



The Urban Game

An exercise in urbanization and
industrialization

Let's Begin!

- The year is 1700 and the nation is England. The scene is a rural village.
- Your village should contain the following items at this point:
 - A river that runs from one end of the map to the opposite end (your river should not be more than 3 squares wide)
 - Two roads (1 square wide) that intersect near the middle of your map and extend off the map in each cardinal direction.
 - Two wooden bridges (1 square wide)
 - 10 houses
 - 1 church
 - 1 cemetery
 - 1 store
 - 1 pub
 - 1 coalmine
 - 1 park

And of course, you need to give your village a name!

Background on Your Village

Life here in our rural English village is similar to other villages throughout Europe in the 18th century. Change traditionally comes very slowly. People moved at a much slower pace and had access to very little information about the world outside their village.

London, England's largest city and one of the two real cities in Europe had a population of about 750,000 in 1750. Three out of every four Englishmen were rural and lived in small villages like this one. The average village was inhabited by about 200-400 people. The tallest structure in the village was the church. The religion of England is Anglican (Church of England).

Home life & work life were closely integrated as most work was done in nearby fields or in the home or perhaps adjoining workshop. The family was an economical unit as well as a social unit. Every member of the family worked very hard from sun-up to sun-down. Even small children had chores.

Background on Your Village

The homes of villagers were very small with earthen floors and inadequate lighting and ventilation. All members of the family slept in the same room and sometimes shared living quarters with the livestock. Sons worked with their fathers farming and tending livestock while daughters worked with their mothers cleaning, cooking, sewing and at other domestic chores.

Life expectancy was slightly over 40 years of age. Most people married in their teens and had babies before they were 20. It was common for women to die during childbirth so the average marriage lasted about 15 years. Step mothers and step fathers were common. One baby out of three died before their first birthday, only one child in two saw their 21st birthday.

Background on Your Village

Unlike France, the English were not rigidly divided into social/legal Estates. However, there was a distinct social class system. Most English were poor farmers. A few were middle class like the bourgeoisie of France. They lived, for the most part, in London. Still a small few were aristocrats and usually owned large tracts of land in the English countryside.

For both peasant & aristocrats, the soil was the key to the economy. Land was the source of livelihood and well-being. Having enough land to produce adequate food, or to produce enough to sell, or even to rent was the key to economic survival.

Background on Your Village

The main occupation of England was farming. Private and public lands were not separated by fences as they are today. Every village had a public area called “the commons”. This was land which was available to anyone for pasturing, hunting, the gathering of fire wood, growing of crops, etc... So poor farmers who did not own their own land, or rented, could eke out a marginal living by depending on the commons. Unlike France, most English peasants or farmers did own their own land, however small.

- **Fence off a 10x10 area to be reserved as a commons.**

Background on Your Village

Villages were connected by a system of dirt roads that became almost impassable during the wet season. As a result, transportation was often slow and trade beyond the village was not easy. Most English farmers never visited any place further than 25 miles from their birthplace, ever! People made their own food, clothes, furniture, tools, and homes. A few items which could not be produced could be obtained from wandering peddlers.

Finally for fuel, there were two sources: firewood & coal. Nearly every English village had a coal mining operation. These mines employed a small number of village dwellers, especially in the winter. Coal pits from which coal was extracted belonged to the owner of the property where the coal mine was situated.

Background on Your Village

Over the next 100 years, a revolution as significant as the Neolithic Revolution (when early man turned from hunting and gathering to agriculture) will completely change life in your village. Some historians believe this revolution (the industrial) is the most fundamental change in human history. We will experience some of these changes this hour.

Round 1

It is now 1745. England's geography is unique in that no section of the country is more than 90 miles from the sea and there are many navigable rivers that crisscross the countryside. An enterprising young capitalist (you) decides to invest money in the construction of a canal.

This is not a public venture but rather a private one. The profits from your canal are astonishing! For example, one canal built in 1745; the Oxford Canal yielded a 300% annual return for its investors for a period of more than 30 years. This new revolution in transportation reduced the price of raw materials and reduced the cost of transportation drastically. Coal could now be transported from the mines to the towns for half the price of horse-wagon transportation.

- **Construct a canal (a waterway 1 square wide that runs nearby the river and connects to the coal mine.)**
- **Since you invested your money, thereby making a tidy profit, build yourself 1 nice home anywhere on the map you would like it to be.**

Round 2

It is now 1750. For a variety of different reasons (soap, diet, sanitation, etc...) there is a population explosion in England, and your village. The cursed Bubonic Plague which for centuries wiped out your village has been virtually eliminated due to the disposal of sewage into the canals and ultimately the ocean.

- **Add 5 houses (total 15).**