

Activity Guide



Voices of Change



University of Massachusetts Lowell
Graduate School of Education

Lowell National Historical Park

**Connections
to National
Standards
and State
Curriculum
Frameworks**

Voices of Change is an interdisciplinary program designed to help students achieve state and national standards in History/Social Science and English/Language Arts. The working of standards varies from state to state, but there is substantial agreement on the knowledge and skill students should acquire. The standards listed below, taken from either the national standards or Massachusetts standards, illustrate the primary curriculum links made in *Voices of Change*.

History/ Social Science

Students understand how the Industrial Revolution, the rapid expansion of slavery, and the westward movement changed the lives of Americans. (National Standards)

Students demonstrate understanding of the rise of the American labor movement, and of how political issues reflected social and economic changes. (National Standards)

Students recognize the importance of individual choices, action, and character. (Massachusetts)

Students explain differences in the points of view in historical accounts of controversial events. (Massachusetts)

Students understand the effects of inventions and discoveries that have altered, for better or worse over time, working and safety conditions in manufacturing; and discoveries and inventions that have transformed daily life. (Massachusetts)

English/Language Arts

Analyze how a work of literature can be shown to reflect the period, ideas, customs, and outlook of a people living in a particular time in history. (Massachusetts)

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Program Description

Voices of Change is a 45 minute program which focuses on life and work in the industrial city of Lowell. Students will meet one of the following characters: mill girl, loom fixer, or boardinghouse keeper, and examine authentic artifacts to learn about life “on the corporation” during the early years of the American Industrial Revolution. Students participate in an interactive role-play illustrating the viewpoints of mill management, mill workers, and Lowell citizens as they discuss the issue of a shorter, ten-hour workday.

Theme

All that we consider “modern” was significantly shaped by the Industrial Revolution, whether it be in technology, politics, art, culture, or the nature of work itself.

Life “on the corporation” presented workers with new opportunities, challenges, and choices.

Program Objectives

After using the activities in this guide and participating in the Ranger/Museum Teacher led *Voices of Change* program, students will be able to:

- describe three elements of life “on the corporation” as experienced by mill workers
- summarize different points of view regarding working and living conditions in Lowell
- identify, from their own perspectives, two major costs and two major benefits of the Industrial Revolution



Pre-Visit Activities

1. *Lyddie*

This program makes an excellent complement to a work of historical fiction we highly recommend: *Lyddie*, by Katherine Paterson. In the novel, Lyddie, is asked to sign a petition calling for a shorter, ten-hour workday. After witnessing the negative effects of mill work on the health of her friend, Lyddie feels she should speak up for better working conditions. However, if she does so, she risks losing her job and her dream of buying back her family's farm.

During the Ranger/Museum Teacher-led program, students will role-play historic characters and adopt the viewpoints of various people faced with the same issue: deciding how they feel about the Ten-Hour Movement and whether they should sign the petition.

2. Character Development Activity:

The following pages contain “Who Am I?” worksheets students can use to develop historic characters or to create realistic composite characters. This activity helps make the history of the Industrial Revolution relevant and personal. It is important that students think critically about how their character would feel about living and working in mid-nineteenth-century Lowell, a booming industrial city whose textile workers were growing increasingly dissatisfied with working twelve to fourteen-hour days and about certain issues of the day, especially the Ten Hour Movement. This activity also presents opportunities for related language arts activities, social science activities, and further research.

Enclosed are short biographies of 32 people who actually lived in Lowell in the 1840's. Some of them were vocal about their views of the Ten-Hour Movement, while others were not. Whether your students use these biographies or create composite characters of their own, they will be asked to role-play during the program. The Ranger/Museum Teacher will also be role-playing a composite or historically based character. During the program, it would be helpful if students wore nametags or placards with their character name and job title.

The “Who Am I? — Historic Characters” and “Who Am I? — Composite Characters” information can be found at the end of this activity guide.

Who Am I?

Name:

Male or Female?:

Year character was born:

Current age (in 1845):

Family:

Parents and Siblings

Spouse

Children

Friends:

Town or region where you were raised:

Religion or other beliefs:

Wealth:

Education and work experience:

Health:

Personality:

Greatest fear:

How do you feel about your family back home?

Favorite and least favorite activities outside of work:

Favorite and least favorite part of your job:

How do you feel about slavery and abolition?

About the Ten-Hour Movement?

About your boardinghouse and boardinghouse keeper?

About your roommates?

About living in a big city?

What are your plans for the future?

Post-Visit Activities

1. What Happened to the Ten-Hour Petition?

In 1845 a Ten-Hour Petition was sent to the Massachusetts Legislature asking for a ten-hour workday. On the petition were 2000 names, 1500 of which were from Lowell. Although this was not the first time the Legislature had received Ten Hour Petitions, this time the State Legislature decided to set up a committee to look into the issue.

The legislature made a careful choice when they selected William Schouler to head this new Committee on Manufactures. Schouler was the editor of the Lowell Courier, a newspaper which sympathized with mill owners. In February 1845 six women and three men testified on the conditions in the mills. They spoke of their wages, their jobs, and what their thoughts were on the ten-hour day. Most complained of ill health, attributing their illness to the long hours of labor in unhealthy conditions.

On March 12, 1845, the Committee released its finding that "legislation is not necessary at the present time." They cited several reasons for this decision. First, they argued, any such law should be general in nature, including in it individuals and co-partnerships, and they were not ready to make such sweeping legislation. Second, they claimed the factory system was no more injurious to health than any other indoor occupation. Third, they noted that hours could not be regulated without cutting wages, and that "labor is intelligent enough to make its own bargains, and look out for its own interest without any interference from us." The Committee also stated that shortening the work day would have the same result as shutting the mills down one day a week, making them unable to compete with other states in the same line of manufacture. The report ended with the Committee's claim that they supported shorter days and better working conditions, but it was not for them to remedy the situations faced by the workers. It was the responsibility of the owners of the mills themselves.

More failed attempts followed until a depression in 1848 left many textile workers unemployed and unable to protest against the long hours. When the ten-hour question again arose in the 1850's, it was not the workers, but the politicians who were behind it. Changes began in 1853 when the corporations passed an eleven-hour day, but the ten-hour day was not fully accepted until 1874—thirty years after the beginning of the Ten Hour struggle, and then it only applied to women and children.

Questions:

- Why were the mill workers unsuccessful in 1845?
- What other strategies could the mill workers have employed in their fight for the Ten-Hour Day?
- How many hours do people generally work today?
- Do you think people are working more or less today than they did in 1845?
- If the ten-hour fight were going on today, what tactics might workers employ?

2. Labor Music

Music is important to people and has particular importance to their work. Throughout the labor history of the U.S., one finds music. Some songs are about work, and some songs aid in getting work done; sea chanties (maritime work songs) are one example, and cadence or jodies (military marching tunes) are another example. Music was also used as a form of protest and a way of joining people together. In the labor movement, songs were and still are used to unite people and to influence thinking about work and workers.

Labor songs are often set to popular tunes. An example of this from the early twentieth century is "The Good Old Picket Line" sung to the tune of "In the Good Old Summer Time."

*In the good old picket line,
In the good old picket line,
The workers are from ev'ry place, from nearly ev'ry clime.
The Greeks and Poles are out so strong and the Germans all the time,
But we want to see more Irish in the good old picket line.*

Questions:

- Why would a songwriter use a popular tune for a labor or protest song?
- Why did labor organizers use music?
- Can you think of other ways music has been used to effect political change?

"I Cannot Be A Slave"

The following song, "I Cannot Be A Slave," was sung by "mill girls" during an 1836 "turn-out" or strike. It was set to the popular tune of "I Cannot Be A Nun."

Questions:

- What does the singer mean when she sings "I will not be a slave?"
- What do the words mean to you?
- How is the singer making a statement by using rhetoric to compare her situation to slavery?
- Does the fact that this is an antebellum-era song change how you think about the words to the song?

Extension:

Using the technique and ideas about labor music from the previous activity, instruct students to write new words to the tune of a popular song. Students should write lyrics that are persuasive and that express their thoughts and feelings about schoolwork, homework, household chores, or a paid job. Discuss the following questions with your students:

- How will what you write help shape the way people think or feel about work?
- How effective would your song be in persuading people to think differently about the work you described?

3. Who Makes the Rules?

In this activity, students will use their roles of historical or composite Lowell characters from the 1840's. Students should consider their relationship to the mills: as a worker, owner, town official, or other Lowell citizen.

Have students consider the following questions:

- Who should make the rules for the mills?
- Should mill owners be allowed to create all the rules for their mills?
- Should the government make decisions about the working conditions of its citizens?
- Should workers be involved in creating rules for their factories?

If we could do it all over again...

Imagine the classroom is a lecture hall in Lowell's City Hall. The hall is packed with citizens, for today there is to be a debate and a vote on who will make the rules and regulations that will govern the working conditions of the workers within the factories.

Choose three people to start the debate:

- one in favor of mill owner management and regulation
- one in favor of joint decision-making between owners and employees
- one in favor of government regulations regarding hours, conditions, etc.

Have others join in the discussion, keeping in mind what their character would have believed. At the end of the discussion, vote on whom should make the rules for the mill.

Create a list of rules for the mills based on your class decision. Then look at a list of rules from the handout **Regulations: Hamilton Manufacturing Company**. How are your rules similar or different?

Regulations

TO BE OBSERVED BY ALL PERSONS EMPLOYED IN THE FACTORIES OF THE

HAMILTON MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

The Overseers are to be punctual in their rooms at the starting of the mill, and not be absent unnecessarily during working hours. They are to see that all those employed in their rooms, are in their places in due season, and keep a correct account of their time and work. They may grant leave of absence to those employed under them, when they have spare hands to supply their places, and not otherwise, except in cases of absolute necessity.

All persons in the employ of the Hamilton Manufacturing Company are to observe the regulations of the Overseer of the room where they are employed. They are not to be absent from their work without his consent, except in cases of sickness, and then they are to send him word of the cause of their absence. They are to board in one of the houses of the Company, and give information to the Counting Room, where they board, when they begin, or whenever they may change their boarding-place, and are to observe the regulations of their boarding-house.

Those intending to leave the employment of the Company are to give at least two weeks' notice to

their Overseer, and their engagement with the Company is not considered as fulfilled, unless they continue faithfully in their employment during this time.

The Company will not employ any one who is habitually absent from public worship on the Sabbath.

A Physician will attend once in every month at the Counting Room, to vaccinate all who may need it, free from expense.

All persons entering into the employment of the Company are considered as engaged for twelve months, and those who leave sooner will not receive a regular discharge.

Payments will be made monthly, including board and wages, which will be made up the last Saturday but one in every month, and paid in the course of the following week.

These regulations are considered part of the contract with all persons entering into the employment of the Hamilton Manufacturing Company.

JOHN AVERY, *Agent.*

Who Am I? - Composite Character

FEMALE FIRST NAMES	MALE FIRST NAMES	LAST NAMES
Abby	Alden	Adams
Betsey	Alfred	Blake
Catherine	Alva	Bradey
Eley	Amos	Cheever
Eliza	Asa	Clough
Elizabeth	Augustus	Coburn
Fanny	Barzillai	Crowell
Hannah	Burchley	Davis
Harriet	Caleb	Dellingham
Jane	Charles	Dennis
Laura	Cyrus	Ellsworth
Louisa	Ephraim	Emerson
Lovey	Erastus	Flanders
Lucy	Ezekiel	Fletcher
Lydia	Ezra	Giles
Margaret	Frederick	Hardy
Martha	George	Hill
Mary	Gilman	Hopkins
Mehitable	Henry	Johnson
Miriam	Herzekiah	Kendall
Nancy	Isaac	Locke
Orphia	Jeremiah	Maxfield
Ortensa	John	Mellon
Phebe	Josiah	Osgood
Polly	Joseph	Page
Rachel	Jotham	Parker
Rebecca	Moses	Penniman
Rhoda	Nathan	Place
Roxana	Nathaniel	Proctor
Ruth	Noah	Quimby
Sally	Oliver	Sargent
Sarah	Robert	Stearns
Sophia	Rufus	Thurlow
Susan	Silas	Tibbetts
Susannah	Stephen	White
Ursula	William	Williams

These names were taken from the 1838, 1839, 1840, and 1850 Directories of Boott Mills boardinghouses, and also from a Lowell City Directory of 1843.

Who Am I? - Composite Character

Some job assignments typically held by women and girls in 1840's Lowell textile mills:

- boardinghouse keeper
- cloth inspector
- cradle warper operator (prepares warp beam)
- drawing-in girl (sets up weaving pattern)
- dresser (puts starch on warp to strengthen it)
- speeder operator (makes roving to be spun)
- spinner
- weaver

Some job assignments typically held by men and boys in 1840's Lowell textile mills:

- calico printer
- carding machine operator
- clerk
- loom fixer
- mason (bricklayer)
- overseer
- mule spinner (skilled worker)
- watchman

These job titles were taken from the previously mentioned sources and from the model of Boott Mill #1 in 1840, on display in the Boott Cotton Mills Museum.

Who Am I? - Historic Characters

Harriet Hanson

Born: In Boston in 1825. Harriet's father died in 1831 and her mother ran a store. By 1832, the family moved to Lowell where Mrs. Hanson became a Tremont Mills boarding-house keeper for mostly male tenants.

Life in Lowell: Harriet attended public school for 3 months a year. When she was not in school, she worked in the mill, starting in 1834. Ten-year-old Harriet worked at the Tremont Manufacturing Corporation as a doffer (doffers replaced full bobbins with empty bobbins on spinning frames). In 1836, Harriet walked out of the mill in an early "turn-out" or strike. Her mother was fired because of Harriet's actions! Harriet later tended her own spinning frame. Eventually, she worked in the drawing-in room, where hundreds of threads are carefully drawn through a loom's harnesses to prepare it for weaving. Harriet was very active in the Female Labor Reform Movement and The Lowell Offering magazine. Eventually, her activism led to an "honorable discharge" from the mill in 1848. That year, Harriet married William Robinson, the owner and editor of a reform newspaper.

Life after Lowell: Harriet joined an anti-slavery group in 1854 and was also active in the women's suffrage (right-to-vote) movement. In 1880, she became the census-taker for Malden, MA. She testified before Congress on behalf of the women's suffrage movement in 1882. In 1911, Harriet died.

Ann Graham

Life in Lowell: When Ann was a 23-year-old mill girl, she worked in the carding room of the Massachusetts Mills. She worked in a room full of large, dangerous machines that brushed the cotton or wool fibers into a soft rope and prepared the rope to be spun into thread. Somehow, she got her hand caught in the machinery and was brought to the hospital. Barilla Taylor described the accident as follows in a letter home: "Ann Graham, if you know her, has got her hand tore off. It was done in the card room. I hear she has got to have it taken off above her elbow. We don't know but she will lose her life by it." Ann lived, but spent 6 weeks in the hospital. The bill was \$18.00, and Ann would have had to pay it. Like other mill workers, Ann did not have health insurance. It is unlikely she ever returned to work in the mills.

Life after Lowell: We do not know what happened to Ann Graham after her accident. Most town and city records from the 1800's do not list women.
Barilla Taylor

Barilla Taylor

Born: June 29, 1828, in Roxbury, Maine, a small farming town of about 200 people. The Taylors had a large family: she was the fourth of 12 children.

Life in Lowell: Barilla came to Lowell in the fall of 1843 at the age of 15. She got a job in the Hamilton Mills, in the Upper Weave Room, Mill C. She made about \$12.00 a month before room and board payments. She first lived in a company boarding house near Eliot & Webster Streets, but eventually she moved to the private home of William and Abigail Elston with two of her friends, Judith and Else. Barilla purchased clothes while in Lowell and also bought jewelry from George Tebbets, a local shopkeeper. She spent \$10.75 for a string of gold beads, earrings, and a gold ring at his shop. Barilla began to have health problems, most likely due to the poor working conditions at the mills. Barilla died in August, 1845, at the age of 17. The cause of her death is unclear. Her friend Pliny Tidd arranged to have her buried in the Lowell Cemetery.

Susan Elizabeth Parsons Brown

Born: Epsom, NH, in 1824. Susan began teaching school in the towns of Epsom and Pittsfield in 1841.

Life in Lowell: She moved to Lowell in 1843 and took a job at the Middlesex Mills during a strike. The striking mill girls were protesting a cut in their wages. The mills wanted to cut the girls' wages by almost 50 cents a week out of a \$3.00 to \$4.00 salary. The strike failed, and most girls went back to work. Many of the labor actions of the early mill girls were unsuccessful, because women lacked political and economic power. Another problem for labor activists was that many mill girls, like Susan, did not participate in strikes and petition movements. Susan did not work in the Lowell mills very long. She left in 1845 to try teaching again.

Life after Lowell: Susan began working in a shop in Boston. In 1859, she married Alexander Forbes, a Scottish immigrant. In 1866, her husband opened a department store and she ran a boarding house. In 1895, they retired and began to travel. Susan died in 1910.

Harriet Farley

Born: Claremont, NH (around 1813), the sixth of ten children of a Congregational minister. Harriet studied at the Atkinson Academy and sought employment at age 14. She taught school and learned French, drawing and ornamental needlework. She disliked being forced to become a teacher so she left home. "I came to Lowell, determined that, if I had my own living to obtain, I would get it in my own way; that I would read, think and write when I could, without restraint."

Life in Lowell: In October 1842 she became co-editor of *The Lowell Offering* with Harriet Curtis. The two women later became publishers and proprietors until December 1845. Farley attempted to revise *The Lowell Offering* in 1848-49. She later edited and published *The New England Offering*, inviting all factory operatives to contribute. In December 1840, Farley printed a reply to Orestes Brownson's attack on mill owners. Farley defended the mill owners and described the benefits of mill work for young women. Mill owner Amos Lawrence read her defense and remembered it. When Farley assumed co-editorship of *The Lowell Offering* with Harriet Curtis in 1842, Lawrence assisted her financially so that she could leave the mill and devote herself to editing.

Sarah G. Bagley

Born: Candia, NH, in 1806. She was one of four children. A court decision forced them to move off of their farm, and Sarah came to Lowell in 1837, most likely to help pay off the family debts.

Life in Lowell: Sarah worked for the Hamilton Mills for 6 1/2 years and at the Middlesex Mills for 2 more years. Sarah started in the weave room and then moved to the dressing room in 1840. In the dressing room, the threads of the warp beam were coated with starch to strengthen them. The work was quieter than weaving, and it also paid more. In 1844, Sarah helped organize the Female Labor Reform Association. The FLRA supported the Ten Hour Petition (a petition to limit the length of the workday). There were 1,151 names on the petition in 1845, and 4,500 names in 1846. Sarah even testified before the Massachusetts Legislature about work in the mills. She spoke about workers' health, their hurried meals, and their lack of time for classes and lectures. The petition was rejected over and over for many years. Sarah left the mills to work in the telegraph office in Lowell and was the first woman telegrapher in the United States.

Life after Lowell: Sarah left Lowell in 1848 to care for her elderly father.

Lucy Larcom

Born: 1824, in Beverly, Massachusetts. Her father was a sea captain and her mother cared for the family of ten children. After her father died, Mrs. Larcom moved the family.

Life in Lowell: Lucy and three of her sisters moved to Lowell in 1835 with their mother who became a boardinghouse keeper. Lucy attended school for part of the year and spent the rest of her time working in the mill. Lucy began working in the Lawrence Mills in 1835 as a doffer (someone who replaced the filled bobbins with empty bobbins on spinning machines). She was ten years old. Lucy next was a spinner and after that, she moved to the "dressing" room. In the dressing room, the threads of the warp beam were coated with starch to strengthen them. Lucy worked on and off for many years at the Lawrence Mills. She and her sister Emmeline belonged to a church-sponsored "Improvement Circle" which created the Operative's Magazine. Lucy wrote articles, editorials, and poetry for that magazine and later for The Lowell Offering.

Life after Lowell: Lucy left Lowell in 1846 to move to Illinois with Emmeline and her husband Rev. George Spaulding. Lucy graduated from the Montecello Seminary in 1852. She returned to Beverly and continued her writing. She published a book, *A New England Girlhood*, in which she describes her early life and mill experiences. Lucy died on April 17, 1893.

Emmeline Larcom

Born: 1817 in Beverly, Massachusetts. She was one of ten children in the family of Benjamin and Lois Larcom. Her father was a sea captain. When he died, Mrs. Larcom went to Lowell.

Life in Lowell: Mrs. Larcom moved to Lowell in 1835 with Emmeline and three of her younger girls. Mrs. Larcom became a boardinghouse keeper for the Lawrence Manufacturing Corporation. Later, Mrs. Larcom returned to Beverly, but the girls remained in Lowell. Emmeline usually sent money in her monthly letters to her mother. Emmeline and her sister Lucy (and probably sisters Abigail and Octavia, too) attended the First Congregational Church and joined the church-sponsored "Improvement Circle." The Circle grew into a literary magazine called the Operative's Magazine. Emmeline and Lucy were frequent contributors. Emmeline later became the secretary for The Lowell Offering, another mill girl magazine.

Life after Lowell: In 1846, Emmeline married Rev. George Spaulding. They moved (with Lucy) to Illinois. Emmeline was kept busy with the duties of a pastor's wife, so she did not continue writing. She raised one son and three daughters. Emmeline Larcom Spaulding died in California on July 17, 1892.

Eliza Adams

Born: In Derry, NH, in 1815, she was one of eight children. In 1828, the family moved to a new farm. Eliza came to Lowell in 1841.

Life in Lowell: She began working for the Lawrence Corporation as a "drawing in girl." Drawing-in is the job of pulling each thread through the loom. It requires steady hands and good eyesight. Eliza opposed a strike against the mill in 1842 and writes a poem about the event. In 1843 Eliza was able to see President Taylor at a reception held at the Merrimack House. The reception was planned by city leaders and tickets for the event cost \$3.00 each (about a week's pay)!

Life after Lowell: Eliza left Lowell in 1846 for a better paying job. She worked in Lancaster, PA, for a time and later moved, with her brother, to Georgia. By 1848, Eliza had returned to Lowell, not to work in the mills but to work in a dressmaker's/tailor's shop. Later, in 1861, she adopted two daughters and tended a farm with their help. Eliza died in 1881 in Derry, NH.

Elizabeth "Lizzie" Emerson Turner

Born: Lyme, NH, on August 27, 1822.

Life in Lowell: Her father, Humphrey Turner, became ill and had to sell his farm to pay a debt. In 1833, with his remaining \$500, he moved his family to Lowell where his wife became a boardinghouse keeper and his children worked in the mills. Lizzie went to work in the mills at age 11 and attended school until she turned 14. She also earned money writing for The Lowell Offering. She bought a mahogany bureau with some of the money. She worshipped at the Universalist Church. Lizzie later reflected on her days as a mill girl, writing, "There were ten of us girl friends (the majority of who wrote for The Offering) who one summer had each a purple satin cape for street wear. These were trimmed with black lace; and this, with a small-figured, light Merrimack print (or calico), constituted walking costume. We had nothing better for Sunday wear; and as we walked along, sometimes all together, I am sure that it never occurred to one of us that we were not as well-dressed as any lady we met."

Lura Currier

Born: In Wentworth, NH

Life in Lowell: In the 1840's, Lura and her three sisters, Louisa, Maria, and Marcia, traveled to Lowell to work in the mills. Most likely, they all attended the Second Universalist Church on the corner of Market and Shattuck Streets in downtown Lowell. A group of people associated with this church, including Harriot Curtis and the Reverend A.C. Thomas, began a literary magazine, *The Lowell Offering*. The Offering featured the writings of female mill workers. Lura apparently liked her life in Lowell, for in the winter of 1845-46, when her parents would not allow her to go back to Lowell, she wrote to a friend and fellow mill worker to complain that she was bored with rural life. She was presumably happy to be back in Lowell after a long winter and spring in the country.

Life after Lowell: Eventually Lura married a Mr. Whitney and became very involved in establishing a free (public) library in Haverhill, NH.

Louisa Currier

Born: In Wentworth, NH

Life in Lowell: Louisa and her sisters Lura, Maria, and Marcia traveled to Lowell in the 1840's to work in the mills. She, like her sisters Maria and Lura, wrote for *The Lowell Offering*, a literary magazine containing stories and essays written by female mill workers. The stories in *The Lowell Offering* were often about mill workers who came to their mills to raise money to pay off a farm mortgage, to pay for a brother's education, or to support themselves and their siblings because they were orphaned. Actually, many women working in the mills were able to spend their money as they wished: on entertainment, schooling, or fine clothing, for example.

Life after Lowell: Perhaps the sisters' after-work pastimes in Lowell, such as borrowing books from the lending libraries, attending lectures, and enjoying concerts, later influenced their interests and pursuits. Since early official documents and town records do not count or note most women, we cannot be sure of what became of Maria, Marcia, and Louisa Currier.

Maria Currier

Born: In Wentworth, NH

Life in Lowell: Maria and her sisters Louisa, Lura, and Marcia worked in Lowell in the 1840's. Most likely, Maria and her sisters attended the Second Universalist Church on the corner of Market and Shattuck Streets in downtown Lowell. Maria kept notes on the first meeting of the church's "improvement circle," and the magazine *The Lowell Offering* evolved from that circle (most likely from the suggestions of Harriot Curtis and the Reverend A.C. Thomas). Soon Maria, Louisa, and Lura were writing for *The Lowell Offering*, a literary magazine containing stories and essays written by female mill workers. Maria seems to have been content to live and work in Lowell. One year, when her parents would not allow her to come to Lowell for the winter and spring, she complained about being stuck in the country while all the lively and interesting people were headed to Lowell.

Life after Lowell: Perhaps the sisters' after-work pastimes in Lowell, such as borrowing books from the lending library, attending lectures, and enjoying concerts, influenced their later interests and pursuits. Since early official documents and town records do not count or note most women, we are not sure what became of Maria Currier.

Lydia Collins

Born: In New Hampshire in 1800 or 1801.

Life in Lowell: Lydia and her sister Susan moved to Lowell in 1843 to become boardinghouse keepers for the Boott Mill Corporation. When they arrived in Lowell, Lydia was 43 years old and Susan was 40. They were in charge of Unit #52 on James Street. The job of a boardinghouse keeper was very demanding. Every day, Lydia and Susan had to do all the cooking and cleaning for 25 to 30 female mill workers. Like other boardinghouse keepers, they also were required to close their doors at 10:00 PM, with all women inside and all visitors gone home. Any woman who returned late to the boardinghouse, or who failed to attend church regularly, was reported to mill management by the boardinghouse keeper. The Collins sisters were the keepers of Boott Mill #52 boardinghouse for almost twenty years!

Life after Lowell: We do not know what became of the Collins sisters after they left Lowell.

Clementine Averill

Born: Mt. Vernon, NH, in 1815.

Life in Lowell: Clementine arrived in Lowell around 1828. She lived on Kirk Street in a boardinghouse owned by the Boott Corporation and she was most likely a mill girl. Averill wrote an article, published in the New York Tribune, in which she defended Northern mill operatives against the accusations of Senator Clemens of Alabama. Clemens argued that the mill girls' situation was no better than that of Southern slaves. She was baptized in the Concord River and joined the First Baptist Church in the summer of 1830. After the disruption that Civil War caused for the mills, many women mill operatives found themselves out of work. Clementine and two other women founded cooperative homes for these unemployed workers. In December 1877 she left for Tampa, Florida, to establish other cooperative homes.

Charles Metcalf

Born: In 1843, Charles Metcalf and wife Sarah left Winthrop, Maine, bound for what they called the "city of spindles," or Lowell. In his letters Charles describes traveling to Lowell by stage coach and train. Charles knew that once he got to Lowell he could visit with friends and relatives who could help him find work in the mills.

Life in Lowell: Charles found work at the Massachusetts Mills, where he worked carrying roving on bobbins in the Spinning Room for 63 cents a day. Charles described his job as "rather hard work. . . . I have to carry out and lay on top of the frames 5,600 or more bobbins every day, and the same number of empty ones back again." He suffered daily nosebleeds, which he blamed on the lint in the air, and was so exhausted he fell asleep in church. Eventually Charles escaped from the mill to the much better and more rewarding work at the "big shop," the Lowell Machine Shop. His female relatives in the Massachusetts Mills had no such option.

Reverend Theodore Edson, D.D.

Born: In Bridgewater, MA, on August 24, 1793. Theodore learned carpentry but then abandoned this trade to prepare for a professional career. He taught school for two years, then went to Phillips Academy in Andover in 1816 to prepare for college. He entered Harvard in 1818 and graduated with honors. Theodore was an assistant at St. Matthew's Church in South Boston when he was invited to come to Lowell. He accepted, saying later, "I entered the ministry with a deep sense of unworthiness of so great an honor, and with intense gratitude to God for putting me into the sacred calling."

Life in Lowell: Rev. Edson preached his first sermon in Lowell in the Merrimack Company's school house, on March 7, 1824. In 1825, St. Anne's church opened and he became its first pastor. In 1832, Rev. Edson favored a proposal to build two grammar schools for \$20,000. He argued that centralized schools would create a more stable atmosphere where morality, discipline and a sense of community could be fostered. The factory owners, such as Kirk Boott, opposed his proposals because they owned most of Lowell's property and would have had to pay higher property taxes to pay for the schools. Boott opposed Edson and his support of the schools so much that he stopped attending church at St. Anne's! Eventually, Edson's proposals won out. Rev. Edson served on the School Committee for many years, and was known as the "Father of Our [Lowell] School System." Reverend Edson died in 1893.

Dr. Elisha Bartlett

Born: Smithfield, RI, on October 6, 1804. At age 22, Bartlett graduated from Brown University Medical School, then traveled one year in Europe.

Life in Lowell: He settled in Lowell and started his medical practice in 1827. Dr. Bartlett wrote many books on the practice of medicine and edited the journal *Medical Literature and American Medical Students' Gazette* (1832). Dr. Bartlett was elected as Lowell's first mayor in 1836, and re-elected in 1837. In July 1840, he published a series of articles in the *Lowell Courier* which later became a pamphlet called "A Vindication of the Character and Condition of the Females Employed in the Lowell Mills Against the Charges Contained in the *Boston Times and Boston Quarterly*." In these writings, Dr. Bartlett claimed that work in the factories was beneficial to the health of the operatives. In the preface to this pamphlet, Dr. Bartlett praised mill worker Harriet Farley, who had also defended the benefits of mill work. Dr. Bartlett's work clearly reflected the views of factory owners.

Life after Lowell: Dr. Bartlett taught in several medical schools, including Dartmouth and the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York. He became ill and returned to Smithfield, where he died in 1855.

George Tebbets

Life in Lowell: George owned a jewelry shop at 26 Central Street, near Merrimack Street, a busy shopping section of downtown Lowell. Tebbets' shop sold watches, jewelry and fancy goods. A mill girl, Barilla Taylor, purchased a string of gold beads, a pair of gold earrings and a gold ring from him for \$10.75 on October 22, 1844. George gave her a handwritten receipt for her purchases. George lived in a boarding house across the street from his shop with his wife and their eight-year old son, also named George. The Lawson family lived in the same Central Street boarding house. The father of the Tebbets' neighbors, Thomas Lawson, was a well-known painter from Lowell.

Life after Lowell: We cannot locate George F. Tebbets in the 1850 city census or death records. His wife was listed as Mrs. George Tebbets. Usually a woman's name is entered like that in the case of a widow or divorced woman. Mrs. Tebbets was listed as living with Dr. Tebbets, a local physician, perhaps a brother-in-law or cousin. The jewelry business became a partnership and was listed as Tebbets and Appleton in the 1850 City Directory.

William Schouler

Born: William Schouler was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1814. He came to the US as an infant in 1816.

Life in Lowell: Schouler was editor of the Lowell Courier. While he was with that paper, he took the side of mill owners against mill workers repeatedly. Interestingly, he helped (secretly) fund the Lowell Offering a literary magazine written by mill workers. He was a member of the state legislature in the 1840s, and chair of the committee which held hearings on the 10 hour petition (the petition to limit the work day to ten hours). He invited several women organizers to testify, assuming they would not accept. He was surprised when Sarah Bagley and several others accepted the invitation. Schouler opposed mill workers at every turn, and the petition was denied. He himself, however, was defeated in the next election. One of Schouler's assistants at the Courier was William Robinson.

Life after Lowell: Schouler was editor of the Boston Atlas, and also edited a newspaper in Columbus, Ohio. He also wrote some historical works about the Civil War. He died in 1872.

James Cook Ayer

Born: James was born in Ledyard, Connecticut in 1818. After his father died, he went to live with an uncle in Lowell. The uncle, James Cook, was Agent of the Middlesex Manufacturing Co., and later became Mayor of Lowell.

Life in Lowell: James moved to Lowell in 1835. He bought an apothecary (drug store) in 1841. He then developed "patent medicines" and sold them in Lowell. Patent medicines are mixtures of alcohol, drugs, and herbs, which were popular in the 19th century. These so-called "medicines" were popular with mill workers who suffered from diseases which scientific medicines could not cure. Lowell was a major center for this industry. Before long, James built factories in Lowell to manufacture his products. These were sold all over the world, and he became very famous and wealthy. James Ayer and his brother Frederick opposed mill owners in the 1850s and 1860s because they believed that these men, who lived in Boston, did not care about the working people of Lowell. In 1870, they bought the Suffolk and Tremont Mills, and James became the treasurer. He gave a lot of money to local charities. One small town in central Massachusetts was so grateful for his generosity that it changed its name from West Groton to Ayer. Ayer died in 1878.

Pliny Tidd

Life in Lowell: Pliny was a good friend of Barilla Taylor, a mill girl working at the Hamilton Mills. He worked as a saddle- and harness-maker for Day, Converse & Whitteredge. The company was on Central Street, and, most likely, Barilla would have walked by it when traveling between work and the house where she stayed. Pliny boarded at the Whitteredges' house on Appleton Street, just around the corner from the shop. There is a good chance he was an apprentice harness-maker. An apprentice was a man who was learning a trade and would someday be skilled enough to open his own shop. Harness- and carriage-makers were necessary in the 1840's, because horses and carriages were the major forms of transportation. When Barilla Taylor died, Pliny had her buried in the Lowell Cemetery. In a letter to Barilla's parents, he described her headstone as a "good strate" stone with engraving in "good taste."

Life after Lowell: Pliny is listed in the 1844 Lowell City Directory, but after that there is no record of him living in Lowell. Perhaps he was able to move on and open his own shop, or perhaps not. Most likely we will never know.

John Aiken

Born: John Aiken was born in 1797 in Bedford, NH. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1819. He was both a lawyer and a teacher in Vermont for many years. He was hired as Agent of the Tremont Mills in 1833. He was almost certainly hired because his wife, Mary, was related to several major mill owners, including the Appletons and the Lawrences.

Life in Lowell: They moved to Lowell in 1834. John Aiken was an Agent for Lowell mills from 1837 until 1849. An Agent was responsible for the operations of an entire mill, including setting wages and hiring and firing of overseers. Each mill had its own agent. John and Mary Aiken had 4 sons and 2 daughters. John was also a trustee of both Dartmouth College and Philips Academy, and he was a deacon in the Congregational Church. He was a very powerful and influential man in Lowell.

Life after Lowell: Aiken became Agent for another textile company in Andover in 1850. He died in 1867. In Lowell, a major street and a bridge across the Merrimack River are named after him.

Mary Aiken

Born: Mary Aiken was born in 1803 in Hampton, NH. Her maiden name was Appleton. She was a cousin to Nathan Appleton, one of the major investors in Lowell. She grew up in Brunswick, Maine, where her father was president of Bowdoin College. He died in 1819, and her mother took the family to Amherst, NH. There she met and married John Aiken in 1832. They first settled in Manchester, Vermont, then moved to Lowell in 1834.

Life in Lowell: Mary and her husband moved to Lowell because he became Agent of the Tremont Mills in 1834. He probably got the job because she was related to several mill owning families. The agent of a mill made all of the decisions about daily operations of the mill. Mary and John had 4 sons and 2 daughters.

Life after Lowell: Mary and John moved to nearby Andover in 1849, when John became agent for a mill there. They lived there for the rest of their lives. Mary's sister, Jane, married Franklin Pierce, President of the United States from 1853-1857. Mary and her sister were in close contact before, during and after his presidency. Mary died in 1883.

John Amory Lowell

Born: 1798. John Lowell was the relative of many well-known Lowells. Francis Cabot Lowell was his uncle. John married his first cousin, Susannah Cabot Lowell (daughter of Francis), in 1822.

Life in Lowell: John Amory Lowell was a major mill owner. John handled the family's mills in Waltham and Lowell. He was a major shareholder in Boott Mills, Massachusetts Mills, Locks and Canals (the waterpower delivery company in Lowell), and the Boston and Lowell Railroad. He was both Director and Treasurer of all of these at different times. Along with Abbott Lawrence, John planned and built the mill city of Lawrence, beginning in 1845. These two men were also major supporters of the Cotton Whigs. Cotton Whigs were members of a branch of a political party called the Whigs. Cotton Whigs sympathized with the slaveowners before the Civil War. The other Whigs were called the Conscience Whigs, because they were against allowing slavery to expand. John Amory Lowell was also an important banker. He was a Director of the Suffolk Bank (in Boston) for 59 years. He helped invent a system that let member banks accept each other's paper money. In those days, that was important because there was no national paper money-- each bank normally had its own money that was no good at other banks! When the famous writer Charles Dickens visited Lowell, it was probably John who gave him his tour of the mills. John Amory Lowell died in 1881.

Linus Child

Born: Linus Child was born in Woodstock, Connecticut, in 1802. He was educated there, and then he went to Yale University and graduated in 1824. He studied law in New Haven, Connecticut, then practiced law for many years in Massachusetts. He moved to Lowell in 1845 to become Agent of the Boott Mills. He lived in a red brick house across the street from the mill girl boardinghouse that still exists today.

Life in Lowell: Linus Child was Agent from 1845 to 1862. A mill agent was the highest ranking officer in the mill, responsible for all daily operations. From his house across the street, Linus had a good view of the boardinghouses and mills. He could keep an eye on workers who did not like their jobs. He was a strong opponent of the Ten Hour Movement, the petition drive which hoped to reduce the length of the mill workers' work-day. Linus also had a political career. He was the main leader of the local branch of the Whig political party (later they became the Republicans). He was elected to the State Senate six times. He was also prominent in many religious and other organizations, and he became an opponent of slavery after 1850. When Walker Lewis, a free black, died in 1856,

Linus became guardian for his son, Walker Lewis, Jr. He took care of Walker Jr. and his inheritance until the boy was an adult. Linus Child died in 1870.

Walker Lewis

Born: Walker Lewis was a free black. He was born about 1800 in Cambridge. At that time, most blacks lived in the southern states, and were slaves. Their main job was picking cotton. The cotton was sent to factory cities like Lowell, where it was made into cloth. In 1825, Lewis married Elizabeth Lovejoy, who was white. This marriage was illegal under Massachusetts law, since the state did not repeal its ban on interracial marriage until 1843. They had two sons and two daughters. In 1826, he helped form Boston's General Colored Association "to promote the welfare of the race by working for the destruction of slavery."

Life in Lowell: Walker and Elizabeth Lewis moved to Lowell in 1830. He owned a home and a business, and was active in the education, politics, and religion of the city. Lewis' commitment to the anti-slavery movement was shown by his actions on behalf of Nathaniel Booth, a runaway slave. Booth settled in Lowell in 1844 and opened a barber shop. When Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, slave catchers were spotted in Lowell, and Booth fled to Canada. Lewis offered protection to Booth, who returned to Lowell and lived with the Lewis family. This type of defiance of the law, which was common in Massachusetts, led to increased tension between north and south in the years before the Civil War. Lewis died in 1856. Linus Child, agent of the Boott Mills, became guardian for Lewis' son.

Nathan Appleton

Born: Nathan Appleton was born in 1779 into a socially prominent family in Ipswich, MA. He attended Dartmouth College but left to join his brother in a mercantile business in Boston. While on a business trip to Great Britain in 1811, Appleton met Francis Cabot Lowell, who was investigating the English system of cotton manufacture. Lowell interested Appleton in establishing a cotton factory in the United States and the two men, along with Patrick Tracy Jackson, became partners in the Boston Manufacturing Company, which operated a water-powered cotton mill in Waltham, Massachusetts. When the Waltham "experiment" proved highly profitable, Appleton and his partners expanded their manufacturing to East Chelmsford to take advantage of the Pawtucket Falls' water power on the Merrimack River. The Boston-based Nathan Appleton was celebrated as one of Lowell's founders.

Life in Lowell: Appleton and his family never relocated to Lowell. However, Nathan visited periodically to observe the construction and operation of the mills. Short in stature with long, bushy sideburns and wavy brown hair, Appleton was a shrewd businessman who sought to attract a predominately female workforce composed of what he

termed "the daughters of respectable farmers . . . to come into [the] mills for a temporary period." Appleton not only became president of the Merrimack Mills, but also served in the Massachusetts legislature for a dozen years. He was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1830. Appleton died in 1861.

Robert Dale Owen

Born: Great Britain in 1801. His father, Robert Owen, a famous philosopher and industrialist in England and America during the early industrial revolution, believed that if workers and owners cooperated, there would be enough wealth for everyone. Owen moved to the US with his father in 1825, where they established a cooperative factory community at New Harmony, Indiana. He taught school and edited the *New Harmony Gazette*. The community failed in 1828 when the partners could not agree on how it should be run. Owen went to New York, where he edited another newspaper. Later he returned to Indiana, where he was a Congressman from 1843-47. He opposed slavery and campaigned for women's rights.

Life in Lowell: Robert Dale Owen never lived in Lowell, but visited here several times in 1844 and 1845. He was quite famous, and thousands of mill workers went to listen to his speeches. Many of them liked his idea that the workers should control the mills.

Life after Lowell: Owen continued to speak out in favor of reform movements, and wrote several books. He died in 1877.

William Robinson

Born: Concord, MA, in 1818. Robinson attended local schools and got his first job as an assistant with the *Concord Gazette* in 1835, at the age of 16. He became editor of the *Concord Republican* in 1839. Robinson sold that paper to William Schouler of Lowell in 1842. Schouler merged the paper with the *Lowell Courier*, and invited Robinson to become assistant editor.

Life in Lowell: Robinson left Concord to work for the *Courier* in Lowell. He was sent to Washington to report on national news. At this time, he became sickened by the selling of slaves in the national capital, and became a strong abolitionist (opponent of slavery). Robinson antagonized many of his old friends in Lowell when he returned. To them, his opposition to slavery threatened Lowell's success. After all, Lowell could not exist without cotton, and who picked the cotton? In 1848, Robinson married Harriet Hanson, a former "mill girl" whom later became a famous writer. They had two daughters and a son. Robinson became one of the founders of the Free-Soil (anti-slavery) Party in New England in 1848, and was a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1851-53. While there, he spoke in favor of the Ten Hour Law.

Life after Lowell: Robinson left Lowell and his job with the *Courier* because of his anti-

slavery attitudes. He advocated war against the southern states to free the slaves. When the Civil War began in 1861, he found his views had become popular. He served as clerk for the Massachusetts legislature from 1862-73, and wrote articles for many newspapers. He died in 1876.

Augustus Lord

Life in Lowell: Augustus was the overseer of the Hamilton Mills Upper Weave Room C. An overseer was a manager or supervisor and was responsible for a room full of workers and machines. Augustus' weave room probably had around 160 looms and 40-80 weavers. Many times, the overseers were paid bonuses based on their room's production: the more high-quality cloth produced, the bigger the bonus. That system was called the "premium system" and many mill girls disliked it because it often made overseers more demanding. Barilla Taylor, a mill girl from Maine, worked as a weaver for Augustus. According to Barilla, he was "not the best or I might say, the cleverest."

Life after Lowell: There is not a trace of Augustus working in Lowell after 1845. Maybe he was promoted, or maybe he found another job elsewhere. We will probably never know what happened to him.

Benjamin Franklin Butler

Born: Deerfield, NH, on November 5, 1818.

Life in Lowell: Benjamin's mother was a boardinghouse keeper in Lowell starting in 1828. He attended Lowell public schools and was a member of the first class of Lowell High School. At 16 Benjamin entered Waterville College in ME, where he studied law. He became a lawyer in 1841 and practiced law in Lowell. He also was elected to the Legislature in Massachusetts. As a member of the legislature, Benjamin supported the 10-hour work day. Corporations like the Hamilton Mills tried to fight the 10-hour movement by intimidating workers with warnings like the following: "Whoever, employed by this corporation, vote[d] the Ben Butler ten-hour ticket . . . will be discharged." Such threats kept some people from voting for Butler, because ballots were not secret at this time.

As a leader of the Lowell Democratic party, Butler eventually organized a strong group of Irish voters. Benjamin also supported the rights of mill operatives who had been denied money the corporations owed them. He used his legal training to help them receive their money. Like many Lowell citizens, Benjamin gradually changed his views about slavery, which he initially defended but later denounced, calling it an "institution cursed of God." He was later a Civil War general and Governor of Massachusetts. In 1884 Butler ran unsuccessfully for US president, and in 1893, he died.

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