



Volume 44

Spring Newsletter

March 2015

LOUISE HUNT IN MEMORIAM

By Lew Karabatsos

We would like to remember Louise Hunt, a Society past president and archivist who recently passed away. Louise came to Society as a volunteer, interested in helping organize the collection, much like what she was doing at St. Anne's Church. Louise jumped in and it soon became evident she would make a significant contribution to the archives. She found and consolidated donation lists, organized artifacts by category and brought the Society into the 20th century by implementing a computer-based logging and tracking system for all donations, past, present and future. She had a special interest in 19th and early 20th clothing, which today represents a significant piece of the Society's overall collection.

She took her role seriously and attended many seminars and classes on conservation and preservation. She also sought out volunteers to assist in the work and made sure they too were trained. Her passion and enthusiasm were evident throughout her tenure as archivist and president, and she laid the foundation for the processes we use today. We are grateful for her dedication and commitment. May she rest in peace.

Lowell Trivia

By Martha Mayo

1. Who played football for the Green Bay Packers?
2. What school was named after the first mayor of Lowell?
3. Who was the first engineer for the Proprietors of Locks and Canals Company?
4. What was the name of the first locomotive that ran from Lowell to Boston?

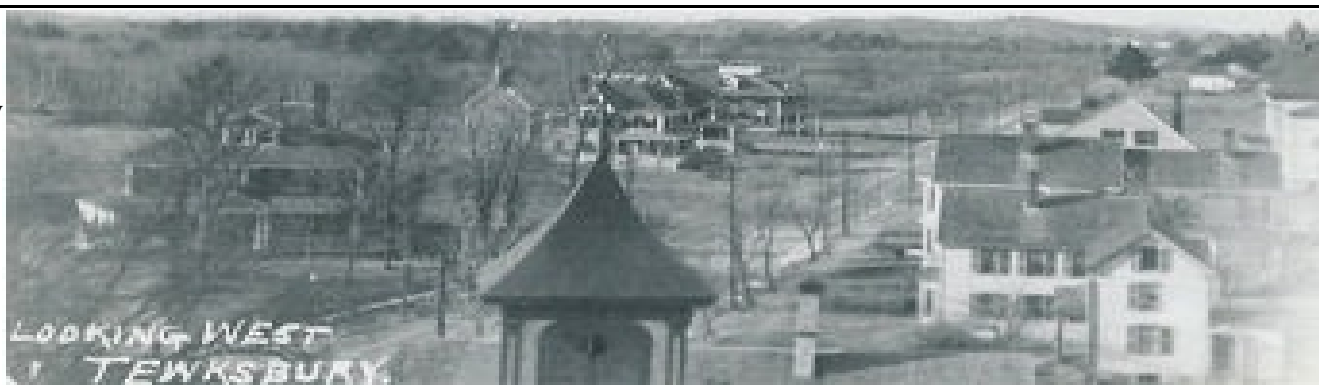
Lowell Historical Society's Annual Meeting: **Militant Methods of Protest:** **A Discussion of the Municipal Annexations of** **Belvidere and South Tewksbury by Lowell** **between 1834 and 1906.**

Presentation by Kim Zunino

Community Room, Pollard Memorial Library
Saturday, June 6, at 3pm-5pm

Starting in 1834 Lowell began annexing sections of the neighboring Town of Tewksbury. Join Kim Zunino and the Lowell Historical Society for a look into the highly contested 1834 land annexation and each subsequent act that led to Lowell gaining nearly 2000 acres of Tewksbury's land by 1906.

Image
Courtesy
of
Tewksbury
Historical
Society
Archives



Growing Up In Lowell

XX

Grace May Burke [*nee* Ecklund]

[In November 1985, Suzette Jefferson interviewed Grace Burke 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 Grace Burke 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 "The Working People of Lowell."]

My name is Grace May Burke and I was born in the 1890,s. My father started life in Christiana Norway which became Oslo, Norway after the first World War. My father would always say he was born in Christiana, because that was the name of the town then. When he was two years old the family migrated to America. He died when he was seventy-four and he has been dead forty-four years now. That makes 118 years ago [since 1985, circa 1867, Ed] His family came to Canada first. They gradually migrated down to the United States and finally settled in Dracut. My father grew up there and went to work in the mills when he was twelve. The mill was called the Navy Yard out there on Pleasant Street. The real name was the Stevens Company. They called it the Navy Yard then, because they manufactured navy blankets and material to make the sailor's uniforms. At first he worked sweeping the floor and as a bobbin boy. He gradually got interested in looms and learned how to weave. He worked as a weaver for quite a few years. Being mechanically inclined he learned how to fix the looms if anything went wrong and soon became a loom fixer.

My parents met at the Saturday night dances. Every time they'd meet she was always his partner. The dance halls had prizes for the best dancers. My parents won many a prize for being the best waltzers.

After my parents married, they lived with my Mother's parents down on Lakeview Avenue. After I was born, they moved out to Dracut, because my father was working there. They had a little three room apartment out there on Sladen Street, off Lakeview Avenue just beyond Pleasant Street in Dracut. Our apartment was one of four in the building. In those days there were no conveniences: no running water, no hot water, no indoor toilet, no bath.

We lived there till I was about three or four years old, and then we moved over on to Pleasant Street. It was another apartment, just like the previous one. No running water. Just a pump in the sink to get you're drinking water but no hot water, no bathroom, and just

the outhouse out in the back. The apartment was heated by coal stove. To take a bath we would put my mother's big wash tub in front of the stove and fill it up with lukewarm water. I used to say that the cleanest got in first, and so on to the dirtiest. We'd wash ourselves and she'd wash our back. At the time, my parents had three children. My fourth sister, was born after we moved to Agawam Street in Lowell. My father got work as a loom fixer at Bay State Woolen Mill and they wanted to be near to dad's work. Finally we migrated from there over to Bleachery Street. It's the Prince Avenue now. It was another tenement, big long blocks of tenements with four apartments in each building. There were six rooms, the living room, the dining room and the kitchen in the back and then there was three bedrooms upstairs. On Bleachery st. we had come up in the world because by that time they had built an indoor toilet. They had one off the kitchen. It was a little cubby hole and they had a tin bathtub and a one seat, a toilet. We still only had cold water, you had to keep the coal fire going all the time to heat your water. But then, at that time, gas came out. My father insisted we get a gas stove. My mother was scared stiff. Afraid we'd blow up. But in the summer you could use the gas for cooking and heating and that helped because you didn't have to put the coal fire on in the summer.

Then my father bought a little cottage out in Wigginville. He bought it from one of his weavers who was leaving Lowell. My father went down to the Co-op Bank with a hundred dollars or so and got a loan. I think he bought the house for fifteen hundred dollars, believe it or not. The cottage had three bedrooms upstairs and four rooms downstairs: living room, dining room, sitting room and the kitchen. It also had a bath off the kitchen, and a little pantry. It was a nice bath, it wasn't fancy, but did have an enamel tub and toilet. It was about that time that my grandparents moved in with us and the dining room and sitting room were converted into bedrooms. They lived with us for awhile until, grandfather died and grandmother died six months later. He died on Christmas Day of pneumonia. There were no funeral homes then, the undertaker came to the house. They shut the door off to the kitchen and did their embalming and everything there. They laid him out right there and when everything was all settled, the undertaker opened the door and had us come in to see him. Grandfather, stayed like that for a day and a half or so, before they buried him. They had a horse-drawn hearse to take him to the church and graveyard. But whoever went to the funeral went in horse drawn hacks. Hacks are what you might see in these old fashion movies in London. They were closed carriages where two would ride facing front, and two backwards with the driver sitting outside up on top. They use to keep the horses and these carriages at the stable on Gorham Street, and they had another one on Hurd Street.

There was a recreation hall above where they kept the carriages, they use to hold sociables there. Two

lawyers in Lowell, one named Bunker and the other named Hennessey leased that hall and turned it into a roller skating rink. Back then, skates then were just screwed onto your shoes with a little key. My father's older brother, he was kind of mechanical. My uncle knew Bunker and got a job taking care of the skates. If there's anything wrong, he used to repair them. My father use to take me and my brother down to the rink on Saturday afternoons. Father would visit his brother and we'd go up in the gallery and watch people skate in time to the music of a brass band.

I graduated eighth grade from the Butler School on Gorham Street, just beyond Gallagher Square. Well then I went to work that summer in the same woolen mill as my father. I was fourteen. I suppose I could have gone to high school. Some of my class did go on to high school. But things were hard. We needed the money. My parents weren't getting much pay then, you know. The highest pay my father ever made was fourteen dollars a week. When I went to work in the mill as a hander-in, I use to make from around \$2,50 a week. My mother would have the \$2.00 and I'd have the rest for spending money.

Working as a "hander-in", I use to sit on a chair underneath the frame holding a bundle of yarn. I would then pull a thread out one at a time and hand these threads to the drawer-in who was putting it on the machine. After a couple of years I became a drawer-in. We made fancy woolen coatings, worsted men suitings and plaid back blankets they called them. They use to sell them to people that go across on the big steamers you know? Steamer rugs. I worked there until I was twenty-eight when I got married and left.

How I met my future husband is quite a story. It involves a coal mine accident, a mandolin, Green Stamps and a jitney. My husband's family came from Germany and settled in Peoria, Illinois. They were coal miners. My husband went to work in the mines at fourteen years old. Early on, he got run over in a mine accident and hurt his knee. He couldn't go back in the mine anymore. At that time, automobiles were starting to come into vogue, so his brother, and a couple of more fellows decided to move to Flint, Michigan and work in the automobile factory making parts for Hudson cars. They worked there for a couple of years but finally the rest of them got home sick and went back home. But my future husband stayed and while he was there he became friends with a young fellow from Lowell. My future husband also took a correspondence course with the International Correspondence School in Chicago on automobile repairing. The friend eventually decided to return home to Lowell. He had a little roadster and he asked my husband if he would like to ride to Lowell with him. My husband said he had always wanted to see one ocean or the other. He gave up his job in Flint and rode to Lowell. On the way fellow taught him how to drive a car. In Lowell, he got a job to repairing cars at the automobile agency for the Hudson and Essex..

Now that we have my future husband in Lowell, we must digress back to when I was ten years old. My mother used to collect green trading stamps. You received them when you bought things at stores. You would paste them in a special book and when you had enough books you could go to a place where you could redeem the books for stuff you wanted. When I was about ten years old, my mother and father, went down to redeemed some Green Stamps. They saw a mandolin up on the wall. Of course when my father was a young man he learned to play the guitar. He played in a mandolin, banjo, guitar club in Lowell at that time. He said to my mother, "Let's get a mandolin and let Grace take lessons." I took lessons from Mr. Hovey at his studio in the Wyman Exchange Building. The lessons cost fifty cents, that was a lot for my father to give up out of his salary. But he would play his guitar with me after I learned to play a few little small pieces, you know, in my book That was his pastime. I soon was teaching my sister to play and later we got a piano and another sister got her piano lessons. So the three of us used to play together and soon we got brave and started singing a bit. We became known then in Lowell as the Ecklund Sisters. We started being asked to entertain at church socials and clubs.

I became involved with an organization called Community Chest. They had offices on the forth floor of the Fairburn Building. These offices were over what used to be Brockleman's Store at the corner of Merrimack and Bridge Street. Well up on the top floor, the Community Chest had rooms next to a dance hall they called the Prescott Hall. That's where my mother and father use to go to dance years ago! The Community Chest people formed a girls club. They had two lady councilors, and educational programs. A nurse from Lowell General Hospital came in and gave instructions in first aid. We had a cooking and sewing teacher. Best of all they provided dance lessons. The girls had something to entertain them all week, but on Saturday night the Community Chest people provide entertainment, in Prescott Hall. The entertainment was for the soldiers from Camp Devens who were coming back from the First World War. The girls from the club provided free dancing as a service for the soldiers in return for all their lessons. My sisters and I would also entertain the soldiers with our music.

In the meantime I had joined Roy Dunfey's Orchestra. Roy's father worked for the Hancock Insurance Company on the third floor of the Fairburn Building. Roy had seen my sisters and my playing for the Community Chest. He contacted me to see if I'd play with him in his orchestra. It turned out that I needed to play a banjo instead of mandolin because a banjo was a little louder than a mandolin with an orchestra. Roy contacted the councilors of the Club and got the job of playing for the soldiers. So every Saturday night, summer and winter for a couple of years we played every Saturday night in Prescott Hall. I got paid \$2 per night. When the Orchestra got jobs outside town,

Littleton and Tewksbury, little town halls, I graduated to five dollars a night for playing. I was working in the mill making around \$30.00 a week, and I would sometimes make \$15.00, \$ 20.00 a week playing.

During this time my sisters and I volunteered to entertain soldiers at Camp Devins. They'd call on us all the time to go down and put on an hour show. When the show was over they had a phonograph there and played dance music. The girls use to dance with the soldiers. We would ride to and from Camp Devins in jitneys. A Jitney was Great big seven passenger touring car. We would go down to Devins often and every time it was the same crowd that was asked to go. The same entertainers and the same drivers with everybody sitting in the same seat all the time. I was the smallest of the crowd so they would jam me in the front seat between the driver and this big woman, because I could jam. The driver was a local auto mechanic who drove the jitney to earn extra money. That mechanic was my future husband. I married at the age of 28.

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:

Blue Taleh Restaurant
CARSTAR Atlantic Collision Ctr.
Dr. Evan Coravos, DMD
Fred C. Church Insurance
Fuse Bistro
Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union
Lowell Five Cent Savings Bank
Morse-Bayliss Funeral Home
Richard Donahue
Washington Savings Bank
Watermark

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

Parker Lecture Series

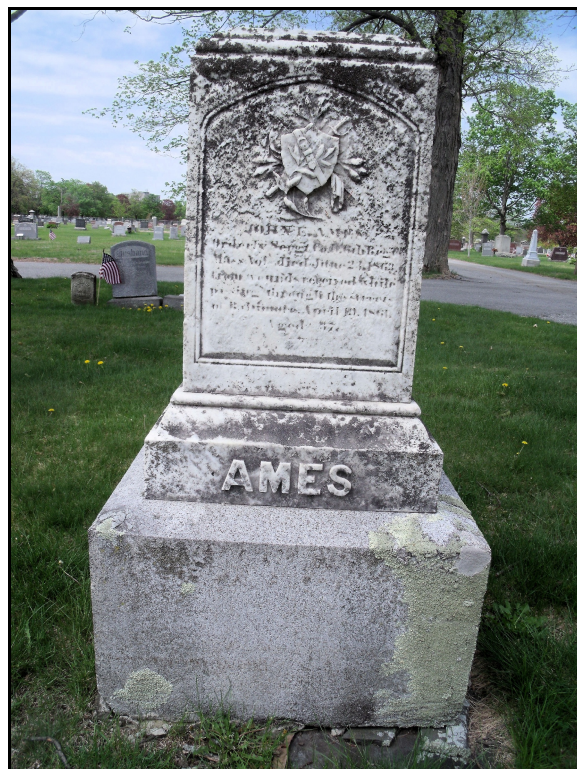
Beyond Ladd and Whitney: the Wounded of Baltimore

by Walter Hickey

April 12, 2015 at 2:00 PM

Lowell National Historical Park Visitor Center
246 Market Street

The attack on the 6th Regiment is remembered today for the deaths of four men: Luther Ladd & Addison Whitney of Lowell, Sumner Needham of Lawrence, and Charles Taylor, attributed to Lowell. However, an additional forty-five men were wounded, some severely, and those, fifteen were in Lowell companies. This is part of the story of those fifteen, and the Baltimore woman responsible for saving two of them.



John E. Ames
Orderly Sergt. CO. D. 6th Regt
Mass Inf. died June 24, 1863
from wounds received while
passing through the streets
of Baltimore. April 19, 1861
Aged 37

John E. Ames: was the 4th Lowell member to die as a result of Baltimore, but not until 26 months later.

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

by Pauline M. Golec

DEALT HANDS, set in the seventies, is the first work of fiction by Mary Blewett. Past President of the Lowell Historical Society and Emeritus Professor at UML, she is also the distinguished author of books dealing with the social history of nineteenth century industrialization.

Having read, admired, and learned from some of these academic books, I was curious about *DEALT HANDS*, the tale of Midwesterner Marty Hatch who teaches at a college in Lowell, has a deepening relationship with John (a man in a failed marriage), copes with crippling repressed feelings and experiences, and gradually becomes more self-realized.

I found this novel, seemingly part memoir, to be of interest. As a graduate of Lowell State before Mary Blewett and the fictitious Marty Hatch arrived there in more unsettled times, I was glued to sections about the college. Much as readers tried to identify Lowellians in Kerouac's *MAGGIE CASSIDY*, I tried to place the depicted campus characters.

Although sections of the book have a hint of academic prose, there are lyrical poetic passages such as the description of autumn in New England and also some humorous touches. Marty's relationships with Jake and the greyhounds are a delight to read. Her caring attitude shown to John's sons, later her stepsons, plays a significant part in the novel's and Marty's development as does, primarily, John's liberating love. Marty and Alisha, new friends, support each other's hopes and ambitions and reflect the struggle of some women in the seventies.

I found puzzling the transitions between first and third person narration as the story unfolded (a very minor point in this debut novel with the attractive cover).

It appears that a second book is in the works. *BLOODY IMPRINT*, a Civil War story, should benefit from Dr. Blewett's strong background as a Professor of American History and the experience she had in writing *DEALT HANDS*.



Lowell Historical Society Board Members

The current members of the Lowell Historical Society's Board Includes:

Gray Fitzsimons, Pres.
Kim Zuniino, VP
Lewis Karabatsos, Treas.
Marie Sweeney, Clerk
Martha Mayo, Librarian
Anthony Sampas, Archivist
Walter Hickey, Genealogist

Phil Belanger
Pauline Golec
Eileen Loucraft
Ryan Owen
Kathleen Ralls
Corey Scuito
Cliff Hoyt

Stephanie Donahue

EBAY Auctions of Lowell Interest

Hood's Sarsaparilla Matchbook Cover: Black & Blue with "HOOD'S / SARSAPARILLA / FREE SAMPLE / OF GOOD / MEDICINE / C.I. HOOD CO" printed on the front and with LOWELL printed on the end of the cover. Printed by Arrow Match Co. Inc, Chicago, circa 1920-1922. Sold for \$63 including shipping.



1901 Encased Indian Head Cent from Talbot Clothing Company, Lowell Massachusetts: 1901 Encased Indian Head Cent Lowell Massachusetts. Talbot Clothing Company Lowell's Leading Clothiers. Keep Me And Never Go Broke I Bring Good Luck with large horseshoe on reverse. Sold for \$80 including shipping.



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

Non Profit Org.
US Postage Paid
Permit #154



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/>.

Calendar of Events

Program: Beyond Ladd and Whitney: the Wounded of Baltimore. Presented by Walter Hickey, LHS Genealogist.

Date: April 12, 2015 at 2:00 PM

Location: Lowell National Historical Park Visitor Center, 246 Market Street

Program: Lowell Historical Society Annual Meeting

Militant Methods of Protest:

A Discussion of the Municipal Annexations of Belvidere and South Tewksbury by Lowell between 1834 and 1906. Presented by Kim Zunino, LHS Vice President.

Date: June 6, 2015 at 3:00pm

Location: Community Room, Pollard Memorial Library

Answers to Trivia Questions

- 1) Ray Riddick, 2) Bartlett, 3) Paul Moody, and 4) "Patrick".