



Volume 51

Fall Newsletter

September 2019

Pollard Memorial Library Program Intro to Genealogy

(Co-sponsored by the Lowell Historical Society)
October 10, 2019 Memorial Hall at the PML – 7:00 pm

Want to start looking into your family history but don't know where to start? Want to try out research without having to spend a lot of money for online resources? The Pollard Memorial Library reference staff and Lowell Historical Society members will be offering an introduction to genealogy with helpful hints on how to organize your research, what tools to consider, free resources both in the library and online, and much more.

This program will offer an overview on where to start, things to consider, resources available both for reference and primary documents, and helpful hints on doing your tree offline.

After the program, the library staff will take you to the PML reference area to show you the resources available for genealogy enthusiasts and researchers so that you can get started on some of your research! Hints about other organizations who have historical documents around the city will be provided as well as online resources to obtain greater insight.

Questions? Please contact Bridget Cooley, Community Planning Librarian, at bcooley@lowelllibrary.org or 978-674-1548.

The Middlesex Canal and Lowell By J. Jeremiah Breen

Saturday, November 16, 2019 at 1:00 PM
Center for Lowell History (the Mogan Center)
40 French Street, Lowell, MA

Major topics, (1) Market St was named because boats from Boston and Concord landed there to sell their goods; (2) the cotton storehouse for the Merrimack Mills was built over the Merrimack Canal, allowing bales to be hoisted directly into storage; (3) a staircase of locks, still partially extant, was built in the Western Canal for canal boats to deliver cotton to the Lawrence Mills; and (4) why the Middlesex Canal is as important as the Pawtucket Falls in founding Lowell.

The speaker is J. Jeremiah Breen, president of the Middlesex Canal Association. The Middlesex Canal Co. was chartered in 1793. John Hancock was the first proprietor. The Middlesex Canal was the first part of a water highway between Boston Harbor and Concord NH. The canal had been in business nearly thirty years when Lowell's Merrimack Manufacturing Co. was incorporated in 1822. The Middlesex Canal Association was founded in 1962 to celebrate the Middlesex Canal "for the benefit of the present & all Future Generations." www.middlesexcanal.org



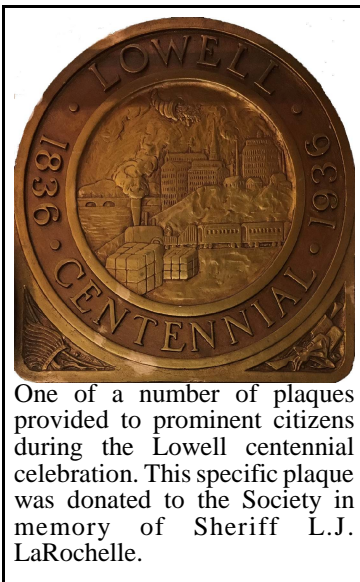
Middlesex Canal Crossing the Symmes River, part of the water highway between Boston Harbor and Concord NH. Pastel by Thomas Dahill for the program at the Winchester Historical Society, October 18, 2016. The artist has captured the sweep of the canal across the land, so very different than the rutted, hilly dirt roads.



LHS Collection Development

By Bridget Cooley

The Lowell Historical Society is grateful for the support of MassHumanities in supporting our inventory and cataloging process for our collection. The Historical Society was incorporated in 1902 but was initially started by the group of Lowell Citizens that were collectively known as the Old Residents, established circa 1868. Since that time various Lowell citizens have been collecting our history. As you can imagine, the collection is quite robust and its organization has changed significantly over the years. It is our goal to create a listing of all items that the Lowell Historical Society owns to share with interested scholars, historians, and citizens. It is our goal to offer more exhibits, both in person and online, as well as share interesting facts about Lowell's history by sharing the unique items in our collection, through the LHS blog and our social media channels. We'll provide updates regularly about where we are in the process and some of the remarkable finds that we uncover. We'll also need the help of the community with some of our items that we are having trouble identifying (i.e. photos, items, etc.). We look forward to you helping us with this process. We are thankful for MassHumanities for investing in this project that will ultimately benefit our entire community. Visit www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org for the most recent updates about the project.



One of a number of plaques provided to prominent citizens during the Lowell centennial celebration. This specific plaque was donated to the Society in memory of Sheriff L.J. LaRochelle.

The Hellenic Culture and Heritage Society presents **Quaint Bits of Lowell Greek History**

By Lewis T. Karabatsos

Tuesday, May 5, 2020; 6:30 p.m.

Lowell National Park Visitors Center
(Co-sponsored by the Lowell Historical Society)

The Greek community in Lowell was one of the largest in the country. The sons, daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren of the early immigrants settlers have gone on to contribute greatly to the corporate, academic, entertainment and political fabric of our city, state and country. But, who were the first Lowell Greek settlers? Who was the first Greek buried in Lowell? Where was the Greek Cemetery in Lowell?(no, it's not Edson/Westlawn). What really happened in those Greek coffeehouses? Come and learn some interesting and fun facts about the early inhabitants of the "Acropolis of America."

The Immigrant Experience In Lowell V

Muriel Parseghian

[In December 2007, Muriel Parseghian 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 Muriel Parseghian 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 name is Muriel Parseghian and I am of Armenian descent. My family came to Lowell in 1963 from France, but in order for me to tell you how we ended up in Lowell, I have to go back almost 70 years. At the turn of the century, my extended family including my grandparents, were living in what was called Anatolia in Asia Minor and the Ottoman Empire. At that time, Armenian families lived under what was called the "Milliett System." They lived under the jurisdiction of their own religious patriarchy. When the programs began against the Armenians and eventually culminated with the 1915 genocide, both sides of my family started to migrate out of their ancestral homes.

My father was born in 1917 during the genocide. His family migrated from the town of Kutahya to Istanbul. From there they took a boat as refugees to Piraeus, Greece. They stayed there for quite a few years. Then from Greece they went, as refugees by boat, to Marseille, France.

My mother was a post-genocide baby. My mother's family traveled the southern route into Syria through the Del Zor desert to the second-largest city in Syria called Aleppo. In the Syrian refugee camps, my grandparents met each other. My mother was conceived in those refugee camps and then my grandparents came by boat to Marseille as refugees. My father was brought up in one refugee camp while my mother grew up in another camp. My father became a citizen by joining the French army. When he came back after World War II, my parents met and married. I was born in France and lived there for the first few years of my life. We lived in an Armenian ghetto. Armenians were in refugee camps, it was literally camps towards the end of the 30s, before World War II broke out. During the 1960's there was a migration from the camps into neighborhoods. Basically, what people did

was go from shacks to homes. So, I lived in an Armenian ghetto. The only non-Armenians I came across was my teacher, the doctor, the mailman and the garbage collector. My school was about 40 percent Armenian and all of my classmates and friends were all Armenian. We lived in a totally Armenian world.

My mother's great-uncle migrated from France to United States and finally settled in Binghamton, New York where there was a substantial Armenian community. Little by little my uncle brought family over to the United States. When it came time for us to come, he signed the paperwork and we were going to go to Binghamton. However, one of my cousins met an Armenian woman from Lowell. They were moving to Lowell so we decided to come to Lowell instead of Binghamton. The cousin who had moved to Lowell met our boat, the USS United States. When it arrived in New York City, he came with his future father-in-law who had a Cadillac. In those days a Cadillac had wings, so when we saw them we said, "Oh, we came to America." Our lifestyle in France had been difficult. When coming to the U.S., our only expectation was that we were going to be reunited with our family and that my parents were going to be able to get jobs, steady jobs. Economically we were going to be better off. My parents came here for, economic opportunity and that my family has achieved. My parents may not have achieved it in their lifetime because they came here late but certainly they gave my sisters and myself the opportunity to do that, and that has made a big difference.

When we came here, we had neighbors on the block who were Armenian but they did not have children. So the immediate friends I had on the block were non-Armenian. So that was really my first exposure to non-Armenian people. The biggest thing was, oh this is how people eat, they eat differently than us. All these things you get exposed to that you were never exposed to before.

At times we faced discrimination in this country but not necessarily because we are Armenian. I'm a little brown-skinned and people don't know what nationality I am. Growing up the kids didn't know but they made the assumption that I was Hispanic and they would say nasty things. Nobody knew what Armenian was and they would ask "What are you?" I was made to feel at times like the outsider. During the Iranian crisis my social circle of Armenian friends would go out to the old Howard Johnson which was open almost 24 hours. We would always go at 11:30 or midnight, to get something to eat. Once, we walk in as a bunch and somebody yells out, "Don't feed those [expletive deleted] Iranians." You know, that kind of thing. And then my cousin was playing soccer, very dark skin, when somebody kicked him somebody yells out, "Don't worry, he's only Iranian." That kind of thing. During 9 /11, people would ask "Are you Palestinian? Aren't you from Pakistan? No, I'm

Armenian. Then I would give them a history and geography lesson.

I can say I was very fortunate when I went to school in Lowell. We didn't speak English. We started school at the Morey and then my aunt bought a house and we moved to Fort Hill Avenue. We switched schools to Oakland, which is now the LeBlanc School. The teacher I had was Robert Timmons, I'll never forget his name. He was my fifth grade teacher and he couldn't have been kinder. There was also a woman that would come in once a week to do remedial reading for the kids like me who couldn't read English. She would teach me English. Then in sixth grade I had Mr. Quirbach, I never knew his first name. He would push me, push me, push me and maybe within the third month of the sixth grade I could read, I had caught up with my class. I think having those teachers was very helpful. Then after that, I went back to Moody and again I was very fortunate to have great teachers. Mr. Sullivan the principal always pushed me. Then I went to Lowell High which was a madhouse. There were so many issues, half of my teachers were fine, the other half were a disaster. I found early on that I had help, the good teachers just made me feel comfortable but still pushed you, "You can do it, you can do it." I graduated from Lowell High in 1971 and then went to college at Northeastern.

I became a United States citizen really quick. After only five years in the U.S., I became a citizen. When I am in this country I'm an Armenian-American. But when I travel outside America I am American. I see Lowell as an Armenian neighborhood. Well, I saw Lowell as a neighborhood. There was a very, very active Armenian community, so there was the support that a community provides and there was both physical and social aspects of this support. There was the physical part, on Fort Hill Avenue we did have four Armenian neighbors on that one block, us and four other families. I did not consider this to be an Armenian section, we just had Armenian neighbors. Also there were Armenian merchants. For example, there was an Armenian tailor. So you would go to him. There were the Armenian hairdressers. Also everybody is related, by marriage, or by acquaintance, so you felt as if you knew these people. Even now there are obviously still some Armenian, merchants and commerce people, but I don't seek them out. I mean, I don't need to seek them out the way my family needed to when we first came to Lowell. For my parents it was easier to seek out Armenians to do business with. When my father went to get his drivers license, he had to deal with registry cops. He saw that there were two Armenians cops on the list, so he sort of sought the Armenian guy, not that the cop was going to give him a break, but my father felt that this guy is going to understand him. The cop was not going to have a difficult time understanding my father's language. The same situations existed with Armenian barber, or go to the Armenian locksmith, whoever had an Armenian

business, my parents would solicit. Not so much to support the business economically, but it just gave my parents a level of confidence. They walked in and it was easy to do business with them, there was no trying to explain things. Or even when my father went to Espresso's Pizza, there was one Armenian guy working there so my father would always go to him to order the pizza. Myself, I don't have that need anymore. I'm very comfortable going into any store but that was the physical part of Armenian support.

There was also the social support that the Armenian community provided. Generally, Armenians know each other. We get together for different events. I don't know if my parents went because they felt the need to re-establish what they had in France, that is living in an Armenian ghetto. I really think for my parents, anyways, it was the fact that it was very easy, the guy knew Armenian words or he understood and if they asked for something unusual, the guy understood. I think it was more a level of comfort. Being an immigrant, you just felt comfortable talking to somebody, of Armenian descent. But as more Armenians learn English the Armenian language is dying out now. Very few people force their children to speak Armenian. For me, I was forced to learn. My parents wouldn't talk to me unless you answered back in Armenian. There are two Armenian schools in greater Boston, but it is dying, yes it's dying.

Like most immigrants I think we straddle two worlds. You have my Armenian world and then I have my non-Armenian world. I have my Armenian friends meet my non-Armenian friends. For the greater majority, the two of them are almost parallel. I know a lot of people like this.

EBAY Auctions of Lowell Interest

Harvard Ale-Beer Tray
Harvard Brewing Co. Lowell
Massachusetts. Sold for \$98
including shipping.



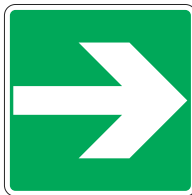
Harrington Brothers Book & Job Printers Advertising Trade Card, Lowell, MA. This is a heavy paper piece (not card stock) that has been trimmed from a larger sheet (5.5" W x 3.5" H). The front design is bright and vivid and clean with bold design and typography for eye catching effect. Additionally the image contains views of factory buildings. Front is in overall very good condition. Sold for \$68 including shipping.



U.S. Ammunition advertising poster for Black Shells for Shotguns from Lowell Mass. Sold for \$184 including shipping.



Rare Romax ammunition box for 10 gauge shot gun shells. Made by the United States Cartridge Co. Lowell, Mass. U.S.A. Labeled as "dead-shot black shells". Great front label on this box and will displays great. One side does have a tear. Sold for \$159 including shipping.



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

For information contact the Historical Society at 978-319-4631 or by email at:

contact@lowellhistoricalsociety.org

Lowell Trivia

By Martha Mayo

1. What mystery writer occasionally mentions Lowell in his books?
 2. What are the current call letters for the University of Massachusetts Lowell radio station?
 3. Who won the Tony Award for best actress in 1987?
- Answers on page 6.

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

by Pauline M. Golec

Every city should have local citizen bloggers who immortalize selections from their blogs in something called a book. Fortunately for us in the Mill City, we have available just such a publication. *HISTORY AS IT HAPPENS: CITIZEN BLOGGERS IN LOWELL, MASS.* edited by Richard P. Howe, Jr. and Paul Marion includes chosen pieces from the Richard Howe.com blog from March 13, 2007 to November 9, 2016.

Contributions to the blog from a credited forty-three citizens touch on varied topics from national politics to, no surprise here, local politics analyzed by some of our own activists and political junkies. Trips down memory lane are prompted by the day's or week's particular happenings, while informed prophetic statements are inspired by other events. Weather tends to be a recurring theme whether as an aside in the blog or a detailed reaction to a storm.

The Lowell Folk Festival, immigrants, community gardens, Lowell National Historical Park, poetry, noted Lowellians and their achievements, personal family recollections (Henri Marchand's engaging "Sisters" comes to mind) - anything is grist for the blogger's mill and this eclectic mix a gift to the reader.

This generously sized volume is not only interesting, it is a valuable historical reference and resource. Years and years from now, it will bear witness to what some citizens thought and wrote about local happenings.

HISTORY AS IT HAPPENS: CITIZEN BLOGGERS IN LOWELL, MASS. may be purchased at Lowell National Historical Park book stores.

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

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 3rd 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: Intro to Genealogy
Time: Thur. October 10, 2019 @ 7:00pm
Location: Memorial Hall, Pollard Library
401 Merrimack St., Lowell, MA

Program: The Middlesex Canal and Lowell
Time: Sat. November 16, 2019 @ 1:00 PM
Location: Center for Lowell History (the Mogan Center), 40 French Street, Lowell, MA

Program: Quaint Bits of Lowell Greek History
Time: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 @ 6:30 p.m.
Location: Lowell National Park Visitors Center

Answers to Trivia Questions

1) Robert Parker, 2) WUML, 3) Mary Ann Plunkett.

