

LESSON 4



A Train Tour of the Northeast

What are different parts of the Northeast like?

Introduction

Welcome to our train tour of the historic Northeast. My name is Ms. Mariner, and I will be your guide. During this tour, we will visit many states in the Northeast. Have you been to this region of the United States before?

When I am not leading tours, I work in my town's local history center. I like to teach and learn about the early American colonies, the American Revolution, and the founding of the United States. You will learn a lot from me about the past as we go.

Our tour will take you to many different places with historical landmarks. Each place has a story to tell about the Northeast and its people. Famous events occurred in some of these places.

As we visit these places, I want you to look for answers to these three questions.

1. Why do we call the Northeast the “birthplace of our nation”?
2. Why did our nation's first factories start here?
3. What large cities are found in the Northeast?

You'll hear and see clues to the answers to these questions as we travel along.

Watch your step as you climb aboard the train. Our first stop of our journey through the Northeast will be in the beautiful state of Maine.

◀ This train travels through a mountain range in New Hampshire, one of the states in the Northeast region.

Social Studies Vocabulary

American Revolution
canal

Declaration of
Independence

lock

mass production

peak

skyscraper

United States
Constitution



Civics



Economics



Geography



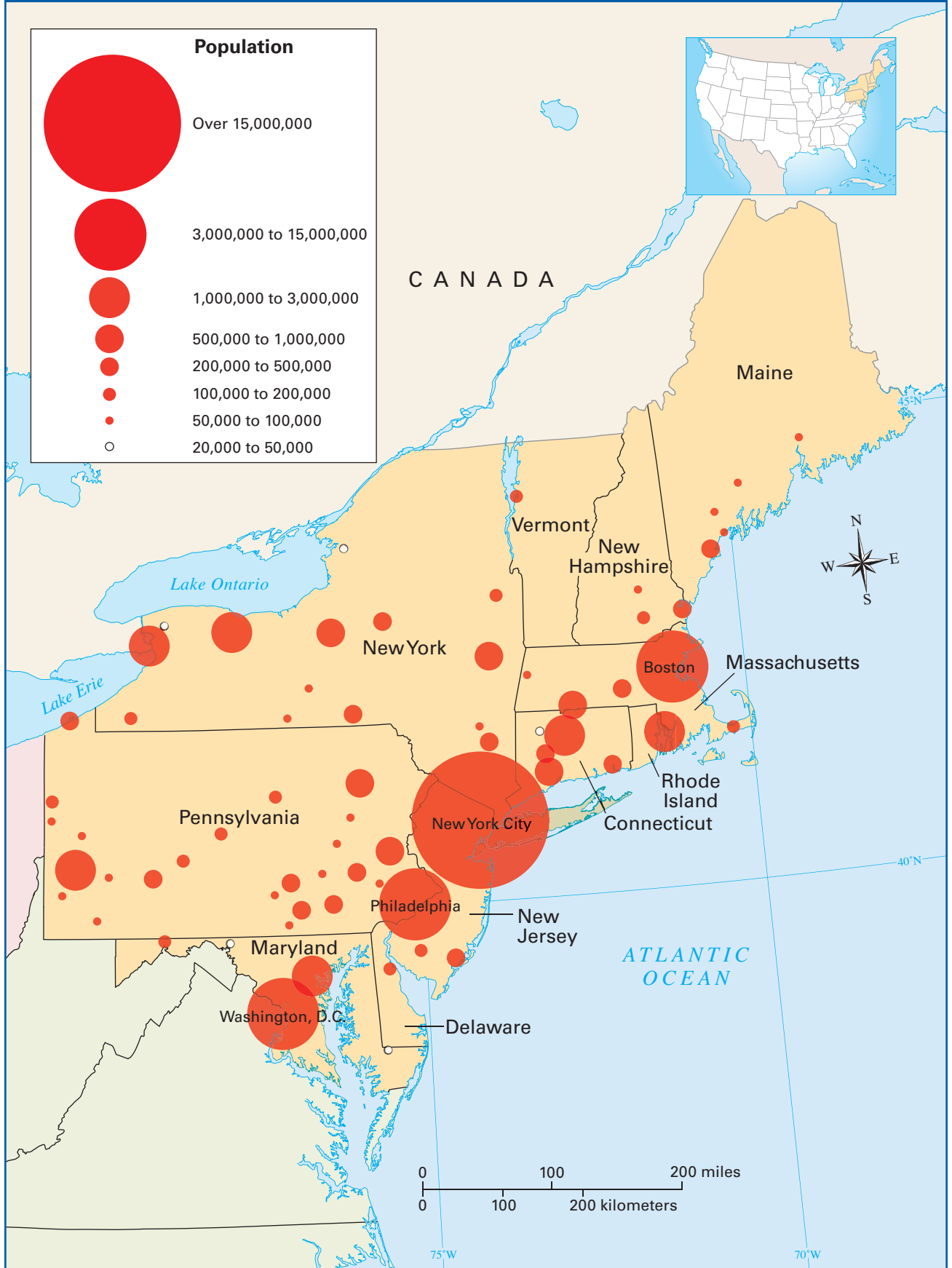
History

The Northeast Region

- Northeast states
- Midwest states
- Southeast states
- National capital
- State capital
- City
- Mountain peak
- Lighthouse



Population of the Northeast Region





The West Quoddy Head Lighthouse is still used today as a guide for ships at sea. This lighthouse is located on the coast of Maine.

1. The Northeast Coast

We are at West Quoddy Head in the eastern corner of Maine. The tribal name of the American Indians living here is Wabanoki, which means “living at the sunrise.” And they are. This is the most eastern point of land in the United States, where the sun rises before anywhere else in the country.

The West Quoddy Head Lighthouse was built in 1808. Its light and foghorn tell ships where the coastline is. This prevents the ships from crashing into Maine’s rocky shore. Some people find foghorns annoying, but my grandfather didn’t. He would even trap lobsters near here. “On a foggy day,” he liked to say, “there is no prettier sound than a foghorn’s moan.”

The Northeast coastline is dotted with harbors, where boats and ships can anchor safely. These harbors weren’t always here, however. Long ago, this coastline was smooth. Then Earth entered a long cold period known as the ice age, when mile-thick sheets of ice called glaciers spread over much of the Northeast.

As the glaciers slowly moved across the land, they carved deep grooves into the coastline. Later, the ice melted, causing the sea to flow into these low places. That’s why you see so many harbors along the Northeast coast today. At our next stop, you’ll see what glaciers did to the mountains of the Northeast.

2. The Mountains of the Northeast

Welcome to Mount Washington in New Hampshire. At 6,288 feet tall, Mount Washington is the highest **peak** in the Northeast. On a clear day, visitors can see for a hundred miles from its top.

Mount Washington has some of the world's most severe weather. It can snow here all year long. The peak is also one of the windiest places on Earth.

My family visited Mount Washington when I was your age. To get to the top, we rode the Mount Washington Cog Railway, which is the second-steepest mountain-climbing railway in the world. The wind speed that day was 75 miles per hour. My mother still believes that if she hadn't held on to me, I would have blown out to sea. The highest wind speed ever recorded here was 231 miles per hour in 1934.

Mount Washington sits in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. The White Mountains are part of the Appalachian mountain range, which is one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world.

peak the top of a mountain

At 6,288 feet high, Mount Washington is the highest peak in the Northeast. Many hikers climb the mountain each year.



In Plymouth Massachusetts, you can visit the *Mayflower II*. This is a copy of the Pilgrims' ship.



3. Democracy Takes Root at Plymouth

This is Plymouth, Massachusetts, where the Pilgrims landed almost 400 years ago. You can visit a reproduction, or copy, of their ship, the *Mayflower*, in Plymouth Harbor.

In 1620, the *Mayflower* left England with 102 passengers aboard. All of the passengers were headed for Virginia. Less than half of them were Pilgrims in search of religious freedom, and the rest simply wanted to make their home in America. The Pilgrims called these settlers “strangers.”

Storms blew the *Mayflower* off course. Instead of Virginia, the ship reached New England. Sick of stormy seas, the Pilgrims decided to stop there instead. But they had a problem. There was no government in New England, and some of the “strangers” looked like troublemakers. What would you have done in their situation? Think about this as you leave the train to visit Plymouth.

* * *

Welcome back. I’ll tell you now how the Pilgrims solved their problem. Before going ashore, they drew up an agreement called the Mayflower Compact. It said that they would set up a government and make laws for the good of everyone. Most of the men signed the compact, and then the passengers elected a governor to lead the government.

Today, Americans believe that people should make their own laws and elect their own leaders. We call this form of government a democracy. During the Pilgrims’ time, when kings and queens ruled countries, this was a bold idea.

4. Boston Leads the Fight for Freedom

We are now visiting the Boston Common in Boston, Massachusetts. The Boston Common is America's first public park, and Boston is one of America's oldest cities. It is also where the fight for America's freedom from Great Britain began.

In 1775, many people in the 13 colonies did not want to live under British rule anymore. Fighting broke out between colonists and British troops about 20 miles outside of Boston. The conflict moved into Boston later that year.

This was the beginning of a long war called the **American Revolution**. The fighting lasted for six years. The American Revolution led to the overthrow, or end, of British rule of the colonies.

Two historic trails begin at the Boston Common. The first is the Freedom Trail. This walking tour takes you to places where the fight for freedom began. The trail ends at Bunker Hill. One of the early battles of the American Revolution was fought near this hill.

The second trail is the Black Heritage Trail. Boston was a safe place for slaves fleeing the South. In many other states, slaves were often returned to the South if they were caught. But in Boston, people worked hard to help African Americans escape slavery. On this walking tour, you will learn about the long history of African Americans in Boston. The trail ends at the African Meeting House, the oldest standing African American church building in the United States.

Which trail should you take? I recommend both. Just be sure to wear good walking shoes.

American Revolution the war in which the American colonies won independence from Great Britain

The Old State House is located in Boston. It is one of the many sights along the Freedom Trail.



5. The Erie Canal Links the Northeast and the Midwest

canal a ditch dug across land that often connects two waterways

lock a water elevator used to raise and lower boats

Have you ever sung a song called “The Erie Canal”? You are looking at the **canal** that inspired the song. A canal is a ditch dug across land, and often canals connect one waterway with another. The Erie Canal is a 340-mile-long ditch that connects the Hudson River with the Great Lakes.

Work on the Erie Canal began in 1817. At that time, there was no good way to move goods from the Northeast to the Midwest. Moving goods by horse and wagon was slow and costly. Moving goods by boat was faster and cheaper, but there was a problem. No river crossed the Appalachian Mountains, which lay between the Midwest and the Northeast.

The men who built the Erie Canal solved that problem. They dug a 40-foot-wide ditch from the Hudson River to Lake Erie. Along the way, they built 83 **locks** to help carry boats over the mountains. Locks are used to raise and lower boats in the water.

The Erie Canal opened for use in 1825, and it was an instant success. Freight prices between Lake Erie and New York City dropped from \$100 a ton by road to just \$10 a ton by canal. New York City was soon the nation’s busiest seaport.

This is a lock on the Erie Canal. Locks are used to raise and lower boats in the water.





On clear days, visitors to the top of the Empire State Building can see parts of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, as well as New York.

6. New York City: Where Buildings Touch the Sky

We are in New York City, the largest city in America. More than 8 million people live here.

New York City has always been a city of immigrants. The Dutch were the first Europeans to settle here, and then people from other parts of Europe and Africa followed. Together, they made New York City a city of many cultures, or ways of life.

Today, people still come to New York City from all over the world. Just listen to people talking on the streets. You will hear English, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Hebrew, Italian, Korean, and many other languages.

Are you wondering how New York City finds room for all of these people? The answer is—up in the air! A hundred years ago, New Yorkers began building **skyscrapers**. People live and work in these very tall buildings.

The Empire State Building is one of New York City's most famous skyscrapers. This office building has 103 stories, or floors, and visitors can go to the very top of the building and look out at the view. You could climb the 1,860 stairs, but I suggest that you take the elevator.

skyscraper a very tall building

7. Hershey, Pennsylvania: A Town Built on Chocolate

One of my favorite movies is *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. So I was very excited when my family visited Hershey, Pennsylvania. At last, I got a chance to see a real chocolate factory. Yum!

Later, I wondered why America's first factories were built in the Northeast. I think there were two main reasons. One reason was waterpower. The first factories were built alongside rivers that rushed down out of the mountains. This rushing water turned big waterwheels that made the machines in the factories run.

A second reason was people power. The Northeast was a good place for people who wanted to start businesses. Candy maker Milton Hershey was one of these people. And there were many people to work in these businesses.

More than 100 years ago, Hershey started a candy business here in Pennsylvania. In his factory, he used a system called **mass production**, which is a way of making very large quantities of the same product. The Hershey bar was America's first mass-produced chocolate bar. Today, Hershey's factory is the largest chocolate factory in the world.

We'll stop here to learn more about mass production. Enjoy your visit, and try not to eat too much chocolate.

mass production a way of making large quantities of products

A worker at this factory checks the quality of a large vat of chocolate. The factory is located in Hershey, Pennsylvania.





The Declaration of Independence was approved in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Today, Independence Hall is part of a national historic park.

8. Independence Hall: The Birthplace of the United States

You are looking at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was here that the United States was born. We celebrate our nation's birthday each year on Independence Day.

The date of our nation's birth was July 4, 1776. On that day, leaders from the 13 colonies met in Independence Hall to approve the **Declaration of Independence**. This statement told the world that the Americans had formed their own nation. This new country was called the United States of America.

Americans fought a long war to win their independence. Great Britain finally agreed that Americans should govern themselves. But how would they do that?

In 1787, some of the best thinkers in the nation met in Independence Hall to answer that question. They talked and argued for months. Then they wrote a new constitution, or plan of government, for the country. We still live under that plan today.

The **United States Constitution** is based on the idea of democracy. Under this plan of government, we, the people, choose our leaders. The Constitution also protects our rights. You have the right to say what you think, to follow any religion you choose, and to have a fair trial. These and many others are rights that the Constitution provides and that Americans hold dear.

Declaration of Independence the document that declared the United States to be free from Great Britain

United States Constitution the plan of government for the United States

The Capitol building is in Washington, D.C., and it is the home of our national government. This is where Congress meets to make our nation's laws.



9. Washington, D.C.: Our Nation's Capital

Does this building look familiar to you? It is the Capitol building, one of the great landmarks of the city of Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C., is our nation's capital, the home of our national government. Here, the people who have the power to make decisions for our country do their jobs. The work of our government is important because the government creates the rules we live by. Picture what life would be like without rules. Think about it as you leave the train to visit Washington, D.C.

* * *

Welcome back. Let me tell you a bit more about our government's rules, or laws.

Our government's laws help to make sure that each person's rights are protected. Our rights include the right to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness.

The government also works for the common good. This means that it tries to act in ways that serve all people, not just a few. Our government seeks to provide an equal chance for all people, and it tries to treat all people fairly.

Our government is a republic. In a republic, the power lies with the people, and they exercise their power by electing leaders. The Constitution says that Americans can choose representatives to make laws for them. People choose representatives by voting in elections. Voting is a key part of being a good citizen.

10. Our Government Buildings

The national government of the United States has three branches, or parts. Each branch has a different role. Each branch helps promote the common good and protect people's basic rights. And each has a special building it calls home.

Congress is the legislative branch. It makes laws for our country. Voters in each state elect lawmakers to represent them in Congress. Congress works in the Capitol building.

The president of the United States is the head of the executive branch. The president's main job is to make sure that laws passed by Congress are carried out. The president is also elected. The president lives and works in the White House.

The judicial branch is the third branch of government, which is made up of the nation's courts. This branch guarantees that the laws passed by Congress are obeyed. The courts also seek truth and justice, and they decide questions and disagreements about our laws. For example, courts decide whether someone has broken a law.

The highest court is the Supreme Court. Its home is also in Washington, D.C.—in the Supreme Court Building. One of the Supreme Court's jobs is to make sure that laws passed by Congress follow the United States Constitution. The Constitution explains what the U.S. government and its leaders can and cannot do. The Supreme Court also helps make sure that government treats all people fairly.



The president of the United States lives and works in the White House. The president is the head of the executive branch.

The top court in the United States meets in the Supreme Court Building. The Court is located next to the Capitol building.



11. Our National Monuments

Washington, D.C., is more than a home to government. It also has many famous landmarks. You have visited the Capitol building and have seen the White House and the Supreme Court Building. Other buildings honor the ideas and the people that have helped make our country great while others hold some of our national treasures.

Washington, D.C., has many monuments. These are buildings that help us remember important people or events. The Washington Monument celebrates George Washington, the first president of the United States. The Jefferson Memorial honors Thomas Jefferson, our third president. Jefferson also wrote the Declaration of Independence. This document says, “All men are created equal,” and it gives some of the main ideas that have shaped our government. In Washington, D.C., you can see the signed copy of the Declaration of Independence. It is at one of the city’s great museums—the National Archives.

The Lincoln Memorial (left), Washington Monument (middle), and the Capitol (at right) are all located in Washington, D.C. These are three of the most famous American landmarks in the country.





The United States National Archives is located in Washington, D.C. This museum holds important records such as copies to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence.

The National Archives also holds the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights, which lists our most cherished freedoms, was added to the Constitution in 1791. Thanks to the Bill of Rights, we have the freedom of speech. We can speak out if we are unhappy with our government and the Bill of Rights also promises us freedom of religion.

As you have learned, there is much to see and do in Washington, D.C. You can find out about our nation's history. You can learn about the ideas that are important to our country and celebrate our past. I hope you have enjoyed your visit!

Lesson Summary

Do you remember the questions I asked you when we began our journey? The first question was why we call the Northeast the “birthplace of our nation.” Boston is where the American Revolution began. And Philadelphia is where Americans first declared their independence from Great Britain.

I asked you why the nation's first factories were built in the Northeast. This region had a lot of waterpower for running factories. And it had people who enjoyed the challenge of starting new businesses and people who wanted to work in them.

My last question was what large cities are found here. You visited some of the largest cities in the Northeast: Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. You also stopped at two smaller towns, Plymouth and Hershey.

Our tour of the Northeast is ending now. I hope you enjoyed your trip as much as I enjoyed being your guide.

The Most Important Cities in Your State

Every state has a variety of cities. Each city has features that make it special. These might be buildings, colleges, sports teams, historical places, or outdoor activities.

Illinois, for example, has the third largest city in the United States—Chicago. It sits on Lake Michigan and has many skyscrapers. The city of Springfield is the state capital and was home to Abraham Lincoln before he became president. Then there is Champaign, a city where more than 40,000 students attend the big, exciting University of Illinois.

Which city do you think is the most important in your state? Can you persuade someone else to agree with you? First, you should research some strong facts about three cities. Then you must develop and present a convincing argument about the best city in your opinion.

Before you start your research, draw a blank research table similar to this example. Pick three well-known cities in your state, and write the city names in the top row. Then find out the size, job opportunities, and points of interest of each. Do your research in several reliable sources. For example, do an Internet search for a city name and choose Web sites that have current information. They could be on government Web sites or the state tourism office. You can also look in encyclopedias and reference books.

A student made this table about three Illinois cities. She can use the information to argue why she thinks that one city is the most important city in the state.

Illinois Cities	Chicago	Springfield	Champaign
Population	2,718,782	117,006	83,424
Popular Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Telecommunications and publishing• Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government jobs• Transportation and warehousing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jobs at university• Health care
Points of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Millennium Park• Wrigley Field• Lake Michigan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lincoln Home National Historic Site• State Capitol Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• University of Illinois• Orpheum Children’s Museum

Build Your Case!

Which is the most important city in your state? There is not one right answer. People have different opinions, and there are many reasons to be a fan of a city. Some people think the state capital is most important, while others like the city with the most people. And others may choose a small city with lots of parks and activities.

You and your classmates should each pick what you think is the most important city in your state. Prepare a presentation to try to convince others to agree with you.

First, state your opinion using “opinion words” like *I think*, *I believe*, and *most important*. Next, support your opinion with three reasons. They may include the city’s size, activities, historical places, sports teams, work opportunities, or natural features. Support each reason with facts from your research. Facts are true statements that tell *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *how much*. You can check that a fact is true by looking in other sources that you trust.

Present your argument to a classmate, and then listen to your classmate make his or her argument. Evaluate your classmate’s presentation. Did it begin with an opinion? Was it supported with reasons? Were the reasons supported with strong facts? Did the presentation change your opinion? Tell your classmate what you thought of his or her presentation and why.

There are many reasons why a city is important. Illinois government leaders work in the Capitol building in Springfield (top). Chicago has tall buildings, a large lake, and manufacturing jobs (bottom).





Lowell, Massachusetts: Factory Life

In the early 1800s, the Northeast was filled with factories. Many of them made just one item—cotton cloth. People around the world wanted cotton goods. In Lowell, Massachusetts, thousands of women took jobs to make these goods. What was it like to work in Lowell’s cotton mills?

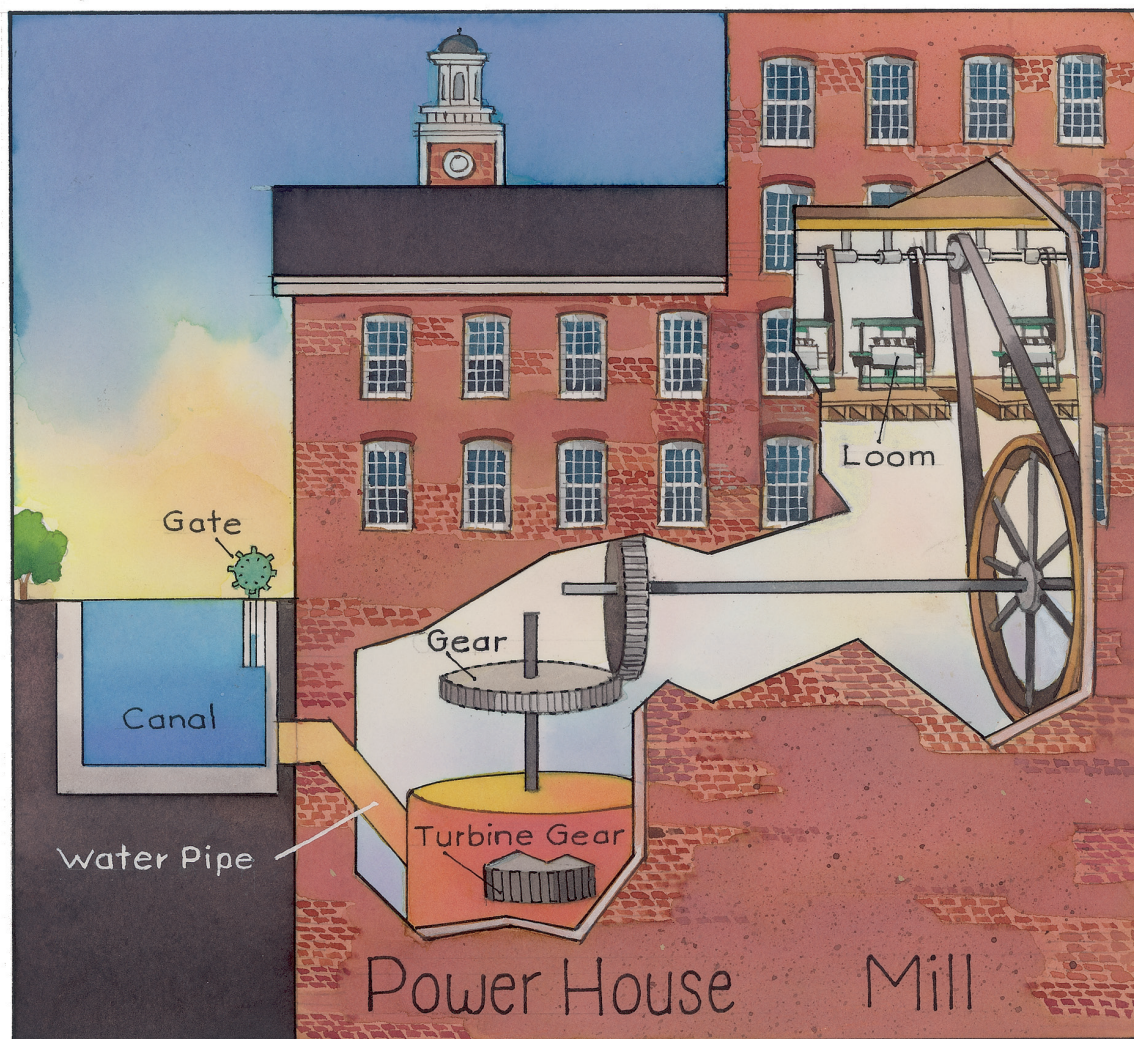
mill a factory in which people make products out of raw materials

Many girls spent their childhoods working in massive mill buildings.

In the still dark just before dawn, loud bells awoke the New England town. Sleepy young women and girls, some only 10 years old, dressed quickly. The sun wasn’t up, but their day had begun.

It was 4:30 A.M. They had to arrive for work at the factory in 30 minutes and if they got there even one minute late, they might lose their jobs. At the very least, they would surely receive an unpleasant scolding. The girls walked hurriedly to their jobs at the textile **mills**, where they would make thread and cloth, in the growing town of Lowell, Massachusetts.





Cotton, Cotton, Cotton!

Lowell was established in 1822. Mill owners in the Northeast had wanted to expand to make more cotton thread and cloth—and more money. So they looked carefully in the region for a place to build a brand new mill town.

They chose the area where the Merrimack and Concord rivers meet. The two rivers made this area the perfect location to create factories. Rivers meant water, and water powered factories. The mill owners built miles of canals to move water from the rivers through the town. This water brought the factories to life, as it turned the mill's turbines, or wheels with blades. These turbines used the power of flowing water to turn gears, which powered the machines inside the mill. With waterpower, the Lowell mills produced millions of yards of cloth in a year.

More than five miles of canals carried river water through Lowell. This water turned large wheels that powered the machines inside the mills.

The Lowell mills grew quickly. Factory buildings lined a mile of the Merrimack River.



Workers Needed

The mill owners needed many workers to produce so much cotton thread and cloth. And because owners continued to build new mills, they needed new workers to fill them. Clever business owners knew that there were not enough men for them to hire for all of those jobs. They choose to hire women—thousands of them—to work in the factories.

In the early 1800s, many Americans felt that women should not work, and the thought of women doing factory work shocked them. But the hum of the mill cities attracted young women and girls from all over the Northeast. Most came from farms. Workers also arrived from Canada and parts of Europe. And men eagerly took jobs in the mills, too. Still, most of the workers were women. They soon became known as “mill girls.” Lowell quickly became one of the most important factory towns in the United States. By 1850, 40 large mill buildings stood side-by-side for a mile along the Merrimack River. And the mills had hired 10,000 women, girls, and men to work in them.

Women came from all over to work in Lowell. These women are from Portugal.





Women could earn more money at the mills than they might have otherwise. This gave them some independence.

Why Did They Come?

In the early 1800s, women could hold only a few types of jobs outside of the home. For example, they could be servants, or they could sew clothes, but these jobs did not pay much. Harriet Robinson, who worked in one of the Lowell mills from age 10 to 23, described the other options:

If she [a woman] worked out as servant, or 'help,' her wages were from 50 cents to \$1.00 a week; or if she went from house to house by the day to spin and weave, or do tailoress [sewing] work, she could get but 75 cents a week and her meals.

At \$2.00 a week, the factories offered good, steady pay. That was hard for many mill girls to ignore as they saw a mill job as a way to a better life.

At the mills, women could earn their own living. They could be independent. Some used their earnings to help pay for a brother's education or a family debt. The girls had more options than they might have had otherwise.

One young mill girl, named Ann Swett Appleton, explained, "The thought that I am living on no one is a happy one, indeed."



Some women ran the spinning machines. Others worked the weaving looms.

Long, Hard Days

But life in the factories was tiring and boring. Women often ran the spinning machines or weaving looms. Spinning machines turned strands of cotton into thread and looms turned thread into cloth. Workers repeated the same tasks for 13 or 14 hours a day.

Today, there are laws that prevent children from working, but in the 1800s, there were not. Even young teens worked from 5 A.M. until the bell announced the end of the workday at 7 P.M. And the mill girls were allowed only two half-hour breaks each day— for breakfast and dinner. Inside the mills, the noise was deafening as hundreds of machines screamed and squealed all day long.

And many factory owners kept all windows shut, even in summer. They wanted the air inside to stay warm and moist. That kept the thread from breaking easily and sometimes workers fainted from the heat.

At times, the stomach-turning smell of burning whale oil filled the air. The oil burned in lamps that lit the dim factories in the dark days of winter.

Often, workers left their jobs because they were unhappy with the working conditions. Others left to return to their families or get married. But many stayed, day after day, for several years and some even stayed as long as 15 years.

Women Speak Out

Mill owners ran crowded boarding houses where mill girls had to live. In 1836, the owners decided to charge women more for their rooms. The owners also lowered **wages**, saying that they had to because the country was facing hard times. As a result, mills were losing money.

Many mill girls could not afford to lose that much pay. About 1,500 women went on strike, or left their jobs in protest. Harriet Robinson described the day:

One of the girls stood on a pump and [stated] the feelings of her companions in a neat speech. . . .

This was the first time a woman had spoken in public in Lowell.

There was community support for the striking workers. But, unfortunately, the factory owners did not change their minds and soon the girls went back to work.

The strike did some good, though. It showed that female workers would join together to fight for better treatment and they did that again and again during the next 75 years. Eventually, mill workers won better pay and working conditions.

The Lowell mills buzzed with activity into the 1900s. But in the 1920s, many of the factories began moving south. By 1955, Lowell's noisy mills had fallen silent. Yet the strong voices of Lowell's mill girls have not been forgotten. ♦

wage a payment of money for work

The *Lowell Offering* published the writings and thoughts of the mill girls.

