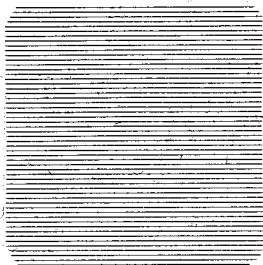


# Press Kit

# Lowell Heritage State Park



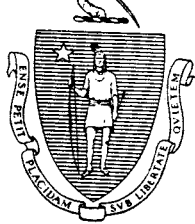
**Massachusetts  
Department of  
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Management**

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*Department of Environmental Management  
Loewell Sallanstill Building, Government Center  
100 Cambridge Street, Boston 02202*

R. BETTE WOODY  
COMMISSIONER

I M M E D I A T E   R E L E A S E

Lieutenant Governor Thomas P. O'Neill and Commissioner of Environmental Management Bette Woody announced at a Lowell Press conference today final plans for development of Lowell Heritage State Park, and concluded an important "Memorandum of Understanding" with the City to initiate this summer's first phase of park development.

A "Lowell Bicentennial Summer" program to take place between June and September is expected to attract an estimated 100,000 visitors to the park and other sites to view the rich cultural and historical resources of this unique city.

According to Dr. Woody, three major activities are anticipated for the summer: development on the Francis Gate and Pawtucket Boulevard sites of the park, including trails and picnicking areas on the banks of the Merrimack River and canals; construction of a performance center on Pawtucket Blvd.; and interpretive signs and tours of the locks, gates and canals.

The Pawtucket Boulevard Park site, consisting of 1.4 miles of frontage on the Merrimack River and 18.3 acres of shore park area, will be open in the summer as a linear park and summer concert site, for which a bandstand is now being constructed. Dr. Woody said that arrangements are now being made for joint sponsorship of a concert series on the banks of the Merrimack River on Pawtucket Blvd., and that various ethnic and historical music themes are being explored. The remainder of the site will be developed with trails, picnicking areas and boat launching facilities.

The Francis Gate Park includes a 12.2 acre site adjacent to 2000' of the Pawtucket Canal. Some gatehouse restoration, security measures, and lighting improvements are planned.

(more)

A summer interpretive program of tours of the gatehouse, locks and flood protection structures by local guides is planned. In addition, 1600 feet of pedestrian trails will be developed with associated picnicking areas.

Interpretive signs of the park will be placed in various locations around the city and on the park sites themselves, explaining the industrial history of Lowell, maps of the rivers and canal systems and their role in the cloth production industry, and explanations of the locks system.

The development of the two park sites is the first phase of a larger system incorporating locks, gates and canals of the historically planned waterway system. The entire canal system, planned and built during the last century, is 5 miles long and contains a flood control and hydropower system largely operational today.

The basic aim of the Summer '76 program in Lowell is to initiate the park, at least in preliminary stages, until additional land can be acquired and associated restoration takes place. According to Dr. Woody, "There is so much enthusiasm in Lowell for the park, that we feel strongly that we should capture this momentum early. Site acquisitions can be quite lengthy. Thus, while we are in the process, we are planning as many activities as we can."

According to state and local officials, the memorandum of understanding constitutes a 'first' in state-local cooperation as well as an important precedent in the conservation of historical resources. The memorandum consists of a series of agreements concerning future city and state actions, providing the basis of a close working relationship between the two levels of government with respect to all planning, development and operations both within and adjacent to the Heritage Park.

(more)

One unique feature of the memorandum is the establishment of a Heritage State Park Impact Area in Lowell. Under the provisions of the agreement, the DEM will have the opportunity to comment on proposed development on all lands adjacent to the Park.

Other points covered in the memorandum of understanding include public project coordination with joint review of both state and local projects and formation of a Lowell Heritage State Park Steering Committee and a Historical Interpretive Committee. The public project review is intended to identify and examine all public projects which have an impact on the park. This is intended, according to state and city spokesmen, to make certain that design of projects conform aesthetically and structurally with the park purpose and to fully explore possibilities for multiple use development.

The Steering Committee, appointed jointly by the city and state, will assist in review coordination of the park development with city actions. The Interpretive committee will focus on the development of cultural and historical themes in the park, as well as coordination with private efforts in the area.

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## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This MEMORANDUM is assented to by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, acting through its Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Management, (hereinafter referred to as the "Department") and the City of Lowell, acting through its City Manager (hereinafter referred to as the "City") and is intended as a mutual statement of position relative to the proposed development of the Lowell Heritage State Park (hereinafter referred to as the "Park").

Be it affirmed and understood by the parties hereto:

- (1) That the focus of the proposed Park shall be the preservation of the cultural heritage of Lowell and the surrounding area.
- (2) That paramount in all planning objectives shall be the development of the resources that comprise the area's heritage as well as the increase in public appreciation of its cultural assets.
- (3) That recognizing the complexity of the proposed development, the City shall acquaint the Department with all funding related to the project including, but not limited to federal, state and city appropriations together with each agency or political subdivision thereof which shall be responsible for the administration of such funding.
- (4) That recognizing the need for a coordinated effort to maximize the efficiency of administration, the City shall disclose to the Department the purpose for which all such appropriations are to be used in the proposed development.

- (5) That prior to the expenditure of any funds by the Department, the City shall inform the Commissioner or her designee of any other commitments, such as refundings, discussions or proposals by any federal, state or city agency or any private interests relative to the use of lands within the boundaries of the proposed Park of adjacent properties.
- (6) That to these ends, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is prepared to appropriate monies and commit its human resources for the development of the Lowell Heritage State Park.
- (7) That as a result of this proposed development, it shall be necessary for the Commonwealth, acting through its Department of Environmental Management, to acquire certain privately owned lands which are located within the boundaries of the proposed Park.
- (8) That primary effort shall be made by the Department to negotiate purchases of the aforementioned lands based on their fair market value as shall be established by independent appraisals.
- (9) That recognizing the possibility that all the privately owned lands within the boundaries of the proposed Park may not be able to be acquired through negotiated purchase, the Department would consider the exercise of its statutory power of eminent domain.
- (10) That any such specific taking by eminent domain would be considered only when efforts for a negotiated purchase have failed despite due diligence by the Department to reach a settlement; or when title to the land in question is of such unmarketability that remedial title action would be impractical.

- (11) That the City Manager and City Council of Lowell will support the land acquisition program of the Department for the purposes of the development of the proposed Lowell Heritage State Park. And that the Lowell City Council will authorize the Department, through resolution, to exercise its powers of eminent domain, if necessary, within the acquisition plan of the Department.
- (12) That such support would be viewed to include, but not be limited to, such approvals of specific takings by eminent domain as the Department may request pursuant to Section 3A of Chapter 132A of the General Laws, as amended, and Chapter 631 of the Acts of 1956.
- (13) That as a result of this proposed development, it shall be necessary for the Commonwealth, acting through its Department of Environmental Management, to acquire certain municipally owned lands which are located within the boundaries of the proposed Park.
- (14) That the City shall examine the nature of these municipal holdings and shall, if necessary, and through coordinated effort with the Department, initiate on a timely basis and at its own expense such legislation as may be required to effectuate the Department's acquisition of these lands.
- (15) That there shall be established a Lowell Heritage Park Impact Area; which area shall be tentatively based on the boundaries set forth in August, 1974 plan and shall include all lands within one city block or one hundred yards (whichever is greater) of the boundaries of said Park as well as lands within one city block or one hundred yards (whichever is greater) of the banks of the Lowell Canal System, the Merrimack River in Lowell, and the Concord River in Lowell in all places where the Park itself does not abut these water courses.

- (16) That the Department shall have the opportunity to review all development proposals, public or private, within the Impact Area to determine their potential effect on the Park.
- (17) That all such development proposals, including the regional sewer system currently under consideration, shall be submitted to the Department so as to allow sufficient time for review and for recommendations to be made to the City prior to its approval or disapproval of said proposals.
- (18) That a Lowell Heritage State Park Steering Committee shall be established within thirty (30) days of the signing of this Memorandum. Said Committee shall consist of three members appointed by the Commissioner of Environmental Management to represent the Division of Forests and Parks, the Division of Land Acquisition and Construction and the Office of Planning, together with four members appointed by the City Manager.
- (19) That a mechanism for coordinating Department review of and City action on all development proposals within the aforementioned Impact Area shall be proposed to the Steering Committee by the City within forty five (45) days of the signing of this Memorandum.
- (20) That a Lowell Heritage State Park Historical Interpretive Committee shall be established. Said Committee shall consist of three members appointed by the Commissioner of Environmental Management to represent the interpretive services, planning and construction elements of the Department, together with four members to be appointed by the City Manager.



(21) That the City regards as recreation lands, all properties standing in its name which may be transferred to the Department in conjunction with the establishment of the Lowell Heritage State Park.

Assented to and subscribed to this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1976.

For the Commonwealth of Massachusetts:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Bette Woody  
Commissioner of Environmental Management

For the City of Lowell:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager for the City of Lowell

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor of Lowell

*Brian J. Delaney*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

*Donald E. Scott*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

*Armand W. Lemay*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

*Samuel Hall*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

Approved as to matter of form:

*Paul J. Spencer*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Solicitor

*Robert M. ...*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant Attorney General

\_\_\_\_\_  
*M. Brendan Fleming*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Michael P. ...*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

\_\_\_\_\_  
*George V. ...*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

## LOWELL HERITAGE STATE PARK: THE CONCEPT

The Lowell Heritage State Park will be dedicated to two equally important purposes:

(1) The preservation of the cultural heritage of Lowell and the surrounding region -- a heritage which has its roots in the past but which is continually growing and diversifying.

(2) The development of the resources that comprise the area's heritage to increase public appreciation and enjoyment of these cultural assets.

Furthermore, the Heritage Park concept is based on the premise that water resources, specifically the Lowell canal system and the Merrimack and Concord Rivers, have been through history the backbone of the region's culture, enabling it to grow from an Indian encampment to a major industrial center. As such, and as one of the principal sources of recreational and open space opportunity in the area, these resources merit primary attention and should be developed complimentary to the region's heritage.

The objectives of the Heritage Park are therefore as follows:

To develop interpretive sites, facilities and services at appropriate locations in the Heritage Park which will enable the public to better understand the region's culture.

To insure that water related open space, now an important asset of the region, is both protected and improved.

To provide land-based public recreational opportunity along the river banks and canal banks - in a manner sensitive to the traditional character of those resources and to provide water-based public recreational opportunity on their watercourses.

To restore, maintain and utilize sites and buildings of historical and architectural interest that are related to the canal system and the river.

To restore and maintain the system of locks and canals so that they may once again be used for boat traffic.

With these objectives as its focus, the Heritage Park would accomplish the dual purposes to which it is dedicated.

## Benefits to be Derived from the Heritage Park

The returns to be derived from the state's investment in the Heritage Park are varied and substantial, conferring benefits on the Commonwealth and the nation, as well as Lowell and its surrounding region. In particular, this park development would result in:

Preservation of historic and cultural resources which are of recognized state and national significance.

Provision of recreational opportunities for the residents of the Commonwealth and for tourists from other parts of the nation.

Restoration of technological resources spanning 182 years and facilitation of their use for educational purposes.

Protection of a valuable and scenic resource of the Commonwealth: the banks of the Merrimack and Concord Rivers.

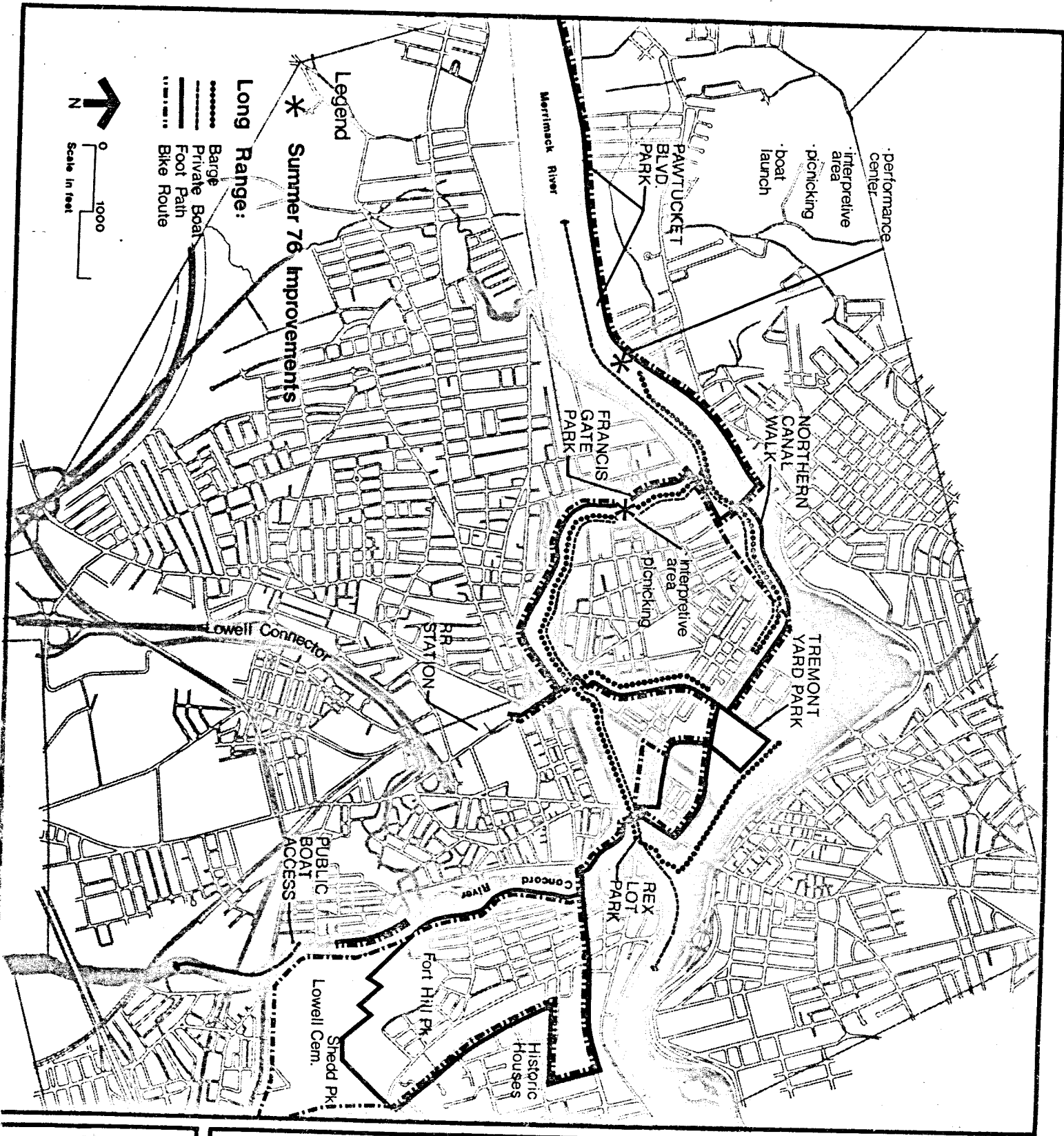
In addition, there are numerous benefits to be derived from the Heritage Park which, while important to the larger populace, would have their most immediate impact on Lowell's citizens. These include:

Expansion and diversification of the Lowell region's economy through (1) the primary and secondary economic impact of tourism and direct state investment, and (2) the creation of a climate of confidence about the city's business future.

An opportunity for Lowell's citizens to integrate recreation into the daily pattern of their lives, thereby responding to the call of both the 1971 and 1976 Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans and the Department of the Interior's 1973 Nation-wide Recreation Plan for more attention to urban recreation needs.

The beautification of Lowell's industrial/commercial cityscape through imaginative utilization of its unique natural and manmade resources.

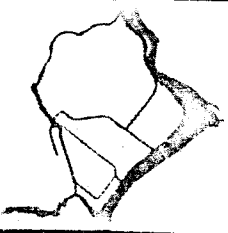
The working agreement between the Commonwealth and City of Lowell will achieve a renaissance of this outstanding example of America's industrial past, and the utopian dream of its founders for a humanized cityscape realized.



Lowell Heritage State Park

# park conceptual plan

## city wide



## A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

Interest in a revitalization process to restore a proud heritage and redefine the image of Lowell first appeared in the 1960's. It was then that the people of Lowell gradually began to see with new appreciation the technological, architectural, and cultural resources which are woven into the fabric of their city, but which in many instances have been either neglected or misused.

In 1970, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior Walter Hickel first responded to this vision with the recommendation of a Lowell Urban Cultural Park, a new kind of park which would both conserve an important segment of America's history and help to make Lowell a showcase of this country's industrial history.

Subsequent to Secretary Hickel's leaving the Department of Interior, the Lowell City Development Authority, the Northern Middlesex Area Commission, and the Human Services Corporation and Lowell citizens prepared a tangible outline for an urban cultural park which was submitted to the Commonwealth in October, 1973, in a document entitled Urban Cultural Park Component. The proposal called for the development of a multi-faceted cultural park in Lowell which would be undertaken as one part of the overall Lowell Development program.

In consequence, the Department of Natural Resources, as it was known then, assessed the City's proposal and included the important elements in a document entitled Lowell Heritage State Park, submitted to the Governor in 1974. The document called for the creation of a state park in the City of Lowell by the Department of Natural Resources.

Thus, in 1975, Dr. Bette Woody, Commissioner of the newly created Department of Environmental Management, successor agency to the DNR, reviewed the Lowell Heritage State Park proposal in the context of the Commonwealth's outdoor recreation and open space needs, and committed up to \$4 million of existing acquisition and development funds to the Park. The expenditure of these funds by the Department of Environmental Management is being used towards the development of an early presence of the state park in the city.

The first steps towards resolution of the formidable acquisition problems associated with the park have already begun, with legal examination of titles of all properties within the five proposed park nodes and all properties owned by the Proprietors of Locks and Canals. This time-consuming first step is an essential one, since the state cannot acquire land without having first established a clear title.

As title examinations are completed, the DEM will develop a clearer picture of the specific lands which must be acquired or otherwise protected for Lowell Heritage State Park. After appraisals and negotiations with landowners the DEM will finalize their interests in specific acquisition, easements, etc. By this time the DEM and the Proprietors of Locks and Canals will also have worked out the complex, long-term agreements necessary for the operation and maintenance of the Canal System. Consummation of these agreements and the acquisition of essential lands will enable the department to proceed with the extensive development called for in the Lowell Heritage State Park proposal.

The resolution of acquisition issues is a complex, expensive, and time-consuming process which produces few "visible" results on the ground.

Recognizing the importance of such results to the City of Lowell, Commissioner Woody and her staff have worked out an accelerated development schedule for two nodes within the park; Francis Gate, and Pawtucket Boulevard, initiating a "Lowell Bicentennial Summer" program to take place between June and September.

## FRANCIS GATE

James B. Francis was chief engineer and later agent, of the Locks and Canals Company for almost fifty years. His knowledge of water dynamics and advances in hydraulic technology helped make this first American manufacturing city a success. His engineering feats included schemes to increase and distribute water power to the mills (including the planning and construction of the Northern Canal), and development of the Francis turbine.

His great foresight was responsible for saving Lowell from disastrous flooding, once in 1852 and again in 1936. Predicting the old guard gates to be inadequate, in 1950 he built the Great Gate, as he called it then, measuring 27 feet wide and 25 feet high. The need for the new gate was considered remote by all and useless by many.

Francis Gate hung by a rope over the lock, as it does today, which was cut by an axe, dropping it into place when the floodwaters swept by the gates at a height of 11'10". The rising water, cresting at 14'1" on April 23, 1852, was held back by Francis Gate, averting great destruction and probable loss of life.

Francis conducted many experiments during his lifetime, and his renowned work and publications did much to influence the growth of the engineering profession in America, and to establish the American engineering reputation internationally. .

Presently under ownership of both the Proprietors of the Locks and Canals and the City of Lowell, open space and recreational functions are planned for this 12.2 acre wooded bank. Future facilities to be constructed at this site include picnic areas, bicycle and foot trails, boat dockage, and a tourist barge landing.

The most interesting feature of this site is the Guard Locks complex itself, gateway to a day of rich industrial activity in the City a century ago.

From the Guard Lock House the water in the locks was controlled to allow passage of boats through the Pawtucket Canal.

The brick built Francis Gate house controlled water flowing past at that point to regulate power delivered to the mills.

## PAWTUCKET BOULEVARD PARK

Presently under City ownership, this 1.4 mile (approximately) stretch of the Merrimack River Bank and 18.3 acres of shore park area will open this summer as a linear park and summer concert site.

Future development plans call for both open space and recreational purposes. In addition to landscaping the area, bicycle and foot trails, boat launching areas, barge tour landing, and picnicking facilities will be developed. Bordering an outstanding section of the Merrimack, this park offers a fine vantage point for viewing river boating activities.

## LOWELL'S HISTORY: THE "VENICE OF AMERICA"

On Lowell's site at the confluence of the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, there was for several hundred years an encampment of Pawtucket Indians. In 1629 the area hosted a new group; recent immigrants from Europe who settled in what was to become Lowell, farming and fishing the area and gradually establishing lumber and grist mills along its riverbanks.

The beginning of Lowell as it is known today may be identified as 1793, when a corporation entitled Proprietors of the Locks and Canals on the Merrimack River was chartered, and construction of the Pawtucket Canal, one of the earliest of its kind in the United States, was begun. This transportation canal, completed in 1796, was built to bypass the rapids and rocks of Pawtucket Falls. Shortly thereafter, the much longer Middlesex Canal was constructed, connecting the Merrimack River to Boston Harbor. These canals were used for transportation, but in the 1820's a group of visionary entrepreneurs saw that a canal system in Lowell might be put to another use, that of providing water power for a major industrial complex.

Thus began Lowell's elaborate system of watercourses and mills and thus began the creation of the United States' first planned industrial city, which came to be known as the "Venice of America." Central to the founding concept of Lowell was the ideal of a humanized cityscape, one which tempered the goal of economic efficiency with attention to the workers' needs for a measure of environmental amenities and open space. They were remarkably successful for a time in achieving this ideal, particularly in comparison with other New England mill communities. The workers in Lowell's mills came in successive stages during the nineteenth century from Ireland, Canada, Greece, Poland, and Portugal. Each of these groups helped establish the neighborhoods of Lowell, where the cultural traditions of many homelands were carefully preserved in the quest for America's promise.

Although the economies of the twentieth century have diminished the power of Lowell's mill systems, the rich and varied human fabric of the city is still remarkably intact. The Lowell Heritage State Park will pay tribute to Lowell's people by preserving and explaining the physical environment which they helped create. As such, the park will represent a tribute to generations of immigrant Americans who made ours a major industrial nation.



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