



Spanish Influenza, Influenza, Flu, Grippe, La Grippe

By Walter Hickey
Sunday, February, 28, 2021
2:00 p.m.

This is an online program only and the link can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/LowellHistoricalSociety/events>

By whatever name it was called, Lowell, in 1918, was impacted by this pandemic. From mid-September to December, there were 7,394 influenza cases with 163 deaths. This was in addition to many deaths officially attributed to various strains of pneumonia. Face masks were prevalent. Businesses, churches and schools were ordered closed or had their hours shortened. Sound familiar? This program was originally presented in the fall of 2018. It is somehow appropriate to revisit it today.



Women wear cloth surgical-style masks to protect against influenza. [Photo credit: Getty Images]

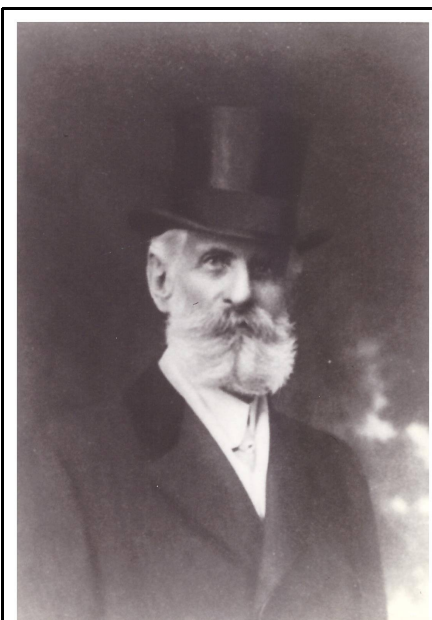
Who is Charles L Willoughby?

By Eileen Loucraft
Sunday, January 24, 2021
2:00 PM

This is an online program only and the link can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/LowellHistoricalSociety/events>

Charles Louis Willoughby grew up in Lowell and was a clothing merchant who developed a chain of stores called Boston Square Dealing - One Price Clothing. His very first store was on Central Street. He moved to Chicago and founded Willoughby & Hill Department Stores. He invested in Chicago real estate and was a member of the Chicago Stock Exchange. In 1881 he commissioned \$200,000 to Paul Philippoteaux to paint the Gettysburg Cyclorama which was exhibited in Chicago. He summered in Plymouth Massachusetts and his summer home is now the Mayflower Society House. He is buried in the Lowell Cemetery along with his parents and siblings. They all returned to Lowell for their final resting spot. (Photo credit to the Mayflower Society House)



Charles L. Willoughby (Photo credit: Mayflower Society House)

INFLUENZA

How to Avoid It—How to Care for Those Who Have It

Lowell Sun headline for October 7, 1919

An Immigrant in the Spindle City: Lowell's "Portuguese Ambassador," Firmo da Encarnação Correa

by Gray Fitzsimons

Not long after Lowell received its city charter in 1836 local historian Charles Cowley observed that Lowell possessed a cosmopolitan quality characteristic of far larger American cities. On the streets of the nation's foremost textile center, one often heard English spoken, not surprisingly, in a clipped New England accent, but this was punctuated by conversations in a distinctive Scottish brogue among the carpet weavers or in the animated

Lancashire dialect spoken by the English calico print workers. Even more pervasive was the Irish lilt of women, men, and children from the Emerald Isle. To a lesser extent one also might have encountered émigrés speaking Gaelic, French, or any number of Germanic languages.

Less conspicuous was the handful of Portuguese speakers in Lowell prior to the Civil War. Quite possibly the first Portuguese family, headed by John J. Medina from the Azorean Island of Faial, settled briefly in Lowell in 1851. The Medinas subsequently moved to nearby Lawrence, where two of the Medina boys entered the barbering trade. But a few more Portuguese who immigrated to the United States moved to Lowell and by 1860 there were about half a dozen, living in various sections of the city. Two worked as barbers in the popular American House hotel on Central Street. And throughout the decade of the 1860s Portuguese and African Americans dominated the city's barbering trade.

Among the barbers and those in the hair products business was Emanuel J. Medina (1838-1912), a son of John J., who returned to Lowell in the late 1860s and became one of the wealthiest Portuguese Lowellians of his generation. His prosperity and social standing,

however contrasted sharply with many other Portuguese who began settling in Lowell in growing numbers in the 1880s. While some came from mainland Portugal, the vast majority had been born in Madeira or the Azores. Like the New England mill girls some decades earlier, most Portuguese newcomers hailed from rural villages. But unlike the Yankee factory workers, only a minority of Portuguese could read and write in their native language and fewer still spoke English.

Young Portuguese women sought work in the large cotton mills—the Appleton was the first major employer of Portuguese immigrants. Portuguese men also worked in the city's cotton mills, but many toiled in Lowell's tanneries or as general laborers. By 1910, the number of Portuguese Lowellians born overseas approached 1,500, ranking about fifth among the city's foreign-born nationalities. (Notwithstanding the typical undercounting of the federal census, especially in working-class neighborhoods, the number of Lowell's Portuguese speakers was closer to 3,600 if one counts the children of one or both parents born overseas.)

The Portuguese presence was large enough that Congregational minister George Kennigott included them in his social survey of Lowell (published in 1912) in which he noted they lived primarily in two neighborhoods. Residing in the largest enclave, Back Central, were Azoreans and Madeirans along with some mainland Portuguese. A second, much smaller Portuguese neighborhood, located near the Tremont-Suffolk Mills, on the fringe of Little Canada, included almost exclusively Madeirans.

Living in a Tilden Street boardinghouse, among the residents in this smaller Portuguese enclave, was Firmo da Encarnação. Born in 1887 in Funchal, Madeira's largest city and its capital, Encarnação appears to have grown up in an urban household in comfortable surroundings. He completed at least nine years of schooling and gained some proficiency in English. His occupation as a young man in Funchal is not known, but



An ad for a Lowell clothing store attests to Correa's popularity as a salesman, *Lowell Sun*, September 13, 1928



These unidentified Portuguese textile workers pose next to a spinning frame. The photograph was probably taken around 1910 at the Appleton Mills, which began employing Portuguese immigrants in the 1880s. The majority of these immigrants came from Madeira and the Azores. (Camara Family Collection, Center for Lowell History, UMass Lowell.)

in 1909, at age 22, he married Julia J. de Jesus. That same year, perhaps seeking better job opportunities, Firmo departed Funchal and sailed on a vessel from Sao Miguel Island in the Azores, arriving in Boston in September after the week-long voyage on the Atlantic. He settled immediately in Lowell.

Across the Atlantic, his wife Julia had their first child, a daughter, Maria, born in Funchal in 1910. Within a year, however, Julia and infant Maria crossed the ocean to join Firmo. The family continued to reside on Tilden Street and between 1911 and 1923, Firmo and Julia had five more children. This included: Beatrice (born 1911), Gabriela (born 1913), Manuel (born 1915), Arthur (born 1920), and Edward (born 1923). And for several years, one of the boardinghouses in which they lived was owned by the Tremont-Suffolk Mills.

Unlike many of his neighbors, Firmo found employment not in the mills but as a clerk selling men's and boy's clothing in retail stores. Tall, slender, and well spoken, the gregarious young émigré proved to be a gifted salesman. And unlike many other first generation Portuguese, he was equally at ease in his native as well as the dominant American culture. These qualities would serve him well throughout his public life.

The first several years Firmo worked in sales were relatively prosperous ones in the city. The downtown bustled with automobile, streetcar, and pedestrian traffic. Especially on Saturdays, shoppers thronged the many merchant businesses lining Merrimack, Central, and Market Streets where one could browse in over thirty clothing stores. Talented salesmen, like Firmo, were in great demand. Through salary and commissions, they typically made two to three times the annual income of a male textile worker. Although one successful clothing store, Picanso-Sousa & Co. on Gorham Street, was Portuguese owned, it is not clear if Firmo worked there.

Instead his fluency in English enabled him to ply his trade in any number of retail establishments, which he did early in his career.

Despite the growing financial pressures as the sole breadwinner with a growing family, Firmo had saved enough money to take a chance and start his own business. Around 1922 he rented a building on Tilden Street and opened the Madeira Grocery. His wife likely joined him in this venture to run the store, which operated six days a week. But Lowell's economic vibrancy quickly dampened in the early 1920s as residents experienced the beginning of a long financial downturn with mill closings, reduced working hours, and occasional labor strikes.

Firmo's Madeira Grocery was one of many retail failures in the city. Even worse for him, his marriage foundered. He and his wife separated, with Julia returning to Funchal with their children. For reasons unclear, Firmo legally changed his surname from Encarnação to Correa and for a number of years he adopted "Frank" as his first name. Correa resumed working as a salesman in men's clothing, entering into a lengthy employment in a store owned by a local Jewish businessman, Louis Ginsburg, and located on Central Street. By 1930 Firmo was living in a small room in a boardinghouse on Hanover Street in the shadow of the Nashua Manufacturing Company's factory (formerly the Tremont-Suffolk Mill). In the U.S. Census of that year he listed himself as unmarried. He remained an extremely capable and popular salesman. By the early 1930s he worked in one of the city's most prestigious retail establishments, the Bon Marché, managing the boy's and men's department. Correa also moved into a more fashionable residence on Kirk Street, a short walk from the Bon Marché.

It was during the 1930s that Correa began devoting himself to local, state, and national politics. He soon



Born in Madeira in 1882, Manuel E. Sousa immigrated to the U.S. in 1903 and settled in Lowell. After several years working in a textile mill, and with financial backing from Antonio Picanso, Sousa opened a clothing store on Gorham Street in 1908. One of the city's many small clothing stores, it was successful for a number of years before closing around 1930 in the wake of the Great Depression. (Photo from the Lowell Historical Society Collection.)

gained city-wide renown as a leading Portuguese-American political activist. An ardent supporter of FDR and the New Deal, Correa, in 1936, founded the Portuguese-American Democratic Club (PADC). He enlisted the support of a number of locally prominent Portuguese, as the club's membership grew into the hundreds. Notable as well, unlike other ethnically based political clubs in Lowell, which allowed only male members to be organizational officers, the PADC included women and men, with several women, including Laura Pacheco (1915-2002) and Mary E. Teixeira (1912-1973), holding leadership positions. They organized political rallies on behalf of Democratic candidates, with Firmo often serving as host in public halls, attended by hundreds of Lowellians. Local Portuguese musicians performed at some of these rallies that featured not only Portuguese speakers but leaders of other ethnic-based Democratic clubs in the city.

Correa also ceased referring to himself as "Frank" and insisted instead on using his Portuguese name, Firmo. Whether this was a new found pride in his Portuguese heritage or for other reasons is not known, but he became one of Lowell's most recognized figures in the Portuguese-American community. He launched a movement to have Portuguese taught at Lowell High School, helped establish Portuguese language and history classes taught in the adult evening schools, and promoted naturalization of Portuguese immigrants. He even entered the fray of local elective politics, using the PADC as a base for his candidacy for city council, running three times for an at-large seat in the 1930s and 1940s. The first Portuguese-American to run for elective office in Lowell, Correa lost each time, finishing near the bottom in the local Democratic primaries.

Although Firmo Correa's visibility and stature within Lowell's Portuguese community rose during the Great Depression, one of his business ventures, a notorious bar and liquor store on Tilden Street, somewhat tarnished his reputation. Lowell police raided his establishment in 1934 that resulted in a drunken brawl and revealed a number of violations. In a hearing before the city's liquor licensing commission, Correa disputed the charges while attempting to exonerate himself, testifying that he left an employee in charge of the bar because of his managerial duties at the Bon Marché. Despite his appeal the commission ruled against him, shutting down what police

described as a bar with among the "worst conditions" in the city.

Clearly, among members of Lowell's Portuguese community, some of the attention Correa attracted was less than flattering (it appears that in his city council races he garnered an unimpressive number of Portuguese votes). But he continued to promote Portuguese culture and education. In addition, Correa was active in the Portuguese-American Civic League, winning election as a delegate to several of the state conventions and serving as the League's president. In the 1950s, while an employee of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, he worked tirelessly to liberalize federal immigration law for Portuguese in the wake of the Capelinhos volcanic eruption on the island of Faial that disrupted the lives of nearly 2,000 Azoreans. The ultimate passage of federal "Azorean Refugee Act" in 1958 resulted in a second great wave of Portuguese immigration to the United States, reinvigorating Portuguese communities in several locales including Lowell.

The Lowell Sun observed upon Correa's death in 1964, that because of his many activities on behalf of his compatriots, he was popularly known as the city's "Portuguese Ambassador." Yet Firmo Correa remains something of an enigma. Although an attendant of St. Anthony's Church that was the center of Lowell's Portuguese parish, he never actively participated in the parish's many social, cultural, and religious activities. And he never resided in the Back Central neighborhood. Perhaps for these reasons he is unfortunately a largely forgotten figure.

[It is hoped that this piece on Lowell's Portuguese and Firmo Correa will spark some interest in the city's Portuguese history and culture and Correa himself. If anyone has comments or questions, or would like to share information on the Portuguese or Correa, please contact the author at Gregory_Fitzsimons@uml.edu]

Political Advertisement

DEMOCRATS

VOTE FOR



FIRMO CORREA

For Councilor-at-Large
25 Years' Business Experience
FIRMO CORREA,
196 Merrimack St.

This ad appeared in the *Lowell Sun*, October 5, 1941, during Firmo Correa's second of three unsuccessful campaigns for a seat on the city council.

Major Donation to Lowell Historical Society

Mico Kaufman (1924-2016) was a world-renowned monumental and numismatic sculptor. Born in Rumania and a survivor of Nazi concentration camps, this well-respected artist settled in Tewksbury and contributed greatly to the cultural fabric of the Merrimack Valley.

Recently, the Society was honored to receive, from his estate, a donation of six pieces that represent not only his incredible talent, but also his interest in Lowell and its history.

We are grateful to Elsie Howell and Flavia Cigliano for their generosity and commitment to preserving Mico's work.

Donated pieces:

1. Plaster mold of the City of Lowell seal
2. "Last Punch" - Wax sculpture with gold leaf of boxer Mickey Ward
3. Bronze medallion of James B. Francis

4. "Lucy Larkham" (sic) - Unfinished clay model of mill girl/poet/author Lucy Larcom sitting and reading on a park bench.
5. "Just Leaf Play" - A polyethylene with gold paint abstract sculpture. It represents Mico's work as an artist-in-residence at UMass Lowell Plastics Dept.
6. National Medal of Technology - Plaster mold and resulting bronze medallion, highlighting Mico's international reputation as a medalist. This honor is still awarded by the President of the United States to this day.



Lowell Seal



James B. Francis



Memorial Funds Established

Due to the generosity of family and friends, the following funds have recently been established in memory of two Lowell Historical Society members: the Adele Cooper Conservation Fund, created with donations totaling \$1,405 and the Barbara Clement Conservation Fund, created with donations totaling \$466. Both funds will be used to support the preservation and conservation of the Society's collection.

The Society is honored to be the named nonprofit recipient of these tributes and has acknowledged all donations to the respective families.

Lowell Trivia

By Martha Mayo

1. Number of Lowell city managers as of 2020?
2. What cemetery is named after the first minister of St. Anne's?
3. What is the name of the first locomotive that ran from Lowell to Boston?

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

by Pauline M. Golec

Two years ago, I enjoyed a mystery written by Cora Harrison. Set in Cork, Ireland in the 1920's, her description of Cork with its river and canals reminded me of Lowell.

More recently, I read some interesting pieces in *ATLANTIC CURRENTS: CONNECTING CORK AND LOWELL* and was delighted to learn that today's Cork and Lowell share other similarities. They both have a noted university, vibrant festivals, and global designation as UNESCO Learning Cities - and a recently established partnership between the two cities.

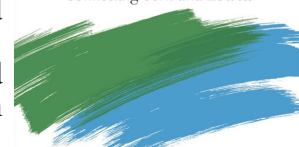
ATLANTIC CURRENTS celebrates and promotes this partnership. This book edited by Paul Marion, Tina Neylon, and John Wooding, tells us that the UNESCO Learning Cities initiative fosters international collaboration between cities for the purpose of creating life-long learning for all citizens and that beyond a learner's personal fulfillment, there could be economic and cultural benefits to the cities themselves.

In addition to important and timely information about Lowell and Cork as Learning Cities, this anthology is rich in poems, short stories, essays, and brief memoirs by writers from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. There's the not surprising cameo appearance of the Irish village priest in William Wall's short story, "The Mountain Road," and the gone but not forgotten sites in Little Canada familiar to Lowell history buffs in "Farewell Little Canada," by Charles Gargiulo. Professional writer Elinor Lipman pays tribute to her old Lowell neighborhood and, chapters later, Christine O'Connor, a lawyer, uses words to bring to life a trip to Ireland. Immigrants to Lowell from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Uganda have contributed to this book as have recognized local and Irish poets. And there is more, so much challenging and pleasurable more.

ATLANTIC CURRENTS with its attractive front cover of symbolic green and blue brushstrokes on a white background (the back cover has the book's price in both dollars and euros - testimony to the Cork/Lowell partnership) may be purchased from Loom Press (www.loompress.com) or at Amazon.

Atlantic Currents

Connecting Cork and Lowell



EDITED BY
PAUL MARION
TINA NEYLON
JOHN WOODING
A PROJECT OF CORK LEARNING CITY AND LOWELL, CITY OF LEARNING

Refreshed Lowell Cemetery Website

By Lew Karabatsos

The Lowell Cemetery is refreshing its website with a new look, colors, content and logo. It should go live before the end of the year.

In the meantime, Cemetery Trustees invite LHS members to become "Followers" of the Cemetery's new Instagram page. Check it out to see beautiful images of nature, monuments and the grounds! And, if you happen to be in the Cemetery and take a photo that highlights its beauty, feel free to post and tag it with the hashtag #lowellcemetery.

In addition, the Trustees are developing a newsletter highlighting articles, press releases, announcements and stories about the Cemetery. In preparation for an anticipated January 2021 first issue, you can join the mailing list now by submitting your email address at:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/3IroJLH/LowellCemetery>

The Sad, Curious Death of Mary Birmingham

By Lew Karabatsos

Poison. Murder. Courtroom intrigue. It's 1861 and the talk in Lowell revolves around one question - "Who killed Mary Birmingham?" Society member Joe Orfant helps to answer that question 159 years later. Check out the historic whodunit by accessing:



The office of Samuel T. Birmingham, father of the poisoned Mary. This building's location is in Boston's West End on Cambridge Street.

[The image is from the internet article listed above by Joe Orfant.]

<https://curiousmysteries.wordpress.com/2020/10/19/the-sad-curious-death-of-mary-ann-birmingham/>

Portuguese American Digital Archive at UMass Lowell

By Gray Fitzsimons

With funding provided by the William M. Wood Foundation of Boston, UMass Lowell's Library and the Saab Center for Portuguese Studies has launched a three-year project to create the Portuguese American Digital Archive (PADA) to document and preserve the rich history and culture of Portuguese-American communities in the Greater Boston Area. Four cities, including Lowell, are the focus of this effort. The others are Hudson, Lawrence, and Gloucester. A wide range of archival resources will be evaluated, digitized, and placed online for use by students, educators, and the general public.

The work to uncover "unknown collections" has begun in Lowell with the PADA team visiting various households, social clubs, businesses, and parishes, as well as the offices of civic and cultural organizations. In addition, PADA is accepting scanned and other digital materials electronically. From family photos and albums, letters, diaries, and oral histories, to musical and other sound recordings, films, and videos, PADA will contain a large series of archival collections that document several generations of Portuguese Americans, from the earliest immigrants in the region to the late 20th century. The Lowell Historical Society is one of the project partners. If you have any questions or knowledge of collections related to Portuguese Americans in the Greater Lowell Area, please contact Gray Fitzsimons at Gregory_Fitzsimons@uml.edu.



Assembling the Ayer's Lion Monument's winter protection. Photo Credit: Lowell Cemetery

Save Lives

Wear a mask over mouth and nose.

Respect six feet of social distancing

Santon's "Little Saints"

By Martha Mayo

Additional examples and descriptions at:

<https://www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org/santons-little-saints/>

Santon's "Little Saints" are small hand-painted terracotta creche (nativity) figures produced in the Provence region of Southern France. A traditional creche can have as many as 100 individual figures representing various characters and members of the village and passion plays, each carrying their gift to the new born Christ Child. My favorite was always the poorest of the poor, the Old Woodcutter bringing his bundle of wood as a gift. Among the most popular are the Fishmonger, Ravi, Spinner, Basket Maker, Gypsies, Cheesemonger, Blind Man and Son, Snail Seller, Highwayman.



The first clay Santons were created in Marseilles about 1800, when during the French Revolution, catholic churches were closed and their large nativity scenes prohibited. Craftsmen modeled small creche figures to be used at home out of local red clay. The main figures in the creche, Mary, Joseph, and the three Kings always wear traditional biblical clothes, all the villagers are dressed in clothes and hats from the early 1800s.

The major portion of my collection are Santons by Marcel Carbonel from Marseilles, France. Carbonel Santons were collected by the French Club in my high school in Falmouth, Maine. During the holidays, club members sang French Christmas Carols through the school hallways, made French pastries for a Mother / Daughter Tea, and selected one Santon to describe in French to the class. Each year, a few French Club members made the annual trip to Damariscotta, Maine to acquire new Santons from one of the few shops selling Santons in the country. I was terrible in French, but loved the cultural and culinary traditions. After the required two years, I begged our teacher / advisor and later good friend Dottie McCann to let me continue as a member (although very unusual, she agreed.) Once working full-time, every summer vacation included a trip to Damariscotta and later to Newburyport with the discovery of another small shop selling Santons. My collection of Carbonel Santons grew after several trips

to Southern France and expanded even more with the creation of ebay and online websites.

The first time, I exhibited my collection of Carbonel Santons was at the Mogan Cultural Center as part of a Lowell Family First Night Celebration in the mid-1990s, along with the traditional Thirteen Desserts. Thirteen Desserts are the traditional desserts used in celebrating Christmas in Provence. The "big supper" ends with a ritual 13 desserts, representing Jesus Christ and the 12 apostles. The desserts always number thirteen, the exact items vary by local or family tradition, but must include dried fruits, nuts, fresh fruits, and sweets.



Around 2000, I was asked by Ray Hoag to participate in the annual "No Room at the Inn: Creche and Nativity Display" at St. John's Church, 260 Gorham Street, Lowell, MA the first weekend of December for many years. At St. John's Church, I showed not only the Carbonel Creche of over 75 villagers, animals, and buildings, but examples of dozens of other Santonniers from Provence.

LHS Corporate Memberships

The Lowell Historical Society proudly acknowledges our 2020 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:

Bonnie Melsaac

Enterprise Bank & Trust Co.

Fred C. Church Insurance

Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union

Lowell Five Cent Savings Bank

Lowell Sun Charities, Inc

Washington Savings Bank

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

[lowellhistoricalsociety.org](https://www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org)

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

contact@lowellhistoricalsociety.org



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 **by appointment only**, during the pandemic. Hours are Monday through Thursday 9-5 and the 3rd Saturday of each month from 10-3. For appointments email Tony: Anthony_Sampas@uml.edu or call 978-934-4997.

The contact point for information is Tony Sampas, 978-934-4997. The Center's web address is: <https://libguides.uml.edu/archives>

Calendar of Events

Program: Who is Charles L Willoughby?
Time: Sun. January 24, 2021 @ 2:00 pm
Location: Online (see below)

Program: Spanish Influenza, Influenza, Flu, Grippe, La Grippe
Time: Sun., February 28, 2021 @ 2:00 p.m.
Location: Online (see below)

Program: LHS Annual Meeting "Comunidade e Cultura: Portuguese in Lowell's Back Central Neighborhood"
Time: May 16, 2021 @ 2:00 pm
Location: Online (see below)

The link for all the above programs can be found at:
<https://www.facebook.com/LowellHistoricalSociety/events>

Answers to Trivia Questions

1) Seventeen, 2) Edson, 3) Patrick.