Remembering Lowell
Art in the Early Years of Lowell’s Revival
By Paul Marion
Executive Director, Office of Outreach, University of Massachusetts Lowell

When I was fourteen years old, I made a room-sized painting. It was the subterranean back room of my brother Richard’s art gallery on Hurd Street, which he operated from the mid-1960s into the early 1980s. We had broken through a wall to enlarge the downstairs exhibition space. The room was in bad shape, so my brother gave me the green light to turn it into a life-sized knock-off of a Jackson Pollock action painting. I wrapped myself in plastic bags and grabbed cans of black and white paint—and whipped paint around the room until the ceiling and walls were completely splattered.

That’s the kind of thing we did at Gallery 21, the epicenter of contemporary art in the city during the early years of Lowell’s revitalization. I remember a lime-green bookmark my brother had made that read: Join the Lowell Renaissance!

Before Western Avenue Studios, before the Arts League of Lowell, before the Revolving Museum, before Open Studios in Lowell, before Ayer Lofts, before the Lowell Public Art Collection, before the University Gallery at UML, before the Brush Gallery and Studios, before Guy Lefebvre’s Lowell Gallery, before the Art Alive! Co-op, before the City-Fair CETA art project—before all these there was Gallery 21, blazing an artistic trail in the days when Lowell’s main stage for visual arts was the Parker Gallery of the Whistler House (before it was the Whistler House Museum).

Gallery 21, next door to the Harkins Real Estate Office, was the gathering spot for local bohemians. They were Mass College of Art and Museum School graduates, some transplanted Bostonians, and blow-ins from Texas and Manhattan, as well as from the Lowell suburbs. They read the New York Times on Sunday, watched educational TV on Channel 2, and had memberships at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. They were the shock troops of the coming cultural revival that made Lowell what it is today.

Who would you see at Gallery 21, besides Gallery Director Richard Marion and his wife Florence Patti Marion? Janet Lambert-Moore, Mico Kaufman, Carol Bacak Durand, Charles Durand, Sherman Rider, Selma Schwartz, Sarah Supplee, Jeannine Tardif, Ross Hanvey, Jack McWiliams, Helen Weld, Antoinette Nault, Bernie Petruziello, Bill Giavis, David Brow, Al Santerre, Lillian Cooper, Carlton Plummer, Joan and Bill McGeer, Phyllis Berwick, Suzanne Ballantine, Robert Kuszek, Dan Rocha, Kevin Harkins, Raymond Foye, Andy Robinson, and more members of the creative class. You saw everything from watercolors and black-and-white photography to brass rubbings, prints, and sculpture.

The artists who circulated around Gallery 21 took their work on the road under the name of the Lowell Sunday Painters and with their Art in the Park program traveled...
from Tyler Park to the parking lot that pre-dated the Doubletree Hotel. The Gallery partnered with the Lowell Art Association to produce a downtown art festival in Lucy Larcom Park. Festival organizers rolled out a 100-foot piece of fabric from the Pellon Corporation on the walkway and then handed out paintbrushes for people to create a group mural. Gallery 21 artists displayed their work in the lobby of the Route 3 Cinema and at the Lowell library, and other places. Lowell Sun art critic Ann Schecter, a painter herself, would review new shows at the Gallery. There would always be an image or two with the review. She was an enthusiast, but didn’t mind saying when someone missed the mark.

When Gallery 21 closed, the director received a grant to create an artist’s book to document the life and times of the Gallery. For anyone who would like to learn more about the city’s recent cultural history, this one-of-a-kind book is in the collection of the UMass Lowell Center for Lowell History at the Mogan Cultural Center.

Lowell Historical Society Seeking Increased Participation

The Lowell Historical Society is seeking to establish a list of members interested in serving on the Board and/or on Board sub-committees. If interested please send a brief resume highlighting your particular interests and experience to: LHS PO Box 1826 Lowell, MA 01853 Attention: Marie Sweeney. The Board of the Historical Society includes:

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Notes from the Publication Committee
by Pauline M. Golec, Chair

Spring! Warm days, budding flowers, and baseball. As the Red Sox make headlines by opening the season in Japan, it's a fine time to remember that Lowell has its own professional baseball history.

This story has been made available to us through BRICKS AND BATS. Written a few years ago by Chaz Scoggins, noted Lowell SUN columnist, and published by the Lowell Historical Society, this book is a must for baseball fans and history buffs. Scoggins begins his history by writing, "Professional baseball history in Lowell,...dates back almost to the pro game's very origins. On June 8, 1870, the Lowell Clippers, who today would be considered a semi-pro team, played the famed and undefeated Cincinnati Red Stockings, baseball's first professional team, in a game at the Lowell Riding Park on outer Gorham Street. A crowd of 300 paid a stiff fee of 50 cents to watch the Red Stockings blitz the Clippers 32-5. "Despite this loss for the locals, baseball flourished in Lowell, and we further read that the city's first all-professional team was formed in 1875. The Mill City could later boast of championship teams such as the Lowell Tigers of 1903 and take pride in that "more than a dozen Hall of Famers played on Lowell diamonds, and more than 130 major-league players wore Lowell uniforms at some time during their professional career."

The author uses the colorful stories of individual players through the years to relate the story of professional baseball in Lowell. The book is rich in photos and tables of statistics.

Consider buying BRICKS AND BATS for your favorite baseball fan. Visit the Society's website for more information about this book and other publications.

Answers to Trivia Questions:

1) WILH, 2) Wigginsville, 3) 48, 4) Bon Marche, 5) American Flags.
LHS Corporate Memberships
The Lowell Historical Society proudly acknowledge our Corporate members (both 2007 & 2008) who demonstrated their organizations’s commitment to the preservation of Lowell’s past and the dissemination of information to keep Lowell’s heritage alive in the future. The following organizations have made this commitment:

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We would like to add the listing of your company here in the future.

2008 Corporate Membership
Enclosed is a $100 tax deductible gift for a Lowell Historical Society Corporate Membership.

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Send to Lowell Historical Society, PO Box 1826, Lowell, MA 01853

Lowell Trivia
By Martha Mayo
1. What was Lowell’s first radio station?
2. Epping Street and Lawrence Street are part of what section of Lowell?
3. What was Lowell High football team’s record for consecutive wins?
4. What store preceded Jordan Marsh?
5. What did the U.S. Bunting Company make for the first time in the U.S.?

Answers are on the Page 2.

EBAY Auctions of Lowell Interest

SOUVENIR MUG LOWELL MA: This souvenir mug has a transfer print of the Lowell City Hall. The mug in not cracked or chipped. The handle and lip of the mug has some of the gilt missing. The mug is 3 ¼ inches tall and dates from around 1900. The price was $116 plus $5.00 shipping.
CABINET CARD PHOTOGRAPH OF MAN IN UNIFORM: The photograph circa 1890 is about 2 ½” x 4 ¼” and pictures a man in uniform. The card is in very good condition. The photographer’s name is printed on the back and says reads: Warren, 100 Merrimac St., Lowell. The price was $27 plus $1.50 shipping.

F. & E. BAILEY & CO. POISON: This cobalt blue poison bottle is 4.25 inches high and is embossed F. & E. BAILEY & CO. LOWELL, MASS on the front. The bottle has ribs to warn the user that it is a poison bottle. The bottle has minor etching and scratches similar to bottles that have been buried and then dug up after years of being underground. The bottle has some very minor chips on the back of the base and lip. The price was $263 plus $4.60 shipping.

LOWELL MASSACHUSETTS STERLING SOUVENIR SPOON: This Lowell Souvenir Spoon is 5 7/8 inches long and dates to around 1900. The bowl has the word Lowell with a shuttle over the center part of the cities name. The spoon is in excellent condition. The price was $58 plus $4.50 shipping.
LOWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANTIQUES APPRAISAL EVENT
Saturday May 3, 2008  11:00 to 2:30

Location:  The Pawtucket Congregational Church, 15 Mammoth Road, Lowell. Annual Meeting immediately followed by appraisals for Members starting at 11 am until 12 noon. General public invited at 12 noon. Cost for members is $5 per item, two item limit. For general public, appraisals are $7 per item, $6 with coupon and $5 to new members.

Mr. Douglas W. Stinson, Senior Appraiser and Principal Auctioneer of Carl W. Stinson Inc. will discuss and verbally evaluate family heirlooms, attic treasures and other objects of sentimental or financial value. Mr. Stinson is a recognized expert and specialist in American, English, Continental and Victorian furniture and all related decorative arts. Mr. Stinson along with his staff oversee the firm’s regularly scheduled auctions which offer a wide selection of estate furnishings and decorative arts from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Their firm has in the past, represented and appraised some interesting estates from Lowell including the sale of the property of the late Eleanor Trull. The format of this appraisal event is public verbal appraisals. This is a fun way for people to learn about a broad spectrum of antiques.

This is a great opportunity to get up to TWO items expertly appraised. Items that will not be accepted due to time constraints and research considerations include: jewelry, coins and stamps, ethnographic items, ancient archeological artifacts, and weapons (guns, swords etc).

If you have larger items that you want appraised such as a room size oriental carpet, a large painting or a piece of furniture, or a large sculpture or garden statuary, etc., please bring multiple photographs and dimensions to the appraisal event. If you have questions about the appropriateness of a particular item feel free to contact Mr. Stinson directly. Please email digital images to: dstinsonantiques@comcast.net or call (781) 259-3200. Standard Print photographs can be sent to their offices at 293 Haverhill Street, Reading Ma 01867-1809. Mr. Stinson and his staff are also available for in home evaluations.

DOUGLAS W. STINSON, Senior Appraiser and Principal Auctioneer of Carl W. Stinson Inc.
Email: dstinsonantiques@comcast.net or Phone: (781) 259-3200.

Carl W. Stinson Inc.  Phone: 781-259-3200 Web: StinsonAuctions.com
293 Haverhill Street, Reading Ma 01867 - Massachusetts Auctioneer Licenses 140 & 219
The preservation of Lowell history depends heavily on your membership. If you have not yet sent in your membership renewal for 2008, please do so as soon as possible.

**Lowell Historical Society**

The Lowell Historical Society's Mission is to collect, preserve and publish materials related to Lowell and to promote the study of the history of the City.

We are located at the Boott Cotton Mills Museum, 115 John Street, Fourth Floor, Downtown Lowell Massachusetts 01852.

The office is open 9:00 am to 12:00 Noon on Monday and Wednesday. The site telephone number is 978-970-5180 or on the Web at:

http://ecommunity.uml.edu/lhs

**Calendar of Events**

**Program:** Trivia Night -- An evening of Trival Pursuit with Lowell Trivia mixed in.

**Date:** Saturday April 26, 2008, 7:00 p.m.

**Location:** Club Lafayette, 465 Fletcher St. Lowell

**Program:** Annual Meeting & Antique Appraisal Fair -- Annual Meeting immediately followed by an "Antique Appraisal Fair" for Members at $5/item. A (2) item limit. General public invited at noontime, cost is $7/item, $6 w/coupon. $5 to new members. Renowned auctioneer & appraiser Doug Stinson will speak and appraise artifacts. No weapons, jewelry, coins, stamps or ancient artifacts due to time constraints. Free parking is available. Call Tom with questions. 978-452-0897.

**Appraiser's Website:**
http://www.stinsonauctions.com/benefit.htm

**Date:** May 3, 2008 11:00 a.m. - 2:30 P.M.

**Location:** Pawtucket Congregational Church, 15 Mammoth Road, Lowell