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LOWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2024, Volume 57, Number 4

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



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Dear Lowell History Enthusiasts,

This past year, the Lowell Historical Society was hit by inflation just like everyone else. Once again, we are faced with an increase in rent for the housing of most of our collections. We are an all volunteer organization, no one receives a salary, and all our events are free and open to the public - **we rely on your annual dues to keep us going.**

Our 2025 Membership Drive has begun, and we would like to take the opportunity to THANK YOU for your past support. Your contribution allows the Society to continue to provide online lectures; expand our collection through the acquisition of selected artifacts and documents; work with academics, researchers, authors, and schoolteachers; create exhibitions; and publish books and pamphlets.

As we did last year, we are offering for your convenience, Electronic Membership Renewal to all members to make the process faster, more efficient and to save money on mailings. We will not be mailing the traditional renewal form. The Lowell Historical Society DOES NOT share your email with any other entities; you will not be bombarded with spam.

Please take the time to make your donation [via our website with PayPal, or a Debit/Credit Card by clicking here](#). If you prefer to pay by check, just print a copy of the form available [here](#), below, or on the [website](#) and mail it with your donation to:

Lowell Historical Society
P.O. Box 1826
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Need to reach us? Call 978-319-4631, contact@lowellhistoricalsociety.org or visit us at <http://www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org> Also like us on Facebook! Questions about membership? Contact membership@lowellhistoricalsociety.org.

We appreciate your attention and hope to see you soon at one of our upcoming events. Thank you,

Joe Jussaume, President & the Membership Committee

Ps: If you have already renewed your membership or if you renew automatically on PayPal, please disregard this letter.

THANK YOU!

Please make your check payable to the Lowell Historical Society

Lowell Historical Society

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation for membership in the Lowell Historical Society in the amount of:

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Save the Smith Baker Center

Updates

The Third Annual Lowell Asian American Film Festival

Friday, October 18 through Saturday, October 19, 2024

Location: MCC's Richard and Nancy Donahue Family Academic Arts Center
240 Central St, Lowell, MA 01852

www.middlesex.mass.edu/laaf

A major goal of **Save Smith Baker** is to establish a **Southeast Asian Refugee Museum** in the Center, with a focus on the resettlement of refugees in Lowell and the contributions that they have made and are making in the city.

Save Smith Baker is creating a traveling museum with **engaging, interactive, and immersive exhibits** that will travel to various venues around Lowell before occupying its permanent home in the SBC. [ma](http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/laaf)

The **first traveling exhibition** will be in collaboration with Middlesex Community College and will be on the college's Lowell campus.

The museum will contain exhibits about history, music, dance, sculpture, painting, graphic arts, photography, textile arts, food, and religion.

Exhibits will be added as the museum travels to other venues around the city until it resides in its home in the renovated Smith Baker

ss.e

There will be a **preview exhibition** at Middlesex Community College's Academic Arts Center during the Lowell Asian American Film Festival and [a short video about the museum](#) will be shown during the festival.

Center.

Please visit the [Save Smith Baker website www.savesmithbaker.org/](http://www.savesmithbaker.org/) to learn more about this effort, and find out other ways to get involved and [support this project](#).

Photo Gallery

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



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

The Bells of Lowell Part 1 of a series

by **Pauline Golec**

(The Introduction to this series was in the Summer 2024 Newsletter available [here](#))

So beautifully appropriate to this article are the last two lines of a poem by Paul Marion -

"Consider the bell as a public instrument
In the realms of work and grace and art."

Two of Lowell's early work bells are today on proud display in the downtown area.



The Franco-American Monument, the first of many of the city's ethnic monuments, was dedicated on June 24, 1974, when Armand LeMay, a prominent Franco-American, was Lowell's mayor. He reportedly saw a large school bell in the attic of a municipal building, negotiated a deal to buy it for \$1, organized a committee, and had a monument designed to honor the Franco-Americans of Lowell. Permission was received from the Lowell City Council to place the monument in front of city hall. Monies for this project were collected with even children donating to the cause. Mayor LeMay and Curtis, his son, dug the monument's 5 foot deep foundation.

Every year, this bell monument on a granite base, is recognized during Lowell's celebration of Franco-American Week.



Another bell in the downtown area serves as a reminder of Lowell's past. Christened the Lowell Bell, it was believed to have been cast by the Naylor Vickers Company of England in 1860. Its early use in Lowell was as a fire alarm in the Old Market House (then a police station) on 40 Market St. before the Palmer St. station was built.

Its service ended, the bell somehow mysteriously surfaced in Lowell's Centralville neighborhood. Since 1923, it had been used as a planter in front of a Jewett St. home, and in 2004, it was donated to the Lowell Heritage Partnership.

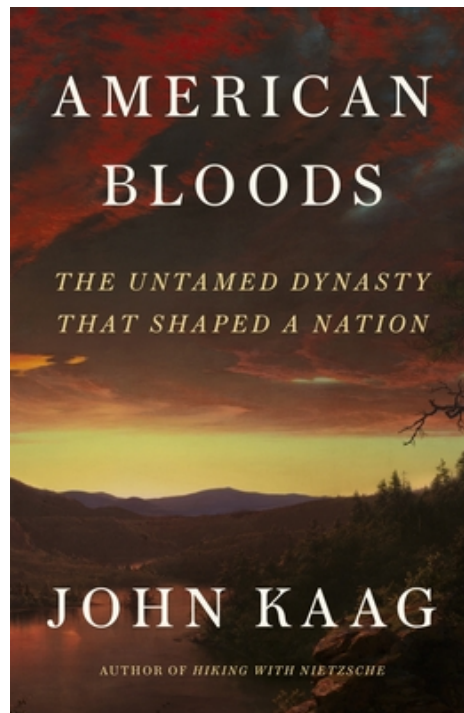
At a cost of \$25,000, the bell was restored and mounted on a stone base. In 2009, it was situated on a lot at the corner of Central and Prescott Streets and was dedicated as a memorial to Lowell's mill workers.

Acknowledgements -

For valuable information, thanks to MONUMENTS AND MEMORIES by Martha Norkunas and to PRESERVATION, a small booklet published by the Lowell Heritage Partnership.

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

By Pauline M. Golec



Plucked from my local library's "New Non Fiction" bookcase, AMERICAN BLOODS by John Kaag proved to be a fascinating book about an independent family that helped to form our nation. The author, who lives in a house built in 1745 by Josiah Blood, wrote this book after finding in his home a privately published history of the Bloods.

In the seventeenth century, Thomas Blood stole the Crown Jewels of England and was pardoned by King Charles II. Although supposedly buried in England, Blood was suspected of staging his own death and leaving for the New World, then home to his nephews Robert, John, and James, who had arrived in Massachusetts around 1630.

From these early Blood settlers, the author follows members of the Blood family through significant events in America's history and highlights their contacts with such noted figures as Emerson, Thoreau, Frederick Douglass, William James, and Victoria

Woodhull (feminist pioneer). He also includes a generous consideration of different philosophies - and how they might or might not have affected some of the Bloods.

I took pleasure in seeing Lowell mentioned in this book. In a very detailed story of Aretas Blood, noted machinist and later owner of the Manchester Locomotive Works in Manchester, NH, the author notes that Blood came to Lowell in 1842 and stayed a year. In his reference to Blood's stay in the mill city, the author glowingly describes the story of Lowell's rapid growth as a leader of the Industrial Revolution.

It was pleasing to see the Lowell Historical Society cited in the book's reference notes. Author John Kaag is the Donahue Professor of the Arts at the University of Lowell Massachusetts.

Just a short time ago, I mentioned this book to someone who informed me that there are Bloods buried in Lowell Cemetery. A week later, a friend told me about the Blood farm in Groton.

Could tracking down current Bloods be the seeds for another book?

Order [AMERICAN BLOODS](#) by John Kaag at [lala Books](#).

Published by Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, New York

LOWELL BY THE NUMBERS

Part I, 1844-1845

by Walter V. Hickey

This article is the first of four about 19th century attempts to have the buildings of Lowell numbered in an orderly manner. *Ordo ab Chao*.

Advanced Placement Test
19th Century Lowell History
Final Exam

Question #1 – Choose the best answer. In 1844 and 1845 Lowell's residential and commercial buildings were:

- a) Not numbered in any logical or orderly sequence
- b) Some were numbered and some were not
- c) Owners could put any number they wanted on their building
- d) More than one building on a street might have the same number
- e) Both Odd and Even numbers might be on the same side of a street
- f) All of the above

[Click here for the correct answer and the article](#)

Countdown to the Bicentennial

The first town officers - March 1826

Part 1 - Hog Reeves

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.

One of the first hog reeves was also a physician and would go on to be an eight-term mayor of Lowell and the Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts.

[Click here to read more about Lowell's first Hog Reeves](#)

The English Come to Lowell

By Walter V. Hickey
Part 1 of 2

Shortly after The Merrimack Manufacturing company began making cloth, it was decided that even more profit was to be made by printing calico cloth instead of plain cloth. Unfortunately, the 'secret' of printing was closely held in England. To that end, Kirk Boott went to England seeking textile workers who knew how to print cloth.

In Lancashire, he met with John Dynely Prince and persuaded him to come to Lowell. It is said that Mr. Prince asked for a salary of \$5,000, to which Mr. Boott replied that the Governor of Massachusetts does not make that much. In response, Mr. Prince simply asked if the Governor of Massachusetts could print cloth. He got the salary he requested.

He sailed from Liverpool on the Ship MANHATTAN, arriving in New York on June 20, 1826. His family would follow in 1827.

He was in charge of the Merrimack Print Works until his retirement in 1855. He died January 5, 1860 and is buried in the Lowell Cemetery.

[Click here to see more about John Prince](#)



Forgotten Today, He Helped Launch Two State Universities

by Bernie Zelitch

Fenwick Umpleby, neither a character in a Dickens novel nor someone found on any current lists of well-known Lowellians, was an innovative educator, proponent of women in higher education and the professions, and major force in founding what are today two state universities.

Bernie Zelitch, an investigative reporter, historian, and executive director of the Lowell-based nonprofit, [by Annie Powell](#) reveals the story of this eminent and interesting man.

[Click here for the story of Fenwick Umpleby](#)

House History Workshop

Saturday November 16, 2024
2pm - 4pm

Pollard Memorial Library
401 Merrimack Street
Lowell, MA

The Lowell Historical Society welcomes you to its House History Workshop on November 16th where you will learn how to uncover the mysteries of your home or property using public records and other resources. This two-hour workshop will go over what records are available, how to access them, and how to put the information together to form a complete history of your property. After the workshop you are welcome to stay for an overview of the records found within the Pollard Library. This workshop can help more than just Lowellians, as the resources discussed can be found in most Massachusetts towns and cities.

This workshop is also great for Real Estate professionals, business owners, or anyone who wants to create a one-of-a-kind housewarming gift

for loved ones! This workshop will be led by Society Board Member Kim Zunino who has researched historical properties in her former position as the Assistant Administrator of the Lowell Historic Board.



Image from the film "Paris Shoe Company, 1970s" by Januario Leal
(available in the UMass Lowell's Portuguese American Digital Archive)

Voices from Industry: Portuguese Workers in Lowell's Late Manufacturing Era

A Free Public Program at the Boott Mills Events Center
Lowell National Historical Park, 115 John St.
(Parking at Downes Garage, 75 John St.)

Saturday, December 7, 10am-Noon

In the early 1970s, Lowell suffered among the highest unemployment rates in the nation and the city's population, which had been declining since the 1920s, continued to plummet. Many believed Lowell's economic well-being was irretrievably lost. Yet largely overlooked amidst this gloom were rising Portuguese and Greek immigrant communities, that helped revitalized a number of densely settled urban neighborhoods. In addition a new group of South American immigrants, notably from Colombia and a few from Brazil, moved into the city.

Many of these new residents found employment in "older" industries such as textiles, garment making, shoe factories, and the well-known Prince Pasta Company, that persisted during these difficult years. Their stories of work in these manufacturing jobs have been mostly eclipsed by more publicized accounts of the emerging high-tech industries such as Wang Computers and a renaissance of Lowell's economic development due in part to the creation of Lowell National Historical Park.

Join us for a program dedicated to learning about the experiences of the women and men who labored in these declining industries from the 1970s into the 1990s. The

program will feature a panel of Portuguese immigrants who will share their stories of factory work and life during this time in Lowell. Light snacks and refreshments will be included, along with a tour of the current exhibit in the Boott Gallery, "The Portuguese in Lowell: The Familiar and the New."

This program is jointly sponsored by UMass Lowell's Saab Center for Portuguese Studies, Lowell National Historical Park, and the Lowell Historical Society.

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](#).



Check out these blogs and many 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 the larger world are a regular occurrence. In some cases... [Read More](#)



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By becoming a corporate sponsor, your company's name and logo will be featured in our quarterly newsletters 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.

[Join us today and be a part of our mission to celebrate and learn from the past.](#)

Click here to visit the LHS Blog page for more interesting stories about Lowell

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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www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org/newsletters/

[Click here to see the past newsletters](http://www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org/newsletters/)

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