



Lowell

new rhythm of the river

Lowell National Historical Park celebrates the new rhythm felt along our rivers, the Merrimack and Concord, through the partnerships, collaborations, and engaging connections we're involved with throughout this city and region. 2006 brought the Rivers' powerful beat to the doorsteps of some. It was also a year when the community's blossoming stewardship approach continued to grow. Whether to assist with flood relief, developing youth as conservation leaders, recycling during a festival, or sprucing up the canal, the Park honors the contributions and these intermingled enhancements to the quality of life in this City!



sharing Lowell's story



River Transformed Exhibition Open

Understanding the Merrimack River is not uniquely Lowell-based of course. Conceptualizing the entire watershed is challenging with its 5,010 square miles and 203 communities encompassed in NH and MA. The industrial-era's impact on tapping the potential power of the Merrimack River is part of the world surrounding us today. A new exhibit "The River Transformed" offers a view of these complexities and an interactive experience connecting the past and current effects in which we each now have a role. From the experience of a rumbling 19th century turbine to the interactive "river studio", visitors will be engaged at water level.

Coming to Lowell...

The Park is undertaking an ethnographic study in collaboration with UMass Lowell and Middlesex Community College. This project will develop a framework for better understanding and interpreting the continuing waves of newcomers to Lowell – from the 19th century industrial-era through today's post-industrial age. The study will document the reasons for emigration and the experiences people had during their adjustment period in Lowell. A special focus on the historical settlement of two neighborhoods – South End (Back Central, Chapel Hill and the Flats) and Highlands (Lower Highlands and Middlesex Village) will provide insights as to the changing cultural landscape of the City.

Spreading the Word

Many people in the Commonwealth and in the Merrimack Valley are proud of Lowell's industrial legacy that contributed to this nation's growth and development. The park is continuously seeking new and creative ways to engage people in the Lowell story. Over 700,000 visitors come to Lowell for tours, special events,



Summer Training: Staff explore the "River Monitor" element of the new *The River Transformed* exhibition at Wannalancit Mills.

education activities and the museums. The park, in collaboration with the Merrimack Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau, is working on marketing strategies that highlight the many activities and venues in Lowell. Special features in the *Massachusetts Getaway Guide* and *Adventures Await Travel Guide for the Merrimack Valley* bring Lowell to a regional and national audience.

From the Park Collections...

The Park has a remarkable collection of buildings and is responsible for preserving an historic canal system, including 14 gatehouses; 1.5 miles of trolley track and 3 historic replica trolley cars; and over 77,000 objects in its collections. In 2006 the Park completed inventorying and database creation for the Proprietors of Locks and Canals architectural and engineering drawings collection. The outline of the finding aid for this important collection was drafted and will be available shortly.



Inventing America: Lowell and the Industrial Revolution

With a \$224,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Tsongas Industrial History Center reached a national audience, offering three week long summer workshops as part of the NEH Landmarks of American History and Culture program for educators from around the country. The workshops, titled *Inventing America: Lowell and the Industrial Revolution*, attracted hundreds of applicants. Forty four teachers from New England joined educators from all over the U.S., including Alaska, for a total enrollment that reached one hundred and thirty educators. The grant has been renewed for an expanded offering in the summer of 2007.



powerful cultural expressions

Lowell 20th Folk Festival in 2006

As the pride of many in the community, July 27–29, 2006 welcomed the 20th incarnation of this annual celebration of traditional music, food, and crafts to downtown Lowell. The 2006 Festival kicked off with fantastic music accompanied by a showy Friday night lightning display. The rest of the weekend brought broiling temperatures. That mattered little to the varied crowd of familiar faces as well as novices filling the venues spread throughout downtown. Whether they were here to kick up their heels on a dance floor or kick off their shoes to feel grass between their toes – they swayed to the music, marveled at the crafts, and consumed the fare of many nations. 2006 was highlighted by the community continuing to expand their role in the festivities. Visitors strode along with the enchanting puppet parades by the Revolving Museum, found local art in the courtyard where the Brush with History organized an exhibition and sale, or they had their questions answered by Lowell Ambassadors, a program of the Greater Merrimack Valley Convention and Visitor Bureau.



Lowell Summer Music Series

The stars were brighter than ever as summer evenings saw crowds gather at Boarding House Park from the Lowell Summer Concert Series. A record attendance of 31,000 people attended some twenty-three evening performances and ten children's shows. From Judy Collins to the Indigo Girls to Los Lobos, the Boarding House was once again the place to be on a summer night.

Public Art

For over two decades the park has maintained 11 pieces of public art which include statues, monuments, water fountains and numerous other special pieces. In collaboration with other key institutions in the city, the park is developing a long-term strategy for their conservation and preservation

Public art installations have been adding visual layers of interest to this industrial city over time. These permanent public art pieces, along with numerous temporary installations have given residents, workers, and visitors intriguing views to ponder, appreciate, and integrate as elements of Lowell's transformation.

Where Elephants Weep

The Cambodian American Opera Project partnership brought a cultural celebration to Lowell in April 2007. A collaboration with a nascent network of organizations brought the premier performances of this evolutionary opera to the Lowell stage. In blending the musical traditions of Cambodia and America, the audiences in Lowell have watched with delight and heard the ancient tempos while also absorbing the cadences of the future.

community stewards and collective effort



Great Canal Cleanup - 2006

Is the public willing to come out and assist with cleaning the canalways and riverwalks of Lowell? The reply YES resonates! On Sunday, October 29, a steady pulse of volunteers that totaled almost 200 arrived that morning for their canal cleanup assignments. Divvied into teams, they went forth with trash bags, clip-pers, and paint brushes into the windy day and didn't return until their work was complete. This turnout was despite the late date change made necessary by the rain sweeping through the whole northeast during the last week of October. While initially questions echoed about disrupted schedules and cancelled participation, happily, the end result showed the community's commitment without regard to rain or wind. Many thanks to those hearty volunteers and our co-sponsors in the clean-up including: The City of Lowell, Lowell Heritage Partnership, Lowell Canalwaters Cleaners, and Keep Lowell Beautiful.



With the excellent turnout from this cleanup, the Park looks forward to encouraging and supporting the continuing quest toward sustainable stewardship of the city's heritage and recreational resources. The existing efforts among community institutions and organizations are numerous and their shared accomplishments continue to merge closer to one collective vision and direction for action.



TOP: Transportation Interns Roberto Pagan and Ryan Shockley with Trolley Conductor Sharon Krawczyk.

CENTER: Spindle City Corps crew.

LEFT: The park also benefits from the contributions of student volunteers, such as Emily Levine, who stepped up to numerous roles as a park interpreter, donating over 400 hours, prior to returning to New York University.



Dynamic members of the Lowell Canalwaters Cleaners volunteer to clear debris from Lowell's canals systematically. This not-for-profit group's efforts were recognized in April 2006 by the National Park Service with the George B. Hartzog, Jr. National Volunteer Group Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service.

The Next Generation of Stewards

Students contribute heartily to the evolving attitude about the City's heritage and image. Funding made available through Youth Conservation Corps and Public Land Corps supports the Spindle City Corps (SCC) with Community Teamwork Inc. The Park-hosted SCC crews spent the summer months eliminating vegetation and clearing thoroughfares to decrease resource damage and increase public access to the Canalway. Their schedule includes a robust stewardship education component. **River Ambassadors (RA)**, through a partnership with UMass Lowell, have a focus on environmental justice. Four were hired as uniformed Park staff, assisting at events, and focused on the Southeast Asian Water Festival – kicking it off with the candle floating ceremony at Lower Locks. **College students** from Middlesex Community College and UMass Lowell continue their educational experiences through service-learning projects and work-study assignments that augment the Park's operations. **Student Conservation Association (SCA)** interns and assistance provide visitor services. The Ford Motor Company Transportation Interns are focused on the alternative transportation system available through the trolleys. In the SCA annual report, Roberto Pagan's account of growth through this summer experience was highlighted.



the greening of Lowell

Our National Park Service identity within a federal preservation and conservation agency is taken to heart. There's a green buzz around the Park that taps into the constant advances in environmentally sustainable practices. The Park is decreasing our "environmental footprint" by participating in varied approaches. Recent projects are increasing our success:

☘ **Photovoltaic (PV) project for Boott Mills:** progress on the installation of this solar-based power system includes the installation of the racks for the photovoltaic panels and the acquisition of some direct current lighting equipment which will be fed directly from the PV panels. Once the installation is complete it will provide lighting in the upper two floors of the Boott Mills particularly for the Tsongas Center Program areas and common areas.

☘ **Recycling at LFF:** The Folk Festival draws huge crowds that, as is to be expected, produce tremendous amounts of trash. For years now the Park has worked with partners to develop and sustain a Festival recycling program. Festival ethnic food vendors supply hungry consumers with compostable cornstarch utensils. In turn, the recycling team, over 100 volunteers, collects and sorts Festival debris for returnables, recyclables, and compostables. As an educational element for the program, compost made from the 2006 Festival's trash is distributed to curious Fest-goers to "put a little folk in their gardens."

☘ As a recipient of the 2006 **Unilever Recycling at Work Sustainable Grant** program, the Park received recycled plastic lumber that replaced walkway decking from Lower Locks up to Central Street. Among those involved with installation were UML Ski Team volunteers who pitched in with this and other projects throughout the year. In addition, the park is replacing wooden decks with recycled plastic lumber along the walkway by the Suffolk Mill.

☘ **Continued use of electric vehicles:** While you may have slowed for an odd-shaped golf-cart vehicle on Lowell's streets occasionally, take a closer look next time you encounter one. These electric vehicles are provided through a Ford Motor Company donation, support the Park's Maintenance and Law Enforcement work groups, and limit noxious emissions produced in park operations and increase efficiency.

☘ **The Mogan Cultural Center** is going green as a model to demonstrate to the public and other facilities at the Park how building operations including special events and exhibits can be handled in greener ways.



TOP: UML Ski Team volunteers removed the walkway decking. Donated recycled plastic lumber replaced it.

CENTER: Photovoltaic panels are installed on the Boott Mills roof.

BOTTOM: Volunteers sort recycling at the Lowell Folk Festival.



city's historic lure gains from preservation successes

Consider Middle Street today, or the Boott Mills Courtyard, or the Pawtucket Canal north of Central Street. Now, if you're not a "blow-in" of the last 10 years, recall those same locations 20 years ago. These are but three examples of preservation successes that have taken place through the shared vision and funding of both private and government realms. This successive forward motion continues to evolve and develop today.

An Altered View of Lowell: Along the River and Canals

Most are familiar with the Merrimack and Concord Rivers flowing through Lowell from common vantage points. Views of the Rivers are most often fleeting: crossing a bridge, a stretch along Pawtucket or East Merrimack Street, then it fades again. Their presence and the water they carry are the essence of Lowell's existence as a city. In the early 1800's, were it not for the 30+ foot drop to tap at Pawtucket Falls for waterpower, the Boston Associates would have continued on in their quest for an expanded site for industry. Many routes into town are dictated by the bridges spanning it. The Park is engaged with the City in expanding the opportunities for enjoying the city's extensive waterfront of canals and rivers. Congressman Marty Meehan's success in bringing federal transportation funding to the Riverwalk and Canalway have seen these projects continue. They offer pedestrian access providing unique perspectives – and the options are expanding with ongoing design and construction.

With the public ways, design concepts are drawn for the Riverwalk passing by the Cox Bridge at Bridge Street. Completed design for the Western Canal will begin to move to construction in 2007. Planning and design is underway for a connection from the Merrimack Riverwalk to the Concord River Greenway – linking the two energetic waterways. In 2006 a successful coming together of numerous partnerships achieved open space preservation and public access. This occurred with the connecting of the stretch of land from the Red Cross building on Pawtucket Street downhill to the Merrimack River near the Pawtucket Gatehouse. With this, the public's opportunities to enjoy views of the Pawtucket Falls and dam are greatly enhanced. The Park joins Congressman Meehan, Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust, the City of Lowell, Enterprise Bank, Lowell Development and Financial Corporation, and the Theodore Edson Parker Foundation, in celebrating this outcome with the community.



Lawrence Mills Park.

coming in 2007

The Paul E. Tsongas Center evolutionary next steps are introducing a new tempo in the realms of experiential education, research and public policy, and civic engagement for the partnership among the Park, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Middlesex Community College, the City, and the Lowell Plan. New collaborations and connections will be revealed in the coming year.

ARTventures! Keep a keen eye open for the soon to begin series of events that the Revolving Museum is organizing at key downtown locations. The series dates are scheduled from May 12 through September 29. See www.lowellartventures.org for all the details.

21st Lowell Folk Festival: Sure, it was successful for the first 3 years as the National Folk Festival in 1987-1989. In those early years partners from all corners of the community pitched in to craft a stellar event, with the national perspective in mind. Looking back, few knew what to expect when the last full weekend of July rolled around after the national festival moved elsewhere. In 2007, the Festival's partnership expands to include the Park, the City of Lowell, National Council for Traditional Arts, Lowell Festival Foundation, and the Greater Merrimack Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau. The festival will continue to feature a treasure chest of the world's music traditions.



Volunteers and Park staff clean up along the RiverWalk after the flood.



» Kerouac's "On the Road" scroll exhibit will rest in Lowell at the Boott Cotton Mills Museum Gallery from June 15 through September 16, 2007. This summer, the city will echo with the spirit of Kerouac as this literary artifact is analyzed and celebratory events reflect on a native son's remarkable existence and his writing. Whether it's a jazz concert during the Lowell Summer Music Series, bus tours of Jack's Lowell, or one of the speaker series – each will offer insight while commemorating his life.

Youth Conservation Summit: Lowell has offered youth employment related to conservation careers for many years, most recently through the Spindle City Corps. Lowell and the Park are pleased to host the 2007 youth conservation summit in August 2007, bringing together participants from local programs and representatives from related programs nationwide.

Teacher to Teacher Workshop: The US Department of Education has selected Lowell and the Tsongas Industrial History Center for one of the nationwide series of workshops

» Lowell Summer Music Series: Don't miss the lineup this summer, there are more stars under Boarding House Park night skies... and a taste of Kerouac's vision of jazz as well.

2007 MUSIC SERIES

JUNE

June 29 Joan Osborne
June 30 TBD

JULY

July 6 SRO – "Broadway Swings"
July 7 10,000 Maniacs and Milagro Saints
July 13 Carbon Leaf
July 14 Don McLean
July 19 Preservation Hall Jazz Band
July 20 Buddy Guy
July 21 Nickel Creek
July 27-29 Lowell Folk Festival

AUGUST

August 3 Dave Mason and Charlie Farren
August 4 Joe Derrane and Seamus Connolly
August 9 Dickey Betts and Great Southern
August 10 Great Big Sea
August 11 Shakespeare's *A Comedy of Errors*
August 16 Big Bad Voodoo Daddy
August 17 Indigo Girls and Melissa Ferrick
August 18 Medeski, Martin & Wood
August 23 Koko Taylor/Shemekia Copeland
August 24 Shawn Colvin and John Hiatt
August 25 David Clayton-Thomas
August 31 Béla Fleck & the Flecktones

SEPTEMBER

September 1 Natalie MacMaster
September 7 David Amram Quintet
September 8 28th Banjo and Fiddle Contests





99% SATISFACTION

In the 2006 annual survey, Lowell National Historical Park received a 99 percent rating for visitors' satisfaction overall with appropriate facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

hail and farewell!

We would like to bid a fond farewell to staff that have retired or continued on to new phases of their careers, including:

Anne Dunlavy, *Park Ranger*
Erica Foss, *Park Ranger*
Carolyn Goldstein, *Museum Curator*
Thomas Matthews, *Gardener*
Brendan Sullivan, *Maintenance Worker*
Richard Wood, *Carpenter*
Byron Zakos, *Mechanic Supervisor*

Salute to Congressman Meehan!

Lowell National Historical Park is losing an incredible national advocate in Washington but is gaining a visionary partner in Lowell. Congressman Marty Meehan has always been a supporter of the National Park Service and in particular, his hometown park.

Since 1993, the Congressman has represented the Lowell area and through his leadership the Park and City have benefited tremendously. The funding that has made Lowell's CanalWay and RiverWalk possible is among Meehan's Congressional legacies to the City. Additionally, his support was a key to the rehabilitation of the Rialto Building on Central Street which stands as a strong anchor to that district's ongoing revitalization. Always a fan of the Lowell Folk Festival, his service as honorary Festival Chairman also illustrates his contributions.

Thank You! to Congressman Meehan and **Welcome!** as Chancellor Meehan. The Park's relationship with the University to support programs such as the Tsongas Industrial History Center, the Folk Festival, Summer Concert Series, Mogan Cultural Center, and many more, has been, and will continue to be, a partnership that is integral to our mutual success.



"When I look back on my career in Congress, one of the most rewarding experiences that I will always remember was the opportunity I had to work closely with the Lowell National Historical Park and their efforts to preserve the culture and history of my hometown. It is because of their hard work and dedication that I will one day be able to teach my own two sons, as my father taught my siblings and me, the story of Lowell's rich history through the many museums, memorials, and events made possible by the Lowell National Historical Park. I look forward to continuing to work with the Park service to ensure that the history of Lowell will always be enjoyed by current and future generations."

– Congressman Marty Meehan