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LOWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2024, Volume 57, Number 3

The mission of the [Lowell Historical Society](http://LowellHistoricalSociety.org) is to collect, preserve, and publish materials related to Lowell and to encourage and promote the study of the city's history.

“Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors.”

- Jonas Salk



- ✓ Save the Smith Baker Center - Updates, Website, & Opportunities to Participate
- ✓ John Ames & William Lamson: Two of the first casualties of the Civil War by Walter V. Hickey
- ✓ Photo Gallery - Contributor: Kevin Harkins

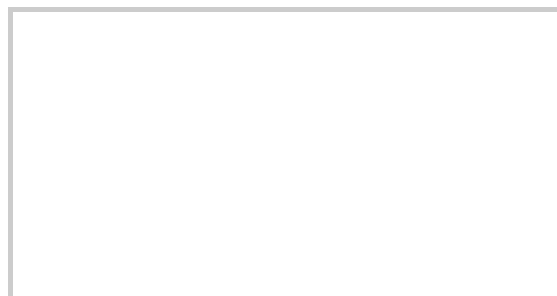
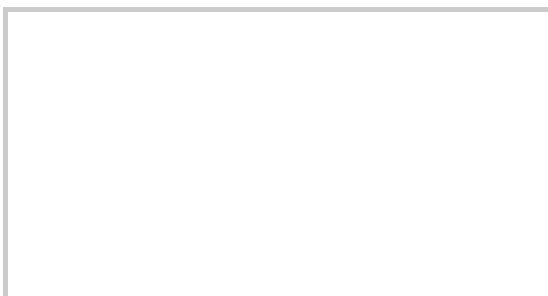
- ✓ Horses and autos “share” the Lowell streets. It didn’t always go well . . .
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Save the Smith Baker Center

Updates

The recent Lowell Historical Society Annual Meeting and Presentation at the Pollard Memorial Library provided a thorough examination of the historical significance and promising future of the Smith Baker Center. With informative sessions by Richard P. Howe, Jr., Dennis McCarthy, Paul Ratha Yem, and Christine McCarron, attendees gained valuable insights into the center's past, its architectural importance, current city initiatives, and upcoming plans. The tour of the exterior guided by Dennis McCarthy offered an up-close look at the center's grandeur.





Paul Ratha Yem, Lowell City Councilor, discussed the status of the Smith Baker Center and current actions being taken by the city.



After the panel presentation, Lowell architect Dennis McCarthy led a group across the street for a tour of the building's exterior features.

Please visit the [Save Smith Baker website](https://www.savesmithbaker.org/)

<https://www.savesmithbaker.org/>

to learn more about this effort, [sign up for the Monthly newsletter](#), and find out other ways to get involved and [support this project](#).



[John E. Ames is buried in Edson Cemetery](#). Corner of Second Avenue and Garfield Avenue.



[William H. Lamson is buried in Lowell Cemetery](#). Lot 581. Corner of Franklin and Catalpa Avenues.

John E. Ames & William Lamson: Two of the first casualties of the Civil War

by Walter V. Hickey

The 6th Regiment, Massachusetts Militia was attacked by a mob while passing through Baltimore on April 19, 1861 on the way to defend Washington, D.C. from rebel attack. Company D, the Lowell City Guards, was a contingent of over 200 men at the rear of the march and suffered 15 casualties. These hostilities, happening just one week after the South Carolina militia attacked Fort Sumter, were called the Baltimore Riot or the Pratt Street Riot.

Two Lowell men, Addison Whitney and Luther Ladd, were killed and are today interred in the lot in front of Lowell City Hall. A third man, Charles A. Taylor, also killed that day, was buried in an unmarked grave in Baltimore and the Ladd and Whitney Monument has a plaque that serves as a cenotaph for Charles Taylor. While Taylor is associated with Lowell in some records, he was not a resident. (See the article below by Eileen Loucraft about Charles A. Taylor.)

Of the other Lowell men who were casualties of the riot only two of them have a reference to the Baltimore Riot on their gravestones: John A. Ames and William H. Lamson.

[Click here to read more about two of the first men to answer their country's call in the Civil War](#)

Photo Gallery

LHS member and photographer [Kevin Harkins](#) has once again dug into his archives of Lowell photographs and digitized some of them for us to enjoy.



The Strand Theater (1981) just before demolition

[Click here to see the photo gallery](#)



**Horses and autos “share” the Lowell streets.
It didn’t always go well . . .**

In the years between the appearance of automobiles and other motor vehicles and the disappearance of horses on Lowell’s streets, there were many injuries and fatal encounters between autos and horse-drawn vehicles. Sometimes the encounters were direct hits and sometimes the horses were spooked by the new machines and ran wildly down the streets.

[Click here for newspaper articles, photographs, and more about autos and horses on Lowell’s streets in the early 1900s](#)



THE BELLS OF LOWELL

by Pauline M. Golec

This is an introduction to a series of articles that will explore the use of bells in Lowell's history.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, English poet, offers testimony to the importance of bells in the early 19th century –

" . . . and the old Church tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
From morn to evening . . . "

We can imagine these words rang true for farmers in Chelmsford before part of it became Lowell.

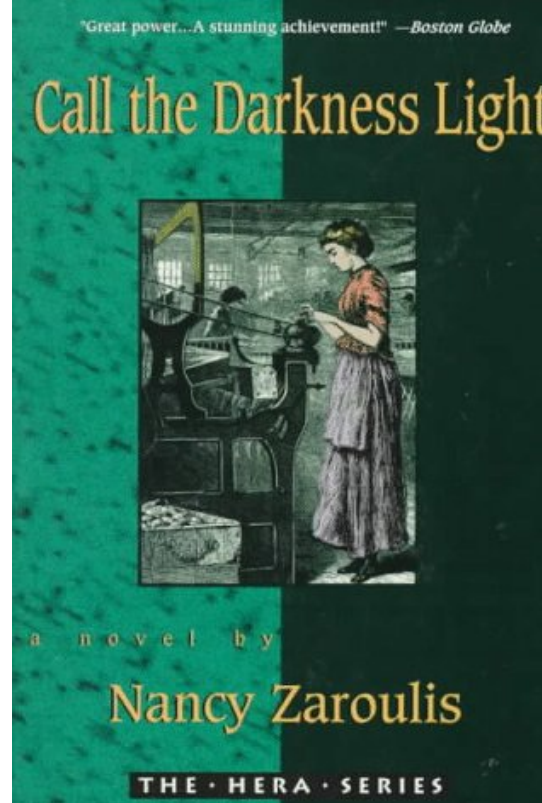
James V. Atkinson, immortalized in a Shute folk painting, was early Lowell's town crier and rang a bell on his rounds.

When Lowell, the leader of the American Industrial Revolution, incorporated in 1826, industrial bells dictated much of the daily routine of the new town. According to "Bell City" by Julie Mofford (shared by blogger Richard Howe) a bell committee, spearheaded by former Sen. Paul Tsongas and under the mandate of the Lowell Cultural Plan, was charged with reviving the city's bell tradition.

Although the committee's plan to install a 23-bell carillon on top of the garage across from Boarding House Park never materialized, research done by Julie Mofford and others supports and inspires some of the findings that will be presented in future articles on Lowell's industrial bells, church bells, fire bells, cemetery bells, and aesthetic/public art bells.

"The Bells of Lowell" will be a regular feature in many upcoming newsletters.

[Click here for more about James V. Atkinson, inc the 1831 painting, the 1837 petition recommending his to be the city crier, and information about the family burial plot in Lowell Cemetery.](#)



FROM THE BOOKSHELF

By Pauline M. Golec

In 1978, Lowell National Historical Park was established and its mission still includes interpreting the Industrial Revolution, one aspect of which is the study of the early women factory workers in Lowell, popularly known as the "mill girls."

In 1979, *CALL THE DARKNESS LIGHT* by Nancy Zaroulis was published by Doubleday, a major publishing house (one of the book's editors was thought to be Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy). This novel relates the experiences, aspirations, and woes of Sabra Palfrey, one of Lowell's early mill girls.

Earlier authors also featured tales of New England farm girls who came to work in Lowell's cotton mills. Slocum's anthology of *NEW ENGLAND IN FICTION 1787-1900* informs us that Osgood Bradbury wrote a novel about a mill girl in 1844. And then there was the plainly titled *THE FACTORY GIRL* by Ariel Ivers Cummings published in 1847.

The actual women mill operatives made available *THE LOWELL OFFERING* in the early 1840s. Their own poetry, impressions of Lowell, and sometimes details of their daily lives were included in its pages.

Thomas Dublin's richly researched and documented book, *WOMEN AT WORK: THE TRANSFORMATION OF WORK AND COMMUNITY IN LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS, 1826-1860*, was published by Columbia University Press in 1979. This prize-winning study includes observations about and from *THE LOWELL OFFERING*. A graphic image of a woman at work adorns its cover.

I would venture to suggest that we haven't seen the last of publications about the Lowell mill girls.

Save the Date!

Portrait, Gravesite, & Mausoleum Tour Lowell Cemetery September 15, 2024 10 AM - 12 Noon

The Lowell Cemetery, in cooperation with the Lowell Historical Society and the Pollard Memorial Library, will host a portrait, gravesite, and mausoleum tour on Sunday, September 15, 2024, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon.

Come to the Cemetery and take a self-guided tour (map will be provided) of more than two dozen grave sites and several of the rarely accessible mausolea.

Do you know about the Atkinson or Birmingham families? How about the Lawsons, the Stickneys, the Parkers, the Stones (no, not the Rolling ones!) or the Mitchells?

Each stop will not only have an interpreter to provide background on each person at rest, but also include an image to put “faces to the names.”

Admission is free. Check for updates on the Lowell Cemetery website at www.lowellcemetery.com.



The renaming (and un-renaming) of City Hall A Chronology

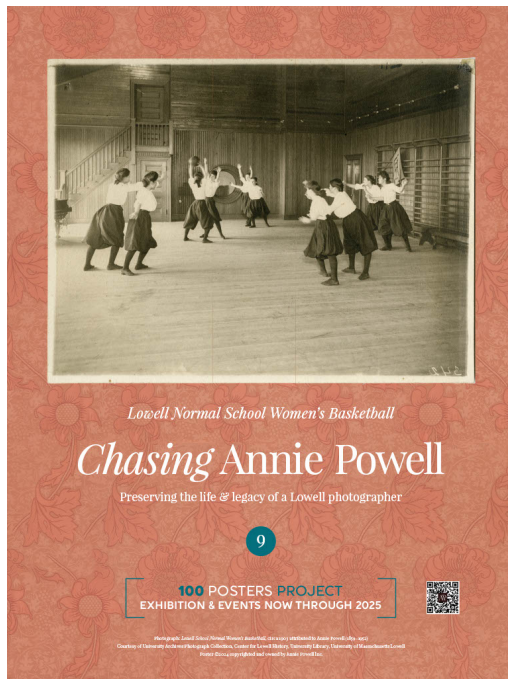
by Walter V. Hickey

15 December 1947

Our story begins with Cornelius J. Barnes suggesting to the city council that General George S. Patton be honoured by naming city hall after him. Barnes was a veteran of World War I and past commander of VFW Post 662 . . .

[Click here for the rest of the story . . .](#)

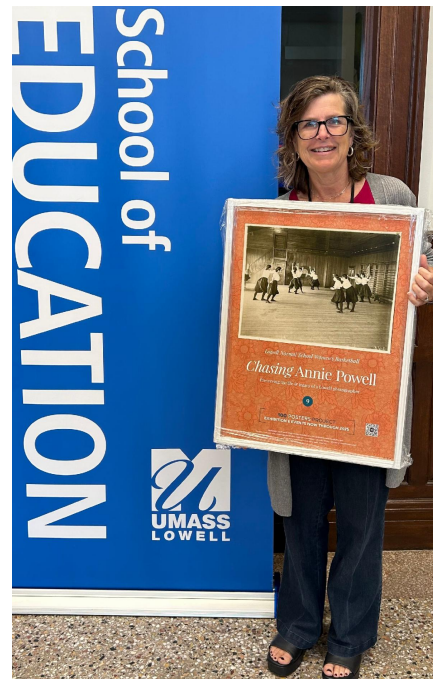
The 100 Poster Project



Lowell Normal School Women's Basketball

[Poster #9](#) depicts the women's basketball team of Lowell's Normal School.

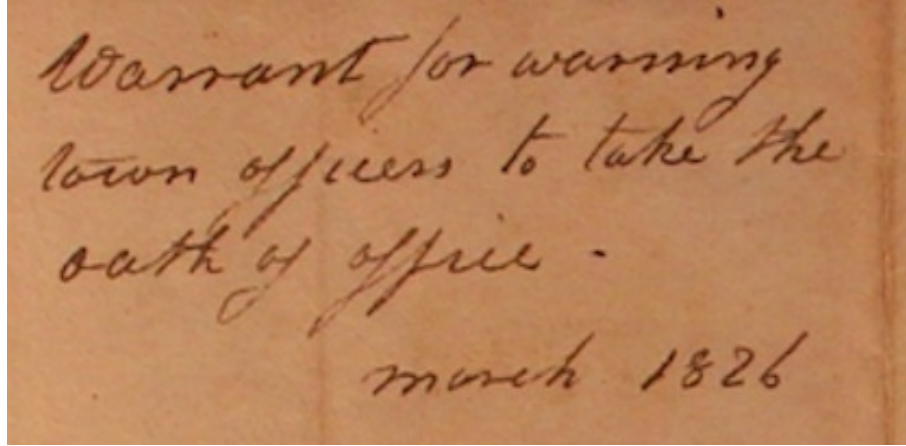
Some 125 years before Caitlin Clark, "Miss Moynihan", one of the team's stars, was drawing 700 spectators to the games.



The Normal School building is now UMASS Lowell's Coburn Hall, and this piece of women's history is now "back home".

Pictured here receiving the poster is Stacy Szczesiul, Associate Dean of Online Education, Accreditation & Licensing FAHSS (Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), and Associate Professor at UML

[Click here for for a larger image of this photograph and more information about the 100 Poster Project](#)



Countdown to the Bicentennial The first town officers - March 1826

When the Town of Lowell was incorporated on March 1, 1826, the population was approximately 2,300 to 2,500 people.

Many of the town officers appointed at the first town meeting provided services that are very different from those we depend on today.

The first town meeting appointed the following officers; Town Treasurer, Field Drivers, Fence Viewers, Surveyors of Lumber, Measurers of Wood and Bark, Cullers of Staves and Hoops, Hog Reeves, and Measurers of Hay.

Tythingmen (1827), the fire department (1829), police court (1833), Board of Health (1834), and almshouse (1835) all came later.

This is the first in a series that will examine these roles and present the original documents from the first years of the Town of Lowell,

[Click here to see the "Warrant for warning town officers to take the oath of office March 1826"](#)



The Lowell Historic Board's email newsletter [Presence from the Past](#) is coming back soon and they are rebuilding the distribution list. It's a great way to keep up with Historic Board activities and discover more about preservation, history, design, and architecture.

All articles not attributed to a specific author were written by the LHS newsletter editor, Brad MacGowan. He also maintains two Lowell history websites [The Town & the City: Lowell before and after the Civil War](#) and [Lowell History: The Isolation Hospital](#).



[Survey of Merrimack River from Wicassee Locks to Town Landing \(1822\)](#)

January 16, 2024

In September, 1822, James F. Baldwin, the agent of the Middlesex Canal, hired surveyors William Taylor and John G. Hales to conduct a survey and... [Read More](#)

[Lowell Squares in 1914](#)

November 13, 2023

Board of Parks – Board of Commissioners – Lowell, Massachusetts – 1914 Middlesex Square – Corner of Middlesex & Baldwin Streets in Middlesex Village ... [Read More](#)

[List of Lowell Mayors with Burial Locations](#)

June 1, 2023

Have you ever wondered where the Mayors of Lowell were buried? Early in Lowell history, Lowell Cemetery was the popular place. Over time as the... [Read More](#)

[Did Lowell Mill Girls' Writings Inspire Charles Dickens to write A Christmas Carol?](#)

December 23, 2022

It is often mentioned that Charles Dickens valued his visit to Lowell in February 1842 more than... [Read More](#)

[80th Anniversary of the Cocoanut Grove Fire and its ties to Lowell](#)

November 28, 2022

November 28th is the 80th anniversary of the Cocoanut Grove Fire at 17 Piedmont Street, Boston. Four hundred and ninety people were killed and many... [Read More](#)

[Lowell's ties to "Jolly" Jane, Massachusetts' Female Serial Killer](#)

October 29, 2022

Many say that the links to Lowell through the people, places, and things that we encounter in



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The Lowell Historical Society offers an exciting opportunity for **Corporate Sponsorships**.

By becoming a corporate sponsor, the company's name and logo will be featured in our quarterly newsletters, on posters at our events, and on our popular website.

A sponsorship with a contribution of \$100 or more can be made conveniently [through our website with PayPal or Debit/Credit Card](#), or by [printing out this form](#) and mailing it with a check to the Lowell Historical Society.

High School Student and College Student Memberships

High school students can join the Lowell Historical Society at a reduced membership fee of just \$5, and college students can join for \$10.

By becoming a member, students will have access to exclusive resources and opportunities to engage with like-minded individuals and experts in the field. [Join us today and be a part of our mission to celebrate and learn from the past.](#)

the larger world are a regular occurrence. In some cases... [Read More](#)

Click here to visit the LHS
Blog page for more

Please click here for more
information about membership
opportunities

OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our corporate sponsors for their support in helping us achieve our mission at the Lowell Historical Society. Their generosity has been instrumental in enabling us to preserve and promote the rich history of Lowell, and we are honored to have them as part of our community.



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Read the past newsletters -

The 2005 - 2024 [newsletters of the Lowell Historical Society](http://www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org/newsletters/) are available online!

www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org/newsletters/

[Click here to see the past newsletters](#)

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