



## **PROCLAMATION**

- WHEREAS:** On December 26, 1828, about half of the 800 “Mill Girls” – women employed at the Cocheco Manufacturing Company engaged in a “Turn-Out,” walking out of the factory to protest their harsh working conditions and poor treatment by mill ownership; and
- WHEREAS:** Taking place right here in Dover, this protest marked the first strike by working women in the United States. The Mill Girls paraded around the mill quadrangle, with a demonstration that included banners, signs, martial music, artillery, and speeches; and
- WHEREAS:** The general response within the community was not very sympathetic. The Dover Enquirer called the turn-out "one of the most disgusting scenes ever witnessed" and claimed that the girls walked out over "some imaginary grievance."; and
- WHEREAS:** Although the job action was unsuccessful and the girls returned to work three days later, no better off than before, the spirit of the protest spread through the local boarding houses and helped to inspire future actions. A subsequent turn-out in 1834 led to the resignation of Cocheco Manufacturing’s factory agent, James Curtis, who was known as a harsh taskmaster with little consideration for the women in his employ; and
- WHEREAS:** In general, mill work was harsh and unforgiving. The hours were long and conditions were hazardous. Head and eye injuries from flying shuttles were frequent. Light was insufficient and the machinery noise was deafening. Mill windows were kept closed to promote humidity, stuffy lint-filled air heightened the likelihood of respiratory diseases and lung infections and
- WHEREAS:** Despite these conditions, factory work was considered a very respectable job, the first profession in which a woman could achieve some degree of financial independence. Mill work had a great degree of sociability with new friends, an opportunity for further education, an honorable way to earn a dowry, and a dignified way to be self-supporting. These advantages helped women move forward in society through their own hard work and dedication; and
- WHEREAS:** As a heroic first step in this journey, the actions of the Mill Girls helped inspire their peers as well as future generations of working women. Their actions are remembered, recognized and celebrated as an important part of the history of both Dover and the United States of America.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, ROBERT CARRIER, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF DOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE, DO HEREBY RECOGNIZE DECEMBER 26, 2022 AS:**

### **DOVER MILL GIRLS RECOGNITION DAY**

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF,** I have here unto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Dover to be affixed this **14<sup>th</sup> Day of December, 2022.**

Robert Carrier, Mayor,  
City of Dover, New Hampshire