

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# First-hand Accounts from the Industrial Revolution

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From the EDSITEment resource **History Matters** [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/>]:

1. **Role:** Shoemaker or apprentice

**Account:** “David Johnson Recalls the Shoemakers’ Shops of Lynn, Massachusetts” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6382/>], recollections of the early 19th century, written in 1880.

2. **Role:** Elias Nason, talking about the reputation of factory work

**Account:** “Factories are talked about as schools ‘of vice’: Elias Nason Considers Careers” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5831/>], 1835 letter.

3. **Role:** A slaveholder who has read both articles and who has a strong opinion about how slaves should be treated

**Account:** “The Happiest Laboring Class in the World: Two Virginia Slaveholders Debate Methods of Slave Management” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5801/>], 1837.

4. **Role:** Sally (Sarah) Rice, a farm girl who has taken work at the mill

**Account:** “I Must, of Course, Have Something of My Own Before Many More Years Have Passed Over My Head: Sally Rice Leaves the Farm” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5789/>], by Sally Rice, 1838.

5. **Role:** A British cabinetmaker who sought work in America

**Account:** “I Was a Cabinet Maker by Trade” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5818/>], 1825-1835.

6. **Role:** Female mill worker

**Account:** “Lowell Girls Go On Strike” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5714/>], 1836.

7. **Role:** Mr. Gordon, manager and chief mechanic of a mill

**Account:** “Manager N. B. Gordon Tends to the Union Cotton and Woolen Manufactory in Mansfield, Massachusetts” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5792/>], 1829. (NOTE: This passage is in the form of a log. Though it is stylistically simple, it refers to specific conditions at the mill. Someone mechanically inclined might do well with this assignment.)

8. **Role:** A former tailoring apprentice

**Account:** “The Natural Tie Between Master and Apprentice has been Rent Asunder: An Old Apprentice Laments Changes in the Workplace” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6622/>], 1826.

9. **Role:** The famous author describing what for many readers would be the novelty of traveling on the superhighway of pre-Civil War America, built ten years earlier  
**Account:** “The Canal Boat: Nathaniel Hawthorne Travels the Erie Canal” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6212/>], 1835. (NOTE: This piece is written in more difficult prose than many of the other passages.)
10. **Role:** A former captain with knowledge of and interest in improving the conditions of workers through organizing  
**Account:** “No One Ever Hurried During ‘Cake-time’: Work and Leisure in a New York Shipyard” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6218/>], 1835. (NOTE: This account contains somewhat difficult prose.)
11. **Role:** J.J. Flournoy, a contractor concerned that the presence of free black workers will drive down wages in the building trades  
**Account:** “So Cheapened the White Man’s Labor: White Artisans Contest the Labor of Black Workers” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6376/>], 1838. (NOTE: The author of this piece is racist.)
12. **Role:** An immigrant to America who sought work in New York City.  
**Account:** “They Must Work Harder Than Ever: A Working Man Remembers Life in New York City” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5839/>], 1830s.
13. **Role:** Hiram Munger, a mill worker  
**Account:** “The Treatment of the Help in Those Days Was Cruel: Hiram Munger Remembers Factory Life” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5830/>], by Hiram Munger, early 19th century.
14. **Role:** Female mill worker, or male mill mechanic, concerned about working conditions for men and women at the mill  
**Account:** “We Call On You to Deliver Us From the Tyrant’s Chain: Lowell Women Workers Campaign for a Ten-Hour Workday” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6217/>], circa 1845.
15. **Role:** A factory sewing woman describing conditions for workers and advocating organizing  
**Account:** “Are We Nothing But Living Machines? A New York Sewing Woman Protests Wages and Working Conditions” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6539/>], 1863. (NOTE: This article is very brief.)
16. **Role:** William J. Brown, describing what it is like to be a free black man seeking to learn a trade and find work  
**Account:** “Elevate Us to a Free and Independent Position: William J. Brown (a free black) Looks for Work” [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6537/>], 1831.

## From **Liberty Rhetoric and 19th Century Women**

[<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/americanstudies/lavender/liberty.html>], a link from the EDSITEment resource **History Matters** [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu>]:

### 17. **Role:** A female mill worker or a mill owner

**Account:** The following graphics are grouped as companion pieces representing one assignment requiring little reading.

- Drawing of a Mill Girl, from the Cover of the *Lowell Offering*, 1840  
[<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/americanstudies/lavender/graphics/lowell.gif>]:  
In this grouping, students are to concentrate on the image of the factory.
- Fabric Label for Merrimack Power Loom Jeans Yardage, c. 1830  
[<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/americanstudies/lavender/graphics/merrjean.jpg>]:  
Compare the image of the factory behind the mill girl, above, to the image of the Merrimack factory. What is meant to be conveyed by both of these images about the factories? Are they merely “realistic” representations of the buildings, or do they evoke a certain response in the viewer?
- Timetable of the Lowell Mills  
[<http://scholar.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/americanstudies/lavender/graphics/ttable.jpg>]:  
Using this simple artifact, what can you learn about the everyday lives of mill workers? What does the bell schedule tell you? Why did the bell schedule change seasonally? What is the effective date of the schedule? Why might this be significant?

### 18. **Role:** A female mill worker or a mill owner

**Account:** The following graphics are grouped as companion pieces representing one assignment requiring little reading.

- Drawing of a Mill Girl, from the Cover of the *Lowell Offering*, 1840  
[<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/americanstudies/lavender/graphics/lowell.gif>]:  
How is the mill girl dressed? Does her clothing look like it is a uniform for drudgery? What items is she carrying in her hands? What would be the significance of these items? What does her carrying of those items mean to convey to those who see this drawing?
- Tintype of Two Woman Weavers, 1860 (Merrimack Valley Textile Museum)  
[<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/americanstudies/lavender/graphics/spinners.jpg>]:  
What does this image tell you about the women who worked in the mills? Why is the date that this picture was taken significant? What does knowing the date add to our knowledge about the women in it? Compare this image to the drawing of a mill girl from the cover of the *Lowell Offering*. What are the differences and similarities between the drawing and the photo? What is the significance of the setting of this photograph? After looking at the two images together, would you have expected this image to have the factory in it as well? Why might it not?

- Title Page of the *Lowell Offering*, 1840  
[<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/americanstudies/lavender/graphics/lofffer.jpg>]:  
Who wrote for the Lowell Offering? Why was this significant? What sort of articles were included in the magazine? (That is, judging from the titles, what subjects were of interest to the young women working at the factory?) Judging by the titles of articles, was “old maidhood” a concern among the Lowell mill girls?

19. **Role:** A female mill worker on strike or a newspaper reporter

**Account:** “1834 Boston Transcript reports on the Strike”

[<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/americanstudies/lavender/lowetext.html> - transcript].

(NOTE: This passage is brief.)

From **Internet Modern History Sourcebook**

[<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html>], an extension of the EDSITEment resource

**Internet Medieval History Sourcebook** [<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html>]:

20. **Role:** Harriet Robinson, describing mill life

**Account:** “Lowell Mill Girls” [<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/robinson-lowell.html>], 1832-1848.

From the EDSITEment resource **Whole Cloth**

[[http://www.si.edu/lemelson/centerpieces/whole\\_cloth/](http://www.si.edu/lemelson/centerpieces/whole_cloth/)]:

21. **Role:** Mill owner who created the rules, or mill worker who must obey them

**Account:** “Regulations to Be Observed by All Individuals Employed in the Lewiston Mills”

[[http://www.si.edu/lemelson/centerpieces/whole\\_cloth/u2ei/u2images/act9/Lew\\_rules.html](http://www.si.edu/lemelson/centerpieces/whole_cloth/u2ei/u2images/act9/Lew_rules.html)].

22. **Role:** An overseer who truly believes in his management rules

**Account:** “Plantation Management, De Bow’s xiv (February 1853): 177-8”

[[http://www.si.edu/lemelson/centerpieces/whole\\_cloth/u2ei/u2materials/deBow.html](http://www.si.edu/lemelson/centerpieces/whole_cloth/u2ei/u2materials/deBow.html)].

23. **Role:** An overseer who truly believes in his management rules

**Account:** “Alexander Telfair, ‘Plantation Rules,’ from Ulrich Phillips, ed., *Plantation and Frontier*, Volume 1 (New York, Burt Frantlin, 1910)”

[[http://www.si.edu/lemelson/centerpieces/whole\\_cloth/u2ei/u2materials/prules.html](http://www.si.edu/lemelson/centerpieces/whole_cloth/u2ei/u2materials/prules.html)].

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# The Lives of Americans During the First Industrial Revolution

**Directions:** In order to determine whether the economic lives of Americans underwent great changes in the period before the Civil War, you will conduct interviews with classmates playing the part of pre-Civil War era Americans. The chart below allows room for your notes and conclusions on six interview subjects.

**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Category:** \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Subject	Changes Described by the Subject (in his/her own life or the lives of others)	Overall Rating from 1 to 10: 1 = Completely Different 10 = Remarkably Alike	Subject's Comments on the Quality of His/Her Life
XXX	Average Rating:		XXX