



LOWER MERRIMACK, THE VALLEY & ITS PEOPLES

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

ABOUT THE BOOK

In this deeply considered and lyrically written volume, esteemed educator Paul Hudon unfolds the story of a fascinating area. *Lower Merrimack: The Valley and Its People* is a dramatic and innovative history of the Merrimack Valley within Massachusetts. The story begins with its original inhabitants and traces the evolution of such modern-day communities as Newburyport, Haverhill, Amesbury, Andover, Lowell, and Lawrence.

The Lower Merrimack River flows to the sea across two Massachusetts counties, encompassing four cities and eight towns, but hundreds of years ago only the tribes of the Pennacook lived in the Valley, which they called *Merroh Awke*—the “Strong Place.” The reign of the Pennacooks ended with the settlement of the area by English Puritans. They fished the river as the Indians had, but used it primarily as a highway of commerce, making its mouth a place for exchange and shipbuilding.

The Puritans and their descendants brought a new meaning to the name “the Strong Place” by harnessing the river to power the great textile mills which transformed the Valley in the 19th century. Later, when businesses began to weaken, the residents recovered with perseverance and skill, encouraging diversified industries.

Paul Hudon’s compelling text is profusely illustrated with more than 250 vintage and contemporary illustrations. More than just depictions of people and scenes frozen in time, these images—photographs, lithographs, advertisements, paintings, many in full color—recapture the daily life of the people who lived here before us and show the Valley in a beautiful new way.

A special chapter presents the histories of many individual business firms and other organizations that have made vital

contributions to the area’s growth and success. Finally, an illustrated chronology of significant events further enhances and supplements the text.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Hudon was born in Lowell and raised in the city’s Pawtucketville section—a short distance from the falls on the Merrimack. In 1956 he began his training as a historian, first at Boston College and then at Georgetown University where he completed his master’s degree and Ph.D. Dr. Hudon has taught at Merrimack College, Bradford College, the University of Massachusetts (Lowell), and Framingham State College. For more than a decade Hudon was on the staff of the American Textile History Museum where he was director of education and public programs, and later served as the museum’s curator of pre-industrial technology. For the last ten years Dr. Hudon has owned and operated The Relevance Company, offering research and writing services. He maintains the website www.timeandtheriver.org.

Helena Wright, photo researcher, graduated from Bryn Mawr College where she majored in history. She went on to earn her master’s degree from Simmons College in 1975. Wright worked at the Merrimack Valley Textile Museum and has been working in Washington D.C. for the past 20 years. Her previous publishing credits include *New City on the Merrimack, 1845-1976* and *Views of Lowell, 1825-1976*.