

Where Is The Lowell Factory Girl? A Tangled Yarn From The Textile Mills

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THE FACTORY SONG;

Written by G. H. A. and C. U. 1838.

1
While in the sable shades of night
With curtains round our head,
The watchmen call, the lamp is brought
To light us from our bed—

2
Then we arise and all prepare
To receive our corp'ral food,
And some complain, while others say
That theirs is rich and good.

3
The factory bell begins to ring,
And we must all obey,
And each to our employment mind,
Or else be turn'd away.

4
We then, into the carding room
With cheerful hearts engage,
Labor in the dust and dirt,
The youth of every age.

5
And now the gate is hoisted high,
The water swiftly flows,
And each to their own station moves,
And all the machinery goes.

6
The rumbling wheels and rattling bands
All in succession roll,
The regulator swiftly moves,
And regulates the whole.

7
It is a wonder how that man
Could such machinery make ;
A thousand wheels in union
Without the least mistake.

8
The bales of cotton soon are brought,
And from the picker flows,
Swift through the cards and breakers comes
And to the speeder goes.

9
With rapid flight the speeder flies,
'Tis pleasing to behold
The roping round the bobbins wind—
One half can't here be told.

10
The next we know the spinner calls
For roping to be brought ;

It's carried from the carding room,
And on the spindle caught.

11
Come, listen, friends, and you I'll tell
What spinners they can do ;
The roping they will quick convert
To warp and filling too.

12
Another sight I now behold,
It is a pleasing scene ;
The warp is taken soon as spun,
And wound around the beam.

13
And then it's carried out of sight
Into the dressing-room,
It's warp'd and dress'd and all complete,
And fitted for the loom.

14
The sleigh and harness is prepared,
Each thread for to convene,
The looms are placed in rows throughout,
The weavers stand between.

15
And now the shuttle's swiftly thrown,
It flies from end to end,
And they stand ready all the while
Each broken thread to mend.

16
The best of weavers do not think
Because they higher go,
That they are better than their friends
Who work in rooms below.

17
Six thousand yards from day to day,
If I am rightly told,
Are carded well and spun and wove
And carried to be sold.

18
Come, all my friends, these lines behold,
Think not I've done my best ;
But now what I have left behind,
I'm leaving for the rest.

19
This corporation now is good,
It's rising with some others ;
May friendship reign throughout the whole
And all unite as brothers.

THE FACTORY GIRL.

I
Come all you weary factory girls,
I'll have you understand,
I intend to leave the factory
And return to my native land.
CHORUS—And sing Ira Itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

II
No more I'll take my bonnet and shawl
To go into the mill,
While other girls are working hard,
And I'll be sitting still.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

III
No more I'll hear those tolling bells
To call me from my bed,
No more I'll hear those noisy drums
As they roll o'er my head.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

IV
No more my overseer shall say
Your ends they are all down,
While you're in the middle of the room
Acting out the clown.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

V
I do not like my overseer,
I do not mean to stay,
I mean to hire a depot boy
To carry me away.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

VI
No more I'll take my towel and soap
And go to the sink to wash,
No more my overseer shall say
Your frames are stopped to doff.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

VII
No more I'll oil my nasty rolls
No more I'll race the room.
No more I'll sweep my dirty floor
All in the spinning room.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

VIII
No more I'll brush my ropers out
No more I'll sit and read,

No more I'll say to Maria
The devil's in the speed.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

IX
We have got a lazy overseer,
I never saw his match,
He sits upon a bobin box
And there his spinners watch.
CHORUS—And sing ira itre ada,
And sing ira itra a.

X
The overseers they not think
Because they higher stand,
That they are better than the girls
Who work at their command.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

XI
The dressroom girls they need not think,
Because they higher go,
That they are better than the girls
Who work in rooms below.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

XII
Come all you little doffers
That work in the spinning room,
Go wash your face and comb your hair
And prepare to leave the room.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

XIII
Now as for we poor factory girls
You very well do know,
What we suffer in the winter time
Wading through the snow.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

XIV
A factory life is a weary life
And that you all do know,
For only think these courting nights
How much we undergo.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

XIV
Now soon you'll see me married
And settled with a man,
Then I'll say to all you factory girls
Come and see me when you can.
CHORUS—And sing ira itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

Fig. 2: THE FACTORY GIRL. Courtesy of the Brown University Library.

THE FACTORY GIRL.



When I set out for Manchester,
Some factory for to find,
I left, my native country,
And all my friends behind.
Chorus—Sing ter re a re I re O.

But now I am in Manchester,
And summoned by the bell,
I think more of the factory girls
Than of my native dell.

The factory bell begins to ring,
And we must all obey,
And to our old employment go,
Or else be turned away.

My overseer has cut my wages down
To ten-and-six a week,
And before I'll work for that
My true love's heart I'll seek.

I do not like my overseer,
I do not mean to stay,
I mean to hire some depot cab
To carry me away.

No more I'll oil my picker rod,
No more I'll brush my loom,
No more I'll scour my naaty floor,
All in the weaving-room.

No more I'll draw the thread
All through the harness eye,
No more I'll say, "My work goes so,
O dear me, I shall die."

No more they'll come to me and say,
"Your ends they are all down,
While I am up in the middle of the room,
Or acting out the clown."

No more I'll go to my overseer
To come and fix my loom;
No more I'll go to him and say,
"May I stay out till noon?"

No more they'll see me read,
No more they'll see me sew,
No more they'll come to me and say,
"This work I sha'n't allow."

No more I'll hear the factory bell,
That calls me from my bed;
No more I'll wash those dusty drums
As they roll o'er my head.

The factory life is a harass'd life,
As I suppose you know,
Do only think in the winter
How much we undergo.

No longer will I tread the snow
To get into the mill;
No longer will I work so hard
To get one dollar bill.

No more I'll put my bonnet on
And hasten to the mill,
While other girls are working hard,
And I am sitting still.

Come all ye pretty factory girls,
I'll have you understand,
I'm going to leave the factory
And return to my native land.

By-and-by you'll see me settle down
With a pretty little man,
Then I will say to the factory girls,
Come and see me when you can.

From the Kenneth S. Goldstein Collection
of American Song Broad-sides
Center for Popular Music
Middle Tennessee State University

Please include appropriate citation
in all presentation and publication.

Fig. 3: THE FACTORY GIRL. Courtesy of the Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University.

SONG
OF
The Factory Girl.
Tune, "Chatham lived a Merchant."

Come all you pretty factory girls,
I'll have you understand
I'm about to leave the factory,
And return to my native land.

And since they've cut my wages down
To ten and six a week,
If I can do no better than this,
My true-love's heart I'll seek.

I do not like my overseer,
I do not mean to stay.
I mean to hire some depo' cab
To carry me away.

While in the sable shades of night,
With curtains round my head,
The Watchman calls—a light is brought
To light me from my bed.

Then we arise, and all prepare
To receive corporeal food,
Which some complain, and others say
That their's is rich and good.

And then into the carding room,
With cheerful hearts engage
To labor in the dust and dirt,
With youths of every age.

And now the gate is hoisted high,
The water swiftly flows,
Each one to her own station moves,
And all the machinery goes.

Come, listen friends, and I will tell,
What spinners, they can do:
The roping they will soon convert
To warp, and filling, too.

Five thousand yards, from day to day,
(If I've been rightly told.)
Are carded well, and spun, and wove,
And carried to be sold.

Great Falls, March, 1840.

The dress-room girls, they need not think
Because they higher go,
They're any better than the rest,
Who work in rooms below,

The overseers, they need not think,
Because they have command,
They're any better than the help,
Who is working under them.

No more I'll hear those tolling bells
To call me from my bed,
No more I'll hear those jarring drums
As they roll o'er my head.

No more I'll take my bonnet and shawl
And hasten to the mill,*
While factory girls are working hard,
I will be setting still.

No more I'll carry the bobins up,
No more I'll fetch them down,
No more I'll ask my overseer,
Shall I stay out this noon.

No more I'll oil my picker rods,
No more I'll brush my looms,
No more I'll clean my nasty floor,
All in the weaving room.

No more I'll take my soap in hand,
No more I'll go to wash,
No more my overseer shall say,
Your frames have stopped to doff.

No more you'll see my lover,
No more you'll hear him talk,
No more from the counting room,
Together we shall walk.

By and by I'll settle down
With a handsome little man,
And then I'll say to factory girls,
Come see me when you can.

Sold by J. G. SHORRY.

Fig. 4: SONG OF THE FACTORY GIRL. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

[PRICE TWO CENTS.]

NEW SONG OF



The Factory Girl.

[May be sung to the tune of "Rory O'More."]

Let us list to the song of the factory girl,
As she sings 'mid the hum, and the clack, and
the whirl;
Tho' her task it be hard, yet her heart it is light;
And she sings at her "loom," from the morn till
the night.

Tell me why should she not, if her health is but
good,
And her pay gives her plenty, for dress, and for
food?

For the most independent of women is she,
Who has plenty of cash, who from care is quite
free.

At her "dresser" she sings, where the "warp"
is in size,

At the "speeder," and "spooler," the song doth
arise;

Go to this room, or that room, or which one you
will,

Still you hear it, as follows: the "song of the
mill."

Who so blithe, or so gay, in the city or town?
As the girl of the mill, in her "Merrimack" gown,
As she hies to her work, at the dawning of day,
And from morning till night, still keeps working
away.

When the sound of the bell, at the set of the sun,
Tells to her, and to all, that the day's work is done;
Then released from her toil, as the wind she is free,
And may go to a party, or "social levee."

Then if healthy and merry, the factory girl be,
Who this life can enjoy, any better than she?
And to you let us whisper a word ere you go;
If we have a good offer, we marry, you know.

Such the "song of the mill," by the factory girl
sung;

Who's a merrier heart, or more musical tongue?
O, then list to her "yarn" as she "spins" it along,
And confess, that there's joy in the factory girl's
song.

Fig. 5: NEW SONG OF THE FACTORY GIRL. Courtesy of the Brown University Library.

WHERE IS THE LOWELL FACTORY GIRL? -- A TANGLED YARN FROM THE TEXTILE MILLS

INTRODUCTION

As the laboring men and women of America built a nation, they sang about their work in tempo with their hammers, axes, capstans, sewing machines, and spindles. Their voices may have been choked with dust, drowned out by machines, or suppressed by overseers, but they have not been forgotten. In 1953 John Greenway (1919-1991) made a significant contribution to the library of American labor lore studies with the publication of his *American Folksongs of Protest*, a fascinating collection of songs and ballads gleaned from printed and oral sources spanning more than a century of American history. Greenway's commentary and choice of texts bespoke a personal commitment to the principles of justice, equity, and unionism--a perspective echoed in his other publications and folksong recordings. Twice republished in the following decades, Greenway's survey provided abundant re-sources for scholars, labor leaders, and folksong presenters alike. One of the earliest of his texts was titled "The Lowell Factory Girl," a song of eighteen stanzas that he credited to an undated broadside in the Harris Collection of the Brown University Library.

I. The Lowell Factory Girl

[I-1] When I set out for Lowell,
Some factory for to find,
I left my native country,
And all my friends behind.

Chorus:

Then sing hit-re-i-re-a-re-o
Then sing hit-re-i-re-a.

[I-2] But now I am in Lowell,
And summon'd by the bell,
I think less of the factory
Than of my native dell.

[I-3] The factory bell begins to ring,
And we must all obey,
And to our old employment go,
Or else be turned away.

[I-4] Come all ye weary factory girls,
I'll have you understand,
I'm going to leave the factory
And return to my native land.

[I-5] No more I'll put my bonnet on
And hasten to the mill,
While all the girls are working hard,
Here I'll be lying still.

[I-6] No more I'll lay my bobbins up,
No more I'll take them down
No more I'll clean my dirty work
For I'm going out of town.

[I-7] No more I'll take my piece of soap,
No more I'll go to wash,
No more my overseer shall say,
"Your frames are stopped to doff."

[I-8] Come all you little doffers
That work in the Spinning room;
Go wash your face and comb your hair,
Prepare to leave the room.

[I-9] No more I'll oil my picker rods,
No more I'll brush my loom,
No more I'll scour my dirty floor
All in the Weaving room.

[I-10] No more I'll draw these threads
All through the harness eye;
No more I'll say to my overseer,
Oh! dear me, I shall die.

[I-11] No more I'll get my overseer
To come and fix my loom,
No more I'll say to my overseer,
Can't I stay out 'till noon?

[I-12] Then since they've cut my wages down
To nine shillings per week,
If I cannot better wages make,
Some other place I'll seek.

[I-13] No more he'll find me reading,
No more he'll see me sew,
No more he'll come to me and say,
"Such works I can't allow."

[I-14] I do not like my overseer,
I do not mean to stay,
I mean to hire a Depot-boy
To carry me away.

[I-15] The Dress-room girls, they needn't think
Because they higher go,
That they are better than the girls
That work in the rooms below.

[I-16] The overseers they need not think
Because they higher stand;
That they are better than the girls
That work at their command.

[I-17] 'Tis wonder how the men

Can such machinery make,
A thousand wheels together roll
Without the least mistake.

[I-18] Now soon you'll see me married
To a handsome little man,
'Tis then I'll say to you factory girls,
Come and see me when you can.¹

Remarked Greenway:

“I have been unable to date this song precisely, but the aged condition of the broadside, together with such internal evidence as can be detected, place its composition around the 1830's. The ‘nine shilling’ wage of which the singer complains coincides with the average weekly earnings of \$2.25 paid to New England cotton-factory operatives in 1830. Furthermore, the freedom to return to the farm was not generally possible after 1840, when a mill-dependent permanent labor community had begun to attach itself to the factories. After the panic of 1837, which wiped out many of the small New England farmers, the refuge that the ‘Lowell factory girl’ sings of had vanished.”²

Greenway established the folksong status of the broadside by its appearance in other forms: in a song collected by John Lomax prior to 1913, and in a text from the “People’s Songs Library” and described as “...collected more recently in North Carolina...titled ‘No More Shall I Work in the Factory.’”³

Greenway’s “Lowell Factory Girl” offered a vivid contemporary view of an industry built with the bricks of exploitation, abuse, and discrimination, and as such constituted an important document in labor history. His text readily found its way into later publications: Phillip Foner included it in his *American Labor Songs of the Nineteenth Century* (1975) and again in *The Factory Girls* (1977); two stanzas were quoted in “A Letter to Hannah,” in *The Lowell Mill Girls: Life in the Factory* (1991), a fictitious work written as if it had been penned in the 1840s; Thomas Dublin quoted a stanza in *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (1979).⁴ Jim Douglas included it among several different versions of ballads about factory girls.⁵ It has been included in numerous LP

and CD recordings.⁶ The text was the centerpiece of Frances Tambarro's excellent study, "A tale of a song: The Lowell Factory girl," in *Southern Exposure*.⁷ Greenway's republication of a century-old protest song resurrected a scarce old broadside text and introduced it to a much wider audience than the original publication ever could have reached. There is one problem, however: there is some question whether that original broadside sheet exists.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE AMERICAN TEXTILE INDUSTRY

American colonists mostly spun and wove their own textile materials; their few machine made fabrics were imported from Great Britain. After the Revolutionary War, English immigrant Samuel Slater established the first water-powered cotton spinning and carding mill in America in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, in 1790. (They were called "mills" because they required water power to turn the machinery, and therefore were always located on rivers, preferably near waterfalls where hydropower was abundant.) Incentives to further development of a domestic textile industry were the British Embargo Act of 1807 and the War of 1812, both of which interrupted commerce between England or Europe and the new nation.

In 1814, Bostonian Francis Cabot Lowell, having returned from England with the details of English mill machinery fixed in his photographic memory, established a mill at Waltham, just west of Boston, on the Charles River--the first to integrate all textile operations in a single building. Lowell and his partners, the Boston Manufacturing Company (or Waltham Co.), concentrated on the production of coarse but durable cotton cloth--a fabric that perfectly suited frontier Americans--and found a ready and profitable market. Because the mills soon outgrew the limited water power of the Charles, in about 1822, after Lowell's death, his partners broke ground on another mill near Chelmsford, on the Merrimack River north of Boston. The new site was named Lowell in honor of the recently deceased textile pioneer and was turning out cloth by 1823. By 1840, the same group of investors had established eight major mills in Lowell.

Children lacking the skills to handle the complicated machinery and young men being needed for work on the family farm, Lowell's mill owners conceived a novel plan to recruit young New England women, offering them better wages than they could obtain in other occupations open to them (such as seamstress, housemaid, or school teacher). To avoid the inhumane circumstances of labor in English and European mills, the entrepreneurs envisioned a system whereby young middle-class women could work for a few years in the mills and then return to their homes, thus circumventing the establishment of a permanent working class. Knowing that potential employees and their families would be concerned with working and living conditions, the owners instituted company-run boarding houses adjacent to the mills,

managed by upstanding women (often widows), to assure their operatives' security and propriety. Rooming and boarding expenses were deducted from the employees' weekly pay. These acts were not entirely altruistic, because going wages for women were considerably less than men expected, so overhead costs could be reduced substantially. Also, owners anticipated that in case of serious illness their workers would return to their New England homes and not become a burden on the corporation. Thanks to this vision, textiles soon became a major industry of the region.

Whatever the corporations' motives, the result was that in the early years the women workers were young, bright, literate, and from sturdy New England stock, living under conditions that, if not the most conducive to good health, were certainly morally flawless. In stark contrast, female factory workers in England were poor and uneducated, often harassed by unscrupulous and immoral men. Many English songs about factory girls slaving in the "dark Satanic mills" portrayed them as the unwilling objects of amorous or lustful attention from the opposite sex.

In spite of the original intentions, early mills workers labored under difficult conditions: long hours, noisy factory environment, inadequate ventilation (windows were nailed shut and the rooms periodically sprayed with water to keep the threads from drying out and breaking), cotton fibers and dust in the air, crowding and lack of privacy in the boarding houses, and insufficient time "for manners" at meals, as one operative complained.

Nevertheless there were advantages: they were paid regularly and reliably--and in cash, unlike other mills, which often paid in company scrip, redeemable only at company-owned stores; they put their money in savings; and there were many educational opportunities (such as libraries and lectures) of which the women were eager to take advantage. As for the long hours, intolerable by today's standards, they were no more than was expected of a typical domestic servant or farm worker. The average mill work week in the 1830s and 1840s was 73 hours; a Lowell Factory Time Table for 1853 declared the work week to consist of sixty-six hours. In reality, the Lowell women were not inclined to complain about long hours because they were eager to earn as much money as possible; when they were exhausted by the conditions, they had pleasant country homes awaiting them. Many, in fact, protested about organized movements to shorten hours; it was reductions in pay, not long hours, that riled them. Women operatives in the late 1830s earned less than \$2.00 a week; men earned almost twice as much. Young children were paid considerably less.⁸

Three quarters of the typical antebellum work force consisted of women, most of whom were 15 to 25 years of age and averaged three to four years of work in the mill before they returned home, married, or moved to other employment. Many of the women labored to help their economically challenged farming families; others sought to earn some spending money for themselves, or to put aside money for a dowry. Probably a greater number worked to enable a brother or sweetheart to obtain a higher education.

While conditions in the 1820s and early '30s were generally tolerable, they steadily deteriorated in later years--partly in response to periodic economic downturns, but also owing to corporate greed. Working hours steadily lengthened, wages were occasionally cut, and workers were put in charge of greater numbers of spindles ("the stretch-out") that were operated at great rates (the "speed-up"). Starting in the mid 1840s, a "premium system" was inaugurated, by which overseers were paid extra for any production exceeding the normal. One means to overproduction consisted in turning back the clock in the evening to delay the ringing of the quitting bell. One positive result of the Lowell system was that overseers learned that the better educated women generally learned faster and were more productive; hence it was to their advantage to encourage educational opportunities and to prefer middle-class New England women to uneducated foreigners. While different overseers had different attitudes toward reading during work, one universal proscription regarded complaints about hours or wages; these were immediate cause for dismissal.

Until 1848, the "City of Spindles" drew mainly on New England farming families for its labor force. In 1845, the women came primarily from New Hampshire (35%), Maine (24%), Vermont (17%), and Massachusetts (12%).⁹ Only 8% came from Ireland--a percentage that exploded dramatically within a few years when the Irish potato famine (some called it "the starvation") forced a stampede of immigration to America, resulting in the sons and daughters of Erin becoming the major part of the work force. At the same time, French-Canadian immigrants from Quebec began to swell the work force in significant numbers.

The Lowell song complains about social hierarchy, the arbitrariness of the supervisor, the tedium, the oppressive surroundings (as contrasted to the "native dell"), and the meager wages. Its author suggests that the only escape route for the factory girl is to marry a successful husband--which often happened--and not infrequently a mill supervisor, or overseer.

The complaint of wages being cut could have referred to any of several periods: in 1834, when depressed economic conditions forced owners to reduce wages 12 to 25 percent; or at least twice in the early 1840s. The 1834 action prompted Lowell's female operatives to meet

and plan a “turn-out,” or strike, which they undertook in February. While unsuccessful in restoring wage cuts, the strike did lead to the formation of the Lowell Factory Girls’ Association, which had 2,500 members by 1836 when they again struck over a 12½ percent increase in the amount charged them by the company-owned boarding houses (where they were required to live).¹⁰

The technical terms used in the Lowell song and overall familiarity with factory life identify its author(s) as mill workers or former workers. Based on several suggestive clues, Frances Tamburro argued that the song’s author was very likely an Irish-American female factory operative recently come to America to work in the mill: the chorus, the “come-all-ye” beginning (moved to stanza 4 in this text), the phrases “my native land/country/dell,” and the use of shillings as currency all were evidence to her of such an attribution.¹¹ While her case is inconclusive, she might have strengthened it by citing as evidence the few recorded New England tunes, which certainly had an Irish flavor.¹² Regardless of the author’s country of origin, the evidence suggests that the series of strikes during the 1830s and ‘40s provided the context in which the song was written and published. The “no more shall I...” stanzas are just the type of lyrics to which different factory girls, collectively voicing their discontents, could have ad libbed continually verses of their own making. Such versifying must have occurred during their free hours in their boarding houses, inasmuch as there were no union meetings or the equivalent, and the factories would have been far too noisy to permit group singing--even if the overseers had allowed it.

The reference to the “Depot boy” suggests the broadside is no earlier than 1835--the inaugural year of the Boston and Lowell Railroad, one of the first three in New England. Previously, cotton goods from Lowell were shipped via the Middlesex Canal, the primary trade route north of Boston since 1795. But by 1830, the volume of goods from Lowell’s bustling mills exceeded the Canal’s carrying capacity, and the mill owners petitioned the state legislature for permission to build a railroad between Boston and Lowell. The resulting enterprise was one of the first passenger lines in the country. The term “depot” for rail station, introduced from the French, and then usually pronounced to rhyme with “tea-pot,” was an American (rather than British) usage. The depot boy would have driven the depot wagon transporting passengers to and from the depot; but the term has not been noted elsewhere.¹³

BROADSIDE SONGS OF THE TEXTILE MILLS OF THE 1840s.

But where and when was this song published--and where did Greenway find it? The magnificent collection at Brown University Library holds three broadsides about textile mill life: "The Factory Song; Written by G. H. A. and C. U. 1838," "The Factory Girl," and "New Song of the Factory Girl." None of these mentions Lowell, and while the first two both contain stanzas of the Lowell song, neither can be the source of Greenway's text. The first of these--probably the earlier-- is unusual among broadside sheets of the period in that it is dated and the authors are partially identified (see Fig. 1).

II. The Factory Song

Written by G. H. A. and C. U. 1838

[II-1] While in the sable shades of night
With curtains round our head,
The watchmen call, the lamp is brought
To light us from our bed-

[II-2] Then we arise and all prepare
To receive our corp'ral food,
And some complain, while others say
That theirs is rich and good.

[II-3] The factory bell begins to ring,
And we must all obey,
And each to our employment mind,
Or else be turn'd away.

[II-4] We then into the carding room
With cheerful hearts engage,
To labor in the dust and dirt,
The youth of every age.

[II-5] And now the gate is hoisted high,
The water swiftly flows,
And each to their own station moves,
And all the machinery goes.

[II-6] The rumbling wheels and rattling bands
All in succession roll,
The regulator swiftly moves,
And regulates the whole.

[II-7] It is a wonder how that man
Could such machinery make;
A thousand wheels in union
Without the least mistake.

[II-8] The bales of cotton soon are brought,
And from the picker flows,
Swift through the cards and breakers comes
And to the speeder goes.

[II-9] With rapid flight the speeder flies,
'Tis pleasing to behold
The roping round the bobbins wind-
One half can't here be told.

[II-10] The next we know the spinner calls
For roping to be brought;
It's carried from the carding room,
And on the spindle caught.

[II-11] Come, listen, friends, and you I'll tell
What spinners they can do;
The roping they will quick convert
To warp and filling too.

[II-12] Another sight I now behold,
It is a pleasing scene;
The warp is taken soon as spun,
And wound around the beam.

[II-13] And then it's carried out of sight
Into the dressing-room,

It's warp'd and dress'd and all complete
And fitted for the loom.

[II-14] The sleigh and harness is prepared,
Each thread for to convene,
The looms are placed in rows throughout,
The weavers stand between.

[II-15] And now the shuttle's swiftly thrown,
It flies from end to end,
And they stand ready all the while
Each broken thread to mend.

[II-16] The best of weavers do not think
Because they higher go,
That they are better than their friends
Who work in rooms below.

[II-17] Six thousand yards from day to day,
If I am rightly told,
Are carded well and spun and wove
And carried to be sold.

[II-18] Come, all my friends, these lines behold,
Think not I've done my best;
But now what I have left behind,
I'm leaving for the rest.

[II-19] This corporation now is good,
It's rising with some others;
May friendship reign throughout the whole
And all unite as brothers.¹⁴

Whoever they were, G. H. A. and C. U. knew the hardships of mill life. The opening stanza evokes an image of girls roused from slumber in the dark of night. In fact, the morning wake up bell rang at 4:30 a.m. from 20 March to 19 September and at 5 a.m. in the fall and winter. In Lowell and elsewhere, most mills worked the boarding house system, by which the

girls slept and ate in boarding houses run by the company, for which privilege \$1.25 was deducted from their weekly wage. A smaller number of mills employed entire families who lived in their “own” dwellings. The second stanza suggests that while the food could have been worse, it could certainly have been better. Surviving contemporary accounts by the women themselves describe the food as abundant and palatable, but complain about the time allotted for meals. English novelist Anthony Trollope visited the boarding houses on a trip to America and was impressed by the fact that hot meat was commonly served at two meals each day.¹⁵

The total weekly wage ranged between about \$2.00 and \$5.00 from the mid-1820s to mid-1860s, but the average hovered around the lower figure;¹⁶ male operatives regularly received twice as much (though they paid \$1.75 for their board). The prices of other commodities put these figures in perspective: a pound of flour or a quart of milk cost 3-5 cents; a pair of shoes, about \$1.35 (less after the mid-1840s). This last figure suggests that an operative had to work about 25 hours for a pair of shoes--equivalent to a minimum wage worker today paying about \$175 for footwear. Exploitive as that sounds today, there were no opportunities for women to do better at that time. At 6:20 a.m. (spring and summer) or 6:50 a.m. (fall and winter) the factory gates opened and the girls had ten minutes to reach their stations. Anyone arriving late was locked out--a regulation noted in the third stanza.

The text accurately describes the principal steps in processing the cotton: carding, drawing, spinning, dressing, and weaving. The bales of raw cotton were brought to the carding room on the first floor of the mill [stanza II-8]. There, the carding and breaker machines straightened out the cotton fibers. Picker machines untangled the fibers and facilitated the removal of dirt and other impurities. The speeder machines elongated and loosely twisted the carded fibers. The carded fibers were then made into a thick loose yarn on the roping machines [II-9, 10]. From the carding machines the “slivers” of long, loosely twisted fibers went to the drawing frame, where they were drawn out and twisted. From there they went to the spinning room on the second floor where two kinds of yard were prepared: the filling and the warp yarn [II-11]. The warp threads run the entire length of the cloth; the filling threads pass between the warp threads perpendicular to them. The threads were then “dressed,” or coated with a starch solution to make them easier to work [II-13]. One dressing frame was used for every sixteen looms; they were located on the third floor. The warp threads were then wound carefully onto a beam [II-12]. One warper could provide enough warp beams for twenty looms. The actual weaving took place on long rows of looms located on the fourth floor [II-14, 15, 16].

A daily output of six thousand yards [II-17] was not impossible. In all of New England, from 1830 to 1838, annual production grew from 142 million to 360 million yards, or between

four hundred thousand and one million yards daily. In 1833, Lowell's twenty mills alone daily turned out about seventy-five thousand yards of cotton.¹⁷ The song's value is credible if it refers to a single mill or possibly one company's group of mills.

Overall, the song is sympathetic to the industry: the authors are primarily concerned with recounting its technological wonders, explaining in detail the steps of the production, from raw cotton to finished cloth, and concluding with a judgment of unqualified praise for "this corporation." Although the mill companies were indeed established as corporations, the term "corporation" as used in Lowell in the 1840s, and probably in the song, referred to the factory, living quarters, streets, and other parts of the physical plant. The enumeration of so many different job descriptions, by the way, reflects the employers' strategy to diminish individual workers' bargaining power and reduce each one's own importance.¹⁸ That the authors partially revealed themselves (probably sufficiently unambiguous disclosure for mill owners to identify them) suggests that they expected their song to be received favorably by the employers; otherwise the authors would certainly have faced immediate discharge. Given the cooperation among different mill owners, that would have insured their being blacklisted from any other mill jobs. Approbation notwithstanding, there is definitely a hint in the final stanza of past troubles, which the authors hope can now be put behind them. Past troubles there certainly had been looking back from 1838.¹⁹

This is clearly not Greenway's Lowell song; furthermore it lacks all the features suggestive to Tamburro of Hibernian authorship. Also, the Irish who gradually became the dominant part of the work force did not live in the boarding houses; in fact, as immigrant labor increased, the boarding house system was gradually discarded.²⁰ There are other clues--starting with the idiosyncratic if not artistic opening stanza--that the author(s) was not steeped in the broadside ballad tradition that shaped Anglo-Irish-American folksong in the 18th and 19th centuries. Frequent awkward and artless phrasing suggests a text close to the original of amateurish authors, unimproved by the smoothing effects of oral tradition.

Only two or three stanzas are shared between the two texts. One of these (I-3/II-3) offers one of the few negative remarks in the 1838 song; conversely, the other (I-17/II-7) is the only positive stanza in the Lowell song. A third closely related shared stanza (I-15/II-16) changes tone from text II to text I: In the former it sounds like a praise of the mood of social equality that pervaded the work force. The slight verbal changes in I-15--from "the best of weavers do not think..." to "The dress-room girls, they needn't think..."--turn this into a warning against feelings of superiority among certain of the operatives--a hint of a significantly less congenial milieu. The 18th stanza suggests that the singer is planning to leave the mill, but for

unspecified reasons. Perhaps the singer was disenchanted with mill life. More likely, this is simply the normal return to home and family after a stint in the mills of a few years.

Comparing I and II, I am inclined to conclude that the latter (the 1838 text) was the earlier, and was a new composition by “G. H. A. and C. U.,” from which the Lowell song’s author(s) borrowed a few stanzas. Alternatively, the shared stanzas could represent borrowings in both songs from earlier, unknown, texts. Lowell’s author certainly must have borrowed; otherwise, it is hard to explain the stanzaic sequence. Stanzas I-12 and 13, in particular, would make better sense if their order were reversed, and stanza I-8 seems intrusive between 7 and 9.

Unlike the 1838 song, the second broadside from the Brown collection (see Fig. 2) has the same critical tone as the Lowell song. In fact, the two are close enough for us to identify eight stanzas in common--compare I-4/III-1, I-5/III-2, I-7/III-6, I-8/III-12, I-11/III-5, I-15/III-11, I-16/III-10, and I-18/III-15. It, too, has the chorus and other locutions that might be suggestive of Irish authorship.

III. The Factory Girl

[III-1] Come all you weary factory girls,
I’ll have you understand
I intend to leave the factory
And return to my native land.
Cho. And sing Ira Itra ada,
And sing ira itra a.

[III-2] No more I’ll take my bonnet and shawl
To go into the mill,
While other girls are working hard,
And I’ll be sitting still. Cho.

[III-3] No more I’ll hear those tolling bells
To call me from my bed,
No more I’ll hear those noisy drums
As they roll o’er my head. Cho.

[III-4] No more my overseer shall say
Your ends they are all down,

While you're in the middle of the room
Acting out the clown. Cho.

[III-5] I do not like my overseer.
I do not mean to stay.
I mean to hire a depot boy
To carry me away. Cho.

[III-6] No more I'll take my towel and soap
And go to the sink to wash,
No more my overseer shall say
Your frames are stopped to doff. Cho.

[III-7] No more I'll oil my nasty rolls
No more I'll race the room.
No more I'll sweep my dirty floor
All in the spinning room. Cho.

[III-8] No more I'll brush my roper out
No more I'll sit and read,
No more I'll say to Maria
The devil's in the speed. Cho.

[III-9] We have got a lazy overseer,
I never saw his match,
He sits upon a bobin [*sic*] box
And there his spinners watch. Cho.

[III-10] The overseers they not think
Because they higher stand,
That they are better than the girls
Who work at their command. Cho.

[III-11] The dressroom girls they need not think
Because they higher go,
That they are better than the girls
Who work in rooms below. Cho.

[III-12] Come all you little doffers
That work in the spinning room,
Go wash your face and comb your hair
And prepare to leave the room. Cho.

[III-13] Now as for we poor factory girls
You very well do know,
What we would suffer in the winter time
Wading through the snow. Cho.

[III-14] A factory life is a weary life
And that you all do know,
For only think these courting nights
How much we undergo. Cho.

[III-15] Now soon you'll see me married
And settled with a man,
Then I'll say to all you factory girls
Come and see me when you can. Cho.²¹

Both of these two broadsides at Brown University Library are related to Greenway's Lowell song, and between them could account for ten of its eighteen stanzas and the refrain. Could the Lowell text have come from another source?

Two other surviving broadside prints from the same era as the preceding are related. One (see Fig. 3) is localized to another mill town, Manchester; but whether in New Hampshire or in Connecticut, both 19th century mill towns, is not explicit. The song might even refer to Manchester, England--also a preeminent textile center early in the 19th century. The first three stanzas are very similar to the Lowell song with one interesting difference: where, in the second stanza, the Lowell song reads "I think less of the factory girls than of my native dell," the Manchester song reads "I think *more* of the factory girls..."--phrasing that suggests the singer is quite happy at her workplace. Unlike the other sheets of this song, this one features a wood engraving at the top depicting a formal social ball. The use of a vignette totally irrelevant to the contents of the song was not unusual in the cheaply produced broadsides of this period.

IV. The Factory Girl

[IV-1] When I set out for Manchester,
Some factory for to find,
I left my native country,
And all my friends behind.

Chorus: Sing ter re a re I re O.

[IV-2] But now I am in Manchester
And summoned by the bell,
I think more of the factory girls
Than of my native dell.

[IV-3] The factory bell begins to ring,
And we must all obey,
And to our old employment go,
Or else be turned away.

[IV-4] My overseer has cut my wages down
To ten-and-six a week,
And before I'll work for that
My true love's heart I'll seek.

[IV-5] I do not like my overseer,
I do not mean to stay,
I mean to hire some depot cab
To carry me away.

[IV-6] No more I'll oil my picker rod,
No more I'll brush my loom,
No more I'll scour my nasty floor,
All in the weaving-room.

[IV-7] No more I'll draw the thread
All through the harness eye,
No more I'll say, "My work goes so,
O dear me, I shall die."

[IV-8] No more they'll come to me and say,
"Your ends they are all down,

While I am up in the middle of the room,
Or acting out the clown.”

[IV-9] No more I'll go to my overseer
To come and fix my loom;
No more I'll go to him and say,
“May I stay out til noon?”

[IV-10] No more they'll see me read,
No more they'll see me sew,
No more they'll come to me and say,
“This work I sha'n't allow.”

[IV-11] No more I'll hear the factory bell,
That calls me from my bed;
No more I'll wash those dusty drums
As they roll o'er my head.

[IV-12] The factory life is a harass'd life,
As I suppose you know,
Do only think in the winter
How much we undergo.

[IV-13] No more will I tread the snow
To get into the mill;
No longer will I work so hard
To get one dollar bill.

[IV-14] No more I'll put my bonnet on
And hasten to the mill,
While other girls are working hard,
And I am sitting still.

[IV-15] Come all ye pretty factory girls,
I'll have you understand,

I'm going to leave the factory

And return to my native land.

[IV-16] By and by you'll see me settle down
With a pretty little man,
They I will say to the factory girls,
Come and see me when you can.²²

If this were indeed about Manchester, UK, then it would suggest an Irish worker who migrated to England, rather than America. One of England's largest industrial cities, Manchester is not far from Liverpool, the nearest port of entry for Irish immigrants. The Manchester and Liverpool Railway was England's first passenger route. Social historian Alexis de Tocqueville recorded that in 1835, wages in one of Manchester's main mills averaged 11 shillings for a 69-hour week. There are the same clues that convinced Tamburro of Irish authorship, but there are also some expressions ("depot cab," "dollar bill") that argue for American origin. An operative who spent her free moments reading sounds more like the education-hungry New England mill girls than the British working class. On the other hand, a pay cut down to 10½ shillings would still have been pretty good pay for a New England operative in the 1830s or '40s. Taken together, then, the evidence suggests that this version is (like the others) American (probably from Manchester, N.H.), but borrowings from English lyrics cannot be ruled out.

New Hampshire's Manchester was named in 1810 in hopes that the booming mill town would emulate England's Manchester. The Amoskeag Mill Cotton and Woolen Mfg. Co. contributed to the city's growth by the 1810s. In the early 1830s, a larger mill was built modeled after the Lowell complex, with nearby accommodations for workers in both tenements and boarding houses. Soon, the city was served by the new Concord Railroad, which opened in 1842. By the following decade, the company was relying less on local labor than on imported skilled weavers from Scotland, Sweden, and Germany.

The final surviving broadside (see Fig. 4) is titled "Song of The Factory Girl," and is of particular interest because it is dated and it also gives indication of tune.

V. Song of the Factory Girl.
Tune, "Chatham lived a Merchant."

[V-1] Come all you pretty factory girls,
I'll have you understand

I'm about to leave the factory,
And return to my native land.

[V-2] And since they've cut my wages down
To ten and six a week,
If I can do no better than this,
My true-love's heart I'll seek.

[V-3] I do not like my overseer,
I do not mean to stay,
I mean to hire some depo' cab
To carry me away.

[V-4] While in the sable shades of night,
With curtains round my head,
The Watchman calls-a light is brought
To light me from my bed.

[V-5] Then we arise, and all prepare
To receive corporeal food,
Which some complain, and others say
That their's [sic] is rich and good.

[V-6] And then into the carding room,
With cheerful hearts engage
To labor in the dust and dirt,
With youths of every age.

[V-7] And now the gate is hoisted high,
The water swiftly flows,
Each one to her own station moves,
And all the machinery goes.

[V-8] Come, listen friends, and I will tell,
What spinners, they can do;
The roping they will soon convert
To warp, and filling, too.

[V-9] Five thousand yards, from day to day,
(If I've been rightly told,)
Are carded well, and spun, and wove,
And carried to be sold.

[V-10] The dress-room girls, they need no think
Because they higher go,
They're any better than the rest,
Who work in rooms below,

[V-11] The overseers, they need not think,
Because they have command,
They're any better than the help
Who is working under them.

[V-12] No more I'll hear those tolling bells
To call me from my bed,
No more I'll hear those jarring drums
As they roll ore [sic] my head.

[V-13] No more I'll take my bonnet and shawl
And hasten to the mill,
While factory girls are working hard,
I will be setting still.

[V-14] No more I'll carry the bobins up,
No more I'll fetch them down,
No more I'll ask my overseer.
Shall I stay out this noon.

[V-15] No more I'll oil my picker rods,
No more I'll brush my looms,
No more I'll [sic] clean my nasty floor,
All in the weaving room.

[V-16] No more I'll take my soap in hand,

No more I'll go to wash,
No more my overseer shall say,
Your frames have stopped to doff.

[V-17] No more you'll see my lover,
No more you'll hear him talk,
No more from the counting room [sic],
Together we shall walk.

V-18] By and by I'll settle down
With a handsome little man,
And then I'll say to factory girls,
Come see me when you can.

Great Falls, March, 1849.

Sold by J. G. SHOREY.²³

Great Falls (since renamed Somersworth), New Hampshire, was also a mill town, home of the Great Falls Mfg. Co. Comparison of this text with the preceding ones shows that it was a carelessly stitched patchwork that snipped some verses from the Lowell/Manchester type and others from the 1838 broadside. The stanzas jump from disapproval to approval with no regard for consistency. Stanza V-7, about the water gate being raised, should come before V-6 rather than after it. The four opening stanzas of the 1838 song (II-1 through II-4) become V-4 through V-7, stuck in between other stanzas of complaint. Typographic errors also indicate an indifference to textual integrity. The spelling “depo” in the third stanza shows that by 1849 the word was being pronounced as it is at present, rather than rhyming with “tea-pot.” One stanza does not appear in any of the other texts: V-17. This is the only reference to a “lover”--and another mill worker at that. In the mills at the time, women generally filled the categories of weaver, spinner, drawer, speeder, and dresser; the higher paying positions of picker, carder, overseer, and machinist were filled by men.

The tune indicated, “Chatham lived a Merchant,” may be the ballad known widely throughout the American southeast (and also in Britain) as “Jack Munro” or “Jack Went a-Sailing.” Neither text nor tune of “Jack Munro” is particularly Irish in provenance.

Two other broadside songs, both in the collection of the Lowell Historical Society (LHS), are alternate versions of the songs already discussed. One is “Factory Song,” a variant text of the 1838 song labeled II above. Only two significantly different stanzas are shown:

VI. Factory Song

[VI-1] Come all ye ladies of Lowell,
I’d have you to understand,
We are going to leave the factory,
And away to our native land.

.....

[VI-20] I hope all those who have the skill
To view the least mistake;
Will start anew, the work review,
And much improvement make.²⁴

The most important feature of this song in the context of the present discussion is its opening stanza: this is the only surviving text, apart from Greenway’s elusive one, that mentions Lowell--in the place where text V refers to Lewiston and broadside text IV specifies Manchester. It would appear that this opening stanza was borrowed from the Lowell/Lewiston/Manchester broadside song and clumsily pasted onto the 1838 song to make text VI; it does not fit well, certainly not in its position at the song’s beginning. From a broader perspective, the penultimate stanza [VI-20] is most arresting: is it a timid suggestion to the mill owners to correct the conditions about which the operatives were complaining? If so, its author(s) hasten to blunt any criticism with the final, more optimistic, stanza.

The LHS’s other broadside is a completely different song, “The Song of the Factory Girl,” credited to Henry W. Heywood and date-lined Claremont, N. H., April 21, 1848, with instructions, “May be sung to the tune of ‘Rory O’More’” (a popular song of 1836). The same text, under the title, “New Song of The Factory Girl,” appeared on another undated (but presumably later) broadside in the Brown University Library (See Fig. 5). Its first and last stanzas are:

Let us list to the song of the factory girl,
As she sings ‘mid the hum, and the clack, and the whirl;
Tho’ her task it be hard, yet her heart it is light;
And she sings at her ‘loom,’ from the morn till the night.

.....

Such the 'song of the mill,' by the factory girl sung;
Who's a merrier heart, or more musical tongue?
O, then list to her 'yarn,' as she 'spins' it along,
And confess, that there's joy in the factory girl's song.²⁵

Unlike the previous songs, Heywood's, through and through a joyful celebration of the factory girl and her life, is a carefully crafted work by a skilled poet.²⁶ Whether it was commissioned by the Lowell factory owners (there is a reference in the fourth stanza to "the girl of the mill, in her Merrimack gown") or not, it would certainly have served their interests. That it appeared so late as 1848 is noteworthy, inasmuch as by then there were already many causes for complaint, and most of the operatives would no longer have subscribed to Heywood's picture-perfect representation. Perhaps by now owners would resort to songs--as they did to newspaper advertisements--for attracting prospective employees. During the rosy days of the 1830s printed ads were unnecessary: each well-dressed, happy, Lowell girl was a living advertisement for the mills, and each summer when she returned home for a vacation she became the envy of all the other local girls.

COLLECTED TEXTS

The preceding texts are the only survivals from what was once a common theme in cheap print of the 1830s and '40s. Most of the broadsides were cast aside to disintegrate, but the song of the factory girl and her tribulations survived for more than a century in the memories of former factory workers or their associates. In 1931, the editors of the *Bulletin of the Folksong Society of the Northeast* published a version from Mrs. Mary E. Hindle of Bangor that placed the story in Lewiston, Maine.²⁷ Situated on the Androscoggin River near Twenty-Mile Falls, Lewiston's first fulling mills erected in 1809; cotton manufacture began in 1836. More cotton mills were built in the next decade, and in 1848, the Androscoggin & Kennebec Railroad built a line to the rapidly expanding city.

VII. The Factory Girl's Come-All-Ye

[VII-1] Come all ye Lewiston fact'ry girls,
I want you to understand,
I'm a going to leave this factory,

And return to my native land.
Sing dum de wickety, dum de way.

[VII-2] No more will I take my Shaker and shawl
And hurry to the mill;
No more will I work so pesky hard
To earn a dollar bill.

[VII-3] No more will I take the towel and soap
To go to the sink and wash;
No more will the overseer say
“You’re making a terrible splosh!”

[VII-4] No more will I take the comb and go
To the glass to comb my hair;
No more the overseer will say
“Oh! What are you doing there?”

[VII-5] No more I’ll take my bobbins out,
No more I’ll put them in,
No more the overseer will say
“You’re weaving your cloth too thin!”

[VII-6] No more will I eat cold pudding,
No more will I eat hard bread,
No more will I eat those half-baked beans,
For I vow! They’re killing me dead!

[VII-7] I’m going back to Boston town
And live on Tremont street;
And I want all you fact’ry girls
To come to my house and eat!²⁸

Whether Mrs. Hindle had herself worked in the mill was not reported; all she said was that she had learned the song in 1875 from a Mrs. Sarah Green. The editor further observed that “The song has been printed in the *Boston Globe* as sung in 1861 in Winchendon, Mass., and in JAFL, XXVIII, 13 (from Florida), by Lomax.”²⁹ Winchendon was yet another early New

England mill town; spinning machinery was set up in 1816 on the Millers River. More of this text shortly.

There are lines in the Lewiston text (in VII-5) that are closely related to lines of the Lowell text (in I-6), but no completely matching stanzas. The extensive differences are not unaccountable, considering that one of the versions had passed through many decades of oral transmission. Stanza VII-6 suggests that the meals in the boarding houses had deteriorated considerably by this time.

The reference to “Shaker and shawl” in the second stanza is interesting. In the 1850s the term “shaker bonnet” was first recorded: a “woman’s or girl’s plain bonnet fitting the head snugly at the sides but flaring at the front and having a puff or hood at the back.”³⁰ In the 1880s (perhaps earlier) they were called just “shakers” for short. The usage is American rather than British. The final stanza presents a bit of a geographic puzzle: why would a Boston girl have sought employment more than 100 miles north in Lewiston, when there were numerous closer mills--Lowell, in particular? Perhaps we have a localization of an older song in which the place names were less remote. The identification of Boston as her former (and favored) residence weakens any argument for Ireland as the referent of “my native land” in the first stanza.

The Winchendon text shares stanzas with all the texts quoted but is identical with none:

[VIII-1] Come, all you weary factory girls,
I'll have you understand
I'm going to leave the factory
And return to my native land.

[VIII-2] No more I'll have those tolling bells
To call me from my bed;
No more I'll hear those passing drums,
As they roll o'er my head.

[VIII-3] No more I'll put my bonnet on
And hasten to the mill;
While all the girls are working hard,
Here I'll be lying still.

[VIII-4] No more I'll lay my bobbins,

No more I'll take them down,
No more I clean my dirty work,
For I'm going out of town.

[VIII-5] No more I'll take my piece of soap,
No more I'll go to wash,
No more my overseer shall say:
"Your frames are stopped to doff."

[VIII-6] No more my overseer shall say:
"Your ends are almost down,
While you're in the middle of the room,
Acting out the clown."

[VIII-7] Come, all you little doffers,
That work in the spinning room,
Go wash your face and comb your hair
Prepare to leave the room.

[VIII-8] No more I'll oil my picker rods,
No more I'll brush my loom,
No more I'll scour my dirty floor,
All in the weaving room.

[VIII-9] No more I'll draw my threads
All through the harness eye,
No more I'll say to my overseer:
"O, dear me, I shall die."

[VIII-10] No more I'll get my overseer
To come and fix my loom,
No more I'll say to my overseer:
"Can't I stay out till noon?"

[VIII-11] Then since they have cut my wages
To nine shillings a week;
If I can't better wages make,

Some other place I'll seek.

[VIII-12] It's soon you will see me married
To a nice little man;
It's then I will say to you factory girls:
"Come and see me when you can."³¹

This text, recalled at least four decades after the correspondent had learned it, contains almost verbatim stanzas 4 through 12 and 18 of the Lowell piece.

For the remaining collected texts of "The Factory Girl" we must move south. In 1915, John A. Lomax wrote that "I heard [this] sung by a wandering singer plying her minstrel trade by the roadside in Fort Worth, during an annual meeting of the Texas Cattle Raisers Association [in or before 1913]. It is the song of the girl factory worker, and the singer told me she picked it up in Florida." In his autobiography, Lomax provided considerably more information about the singer and her husband, who posed respectively as a gypsy fortune teller and a blind street singer.³² The woman sang several songs for Lomax, including the first blues he ever heard, some of which he may have recorded with his "portable" Edison recording machine. The couple's description of their way of life ("We toil not, neither do we spin") suggests that the woman must have learned "The Factory Girl" from someone else who had worked in the factory, rather than in the factory herself.³³

IX. [No more shall I work in the factory]

[IX-1] No more shall I work in the factory
To greasy up my clothes,
No more shall I work in the factory
With splinters in my toes.

Refrain:

It's pity me, my darling,
It's pity me, I say,
It's pity me, my darling,
And carry me far away.

[IX-2] No more shall I hear the bosses say,

“Boys, you had better daulf,”³⁴
No more shall I hear those bosses say,
“Spinners, you had better clean off”

[IX-3] No more shall I hear the drummer wheels
A-rolling over my head;
When factory girls are hard at work
I'll be in my bed.

[IX-4] No more shall I hear the whistle blow
To call me up too soon,
No more shall I hear the whistle blow
To call me from my home.

[IX-5] No more shall I see the super come
All dressed up so fine;
For I know I'll marry a country boy
Before the year is round.

[IX-6] No more shall I wear the old black dress
Greasy all around;
No more shall I wear the old black bonnet
With holes all in the crown. Refrain.³⁵

Lomax's text is more consistent than some of the others: every stanza has the same format. The refrain, or chorus, is very different from the Irish refrain of texts I, III, IV, and VII.

The song's refrain, "It's pity me, my darling...." hints at another mill song from the 1840s. In *The Lowell Offering* for May, 1844, Susan, describing mill life, wrote,

As soon as day broke I was awakened by one of the girls
jumping out of bed, and beginning to crow. That awakened the
others, and they bestirred themselves. One sung

“Morning bells I hate to hear,
Ringing dolefully, loud and drear, &c.

Then the others struck up with a loud voice,

Now isn't it a pity, such a pretty girl as I,
Should be sent to a factory to pine away and die."³⁶

More of this song was recalled by Harriet H. Robinson in 1898, who had worked in the mills at Lowell from 1835, at age ten, until she married at age twenty-three:

“Oh! isn't it a pity, such a pretty girl as I--
Should be sent to the factory to pine away and die?
Oh! I cannot be a slave, I will not be a slave,
For I'm so fond of liberty that I cannot be a slave.”³⁷

Robinson remembered this as being a parody on “I won't be a nun,” and associated it with the strike in October, 1836.

The last traditional appearance of the factory girl songs was in North Carolina in 1962. While interviewing Dorsey and Nancy Dixon, both of whom (and their late brother, Howard) had worked in the Darlington, South Carolina, cotton mills, folklorist Archie Green was thrilled to hear Nancy sing a fragment of a song that she had learned during her first year working in the mill in 1899. South Carolina's textile industry had begun in the 1880s, when cheap labor and plentiful water power rapidly made the Southern states' mills competitive with New England's textile industry. Later, her brother, Dorsey, tape recorded an additional stanza for Green, but it wasn't clear whether he had recalled it from his youth or had freshly composed it (he was a prolific songwriter).

X. Factory Girl

[X-1] Yonder stands that spinning room boss,
He looks so fair and stout,
I hope he'll marry a factory girl
Before this year goes out.

Chorus:

Pity me all day, pity me I pray,
Pity me, my darling, and take me far away.

[X-2] I'll now say to you factory girls,

Come see me if you can;
I'm gonna quit this factory work
And marry a nice young man.

[X-3] No more I'll hear this roarin',
This roarin' over my head.
When you poor girls is hard at work
And me at home in bed.

[X-4; Dorsey Dixon] No more will I hear that whistle blow
The sound of it I hate.
No more I'll hear that bossman say
"Young girl you are too late."³⁸

The two Southern texts, originating later in the century than the New England examples, suggest at least two regional differences in mill culture. The omnipresent bells of the New England mills have been replaced by whistles; also, the overseer is now called a super(intendant) or bossman.

A TENTATIVE CHRONOLOGY

We have a handful of songs about mill life in the 19th century, some related, others, not. Some are highly critical of working conditions; others, not at all so. As a group, they paint a picture of a working society in which songs played important roles--both as propaganda pieces and as vehicles for protest.

Without other texts at our disposal, the conclusion that I find most credible is the following: The first of this group of songs was the 1838 broadside (II), published locally and then reprinted, with alterations, elsewhere. It was published after the industry had already experienced some labor unrest but before widespread dissatisfaction set in. In the mid-1840s, when conditions had become less bearable, the more critical song represented by the Lowell (I), the Manchester (IV), and the Brown Library (III) broadsides and the two texts from Maine oral tradition (VII, VIII) was written and circulated widely, borrowing from the 1838 song and possibly other texts.

I suspect there were (at least) two distinct critical songs at one time. The earlier one began with the “Come all ye weary/Lewiston factory girls” stanza that opens texts III, V, VI, and VIII. The broadside text III is the earliest--and it specifies no locale. Nor does it complain about reduced wages. VII and VIII are Maine versions from later oral tradition. In version VII, Lewiston’s name has been inserted. In version VIII, from Winchendon, there are no localizations but a complaint about wage reduction has been added--possibly from the following group.

The second song began with the “When I set out for Lowell/Manchester” stanza that opens texts I and IV--the Lowell and Manchester broadsides, respectively. Between these, the Manchester text seems to be the earlier, based on the much higher wages paid and the fact that stanza II represents the factory as a better place to be. (It may be pertinent that the first line scans much better with “Manchester” rather than “Lowell” as the place name.) These broadsides either incorporated verses from the previous group from the outset or else later became commingled. All of these must have originated in the 1840s. Considering the frequent movements of factory operatives from one mill to another, chances are that there were numerous versions of this song localized to different mill towns, of which we have surviving copies only of the Manchester and Lewiston (and possibly Lowell) variants. All these texts probably preceded the Great Falls text (V) of 1849, which clumsily mingles stanzas of its predecessors.

Late in the century, the song moved south, as did the textile industry itself. The Texas/Florida and South Carolina texts show that their authors were influenced by the New England tradition, but made extensive modifications--in verse, chorus, and tune. One of the most persistent structural elements is the “No more I’ll...” sequence; this is the stuff that spawns new verses and also encourages variation from text to text.

The question of Irish authorship is perplexing. Some textual and musical characteristics hint at Irish origins, but other internal evidence (including an Anglo-American rather than Celtic-American tune) places the song in the period when New England women, rather than immigrants, dominated the work force. Immigrant operatives, for example, did not have the opportunity to return home, as the New Englanders could--and often did--after a few years’ work. Perhaps statistics are misleading us, and the songs’ authors included those few Irish women who were already working in the mills early in the 1840s and sharing boarding house quarters with the New England women.³⁹

The influential Lomaxes were responsible for one text being returned to circulation and becoming part of the urban folksong revival repertoire. The Dixons’ song provided a second

model that was picked up by several singers, starting with Mike Seeger. The current generation of folk revival singers has resurrected the New England text. In an age when complaints about worker exploitation, unequal distribution of wealth and power, and abuse of women's rights, together with celebrations of the dignity of labor are still important issues, the song about proud young New England and Southern textile women has found an appreciative new audience.

GREENWAY'S FACTORY GIRL

The puzzle that remains is the source of the text that started this lengthy discussion: the Lowell song that Greenway published. I have been unable to find a broadside in any public collection that matches his text. His attribution to a sheet in the Harris Collection at Brown is incorrect, but why? Could he have "misremembered" his source for the text?

Perhaps there had been a broadside that he copied accurately, but it disappeared subsequently. It is not unheard of for a library or archive to "lose" a document. Certainly, librarians at the Brown Library might have misfiled the single sheet of paper with the "Lowell Factory Girl" song, but even so, the item should have left a "paper trail" in the library catalog. When items themselves disappear, they do not take their catalog entries with them; catalog cards for missing items are generally annotated to that effect in the hope that the wayward item will one day reappear.

Greenway's book was based on his own doctoral dissertation, *American Folksongs of Social and Economic Protest: An Introduction to a Neglected Phase of American Folk Culture* (University of Pennsylvania, 1951), from which it differed only slightly.⁴⁰ Could he have conflated a text from different sources? This explanation would require us to charge Greenway not only with selecting stanzas from different sources but also with considerably scrambling individual stanzas. Greenway would certainly not have been the first folksong scholar to tamper with his texts: the downward path to the balladist's own private hell is strewn with the scissor cuttings of text surgeons from Bishop Thomas Percy in the 18th century to John Avery Lomax in the 20th. I find it hard to believe this explanation--not so much because of Greenway's own scholarly integrity as on the basis of his text itself. The song of the factory girl has been found associated with several New England mill towns; it seems almost inescapable that there would have been a version localized to Lowell, the best-known and largest of the textile mills. Of all the available texts, the Lowell version, as Greenway published it, is the most critical of mill life. But if pro-labor Greenway himself constructed the text, why would he have included the one stanza that is laudatory of the mill (I-17)?

The accusation of textual sleight-of-hand is an odious bouquet to lay at the gravestone of one of America's most distinguished folklore/anthropology academics. Greenway's scholarly writings included books on English literature, anthropology, folklore, and on his Australian researches.⁴¹ Yet, in his senior years, Greenway was not above mooning the world of scholarship. His remarkable *vale* in the *Journal of American Folklore*, which he edited for many years, is either a hilarious spoof or the effusion of a scholar beginning to show signs of academic paranoia. After commenting on resignations of the Secretary-Treasurer, Book Review Editor, and Chairman of Local Arrangements, and the change of publishers for the *Journal*, Greenway continued:

“...This is not to say that there are no Mysterious Forces at work within the Society, devious, inscrutable, insidious, wholly evil. They even move against the Editor, for all his innocence and inoffensiveness. He has been notified by the N.I.M.H. that he is being sent to Australia in September, ostensibly to give him a year of field work to support his various pronouncements on the anthropology of the Australian aborigines. Now there is a likely story! The Editor's writings on the Australian natives are already founded solidly on years of reiteration. If he had any suspiciousness in his nature, he would wonder about such things as why the National Institute of *Mental Health* should be taking such an interest in him, why he is being sent to the most inhospitable, dangerous, and remote part of that isolated continent (the best general description of the area where he is to work is Carl Lumholtz's *Among Cannibals*), and why his transportation consists of a one-way ticket. But he is entirely guileless, and such thoughts do not enter his mind. Even if they did, he would accept the injury with the Christian docility that has always distinguished his conduct toward others. He intends to continue editing the JOURNAL, even though his correspondence will have to be sent part of the way by itinerant kangaroos with room in their marsupial pouches for mail and manuscripts...”⁴²

The bibliographic puzzle concerning the source of the song, “The Lowell Factory Girl” deserves only a terse footnote to the scholarship devoted to a fascinating period of American social history. Life in mid-19th century textile mills has received considerable scrutiny--and well justified, considering that they were one of America's first major industries. The musical accounts of the workers' lives in the mill setting support the image of a turbulent and strife-riven epoch drawn from other documentary sources. Poetical and musical artifacts breathe life into the otherwise lifeless corpse of government documents, newspaper accounts, and corporate files

that inform our histories. Further, being able to date and place songs offers confirmation (or refutation) of the historical evolution of mill life, and the gradual transformation of an idyllic working society into a tempestuous one. Assembling the puzzle pieces of one particular group of protest songs helps to illuminate an era of labor history and its characteristic social milieu. In this regard, a minor bibliographic conundrum may hold a key to some of the nuances of that era.

NOTES

Notes

- ¹ “The Lowell Factory Girl.” From an undated (and now, untraceable) broadside, quoted in John Greenway, *American Folksongs of Protest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953; reprint, Barnes, 1960, and Octagon, 1970), pp. 122-6.
- ² Actually, the ‘nine shillings’ is more likely equivalent to \$1.50; see note 11.
- ³ I have not found the text in *People’s Songs Bulletin*. The text published by Greenway and reprinted by Tamburro is--except for two words--identical with that given by John A. Lomax in 1915, but I expect this is the same text as published in *Sing Out!* 9:2 (Fall 1959), p. 14-15.
- ⁴ But Dublin incorrectly stated it was from a broadside in the Lowell Historical Society Collection.
- ⁵ Jim Douglas, *From Farm to Factory: The Story of the New England Textile Industry In Song* (Sturbridge: The Pedlar Press, 1988). Douglas included three different texts of the song and, following Greenway, credited this one to a broadside at Brown University; however, when he requested permission from the library to reprint the text he was told the broadside could not be found (email to me, 19 April 2004).
- ⁶ See Checklist of Published Versions at the end.
- ⁷ *Southern Exposure* 2:1 (Spring/Summer 1974), pp. 42-51.
- ⁸ Figures for earnings of mill operatives in the 19th century differ greatly according to source; often it is not clear whether the reported earnings are in actual dollars or have been converted to dollars for some reference year. According to Robert G. Layer’s *Earnings of Cotton Mill Operatives, 1825-1914* (Harvard University Press), actual average daily earnings for all workers of the Boston Company were 50 to 60 cents in the 1830s and ‘40s.
- ⁹ Rev. Henry A. Miles. *Lowell, As It Was, And As It Is* (Lowell: Nathaniel L. Dayton. Merrill & Heywood. 1846; Rept. 1972, Arno Press), pp. 162-94.
- ¹⁰ See the website, www.hampton.lib.nh.us/children/homework/lowellturnout1834.htm. The information was taken from the *National Laborer* (29 Oct 1836).
- ¹¹ See Text VII, below. The use of shillings as units of remuneration is not so clear a sign of transatlantic origins as Tamburro suggested. While shillings had not been used

officially in the United States after the War for Independence, locally common terminology continued to use shillings and pence even when dollars was meant. “Sixpence, in Massachusetts, meant eight and a third cents ... nine shillings was a dollar and a half.” (See John J. McCusker, *How Much Is That in Real Money?* (American Antiquarian Society, 2001), p. 87, n28. Robinson, in *Loom and Spindle* (p. 6), mentions cotton cloth manufactured by the Merrimack Manufacturing Company in the early 1820s as costing “two and threepence” a yard. Mill operative Mary S. Paul wrote her father in April, 1846, that she “was paid nine shillings last payment” (quoted in Thomas Dublin, *Farm to Factory: Women’s Letters, 1830-1860* [Columbia University Press, 1981], p. 104.) Another “clue” that may be deceptive is the chorus. While many Irish songs had similar nonsense refrains, in mid-19th century American popular music such refrains occasionally turned up in comic songs with no Celtic background. For example, “The Pesky Sarpent,” the stage version of the traditional ballad, “On Springfield Mountain,” appeared possibly as early as the 1830s, with the refrain, “Ri tu ri nu ri tu di na, etc.” In addition, it may possibly be relevant that nineteenth century Hiberno-English speakers “will always employ *will* rather than *shall* when the intention is to indicate the simple future for first person” (Joyce Flynn, “Teague Talk; or, How to Impersonate a Stage Irishman in Five Lessons,” in *American Speech: 1600 to the Present*, Peter Bernes, ed. [Boston University, 1985], pp. 88-96), whereas “shall” is used in stanza 10. More importantly, immigrant Irish, who came in great numbers after 1848, were not positioned to pen this kind of protest. As Greenway noted, unlike the earlier New England girls, they were not free to return to their home because of difficult working conditions. At least, factories provided a regular job with steady pay.

¹² I refer to the tune published in *BFSSNE* and another tune in the Barry collection from Susie Carr Young.

¹³ See Mathews, Mitford M. ed. *A Dictionary of Americanisms On Historical Principles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

¹⁴ From a broadside, “The Factory Song,” call no. HB 30025, in the Harris Collection, Brown University Library, Providence R. I.

¹⁵ See Benita Eisler, *The Lowell Offering: Writings by New England Mill Women, 1840-1848* (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1977), p. 14.

¹⁶ Josephson, p. 78.

¹⁷ Based on Lance E. Davis and H. Louis Stettler III, “The New England Textile Industry, 1825-60: Trends and Fluctuations,” in *Output, Employment, and Productivity in the United States After 1800* (National Bureau of Economic Research and Columbia

University Press, 1966), pp. 213-238; and Hannah Josephson, *The Golden Threads: New England's Mill Girls and Magnates* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1949), p. 56.

¹⁸ See Laurence F. Gross, *The Course of Industrial Decline: The Boott Cotton Mills of Lowell Massachusetts, 1835-1955* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 12.

¹⁹ The sentiments of the final stanza are reminiscent of one contributor to the *Voice of Industry* (7 May 1847): "I dislike heartily the long hour system in families and in corporations; but I have a joyful faith in corporations.... I have no doubt that, in their own good time, they will introduce the ten-hour system; and will not this be a noble deed?...Will it not be doing for our New England females what few of their fathers and husbands would do for them?" (cited in Ware, *The Early New England Cotton Manufacture: A Study in Industrial Beginnings* [1931; rept. Russell and Russell, 1966], p. 281).

²⁰ See Caroline F. Ware, *The Early New England Cotton Manufacture...*, p. 259-60.

²¹ From a broadside, "The Factory Girl," call no. HB 18391, in the Harris Collection, Brown University Library, Providence R. I.

²² Broadside from the Kenneth S. Goldstein Collection of American Song Broadside, catalog 002501-BROAD, in the Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University.

²³ "Song of the Factory Girl." From the collection of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA.

²⁴ From a broadside in the Lowell Historical Society collection.

²⁵ Broadside at the Lowell Historical Society, "The Song of the Factory Girl," by Henry W. Heywood. Claremont, N. H. April 21, 1848. Price--Six Cents." The same text, under the title, "New Song of The Factory Girl," appeared on another undated broadside in the Brown University Library.

²⁶ I have learned nothing else about Heywood, except that three years later he authored *The tabular vade-mecum; or, Mechanic's pocket companion ...* (Claremont, N.H., 1851).

²⁷ It has generally been assumed that Phillips Barry, the senior editor of the *Bulletin*, wrote the note and collected the text, but a letter to Barry from Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, Barry's colleague and co-editor of the *Bulletin*, suggests that she obtained the text from Hindle on 10 Oct 1929 (in the Barry collection at Harvard University's Houghton Library). The tune of the song was "recorded by Susie Carr Young, Brewer." This

probably means that Mrs. Young, an active folksong collector and also tradition bearer herself, either recorded or annotated Mrs. Hindle's tune; inasmuch as the version that she gave Hardy and Barry is somewhat different both in text and tune. When Mrs. Hindle's text was reprinted in the weekly newspaper column, "New England Folk Songs" by Helen Hartness Flanders and Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, the song bore the acknowledgement, "Reprinted from the Bulletin of the Folk Song Society of the Northeast, by permission of the archivist, Phillips Barry"--he was not identified as the collector.

²⁸ From *Bulletin of the Folksong Society of the Northeast* No. 2 (1931), pp. 12-13; reprinted by Helen Hartness Flanders and Fannie Hardy Eckstorm in the column, "New England Folk Songs," that appeared in the *Springfield Sunday Union* (15 Oct 1933) and the *Bangor Daily News* (20 Jan 34). Whether the title was Mrs. Hindle's or assigned by the editors was not made explicit. For subsequent reprintings, see the Checklist of Published Versions below.

²⁹ This assertion was misinterpreted by later writers to mean that the song had been *printed* in the newspaper in 1861.

³⁰ From Mitford M. Mathews, ed., *A Dictionary of Americanisms* (University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 1507. Alternatively, the phrase might be more properly "Shaker shawl," that is, a coarse, flat-knit shawl.

³¹ "The Factory Girl," from unidentified [Boston *Globe*?] newspaper clipping, copy in Phillips Barry scrapbook, "Folk-Songs in America; a collection of cuttings from newspapers, c. 1903-c. 1935," Widener Harvard Depository XVN 11. The *Sunday Globe* in the early 1900s ran a feature entitled "Everybody's Column," which included requests for songs and poems and responses by readers; I assume this is where the song was published, though Barry's scrapbook did not provide any more information. The text in question was submitted by a contributor identified only by the initials, L. M. B., with the note, "Some one asked for the poem entitled 'The Factory Girl.' I think this is what she wants. I got it in 1861 when I worked in Winchendon, Mass."

³² ~ John A. Lomax, *Adventures of a Ballad Hunter* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), pp. 42-44.

³³ In 1877, Clementine Averill, a former Lowell operative, moved to Florida and near Tampa, with some other operatives, established a cooperative home for homeless persons. One wonders if these workers could have brought the Factory Girl song to Florida where Lomax's "wandering singer" learned it. (See Robinson, *Loom and Spindle*, pp. 118-9.)

³⁴ “Dauff” is Lomax’s idiosyncratic spelling for “doff”--that is, “take off”--meaning, the spindles.

³⁵ From “Some Types of American Folk-Song,” *JAF-L*, XXVIII (Jan-Mar 1915), pp. 1-17, Lomax’s Presidential Address to the American Folk-Lore Society in December 1913; the text was reprinted in John A. Lomax & Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (NY: Macmillan, 1934, 1964), pp. 331-2. See the Checklist for more reprintings.

³⁶ “Letters from Susan, First Letter,” in *The Lowell Offering* n.s. 4 (May 1844), p. 145; reprinted in Eisler, ed., *The Lowell Offering...*, p. 48. The piece was actually written by Harriet Farley, one of the editors of the magazine.

³⁷ Harriet Hanson Robinson, *Loom and Spindle, or Life Among the Early Mill Girls*, 1898, rept. 1976 p. 51.

³⁸ From Testament Records LP T-3301: *Babies in the Mill*.

³⁹ Hannah Josephson, in *The Golden Threads* (1949) wrote, “In the early days there were so few Irish girls in the mills that they rose quickly to the standards of the New Englanders, with whom they lived side by side in the boarding houses on terms of equality and friendship” (p. 297).

⁴⁰ A search of internet-accessible library catalogs reveals only one surviving copy of Greenway’s dissertation in a public library: a microfilm at Washington University’s (St. Louis) Olin Library. I am grateful to Paul Stamler for examining this copy and comparing it with the book version. Stamler reported that the only differences are in the title, in the addition of tune transcriptions, and in the correction of some typographic errors. Although the catalog of the library at the University of Pennsylvania, where Greenway wrote the dissertation, has an entry for a copy, it in fact does not exist. I thank Roger Abrahams for collaring the librarian and finally establishing this fact.

⁴¹ *A Guide Through James Joyce’s Ulysses* [1955], *The Primitive Reader* [1965], *Literature among the Primitives* [1964], *The Golden Horns: Mythic Imagination and the Nordic Past* [1977], *Folklore of the Great West* [1969], *Down Among the Wild Men: The Narrative Journal of Fifteen Years Spent Pursuing the Old Stone Age Aborigines of Australia’s Western Desert* [1972], *Australia, The Last Frontier* [1972].

⁴² From “Announcement: Change of Officers of the American Folklore Society, *JAF* 78:309 (July-Sept 1965), p. 194.

CHECKLIST OF PUBLISHED VERSIONS

I. Lomax text

1915. John A. Lomax, "Some Types of American Folk-Song," *JAF-L*, XXVIII (Jan-Mar 1915), pp. 1-17, Lomax's Presidential Address to the American Folk-Lore Society in December 1913.
1934. John A. Lomax & Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (NY: Macmillan, 1934, 1964), pp. 331-2.
- 1941? Alan Lomax, LC AFS AAFS L50: John A. Lomax--*The Ballad Hunter, Part 3*. (LP).
- 1958? John A. Lomax, Jr., Folkways LP FG 3508: ... *Sings American Folksongs*. (LP).
1959. Sing Out! v. 9 No 2 (Fall 1959), p. 14-15. "This version, which comes from the SING OUT Library is substantially the same as the one appearing in American Ballads and Folksongs."
1963. *Reprints from Sing Out! Vol. 5* (NY: Oak), p. 42.
1965. *124 Folk Songs* (New York: Robbins Music), p. 46 (from singing of John A. Lomax Jr.).
1965. Irwin Silber, *This Singing Land* (New York: Amsco Music Publishing Co.), p. 75 (from *Sing Out*).
1967. Alan Lomax, comp., *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard Hit People* (New York: Oak), pp 126-7.
1971. Silverman, Jerry. *The Liberated Woman's Songbook* (New York: Collier Books), p. 59 (from *Sing Out*).
1973. Fred and Irwin Silber, *Folksinger's Wordbook* (New York: Oak), p. 128 (from *Sing Out*).
1993. Tommy O'Sullivan, *Legacy* (LP L001; reissued on CD in 2003 . Two stanzas (modified somewhat) and refrain.
1998. William L. Andrews, gen. ed., *The Literature of the American South: A Norton Anthology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998). "Factory Girl" (stanzas from Nancy and Dorsey Dixon and John A. Lomax), p. 1116-7.

II. New England Text

1931. *Bulletin of the Folksong Society of the Northeast* No. 2, pp. 12-13.

- 1933-4. Helen Hartness Flanders and Fannie Hardy Eckstorm in the column, "New England Folk Songs," that appeared in the *Springfield Sunday Union* (15 Oct 1933) and the *Bangor Daily News* (20 Jan 34).
1951. John Greenway. *American Folksongs of Social and Economic Protest: An Introduction to a Neglected Phase of American Folk Culture* (University of Pennsylvania)
1953. John Greenway. *American Folksongs of Protest* (University of Pennsylvania).
- 1963? Hedy West *Hedy West, Vol. 2* (Vanguard VRS 9162/VSD 79162) (LP) "Lewiston Factory Mill Girls".
1968. The Critics Group, *Female Frolic* (LP Argo ZDA 82) "Lowell Factory Girl."
1974. Frances Tamburro, "A tale of a song: The Lowell Factory girl," in *Southern Exposure* 2:1 (Spring/Summer 1974), pp. 42-51.
1975. Philip S. Foner, *American Labor Songs of the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), pp 69-70.
1976. Hedy West, *Love, Hell, and Biscuits* (LP Bear Family BF 15003), "Come All Ye Lewiston Factory Girls."
1976. Evelyn Alloy, *Working Women's Music: The Songs and Struggles of the Women in the Cotton Mills, Textile Plants and Needle Trades* (Hatboro: Legacy Books), p. 8, "The Factory Girl" (Tune: "Ten Thousand Miles").
1977. Philip S. Foner, *The Factory Girls* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), "The Lowell Factory Girl," pp. 6-8 (credited to broadside in Harris collection but almost certainly from Greenway); "The Factory Girl's Come-All-Ye," pp. 338-9, credited to Phillips Barry in *BFSSNE*.
1979. Thomas Dublin *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 269. Quotes one stanza, credited to Lowell Historical Society Collection. The LHS has no such broadside.
1987. Hilda E. Wenner & Elizabeth Freilicher, *Here's to the Women: 100 Songs for and about American Women* (Syracuse University Press), p. 95.
1988. Jim Douglas. *From Farm to Factory: The Story of the New England Textile Industry in Song* (Sturbridge, MA: The Pedlar Press.) Includes three texts: two from broadsides, the third from *BFSSNE*.
1991. "A Letter to Hannah," in *The Lowell Mill Girls: Life in the Factory* (Carlisle, Mass.: Discovery Enterprises), quotes one stanza (from Greenway?)
- 2000? David Rovics, *Pay Day at Coal Creek* (CD) "(The Lowell) Factory Girl".
2002. Ethan Miller, *Live at Unity College* 16 Apr 2002 (CD). "Lewiston Factory Girl."
2002. Ethan Miller, *Live at Colby College* 12 Sept 2002 (CD). "Lewiston Factory Girl."

2002. Ethan Miller, *In Times of War* (2002, CD). “Lewiston Factory Girl.”

III. Nancy/Dorsey Dixon text

1962. Nancy and Dorsey Dixon, *Babies in the Mill* (LP Testament T-3301). “Factory Girl”
1966. Mike Seeger. *Tipple, Loom & Rail: Songs of the Industrialization of the South* (LP Folkways FH 5273) “A Factory Girl.”
1970. Joe Glazer. *Textile Voices* (LP Collector Records 1922). “Factory Girl.”
1972. Kathy Kahn. *The Working Girl: Women’s Songs from Mountains, Mines and Mills* (LP Voyager VRLP 3055) “Factory Girl.”
- 1981? Bobbie McGee *Bread and Raises: Songs for Working Women*. (LP Collector Records 1933), “The Factory Girl.”
1998. William L. Andrews, gen. ed., *The Literature of the American South: A Norton Anthology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998). “Factory Girl” (stanzas from Nancy and Dorsey Dixon and John A. Lomax), p. 1116-7.

ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

Fig. 1: THE FACTORY SONG; Written by G. H. A. and C. U. 1838. Courtesy of the Brown University Library.

Fig. 2: THE FACTORY GIRL. Courtesy of the Brown University Library.

Fig. 3: THE FACTORY GIRL. Courtesy of the Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University.

Fig. 4: SONG OF THE FACTORY GIRL. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

Fig. 5: NEW SONG OF THE FACTORY GIRL. Courtesy of the Brown University Library.

WHERE IS THE LOWELL FACTORY GIRL?

**A TANGLED YARN FROM
THE TEXTILE MILLS**