

Industrial Development in New Hampshire: A Timeline

Note: Italicized entries indicate national events or developments that affected industrialization in New Hampshire.

- Up to 1623** Prior to contact, Abenaki use stone tools in hunting, fishing, and agriculture. Practice seasonal burning to control underbrush and prepare for planting.
- 1634** First shipment of masts leaves for England. Regular shipments are made by 1654. Along with fishing, forest products form the backbone of NH's colonial economy; brickmaking for local use (chimneys) among the first industries established
- 1705** Piscataqua River is lined with sawmills and is one of the most densely industrialized areas in the world prior to the Industrial Revolution.
- 1700s** Products are made in homes and artisans' workshops. Production is slow as goods are made by hand. Scots-Irish immigrants in Londonderry weave linen into a high quality cloth in their homes
- 1787** *Samuel Slater and Moses Brown begin operation of first textile factory in America, located on the Blackstone River in R.I.*
- 1793** *Eli Whitney patents the cotton gin*
- 1804** First cotton mill in NH opens in New Ipswich.
- 1807-12** *Jefferson's embargo brings shipping to a standstill. Merchants begin to invest in emerging textile industry. War of 1812 further affects shipping*
- 1807** Completion of canal around Amoskeag Falls
- 1810** Amoskeag Cotton & Mfg. Co. is established; granite industry begins in Concord with contracted prison labor
- 1811** Meredith Cotton & Woolen Co. in Laconia; burned in 1823, replaced with present brick building known today as the Belknap Mill
- 1812** Cocheco Mill in Dover opens. *War of 1812 further affects shipping*
- 1813** *Completion of Middlesex Canal in Mass. soon allows boat travel from Concord to Boston; Boston Company founded, invests capital in textile factories throughout New England; Keene's Faulkner & Colony Co. weaves flannel cloth, which would later be the fabric of choice for gold prospectors in Calif.; Lewis Downing, a wheelwright who made buggies, founds a wheelwright business in Concord*
- 1818** State House completed with granite from nearby Rattlesnake Hill
- 1821** *Site on the lower Merrimack's Pawtucket Falls chosen to be the site of the mills of Lowell, Mass.*

- 1822** Two textile mills on Salmon Falls River in Somersworth
- 1823** First shoe factory in NH opens in Weare, and others follow in Rochester, Farmington & Dover; Nashua Manufacturing Co. opens; there are 56 woolen carding mills in NH. *First mills of Lowell begin manufacturing cotton textiles*
- 1825** Concord becomes greatest producer of granite in New England; stone used in construction of Quincy Market in Boston
- 1826** Stephen Abbot joins Lewis Downing's staff
- 1827** Abbot and Downing, now partners, complete first Concord Coach
- 1820s-40s** Farm girls from N.H. communities supply labor for mills
- 1828** 400 women at Dover's Cocheco mills strike, one of the first women's strikes in the nation.
- 1831** Amoskeag Mfg. Co. is reorganized and buys much of land on banks of the Merrimack in Manchester
- 1838** First railroad in NH connects Nashua and Lowell, Mass.
- 1850s** Irish immigrants begin to replace farm girls in mills
- 1850** 44 Cotton and 61 woolen mills in NH
- 1851** Amoskeag textiles win top honors at London's World Fair
- 1854** Mob violence erupts between Manchester Irish and Yankees
- 1856** Walter Aiken begins marketing circular knitting machines
- 1850-70** Harrisville's woolen mills undergo greatest period of growth
- 1861-65** *Civil War cuts off supply of cotton from South*; Amoskeag shifts production to soldiers' uniforms, rifles, & locomotives; Belknap Mill knits socks for soldiers
- 1870** A Concord Coach costs \$1200 to build
- 1874** Eleven granite quarries in Concord employ 500, many immigrants from Italy, Ireland, and Sweden
- 1878** Natt & William F. Head of Hooksett produce 5,000,000 bricks each year
- 1880** NH produces 54 million bricks; 13 brickyards in Plaistow employ 125 men to produce 11,000,000 bricks
- 1882** Electric power lights the streets of Manchester and Berlin
- 1880s** Amoskeag's employee welfare programs provide dental care, housing, and provisions for mortgages, health care, and playgrounds to ensure loyalty of workers

- 1890** Peak of granite production in Concord—20 quarries and 44 cutters and dealers combining to employ 1,000
U.S. Census—Manchester’s foreign-born population is 45.5%; in addition to Irish and French-Canadians, immigrant groups include Germans, Greeks, Scots, & Poles. French Canadians represent 28% of total. Each group has its own church and social groups
- 1892** Six month strike by Concord’s stonecutters
- 1893** *Beginning of worst depression in America to this point*
- 1896** 31,000 tons of granite shipped from Concord; this was a “dull” year
- 1898** Last salmon seen on Merrimack River
- 1905** NH Child labor laws restrict children under 14 to be employed full-time; many violations resulted from poor enforcement
- 1906** Berlin Mills is world’s largest producer of chemical pulp paper
- 1909** Photographer Lewis Hine visits N. New England to document child labor abuses in mill cities like Manchester, Dover, and Lewiston, Me.
- 1912** Amoskeag is largest textile producer in the world employing 15,000 workers; 31 factories produce 147,000 miles of cloth, enough to circle the world 6 times.
- 1914-18** World War I increases global demand for Amoskeag textiles
- 1922** First strike at Amoskeag
- 1923** Dover’s Samuel Horne brickyard produces 40,000,000 bricks since 1865
- 1925** Abbot-Downing Co. is dissolved
- 1929** *Stock Market crash leads to Depression with fatal consequences for N.H. factories*
- 1933-34** Violent strikes in Manchester
- 1935** Amoskeag files for bankruptcy on Christmas Eve; flood of following year thwarts any attempt at reorganization
- 1968** Urban renewal plan for Manchester tears down many mill buildings and fills in canal to make room for auto traffic.
- 1974** Belknap Mill purchased by a non-profit agency to convert building into a cultural center
- 1990** Concord’s last remaining granite company, Swenson Granite Co., is largest producer of granite in North America, providing 60 miles of road curbing annually