprentice when they were 14 years old – just a few years older than you now!

A sum of money was usually paid to the master, and in exchange he agreed to train the child in their trade or profession, and to supply them with appropriate food, clothing and lodging for the duration of the apprenticeship



Two copies of the apprentice's indenture were made, one of which was kept by the parents (or parish) on behalf of the apprentice, and the other by the master





Journeyman weavers

- Skilled
- Worked long hours
- Lived in poverty
- Worked 16 hours a day
- Earned £15 a year (28p a week, 4p a day)
- Unemployed for months
- No pension, benefits, security

Journeymen weavers lived and worked in cramped and squalid conditions



Many journeymen's houses have been under threat

- Some have now been saved
- Community groups worked to make sure they were saved
- Why do you think people tried to save these houses?



Summing Up

- Huguenots were England's first refugees
- They came from France and brought new skills
- They transformed skills like weaving and silverwork, in England
- Many lived and worked in Spitalfields, London.
- Many were entrepreneurs and became wealthy, many more worked hard but were poor
- We can still see traces of the Huguenots in Spitalfields - buildings and objects