Mrs. John J. Van Winkle Travel Diary 1850
Lowell Visit - August 21 and 22, 1850
Wednesday and Thursday

work than all - there
were over 100, miles of staging
so we gave it up, but at
the white river junction Father
met a Mr. Witman from NY
who just came from there & said
he had a fair time no fog
all as clear as need be, this
made us almost regret it
however, we consoled ourselves
with the idea that we had
that yet in store, - at the W-R-
J - they gave us 25 minutes
in which to get dinner & a
most excellent one it was too
every thing neat & all cooked
in the nicest manner &
[cioil] attendance - after dinner
we took our seats in the
cars, and were whirled, along
so very rapidly that it almost
made us dizzy. this part
of our route lay
across New Hampshire
along the banks of the Merrimack
River, and a very beautiful
stream it is too, - we had a
far distant glimpse of
the White Mts. but soon
lost sight of them entirely
and travelled over, a
rich highly cultivated
country, looking in some
part like a large garden
and making [but] dusty
way of ours, think of the
shady quiet comforts in the
old houses, which were
scattered about – in the
afternoon we decided to
stop over night at Lowell
and run into Boston next
day as that would save us
the trouble & expense of -
coming out from Boston next day - about half past six we stopped, having performed the whole great distance without any accident – thus far we have had a most delightful trip, and have every reason to be thankful for safe travel - and continued health, we decided to go the Merrimack house, and when in the coach Father asked a crusty old man if that was a good house, house, said he yes good enough for any body, I have have stopped there – on getting in the
middle seat was out of place, and pushed back so far that I was obliged to sit quite at the first end, some one else came, and he told me to move along and let people get in easily & not climb over me, I told his bench was out of place bench said he – not much I am here, there is room enough. this was the first [op ] of our travels we have met with, and I hope & think he is an Englishman - after tea, it being a bright moonlight night Father & I although very tired took a stroll through the streets to see what would be found - Lowell is a
large place containing 30,000 inhabitants, built up entirely by its manufactories, there are between 8, & 9,000 factory girls here, and in the evening you meet multitudes of them the streets are well built, clean, and lighted with gas - one peculiarity we noticed and that was, the great number of candy shops, in our little walk we counted over two dozen - I should think the mill girls would lose all their teeth for I suppose these shops are for their benefit, indeed we noticed them in several buying candy.

August 22 – Thursday after a sound sleep
we were awoke about
half past six by the ringing
of the first bell, we soon
rose, but my head felt
dizzy, and I was travelling
as fast as ever, although
quite still - I had taken
a little cold too, altogether
I felt quite stupid, but
after a plentiful bathing
in cold water, and getting
dressed I felt much better
went down to breakfast
found as usual an abun-
dance of bread, - this
time there was plenty of
other bread too, and other
very good eatables -
after breakfast - Father
procured some letters & we
went to some of the
newer ctn mills in this
Manchester of America
in the first place we went
to the Massachusetts Cotton
Mills – you can have no
idea of the extent of these
mills unless you visit them
imagine the whole of land
north st, being taken up with
one mill, the street in the
center being the grounds &
the buildings occupying
each side of the street, - every
thing is in perfect order, the
rooms scrupulously clean,
and well ventilated, and
the grounds kept in perfect
order filled with beautiful
shrubbery & flowers, and grape
vines trained on the outside
of the building filled with
grapes, I do not pity any
one who works here, for a chance or never any place they could not have, & the labour is very light - the strictest regulations are enforced regarding manners & morals and no one is allowed to be there who is not perfectly orderly - the females are a set of fine healthy looking girls, and behaved with the utmost decorum -
we saw the whole process from the time the cotton was in the bale till it came out cloth – I was delighted, everything was managed admirably – from there we went to the Hamilton print works, and saw them take the cotton cloth we
just saw made & stamp it into calico, the process is singular, being stamped between to brass cylinders then colored, then washed then ironed then folded & measured then packaged - from there we went to the card factory and saw them make the cards with which they card the cotton & wool, - the machinery is very curious, a little pair of pinces cuts off the wire, binds it and stitches it into the the leather, and another little thing picks the holes and draws in the wire there is nothing to do scarcely one man can take care of a dozen machines -
being pretty tired, we turned toward home, and on the way bought some [corn ] & some soda water which was very refreshing - - I forgot to say that not being able to get a permit about of Boston, we could not get in the carpet factory - one o clock we took dinner & at half past two left for Boston where we arrived about, half past 3 - the distance 26 miles we traversed in an hour the country we passed through is very flat and uninteresting more so than any we had passed since we began our tour & here we are at last in the Boston, that we have


