

Weave Room

Boott Cotton Mills Museum

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Lowell National Historical Park



The Boott Cotton Mills Museum Weave Room is representative of an early 20th-century textile mill. Weave rooms of this period typically held approximately 200 looms. The result: deafening noise, oppressive heat and humidity, and air white with cotton dust.



The Looms

The Draper Model E looms are more than 100 years old, and were first used in Fall River, Massachusetts. Eighty-eight looms were purchased in 1990 by the National Park Service and restored for the exhibit.

The Product

In the 19th and early 20th century, the Boott Cotton Mills produced cloth used to make towels. Today, our historic looms make the same type of cotton cloth. Finished towels are available for sale at the Boott Cotton Mills Museum and at the Visitors Center.

The People

When the Boott Mills first opened in the late 1830s, each weaver tended two looms. A century later, changes in technology made it possible for management to spread out the work force and assign twenty looms to each weaver.

Between 1826 and the mid-1850s, a majority of the workers were Yankee “mill girls,” who labored 10-12 hours a day to earn money for themselves and their families. By the late 19th century and into the 20th century, successive waves of immigrants were attracted to the abundance of jobs and opportunities in Lowell’s mills.

Manufacturing Today

During the early 20th century, advancing technology, cheaper labor, accessible energy sources, and lower taxes lured manufacturing out of Lowell to other parts of the United States and around the world. In today’s global economy, most cloth and clothing are made in other countries. Lowell’s once humming textile mill buildings now serve as offices, homes, businesses, and museums.

Check your tags—where was your shirt made?