

2019



Philip Scalia / Alamy Stock Photo

*Grotto and the  
Way of the Cross*

# ***Lowell Grotto Restoration Project***





## ***Letter From The Committee***

Every now and then, we are honored with the opportunity to preserve the sacrifice and symbols of those who came before us.

The Grotto and the Way of the Cross stand on the banks of the Pawtucket Falls. Over 100 years ago, the Franco American community of Lowell established this enduring oasis for prayer, reflection and contemplation. Their legacy of faith in Christ has inspired people from all walks of life, the poor and the prosperous, the hopeful and the hopeless, the learned and the unlearned. All are equal under His enduring message of Love. Maintaining that legacy is a blessing and a responsibility.

The Grotto stands in need of extensive renovation. The Way of the Cross must be relocated to a new walkway and park behind the Grotto.

We invite you to join us in this massive effort. It will not be easy and completing the long task ahead requires the support of many.

Become a part of history and join the long line of people who have made sacrifices to keep this place of solace open to all. The help you offer today will impact future generations.

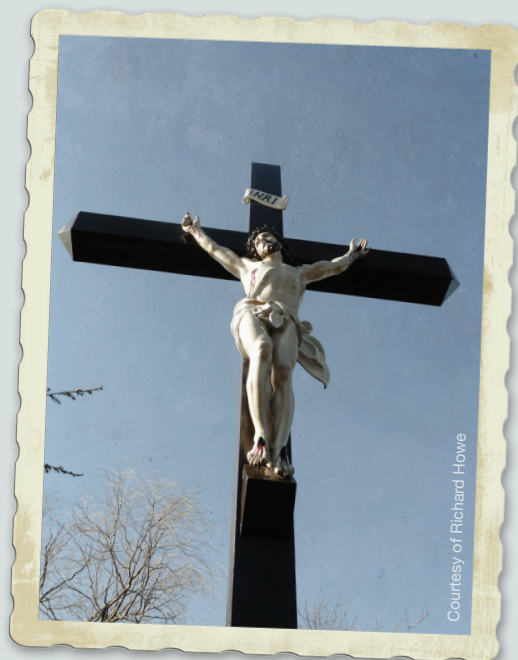
## ***Lowell Grotto Fundraising Committee***

John and Linda Chemaly  
Michael and Cindy Kuenzler

Brian and Tracey McGowan  
Steven and Christine Panagiotakos

*Special thanks to project manager Donald Lampron*







## ***The Beginning***

On May 15, 1911, contractor Jean-Baptiste Morin began construction of the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, a scaled replica of the original in France. The Grotto marks the spot where a 14-year-old peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, claimed to have a vision of “a lady” speaking to her from a cave.

Over the next two years, statues of the Virgin Mary and Soubirous, along with a wooden cross, were imported from France and installed at the Lowell location. Along the road, workers built terra cotta replicas of the fourteen Stations of the Way of the Cross as well as a replica of the Scala Sancta — “Holy Stairs” that, according to Catholic tradition, Jesus Christ climbed on the way to trial.

Throughout the next century, the Grotto would become a destination for pilgrims, artists and lovers of history.

## ***Birth of a Landmark***

The land where the Grotto and Way of the Cross are located is imbued with history. It is the site of the sacred fishing grounds of the Pennacook nation and where 17th century Native American chief Wannalancit erected his wigwam.

In the early parts of 19th century, it was home to Captain Phineas Whiting and his famous general store. Later that century, Frederick Ayer, an investor and owner of a patent medicine company, bought the land from Whiting’s widow and began building a luxurious, 67-room Second Empire style mansion. The property was expansive enough to boast stables and horse trails, as well as greenhouses for Ayer’s flower-loving wife.



Courtesy of Kevin Harkins



Philip Scalia / Alamy Stock Photo



Courtesy of Richard Howe



## ***The Orphanage***

In 1908, the mansion and lands were purchased for an orphanage by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate who entrusted operations to the Sisters of Charity of Quebec. Three years later, the sisters oversaw construction of the Grotto, the Way of the Cross and a four-story addition to the main house. The Franco American Orphanage continued serving the community until 1963, at which point it became the Franco American School.

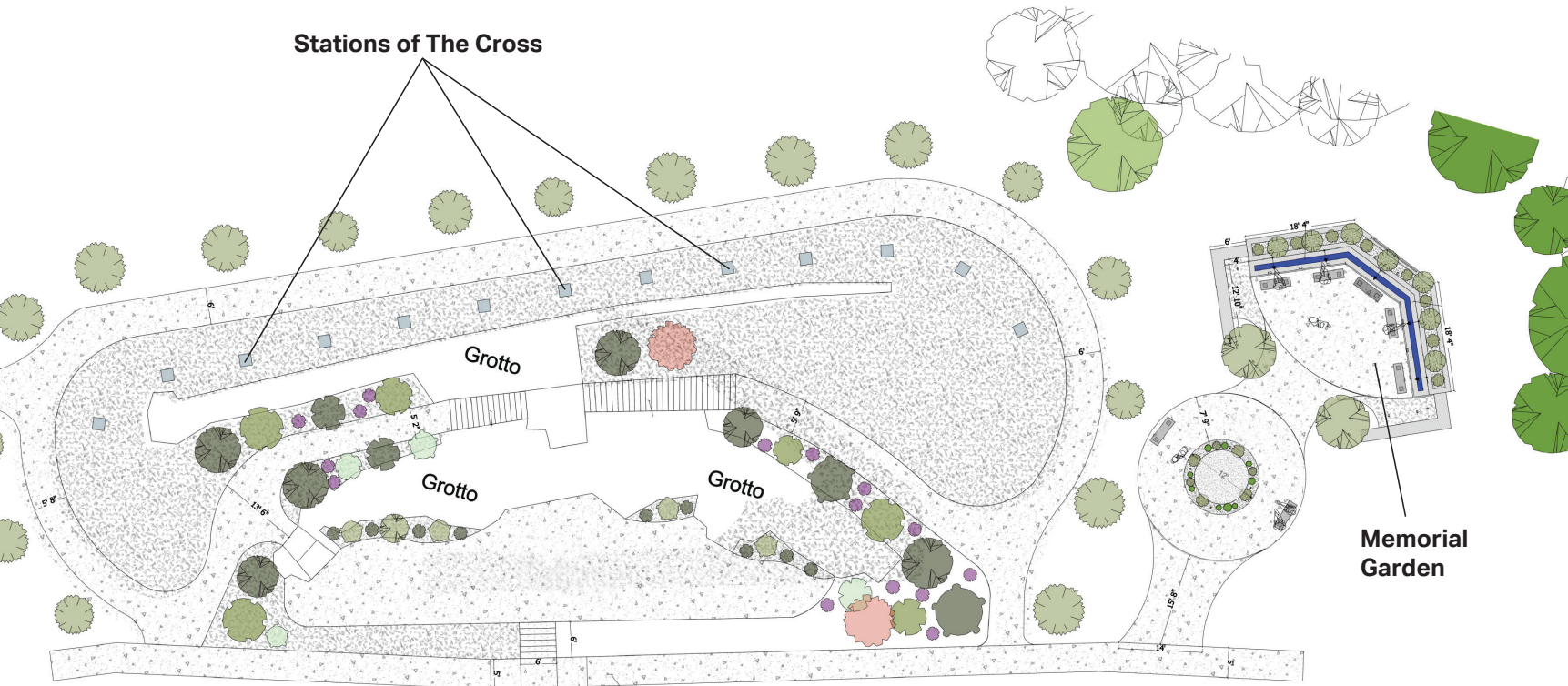
## ***The Grotto's Cultural Heritage***

The Grotto and the Way of the Cross have figured prominently in the novels of Jack Kerouac. Luminaries such as Jacqueline Kennedy and Bob Dylan have visited the site to pay their respects.

The Franco American School concluded its calling in 2016 and the property was sold by the trustees of the nonprofit Franco American Inc. to TMI Properties with Brian McGowan as the principal in the association with the Coalition for a Better Acre.

The parties agreed to maintain the Grotto and Stations of the Cross and undertake their much-needed renovation. The stations would be relocated to a newly constructed walkway and park behind the Grotto, ensuring that future generations would be able to visit this symbol of the legacy and sacrifices of many generations of Lowell citizens.

# *Lowell Grotto Restoration Site Plan*





*“ We can only know where we’re going if we know where we’ve been. ”*  
– Maya Angelou

## ***The Plan***

### **Lowell Grotto Restoration Project**

The Lowell Grotto Restoration Project (LGRP) lets us appreciate where we are going and growing as a community by respecting where we have been. You can join us by permanently inscribing your commitment to our region’s history and future.

In 2019, the entire Grotto will be refaced with additional concrete. The Scala Sancta replica will be restored. The Stations will be moved to a new position along the historic Riverwalk. Visitors will be provided space to leave votive candles in the spirit of faith, hope and love as they have for over a century.

This massive undertaking will require the work, dedication and passion of countless individuals. The LGRP has benefited from two grants but still needs to raise a minimum of \$600,000. Additional funds are necessary for ongoing annual maintenance so that the Grotto will remain free and welcome to all.

### ***The Franco American Stations and Grotto Committee***

|                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Yun-Ju Choi         | Russell Pandres   |
| Joseph Clermont     | Neil Paton        |
| Stephen Corey       | Cecile Provencher |
| Thomas Emery        | Kevin Roy         |
| Fred Faust          | Anne Sepe         |
| Sister Jane Holland | Jean Soucy        |
| Brian McGowan       | Craig Thomas      |
| Steven Panagiotakos |                   |

### ***Franco American School***

|                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Stephen Corey       | Anne Sepe       |
| Sister Jane Holland | Paul Gagnon     |
| Joe Lussier         | Thomas Emery    |
| Neil Paton          | Jean Soucy      |
| Cecile Provencher   | Joseph Clermont |
| Kevin Roy           | Yun-Ju Choi     |

# *Lowell Grotto Memorial Park*





# Sponsorship Levels

Everyone can contribute to the Lowell Grotto Restoration Project as sponsorships begin at \$100. Sponsor levels and recognition options are as follows:

**\$50,000** = 5 annual payments of \$10,000 (24 x 15 inch plaque)

**\$25,000** = 5 annual payments of \$5,000 (12 x 15 inch plaque)

**\$10,000** = 5 annual payments of \$2,000 (8 x 10 inch plaque)

**\$5,000** = 5 annual payments of \$1,000 (6 x 8 inch plaque)

**\$250** = 1 time payment of of \$250 for an In Memory Of listing from a business

**\$100** = 1 time payment of of \$100 for an In Memory Of listing from an individual

|          |                   |  |  |  |  |
|----------|-------------------|--|--|--|--|
| \$50,000 | Dedication Plaque |  |  |  |  |
| \$25,000 |                   |  |  |  |  |
| \$10,000 |                   |  |  |  |  |
| \$5,000  |                   |  |  |  |  |



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## ***Want to donate?***

Follow this link to donate directly to the campaign:

**[www.glcfoundation.org/grotto](http://www.glcfoundation.org/grotto)**

