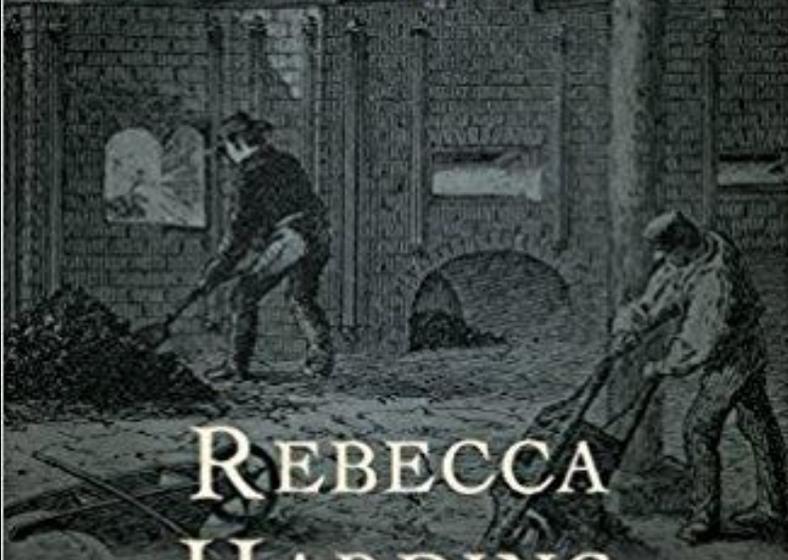


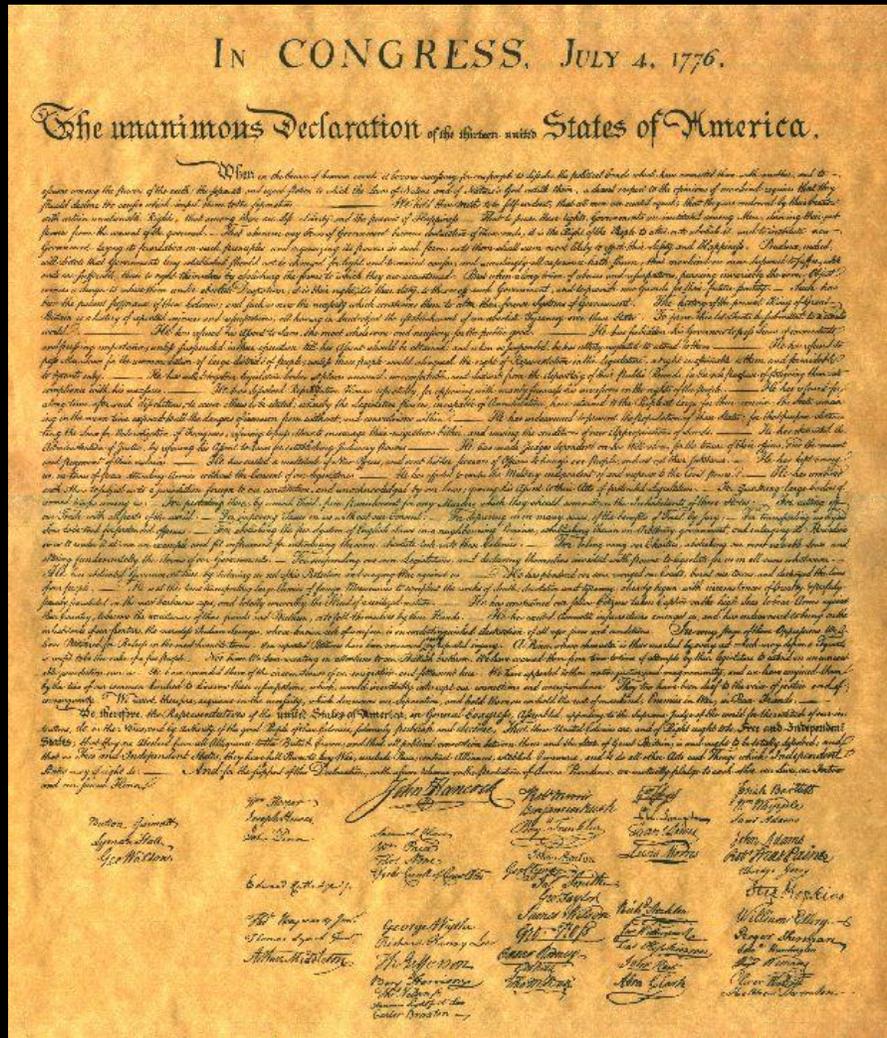
LIFE IN THE IRON MILLS

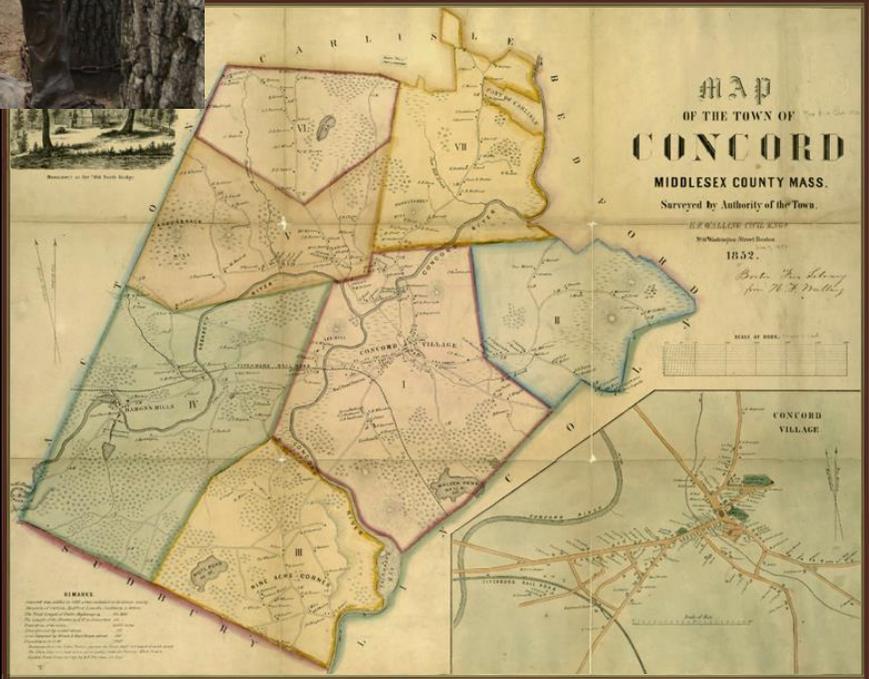


REBECCA
HARDING
DAVIS

English 213
Term 2, Week 1

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. (Jefferson, Declaration)







“Some of you, we all know, are poor [...] I have no doubt that some of you who read this book are unable to pay for all the dinners which you have actually eaten, or for the coats and shoes which are fast wearing or are already worn out, and have come to this page to spend borrowed or stolen time, robbing your creditors of an hour”

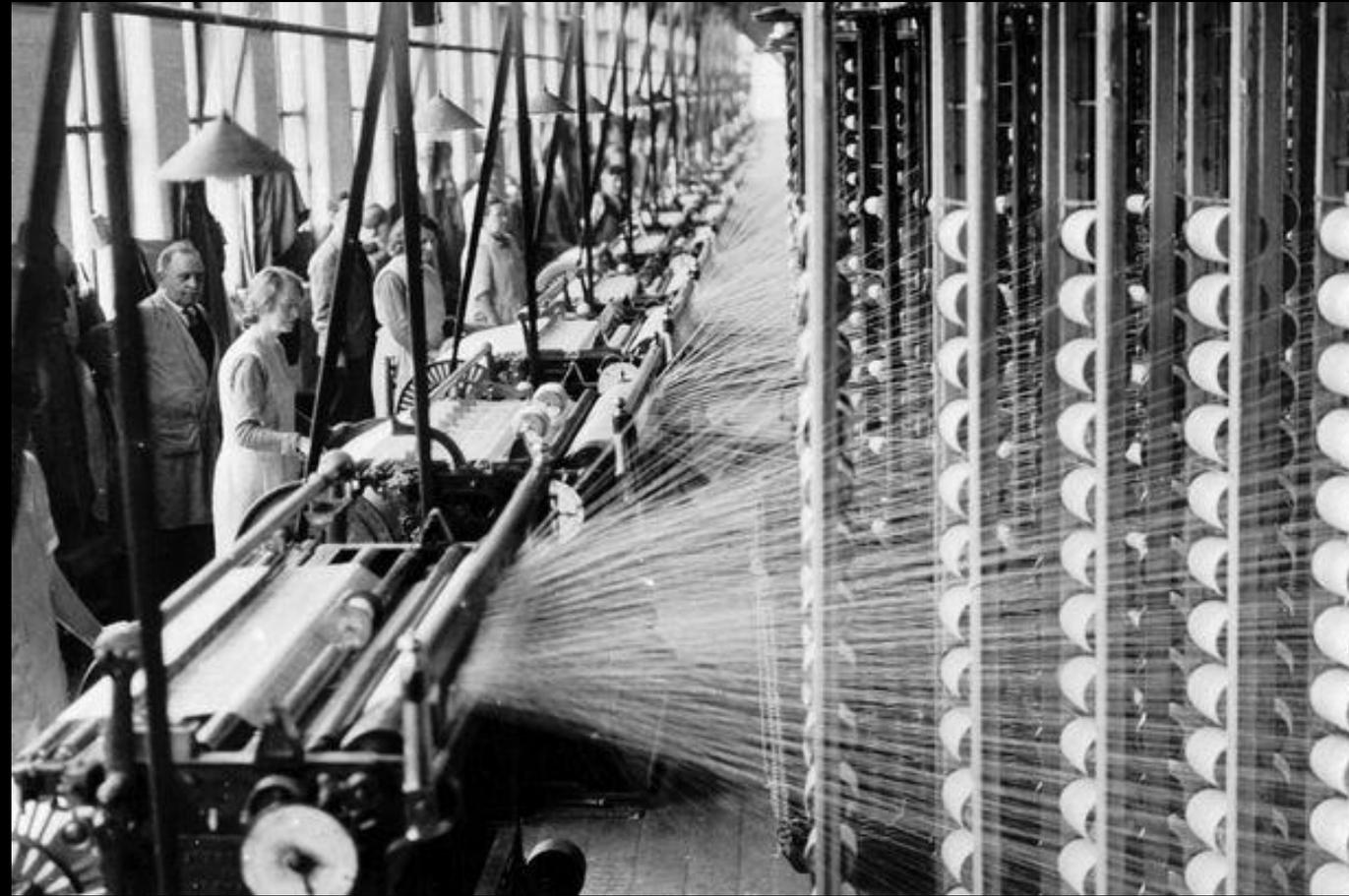
-Thoreau *Walden*



The mass of men lead lives of quite *desperation*. What is called resignation is confirmed *desperation*. From the *desperate* city you go into the *desperate* country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work. But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do *desperate* things.

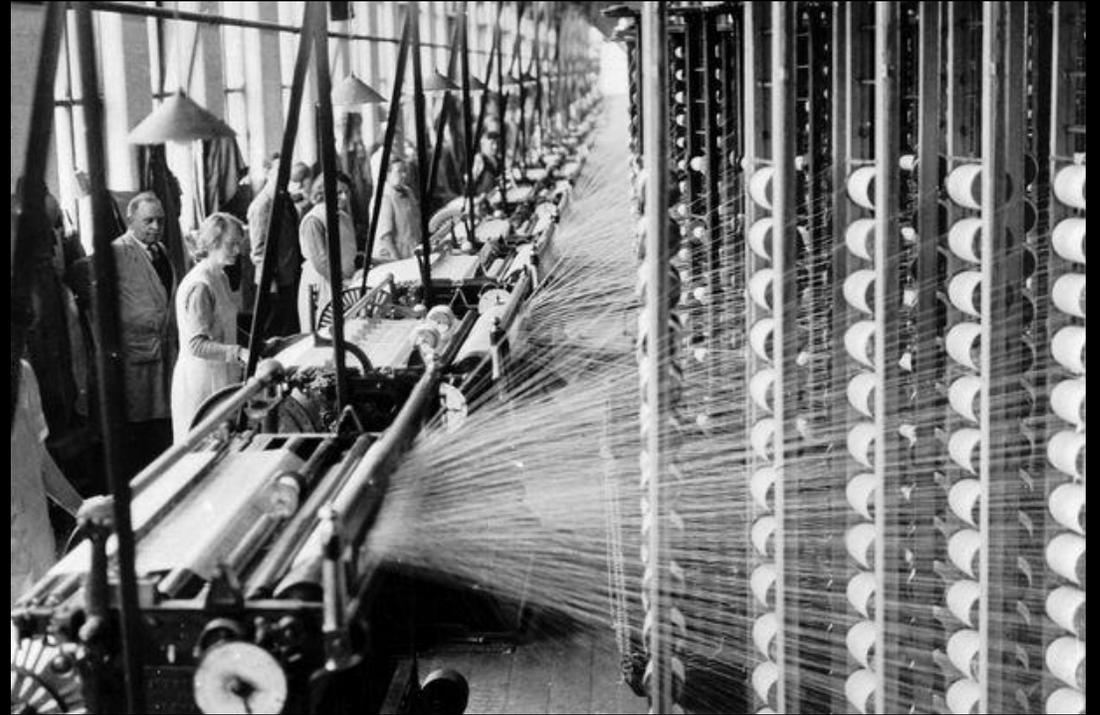
-Thoreau *Walden*

The Industrial Revolution

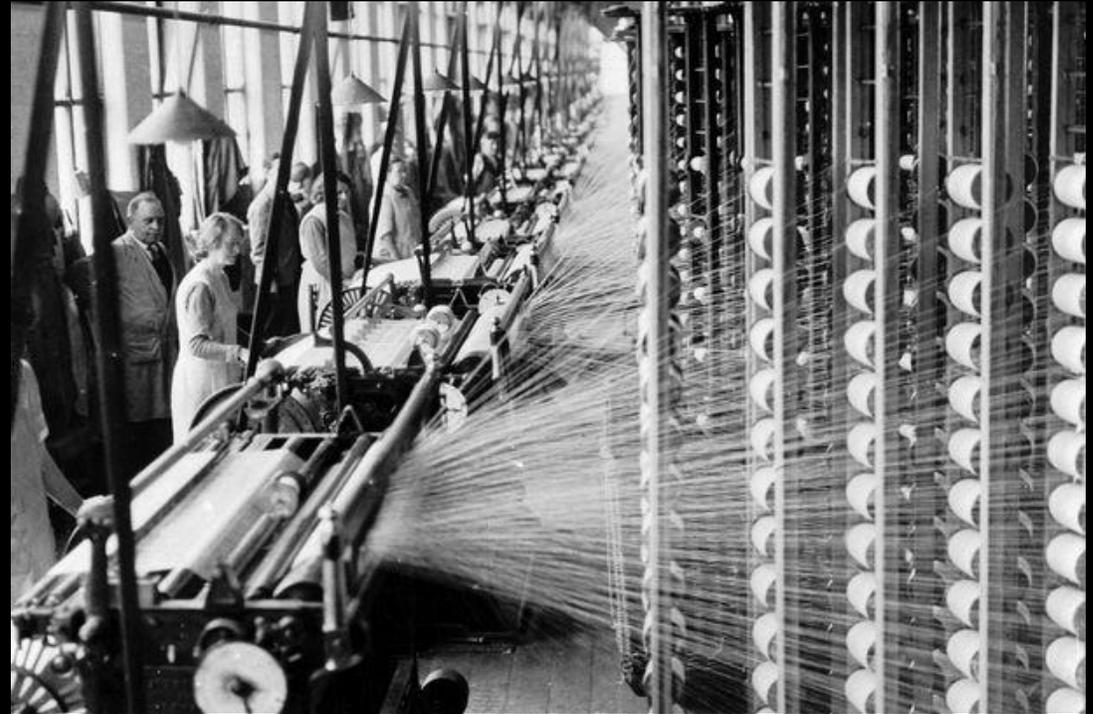


“What does the phrase 'the Industrial Revolution broke out' mean? It means that some time in the 1780s, and for the first time in human history, the shackles were taken off the productive power of human societies, which henceforth became capable of the constant, rapid and up to the present limitless multiplication of men, goods and services.”

-Eric Hobsbawm



- Movement from Subsistence farming to market farming
- New forms of enclosures
- Labour-Saving Technologies
- Urbanization
- New commodity frontiers/forms of energy
- New forms of Labour management
- Rise of Commodity culture
- New forms of politics





The mass of men lead lives of quite *desperation*. What is called resignation is confirmed *desperation*. From the *desperate* city you go into the *desperate* country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work. But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do *desperate* things.

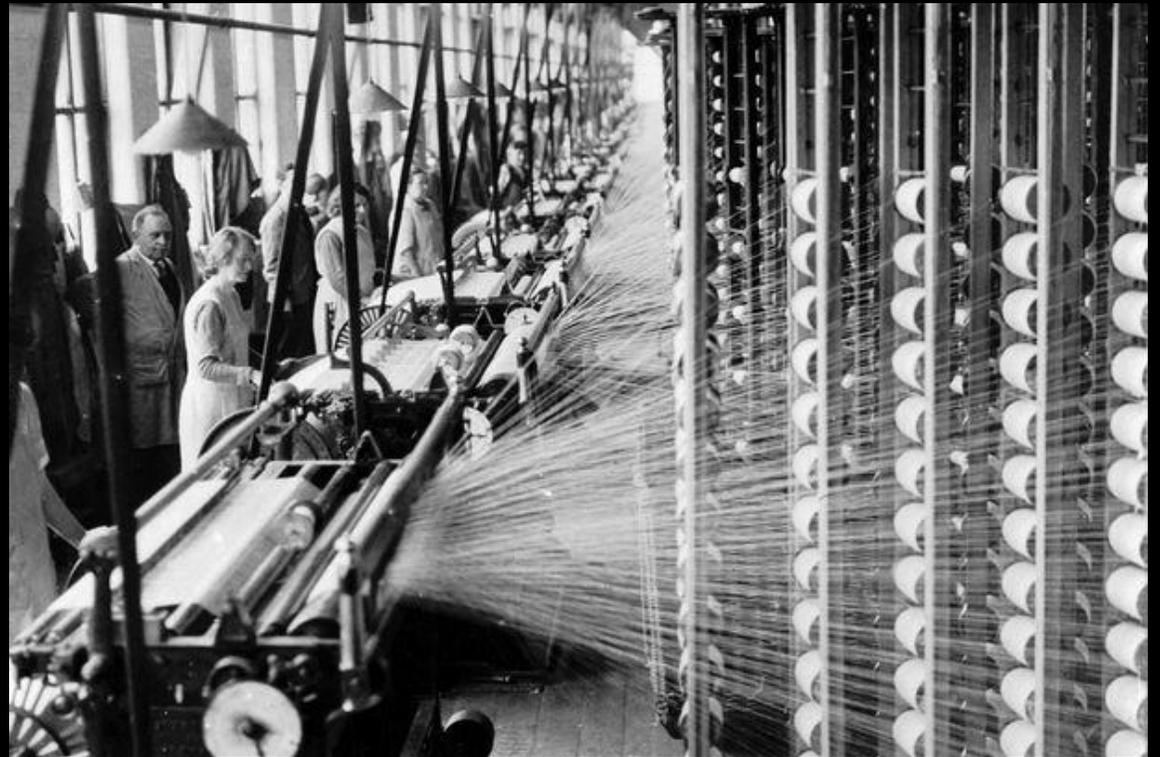
-Thoreau *Walden*



“I sometimes wonder that we can be so frivolous, I may almost say, as to attend to the gross but somewhat foreign form of servitude called Negro Slavery, there are so many keen and subtle masters that enslave both North and South. It is hard to have a Southern overseer; it is worse to have a Northern one; but worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself”

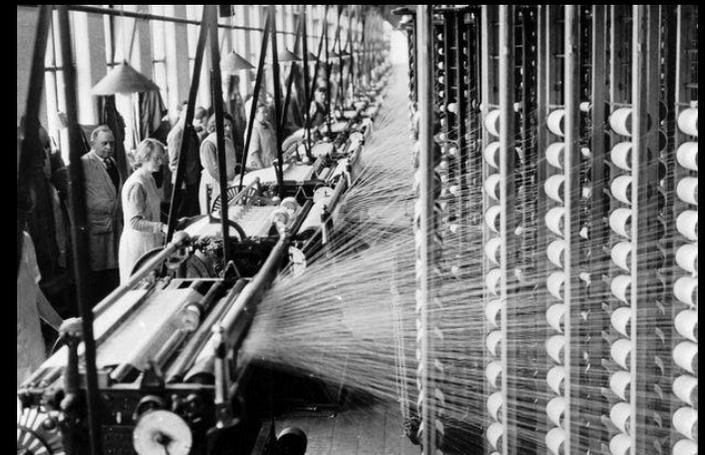
-Thoreau *Walden*

Slavery and the Industrial revolution



“The plantation colonies supplied the mother country with a growing stream of popular luxuries - dyestuffs, sugar, tobacco, then later coffee and chocolate as well - and cotton, a crucial industrial input. The availability of such treats drew consumers into greater participation in market exchanges and greater reliance on wages, salaries and fees. Baiting the hook of wage dependence, new consumer goods helped to motivate what some historians call the 'industrious revolution', the longer hours and tight labour control associated with industrialism”

-Robin Blackburn





“The conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future. Standing with God and the crushed and bleeding slave on this occasion, I will, in the name of humanity which is outraged, in the name of liberty which is fettered, in the name of the constitution and the Bible, which are disregarded and trampled upon, dare to call in question and to denounce, with all the emphasis I can command, everything that serves to perpetuate slavery — the great sin and shame of America!”



“I have said that **the Declaration of Independence is the ring-bolt to the chain of your nation’s destiny**; so, indeed, I regard it. The principles contained in that instrument are **saving principles**. Stand by those principles, be true to them on all occasions, in all places, against all foes, and at whatever cost.”

-Frederick Douglass



“From the commencement of the titanic American strife the workingmen of Europe felt instinctively that the star-spangled banner carried the destiny of their class”

-Karl Marx “Address”



“While the workingmen, the true political powers of the North, allowed slavery to defile their own republic, while before the Negro, mastered and sold without his concurrence, they boasted it the highest prerogative of the white-skinned laborer to sell himself and choose his own master, they were unable to attain the true freedom of labor”

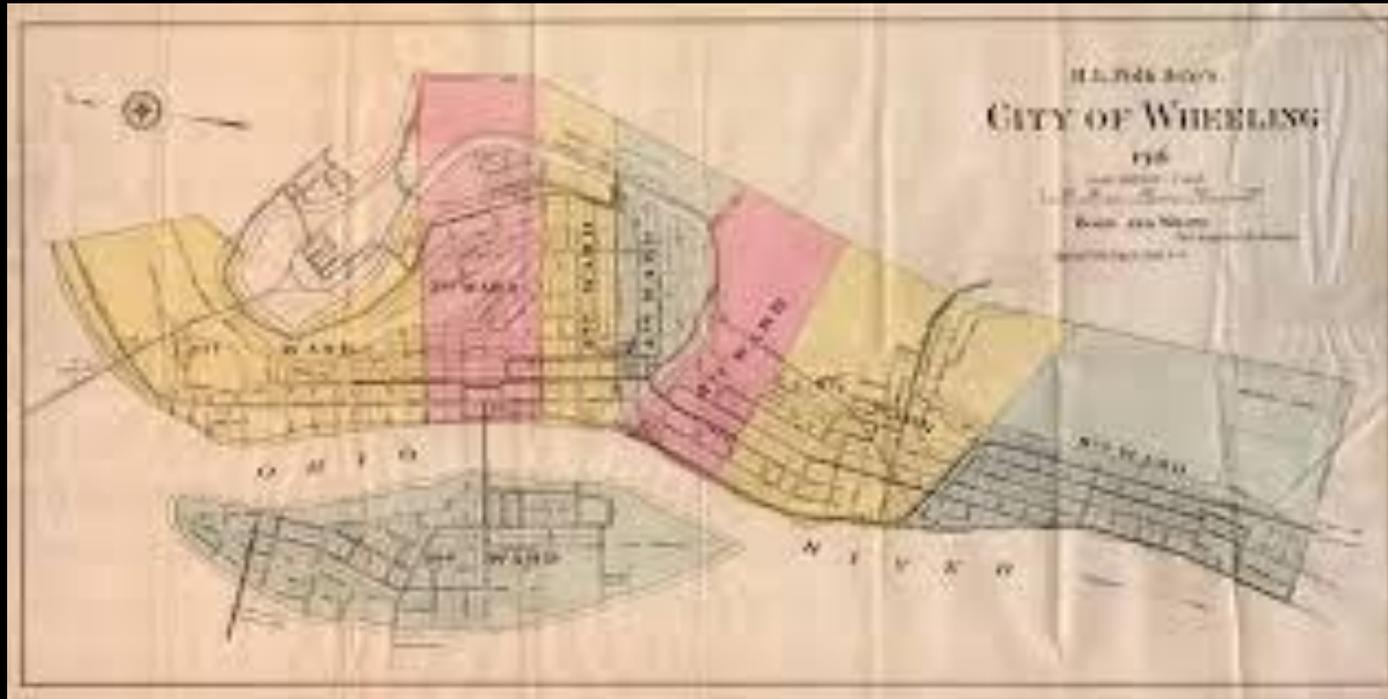


“But this barrier to progress has been swept off by the red sea of civil war [...] as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class, so the American Antislavery War will do for the working classes”



Rebecca Harding Davis

- 1831-1910
- Grows up in Wheeling, West Virginia (1836)
- Writes *Life in the Iron Mills* (1861) in *Atlantic Monthly*
- Pioneer of literary realism



“When I was a child, I used to fancy a look of weary, dumb appeal upon the face of the **negro-like river slavishly bearing its burden day after day. Something of the same idle notion comes to me to-day, when from the street-window I look on the slow stream of human life creeping past, night and morning, to the great mills. Masses of men, with dull, besotted faces bent to the ground, sharpened here and there by pain or cunning; skin and muscle and flesh begrimed with smoke and ashes; stooping all night over boiling caldrons of metal, laired by day in dens of drunkenness and infamy; breathing from infancy to death an air saturated with fog and grease and soot, vileness for soul and body**”

“The girl’s face was haggard and sickly; her eyes were heavy with sleep and hunger: real Milesian eyes they were, dark, delicate blue, glooming out from **black shadows** with a pitiful fright”

“Here, inside, is a little broken figure of an angel pointing upward from the mantel-shelf; but even its wings are covered with smoke, **clotted and black**”

“Mitchell started back, half-frightened, as, suddenly turning a corner, the white figure of a woman faced him in the **darkness**”



“Some of you, we all know, are poor [...] I have no doubt that some of you who read this book are unable to pay for all the dinners which you have actually eaten, or for the coats and shoes which are fast wearing or are already worn out, and have come to this page to spend borrowed or stolen time, robbing your creditors of an hour” (p.2 par. 1)

“There is no need to tire you with the long years of sunshine, and fresh air, and slow, patient Christlove, needed to make healthy and hopeful this impure body and soul. There is a homely pine house, on one of these hills, whose windows overlook broad, wooded slopes and clover-crimsoned meadows,— niched into the very place where the light is warmest, the air freest. It is the Friends’ meeting-house. Once a week they sit there, in their grave, earnest way, waiting for the Spirit of Love to speak, opening their simple hearts to receive His words. There is a woman, old, deformed, who takes a humble place among them: waiting like them: in her gray dress, her worn face, pure and meek, turned now and then to the sky” (33)