

# This Day in History... June 5, 1978

## Lowell National Historical Park

On June 5, 1978, Lowell National Historical Park was founded in Massachusetts. Lowell has been called the "Cradle of the American Industrial Revolution," for the important role it played in the rise of America's textile industry.

Lowell, Massachusetts sits on the banks of the Merrimack River, just a few miles from the border with New Hampshire. European colonists first arrived in the Lowell area around the 1640s, and, before long, formed a friendly relationship with the local Native American groups. Chelmsford (later renamed Lowell) was founded in 1653, after the colonists had bought many acres of land from the Native Americans.

As more people became aware of the Pawtucket Falls and the potential they had as a power source, more industrialists started coming to Chelmsford. In the early 18th century, a sawmill, gristmill, and fulling mill were all opened. In 1797, the first of several canals to be built in Chelmsford was finished. Named the Middlesex Canal, it went around the 32-foot Pawtucket Falls, allowing the logging industry to easily ship lumber and other goods directly to Newburyport.



*Wool was the most common fabric prior to the Industrial Revolution.*

After visiting Great Britain in 1810 to learn about their textile machinery, Francis Cabot Lowell memorized the machines' designs and brought them back to America. He established the Boston Manufacturing Company in 1813 and built the first cotton mill in America to use power looms. Upon Lowell's death in 1817, Patrick Jackson took over the company and built a second mill in Chelmsford in 1822. Two years later, the mill was booming, and more canals were dug to build more mills. The town was renamed Lowell in honor of Francis Cabot Lowell on March 1, 1826.

At the time it was renamed, Lowell's population was around 2,500. Just 10 years later, it had grown to over 18,000, and on April 1, 1836, Lowell was officially designated a city. It was the third Massachusetts settlement to be given a city government. As Lowell continued to prosper, it began expanding and absorbing nearby neighborhoods into its jurisdiction. By 1850, Lowell was the second largest city in Massachusetts and America's most prominent industrial city.



*Before textile mills, only the rich could afford to buy fabric, and everyone else had to spin and weave their own cloth. Textile mills made fabric more affordable, making quilting popular for all.*

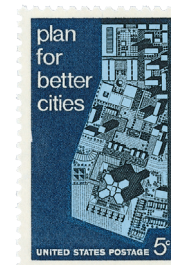
By the 1970s, many of Lowell's historic buildings were abandoned, and some demolished. The city's history was in danger of being destroyed along with its economy until advocates like Patrick J. Mogan stepped forward and suggested Lowell's history be preserved. He believed that, along with the history, the protection of Lowell's old mills and canals would help bring people to the city and boost the economy. Lowell Heritage State Park was created in 1974, with Lowell National Historical Park following on June 4, 1978. Called "the Massachusetts miracle," suddenly new employers moved to the city and jobs were available in Lowell again. Today, Lowell is known to be one of the safest cities of its size in the US.



*The park's creation in 1978 was dubbed "The Massachusetts Miracle."*



*Lowell's six-mile canal system combined with the power of the nearby Pawtucket Falls to provide electricity to the city's mills.*



*Lowell was one of the first planned industrial cities in the US, with a goal of becoming everything Great Britain's industrial cities were not – clean, organized, and with enough jobs to keep its citizens fed and housed.*

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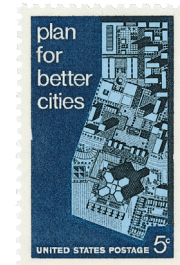
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