



LOWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Winter 2023, Volume 56, Number 1

Our mission is to collect, preserve, and publish materials related to Lowell and to encourage and promote the study of the city's history.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

I have the pleasure to introduce the Society's first eNewsletter!

There are many advantages to transitioning to electronic format. It will be faster and more efficient to communicate with the entire membership on our mission to collect, preserve, and publish materials related to Lowell and to encourage and promote the study of the city's history. The LHS will be able to send you timely notices of our Programs, Exhibits, and Hybrid Zoom events. There will be links to more in-depth research, background stories, and historical resources.

Please remember to include your email with your membership renewal this year or send an email to membership@lowellhistoricalsociety.org so you won't miss out. The LHS does not provide email addresses to third parties. You will not get "spammed".

This year we will continue to host hybrid Zoom/in-person events. This has allowed many more Lowell history buffs from near and far to participate and enjoy our Programs. The Lowell Historical Society is an all volunteer organization and depends upon you for our success.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to launching the eNewsletter. I also want to thank the general membership for your continued support and hope you enjoy our new eNewsletter.

Phil Belanger

150 years ago . .



Since 1873, the Lowell Humane Society has worked to protect many of the city's most defenseless residents.

Follow the history of this crucial, esteemed, and enduring community resource and partner.

This is part 1 of a series that will appear in this year's newsletters.

Click for Part #1 on the history of the Lowell Humane Society

Eagle Scout Project curates and catalogs treasured Lowell archives



In search of an Eagle Scout Project that satisfied his history itch and went beyond the typical projects, Nick Hoff devised a plan to assemble, shelve, and rehouse documents and artifacts, and to digitally catalog the Student Papers Project.

Thank you Nick and Congratulations on your Eagle Award!

Click to see more about Nick's Eagle Scout Project.

In case you missed them . . .



[Did Lowell mill girls' writings inspire Charles Dickens to write A Christmas Carol?](#)

[The 80th Anniversary of the Coconut Grove fire and its ties to Lowell](#)

Read the past newsletters -

The 2005 - 2020 newsletters of the Lowell Historical Society are available online!

[Click here to see the newsletters](#)

75 years ago . . .



2023 is the 76th annual Lowell Sun Charities Golden Gloves. Seventy five years ago, at Lowell's Memorial Auditorium, an unknown boxer from Brockton went from obscurity to being a contender in the national Golden Gloves championships. After Lowell, Rocco Marchigiano started thinking more intently about turning pro.

Lowell's ties to "Jolly" Jane,
Massachusetts' Female
Serial Killer

"When I fought there I was just another fighter ... I guess I owe all that followed to that place."
— Rocky Marciano

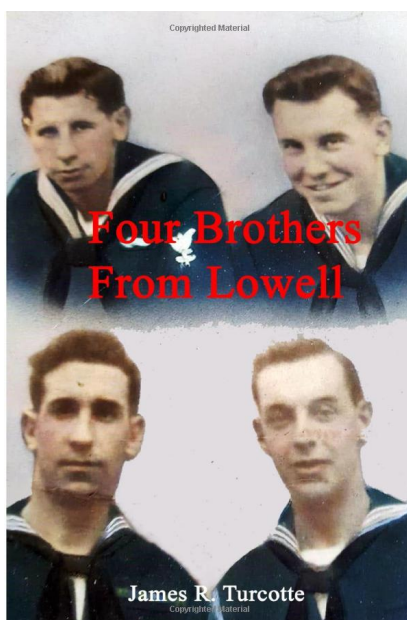
Back to School Lowell

Click for more LHS
blogs

Click for articles on The
Golden Gloves in
Lowell in 1948

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

By Pauline M. Golec



I recently had the pleasure of reading [FOUR BROTHERS FROM LOWELL](#) written by [James R. Turcotte](#), son of one of the featured brothers. This detailed and solidly researched book tells the story of Lionel, Robert (Bob), James (Jim) and Walter (Bud) Turcotte, all born in Lowell, the sons of Herman and Helen (Willett) Turcotte. The beginning pages include stories and photos of the boys and their two sisters as children.

The bulk of the book explores the World War II navy experiences of the Turcotte brothers, who all enlisted at an early age. Of the four brothers pictured on the book's cover, the two oldest would not survive the war. Bob was on a flight mission when his plane disappeared in the South Atlantic and Lionel would die in a plane crash in Dutch Guiana.

James survived seven major sea battles, was accepted into Officers Candidate School, and served on the legendary U.S.S. Missouri as this grand ship visited European ports. After being discharged, he enlisted in the Reserves and was recalled as an officer during the Korean conflict. After his final discharge, Jim would go back to college, earn a degree in engineering, and live until age 92.

Walter (Bud) enlisted at age 17 after convincing his parents, particularly his mother who had already lost two sons, that he was determined to carry on the tradition. He would serve three years and three months before his honorable discharge.

The author has included many photos which complement the text. For some readers, the stories of the battles and the description of the planes, ships, and weaponry might be of special

interest. I found the shared personal letters to be especially compelling. These letters let me see aspects of war through a sailor's eyes as well as get a sense of life for the sailor's family back home in Lowell.

For years, I have passed the Turcotte Square memorial sign at the intersection of Varnum Ave. and Pawtucket Blvd. without giving it too much thought. Thanks to reading this inspiring book, the sign now means much more to me.



Lowell in winters past

I got all my boyhood in vanilla winter waves around the kitchen stove.

- Jack Kerouac



Monument Square from City Hall. February 17, 1914, [The Lowell City Engineers Collection](#)
[Engineers Collection](#)



Details from above photo

[Click for more scenes of Lowell in winter](#)

There's always a Lowell connection....

These are historic times as a new Governor takes office in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It's always intriguing when history reveals just how often there is a Lowell connection to proceedings and traditions. The red carpet was rolled out for Gov. Charlie Baker's so called "lone walk" out of the State House on his last official day in office on January 4, 2023. He met briefly with his successor, Maura Healey to present her with four symbolic gifts: the original key to the governor's office, the governor's gavel, a two-volume copy of the Massachusetts General Statutes, both of which date back to the 1800s and interestingly, a Bible used and left by the late **Gov. Benjamin Butler**.

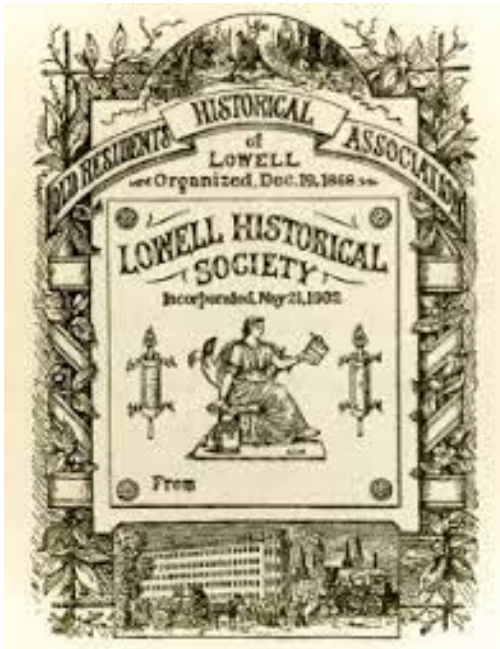
Of further interest, is the origin of the "lone walk" – perhaps the most symbolic since it involves the actual physical leaving of the building. It too harkens back to Ben Butler who ended his term as Governor of the Commonwealth on January 3, 1884 by taking that lone walk out of the State House. Some historians say Butler – who appointed the first Irish-American and African American judges and the first woman to executive office - was so unpopular that he left alone - bereft of friend or fanfare.

And so, the Lowell connection lives on.... and, so too, does the Butler legend.



Photo credit: Eric Haynes / Governor's Office

The Four Gifts - The Butler Bible is the leftmost of the three books.



Become a member!

We welcome all of those interested in history and Lowell to join! Membership is open to the public and all contributions are tax-deductible.

[Click for more information](#)



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UMass Lowell Archives and Special Collections

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