



Volume 43

Fall Newsletter

October 2014

Lowell Historical Society Program:

Immigrants, Refugees, and the International Institute of Lowell

A Presentation by Robert Forrant and Derek Mitchell

Community Room, Pollard Memorial Library

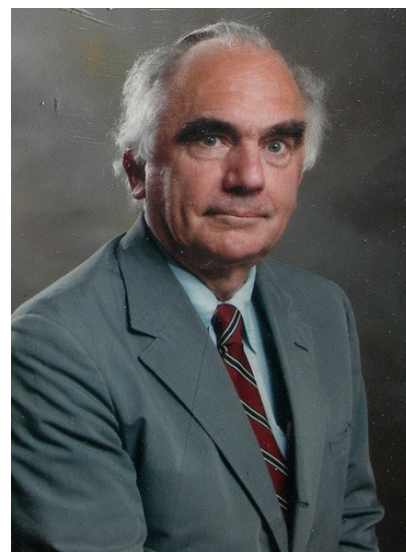
Wednesday, November 19 at 7pm-8:30

Like other cities in America, Lowell has been the home of many thousands of immigrants and refugees. Many settled here seeking a better life while others moved to Lowell in the wake of oppression, war, or famine in their native land. The difficulties of adapting to a new culture and a new way of life were frequently compounded by the struggle to find decent housing and employment.

The story of Lowell's émigrés, both past and present, remains poignant and vital. Please join the Lowell Historical Society for an illustrated presentation titled "Immigrants, Refugees, and the International Institute of Lowell," featuring Dr. Robert Forrant, professor of history at UMass Lowell, and Derek Mitchell, executive director of the International Institute of Lowell, to be held at the community room of the Pollard Memorial Library, on Wednesday, November 19, 2014, from 7pm to 8:30pm. Refreshments will be available.



Children pledging allegiance outside the office of the International Institute of Lowell, formerly located on High Street, 1964.—Photo Credit: International Institute of Lowell/Lowell Historical Society.



ARTHUR LOUIS ENO, JR. IN MEMORIAM

By Lew Karabatsos

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Arthur "Louis" Eno, Jr., president of the Lowell Historical Society from 1972 to 1974.

Louis' outstanding academic and professional achievements are well known and documented. He was an avid collector and was considered one of the local authorities on General Benjamin F. Butler. In fact, the Society owns his extensive collection of 19th century Butler political cartoons. But, few may know of the significant contribution he has made to the Society and to the preservation of Lowell's past.

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During his tenure as president, he recognized that if the organization was to continue to grow and prosper, it needed to extend itself beyond the traditional public meetings and venture into new areas. Two of his most significant achievements were 1) the diversification of the membership and the board and 2) re-instituting the local history publication program that the Society was well known for at the beginning of the 20th century.

In terms of diversification, Louis recognized the importance of encouraging the participation of a younger audience, both in projects and on the board. He reached out to a young female history professor at Lowell State College, Mary Blewett, and engaged her and her students in the Society's efforts. A group of those students soon came forward with a proposal to the Board to document the city's cemeteries through gravestone rubbings. It was unlike anything the Society had been involved in up to that time and could have been viewed with skepticism and indifference. Louis seized the opportunity to support the project and, with Board approval, the students received an endorsement and funds for supplies. They completed the city-wide project, the results of which are part of the Society's collection at the Center for Lowell History. In fact, many of those students became active in the Society, and some continue to do so today. Professor Blewett went on to become the first female president in the Society's history, serving from 1976 to 1978.

Louis's love for the city's history and the written word came together when he re-launched the Society's publication program that culminated in *Cotton Was King*, the first history of Lowell in decades. The book, a collaborative effort that brought together contributions from both academic and community historians, became, at the time, the publication of choice for high school and college classes as well as Lowell history buffs. That one book in the 1970s set off a chain of publication activity that continues to this day.

After Louis stepped down as President, he continued to stay engaged. In 1976 during Lowell's 150th anniversary, Louis served on the Sesquicentennial Commission, chaired by Charlie Sampas. Upon the sudden death of Mr. Sampas, Louis stepped in as chair and turned to the Society for assistance. The city needed a host for the anniversary ball and Louis asked some of those now-graduated students and friends to take the lead. The Sesquicentennial Ball, held in the Wannalancit Mill, attracted more than 700 people and by all measures was a fitting celebration of the city's past.

Louis understood what needed to be done and quietly - and effectively - just did it without any fanfare or expectations. Today's Lowell Historical Society is reflective of many things he put into place during his tenure on the board and afterward. By acknowledging his contributions, we not only honor his memory, but also thank him for his dedication to and passion for the Society and Lowell history. – May he rest in peace.



Photo Credit: Phil Belanger

Spanish American War Plaque

The Lowell Armory on Westford Street was built in 1889 for \$90,000 to house the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia. Over the years it has seen service as Army training, drilling, assemblies, draft registrations, sports auditorium, Lowell High School basketball games, Silver Mittens [Boxing – Ed.] and Civil Defense activities.

After the Spanish American War, Lowell veterans commissioned a bronze tablet modeled by R. Hinton Perry, designed by J.W. Gosling and cast by Henry-Bonnard Bronze Company, New York. It was dedicated on September 8th 1901 in impressive ceremonies at the newly constructed Lowell Armory. The plaque reads:

In memory of the soldiers from Lowell, who died in
Spanish American War A.D. 1898.

The names of the members who died in the war are
inscribed as follows:

SIXTH REGIMENT

Sergt. George C. Wenden Co. C, Corp. Herbert C.
Bellamy Co. C, Pvt. David T. Gifford Co. C, Pvt.
Harvey Aldrich Co. C, Pvt. Forrest W. Durant, Co. C

NINTH REGIMENT

Sergt. Ralph B. Walker Co. M, Pvt. John E, Connor Co.
M, Pvt. Chester F. Cummings Co. M, Pvt. Walter Small
Co. M, Pvt. John H. Marshall Co. M, Pvt. Charles H.
Braden Co. M, Pvt. George A. Pitcher Co. M, Pvt
Walter J. Tilton Co. M, Pvt. Joseph L. Wallace Co. M
Patrick E. Donahue, Troop H, Third United States Cav

The Lowell Armory was no longer needed in the new modern National Guard. It was demolished in 1973 and is now open space as Armory Park. The plaque from the Armory has been in the hands of the Lowell Historical Society. We are working on loaning the plaque to the Greater Lowell Veteran's Council for display in the Lowell Memorial Auditorium for all to remember the sacrifice of our Spanish American War heroes.

Growing Up In Lowell

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Valentine Chartrand

[In October, 1984, Diane Novelli interviewed Valentine Chartrand as part of the Oral History Collection created as a joint project between the University of Massachusetts Lowell, and the Lowell National Historical Park. The following article represents a small segment of the information on Valentine Chartrand as edited by Cliff Hoyt. The full text is on the website for the Center for Lowell History, University of Massachusetts (<http://library.uml.edu/clh>). It can be found under "Oral History" then "Mill Workers of Lowell."]

My name is Valentine Chartrand. My parents were born in Canada, but they met when they were both living in Lewiston, Maine. They subsequently moved to Lowell and I was born in Lowell, Mass., on December 18, 1903. My father was a contractor and built many buildings during his seventy-four years on earth. My mother never worked outside of the home. She had twelve children. I was the fourth child.

My father built our home in Lowell. It was located three miles from the center of town near the Tewksbury line. We lived too far out of town for me to go to a Catholic School. My father ended up putting me in St. Peter's orphanage on Stevens Street. He had built that building and arranged for me to stay at the orphanage for four years. I was there, room and board, for four years. I had the first grade, the second grade in there. I was about eleven when I came home from the orphanage. I then went to school at Immaculate Conception which was the nearest school coming from Tewksbury to downtown. They put me in the first grade, but I was too smart, I guess. After two or three weeks they put me in the second. I then went from second grade to the fourth, and from the fourth to the sixth. I skipped grades, because I had already done three years up at St. Peter's orphanage. Then I started the seventh grade when I was thirteen.

My life changed drastically on January 18, 1917 (my fourteenth birthday) – My father was crying, and he asked me if I would mind quitting school. He needed help paying the bills. By this time I was the oldest child at home in the family. My two oldest brothers had died over in Germany during World War I. I told him I did like school and I hated to leave it. I wanted to go to high school. But when he asked I said, "OK." When I told the Sister at school that I was leaving school, she felt bad about my leaving. "I hate to see you go because you are doing so well." I said, "Well my father needs extra money and I have to leave school."

I went to the Employment Office down at City Hall to find out if I could get a job, I'd take anything. They told me that a job was open in a woolen mill in North



Valentine Chartrand age fourteen. – Photo Credit: University of Massachusetts, Lowell, Center for Lowell History.

Chelmsford. I took the job but because I was only fourteen I could only work in the mill for six hours a day, six days a week. The mill was a long way from my home but for five cents it was possible to take a trolley from Tewksbury to North Chelmsford. My job was spinning and doffing. Spinning is the process of "spinning" thread on to a bobbin. [A cylinder, cone, or reel holding thread. – Ed.] Doffing is taking a full bobbin off the frame and putting on an empty bobbin. I was a little scared about the belts. In those days they didn't have security like today. They have everything in boxes now. In those days, those big wide straps, some of them half a foot wide, go way up on a pulley to make the frame run. And there was a handle on the end of the frame that you pull to stop and start the frame. It was dangerous. For this work I earned nine dollars and sixty-five cents for a six day week. When I gave my father the check he handed me \$1.00 for expenses and 50 cents for the trolley. That is what I received for a week's work and my father kept the rest. My father and I were the only ones in the family earning a wage. It wasn't much, but it helped. We always ate good and we always had plenty of food, and my father always

worried about that. We had our health and mother was still having kids.

I wanted a different job because the mill in North Chelmsford was too far from home. At fourteen, the only jobs available for me were in the mill. Other girls could look for an office job in a bank or something but I had no high school diploma, not even a grammar school diploma. So I had to take what I could get. I never was kicking about it and I took what I could get. I worked at the woolen mill for less than a year until I found a job in Lowell that was closer to home in the old Massachusetts Cotton Mill.

They put me on what I knew already, spinning and doffing. Working with cotton thread was different. The frame was made the same, but it was a finer, finer work. On wool it's heavier and thick while cotton it was fine. The work was very physically exhausting. You're on your feet all day and you can't sit down. Maybe a second, a minute maybe but there were no chairs or stools around. We weren't supposed to sit. I stayed there [Massachusetts Cotton Mill] because I was thinking I'd like to go to night school, high school. I was going to stick out and I asked my father about it. He was worried because the trolley cars in those days, they only ran a certain hour. And he was always afraid that I might get stuck downtown and there was no way he could come after me. It was finally decided that I would try to get into night school but before we got very far I got sick, I came down with typhoid fever.

This was just about the time we were going to have that First World War. A lot of people around had typhoid. I was the only one in my family that had typhoid fever, because mine was diagnosed right away. They put me in Saint John's Hospital and they had to cut off my dress. I felt I wasn't going to live. My mother and father couldn't even come near me. They'd stand in the door and look with masks on their face. All I could see was their eyes. As I lay in bed I saw caskets, I could see victims going out in caskets. When I was allowed to come home I still couldn't work, I had to stay home for a while. All totaled I was unable to work for eight months. Because of typhoid I lost all my hair. I was afraid to go out without no hair. I'd never go to school that way. They will laugh at you and everything. They don't think it's serious but I was thanking God everyday I hadn't died. When I come out of the hospital, I had lost my place in Massachusetts Mills and I couldn't go to school. Instead I went to work in Prescott Mill across the street from Massachusetts Mills, and I did the same kind of work. I used to wear a turban and I stayed in the mill.

I started dating when I was seventeen. My parents were very strict about going out and dating. When I first started to go out, I was always going out with girls. I had a couple of girls, they were twin sisters, Mary and Anne McAnespie was their name. They lived up my way and I used to go out with them once a week to dance at Lakeview. They had a big ballroom there and had different bands going. My friends and I loved to dance.



Valentine Chartrand in 1984 around the time of the Oral History Interview. – Photo Credit: University of Massachusetts, Lowell, Center for Lowell History.

I only went out once a week and I had to be home at 10:30. This rushed me a bit because the dance started at 8:30 and at 9:30 I had to decide to catch the trolley to get to my home near Tewksbury.

The first time I met my husband was at the dance, right at the lake, and he was a wonderful dancer! He used to go dancing two or three times a week. Well I happened to be dancing with a fellow and he cut in. He wanted to dance with me. We danced a few dances and then I went back to the girls. I was always with girls in those days. They asked me, "Who was that fellow you were dancing with?" "I don't know. I never met him before." So ah, the last dance we had together he asked if he could take me home. I said, "Oh no, I came with the girls and I'm going back with the girls." He said okay. So that was it for six months. I didn't see him again for six months until we met again at the Royal Theatre on Merrimack Street. In those days the ushers took you to your seats. I walked into the theatre around three o'clock with Mary and Anne, the twins. There were no seats for three people together. So the usher said, "I got a seat there," and he was pointing, "And two more there." So the girls had to sit in back and I was shown to a seat beside two guys. One of them was the one I danced with. He was with his chum. "Oh!" he says. And I says, "Yah!" I says, "Here we are again!" His chum moved over one seat so I could sit between the two of them. That's how we met. This time he took me home in his car. He made a date to come back the following week. I told him about my parents bring strict and all that. I said, "You'll have to come to the house and if my father says, "Yes," okay. "No," no. I always obey him. Father said okay and we started to go out. We went out a year before we married in March of 1923.

I continued to work in the mills until I was 68. I only took time out to have my children. I remember one

time, I was in the Boott Mill and they had to take me to First Aid and they called the ambulance. I thought I was going to have my daughter in the ambulance. I had a hard time with each birth and lost three. Thank God I got two of them.

I guess it was meant to be that I'd be a mill worker all my life.

Dealt Hands A Novel By Mary Blewett

Mary Blewett, a former President of the Lowell Historical Society and Emeritus Professor of History at University of Massachusetts Lowell, has added a new novel to her growing list of achievements. The prize-winning author of six books about the social history associated with New England's nineteenth century industrialization has now written a novel. The author describes how:



"Midwesterner Marty Hatch moves to Massachusetts in 1970, an intruder into culturally distinct New England. Marty's job as an historian in the political world of public higher education tests her values, extorts her conformity, and prompts confrontation with hostile colleagues. She gradually uncovers her childhood terrors, which have repressed her sexuality and warped her life. Marty embraces self-realization by beginning to see things differently."

John Cassidy, trapped by conventional moral doctrine, endures a loveless marriage. His deepening sexual involvement with Marty marks his emergence from an only tolerable life with his wife Lillian, a dedicated hypocrite. John Cassidy knows who he is but has to fight aggressively for what he wants: to marry Marty, to raise his two young sons, to counteract the uses of deceit and violence, to enjoy incidents of humor, courage, the richness of nature, and the fun of dogs, and absorb moments of grief and remorse."



Mary Blewett, author and historian.

LHS Corporate Memberships

The Lowell Historical Society proudly acknowledge our 2014 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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We would like to add the listing of your company here in the future.

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Send to Lowell Historical Society, PO Box 1826,
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Winged Victory

Given to the People of Lowell
From J. C. Ayer

By Cliff Hoyt

James C. Ayer bought a Lowell drug store in 1841. The company he founded, at that time, remained in business for the next century. His company made medical products that were state of the art. Few, if any, doctor's prescriptions were better than the medicines produced by J.C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass. Selling medicine just in Lowell or the United States was too constraining for Ayer, he wanted his name and medicines to be known around the world. During his lifetime J.C. Ayer & Co would have distributors on every continent except with the possible exception of Antarctica. Ayer obtained a fortune from the sale of his company's medical products. Not content with one fortune, he took these profits and invested in lumber in Florida, mineral and lumber rights in Michigan, the Fremont and Suffolk Mills in Lowell, and made many fortunes.

By the middle of the 1870's James was forced by ill health to slow down. In 1874 James Ayer traveled

through Europe. While traveling, James' name could provide "entree of every court in Europe from London to Constantinople, and from St. Petersburg to Naples." [Cowley, Charles, *Reminiscences of James C. Ayer*, 1879, p. 97.] He met dignitaries such as Bismarck and in 1874 was invited to watch a Russian navy review and attended the royal wedding of Grand Duke Lattimer.

In Munich, in what is now Germany, James wrote a letter dated October 23, 1866, to the Mayor of Lowell. In this letter James described his search for a statue that he could present to the city of Lowell. He wanted to place it on a granite pedestal at the eastern corner of Lowell's Monument Square. He finally found "a statue of Victory, designed by the celebrated Prussian sculptor, Rauch. Two of these statues had been made for the king of Bavaria, to stand at the entrance of his palace in Munich . . . The figure is a draped woman, with wings, handing forth the wreath of victory in one hand, and holding the harvest sheaf of peace in the other. It is of heroic size – or larger than life – so as to appear life size when lifted on its pedestal." [Cowley, Charles, *Reminiscences of James C. Ayer*, 1879, pgs. 97-99.] The Statue of Victory was subsequently cast in "soft bronze" and erected in Lowell's Monument Square on July 4, 1867. The ceremony included Dr. Ayer, Lowell Mayor Richardson, the City Council, and an audience of 10,000 to 15,000 onlookers. [*First Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Lowell for the Year Ending December 31, 1903*, p. 38.]



Stereo View of the dedication ceremony of the Statue of Victory, July 4, 1867. The obelisk to the rear of the statue is the Ladd and Whitney Memorial, commemorating the first Union Soldiers to die in the Civil War.

On October 28, 1922, *The Lowell Sun* announced that the statue of Victory was showing “signs of deterioration.” Frederick Fanning Ayer (J.C Ayer’s son) indicated that he would pay for any needed repairs. By November 6, 1922, *The Lowell Sun* reported that the statue was in worse condition than first thought and may have to be replaced. The question of whether the statue was to be repaired or replaced is never clearly stated. *The Lowell Sun* of April 12, 1923, provides contradictory statements. At the start of the article the statue “taken down last year for extensive repairs ... has now been entirely renewed.” By the end of the article “the renewed statue is more beautiful than the original and is constructed out of heavy bronze.” *The Sun* of April 25, 1923, stated that the statue would be installed the following week and that “It has been reconstructed with the use of a particularly high standard of bronze.” Frederick Fanning Ayer requested that the statue be placed on its original pedestal without any ceremony. *The Sun* reported on May 9th that the statue “was swung into place this forenoon, with only a few interested on-lookers as witnesses.” And that “In every respect except in its finish, the renewed statue is an exact replica of the original, although its appearance is enhanced a hundredfold.”

The author leaves it up to you – was Winged Victory restored or replaced in 1923?



Ayer’s Winged Victory as it looks today.

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

by Pauline M. Golec

Interested in local history? Doing some Lowell family research? Consider visiting the University of Massachusetts Lowell Center for Lowell History in the Mogan Cultural Center, 40 French Street.

This university library, established in 1971 and first housed on UML's North Campus before moving to downtown Lowell, is a treasure.

WiFi is available on site and many of the Center's materials are on line. No doubt, this technology is convenient and useful.

However, I find it appealing to go to the Center. It's light and airy with solid wooden work tables, but the real attractions are the collections (including a sizable amount belonging to the Lowell Historical Society), documents, maps, books. Paul Marion's book, *Mill Power: the Origin and Impact of Lowell National Historical Park*, hot off the presses, is found in the stacks, as is *Cotton Was King*, the Lowell Historical Society's history of Lowell, published in 1976.

The Lowell City Directories (1832-2000) offer valuable information, including resident names, addresses, and occupations. When I carefully handle the older worn ones, I wonder how many others have opened them and found them fascinating and informative. Once when doing research using early 20th century directories, I saw, purely by chance, an advertisement for my maternal grandfather's wood and coal yard. For a few minutes, my grandfather, long dead before I was born, became vibrant to me.

I can't promise you a similar experience, but I can assure you that UML's Center for Lowell History is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of Lowell.



Lowell Trivia

By Martha Mayo

1. What professional theatre calls Liberty Hall home?
2. Who donated Fort Hill Park to the City?
3. Where is the City of Lowell reservoir?
4. What transportation system was introduced in 1864?

Answers on page 8.

Lowell Historical Society
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The preservation of Lowell history depends heavily on your membership. If you have not yet sent in your membership renewal, 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 3:00 pm Monday. The site telephone number is 978- 970-5180 or on the Web at:

<http://www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org>.

Center for Lowell History

The Center for Lowell History, 40 French Street, currently is open on Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm and on Saturday from 10 am to 3 pm.

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) Merrimack Repertory Theatre, 2) Misses Emily and Elizabeth Rogers, 3) Christain Hill, and 4) Horse Railroad.

Calendar of Events

Program: Immigrants, Refugees, and the International Institute of Lowell, by Robert Forrant and Derek Mitchell

Date: Wed., November 19 at 7pm

Location: Community Room, Pollard Memorial Library



Arabic classes at the International Institute. – Photo Credit: International Institute of Lowell.