

# Lawrence History News

Volume 4, Issue 1

Winter, Spring 2004

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Massachusetts Cultural Council

## *John V. Kelleher: Irish Scholar, Lawrence Native*

Harvard's Professor of Irish Studies *Emeritus* and foremost American authority on Irish history and literature, John V. Kelleher, died on January 1 in St. Louis. Kelleher was born at 7 Birch Street in Lawrence on March 8, 1916. He absorbed all things Irish from childhood on, learning to speak Irish when very young from his grandmother, who, like all his grandparents, had come to Lawrence from Ireland in the mid-1800s. He continued Irish lessons with his grandfather's cousin, Fr. Daniel J. O'Mahony, O.S.A., later the oldest living Augustinian priest.

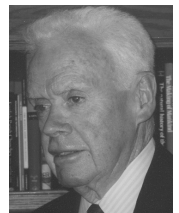
In 1920, his father, a contractor, built two duplexes on Tower Hill, where they and relatives on both the Kelleher and McGowan sides of the family came to live. In 1922, the senior

John Kelleher built the family's house on Ferry Street.

Like his father, Kelleher won the Perkins Prize while at Lawrence High School. Graduating from high school during the Depression, he saved money for college by working with his father and uncles (McGowan and Kelleher, Carpenters and Roofers) for two years, and serving in the National Guard. At Dartmouth, he read "every book of Irish interest in Baker library," and as a Senior Fellow had a year of independent study to pursue his "great plan for learning everything about Ireland." He received his A.B. with honors in English in 1939.

Kelleher entered Harvard in 1940 as a Junior Fellow in the Society of Fellows and soon after delivered the Lowell Lectures, on modern Irish Literature, at age 26. Harvard's Presi-

dent Lowell was most proud of the Society of Fellows: the twenty-four "most brilliant young men that can be found, with the guidance



John Kelleher in 1999

and companionship of professors who have achieved eminence." True to Lowell's vision, Kelleher is regarded as the founder of his field, Irish Studies.

After serving in World War II in military intelligence at the Pentagon, he visited Ireland for the first time in 1946, sending home long illustrated letters almost daily as he cycled his way around the country.

In 1947 he began his long teaching career in (continued, p.2)

### **LHC Mission**

The Lawrence History Center is dedicated to:

- 1) Collection, preservation, arrangement, description and exhibition of documents, photographs and other artifacts that constitute the historical record of Lawrence, Massachusetts;
- 2) Preservation of the historic site of the company that

built Lawrence;

- 3) Facilitating access to the materials and site for education and research;
- 4) Use of this cultural asset to contribute to the economic and social enhancement of Lawrence.

### **In Memoriam**

The Lawrence History Center offers condolences to the family of long time volunteer and Lawrence scholar James Sullivan. We very much appreciate the family's naming the Lawrence History Center as the recipient of memorial gifts.

# History of Arts and Culture in Lawrence

Our new exhibit for 2004 will be on the history of arts and culture in Lawrence. The Lawrence community has, since its beginning, been a lively center of cultural activity. It has produced artists and nurtured lectures, concerts, dance and theater, and impressive architecture. In addition to Robert Frost and Leonard Bernstein, there is a broad range of well-known artists and scholars. Among them are John Kelleher, featured in this issue. Noted musicians include Elaine Comparone, famed harpsichordist, and Richard Ippolito, jazz artist. Actors Robert Goulet and Thelma Todd are recognized by most Lawrencians, but the Garrett Family Players were also prominent. George C. Adams was an architect responsible for the old Library building and the Ma-

sonic Temple. George Leck and James McEvoy were photographers who preserved late 19th and early 20th century Lawrence. Of course, the tradition of cultural achievement has been carried through today. A young artist gaining acclaim is fashion designer Jeury Rosario.

As the City moves forward in the many efforts to rehabilitate and redevelop neighborhoods and historic structures, it is important to recognize the community as a cultural center, both past and present. This quality has been recognized in the creation of the Lawrence Cultural Alliance, members of which are collaborating with the Lawrence History Center in the development of the exhibit.

We are delighted that that the Mas-

sachusetts Cultural Council has recognized the work of the Lawrence History Center on this project with a Gold Star Award, one of only 16 in the State. The award is granted to projects that integrate arts and culture in the community. The exhibit will be displayed at Lawrence Heritage State Park in July and August. We are asking anyone who may have artifacts associated with arts and culture in Lawrence to consider either donating or lending them for that period. Items could include documents (programs, posters), objects such as musical instruments, tools for painting and drawing, or costumes, as well as works of art. Just give us a call at (978) 686-9230.

## John Kelleher, continued from page 1

Irish History and Literature at Harvard. In 1960, he became Professor of Modern Irish History and Literature. He was a member of the departments of English and History and also taught Extension School courses every year for nearly three decades: Yeats and Joyce, modern Irish literature, and both modern and medieval Irish history. In the course of his career he was awarded an honorary M.A. by Harvard (1953), and honorary Litt.D.s by Trinity College, Dublin (1965) and the National University of Ireland, Cork

(1999).

Kelleher retired in 1986 as *emeritus* Professor of Irish Studies in the Department of Celtic Languages and Literatures. In 1991, he and his wife, the late Helen C. Kelleher (whom he had known since first grade at the Riverside School on Tower Hill), moved to St. Louis, near three of his four daughters, continuing to encourage academic departments that were developing Irish Studies programs.

Visiting Harvard in November, Kelleher was told that the Celtic

Department had begun raising funds for an annual lecture in his name to honor his outstanding contributions to Irish studies.



## First Essex Bank Collection

Our most recent major acquisition is a collection of the historic documents associated with the First Essex Bank. The FirstEssex Bank was recently taken over by Sovereign Bank, ending an important Lawrence institution. It began as the Essex Savings Bank in 184 , the

second bank established in Lawrence and the one created to accommodate mill operatives, mechanics and small business people who wished to begin savings accounts. The first bank, the Bay State Merchants Bank, after which the Bay State Building is named, was devel-

oped to serve the mills and agents.

As is often the case, the collection contains a large number of photographs that we cannot identify. If you think you might be able to recognize people in the images, please get in touch with us.



## Upcoming Events

April 17 (Saturday): Spring Sale at Lawrence History Center, 6 Essex Street; 9—3.

April 30 (Friday): Genealogy Lock-in at Lawrence Public Library; Dinner and Speaker; \$5. Call (978) 682-1727.

May 6 (Thursday): Eartha Dengler History Award Dinner and raffle at Wood Mill; \$50 per ticket; Call (978)686-9230

June 5 (Saturday): Regatta at Beshara Boathouse; 8:30—2:30. Also, exhibit on the history of boating in Lawrence.

June 5 (Saturday): Day long activities in Historic District. Admission Free.

June 5 (Saturday): Essex Art Center's New Paint Auction and Dinner with music at Jackson Lumber—5:30; call (978) 685-2343.

June 11(Friday): Riverside Rhapsody: Family Service Annual dinner and auction celebrating its 150th Anniversary. 6—10 PM \$75. Call (978)683-9505, ext. 39.

June 12 (Saturday): 11—3 Pemberton Park. Family Service sponsoring Family Fiesta, kite making, face painting, pony rides and more. Admission free.

## Ellis Island Exhibit Returns

After five months of being displayed at Ellis Island, our exhibit on Lawrence—Lawrence, Massachusetts: A First American Home— has returned. The exhibit focused the attention of hundreds of thousands of visitors on the rich history of this city.

We are planning an event to celebrate its return and to enable those unable to go to Ellis Island to view it locally. We will also display photographs of the exhibit at Ellis Island

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## Spring Sale

Celebrate Spring by coming to the Lawrence History Center on April 17! We'll have refreshments and a sale of up to 50% on almost all items in our Museum Store.

## ESSEX HERITAGE EXPLORERS PROGRAM ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO VISIT AREA RESOURCES

Essex Heritage Explorers is a new program offered by the Essex National Heritage Commission (ENHC) designed to help residents enjoy the numerous historic, cultural and natural sites found within the Essex National Heritage Area. Central to the program is the quarterly Explorers Guide, a thematic newsletter chock-full of information on events and places to explore throughout the region. Past themes have included bird watching and winter activities in the Area, and the spring theme is gar-

dens. Subscribers are invited to attend special happenings at sites, offering access not generally available to the public. For example, in October, Explorers ventured into the fields at Alfalfa Farms in Topsfield to learn about the grape harvest and winemaking, while a private tour of the House of Seven Gables and discussion on 17<sup>th</sup> century colonial American architecture occurred in January. All special events are free to Explorers subscribers.

Explorer subscriptions are \$35 annually for individuals, \$55 for families. Students and seniors are eligible for a discounted rate of \$25 annually. Corporate memberships are also available. So grab your binoculars, put on your walking shoes and become an Explorer. You'll soon learn there's more to explore.

For more information about the Explorers Program, visit [www.essexheritage.org](http://www.essexheritage.org) or call the ENHC at 978-740-0444.

### Membership Enrollment/Renewal

|                                                                              | Price    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior / Student                                    | \$10.00  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual                                          | \$25.00  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family                                              | \$35.00  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor                                         | \$50.00  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor                                             | \$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron                                              | \$150.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter                                           | \$500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Add Genealogy Group membership \$5 ind., \$7.50 fam | _____    |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                 | _____    |

**Method of Payment**

|                                           |                   |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check            | Name              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visa             | Number and Street |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard       | City, State, Zip  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Express | Phone             |

Credit Card #

Exp. date

Signature

**LAWRENCE HISTORY CENTER:  
IMMIGRANT CITY ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM**

6 Essex Street,  
Lawrence, MA 01840

Phone: 978-686-9230  
Fax: 978-975-2154  
Email:  
[lawrencehistorycenter@conversent.net](mailto:lawrencehistorycenter@conversent.net)



**In order to safely preserve the historical documents of Lawrence, we depend on the memberships of those who care about the rich heritage of this city. Benefits include research privileges, newsletters,**

**Please consider an additional contribution.**

# Ellis Island Oral History Project

The Ellis Island Immigration Museum has an on-going oral history project. Since 1973, interviews have been conducted with people who passed through Ellis Island from the year of its opening as an immigrant reception center in 1892 through 1954 when it was closed. During those years three-fourths of the immigrants who came to this country came through Ellis Island. Forty per cent of American citizens can trace at least one ancestor as coming through Ellis Island.

The Ellis Island Oral History Collection contains over 1800 interviews with people recounting their immigration experience. If you or someone you know passed through Ellis Island, however briefly, and are able to talk about memories of life in the old country or life in an immigrant family in this country or the journey to America or impressions of this country, the Ellis Island Oral History Project is interested in you. If several people would be willing to participate, staff from Ellis Island will be able to come up here to interview. Call

LHC at (978) 686-9230 for more information, or email at lawrencehistorycenter@conversent.net.

**And Don't Forget! Lawrence History Center is always interested in interviewing people for our own Oral History Collection!**

## 5th Eartha Dengler History Award Dinner

**Join us for an exciting evening: Dinner, Cash Bar, Raffle.**

**Tickets: \$50**

**Sponsorships: \$1,000, \$750, \$500**

**Program Book ads:**

**Full page \$300,**

**1/2 page \$150,**

**1/4 page \$100,**

**1/8 page (business card) \$50.**

### Order Form Title

Tickets \$50 each Quantity?   
 Sponsorship amount: \$1000 \$750 \$500 *Circle one*

Ad: \$300 \$150 \$100 \$50 *Circle one*

Order total: \_\_\_\_\_

### Method of Payment

Check Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Visa Number and Street \_\_\_\_\_  
 MasterCard City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 American Express Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### LAWRENCE HISTORY CENTER: IMMIGRANT CITY ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM

6 Essex Street,  
Lawrence, MA 01840

Phone: 978-686-9230  
 Fax: 978-975-2154  
 Email:  
 lawrencehistorycenter@converse  
 nt.net



**LAWRENCE HISTORY CENTER**

*Immigrant City Archives and Museum*

6 Essex Street,  
Lawrence, MA 01840

Phone: 978-686-9230  
Fax: 978-975-2154  
Email: [lawrencehistorycenter@conversent.net](mailto:lawrencehistorycenter@conversent.net)

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Lawrence

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. LHC's site—the Essex Company complex in the North Canal Historic District—is on the National Register of Historic Places.

*We're on the Web!*  
[Lawrencehistorycenter.org](http://Lawrencehistorycenter.org)

## ***Eartha Dengler History Award Dinner!***

**The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Eartha Dengler History Award Dinner will be held on May 6. The recipient this year is Tom Caffrey, a community leader who has, over many years, made historic preservation a primary goal. Prominent evidence of his work is the restoration of the Ayer Mill Clock Tower, which has arguably done more than any other project to date to promote and demonstrate Lawrence's progress in efforts to effect revitalization.**

**The location of the event is also exciting. Bob Ansin, the new owner of the Wood Mill, has graciously offered to host the Dinner at this site. Guests will have an opportunity to visit the exhibit gallery and to hear about some of his plans for the future.**

**To make reservations, place an ad in the program book or become an event sponsor, call (978) 686-9230 or see page 5.**