

# Young Audiences of Massachusetts

## *Educational Materials*

Please forward to teachers

7/21/09

### **ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE**

**Characters Educational Theatre:** *Three Mill Girls*

**Grade levels:** 7-12

During this program your class will meet three women who worked in the mills of Lowell, Massachusetts during the 1800s. Each brings her own unique perspective: Mary Paul was “pro-mill,” Sarah Bagley participated in “turn-outs” and strikes, and Mary Harvey was an Irish immigrant worker. The program will explore aspects of immigration, industrialization, labor history, prejudice, Victorian morals and fashions, and Women’s history.

### **LEARNING GOALS:**

1. To explore the history of New England’s mills in the 1800s.
2. To understand the impact of these mills on the personal lives of the workers and on New England culture.

### **PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY:** *Life in the Mills*

Prepare for the *Three Mill Girls*’ visit by learning about life in the mills. Compare available jobs for women in New England today and in the 1800s. Have students work in groups to research a few mill towns in New England that flourished during the 1800s. Have each group present its information to the class.

### **POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY:** *Class Debate*

Debate the issues raised in the *Three Mills Girls*’ presentation. Have students research the differing opinions presented by Mary Paul, Sarah Bagley, and Mary Harvey. Discuss the pros and cons of each woman’s experience. Invite another class to watch the debate.

### **CURRICULUM LINKS:**

Language Arts, Social Studies, Theater, Women’s Studies, Industrial History

## PRE-ACTIVITY: *LIFE IN THE MILLS*

### LEARNING GOAL:

To familiarize students with the role of fabric mills in New England in the 1800s and their impact on individuals

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Photos/pictures of New England in the 1800s and present day, map of New England

### TIME:

3 45-minute sessions

### TIPS FOR THE TEACHER:

- \* Make sure students know that working in a fabric mill was one of the few jobs available to women in the 1800s in New England.
- \* Mill towns include Lowell, Fall River, and Lawrence, MA, Woonsocket and Pawtucket, RI, and Manchester, NH.

### STEP 1:

**Show** students pictures from New England in the 1800s and New England today. Discuss differences in the landscape, clothing, buildings, transportation, etc.

### STEP 2:

**Discuss** job opportunities for women in the past and present. Discuss life in fabric factories today (sweat shops).

### STEP 3:

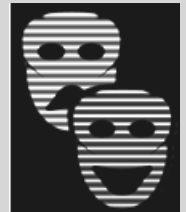
**Divide** the class into groups of four or five students. Assign each group a mill town to research. Have students investigate the statistics of the times, such as mortality rates, ages of working women, etc. Create charts and/or tables to display this information.

### STEP 4:

**Have** student groups present their research and statistics to the class.

### EXTENSIONS:

- 1) **Discuss** New England mill towns. What geographic features do mill towns have in common? How are "closed" mill buildings used today?
- 2) **Locate** and research the mills in your town. Did the town exist before the mills? If so, how did the mills change the town and its population (size and ethnic composition)?
- 3) **Present** a skit about a child who wants or has to work at the mill.



## POST-ACTIVITY: CLASS DEBATE

### LEARNING GOAL:

- \* To understand the advantages and disadvantages of working in fabric mills
- \* To improve oral communication skills by debating an issue in front of a class.

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Video of a debate, related books, poster board, markers

### TIME:

4 45-minute sessions

### TIPS FOR THE TEACHER:

- \* If possible, watch the video again after the discussion.
- \* Make sure students understand that the whole group has to reach the same consensus.
- \* Encourage students to write down notes on index cards to use during the debate.

### STEP 1:

**Show** a video of a debate (presidential, from news broadcasts, etc.).

### STEP 2:

**Discuss** what a debate is. How is a debate different from an argument? Who are the participants? What are they debating? What is the outcome?

### STEP 3:

**Discuss** the rules of the debate. Remind students that in a debate, "you are wrong" is not an appropriate response. Discuss the roles of the moderator and debaters.

### STEP 4:

**Solicit** debate ideas from the class based on the *Three Mill Girls*' presentation (pro-mill/anti-mill and pro-immigrant/anti-immigrant, etc.).

### STEP 5:

**Select** two moderators and divide the rest of the class into four groups. Assign a topic for each moderator and give each group a position on that topic.

### STEP 6:

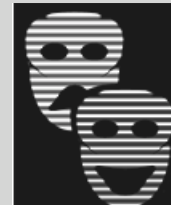
Have the groups research their positions. Have the moderators create questions. (Students may create posters and charts to support their ideas.)

### STEP 7:

**Hold** the class debate. Invite another class to watch the debate, if possible.

### EXTENSIONS:

- 1) **Research** other jobs that were available to women in the 1800s. Were they *more* or *less* desirable than working in the fabric mills?
- 2) **Visit** Lowell National Historic Park in Lowell, MA (978-970-5000, <http://www.nps.gov/LOWE/>)
- 3) Have students write letters from Mary Paul, Sarah Bagley, and/or Mary Harvey. Read the letters to the class.



**Characters Educational Theatre: *Three Mill Girls***

**Grade levels: 7-12**

**RESOURCES:**

Dublin, Thomas. Women at Work. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1979.

Dublin, Thomas. Farm to Factory. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1981.

O'Dwyer, George F. The Irish Catholic Genesis of Lowell. Lowell, MA: Lowell Museum Corporation.

**VOCABULARY:**

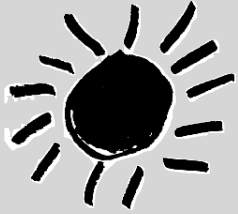
reticule	doffer	spinning mule	carding
band box	dowry	cholera morbus	temperance
suffrage	"spud"	remittance	overseer
bobbin	spindle	scrip	turbine
abolition			

**ABOUT THE PERFORMER:**

A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and a former teacher, Marcia Estabrook began performing her characters in 1982. In addition to her Characters Educational Theatre performances, Marcia has been a featured storyteller at the Three Apples and the Big Apple Storytelling Festivals, the John F. Kennedy Library, the Old South Meeting House, the Martin Van Buren Historical Site in Kinderhook, NY, the Deerfield Museum, Old Sturbridge Village, Channel 5's "Tank Away" and Fox 25's "Americana". Marcia has been the keynote speaker at the New England Kindergarten Conference and has also performed and conducted workshops at the CT Storytelling Festival. Marcia appeared in "The Raven and the Dove" and "Town Called a River". She has consulted for the Rhode Island Children's Museum and the National Park Service. Marcia is a member of Solo Together and Historical Entertainments, and is proud to have been twice a nominee for the National Performer of the Year Award from Young Audiences.

**ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:**

Young Audiences of Massachusetts (YAMA) is the oldest, largest and most utilized arts-in-education organization in the state and one of the largest in a national network of 33 chapters. For over 45 years, YA has been serving as a link between teaching artists and the region's school children, providing dance, storytelling, music and theater programs to children in schools, libraries and hospitals in the form of assembly performances, workshops and residencies. The organization's mission is to encourage lifelong engagement with the arts by making them an integral part of every child's education.



# Young Audiences of Massachusetts

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## MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS CONNECTIONS

### Characters Educational Theatre: *Three Mill Girls*

<i>Language Arts 2</i>	...pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions.
<i>Language Arts 3</i>	...make oral presentations that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and the information to be conveyed.
<i>Language Arts 6</i>	...describe and analyze how oral dialects differ from each other in English.
<i>Language Arts 9</i>	...identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed.
<i>Language Arts 13</i>	...identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure, elements, and meaning of nonfiction material.
<i>History 2</i>	Historical Understanding...understand the meaning, implications, and import of historical events, while recognizing the contingency and unpredictability of history.
<i>History 4</i>	Society, Diversity, Commonality, and the Individual...learn the complex interplay that has existed from the beginning of our country between American ideals and American practice.
<i>Arts-Theatre 1</i>	Acting...develop acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes.
<i>Arts-Theatre 5</i>	Critical Response...describe and analyze their own theatrical work and the work of others using appropriate theater vocabulary.
<i>Arts-Theatre 10</i>	Interdisciplinary Connections...apply knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history, and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.