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# LOWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2025, Volume 58, Number 1

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

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“Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors.”

- Jonas Salk

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- √ Editorial - The Smith Baker Center City Council vote
- √ A 50-year History: Southeast Asian Immigrants in Lowell
- √ The tragic death of a Greek mill girl by Lew Karabatsos
- √ Four portraits by Samuel P. Howes by Bridget Cooley
- √ Photo Gallery - Winter in Lowell, Contributor: Kevin Harkins
- √ The Bells of Lowell: Part 2 - The Hosford Bell by Lew Karabatsos

- √ From the Bookshelf - *Portraits Along the Way* by Paul Marion
  - √ Countdown to the Bicentennial - The first town officers, Part 2 - "Field drivers"
  - √ The English Come to Lowell, Part 2 by Walter V. Hickey
  - √ Where do the children play? The Progressive Era Playground Movement in Lowell
  - √ Sign up to receive Belinda Juran's monthly enewsletter of activities and events in Lowell
  - √ Save the Date - Saturday March 8th
  - √ LHS Blogs
  - √ The benefits of being a Corporate Sponsor
  - √ Corporate Sponsors
  - √ Past newsletters
- 



### **Editorial**

#### **The Smith Baker Center**

Brad MacGowan (newsletter editor)

These opinions may not represent the views of all LHS members.

Sadly, the majority of the City Council voted on January 14 to demolish the Smith Baker Center.

Say goodbye to another piece of Lowell history.

This decision was made despite the fact that the recent and comprehensive Gale Associates' structural engineer's evaluation of the Smith Baker Center reports that the stone foundation and the load-bearing masonry walls are structurally sound.

I hope this is the last building in Lowell that is destroyed by demolition by neglect.

I am glad that past city and state leaders were more visionary than the current ones and some of the city's treasures have been saved.

Councilors who voted YES to demolish the Smith Baker Center were; Belanger, Descoteaux, Gitschier, Jenness, Nuon, and Rourke

Councilor Paul Ratha Yem rescued himself from voting because of his association with Save Smith Baker.

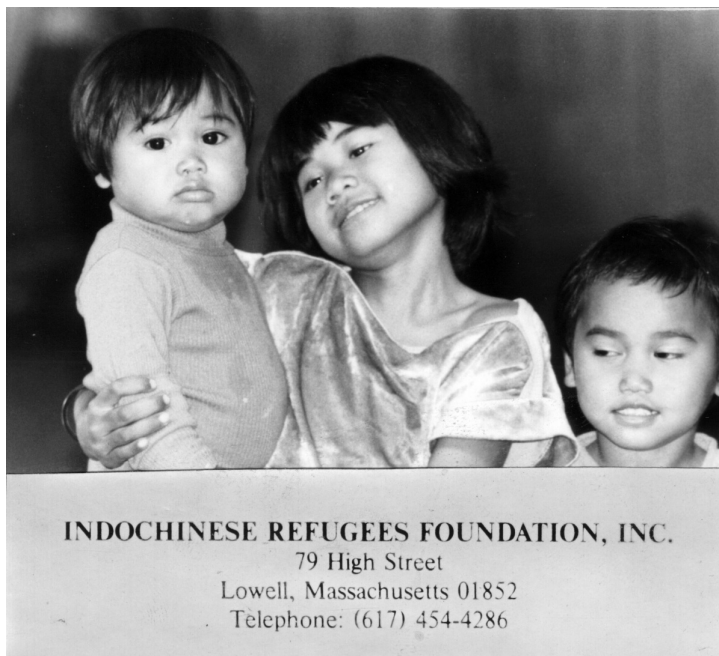
Councilors Rita Mercier and Corey Robinson voted against demolition.

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**A 50-year History:**

## **Southeast Asian Immigrants in Lowell**

Today, more than 25% of Lowell's population identifies as Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese. Yet many of us know little about our Southeast Asian neighbors beyond the storefronts and delicious food. A new professor at UMass Lowell seeks to change that.



[Click here to learn more about UMass Lowell professor Dr. Christine Su and her ideas and plans for events this Spring celebrating the history and the contributions of Southeast Asian Americans to our City](#)

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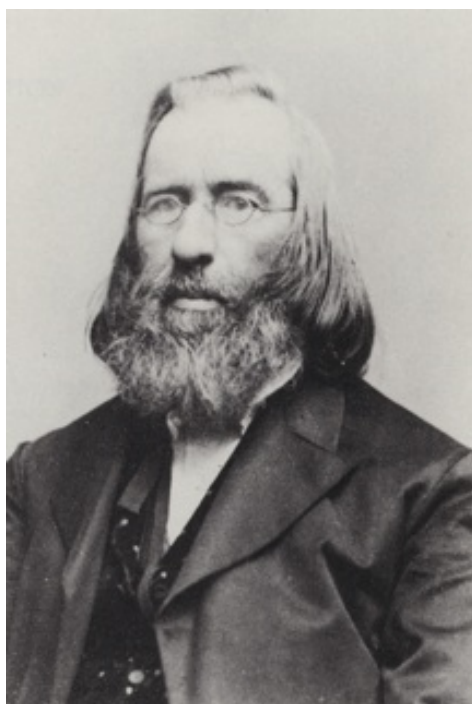
### **The Tragic Death of a Greek Mill Girl by Lew Karabatsos**

Heraklea Goverinos was lucky. When she arrived in Lowell, sometime in March, 1907, she had, at age 16, two brothers already here -- Haralambos and Constantinos -- working in the mills and living at 163 Suffolk Street. Their apartment had a balcony overlooking the Western Canal.



Photo credit: UMass Lowell/Center for Lowell History

[Click here to read the rest of the story of Heraklea Goverinos](#)



Samuel P. Howes (1808 - 1881)

### **Four portraits by Samuel P. Howes by Bridget Cooley**

The Lowell Historical Society recently received a bequest from the estate of Gordon Fine of 4 portraits done by Lowell artist, Samuel P. Howes.

[Click here to see the paintings and read more about Samuel P. Howes](#)

## Photo Gallery Winters in Lowell



Remember when we used to get a lot of snow in the Winter? [Kevin Harkins](#) has provided three photos of downtown Lowell in winters past blanketed with snow.

[Click here to see more photos of downtown in the Winter](#)

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### **The Bells of Lowell Part 2 of a series**

#### **The Hosford Bell**

By Lew Karabatsos

The Lowell Cemetery, in its more than 180 years, has many stories to tell. Here's but one — the bell over the Lawrence Street entry gate.

[Click here for stories and pictures of the Hosford Bell](#)

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### **FROM THE BOOKSHELF Review by Pauline M. Golec**

# PORTRAITS ALONG THE WAY

1976-2024



PAUL MARION

**PORTRAITS ALONG THE WAY: 1976-2024** by Paul Marion is a labor of love. The book's pieces, many of which appeared in other publications or as blog posts, attest to the author's love of people and their stories, places and their histories, and poets and their poetry. In many ways, the book serves as a memoir of growing up in the local area in the 1950s and 1960s.

The first to be framed in these verbal portraits are distant relatives. Two of Marion's aunts traced branches of the family tree to France in the 1600s and to family members first recorded in Quebec, Canada in the late 1600s. Among the more recent relatives, Wilfred Marion, the author's grandfather, was the colorful owner of Marion's Meat Market in Lowell's Little Canada in the early 1900s. More detailed portraits feature Marcel and Doris Marion, the author's parents.

Celebrities also are pictured in this volume. The article on Tony Conigliaro, whose handsome face is one of four on the book's cover, brought back pleasant memories of former robust Red Sox teams. However, I enjoyed reading even more about Marion's baseball games with the neighborhood kids or on school teams. Others highlighted in the book include those born in Lowell and those who performed here.

Joining Tony Conigliaro, poet Louise Gluck, and piano man Billy Joel on the book's cover is Leymah Gbowee. Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, she organized women to peacefully oppose a dictator during turbulent times in Liberia. She spent time in Lowell as the Greeley Scholar for Peace Studies at University of Massachusetts Lowell.

Articles on poets and poetry are generous offerings in this book. And there's more....a whole album of portraits of Merrimack Valley authors.

This volume ends with a celebration of Meetinghouse Hill Figures. From the personal and familiar to those whose names are in history books, this important and enjoyable piece reminds us that Paul Marion took to heart poet Gary Snyder's philosophy of community involvement.

[PORTRAITS ALONG THE WAY: 1976-2024](#) by Paul Marion may be purchased at [Lala Books](#) 189 Market Street, Lowell.

# **The first town officers - March 1826**

## **Part 2 - Field Drivers**

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.

Who were Lowell's first field drivers and what did they do for the town?

[Click here to read more about Lowell's first Field Drivers](#)

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## **The English Come to Lowell**

By Walter V. Hickey  
Part 2 of 2

When J.D. Prince left for America, Kirk Boott remained behind in England to complete his mission. The Merrimack Manufacturing Co. produced CALICO --A heavy, plain-woven cotton fabric often unbleached and unfinished. Among other uses, this was commonly used for dresses. It sold well, but could not compete with the printed, finished cloth imported from England.

Prince was to oversee the printing but there remained the issue of hiring the skilled operatives required. It would be a logical conclusion that the men selected were all vetted by Prince prior to their being hired. The next step was to bring craftsmen skilled in the printing process to Lowell.

This was accomplished on April 30, 1827 with the arrival in Boston of the ship Emerald from Liverpool after a voyage of 32 days.

[Click here to see more about the English coming to Lowell in 1827.](#)

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GAMES ON THE HOWARD STREET PLAYGROUND

## Where do the children play?

### The Progressive Era Playground Movement in Lowell

One of the many crusades of the Progressive Era (c. 1901 – c. 1929) was the “Playground Movement,” which advocated for safe play spaces for children in the increasingly crowded cities of the United States.

What effects did the “Playground Movement” have in Lowell?

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## Upcoming activities, events and news in Lowell

### Sign up for Belinda Juran’s monthly email newsletter

LHS member Belida Juran assembles an incredible comprehensive monthly email newsletter that lists upcoming activities, events and news in Lowell - historical, cultural, and everything else. Email her at [belinda@bjuran.com](mailto:belinda@bjuran.com) to subscribe.

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



## Save the date

“spectral-in-my-mind Bridge Street,”

Saturday, March 8 at 2 PM

Pollard Library

Brad MacGowan, LHS newsletter editor and board member of by Annie Powell, will collaborate with Lowell Celebrates Kerouac! on a **talk commemorating Kerouac’s 103rd birthday at Pollard Library on Saturday, March 8 at 2 PM.**

This is one of an occasional series focused on the overlap between Annie Powell’s photographs and Jack Kerouac’s writings during the years 1922 to 1936. Coincidentally, Annie and Jack are interred within a few feet of each other at Lowell’s Edson Cemetery.

The title of the presentation, “spectral-in-my-mind Bridge Street,” is a quote from Kerouac’s novel *Visions of Gerard*.



### Check out these blogs and many 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](#)

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



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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.

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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](#) are available online!

[www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org/newsletters/](http://www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org/newsletters/)

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

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