



MAINE MUSEUM OF
INNOVATION
LEARNING +
LABOR

Long Hours, Low Pay

Teacher's Guide and Worksheets

Long Hours, Low Pay

Grades 5-8

Time: 1-2, 50-60 min. class period(s)

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify who the Mill Girls were and their role in the Industrial Revolution
- Describe working and living conditions of the Mill Girls
- Develop historical empathy by imagining life as a Mill Girl through creative writing

Materials Needed

1. "Long Hours, Low Pay" student packet
2. Pencils

Pre-reading/Preparation

It is recommended that students be familiar with the Child Labor section of our website. Reviewing this material can be done together as a class, or assigned for homework prior to the lesson below.

Set Up

This lesson requires minimal set up. Student packets should be copied and read for the class period.

Introduction

1. Ask students to think about the reasons that people work? What are some of the conditions that people work in today? Why are some jobs more dangerous than others? What would be some reasons a person might choose to do dangerous work?
2. Ask students to think about children working? Do they know any kids who work? What type of work do they do? What do they know about the laws regarding children working? ***This is an opportunity to review for understanding of the Child Labor section of our website/to answer any questions students may have and to set the framework for the assignment on the following pages.

Instruction, Teacher Modeling, Guided Practice

1. Read together as a group the first page of the student handouts on the following pages.
2. Ask students to look carefully at the 2 notices on the next page. Ask them what they notice about the advertisements? What surprises them? What do they want to know more about? Ask them to consider what might make someone want to work such long hours for such little amount of money?
3. Review the directions for the activity. Students are to choose how they would spend the \$8 a month they would have on items they might need. Ask them to consider items that the need vs. those that they want. ***Remind them that their housing would also have included basic meals each day, so any additional food items they purchase could be for "treats."

Independent Work Time

1. Students should complete the chart on their own.

Additional Activities

- Challenge students to determine how long it would take them to save for a house if they saved \$1 a month.
- Challenge students to purchase materials they would want for a birthday party including a gift. How much would this cost?
- How much would it cost to make a cake containing flour, sugar and eggs?



Name:

The Southern states of the United States, including Texas, Louisiana, Virginia, and Georgia, have long been known as the "cotton belt" due to their favorable climate and soil conditions, which are perfect for growing cotton plants. The cotton production process involves several stages, beginning with planting and harvesting, followed by the separation of cotton fibers from the seeds. These fibers are then compressed into large bales, ready for transportation to textile mills across the country for further processing into various fabric products.

The Lewiston-Auburn area in Maine was one such region that received these cotton bales and emerged as a significant textile manufacturing hub. Mills like the Bates Mill in Lewiston played a pivotal role in this transformation, converting raw cotton into finished fabric products. Within these mills, the cotton fibers underwent a series of intricate processes. Initially, the fibers were carded, which involved combing and aligning them. Then, they were spun, twisting the fibers into yarn. The yarn was then warped in preparation for weaving, the final stage where the yarn was interlaced to create the fabric.

During the early years of the textile mills, young women known as "mill girls" were employed to operate the machinery and manage the production process. These women typically earned between \$2 and \$4 per week, a wage that was considered reasonable at the time. However, a significant portion of their earnings, about \$1.25, was deducted to cover the cost of room and board provided by the mill owners. This left the mill girls with only 75 cents to \$2.75 per week for their personal expenses. Despite the demanding working conditions and low wages, these mill girls played a crucial role in the growth of the textile industry and the economic development of the region.

The lives of the mill girls were often challenging. They worked long hours in noisy and dusty environments, operating dangerous machinery. The living conditions in the boardinghouses provided by the mill owners were often cramped and lacked privacy. Despite these hardships, the mill girls found ways to build community and support each other. They formed social clubs, organized educational programs, and participated in labor movements to advocate for better working conditions and wages.

The textile industry's growth in the Lewiston-Auburn area had a profound impact on the region's economy and society. It created numerous job opportunities, attracting workers from different parts of the country and contributing to the region's population growth. The mills also stimulated the development of supporting industries and infrastructure, such as transportation networks and housing facilities. The mill buildings, now repurposed for various uses, stand as reminders of the region's industrial past and the contributions of the mill girls who played a vital role in its history.

NOTICE.

On and after April 1, 1854, the Bagging Mill will start at 15 minutes past 6 A. M., and run till 12 M. An intermission of 45 Minutes will be given for dinner. After dinner the Mills will start at 15 minutes before 1 o'clock, and run till 7 P. M.

On Saturdays the time for stopping work will be 30 minutes past 6 P. M.

M. FRENCH, Agent.

Lewiston, March 22, 1854.

WANTED!

120 Girls & Boys!

Owing to the inability of the Mills, to supply the Government with

TENT CLOTH,

(So much needed by our Soldiers now in the field,) as fast as wanted, the Managers of

THE BATES MILLS,


Have been induced to run their Machinery Extra Time, in order to supply in part, the wants of the Government, therefore the above number of hands can obtain employment at the Bates Mills, to do the following work, viz.

Twisting, Spooling, Spinning, Doffing and Quilling. They will be required to work 9 hours per day.

D. M. AYER, Agent.

Lewiston, October 16, 1861.





If you lived in Lewiston between 1858 to 1908, YOU could easily have been a child working in one of the mills. Back then, everyone over the age of eight was expected to work and help support their family. Young mill workers were paid in cash and made an average of \$2 a week after they had paid for their housing, which also included basic meals each day.

Could you have managed your cash AND saved some money back then? Using the provided price list decide how you would spend your money over the course of a month. This gives you a total of \$8 to spend. When considering how to spend your money try to decide if an item is something you might need vs. something you may just want. List the item, how much it costs and why you need it.

Item	Cost	Why would you need this item?

Total amount spent in 1 month = _____

Totoal amount saved in 1 month = _____

1870 Catalogue of Goods

<i>Food Prices</i>		<i>Horses, cattle & gear</i>	
Wheat per bushel	\$1.02	Horse, average work horse	\$150
Flour per barrel	\$3.00	Horse, good saddle horse	\$200
Corn per bushel	40 cents		.
Molasses, gallon	15 cents	Saddle	\$30
Mess pork per barrel	\$9	cowboy saddle	\$60
Mess beef per barrel	\$8	Harness	\$50
Lard per pound	6 cents		.
Butter per pound	15 cents	Yoke of two oxen	\$150
Sugar per pound	7 cents	heifer	\$18.75
1 Cheese per pound	5 cents	cow	\$26
Rice per pound	5 cents	bull	\$90
oranges	\$.50/dozen	3 year old steer	\$62
dried figs	\$.20/pound	2 year old steer	\$22.50
dried apples	\$.10/pound	yearlings	\$12.50
dried apricots	\$.15/pound	calves	\$2.50

Chairs	\$1.25 each	2 colored undershirts -- (white -- \$1.00)	\$1.25
Bed, bureau and commode	\$15	2 colored drawers -- (white -- \$1.00)	\$1.25
Cookstove	\$25	3 New York Mills white shirts	\$2.50
lantern	\$1.00	6 pairs men's cotton socks	\$1.00
Coal	about \$80/year	6 pairs Army wool socks	\$1.00
Kerosene	\$.15/gallon	7 yards blue denim	\$1.00
.		3 yards plain cassimere [cashmere]	\$1.00
Dry Goods		1 hoop skirt, 1 bustle, & 1 hair braid	\$1.00
calicos	10 cents/yard	1 ladies gold locket, plain	\$1.50
		enameled	\$2.00
bleached cotton	15 cents/yard	1 pair ladies earrings & pin set, imported	\$4.50
brown shirtings	13 cents/yard	1 pair ladies solid gold ear drops	\$3.00
domestic gingham	15 cents/yard	1 plain gold ring (all sizes)	\$2.00
blankets	\$3.00 each	1 silver plated hunting case watch	\$6.00
.	.	1 silk parasol	\$1.00
.		1 heavy plaid shawl	\$3.00

dried peaches	\$.12/pound		•
fresh peaches	3 for \$.10	Buggy	\$75
fresh apples	2 for \$.05	Wagon	\$65
sugar	\$.10/pound		•
flour	\$.04/pound		•
coffee	\$.12/pound		•
•			•
<i>Home and farm costs</i>			
Land	\$5/acre (avg. 160 acres)		
Homestead filing fee	\$14		
House -- 32'x40' (4 rooms)	\$700		
House -- 16'x22' (2 rooms)	\$300		
Shanty -- 8'x10' (1 room/dirt floor)	\$25		•
Stable and well	\$150		•
Plows, cultivators, field equip.	\$325		

Prices from Montgomery Ward's First Catalogue, 1872