

# PIECEWORK

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**ON-DEMAND WORK IS A MODERN INSTANTIATION OF A  
MUCH OLDER PHENOMENON — PIECEWORK.**

**THE HISTORICAL ARC OF PIECEWORK CAN SHED LIGHT ON PERSISTENT QUESTIONS  
IN THIS ONGOING PHENOMENON OF ON-DEMAND WORK.**

## **PAYMENT FOR OUTPUT RATHER THAN FOR TIME**

Textiles

Automobiles

Metalwork

# PAYMENT FOR OUTPUT RATHER THAN FOR TIME

Textiles

Automobiles

Metalwork

Crowd work

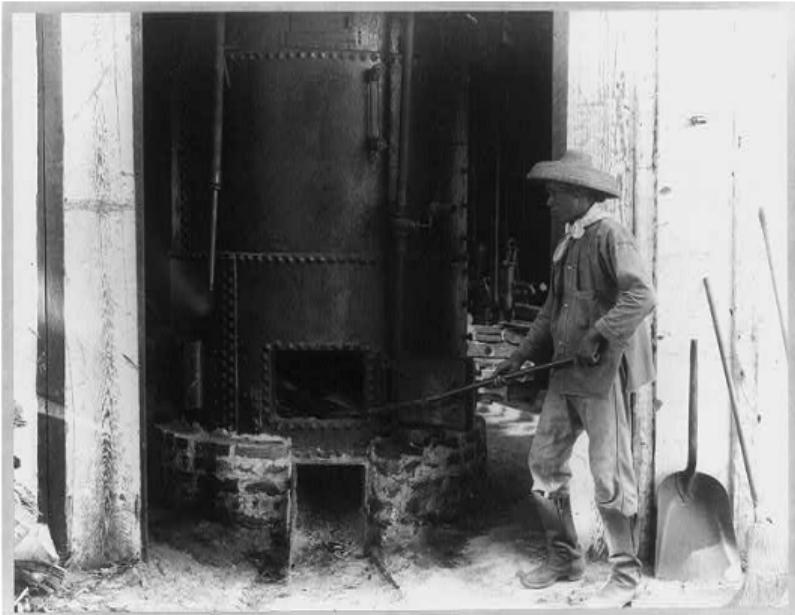
Gig Work

How will technology affect the complexity of on-demand work?

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What are the **limits** of complexity in on-demand work?

## Farms



- Formalization of piecework:  
*payment for results*  
Chadwick 1865
- Dynamic piece rates

## Textiles

- Distributed workers



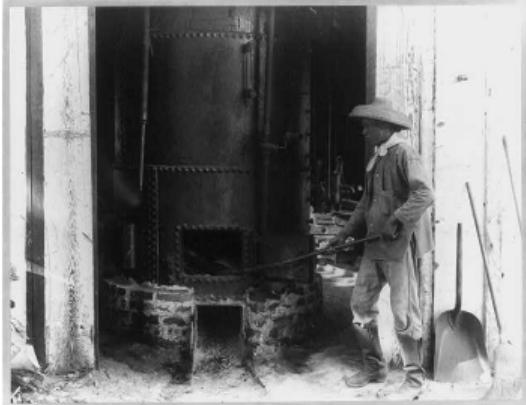
- Assuming common skills

## Matchstick Girls

- Strict management
- Formalizing work methods



Farms



Textiles



Matchstick Girls



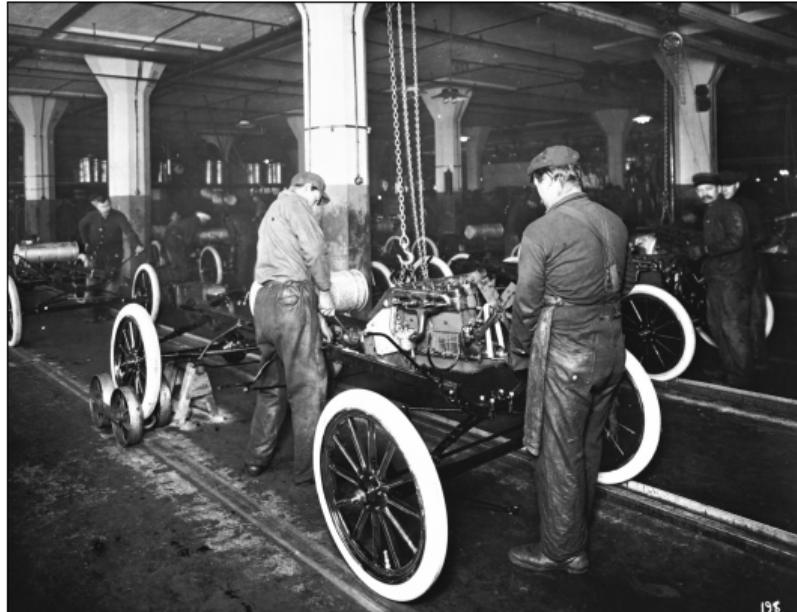
## Trains



- “Efficiency experts” measured how long it would take to do various jobs  
(Cunningham 1911)
- These measurements would be used to assign pay rates for each specific task  
(Jewell 1921)

## Automobiles

- Consolidating and training workers  
(*Fordism*)  
(Schoenberger 1988; Tolliday and Zeitlin 1986)



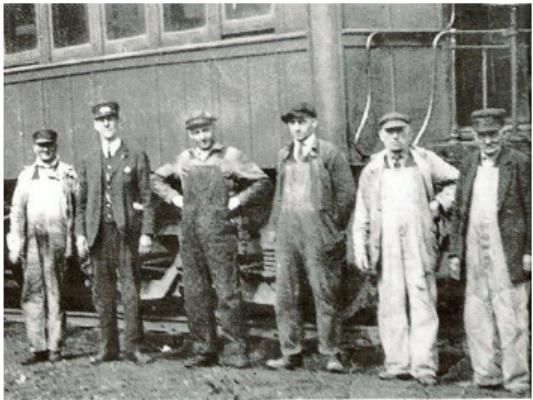
- Measuring and evaluating workers by very carefully defined instructions  
(*Taylorism*)  
(Taylor 1911)

## Planes

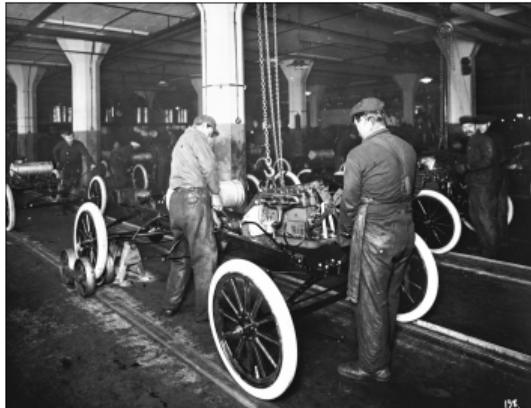
- Men drafted during World War II
- Factories turned to a new workforce who had neither conventional training nor experience
- **Specialized training and assignment**



Trains



Automobiles



Planes

