

American Architecture
ARHI-3140
Fall 2016
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Map Reading Assignment

For this assignment you must examine the 1896 and 1924 atlases of Lowell. You can either examine a hard copy at O'Leary Library, or you can search a digital version on line. Note: the on-line version may not give you the overall sense of space that the hard copy will. The atlases are located at:

For the on-line version, take the following steps:

Go to: <http://library.uml.edu/clh/index.Html>

Click on the icon for Lowell maps

Click on the link for the atlases of 1896 and 1924 (please note there are separate links for MAPS and ATLASES; you want the ATLAS!)

Once in, you will see icons for a base map, a street index, and individual plates from the atlas.

Purpose of this assignment:

With this assignment you will become familiar with maps and atlases as research tools. They are not "texts" in the traditional sense, but they nonetheless can be read and important information on the social and cultural history of Lowell can be obtained.

Most atlases begin with a Street Index, followed by an Index Map, followed by the individual plates of various sections of town.

The Street Index will alphabetically list the names of all the streets included in the atlas, followed by the specific plate number where that street can be found.

The Index Map is a map of the entire area represented in the atlas.

The plates that follow are small-scale studies of individual streets, neighborhoods, or sections of town. Most will include a "Legend" in the lower right or left corner. A legend is a box that contains the symbols used in the map that will allow you to "read" more information.

NOTE: the 1896 atlas is referred to as Atlas 1; the 1924 atlas is referred to as Atlas 2

Questions:

Atlas 1 (1896)

1. Using the Street Index, on which plate will you find Coburn Hall (your classroom building)? Go to that plate:

- Are any other UML campus buildings present?
- What was on the site of the current Faculty/staff parking lot?

2. Using the Index Map, what is the symbol for a steam railway?

--Where did the Boston & Maine line drop off its passengers in Lowell? (Provide street names or the name of the station.)

--What do the red numbers on the map refer to?

--What do the orange lines refer to? What is the difference between the orange and the red lines?

--The map provides a scale; using that, how many feet long would you estimate the Hamilton canal is?

3. The individual plates: go to Plate 8.

--How do you know which direction is North, South, East, West?

--What lies directly south of the Pond Street School?

--Using the legend, what percentage of the buildings in this section of town would you estimate are wood? Are brick? Are stone?

--What material is the Pond Street School made from?

--About how many fire hydrants are there for each block? Does that seem sufficient for the percentage of wooden structures?

--Did this section of town have running water?

--How far would a resident of Harrison Street have to walk to get the streetcar into town?

--What are the names of some of the businesses or industries in this section?

--What is the fan-shaped building near the bottom right hand corner?

4. Given your answers above, would you say this was a poor section of town, middle class, or wealthy? Was it primarily residential or industrial or commercial? Defend your answer.

--Now look closely at the section between the base of Stackpole Street, E. Merrimack Street, and Brown Street. Who owned most of the structures here? Can you guess what type of structures they might be? Are they residential, industrial, or commercial?

GO TO ATLAS 2, 1924

--Find this same section of town in this atlas: the triangle of land formed by Stackpole, E. Merrimack, and Brown. What plate are they on?

--What has happened to the buildings delineated on the 1896 atlas? What can this tell us? Please write a paragraph in which you draw together all of the information the atlas pages provide so that you can construct a "history" or narrative of this site around Stackpole Street.