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Transcribed: University of Massachusetts Lowell, Center for Lowell History

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
shrubby & 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 pincers cuts off the wire,
binds it and stiches 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
