

Volume 50

Winter Newsletter

February 2019

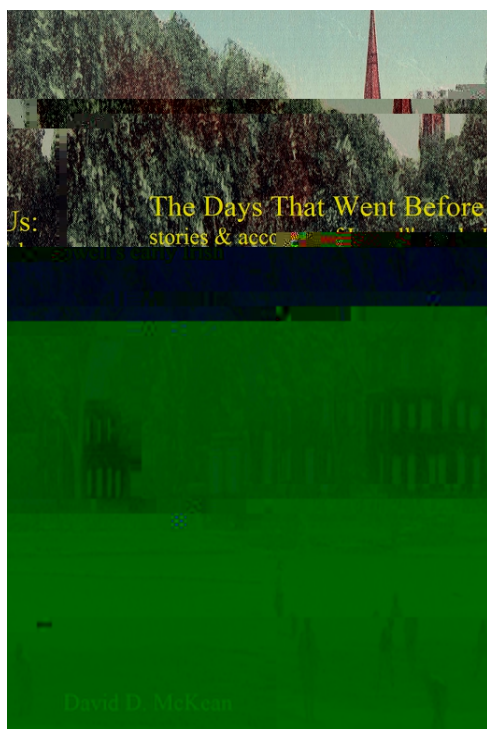
## Lowell Historical Society Program ***THE DAYS THAT WENT BEFORE US:***

*Stories & Accounts of Lowell's Early Irish*  
By Dave McKean

Pollard Memorial Library Community Room  
March 23, 2019 at 10:00 AM

From the riot that started it all, to the rocky road to Boston. From thousands taking the temperance pledge, to keening at an Irish wake. *The Days That Went Before Us*, by David McKean, recounts the trials and tribulations, tears and joys of the Irish pioneers of Lowell's first immigrant group. Using the latest research and primary sources, learn how the Irish became a political, religious, and cultural force.

Books will be  
available for  
purchase.



## *The Immigrant Experience In Lowell IV*

**Tony Mai**

*[In April 2008, Tony Mai provided an interview as part of an ethnographic assessment of immigrant communities in Lowell. This assessment was conducted by Robert Forrant, Ph.D. and Christoph Stobelas, Ph.D. under contract to the Lowell National Historical Park. The following article represents a small segment of the information on Tony Mai 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 "ETHNICITY IN LOWELL".]*

My heritage is Vietnamese. I left Vietnam on December 20, 1981 when I was 17 "I am the 'boat people.'" Specifically a 30 foot long wooden boat with 72 other human cargo. We brought everything that we owned and could carry. It took us five days and five nights to cross the South China Sea to Malaysia. It was a horrible experience. But we were lucky. Somehow we escaped the pirate attacks that were known to rape the women and rob you of every thing that you had left in the world. We landed in Malaysia on December 26, 1981.

I stayed in three different places in Malaysia. First they shipped us to an Island called Pulau Bidong. We stayed there waiting for the United Nations to interview us. We did not know which country would be generous enough to accept us. Some of us would go to Europe, perhaps Germany, France, England, or Sweden. Others could go to Canada or Australia. I was selected by the Americans. I stayed on the Island for six months. Then I went to the capital Kuala Lumpur for a few months. Then

they shipped me to the Philippines to learn English. Finally I came to America. Believe it or not, I came to America on April 15, 1983, I was almost 19. That's the tax day. Its funny, one day I would become a tax accountant. I finished high school in Chelsea, MA, and then went to Umass. Lowell where I stayed in Leitch Hall. When I finished school with an accounting degree, I decided to stay in Lowell – to stay and work and live here.

I feel it is important to keep my heritage. I want my children to know where they came from. I belong to Vietnamese Social Club. We celebrate the Vietnamese New Year, called Tet and we also meet once a month to have a little fun, talk a little bit. The kids get together and socialize. We also have Vietnamese language classes every Saturday so I bring my children there to learn Vietnamese.

I am active in the community because I want my children to know where I came from. It is said that America is a melting pot, but I don't think of it in that way. I think we are a salad bowl. Each of us has a different flavor. It is the distinct variety that makes the whole. Therefor it is very important for my children to learn Vietnamese and to know their heritage. Their mother's ethnicity is Cambodian and they also have Cambodian language classes on Sunday. So my kids are very busy, we want them to learn our languages. The little more they understand where we came from then the generational gap is lower. We communicate a little more. I think it's great that there is this tri-cultural thing going. If you give your children the tools, they have more advantages in life. If you speak more languages, opportunities open up. These are the tools we want to provide for the long run. Even though right now we have to push them, they will appreciate in the end because we live in a global economy. People travel all over the world to do businesses. The more languages you speak, the better off you are.

When I came to the U. S., I came with my older brother and a year later my youngest brother came to the U.S. In 2001, I sponsored my parents and they also came to the U.S. My parents are now U.S. citizens. I currently still have a brother and sister living in Vietnam. We are not sure wether they will come to the U.S. The economy in Vietnam is much better, because of the Vietnamese American support. They send money back there to their families. That gave a big boost to the economy by increasing consumption and investment which helped the economy as a whole. So right now they are much better off than they've ever been. They make good money these days and life is much better.

Of course, I've changed a lot because I have had to learn new things in a new environment. You adopt a new culture. You have to blend in. The longer you live in America you realize that you know more about American culture, language, laws, business, everything else, and the less you know about where you came from. As a matter of fact, I am much more loyal than most Americans believe it or not. After September 11, I realized, oh my God, this

is my homeland. It's my home, period. If people ask me if I am Asian – I say, "Excuse me? I am American." I am American, I am by law. The only thing I cannot do is run for the presidential office. Everything else I can do. I can vote. I can do anything I want. I am ethnically speaking Vietnamese American but that is behind me now I am American, period. I drive an American car. I do not drive imports. I drink American beer – Budweiser.

I always vote. That's the only power I have. The power to select the members of Congress, or President, or City Councilor. I think that our local elected officials should represent the city's population. I think they should be elected by district, break it down by neighborhoods. I like to support people who really have a heart and soul to help out. I would like to see representatives from different ethnic groups so they can better serve the population.

The future of the country is my future, my children's future. Economically speaking, if the economy is going down, then I'm going down. If the country is better off than I am better off.

## LHS Corporate Memberships

The Lowell Historical Society proudly acknowledge our 2019 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:

**D'Youville Senior Care  
Enterprise Bank & Trust Co.  
Fred C. Church Insurance  
Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union  
Lowell Five Cent Savings Bank  
Lowell General Hospital  
Lowell Sun Charities, Inc  
Morse-Bayliss Funeral Home  
Sage Bank  
Washington Savings Bank  
Watermark Environmental**

We would like to add the listing of your company here in the future. Join on-line at:

**[lowellhistoricalsociety.org](http://lowellhistoricalsociety.org)**

For information contact the Historical Society at 978-934-4995 or by email at:

**[contact@lowellhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:contact@lowellhistoricalsociety.org)**



# The General Butler Frog Bank

The Lowell Historical Society has obtained a negative satirical cast iron bank of a frog depicting the facial likeness of Lowell Civil War General Benjamin Butler. The website Wikipedia provides a brief introductory paragraph on Butler:

“Benjamin Franklin Butler (November 5, 1818 – January 11, 1893) was a major general of the Union Army, politician, lawyer and businessman from Massachusetts. Born in New Hampshire and raised in Lowell, Massachusetts, Butler is best known as a political major general of the Union Army during the American Civil War, and for his leadership role in the impeachment of U.S. President Andrew Johnson. He was a colorful and often controversial figure on the national stage and in the Massachusetts political scene, during his one term as Governor.”

The Butler frog is a “still” [no moving parts] bank with the coin slot through the General’s mouth. Patent information is cast on the left leg of the frog near the base as “Pat’d Nov. 12 1878.” The designer of the patent is A. Seligsberg which can be found on the actual patent. The bank was probably cast by J. & E. Stevens, Cromwell, CT, since the base of the bank has a patent date of 1875 on what is known as a “Stevens’ coin retainer.”

Besides the amphibious (implied slimy) nature of the figure, the bank has two additional negative characteristics that the designer felt obligated to relay:

- Written down the left arm of the frog is the phrase “For the masses.” While the actual patent’s written text describes the frog as grasping a bundle of paper money. Butler, while serving in U.S. Congress, was an Independent Greenbacker which wanted significant paper money in circulation that was not backed by gold or silver. The left arm of the frog implies that Butler was pushing policies that resulted in high inflation and provided worthless paper money for the masses or common man.
- Written down the right arm of the frog is the phrase “Bonds and yachts for me” The implication of the word “bonds” implies that these financial instruments were backed by more than worthless promises. Additionally the phrase “yachts for me” refers to a transaction where Butler was the sole bidder in an auction to purchase the yacht “America” for \$5,000 at a less than legitimate government auction that was setup by friends in the U.S. Navy Department.

The information in this article was derived from a larger article in the July 1992 issue of *Mechanical Banker Journal* by Sy Schreckinger. In addition to the above information, Schreckinger indicates that the “General Butler” bank has not been reproduced nor are there any

casting or color variations. However, during research for this article a different Butler Bank is very prevalent on the internet. The color variations are unquestionable. Also from images I have seen, the feet of the frog are very different. The implication is that this second bank is a post 1992 reproduction or the author of the article was not aware of the second bank.



Both banks in the above image are actually the same size. The larger image on the left belongs to the LHS and a similar bank is described and pictured in the July 1992 article. This frog has a dark green chest and webbed feet with three rounded toes. The smaller image on the right is from the internet describing a Bertoia auction from September 2018. This smaller image has a distinctive yellow chest and toes that are pointed.

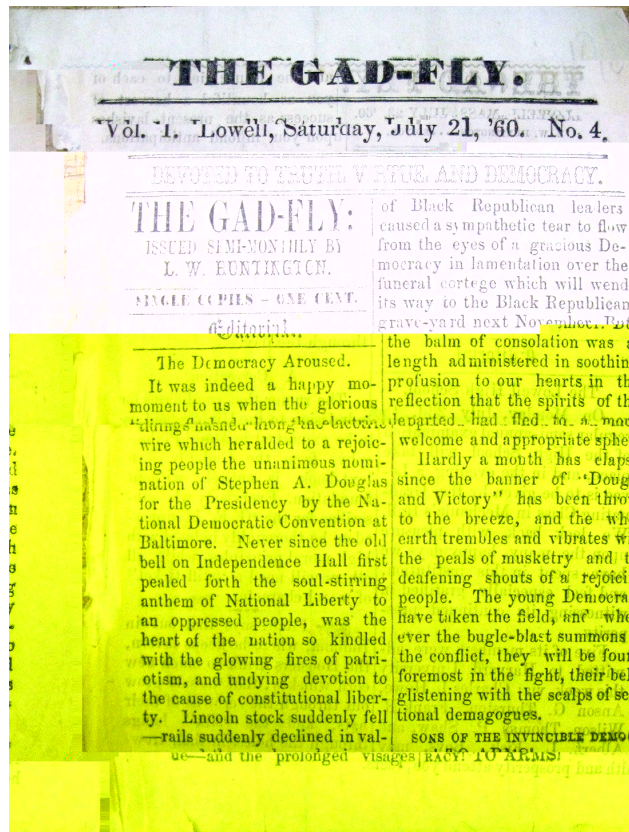
## EBAY Auctions of Lowell Interest

M c N i c h o l  
Carnation 9"  
1909 calendar  
plate advertising  
Dickson's Tea  
Store at, 68  
Merrimack St.,  
Lowell MA. Sold  
for \$58 including  
shipping.





**Rare complete 1860 Lowell, MA, newspaper called THE GAD-FLY.** Printed semi-monthly by L.W. Huntington. This was Vol.1 Number 4 dated July 21, 1860. The newspaper contains four pages (2 leafs) and is very small, with a page size of 7.5" x 5.0". This issue contains an inside page political ad supporting Democrat Stephen A. Douglas for President. There is also a commentary referring to Abraham Lincoln as "Honest Abe." Sold for \$74.00 including shipping.



**RARE O. B. RANLETT, LOWELL, MA FOUR GALLON DECORATED STONEWARE CROCK (CIRCA 1845-1865.)** Ranlett was at 69 & 72 Dutton St. The crock is 11 1/4" High and has a 12" rim diameter. It is decorated with putty white base glaze with blue slip wheat decoration. The crock was recently discovered in Lowell in the basement of an abandoned home. It was actually wet & lying directly on the floor and filled with kerosene. It has some glaze crazing, two lip chips and a small hairline crack. Sold for approximately \$420+ including shipping.



**1890s Moxie Advertising Flyer - A. Thompson, M.D. Lowell Mass.** Original Advertisement has some folds and hand written calculation in pencil on the back. The address is 137 and 139 Market St Lowell, Mass. Sold for \$107.00 including shipping.

**ONLY FOR THE NERVES OF THE PEOPLE.**  
THE HARMLESS AND PHENOMENAL  
**Moxie Nerve Food.**

The nervous system is the only part of the human body that contains animal life. It forms nearly all of the human organism and governs all the functions of the system. When required to do only its ordinary work, ordinary food will keep its strength. When overworked it must have a special food to support that overwork, or exhaustion ensues, and it fails to control the functions of the body, and we are ill. Why? Because half the food we take is made into blood, and there must be a corresponding waste of worn out, unhealthy material. If the nerves fail to have strength enough to pass this off, we are ill. I therefore insist that a strong, vigorous, nervous system is essential to good health. This is conceded by every school or individual known. It is also conceded that the business and living habits of the people under our present pushing luxurious civilization, in which we are surrounded by stimulants, drugs, morphine, severe mental labor, excitement, sexual excesses, fast living, &c., we are rapidly degenerating to a nation of invalids. Every school of medicine and theorist have been at work for a thousand years to devise means of support to stem this tide of terrible nerve wear, and have only devised the destructive stimulant and suppressive morphine as a palliative. Nerve foods innumerable have been devised, supported on the markets with falsehood, purchased opinions and testimonials, only to be miserable failures because they could not stand a reasonable test. In 1885, accident has given us one that will. It was discovered in a little sugar cane like plant by Lieut. Moxie, a year since, on the South American Pampas, sent to Dr. A. Thompson, a very prominent physician in Lowell, Mass., who determined at once that it was neither poison, medicine or stimulant, but a powerful nerve food. When put to the test it recovered helpless, nervous exhaustion, paralysis, insanity, blindness, the terrible sloopy tired out feeling so common. Inebriety from too close mental applications, loss of manhood and every other nerve wear known, as rapidly as food would recover a starving, healthy man. After it was on the market in Lowell, Boston and Providence, it created more excitement than a political campaign. Lowell alone consumed 75,000 bottles, and the demand is on the rapid increase everywhere. When charged with soda and flavored, it makes the finest beverage in the world, and is rapidly driving out the stimulants and beers from the hotels, saloons and barrooms, because it gives solid vigor, powers of endurance, mentally and physically, and not the other. It satisfies the nervous system of the old drunkard better than rum, makes him a man everywhere, and he is fast leaving his old habits in the city of Lowell. The Moxie Nerve Food Co. agree to forfeit \$500.00 to any person, if they cannot show in two hours that these statements are true. Heavy companies are forming for its manufacture and sale all over the world. This food like quinine in medicine, has come to stay, and all prominent families in Lowell are making it a steady diet.

For Sale Everywhere, by Grocers, Shopkeepers, Saloon keepers and Apothecaries, 35 cents a Quart Bottle, or \$3.50 per dozen. Double Extracts, 50 cents or \$5.00 a dozen.

The Price has been placed low, that everybody can reach it.

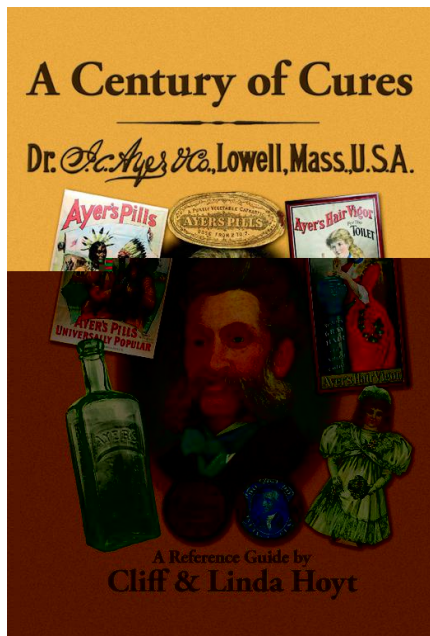
**MOXIE NERVE FOOD CO.,**  
137 and 139 Market St., Lowell, Mass.  
**A. THOMPSON, M.D., - Gen. Manager.**  
New York Office, No. 1 WEST THIRD STREET.  
Huntington Block, 17th, New Office, Lowell, Mass.

**A Y E R ' S HELHTONE** medicine bottle from Lowell, MASS. Advertised as a modern scientific tonic remedy. Still has original label and contents. It still has the original outer cardboard box. The machine made bottle has a cork closure, is 8.5" tall, and dates between 1925 and 1930. Outer box shows much wear and is missing the top and bottom flaps but still displays well. Sold for \$162.00 including shipping.





**Antique American Banjo Clock Signed by D.E. Brown Maker, Lowell, Mass.** The clock is 33.5" high and 10.5" wide. It is in good condition but the finial may be an older replacement. The weight driven clock winds fine but it is untested and may not run. The signature is on the weight and the original pendulum and hands are intact. The reverse painting is in overall nice condition. Sold for approximately \$840+ including shipping.



## FROM THE BOOKSHELF

by Pauline M. Golec

If you attended the Lowell Historical Society's Annual Meeting in November, you were treated to an informative program related to the launching of *A CENTURY OF CURES: DR. J. C. AYER, LOWELL, MASS., U.S.A.*, written by Cliff and Linda Hoyt.

This nearly 500 page reference guide, published by the Society, was born when the Hoyts first began compiling a guide describing bottles used for the Ayer Company medicine products. Nearly 15 years later, they finished a definitive reference volume about the history of the illustrious Dr. J. C. Ayer, the Ayer Company, its products and their sales and promotion.

Exceedingly well researched, *A CENTURY OF CURES* may never have an equal in its coverage of Ayer products such as Cherry Pectoral, Sarsaparilla, and Hair Vigor, and their contents and effectiveness. Other detailed topics include patented medicine, pertinent laws, and the U. S. Pharmacopeia.

Of particular interest to me, in addition to the biography of Ayer himself, were the sections in the book featuring the distribution and marketing of this Lowell company's products. Many beautiful illustrations of Ayer Company advertisement pieces and noted trade cards translated in various languages are included in this handsome reference book. Bottles used for Ayer medicine are treated with special consideration and some pages are replete with illustrated and exacting descriptions.

This large coffee table sized book has an inclusive table of contents and handy bibliographical references after each chapter. It is attractively laid out with a generous amount of relevant photos and scattered "Tidbits." These boxed articles offer the reader interesting bite size information. One favorite tells of King Kalakaua of Hawaii's 1875 visit to Lowell which included a stop at the Ayer Company.

The Hoyts are passionate and knowledgeable collectors of Ayer memorabilia and their book, *A CENTURY OF CURES*, is a unique collector's item.

### Ordering Information

The book can be purchased for \$49.95 plus MA tax of \$3.12 if mailed to a Mass. address. A shipping charge of \$6.50 should also be included. Checks can be sent to Cliff Hoyt, 10 Kearney Sq Apt. 408, Lowell, MA 01852. Credit card purchases can be made at a secure internet store accessible through

[www.cliffhoyt.com](http://www.cliffhoyt.com)

To save shipping charge, please attend a program and book signing at Pollard Memorial Library (see previous column.) Information can also be obtained by emailing questions to:

[info@cliffhoyt.com](mailto:info@cliffhoyt.com)

## Presentation and Book Signing:

By Cliff & Linda Hoyt

*Century of Cures* on J.C. Ayer & Co.

Pollard Memorial Library

401 Merrimack St., Lowell, MA

Saturday March 16<sup>th</sup> @ 2:00 pm

### another program & book signing at

Ayer Library, 26 E. Main St, Ayer, MA

Wednesday April 24<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00 pm

## Lowell Trivia

By Martha Mayo

1. What Lowellian became governor of New Hampshire?
2. Who was an Olympic Walker?
3. Who sculptured "Homage to Women"?

Answers on page 6.

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, 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 City's history. We have recently moved the Historical Society's collection out of the Boott Mill as requested by the National Park Service. A permanent home is yet to be determined. We can be reached via phone at 978-319-4631 or by email at:

[contact@lowellhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:contact@lowellhistoricalsociety.org)

or visit our web site:

<http://www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org>

### Center for Lowell History

The Center for Lowell History, 40 French Street, currently is open Monday through Friday 9-5 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month from 10-3.

The contact point for information is Janine Whitcomb, 978-934-4997. The Center's web address is: <http://library.uml.edu/clh/>.

## Calendar of Events

Program: *Book Signing - The Days That Went Before Us: Stories & Accounts of Lowell's Early Irish*

Time: March 23, 2019, 10am

Location: Pollard Memorial Library Community Room

Program: *Book Signing & Program: Century of Cures Dr. J.C. Ayer & Co., By Cliff & Linda Hoyt*

### Two Seperate Events

Time: Saturday March 16, 2019 @ 2pm

Location: Pollard Memorial Library  
401 Merrimack St., Lowell, MA

&

Time: Wednesday April 24th @ 6:00 pm

Location: Ayer Library, 26 E. Main St, Ayer, MA

### Answers to Trivia Questions

1) Ezekiel A. Straw, 2) Al Mangan, 3) Mico Kaufman.