

A PEOPLE'S MAP OF LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS

THE MILL CITY

What is today Lowell had long been an area of Native settlement before English immigrants arrived in the mid-1600s. Formally established in 1826, Lowell soon became a leading industrial center, its prosperity tied to the slave economy via its cotton mills. Wealthy Bostonians provided the investment capital while workers, mostly Irish immigrants, constructed dams and canals to harness waterpower for the factories.

The mill workforce was mostly young and female. Paid relatively well initially, they soon rebelled against arduous working conditions. Fighting for their economic and political rights, many joined forces with Lowell's small, but influential Black population and abolitionist churches, and championed the anti-slavery cause.

In the late 1800s-early 1900s, immigrants from southern and eastern Europe and Francophone Canada joined the workforce or started small businesses. However, deindustrialization and capital flight eventually resulted in high unemployment and empty factories. In the 1970s and 1980s, city officials, educators, and community activists nurtured a vision for the city predicated on historic preservation, enhanced public schools, and dynamic cultural life. Newcomers from Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Southeast Asia—especially Cambodia—also arrived, energizing the city.

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1. Abolitionist Churches during the mid-1800s

They included St. Anne's Episcopal (8 Kirk Street); St. Paul's Methodist (35 Warren Street); and First United Baptist (99 Church Street).

2. African Community Center of Lowell

99 Church Street
Founded in 2016, the ACCI provides support for immigrant and refugee communities.

3. American House Hotel

136 Central Street
On this site stood a hotel that hosted a barbershop operated by prominent Black abolitionists Walker Lewis and John Levy in the 1830s and 1840s.

4. Blanche Ames House

333 Andover Street
Born in 1878, Ames was an artist, inventor, writer, and prominent supporter of women's suffrage and birth control.

5. Boott Cotton Mills

115 John Street
One of Lowell's earliest factories, it is today home to the Tsongas Industrial History Center and Lowell National Historical Park's Boott Cotton Mills Museum.

6. Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association

465 School Street
Established in 1984, it serves the U.S.'s second-largest Cambodian American community.

7. Cambodian Wood-fired Kiln

233-255 Aiken Street
The kiln was built in 2012, by one of the only three Cambodian master ceramicists who survived the Khmer Rouge genocide.

8. Center for Lowell History

40 French Street
Part of UMass Lowell, this Underground Railroad Network to Freedom research site holds materials on the region's immigrant, refugee, and working-class history. It also houses the archives of the Lowell Historical Society.

9. City Hall Plaza

375 Merrimack Street
Site of numerous immigrant and refugee monuments and memorials.

10. Clay Pit Cemetery

90 Old Ferry Road (behind complex)
Burial site of 25 area residents, including Africans and African Americans interred between 1715 and the 1860s.

11. Roberto Clemente Park and Healing Garden

732 Middlesex Street
The park was dedicated in 1973; a healing garden was added in 2014 to honor Cambodians who died or fled their homeland during the Khmer Rouge genocide.

12. Coalition for a Better Acre

517 Moody Street
A leading community development corporation, it was established in 1982 to oppose an urban renewal plan that would have devastated the Acre neighborhood.

13. Decatur Way

Opened in 2016, the alley, next to 221 Salem Street, combines public art, plantings, and innovative stormwater management and education.

14. Charles A. Gallagher Transit Terminal

101 Thorndike Street
Home to Lowell's MBTA Commuter Rail station and the LRTA's Kennedy Transfer Center (public buses). A ½ mile southwest stood the Hale/Howard District, a neighborhood razed in the 1970s in the name of urban renewal.

15. Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

62 Lewis Street
Completed in 1908, it is the country's first Byzantine-styled church.

16. Industrial Workers of the World Office

97 Central Street
The IWW, which led a successful mill strike in 1912, had its office in the building.

17. Jack Kerouac, Early Childhood Home

9 Lupine Road
Born in 1922, the famed novelist and poet lived at 118 University Ave. (formerly Moody St.) as a teen; he's buried at Edson Cemetery (1375 Gorham St.).

18. Ladd and Whitney Monument

Monument Square
Dedicated in June 1865, the monument honors two Lowell mill workers, among the first Union soldiers killed in the Civil War.

19. Lew Family Square

John and Paige Streets
The Lew family were Black antislavery and civil rights activists in the 19th century. The square sits on the former site of the family's dry-cleaning business.

24. Lowell National Historical Park Visitor Center

246 Market Street

25. Lowell Technological Institute

One University Avenue
Workplace of two professors fired due to McCarthyism in the late 1950s.

26. Florence Luscomb Birth Home

105 Branch Street
Targeted by the FBI and the Massachusetts Commission to Investigate Communism, Luscomb (1887-1985) was an important 20th century women's, civil, and labor rights activist.

27. Birdie Malbury Campaign Office

14-18 Concord Street
Community activist Birdie Bell Jones Malbury was the first Black woman to run for city council. In 1979, her campaign office was stoned and fire-bombed.

22. The Lowell Female Labor Reform Association

76 Central Street
Founded in 1845, the advocacy group for female workers fought for the ten-hour day. In 1846, it took charge of *The Voice of Industry*.

23. Lowell High School

50 Father Morrisette Boulevard
Opened in 1831, at Thorndike and Dutton Streets, it was the nation's first coeducational high school and the first to racially integrate.

20. Little Canada Monument

Northern Canal walkway, just east of Aiken Street
It commemorates a French-Canadian neighborhood razed in the 1960s as part of the city's urban renewal endeavor.

21. Lowell Community Health Center

161 Jackson Street
Lowell General Hospital started the center in 1970.



Community Garden Founded in 2011, Mill City Grows has urban farms and community gardens throughout Lowell.



Downtown Lowell, confluence of Lower Pawtucket Canal and the Concord River



Middlesex Standard and The Voice of Industry

In the 1840s, the *Middlesex Standard*, an antislavery newspaper, and *The Voice of Industry*, a worker-run newspaper with a strong feminist bent, briefly had offices in a Central Street building that sat on the Pawtucket Canal bridge.

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Merrimack Valley Central Labor Council

HISTORY DEPARTMENT
UMASS LOWELL

33. Old City Hall

222 Merrimack Street
The building was the original home of the city's library. From the mid-1830s through the Civil War, the upper floor hosted anti-slavery society fundraisers and meetings.

34. Samuel S. Pollard Memorial Library

401 Merrimack Street
Originally called Memorial Hall and dedicated to men of Lowell who died in the Civil War, the building hosted the city's library in its basement when it opened in 1893. The renamed building is now used entirely for the library.

35. St. Patrick Church

284 Suffolk Street
Lowell's first Catholic parish, it was founded in 1831 by Irish immigrants.

36. Socialist Hall

22 Middle Street
Federal agents and local police raided the building (torn down circa 1980) as part of the anti-left Palmer Raids in January 1920, arresting 30 people.

37. Southwick Hall, University of Massachusetts Lowell Council

One University Avenue
Constructed in 1902, it is named after a Quaker abolitionist who, ironically, profited from selling cloth to enslavers. The building sits atop a Native American burial site.

38. UTEC

35 Warren Street
Founded in 1999, UTEC works to decrease youth violence, gang activity, and incarceration, and to provide enhanced economic opportunities for young people in the Merrimack Valley.

39. Wamesit

Confluence of the Merrimack and Concord Rivers
Wamesit was a "praying village" of nominally Christianized Indians during the 1600s. Native people had long gathered at the confluence to take advantage of the spring fish runs, to engage in trade, and to hold gatherings.

28. Meetinghouse Hill

Summer and Favor Streets
Site of a chapel erected in 1653 where John Eliot preached to the Wamesit and Pennacook Indians, converting many and establishing a village of Christian Indians called Wamesit.

29. Merrimack Valley Central Labor Council

169 Merrimack Street

30. Middlesex Community College

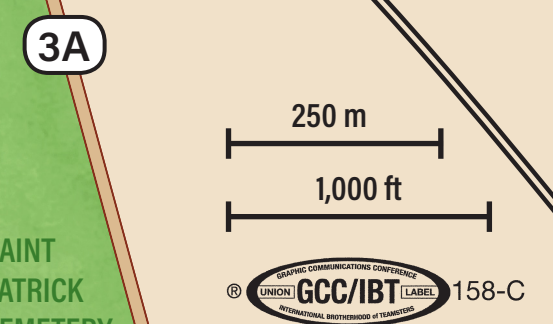
33 Kearney Square

31. Middlesex Mechanic Association Building

167 Dutton Street

32. North Common Village

21 Salem Street
In the heart of what was the city's Greek neighborhood, it is one of the country's first public housing projects; construction began in 1937.



This map, completed in May 2025, grows out of *A People's Guide to Greater Boston* (University of California Press, 2020) by Joseph Nevins, Suren Moodliar, and Eleni Macrakis.



Shoe Worker Strike In April-May 1933, about 3,000 Lowell shoe workers went on strike. The bridge (on Bridge Street) and the surrounding area became the site of many confrontations between workers, strikebreakers, and the police.