



the  
**Charles  
River  
Museum**  
of Industry & Innovation

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**Our mission** is to educate people about America's industrial history and to encourage and inspire future innovation.

We do this by creating engaging experiences that highlight the many fascinating technical and business innovations that have taken place in this region and continue to change the world.

Located in the Francis Cabot Lowell Mill, an icon of the American Industrial Revolution, the Museum brings together intriguing artifacts, cultural insights, and inspiring stories to delight people of all ages, enabling them to see the past and envision the future.



Introducing the  
**Charles River Museum  
of Industry & Innovation**

**Welcome to the Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation in Waltham, Massachusetts, where we explore and celebrate America's industrial history and culture of innovation.**

The foundation of our Museum is our extraordinary home. Now known as the Francis Cabot Lowell Mill, this grand edifice was originally called the Boston Manufacturing Company. The BMC was the first integrated textile mill in the world, meaning that it brought spinning and weaving together under one roof. It was here that for the first time, raw cotton was transformed into whole cloth in a single building.

The business model and building design pioneered here became the standard for textile mills that were built throughout New England during the Industrial Revolution, starting with the development of the city of Lowell, Massachusetts, named after the founder of the BMC. In Lowell, thirteen new cotton mills were built "on the Waltham model."

Founded in 1813, The Boston Manufacturing Company was also the first modern industrial corporation. Its structure of stockholder ownership and professional management established a standard for organizing manufacturing businesses that became a worldwide standard that prevails to this day.

The Museum's home is in the dramatic 1911 Boiler House that powered the mill after it outgrew the waterpower of the Charles River. The grand main gallery, with its high brick walls and windows over the river, inspires awe as visitors walk in and see the kind of industrial space that architects have likened to the feeling of a cathedral. Here, artifacts like nineteenth century bicycles and early twentieth century cars, a working machine shop, steam engines, and an unparalleled collection of Waltham watches and tools, all help visitors to grasp some of the many facets of the American Industrial Revolution.



*Marcia Folsom*



Marcia M. Folsom  
Chair, Board of Trustees

# From the Museum's Director

It is my privilege and pleasure to introduce you to the Charles River Museum of Industry and Innovation, now in its fourth decade of public service. Today we are the beating cultural heart of Waltham's downtown, the small city west of Boston where America's industrial potential first coalesced. Occupying a unique space that both industrialists and musicians have described as a cathedral, we gather people together for lectures, concerts, live theater and dance, weddings, technical demonstrations, artist openings, trade and craft shows, food festivals, and more—all while fulfilling our mission to educate people about America's industrial history.

My personal appreciation of our essential purpose has only grown since I began my tenure at the Museum in the summer of 2015. Then, I did not grasp the extraordinary impact of America's industrial history on two centuries—and counting—of world history. Nor did I understand then that I work on the site where the tree of life of American industry burst through the ground. It is here that the first modern industrial corporation was founded by Francis Cabot Lowell, the brilliantly conceived and executed organizational model for mass production that dominates—globally—to this day. It was here in this cradle of the American Industrial Revolution that engineer/machinist Paul Moody first demonstrated the extraordinary potential of technological innovation and systems integration.

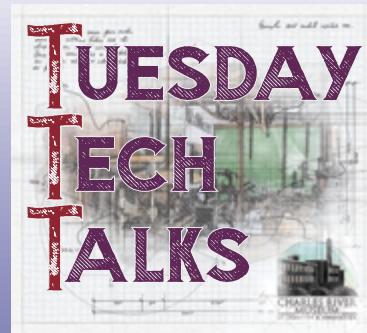
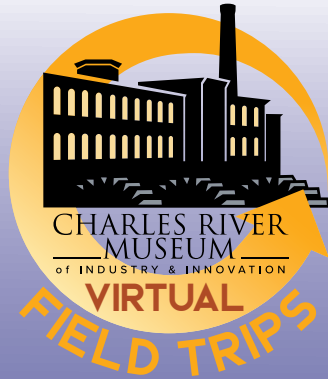
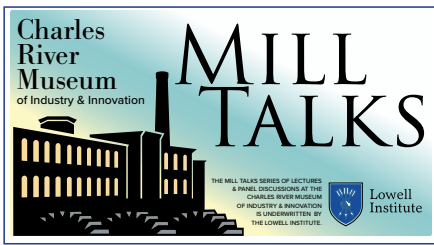
It was the vision of Michael Folsom, the Museum's founder, to “tell the story of the American Industrial Revolution writ large.” Objectively, of course, that is an absurdly tall task. How can we possibly share the entire American industrial story in our at once grand but also intimate space? We do this by embracing this intimacy, by getting personal, by taking a close look at the ideas and inventions, the materials, the tools, the techniques, and the character of the people behind the relentless progress of the American industrial narrative.

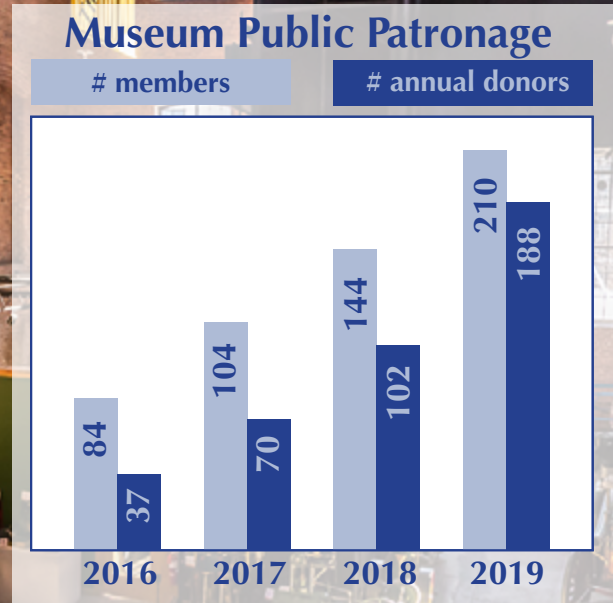
Our collection of two centuries of examples of hand tools, machine tools, industrial machines, invention prototypes, and finished products is the bedrock of our educational platform. Our volunteers, in most cases having contributed personally as mechanical engineers, molecular biologists, computer programmers, machinists, carpenters, and more to the legacy we share, help keep this history personal and bring it to life. Together, these artifacts, these people, these ideas and inspirations, integrated by our dedicated staff, enable us to fulfill our mission.

As I often say when orienting Museum visitors: the American Revolution created the United States but the American Industrial Revolution—and its continuing evolution—made and keeps our country strong. We feel so fortunate to be able to interpret and to share such essential ingredients of the American ethos and our American heritage.









## Testimonials

*"We spent a good couple hours here learning about all the industry that existed in Waltham during the 19th and 20th centuries. The museum staff gave a wonderful overview at the start of our visit which kicked off a lot of interesting exhibits... Super fascinating visit that I enjoyed very much. If you're into local history/the Industrial Revolution, then this is the place for you! "*

*"The museum itself is a great learning environment for kids, and the staff is awesome with them. Small group, very engaging, fun projects, and just kids having a good time while learning."*

*"The building itself is historic, being the birthplace of the industrial revolution in the US. It is located on the Charles River at the dam in a picturesque location. The exhibits are very educational, the staff are knowledgeable, and the museum has an excellent program of weekly events."*

*"Thank you for helping us learn more about inventions and contraptions. I really enjoyed experimenting."*

*"My favorite museum in the Boston area, which is actually quite a feat. Something for everyone here with detailed history in easy-to-look-at exhibits So interesting the stuff to be learned. The memorabilia here is impressive, the quantity and realizing people 200 years ago were doing these kind of things that we expect only smart, modern people to be able to do."*

*"This is the best Museum you've ever taken me to, Mom! Because everything here is REAL!"*

