

Mill Schedule



Date ★ September 21, 1853

Place ★ Lowell, Massachusetts

Type of Source ★ Daily Life

Author ★ Lowell Mills

Context ★ In the mid 1800s, Lowell, Massachusetts, became an important textile manufacturing center. Thousands of people were hired to work in Lowell's factories, including "mill girls." Most mill girls were 15–30 years old and came from farms and small villages in New England. Many of the mill girls lived in boardinghouses near the factories, where they slept and ate their meals. Their days were structured around work. For the first time in history, people worked by the clock. Most mill employees worked 12–14 hours, five days a week and a half day on Saturday. Mill girls earned about \$2 a week.

TIME TABLE OF THE LOWELL MILLS,		
Arranged to make the working time throughout the year average 11 hours per day, TO TAKE EFFECT SEPTEMBER 21st, 1853.		
The Standard time being that of the meridian of Lowell, as shown by the Regulator Clock of ANOS SANBORN, Post Office Corner, Central Street.		
From March 20th to September 19th, inclusive.		
COMMENCE WORK, at 6.30 A. M. LEAVE OFF WORK, at 6.30 P. M., except on Saturday Evenings. BREAKFAST at 6 A. M. DINNER, at 12 M. Commence Work, after dinner, 12.45 P. M.		
From September 20th to March 19th, inclusive.		
COMMENCE WORK at 7.00 A. M. LEAVE OFF WORK, at 7.00 P. M., except on Saturday Evenings. BREAKFAST at 6.30 A. M. DINNER, at 12.30 P. M. Commence Work, after dinner, 1.15 P. M.		
BELLS.		
From March 20th to September 19th, inclusive.		
<i>Morning Bells.</i>	<i>Dinner Bells.</i>	<i>Evening Bells.</i>
First bell,.....4.30 A. M.	Ring out,.....12.00 M.	Ring out,.....6.30 P. M.
Second, 6.30 A. M.; Third, 6.20.	Ring in,.....12.35 P. M.	Except on Saturday Evenings.
From September 20th to March 19th, inclusive.		
<i>Morning Bells.</i>	<i>Dinner Bells.</i>	<i>Evening Bells.</i>
First bell,.....5.00 A. M.	Ring out,.....12.30 P. M.	Ring out at.....7.00 P. M.
Second, 6.00 A. M.; Third, 6.50.	Ring in,.....1.05 P. M.	Except on Saturday Evenings.
SATURDAY EVENING BELLS.		
During APRIL, MAY, JUNE, JULY, and AUGUST, Ring Out, at 6.00 P. M. The remaining Saturday Evenings in the year, ring out as follows:		
SEPTEMBER.	NOVEMBER.	JANUARY.
First Saturday, ring out 6.00 P. M.	Third Saturday ring out 4.00 P. M.	Third Saturday, ring out 4.25 P. M.
Second " " 5.45 "	Fourth " " 3.55 "	Fourth " " 4.35 "
Third " " 5.30 "		
Fourth " " 5.20 "		
OCTOBER.	DECEMBER.	FEBRUARY.
First Saturday, ring out 5.05 P. M.	First Saturday, ring out 3.60 P. M.	First Saturday, ring out 4.45 P. M.
Second " " 4.55 "	Second " " 3.55 "	Second " " 4.55 "
Third " " 4.45 "	Third " " 3.55 "	Third " " 5.00 "
Fourth " " 4.35 "	Fourth " " 4.00 "	Fourth " " 5.10 "
Fifth " " 4.25 "	Fifth " " 4.00 "	
NOVEMBER.	JANUARY.	MARCH.
First Saturday, ring out 4.15 P. M.	First Saturday, ring out 4.10 P. M.	First Saturday, ring out 5.25 P. M.
Second " " 4.05 "	Second " " 4.15 "	Second " " 5.30 "
		Third " " 5.35 "
		Fourth " " 5.45 "
YARD GATES will be opened at the first stroke of the bells for entering or leaving the Mills.		
••• SPEED GATES commence hoisting three minutes before commencing work.		

TIME TABLE OF THE LOWELL MILLS

Arranged to make the working time throughout the year average 11 hours per day, TO TAKE EFFECT SEPTEMBER 21st., 1853. The **Standard time** being that of the **meridian** of Lowell, as shown by the **Regulator Clock** of AMOS SANBORN, Post Office Corner, Central Street.

From March 20th to September 19th, inclusive.

COMMENCE WORK. at 6.30 A.M. **LEAVE OFF WORK,** at 6.30 P.M. except on Saturday Evenings.

BREAKFAST at 6 A. M. **DINNER,** at 12.30 P.M. Commence Work, after dinner, 12.45 P.M.

From September 20th to March 19th, inclusive.

COMMENCE WORK, at 7.00 A.M. **LEAVE OFF WORK,** at 7.00 P.M. except on Saturday Evening.

BREAKFAST at 6.30 A.M. **DINNER,** at 12.30 P.M. Commence Work, after dinner, 1.15 P.M.

BELLS

From March 20th to September 19th, inclusive.

Morning Bells. First bell 4.30 A.M.; Second 5.30 A.M.; Third 6.20

Dinner Bells. Ring out 12.00 M; Ring in 12.35 P.M.

Evening Bells. Ring out 6.30 P.M. Except on Saturday Evenings.

From September 20th to March 19th, inclusive.

Morning Bells. First bell 5.00 A.M.; Second 6.00 A.M.; Third 6.50

Dinner Bells. Ring out 12.30 P.M.; Ring in 1.05 P.M.

Evening Bells. Ring out at 7.00 P.M. Except on Saturday Evenings.

SATURDAY EVENING BELLS

During APRIL, MAY, JUNE, JULY, and AUGUST, Ring Out at 6.00 P.M. The remaining Saturday Evenings in the year, ring out as follows:

SEPTEMBER

First Saturday, ring out 6.00 P.M.

Second Saturday, ring out 5.45 P.M.

Third Saturday, ring out 5.30 P.M.

Fourth Saturday, ring out 5.20 P.M.

OCTOBER

First Saturday, ring out 5.05 P.M.

Second Saturday, ring out 4.55 P.M.

Third Saturday, ring out 4.35 P.M.

Fourth Saturday, ring out 4.25 P.M.

Fifth Saturday, ring out 4.25 P.M.

Standard time

Before the establishment of time zones in 1883, time was measured the local solar time.

meridian

longitude line. The meridian provided the exact spot where local solar noon (the point where the sun is highest in the sky) was measured.

Regulator Clock

The Regulator Clock was always set to local solar time at the meridian, so it was used by the entire town as the standard time.

inclusive

including the listed beginning and end dates

Commence

start

NOVEMBER

First Saturday, ring out 4.15 P.M.
Second Saturday, ring out 4.05 P.M.
Third Saturday, ring out 4.00 P.M.
Fourth Saturday, ring out 3.55 P.M.

DECEMBER

First Saturday, ring out 3.50 P.M.
Second Saturday, ring out 3.55 P.M.
Third Saturday, ring out 3.55 P.M.
Fourth Saturday, ring out 4.00 P.M.
Fifth Saturday, ring out 4.00 P.M.

JANUARY

First Saturday, ring out 4.10 P.M.
Second Saturday, ring out 4.15 P.M.
Third Saturday, ring out 4.25 P.M.
Fourth Saturday, ring out 4.35 P.M.

FEBRUARY

First Saturday, ring out 4.45 P.M.
Second Saturday, ring out 4.55 P.M.
Third Saturday, ring out 5.00 P.M.
Fourth Saturday, ring out 5.10 P.M.

MARCH

First Saturday, ring out 5.25 P.M.
Second Saturday, ring out 5.30 P.M.
Third Saturday, ring out 5.35 P.M.
Fourth Saturday, ring out 5.45 P.M.

YARD GATES will be opened at the first stroke of the bells for entering or leaving the Mills.

SPEED GATES commence **hoisting** three minutes before commencing work.

yard gates

the main factory gates

speed gates

sluice gates, used to regulate how much water was pouring through the mill turbine to power the machines.

hoisting

lifting

Source: American Studies Department, College of Staten Island, City University of New York.