

TABLE OF CONTENTS

USING THE TEACHING GUIDE AND RESOURCE BOOK

Curriculum Standards
Lesson Format
Student Team Learning
Lesson Techniques and Strategies
Modifying the Lessons
Materials List

THE LESSONS

Section 1 — Manifest Destiny		
Lesson 1	Going West	1
Lesson 2	Westward Ho!	17
Lesson 3	Westward Ho!	31
Lesson 4	Westward Ho!	44
Lesson 5	Manifest Destiny	56
Review Lesson		70
Section 2 — Texas and California		
Lesson 6	The Pathfinder	73
Lesson 7	Remembering the Alamo	86
Lesson 8	War With Mexico	99
Lesson 9	Gold! Gold! Gold!	113
Review Lesson		127
Section 3 — A Nation on the Move		
Lesson 10	Ponies, Coaches, Wires & Sails	131
Lesson 11	Whaling	144
Lesson 12	Perry in Japan	158
Lesson 13	Cities and Progress	170
Lesson 14	Lincoln and the Railroad	182
Review Lesson		193
Section 4 — Women, Writers, and Artists		
Lesson 15	Women and Education	197
Lesson 16	Seneca Falls	210
Lesson 17	The Mills	224
Lesson 18	America's Literary Movement	235
Lesson 19	Transcendentalism and American Literature	246
Lesson 20	American Painters	256
Review Lesson		267

Section 5 — Toward War

Lesson 21	<i>Amistad</i>	271
Lesson 22	Webster Defends the Union	281
Lesson 23	Douglas	292
Lesson 24	The Dred Scott Decision	306
Lesson 25	The Underground Railroad	318
Review Lesson		332

RESOURCE Book includes:

Student Sheets, Team Sheets, Transparencies, and Documents
Game Cards, Assessments, and Library and Media Resources

SAMPLE

Lesson 17

The Mills

Chapters 25 and 26

Theme

The Lowell experiment afforded the early mill girls a unique opportunity to challenge nineteenth-century standards, find their identities, and contribute to the shaping of America.

Overview

“People with past histories came, to hide their griefs and their identity, and to earn an honest living by the ‘sweat of their brow,’” wrote Harriet Robinson, who was a Lowell mill girl during the 1830s and 1840s. Much has been written about factory life during the Industrial Revolution in both England and the United States, and not usually in the most favorable light. However, factory life in the United States began when help was in great demand, and all classes of working people needed to make an honest living.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, England had already found a way to produce machine-made cloth, but was unwilling to share its invention with America. The English immigrant Samuel Slater memorized the way the machines were built and brought that knowledge with him to America in 1789, although the thread the machines produced could only be made into cloth by hand weavers. Finally, after entrepreneur Francis Cabot Lowell toured the cloth making factories in England during a visit in 1810, he returned to America with

the knowledge of cloth making and employed skilled workers to reproduce the power loom.

In 1813, Lowell and other Boston merchants founded one of the first textile companies in America. Just outside of Boston, the company built a five-story factory that became the largest in the United States. Lowell’s textile mill produced woven cloth from cotton plant to finished product all in one building. The factory was so successful that within five years a second mill was built. By 1820, there were three mills. When the company wanted to build more mills, they had to look for a location that provided more waterpower.

The company found a location twenty-five miles away on the Merrimack River that had all the makings for a successful mill system, including a thirty-foot waterfall, a dam, and a canal on the river. In 1823, the mills opened as part of an entirely new community, which became “the nation’s first successful planned industrial city.” The city was named in honor of Francis Cabot Lowell, who died in 1817. Additional mills and canals were built over the next twenty-five years, and by 1848, Lowell became the “largest industrial center in America.”

Much of its immediate success came from a labor force comprised mostly of young women from rural New England. According to Harriet Robinson, “Troops of young girls came by stages and baggage wagons, and men were employed to go into other states and Canada and collect them at so much a head and deliver them at the factories.”

Not only would women work more cheaply than men, but they were also considered to be more impressionable. Due to the “degraded status” of factory workers in England, Lowell’s investors were careful to make a distinction between their operatives and those in England. Therefore, they sought young women, figuring that before long they would leave the factories to marry and start a family. This natural turnover would prohibit the formation of a permanent working class. Corporate-owned boardinghouses provided safe havens for the young mill girls and reassurance for their parents, although rooms were lackluster and crowded. Women were expected to follow a strict code of conduct and to encourage each other to abide by the rules. Those who failed to meet expectations risked dismissal.

The young women came to Lowell for various reasons. For some, it was the relative freedom that lured them to the mill town. During the mid-1800s, there were few professional opportunities for women outside of domestic work and teaching. The Lowell mills defied prescribed gender roles by offering women another choice. Some women came for the high wages, including “the daughters of people in reduced circumstances,” who chose mill life as a means of aiding the family purse.

By the 1840s, it was clear that the Lowell community had reached a turning point. Competition created by Lowell’s own successes had saturated the market and lowered textile prices. Owners responded by demanding more from factory workers and cutting wages. At the same time, increased immigration had created a profusion of cheap labor.

Overworked and disillusioned operatives formed the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association in 1844 to lobby for better working conditions and a ten-hour workday. Members testified at state committee hear-

ings, held public meetings, and published a newspaper that favored the ten-hour day. While the association had some successes, the ten-hour day, which was their main cause, did not become law until 1874. By then, several corporations had already shortened their workday and many women had left Lowell to return home, go west, or marry.

The early factory workers at Lowell, whether they realized it or not, were part of a grand experiment. Cities and towns had always developed around fertile ground and natural resources. Factory owners had created boardinghouses for their employees before. But never had a town been built—from churches to schools to assembly halls—completely for the benefit of a company and its employees. The Lowell experiment afforded the early mill girls a unique opportunity to challenge nineteenth-century standards, find their identities, and contribute to the shaping of America.

References

- Burke, Kathleen. “The Story of America’s Industrial Revolution.” *Cobblestone Magazine*. September 1981: 10-15.
- Kimball, Virginia. “The Bright Promise: The Mill Girls’ Life at Lowell.” *Cobblestone Magazine*. September 1981: 18-23.
- Larcom, Lucy. 1889. *A New England Girlhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Larkin, Jack. 1988. *The Reshaping of Everyday Life: 1790-1840*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- “Lowell, Massachusetts.” *Center for Lowell History*. <http://library.uml.edu/clh/index.html>. Access date March 2003.
- “Lowell Mills.” *Lowell National Historical Park*. <http://www.nps.gov/lowe/2002/home.htm>. Access date March 2003.

The Lesson

Focus Activity – 5 minutes

Notes

1. Place the transparency: *Help Wanted Ad* on the overhead projector. Read the following aloud to students:

Wanted: children, preferably young women to work in a hot, sticky cotton mill from sunup to sundown, six days a week. This person must not mind the deafening sounds of machines or thick dust in the air. He or she must understand that cotton filaments and dust in the air will likely cause injury to the lungs. Accidents, some deadly, are common occurrences. Lunch and dinner breaks may not exceed 30 minutes including trips to and from the restrooms and dining hall. Lateness is unacceptable. If you agree to these conditions, you are bound to the company for one year. Leaving before a year is up will result in the loss of wages. Please be advised the average age of death for a mill worker is about 20 years.

2. Ask students the following questions:
 - Is anyone here interested in this job?
 - Is the want ad real or fake? (It is a fake advertisement, but the information contained in it is historically accurate. It describes the typical conditions in a New England mill town during the mid-1800s.)
3. Ask students to **Speculate**:
 - Why would people choose to work in these conditions? Give students a few minutes to **Think-Pair-Share**.
4. Explain that in this lesson students will explore the lives of mill workers during the mid-1800s.

Teaching Activity – 25 minutes

1. Introduce Chapter 25, “Life in the Mills,” and Chapter 26, “Working Women and Children,” by briefly reviewing the move toward industrialization in the North,

the need for cheap labor, the establishment of mill towns, and life in the mills by using information in the Overview.

2. **Introduce the vocabulary** *Words, People, and Places to Remember*.
3. **Reading for a Purpose:** Students silently read or **Partner Read** Chapter 25, “Life in the Mills,” and Chapter 26, “Working Women and Children,” in *Liberty for All?* to collect information for a newspaper article about life in the mills.

Write the following questions on chart paper to guide students’ reading.

- Where did most Americans live during the nineteenth century? (Most Americans lived on farms.)
- Describe the typical ironworker, including number of hours worked, age, and working conditions. (Ironworkers worked fourteen hours a day, six days a week. They went into the mill at age nine or ten, and left when they died. Smoke was everywhere in an iron-mill town. Workers breathed “from infancy to death an air saturated with fog and grease and soot.” The work was hard, horrible, and backbreaking.)
- What were some of the dangers associated with working in an iron mill? (The carbon monoxide vapors from the burning coal destroyed people’s lungs. The liquid metal spilled, hardened, and flew off as accidental bullets.)
- Why were women and children hired to work in the new factories in America? (Women were willing to work for lower wages than men. Children worked for still lower wages.)
- Read the letter written by Mary Paul on page 144. What kinds of accidents occurred at the mills? (“...one girl fell down and broke her neck which caused instant death. She was going in or coming out of the mill and slipped down it being very icy. The same day a man was killed by the [railroad] cars. Another had nearly all of his ribs broken. Another was nearly killed by falling down and having a bale of cotton fall on him.”)
- What did Mary do with the money she earned? (Of the \$6.60 she was paid, \$4.68 went to room and board. She also got a pair of rubbers [rain boots] and a pair of shoes.)

- Would she recommend this job to other girls? Explain. (She said the factory was the best place for her, and she would advise any girl who wanted employment to come to Lowell.)
- Why does Melville repeatedly use the word “blank” when describing the scene at the factory? (He repeatedly uses the word “blank” to emphasize the monotony of working in a paper factory. The girls appear to be bored by the repetitiveness of their work.)

Circulate and Monitor: Visit each team to help students read the chapters and discuss the questions.

4. Distribute the Student Sheet: *5Ws and H*, the Document Packet: *Voices from the Mills*, and the Team Sheet: *Headline News*.

Discuss the inverted pyramid format of newspaper reporting and the use of the “5Ws and H” with the class.

In the discussion, be sure to include the following information.

- The first or lead paragraph is the most important in a news story. It answers the 5Ws and H (Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?).
- The second paragraph contains additional, but less important facts and details that add interest and information.
- The last paragraph contains the least important details or background information.
- This method is called the inverted pyramid because the reporter begins with the most important facts and ends with the least important facts.

Student Team Learning Activity – 25 minutes

Reporting about life in a mill town

1. Explain the Student Team Learning Activity: You are newspaper reporters investigating life in a mill town. Each team must write a news article about mill life in fifty words or less based on an assigned headline.

Liberty for All? Resource Book

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Student Sheets	1
Team Sheets & Document Packets	39
Transparency Masters	177
Review Game Cards & Answer Sheets	219
Assessments & Answer Sheets	283
Library and Media Resources	327

Liberty for All?
Review IV



Factories and Mills

Liberty for All?
Review IV



Factories and Mills

Liberty for All?
Review IV



Factories and Mills

Liberty for All?
Review IV



Factories and Mills

Liberty for All?
Review IV



Factories and Mills

Liberty for All?
Review IV



Factories and Mills

13. Why were women and children hired to work in the new factories in America?

14. Where was the site of the first mill factory system in the United States?

15. What was unusual about Rebecca Harding Davis's "Life in the Iron Mills"?

16. Describe the typical working conditions for an ironworker.

17. Describe the typical working conditions for a textile mill girl.

18. Describe the typical working conditions for a paper factory worker.