



Volume 33

Winter Newsletter

March 2011

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The following article contains some of the information that will be presented on Sunday, March 27, 2011, at 11:30 a.m. at the Lowell National Park Visitor Center, 246 Market Street, Lowell.

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THE ROAD TO BALTIMORE

by Richard P. Howe Jr.

(Richard P. Howe Jr., the Middlesex North Register of Deeds and a former President of the Lowell Historical Society, will present two lectures on the Sixth Regiment this spring. The first, on Sunday, March 27, 2011 at 11:30 a.m. at the Lowell National Park Visitor's Center, 246 Market Street in Lowell, will discuss the Baltimore riot. The second lecture, on Saturday, April 23, 2011 at 11:30 a.m. at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium's Hall of Flags, will discuss the experience of the veterans of the Sixth Regiment through the rest of the Civil War and in post-war Lowell. Both lectures are co-sponsored by the Lowell Historical Society and the Greater Lowell Veterans' Council.)

At the top of the stairs leading to the third floor rotunda of the Massachusetts State House, just outside the chamber of the House of Representatives, a colorful mural, ten feet high and fifteen feet long, depicts the soldiers of the Sixth Massachusetts Volunteer Militia Regiment standing beneath the flags of the United States and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, desperately fighting an angry, well-armed mob of civilians in the streets of Baltimore. The mural's inscription, signed in 1919 by Governor Calvin Coolidge explains:

"Marching through Baltimore in 1861 on the Historic 19th of April, true to the tradition of their own Lexington and Concord, defending the Constitution and the Union and carrying freedom to all who live beneath the stars and stripes."

Killed in that engagement were four soldiers from the Sixth Regiment including two from Lowell - Luther Ladd and Addison Whitney. Despite four more years of fighting and 620,000 additional deaths, the State House mural and the city of Lowell's iconic Ladd and Whitney Monument provide powerful evidence that intervening generations attributed great significance to the events in Baltimore on April 19, 1861. Even today, realizing that of all the men who died in the American Civil War, two from Lowell were among the first compels us to ask why that was so.

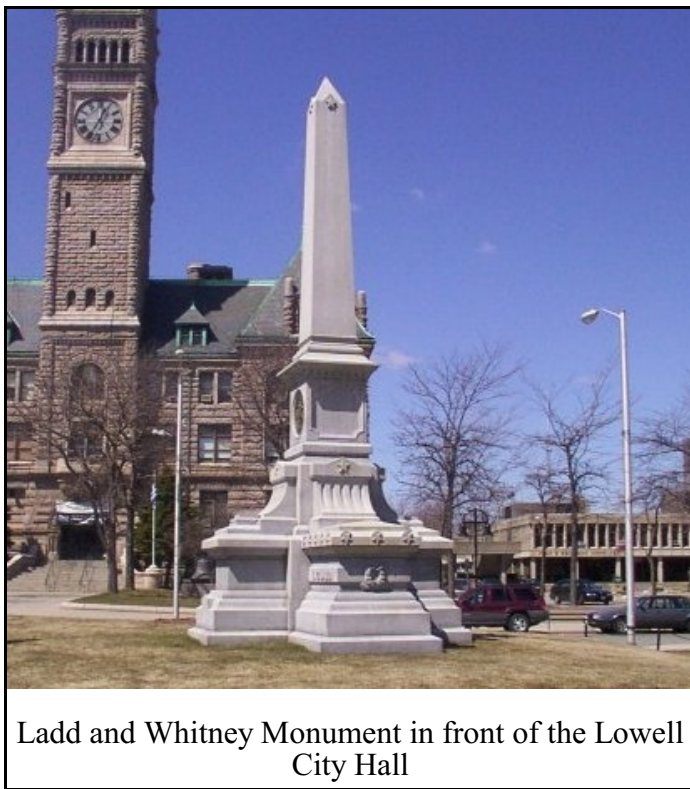
The election of 1860 set in motion the chain of events that led to Baltimore. Abraham Lincoln's victory on November 6 prompted South Carolina to secede from the union on December 20. Six other states of the deep South soon followed. Because Lincoln would not take office



Mural in the rotunda of the State House representing the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment in Baltimore.

until March 4, 1861, an uneasy calm prevailed through the winter. On the second day of his presidency, however, Lincoln learned that the Federal garrison at Fort Sumter, situated on an island in the midst of the harbor at Charleston, South Carolina, would be forced to surrender in a matter of weeks unless resupplied with food.

In early April, Lincoln authorized the dispatch of a relief convoy led by Lowell resident Gustavus Fox. The imminent arrival of these ships prompted the South Carolina militia to open fire on Sumter at 4:30 a.m. on April 12, 1861. After 34 hours of battering, the Federal garrison surrendered on April 14. The next day, President Lincoln requested Northern governors to provide 75,000 state militia to suppress the rebellion. Massachusetts was the first to act. By April 19, 1861, four full regiments of well-equipped militia had left the Commonwealth, bound for points south. The first to go was the Lowell-based Sixth Regiment.



Ladd and Whitney Monument in front of the Lowell City Hall

Abraham Lincoln was not the only newly elected chief executive to take office in 1861. In Massachusetts, John Andrew, an abolitionist Republican, vociferous in his support for John Brown, succeeded Nathaniel Banks as governor of the Commonwealth. Unlike Lincoln, who had to wait until March to assume the presidency, Andrew took office on January 5, 1861.

In December, 1860, Governor-elect Andrew traveled to Washington to consult with members of the Massachusetts Congressional delegation such as Senator Charles Sumner and Charles Francis Adams. The latter, the son and grandson of American presidents, had risen to prominence in Massachusetts in 1848, when he led opponents of slavery out of the Whig Party to protest the

nomination of Zachary Taylor for the presidency. This rift between the so-called Conscience Whigs and Cotton Whigs in Massachusetts led Adams to denounce the "unholy alliance between the Lords of the Lash and the Lords of the Loom." It foreshadowed the eventual demise of the Whig Party in national politics.¹

In Charles Francis Adams, John Andrew had found a mentor who communicated to him a certitude that war with the south was inevitable and a determination that Massachusetts should be fully prepared.² In a letter dated January 4, 1861, Adams urged Andrew to discreetly prepare the militia by appropriating funds and organizing men and to do so quickly, since war was inevitable within 30 days and certainly by March 4.³ Andrew's own conversations with Southerners during his December trip to Washington corroborated the concerns of Adams. The new governor took office determined to put the state's militia into readiness at once.⁴

The militia that Governor Andrew inherited was far from battle-ready. The process of transforming the Massachusetts militia from a social club to a field army commenced on January 16, 1861 with the issuance of General Order Number 4, which directed all militia company commanders to forward to the adjutant general the name, rank, and place of residence of all members of their companies. Prior to this, the order instructed,

"commanders of companies shall make strict inquiry, whether there are men in their commands who from age, physical defect, business, or family causes, may be unable or indisposed to respond at once to the orders of the Commander-in-chief, made in response to the call of the President of the United States, that they be forthwith discharged; so that their places may be filled by men ready for any public exigency which may arise, whenever called upon."⁵

The state legislature also addressed the equipment needs of the militia on January 23, appropriating \$31,500 for new overcoats, knapsacks, blankets and haversacks. In a secret session on February 2, the legislature also appropriated \$100,000 for an emergency fund to be used at the discretion of the governor in time of national emergency.

Having undertaken the steps needed to staff and equip the state's militia, Governor Andrew next addressed the question of how to move the troops southward should the need arise. A meeting of the state's highest ranking military officers at the governor's office on February 2 concluded that, in the event of war, Maryland was as likely to join the seceding states as remain in the union.

¹ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) 62

² Henry Greenleaf Pearson, *The Life of John A. Andrew* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1904) 136.

³ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁴ William Schouler, *A History of Massachusetts in the Civil War* (Boston: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1868) 17.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

Therefore, sending troops by rail through Baltimore was deemed too risky and an inventory of all steam ships in Boston Harbor capable of transporting troops southward was immediately obtained.⁶

By April 1, 1861, after three months of intensive preparation, the Massachusetts militia was ready to answer the call to arms. Perhaps the best prepared regiment was the Sixth, from the city of Lowell. From the moment of its incorporation as a town in 1826, Lowell grew rapidly with its population rising from a few thousand inhabitants at its inception to over 37,000 residents on the eve of the Civil War, making it the second largest city in Massachusetts.

Lowell's economic life blood was the tons of raw cotton that flowed into the city from the southern states. By 1855, Lowell's 55 textile mills turned 690,000 pounds of raw cotton into 2,246,000 yards of cotton cloth each week.⁷ Given such a strong economic incentive to maintain good relations with the south, many in Lowell expressed little support for and some hostility towards the abolitionists who became so pronounced throughout Massachusetts. Nevertheless, in 1860 the voters of Lowell cast their ballots overwhelmingly for Abraham Lincoln.⁸ Despite the city's economic and historic ties to the south, the militia companies of Lowell emphatically embraced Governor Andrew's military preparedness program. The governor found an unlikely ally in Lowell in Benjamin F. Butler, a lawyer, politician, and militia officer. Butler had unsuccessfully challenged Andrew in the election of 1860 as the gubernatorial nominee of the Breckinridge-led National Democratic Party. As a delegate to the Democratic convention of 1860, Butler had infuriated many of his constituents by voting repeatedly for Jefferson Davis, not Stephen Douglas, the favorite of Lowell Democrats and had become one of the most prominent Breckinridge Democrats in Massachusetts.⁹ Butler's political association proved fortuitous to Lowell's militia, for in December, 1860, while attending a meeting of Breckinridge Democrats - primarily southern politicians - in Washington, D.C., Butler became convinced that war with the South was imminent.¹⁰ He returned to Massachusetts on January 2, consumed by a zeal for military preparedness that helped turn the militia of his hometown of Lowell into one of the best trained and equipped regiments in the Commonwealth.

On the eve of the Civil War, four militia companies and the headquarters of the Sixth Regiment were based in Lowell. The companies had been formed independently and were clad in different uniforms. Each company was

commanded by a captain with a first lieutenant, a second lieutenant, four sergeants, four corporals and about forty privates in the ranks.

A review of pre-war newspaper accounts of regimental activities discloses a schedule dominated by social events. The January 14, 1861 *Lowell Courier* reported that one of the companies had held a very successful banquet attended by eighty citizens who feasted on oysters and were entertained by the company glee club. The reporter commented that the company had participated in fourteen parades in the prior six months and that if "America had more companies like this, there would be no need to fight." The January 25th *Courier* reported that the Davis Guards of Acton (Company E) gave a "levee" which was attended by General Butler, Colonel Jones, and many others from Lowell. The paper of Saturday, February 2 reported that "The Phalanx Parties", a series of parties hosted by the Mechanic Phalanx (Company C) closed Thursday night, but "as the season for dancing is not yet over, the Phalanx are meditating four additional parties." Later in February, the Watson Light Guard (Company H) participated in a Washington's Birthday Parade with full ranks and some members of the company attired in colonial army dress for an historical re-enactment. In early March, the Lowell City Guards (Company D) were hosting a levee for the benefit of Charles W. H. Stone, "who lost a hand while firing a salute on [Washington's Birthday]."

While the unfortunate Private Stone's injury may have been caused by his own ineptitude, it was more likely the inevitable result of firing the obsolete muskets with which the regiment was equipped. A February 5, 1861 letter from Colonel Jones to Governor Andrew detailed the needs of the Sixth Regiment:

"Four companies of the regiment are insufficiently armed (as to quantity) with a serviceable rifle musket; the other four with the old musket; which is not a safe or serviceable arm, and requiring a different cartridge from the first, which would make confusion in the distribution of ammunition.

Two companies are without uniforms, having worn them out and were proposing to have new ones the ensuing Spring. Six companies and the band have company uniforms of different colors and styles but insufficient in numbers, and which are entirely unfit for actual service, from the fact that they are made of fine cloth, more for show and the attractive appearance of the company on parade than for any other purpose, being cut tight to the form and in fashionable style."¹¹

To be ready for war, Jones' men needed all new uniforms and equipment, "of heavy serviceable material, cut sufficiently loose and made strongly, to stand the necessities of the service." In a P.S., Jones suggested that

⁶ Ibid., 34.

⁷ Arthur L. Eno, Jr., ed., *Cotton Was King: A History of Lowell, Massachusetts* (Lowell Historical Society/New Hampshire Publishing Co., 1976) 256 (Appendix B).

⁸ Ibid., 262 (Appendix G).

⁹ Howard P. Nash, Jr., *Stormy Petrel: The Life and Time of General Benjamin F. Butler, 1818-1893*. (Cranbury, N.J.: Farleigh Dickinson University Press: 1969) 63.

¹⁰ Benjamin F. Butler, *Butler's Book* (Boston: A.M. Thayer & Co., 1892) 159-160.

¹¹ Frederick W. Coburn, *History of Lowell and Its People* Vol I (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1920) 289-290.

it would take ten to fourteen days to put his regiment in "marching order."

The same newspapers which reported the levees and parades also provide evidence of the transition of the Sixth Regiment into a unit ready for war. On January 19, just three days after Governor Andrew issued General Order No. 4, the regimental officers and company commanders of the Sixth convened and passed the following resolution which was then transmitted to the governor:

"Resolved, That Colonel Jones be authorized and requested forthwith to tender the services of the Sixth Regiment to the commander-in-chief and legislature, when such services may become desirable, for the purposes contemplated in General Order No. 4."¹²

The January 23, 1861 *Courier* reported that the various companies of the regiment had met the prior evening and that three-quarters of the men proclaimed their readiness to respond to the call to arms on short notice, while the remainder caused their names to be removed from the rolls of the companies because of an inability to answer the summons to duty due to "domestic affairs, poor health, etc."

Lincoln's inauguration came and went without a shot being fired, and the dire predictions of imminent hostilities from earlier in the year appeared to many to have been a gross overreaction. In Massachusetts, Governor Andrew was criticized by business owners for fostering a climate of fear that stifled industry. He was condemned by his abolitionist friends for not moving aggressively enough towards the attainment of their objectives.¹³ Unfriendly newspapers pointed out that Ben Butler had personally profited from the war scare since the cloth for the militia's 2000 new overcoats had been purchased from Lowell's Middlesex Mills of which Butler was the majority shareholder.¹⁴

On March 13, the Lowell *Courier* reported that the Lincoln administration was resigned to the loss of Fort Sumter. On April 11, the Massachusetts Legislature cancelled the \$100,000 gubernatorial contingency fund it had earlier enacted and promptly adjourned for the year.¹⁵ To many, it seemed that the crisis had passed.

This was not the view held in the White House or at the gun batteries that besieged Fort Sumter. For more than a month, President Lincoln and the secessionist leaders of South Carolina engaged in a high stakes chess match that moved the country inextricably towards war. The rest of the country had been lulled to sleep, however, which magnified the shock felt when the news of the attack on Fort Sumter arrived. The *Lowell Courier* of Monday, April 15 (there was no paper on Sunday) reported:

"Major Anderson Surrenders Fort Sumter

We have never known more excitement than has prevailed in this city during the last forty-eight hours, since the news that hostilities had commenced between the Southern traitors and the General Government . . . The various military companies have meetings this evening, and we trust a spirit will be evinced of readiness to aid in upholding the President by volunteering their services if necessary."

Many of the volunteers remained at their armories throughout the night of April 15th. The next morning, the regiment's remaining companies, two from Lawrence and one each from Groton and Acton, arrived in Lowell. That day at noon, the entire regiment took a special train from Lowell to Boston. In Boston, one company from Stoneham and another from Boston were added to the Sixth. Additionally the old, unreliable smooth-bore muskets were replaced by the newer rifled models.

When President Lincoln's initial call for troops arrived, Governor Andrew sent back a simple response: "Where do you want them and by what route are they to get there?" Secretary of War Cameron telegraphed Andrew that Baltimore was calm and the troops coming to Washington should travel by rail. Departing from the previously prepared movement plans that would have avoided Baltimore, the Sixth left Boston by train late in the day on April 17. Two days later the men from Lowell and their comrades were fighting for their lives in the streets of Baltimore.

(Please come out to the two Civil War presentations by Richard P. Howe Jr. The first on Sunday, March 27, 2011, at 11:30 a.m. at the Lowell National Park Visitor Center, 246 Market Street, Lowell. The second presentation, is on Saturday, April 23, 2011 at 11:30 a.m. at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium's Hall of Flags).

Lowell Historical Society Board Members

The current members of the Historical Society's Board includes:

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Tom Langan
Paul Sheehy
Matthew Sepe

Walter Hickey, Genealogist

¹² Butler, 163.

¹³ Pearson, 168-69.

¹⁴ Butler, 168.

¹⁵ Schouler, 33.

LHS Corporate Memberships

The Lowell Historical Society proudly acknowledge our 2011 Corporate members who demonstrated 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:

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

2011 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. Title of worker who opened bales and cleaned the cotton fibers in the mill?
2. The warp yarns run which direction in woven fabric?
3. What business did Daniel Gage operate?
4. Who was the number one #2 man on television?

Answers are on the Page 8.

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

by Pauline M. Golec

Stephen Yafa spins quite a yarn in his well-researched and economically titled book, *BIG COTTON*. He tells us of the plant, *Gossypium malvaceae*, whose fibers are woven into articles we wear and use and whose seed oil is found in products we eat. (FYI-each cotton boll has 500,000 fibers. Who knew?)

From the personal to the global, the book traces the tale of cotton from Peru and India where it was first domesticated about 5500 years ago to China, today's leading cotton-growing nation. Cotton has significantly affected the history and culture of our world and nation from ancient times to the Industrial Revolution and Civil War, to current issues raised by genetically modified cotton and US farm subsidies.

BIG COTTON explores the technology of changing cotton fibers to cotton cloth beginning with the assumption that the first loom was a tree branch anchored to a base by vertical warp threads. The spinning jenny reduced tedious labor. Richard Arkwright, whose character is richly developed in this book, used water to power his factories in England and gave birth to the world-changing Industrial Revolution. In the US, Eli Whitney's cotton gin resulted in an explosion of cotton farming. The mechanical harvester pushed unemployed southern black cotton pickers north in record numbers in the early 1900s.

The chapter, "Camelot on the Merrimack," was of particular interest. Yafa's lively prose makes fresh again the familiar story of Yankee farm girls recruited to work in the new cotton mills of Lowell and the bold shrewdness of Francis Cabot Lowell and his associates. The author spotlights the glory of the first planned industrial community in America as well as the price paid for this showcase production of cotton.

Stephen Yafa, now a California writer of novels and movies, grew up in Lowell. His comments in the Preface and Afterword are not to be missed. While decrying the gloom and grime of Lowell in the 1950s, he respects the character and characters of this mill city as he tells of Lowell's importance in cotton's history as well as a humorous attempt at getting directions when he returned to his old home town.

Finally, it should be noted that the Society's own Martha Mayo and Gray Fitzsimons are mentioned in the book's acknowledgments and that *BIG COTTON* is available at the Lowell National Historical Park bookstores.

EXHIBIT INVITATION

Lowell in the Civil War
First Blood: The Lexington of 1861

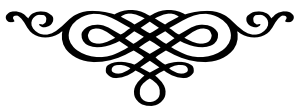
This exhibit will display Lowell-related Civil War images and artifacts. The opening Reception will be held on Monday April 18, 2011 at 2:00 pm.

Where: Mogan Cultural Center
40 French Street
Lowell, MA 01853

Sponsors: Lowell Historical Society and
Lowell National Historical Park

In the Summer of 1861 James Russell Lowell of Massachusetts stated:

"The country had come to the conclusion that Mr. Lincoln and his cabinet were mainly employed in packing their trunks to leave Washington, when the 'venerable Edward Ruffin of Virginia' fired the first gun at Fort Sumter which brought all the Free States to their feet as one man. That shot is destined to be the most memorable one ever fired on this continent since the Concord fowling pieces said, 'That bridge is ours, and we mean to go across it,' eight-seven Aprils ago. As these began a conflict which gave us independence, so that began another which is to give us nationality."



Daguerreotype of Lowell City Guard

Immediately after the first gun at Fort Sumter, President Lincoln called for troops on April 15, 1861 and the Massachusetts Sixth Regiment of Volunteers from Lowell responded under the command of General Benjamin F. Butler. Ordered to Washington, DC to defend the Capital, they traveled by train arriving on in Baltimore on April 19. As they march from Baltimore's north station to south station, at Pratt Street they were attacked by southern sympathizers with brickbats, rocks, and gunfire. In the end, many were wounded and four died – Luther Ladd, Sumner Needham, Charles Taylor, and Addison Whitney.

Images on this page are just a few of the Lowell Historical Society's Civil War related items to be displayed in the exhibit.



"Dedication of the Monument In Memory of Ladd and Whitney, Lowell, Massachusetts, June 17, 1865-Sketched by William H. Hand"



"Massachusetts Militia Passing Through Baltimore"

EBAY Auctions of Lowell Interest



1930's celluloid tape measure advertising Harry A. Bissonnett Chrysler from Lowell. Good original working condition with only light general wear. Sold for \$59 including postage.

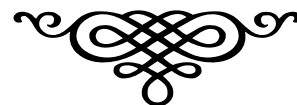
Team photo of the 1926-1927 Boston Bruins Hockey Team that played the Ottawa Senators in 1927 for the Stanley Cup. Regrettably for Boston area residents the Bruins lost the series. The photographs were distributed by The Ayer Co. of Lowell Mass. This company, whose offices were currently at 176 Middle Street, was established in 1841 as the apothecary shop known as J.C. Ayer and Co. This company began selling a medicine called Cherry Pectoral in 1843 and was still selling it in 1927 and in fact continued in Lowell until 1943. The Bruins image still had its original mailing tube and sold for \$266 including postage.



Harvard Brewery Co., Lowell, Mass. Unused Post Card. Sold for \$44 including postage.



Mickey Ward boxing bobble head figure. This was a giveaway from the Lowell Lock Monsters. The figure was about eight inches tall and in mint condition but without the original box. The figure sold for \$38 including shipping.





The preservation of Lowell history depends heavily on your membership. If you have not yet sent in your membership renewal for 2011, 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>.

Center for Lowell History

The Center for Lowell History, 40 French Street, currently is open on Tuesday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm. For Saturday hours call 978-934-4997. The contact point for information is Martha Mayo, 978-934-4998. The Center's web address is:
<http://library.uml.edu/clh/>

Answers to Trivia Questions

1) Picker, 2) Length-wise, 3) Ice, 4) Ed McMahon.

Calendar of Events

Program: Richard P. Howe Jr. will discuss the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment and the events preceding the Baltimore riot at the onset of the Civil War.
Date: Sunday, March 27, 2011 at 11:30 a.m.
Location: Lowell National Park Visitor's Center, 246 Market Street.

Program: Opening of the Civil War Exhibit in the Mogan Center
Date: Monday April 18, 2011 at 2:00 pm.
Location: 40 French Street, Lowell, MA 01853.

Program: Richard P. Howe Jr. will discuss the Civil War experiences of the veterans of the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment during the Civil War and in post-war Lowell.
Date: Saturday, April 23, 2011 at 11:30 a.m.
Location: Lowell Memorial Auditorium's Hall of Flags.