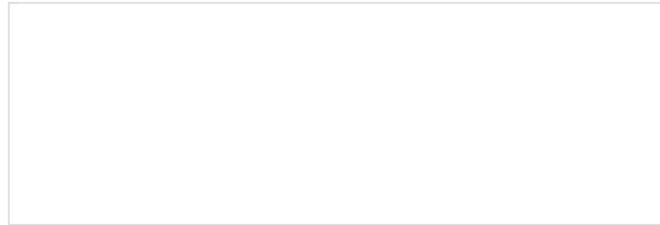


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Writing the Wrong: A. Lawrence Lowell

By SIMON W. VOZICK-LEVINSON, CRIMSON STAFF WRITER November 3, 2005

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Abbott Lawrence Lowell was many things: a member of the Class of 1877, the Eaton Professor of the Science of Government, and the twenty-second President of Harvard University. But he was, above all, a dangerous bigot—a man of virulent prejudices who systematically used his position of power to exclude and oppress those whom he hated.

William Wright's new book focuses on the notorious secret "Court" which Lowell convened in 1920 to target and destroy gay students and faculty. But the former University president found a true, lifelong vocation in the paranoid persecution of those who differed from him, whether in their sexual orientation, their faith, or the color of their skin.

Lowell's worldview amounted to undisguised white Christian supremacy, and he did not hesitate to put these diseased beliefs into action. In 1922, Lowell expelled all African-American students from Harvard Yard, declaring firmly (as quoted in a 1971 issue of *Commentary*) that "We have not thought it possible to compel men of different races to reside together."

Shortly thereafter, he persuaded the Faculty to adopt cryptic changes to admissions policy which reduced the percentage of Jewish freshmen at Harvard from 27.6 percent in

1925 to less than 15 percent when he retired in 1933, according to Jerome Karabel’s scathingly comprehensive “The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton.”

Karabel has unearthed a letter to a faculty member in which Lowell explains that “The summer hotel that is ruined by admitting Jews meets its fate, not because the Jews it admits are of bad character, but because they drive away the Gentiles, and then after the Gentiles have left, they leave also.”

One might expect Harvard to be embarrassed by such a former leader. But the man responsible for these undeniably, irrevocably hateful words and actions is still held in high honor by the University. The azure-domed House on Mt. Auburn Street bears his family name; a stately bust of Lowell himself perches to one side of its picturesque courtyard. The Lowell Dining Hall bustles today with countless students its namesake would have undoubtedly labored to keep out—thriving undergraduates who happen to be female, gay, African-American, Jewish, or anything other than members of Lowell’s own high-WASP caste. Hanging prominently on the far wall, a large portrait of the former president stares down and frowns.

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Twenty Years of Harvard Base-Ball.

Old graduates who witnessed the crowds on Holmes field last spring at the occasion of the Yale and Princeton games,

Twenty Years of Harvard Base-Ball.

The spring of 1868 opened with a decided fall in the base-ball thermometer, owing to the Harvard-Lowell controversy of the

The Truth About HoCos

Anyone who has ever been to the Lowell House Bacchanalia knows there is a lot of bang—and it is done

A Presidency Unsealed

CORRECTION APPENDED
Despite the intense media coverage surrounding the current search for Harvard’s 28th president, much of the internal intrigue

Harvard Signs Official Pact With Monastery to Send Historic Lowell Bells Back to Russia by Summer 2008

Lowell House’s historic Russian bells are officially headed back to the motherland, following a formal agreement inked in Moscow Tuesday