

LPS Connector

December 2021

Message From Dr. Boyd



Dear Lowell Public Schools Families,

It is the most wonderful time of the year. I hope all of our families who celebrate Hanukkah had a joyous celebration earlier this month and that all of you - whether you're preparing for Christmas, Kwanzaa, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, Three Kings Day or just some much-needed time off - have warm and fun days filled with food, family, and friends.

And while everyone at Lowell Public Schools is eagerly anticipating the holiday break, we're also looking forward to welcoming everyone back to school on Monday, January 3.

As you know, we continue to work through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and all of the challenges it has created. We are grateful for the patience and understanding you have shown throughout this unusual time. You'll note in this newsletter that the Lowell Health Department will be holding a vaccination clinic at the former Elks Club on Old Ferry Rd. for children 5-11 years old on December 30. This site, as well as many local pharmacies, are offering first and second doses, as well as booster shots. The vaccinations are free and quick, so please consider being vaccinated as a way to stop the spread and severity of COVID-19 in our community.

In addition to addressing health and safety concerns relating to COVID-19, we know that safety and behavioral issues have also been on many of your minds as we transitioned back into in-person learning. We are actively working to address these concerns, and in the new year, will be scheduling a series of school safety forums to

give parents and guardians a chance to meet with administrators, find out what we are doing to keep your children and our staff safe, and ask any questions or voice any concerns you may have. You can expect to hear more from us with specific dates and times in the new year. We are looking forward to working together with you to make Lowell Public Schools safe and welcoming to all.

There have been a lot of fun and exciting things happening in our schools, a sample of which you will see in this newsletter. At the Robinson School, for instance, Mr. Buckley is wrapping up his first semester teaching a new robotics curriculum that has been engaging his students in a way he has never seen before; the immigrant students in Ms. Lander's class at Lowell High have produced an award-winning cookbook chock full of delicious recipes from their homelands; and at the Dr. Janice Adie Day School, the staff did an incredible job preparing students for holiday photos and visits with Santa, a tradition that has been ongoing for five years and that the children have become excited to take part in.

Have a wonderful break. See you in January!

Joel D. Boyd
Superintendent of Schools

District Highlights



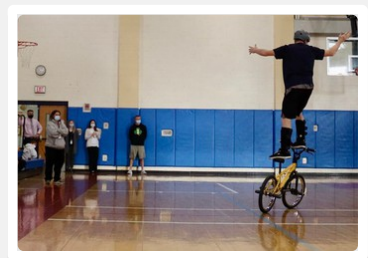
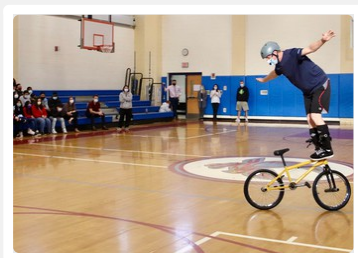
BMX Stunt Champion Chris Poulos Visits the Stoklosa Middle School



Chris Poulos, who has competed in 413 bicycle stunt competitions and won 85 (including the 1991 Bicycle Stunt World Championship in Denmark), visited the Stoklosa Middle School on December 14. In addition to showing off his rad stunt skills, Chris spoke to the students about several subjects that tie into the school's core values of Success, Tolerance, Ownership, and Kindness.

By using anecdotes from his own life and experiences, Chris emphasized the importance of treating people with kindness and respect, making and keeping friends, owning up and apologizing for your mistakes, working hard and practicing to become better at whatever you love to do, and being kind to others especially when they are having a hard time or need a little extra encouragement.

"What matters is how you interact with people," he said. "I make a lot of friends because I am nice to people and I am polite. Be someone nice who helps other people."



BMX Stunt Champion/Youth Motivational Speaker Chris Poulos visits the Stoklosa Middle School



'Tis The Season at the Murkland



The Murkland School hosted their annual magical Winter Gingerbread Family Fun Night on December 1. The evening featured games, arts & crafts, stories, Bingo for Books, and of course . . . cookies!



Here Comes Santa Claus, Here Comes Santa Claus



Five years ago, LPS opened the Dr. Janice Adie Day School, a five-day-a-week program for preschool through grade 12 students with Autism. The school provides a structured learning environment with more individualized programming than can be offered in an inclusion setting; and the students have thrived.

Earlier this month, the students whose families were interested practiced having holiday photos taken and interacting with Santa Claus.

"The holiday season can be a lot of fun for families and students but also stressful," said Program Coordinator Christine Adams. "Typical events associated with the holidays can be overwhelming for our students."

She explained that when they first started doing this five years ago, the process was much more complicated. The backdrop would be set up two weeks in advance so the students could get used to the backdrop set up. Then there would be a practice photo session with Santa so the students could get used to seeing Santa or the seasons backdrop and become familiar with the expectations for lining up, waiting their turn, and sitting and posing for the picture. A week later, they would do the official

photo shoot once the students were more familiar with the process and expectations. This year there was no need for a practice run. The students did it all in one take!

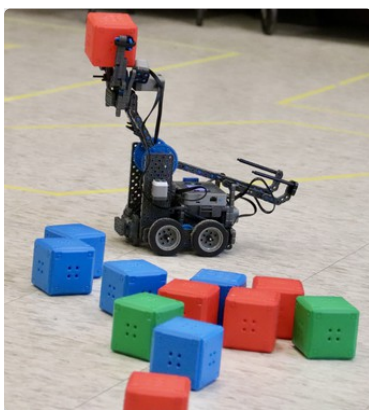
"The students were amazing," said Adams. "As a result of repeated exposure over the last few years, reviewing visuals, and providing the event in a safe environment, we were able to get some great pictures the families will treasure."

The photo session was held outside so the students could remove their masks.

"This is one of many holiday events we work on throughout the school year," Adams said. "The hope is for our students to generalize the skills learned to the same events in the community setting once they understand the expectations and have been desensitized to the process."



Robinson Robotics



It is 7:35 a.m. – while other students at the Robinson Middle School are practicing vocabulary or measuring the angles of an isosceles triangle, the eighth-graders in teacher Mark Buckley's Technology class are preparing to release the robots!

These kids are practically robotics experts at this point. On this chilly December morning they take their Clawbots out of the closet and prepare to take on their classmates' machines to see who can maneuver their creations with the dexterity and speed to pick up the most blocks in the shortest amount of time.

Earlier in the semester, they built Autobots – robots that they then programmed to maneuver along a track marked off in tape on the classroom floor. It wasn't easy. After figuring out how to properly

build the machines from the kits they were given, the students then had to measure the distances and turn angles on the track and enter all of the correct commands into a computer to be downloaded into the robots. Then came the test – let the robot hit the track and see what happened. Did it miss a turn? Stop short? Back to the computer to tweak the programming.

Once that lesson was completed, those robots were dismantled and turned into Clawbots – robots with mechanical arms able to pick up and lift items - and reprogrammed.

“It is something different than working on computers all day,” said eighth- grader Ruben Correia, who is highly skilled in using the remote-control joystick to make the robot pick up and move blocks with precision and speed. “I really like it. Building the robots was easy, but programming was the challenge.”

During the competition eighth-grader Jaime Surillo used his robot like a snowplow, pushing several blocks at once to their destination and wiping out the other competitors. Some cried foul, but Jaime pointed out that Mr. Buckley had not laid down any ground rules. He was correct. In the next round, Mr. Buckley was more careful to set the rules.

“We learn to think out of the box, which is what I did there,” smiled Surillo.

He added that the robotics class has not only been fun, but the students have built stronger friendships by working together to solve problems. Additionally, he said, the students who are less social or outgoing have engaged more than they usually do and have come out of their shells.

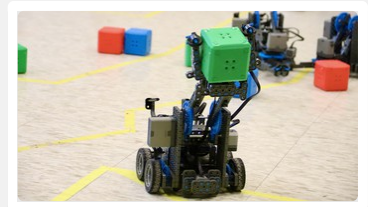
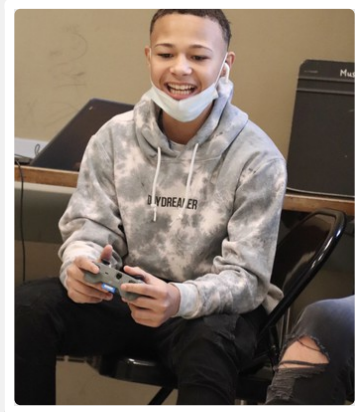
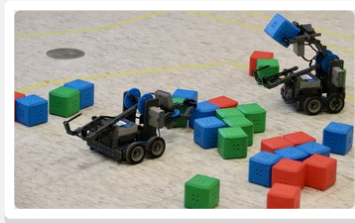
This is the first year the school has offered robotics, a program Buckley has wanted to do for some time, but there was never any funding to make it happen. This year, the school received a grant to cover the cost of the program and Principal Bridget Dowling gave Buckley the greenlight.

This semester he has seen students who previously did not participate in class come to life. Some of the best robotics students were previously the most underperforming students; they just needed a hands-on project to engage them in learning.

Buckley said he had one student who never took interest in class before ask if she could come down to his class on her free time to work on her robot. She is now one of his best students.

“In some of them it has boosted their confidence and awakened their competitive spirit,” he said. “We hear them talking about it in the halls and outside of school. They all want to be the best.”

Buckley said he wants the students to leave his class having learned “problem solving skills and perseverance. If something doesn’t work out, figure out how to change it instead of giving up.”



Raising Funds . . . and Readers



It was a great afternoon of storytelling and shopping for new books at lala downtown on Dec. 5 at the fundraiser for the STEM Academy.

Throughout the day, a variety of STEM superstar readers including principal Dr. Passeri, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Boyd, former STEM principal Jason McCrevan, and some of the STEM Sharks' favorite teachers came out to read stories and talk about books with students.

Ten percent of the store's sales went to the STEM PTO. The book store is owned by former STEM Academy teacher Laura Lamarre Anderson (better known as Ms. L.A.). Since opening its doors last year, la la books has made giving back to the community a big piece of their business plan.



Partnerships are Key

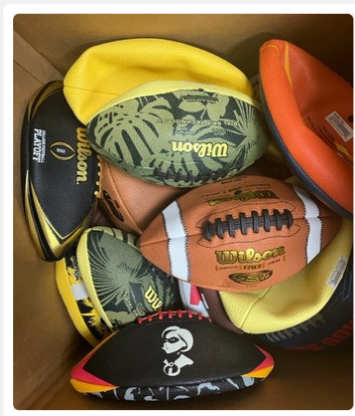


Lowell Public Schools is extremely grateful for our community partners that do so much for our families at the holidays and throughout the year.

The Lowell Police Department stepped up big this year, collecting dozens and dozens of new toys to help Santa out as he delivers cheer throughout the city this week. Additionally, our friends at [Good Sports](#) came through with more than 15 boxes of brand new athletic wear for our students, as well as sports equipment to help keep everyone busy and fit.

While the holidays are a joyous time for many families across the city, for others it can be a very difficult time. We have many students who have lost parents and other loved ones in recent weeks, parents and guardians who have lost jobs, and others who are working their way through trauma. The support they receive from our community partners, as well as from the staff in our school buildings, makes all the difference in the world. It truly takes a village.

Thank you to all of our partners, we truly could not do it without you!




Let's Eat!





Harvest of the Month - Carrot Hummus





CARROT HUMMUS

December Recipe | 10 2-oz servings | Feature: Joe Czajkowski Farm

INGREDIENTS	INSTRUCTIONS
<p>CARROT PUREE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 cups chopped, local carrots <p>HOMEMADE SCRATCH HUMMUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 can (15oz) chickpeas (reserve the water from the can) • 2 tablespoons olive oil • 3 tablespoons tahini* • 1 garlic clove, crushed • 2 teaspoons lemon juice • 1 teaspoon ground cumin • Salt and pepper to taste <p><small>*Tahini: carob seed paste, a common allergen</small></p> 	<p>CARROT PUREE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Steam or boil the carrots until soft. You could roast them at 400F for 20-25 minutes as well. Allow carrots to cool. 2. Blend for a few minutes until thick and saucy. <p>CARROT HUMMUS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose your favorite hummus brand & flavor -- at LPS Food and Nutrition, we use Cedar's Red Pepper Hummus. Blend hummus and carrot pure until thick and creamy. Enjoy! 2. Want to make hummus from scratch? Drain a can of chickpeas over a bowl to collect the chickpea water. 3. In a blender, add the cooked carrots and chickpeas, plus 2 TBSP of the chickpea water and all other remaining ingredients. 4. Blend for a few minutes until thick and creamy. Use as a dip for your favorite chips or wraps. 

The December Harvest of the Month special was carrot hummus, which was served on a chicken shawarma wrap. The carrots were from Joe Czajkowski Farm in Hadley, Ma.

Try the recipe yourself over vacation for a healthy snack or to add to your favorite sandwich or wrap.

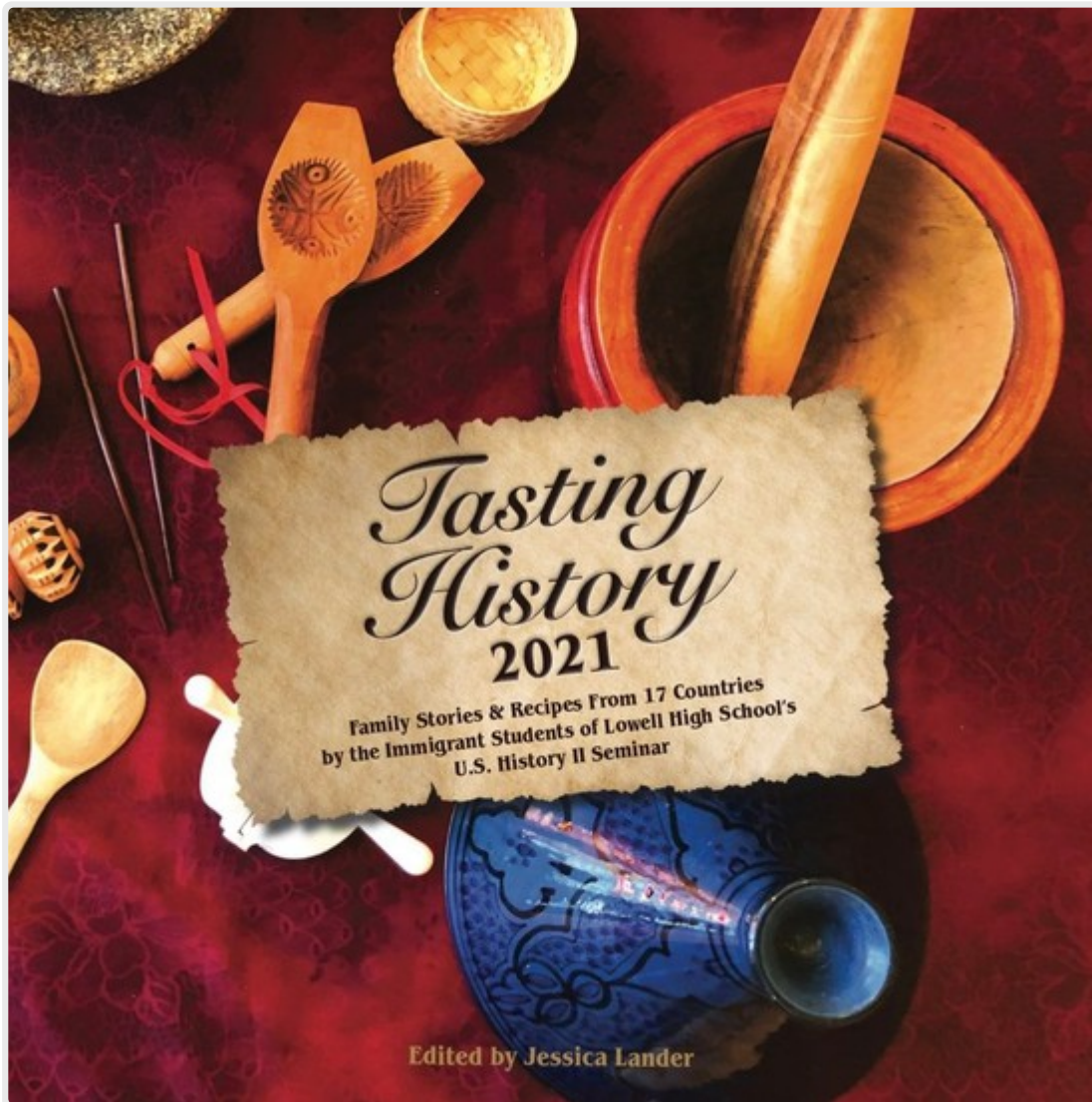


Before you come back to a school in January, check out the school breakfast and lunch menus here: [School Food](#)

What's New?



Tasting History - A Lowell High School Cookbook



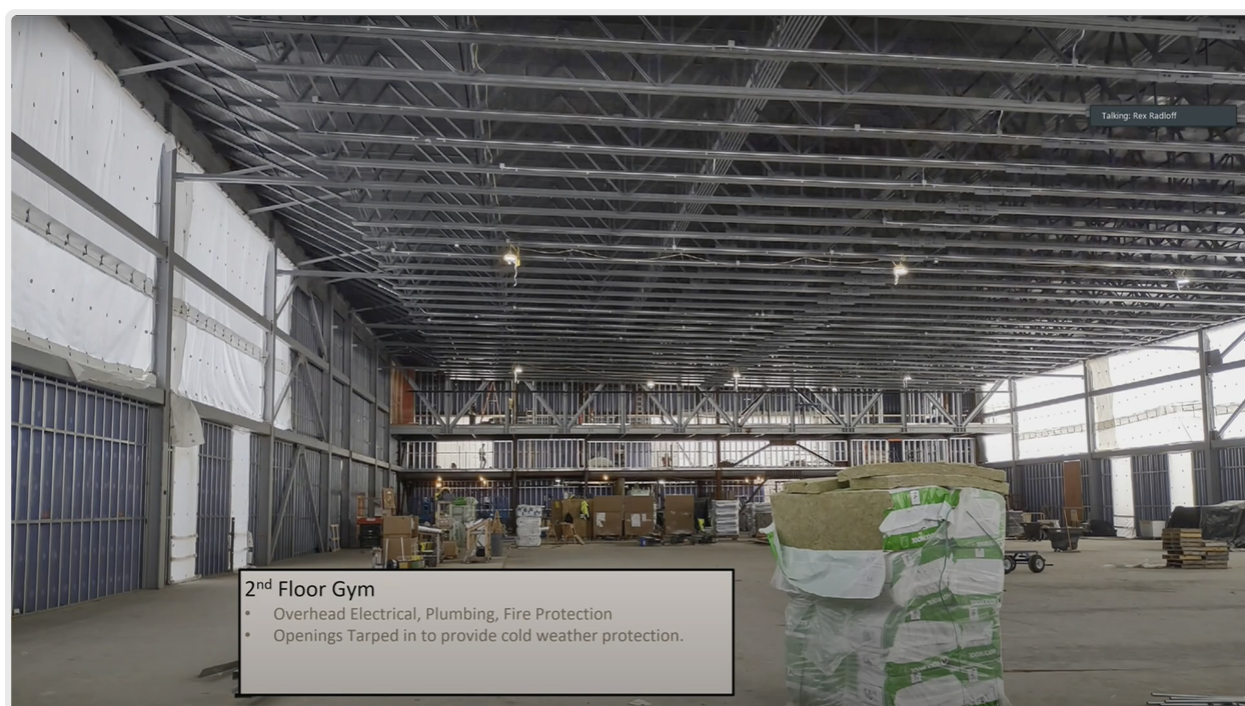
The immigrant students in Ms. Lander's U.S. History II class at Lowell High School published a cookbook that includes both their families' stories and more than 60 recipes from 17 countries.

The book was recently awarded the Founders Award by Readable Feast. Readable Feast is a New England organization celebrating regional cookbooks. The honor is given to a book, person, or organization that the founders of Readable Feast believe embodies and represents the spirit of the Readable Feast Awards and the goal the founders had in originally creating the awards program. This is the inaugural year for this award.

The book - which makes an excellent gift - can be purchased at the 1826 Store at Lowell High the link to which can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3sn78eO>

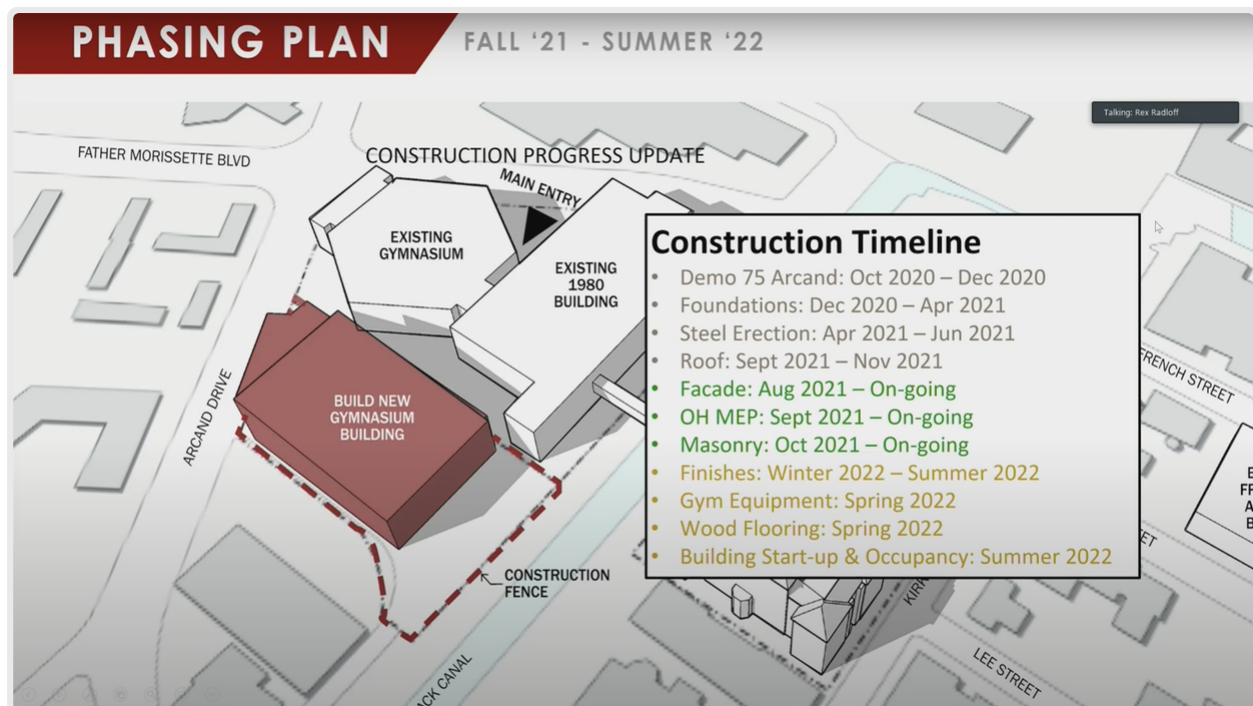


LHS Construction Update



The School Building Committee met on Dec. 9 to get an update on the progress being made on the construction of Lowell High School. Video of the meeting, which includes a virtual tour of the new construction, can be seen below:

School Building Committee - December 9, 2021



Student Police Academy



Student Police Academy



Join officers from the Lowell Police Department to learn about:

First Aid and CPR

Bullying

Internet Safety

Responsibility and Leadership and more!



Register Here

Or use this QR code to register!



Friday Afternoons
January 14, 21, 28th
February 4, 11, 17th (Thurs)
March 4, 11th
3-5pm

Open to students from the Sullivan and Butler Middle Schools
Grades 5-8

Program to be held at Sullivan and Butler Middle Schools

Students must wear sneakers as we will be participating in drills and physical activities.



The Student Police Academy at the Stokosa and Robinson Middle Schools just wrapped up - now it is time for the Sullivan and Butler Schools. The program is for students in grades 5-8 and is held after school once a week for 8 weeks. Register here: <https://bit.ly/3yJBk4G>

A Look Back in Time





By Rebecca A. Duda, Ed.D, Family Resource Center Coordinator

There are innumerable untold stories of ordinary men who volunteered to serve during the Civil War. One such story is that of Orrin Park from Pawtucketville.

In 1860, Orrin began courting one of his neighbors, Jennie Thomas and they married the next year on December 25, 1861. The Civil War had started earlier that year at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina.

Orrin and Jennie were married at the First Congregational Church in Lowell by Pastor J.L. Jenkins. Unfortunately, Orrin and Jennie's marriage was cut tragically short when Jennie died just a few months later in May 1862. Jennie was only 20-years-old and her husband was now a widower at 21. She was buried in Claypit Cemetery in Pawtucketville. (At the time Pawtucketville was part of Dracut. It was annexed to Lowell in 1874.)

Having just lost his wife three months earlier, Orrin enlisted to join the Union army on August 25, 1862. He enlisted in the 6th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment. His enlistment was to last nine months. In total, President Abraham Lincoln had called for 300,000 men to enlist for nine months and Massachusetts was asked to fill a quota of 19,080 to help meet this goal. If Massachusetts could not find 19,080 volunteers, then it would be necessary to employ a statewide draft.

However, the quota was filled and the 6th Infantry Regiment formed at Camp Henry Wilson in Lowell. Most of the regiment's companies, which included Park's Company A, were mustered in on August 31st. As part of the 6th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Park left Lowell and went first to Washington, D.C. and then to Fort Monroe in Virginia.

Fort Monroe was strategically important throughout the Civil War and was never held by Confederate forces. In fact, the previous year General Benjamin F. Butler of Lowell had been placed in command of Fort Monroe and declared any slave that reached Union lines would not be returned as requested by Southerners. This action by Butler became known as the Fort Monroe Doctrine and approved by President Lincoln.

The 6th Massachusetts was then sent to Suffolk, Virginia. This regiment would eventually engage in battle with Confederate General Longstreet at Suffolk but Orrin Park would not live to see this engagement.

He died on November 15, 1862 from typhoid fever contracted while at Suffolk. His body was brought back to Pawtucketville and he was laid to rest with his late wife, Jennie at Claypit Cemetery. He was only 21-years-old. The Park homestead still stands on Varnum Avenue.

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