35 Jobs That No Longer Exist - mental_floss List Show (Ep.222)

List Show
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Hey guys I'm Elliott Morgan from youtube.com/elliottmorgan and youtube.com/mashable. This is Mental Floss on YouTube.

1. And did you know that in 19th century Europe and America phrenology was a very popular science. People who have their skulls examined and measured because they believed it was an indicator of what was going on with the brain. A phrenologist was the person who looked at heads and then determined things about a person's character based on it.

And that is the first of many jobs that no longer exist that I'm going to tell you about today.

(Intro)

2. River pigs or log drivers drove logs down rivers to sawmills. If the logs jammed, which they did a lot, these men had to run out over the moving logs and use a pike pole to try and dislodge them. This dangerous job existed in the US and Canada from the Industrial Revolution all the way through the 1970s. Oop, that is a quarter in the piggy bank for the pork chop party fund.

3. Speaking of jobs named after animals, from the 16th through 19th centuries, powder monkeys resupplied the cannons on ships with gunpowder after every fire. They were young boys because they were the fastest and smallest, so they would run powder from the safety of the hold, which is where cargo was held, to the artillery.

4. Badgers bought corn and other food from farmers and then resold them in markets in town. This job existed for centuries in Europe, until the 1800s. Some historians think this job gave us the term "badger" meaning "to pester someone." Apparently, to do this job you had to be annoyingly persistent.

5. Okay. Last human job named after an animal. In the Victorian era, a rattener would catch rats and sell them to local pubs. There, dogs would eat them. Which actually served as entertainment for pub goers. They didn't really have reality TV back then. But if you tell me that watching animals fight is nothing like reality TV, then you've obviously never seen *The Real Housewives*, of anywhere. Or the reunions that they do.

6. In the mid 1800s, leech collecting became it's own industry. Leech collectors used animal legs to attract leeches which were then used in medical procedures. And that is just one of the many reasons I'm glad I didn't live in the mid 1800s.

7. On that note, in the 19th century, resurrectionists or "body snatchers" were people hired to remove corpses from graves for medical university students to use. I feel bad for whoever had to dig that up. But also hungry.

8. Speaking of death, in many cultures, there was a ritual in which food and ale were left on a corpse to absorb that person's sins. A sin-eater would eat this food, essentially taking the burden of another's sins. This was common in the European Middle Ages, but there are also signs of similar rituals in Aztec mythology.

9. Let's move on from death for awhile and move onto something much more uplifting. Factory life. A knocker up is, uh, not what it sounds like. During the Industrial Revolution in Britain, this was the person who went from house to house waking workers in the morning. To do this, they knocked on the windows... hence the name.

10. A lector provided factory workers with much needed entertainment. They would read news and literature out loud in the factories. Factory life, it wasn't as bad as you think. Just kidding, it actually totally was. It was awful. This is a tiny lector, who only reads tiny John Green books. He's a big, I mean, little fan.

11. In 18th and 19th century London, mudlarks collected anything that may have fallen in the river that could be sold. This could be things like lost goods, or copper, or coal, iron, rope, and so on.

12. Between 1850 and 1860, filibuster referred to the American mercenaries who attempted to revolutionize Central America and the Spanish West Indies.

13. Lungs were people to fan the fire in an alchemists workshop. It turned out that doing this while an alchemist was trying to turn various metals into gold as not good for the lungs.

14. An alnager was responsible for ensuring that woolen goods were of the highest quality and that no one was being cheated on the amount of fabric ordered. Alnagers had Richard I to thank for their jobs as he ordered that "woolen cloths, wherever they were made, shall be of the same width, to wit, of two ells within the lists, and of the same goodness in the middle and sides." An ell was a unit of measurement, by the way. As opposed to an eel which is an animal that will electrocute you.

15. In Britain, in the 1800s, the "necessary woman" was the servant responsible for emptying and cleaning chamber pots.

16. Lamplighters used long poles to light, extinguish, and refuel street lamps. Then electric lamps were introduced.

17. Another job that has electricity to thank for its demise - ice cutting. Ice cutters would saw up ice on frozen lakes for people to use in their cellars and refrigerators. You saw this in Frozen. But, surprisingly, that Disney movie didn't tell you that this job was actually really dangerous.

18. A fuller helped make textiles by walking on the backside of the cloth to bind the fibers together and give cohesion to the newly woven fabric. It wasn't just stomping though. Fullers soaked the cloth in a mixture of clay - fuller's earth - and urine while it was being trampled. Fulling existed for a long time too. It's even mentioned in the Bible.

19. Thimbleriggers is a fun word to say. It's also a person who ran the game Thimblerig, the predecessor to Three-card Monte. It involved shuttling a pea among three thimbles and betting on which thimble the pea was under. The game itself dates back to Ancient Greece, but it started being called Thimblerig in the 1800s in England.

20. Here's a fun one because it's about to get super depressing. Bowling alley pinsetters were young boys employed at bowling alleys to set up the pins for clients. Then the mechanical pin setter was invented in 1936.

21. Until around the 18th century in England, dog whippers were employed by churches. Unfortunately, that's exactly what it sounds like. They kept dogs off of the church yard by, by whipping them.

22. Gong farmer was a job that lasted through the 19th century in Europe. They would come to houses at night and then dig out all the feces under the privy, then carry it to a dump where it was recycled as fertilizer and building materials. Sounds like a pretty crappy job.

23. Another job that lasted through the 19th century in Europe - the herb strewer. This person walked with royals throwing cowslips, lavender, maudlin, and pennyroyal on the ground. This was to mask the Thames scent, which mostly contained poop back then. Thank

you Industrial Revolution.

24. Okay, let's speed up. A catchpole rounded up delinquent debtors.

25. A weirkeeper was a keeper of fish traps.

26. Hobblers towed boats on a river or canals.

27. Arkwrights made arks, like wooden chests or coffers.

28. Redsmiths were like blacksmiths, only they worked with copper instead of iron.

29. Knackers made harnesses.

30. Chandlers made candles, and fell in love with Monica.

31. Egglers were egg merchants.

32. Colliers made and sold charcoal.

33. Haberdashers dealt in men's furnishings.

34. And an ackerman was an ox herder. Why didn't they just go by ox herders?

35. And finally, I return to the salon to tell you that a hayward was an officer in charge of fences and hedges.

Thanks for watching Mental Floss on YouTube, which is made with the help of all these nice people.

Every week we endeavor one of your mind-blowing questions. This week's question comes from Nathaniel Ferguson who asks "When was pie invented?" The first pies were made about 9500 BCE during the New Stone Age. They consisted of some sort of flat crust with honey or another tasty treat inside. And at some point before 2000 BCE, a recipe for chicken pie was written down. The first recorded evidence of savory pie.

If you have a mind-blowing question you would like answered, leave it below in the comments and we will try to answer it. Thank you for watching and DFTBA!