



Winter Newsletter

Volume 21

February 2007

LOCAL HERO - Marie Sweeney

Community Teamwork, Inc. presented their "Local Heroes" Awards on October 26, 2006. Their President's Award this year went to our own Marie Sweeney. To call Marie "our own" is perhaps overstated and a bit too proprietary but that is how one perceives Marie. She in fact supports many organizations in and around Lowell and is a member of at least four boards of directors of which the Lowell Historical Society is one. Her varied interests and participation means that to each organization she brings not one but many facets of knowledge and experience. The Lowell Historical Society is lucky to see her as one of our own. Congratulations Marie, the award is well deserved.



LHS CORPORATE MEMBERSHIPS

The Lowell Historical Society proudly announces our Corporate Membership program. Corporate members demonstrate their organization'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:

- ★ D.J. Reardon Co.
- ★ Wyman's Exchange, Inc.
- ★ Law Office of Elizabeth Broderick

ARCHIVIST COLUMN

By Denise C. Cailler

The Society has been working feverishly on the newly acquired "Lowell Sun" Collection consisting of negatives and prints taken in the late 1970s and into the 1990's by Lowell Sun photographers. We are presently processing the collection so the images will be available for research. The negatives and prints are sorted, indexed, housed in proper archival storage, and finally the negatives are scanned to allow computer access. We are grateful to the Lowell Sun Community Fund (a fund of the McCormick Tribune Foundation) for a recent grant to help us with this project.

Members and Non-members alike continue to generously donate items to the Society that relate to Lowell's past and present. We would like to thank those who have donated since our last newsletter; James Baird, Martha Brogan, Denise Cailler, James Conlon, Seth Cooper, Ruth Culpon, Stephanie Donahue, Nancy Enos, Pauline Golec, Ron McAllister, Robert Maria, Martha Mayo, Robert Mongeau, Marjorie O'Malley, George Poirier, Dorothy Reed, Kevin Sullivan, Dr. & Mrs. William Sweeney, Laura Tempia, Sharon Welch, Janine Whitcomb, and Claire Wuolle.



Answers to Trivia Questions:

1) Edgar Allen Poe, 2) A shuttle, 3) Lowell Memorial Auditorium, 4) An eclipse

NEWS FROM THE PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

by Pauline M. Golec, Chair

As many of you know, the Lowell Historical Committee, incorporated in 1902, was originally organized as the Old Residents' Historical Association in 1868, making it one of the first historical societies in the nation. True to the Society's mission to tell Lowell's story, the Old Residents' Association published many papers presented before it.

In Volume I (June 1879), Joshua Merrill, Esq., lauds Dr. Theodore Edson "for the many sacrifices he made for the cause of education, and that the success of our schools,...has been in a great degree owing to his unwearied labors."

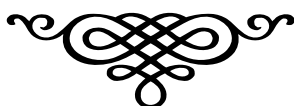
Also published were the Honorable Samuel Hadley's remembrances which include attending a lecture on electricity and witnessing lively electrical stool experiments. "B. F. Foster, of pig raising memory, who lived on Pine Street, was placed on the stool and his hair stood up on his head like the quills of a porcupine."

After the Lowell Historical Society's incorporation, it continued publishing historical papers and in its 1926 volume included essays written by Lowell High School students.

"The Streets of Lowell," an essay written by Helen Thessia, Class of 1914, informs the reader that "North of the river are two historic roads built about 1720. Old Ferry Road and the Gumpus Road. The first leads from Varnum Ave. to Clark's Ferry. Until 1792, Old Ferry Road was a highway to Boston.

...The Old Gumpus Road was first a cowpath to meadows farther north, and later the bodies of negro slaves were carried over it to a little negro burying ground near its junction with the Old Meadow Road." We read further in the essay that Gorham Street, named after a Boston resident who owned land in the area, was laid out in 1832.

The above quoted volumes and others are housed in UMass Lowell's Center for Lowell History at the Mogan Center. These early publications, prolific ancestors to later Society publications, make for interesting, sometimes eloquent, historical reading and research.



GROWING UP IN LOWELL III

"Hangin' Around in Lowell"

Memories of Back Central Street Area
(A.K.A. The Flats, South End or Chapel Hill Area)
Gary Mastas, Lifelong Lowell Resident

I lived in this section for the first thirty-one years of my life and still have great memories of the area. I was born in 1947 and my family resided at 39 Whipple St. in a six-tenement, three-storied block on the corner of Mead Street. In retrospect, when I'm driving through this area now, I never realized how close the homes were to each other and how narrow the streets truly are in this great section. Remember years ago (fifties & sixties? Cars didn't take up all available spaces like today.

Churches in this section were plentiful. St. Peter's & St. Anthony's (Catholic), St. Vartanantz (Armenian Apostolic) along with St. John's and the Eliot Church (Protestant), solidifying the name also used for this area – Chapel Hill. These churches were key to the lives of many people who claimed "roots" in the Back Central St. area.

The geography offered major roads such as Gorham St., Central St. and lower Lawrence St., Gorham St. up to around Butler Ave., Lawrence St. to around Watson Street. Thorndike St. and points such as Hale St. belonged to the lower Highlands. Terms such as Ayers City, Swede Village and Wigginvill were areas out of "our realm". Points on the other side of the Concord River were not in the Flats. The South Common and Hudson Field offered recreation and leisure time for "our people". Architectural diversification and beauty is seen throughout this section. The Asahel Puffer house (62 Highland St.) and the Samuel Wood house (648 Central St.) offer examples of a Mansard roof which originated in France during the Napoleon III time (1852-1870). The Hocum Hosford house (574 Central St.) offers an example of Italian elegance. Greek Revival architecture is on display at the old Coburn School on Lawrence St. – perfect architecture for narrow but long lots.

Growing up on Whipple St. (off 810 Central St.) was an education about old neighborhoods with many stores and businesses around your home. On Whipple St. alone we had Nora's Bar Room, Mike's Market, O'Brien's Funeral Home, Harry's Market and Nickles' Variety at the corner of Kinsman St. To my generation, you always included Frank & Ernie's at 810 Central St.-

which is still in business. Also, across the street from St. Anthony's Rectory was Charlie's Market on the corner of Central and Floyd Streets.

Hudson Field offered baseball time for kids like Steve Walsh, Joe Branco, Mike Geyer and me along with many others. The South Common was home to the St. Peter's Little League and Cadets. Memories: Monsignor John J. Twiss throwing out the yearly "first pitch" - a nice sight to the kids. Remember the Fourth of July time at the South Common? JUST GREAT! Some other personal memories of mine were the home run exploits of "Joe" Gallagher and "Mickey" Sarault - both kids from the Flats. My brother Tony Mastas, a very good athlete, learned all of his hitting and catching skills in our neighborhood. Some other individuals who come to mind include Jim and Marilyn Davlin, Frances and Ellen Gath, Diane Sousa, Louise Harzigian, Peggy Lorrey, Billy Montbleau, Eric Chaisson, Mickey and Butch Connors, Ed Fontes, Manny Cunha along with Billy and Steve Walsh.

As the fifties turned into the sixties, many kids and their parents turned to the new Rialto duck pin alleys - as Lowell was always a "Mecca" for duck pin bowling. The Rialto opened the week President Kennedy was inaugurated in January 1961. I will always remember bowling with my father on OPENING NIGHT. Mr. Norman Glassman, proprietor of alleys, was previously the owner of the Rialto Theatre, and was a great owner. Many a night Mr. Glassman had given me a ride home when he closed the alleys and my mother would call the alleys looking for her "delinquent" son. Bowling cost \$.30 cents before 5:00 pm. - \$.35 cents after 5:00 pm. Shoe rental was \$.15 cents. To young bowlers, some heroes were names like Joe Barros, Cleo Surprenant, Ray Daniels, Tex Weed and the Dinnigan family from Chelmsford. I would be remiss if I failed to remember the Rialto Desk Manager Steve Norkiewicz, a great guy who managed the Rex and Rialto alleys for years.

A very prominent Lowellian, Hocus Hosford, has a square named after him - Hosford Square at the top of Central St. near Wamesit St. Mr. Hosford was a two-time mayor in the 1800s who built the Masonic Temple in Lowell. The Hosford Building on Middle St still stands (look for the letter "H")

The Brentwood Bowling Alleys, Santoro's Sandwich Shop, Pioneer Market, Turcotte's Package Store, O'Connor & Hill Hardware, Cushman's Bakery, Hogan's Bakery, Finnegan's and Colonial Bar Rooms were busy spots as was Danas Market.

One final comment - remember the Commodore Ballroom? My father, Nick Mastas who is originally from the Acre, met my mother (Mary Welch from Whipple St.) there in 1936.

GROWING UP IN LOWELL IV

Joseph Quattrochi

(as told in an interview with Linda Hoyt)

I was born in the Hale/Howard St. area. It wasn't the best part of town but it was a good place to grow up. We used to go fishing in Hale's Brook. We never ate them, just caught them and threw them back. We couldn't go swimming there...it was too dirty. We did go swimming further



up, near the Harvard Brewery. In the summer we used to jump on the back of the ice truck to get a piece of ice. It's Muldoon Bros. & Co. now. Or I could ride with Mr. Brody, the rag man. There was a junk yard on Dailey Street that had a horse. When I was 11 or 12, we used to have rock fights with the Smith St. gang. Some of them are cops now.

Sometimes we would travel all over town. People would throw their bus passes away when they were through with them. We would get hold of them, and ride wherever we wanted to go. It was great!

Of course, I had chores at home. In the summer, I had to get wood and put it in the basement. In the fall, I had to pull up tomato plants. It wasn't exciting, but it was a good life.

I didn't like school much. I graduated ninth grade from C.W. Morey. Miss Macheras was my teacher. I remember the principal - Buck Dennett. He was tough!

I liked the Lowell Trade School. It was across the street from the John St. parking garage. I enjoyed it because we had one week in class, then one week in shop. I learned to do carpentry there.

I always looked forward to going downtown. My favorite place was Rufkin's candy store. Downtown was especially good at Christmas time. The city put up lots

of lights. I especially remember the smells. All the stores gave out popcorn, so it smelled like popcorn everywhere.

My first job was at Plaza Lunch; I made 25 cents an hour. Later, my father and I both worked at Merrimack Mills. They replaced the floors every year. The wood would get rotten from the dyes.

When I was about 16 or 17, there was a dance every Friday or Saturday night at the Immaculate Conception Church. It was called the "Hoodsie Hop". Bernie Larkin's group played. I remember dancing to songs like "Muskrat Ramble" and "Bonaparte's Retreat." We danced the jitterbug and the foxtrot. There was always a priest policing the dance.

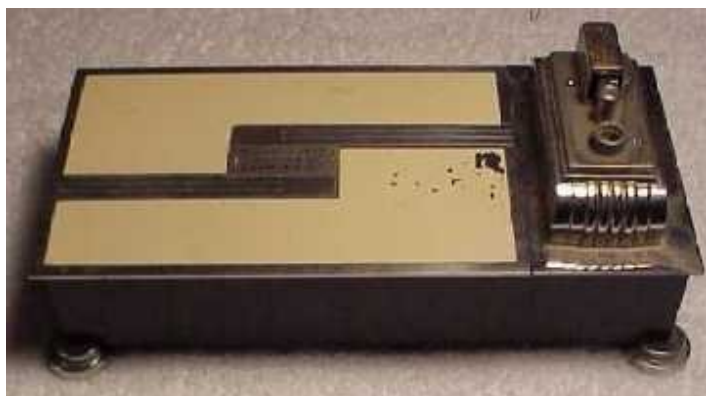
When I was older, we went to dances at the Commodore Ballroom, where the Bus Center is now. I heard Tommy Dorsey and Gene Krupa there. Dorothy Lamour was there, selling war bonds. Truman stopped at the Depot, and also Gov. Dewey and Wilkie, when they were running for president.

Lowell was a beautiful town when I was growing up, and it's still a good place to live.

(Call Tom Langan at 978.452.0897 to publish your memories of growing up in Lowell.)

EBAY AUCTIONS OF LOWELL INTEREST

Mahogany lined art deco Ronson cigarette box with lighter from the Harvard Brewing Co., Lowell Mass. The box is dated Christmas 1937 and is 8" long & 3 1/2" tall. The item sold for \$202 plus shipping.



Fine sixth plate unidentified Daguerreotype of a Massachusetts *Lowell City Guard* Militiaman, ca 1855, with original paper seals still intact. This militia would eventually take part in the Baltimore riot which would result in the first casualties of the Civil War. Sold for \$1,285.00.



Lowell Trivia

By Martha Mayo

1. Lowell's Annie Richmond had an affair with what 19th century author?
2. What is the shape of the Boott Mill weathervane?
3. Where was the first indoor circus held in Lowell?
4. Why were schools in Lowell closed in 1881 during "Yellow Tuesday"?

Answers are on the first page of the newsletter.

Trivia Challenge from Fall Issue

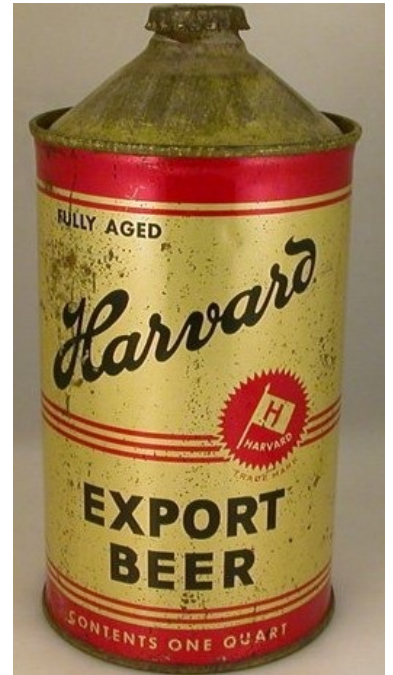
The trivia question challenge provided by Richard J. Dacey was correctly answered by Keith Arbour.

Question: What Lowell High School headmaster went on to become a governor of New Hampshire?

Answer: Moody Currier became governor of New Hampshire long after his tenure as Lowell High School's Principal.

Thanks to Keith Arbour's correct answer, Mr. Dacey has generously donated \$100 to the Society. We thank both of these gentlemen for providing active support for the Lowell Historical Society.

Lowell Historical Society and D.J. Reardon Co. are Hosting
Mehmed Ali
presenting
The Story of the
Harvard Brewing Co., Lowell, MA
Including a
Display of Harvard Beer Memorabilia
Plus
Optional Beer Tasting Extravaganza



Sunday March 4, 2007, 2:00 - 4:00 pm

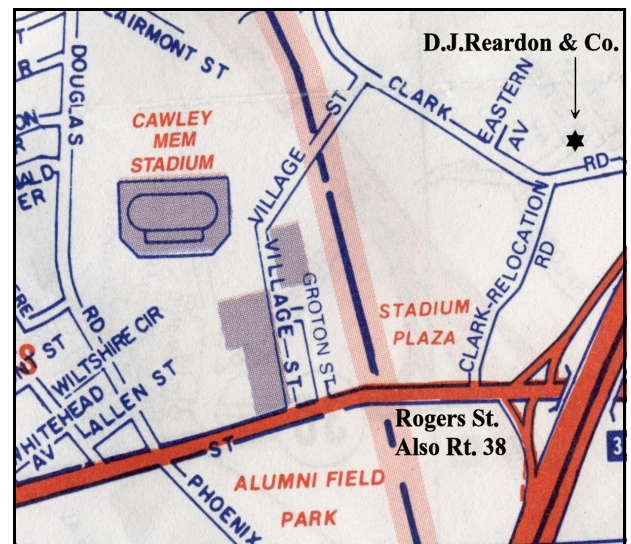
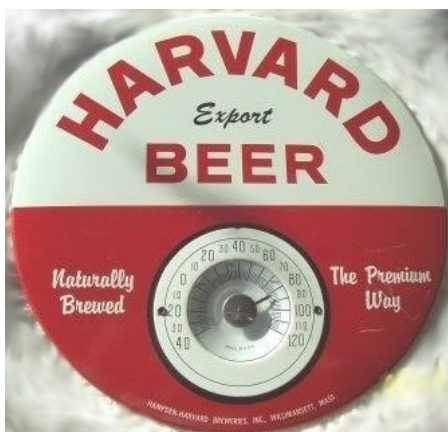
at the Offices of D.J. Reardon Co., 558 Clark Road, Tewksbury

Your opportunity to add enjoyment and information to your day and provide support to the
Lowell Historical Society.

Presentation and memorabilia display is free to the public.

(Optional beer tasting fund-raiser is \$8 per person with advance purchase or \$10 at the door and includes a large selection of domestic, imported, and specialty brews. All proceeds go to support the Lowell Historical Society)

**For advance purchase of beer tasting
opportunity, mail a check today payable to
Lowell Historical Society
Box 1826
Lowell, MA 01853**



D.J. Reardon, 558 Clark Road, Tewksbury,
MA, at exit 38 off I-495, just over the
Lowell/Tewksbury line.

Lowell Historical Society
P.O. Box 1826
Lowell, MA 01853

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The preservation of Lowell history depends heavily on YOUR membership. If you have not yet sent in your membership renewal for 2007, 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 Boot Cotton Mills Museum, 115 John Street, Fourth Floor, Downtown Lowell Massachusetts 01852

The office is open on Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The telephone number is 978 970-5180 or On the Web at:

<http://ecommunity.uml.edu/lhs>

Calendar of Events

Program: Actor Guy Peartree portrays Robert Roberts (Author and Abolitionist, 1780-1860) servant to both Nathan Appleton & Kirk Boott. In partnership with Parker Lecture Series.

Date: February 4, 2007 – 2:00 p.m.

Location: National Park Visitor Center, 246 Market St., Lowell

Program: Harvard Brewery History Exhibit, lecture, beer tasting fund raiser

Date : March 4, 2007, 2:00 p.m.

Location: D.J. Reardon, 558 Clark Road Tewksbury, MA

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

Date: April 28, 2007, 7:00 p.m.

Location: Club Lafayette, 465 Fletcher St. Lowell

Date: May 6th. 2007 – Annual Meeting, 1:30 pm

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Program: Presentation by UML Professor Chad Montrie Landscapes Lost, Meanings Found: Lowell Operatives' Changing Views of Nature

Date: May 6th. 2007 – Annual Meeting, 1:30 p.m.

Location: National Park Visitor Center, 246 Market St., Lowell

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All of our programs are free and open to the public. For information or directions call 978-970-5180