A significant portion of the built environment in Lawrence was designed by one architect, George G. Adams. Adams had an extraordinary career, from 1879 to 1926 creating many of the most enduring landmarks of Lawrence. These include the old Franklin Library on the corner of Haverhill and Hampshire, the Tower Hill Water Tower, the Rollins School, and the Masonic Temple are today dramatic examples of his structures. Of course, he also designed the renovations of City Hall in 1923, which radically altered its appearance inside and out. He designed a number of prominent buildings on Essex Street, including an enlargement of the Bay State Building. Among structures that no longer exist are the original Lawrence Canoe Club on the south side of the Merrimack River and the first Lawrence General Hospital building on Methuen Street. This was the period of Lawrence’s most rapid growth. His fame attracted the interest of mill agents and other prominent businessmen and professionals, so a number of the stunning houses on Tower and Prospect Hills were also products of his work.

Lawrence Presents…

It is no news to Lawrenceans that Lawrence was once home to artistic giants Robert Frost and Leonard Bernstein. However, as we found in preparing this past summer’s exhibit Lawrence Presents…the City has been a cauldron of cultural activity since its early days. This issue of Lawrence History News is devoted to offering a small sample of the figures, organizations and buildings that have promoted enjoyment and enlightenment during the past 150 years. If you didn’t have a chance to see the exhibit during the summer, most of it has been re-installed at the Lawrence History Center and will be there until the first of the year.
Lawrence Musicians

Davis Shuman was a Russian immigrant to Lawrence and graduated from its schools. He received a degree in engineering in 1935 from Northeastern University and then went on to study trombone at Juilliard School of Music. Soon afterward, he was hired by Fritz Reiner to perform in the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. David Taylor, an internationally acclaimed bass trombonist who studied under Shuman, says, “Davis Shuman was a hero to me. He was so excited about music… He received letters from all over the world from musicians and students telling how much they loved what he was doing for the trombone.” In later years, Shuman engaged his engineering education by inventing the angular trombone, which enabled the musician to operate the instrument to the side and face the sheet music directly.

There were numerous music schools in Lawrence. Phillipe and Laura LeVeille operated the Virtuoso School for Violin and Piano. Phillipe also composed music. They taught their daughter, Cecile, violin and piano. She began performing solo violin as a very young child at the Winter Garden (formerly the Opera House). Her interest in piano became paramount, however, and was the focus of her career. In 1946, her national importance was recognized when she performed a full solo concert at Carnegie Hall, including one of her own compositions.

A Note from Pat

LHC volunteers and underpaid staff are so essential to its operation that it is often a danger that they will be taken for granted. Please accept my heartfelt gratitude to all of you:

Helen Sappupo          Al Koch
Art and Arlene Dallon
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Tom Walsh             Mike Hecken
Bob Hamel             Amita Jani
Mele Dome             Nancy Leonardi
Jurg and Linda Siegenthaler
---------------------------------
Monika Kennedy        Barbara Brown
Armand Girouard       Jonathan Smith
Peg Hughes            Frank Hughes
Joan Kelley           Gene Winter
My Board Members
My extended family

Cultural Associations

As early as 1848, immediately after Lawrence was incorporated and while farm animals still roamed mud streets, the Lawrence Athenaeum and the Franklin Library Association were established. Although the Athenaeum disappeared after 1850, the Franklin Library Association, in great part due to the support of the White Fund, thrived, eventually becoming the City’s Public Library. The Library Association was soon joined by many other cultural societies and arts organizations. The Monday Night Club was organized in 1872, a literary club with a required membership of 25 men. The first members represented the most prominent residents of Lawrence, including Daniel Saunders, Jr., John R. Rollins, William A. Russell, among others. The Old Residents Association, founded in 1882, required that members had been residents for at least 25 years. Their programs included musical, humorist and dramatic presentations, as well as lectures on issues of the day.
Upcoming

In January, 2005, we are installing our exhibit Lawrence, Massachusetts: A First American Home at Lawrence Heritage State Park. This is the exhibit that was displayed for five months at Ellis Island at the invitation of the National Park Service.

From June through August of 2005, the Lawrence History Center will celebrate the history of Public Safety in Lawrence.

Annual Appeal 2004

The Lawrence History Center is launching its Annual Appeal this month. We cannot overstate how important the generous contributions of our members are to the current health and long-term sustainability of this organization and its mission to preserve Lawrence history. Please give what you can to this effort.

Holiday Shopping

Saturday, December 11 9—3

Join us for hot cider and cookies! Have a tour and find something different for holiday gift giving. We have Volume 2 of Lawrence, and Gilded Age, as well as Diners of the North Shore, many other selections for people interested in genealogy, posters, vintage photographs.
Lawrence History Center, as Immigrant City Archives, was created in 1978 by Eartha Dengler to preserve the history of Lawrence. Along with preserving the growing collection, we mount exhibits, develop educational programs and assist researchers. LCA’s site—the Essex Company complex in the North Canal Historic District—is on the National Register of Historic Places.