In 1913 a group of prominent Franco-American citizens of Lowell assembled and discussed the anomaly of Franco-Americans celebrating Le Jour de l'An in clubs not French, where the members did not have the same ties of language, blood and tradition surging through their veins. They decided to form a high grade French club under the name of Club Lafayette, named after that great Frenchman, the apostle of American liberty, who is the greatest Franco-American.

On December 4, 1913 the Club Lafayette was incorporated with the following officers: Dr. Joseph E. Lamoureux, President; Joseph A. Legare, Vice-President; Albert J. Blazon, Secretary; J. Celixte Manseau, Treasurer. The Board of Directors consisted of the above named members, together with Adolphe Delisle, E. Ovide Ledoux, Dr. Arthur J. Gagnon, Louis P. Turcotte, Dr. Rodrigue Mignault and the late lamented Joseph H. Guillet, Esquire.

Dr. Lamoureux, the first President, served with distinction through 1914 and 1915 and is a former Chairman of the Lowell School Committee. During a visit at the Club of the then Governor David I. Walsh, the Governor was so impressed with him that he appointed him to the State Public Health Council where he served for ten years with distinction, being re-appointed by two other Governors and refusing appointment by a third Governor.


The Club was first located at 831 Merrimack Street and the grand opening was held with a very successful New Year's party held December 31, 1913, at which ladies were admitted.
The Club was situated at this location for six years and then removed in 1920 to 58 Wannalancit Street in what was then known as the "Stone Castle" now occupied by the family of the late Representative Victor F. Jewett and known as the "Bowers Castle", and there it stayed until January 31, 1924. It became the feeling of the majority of the members that it was not centrally enough located and not within easy reach so that the location was again changed to the present location at No. 663 Merrimack Street at the corner of Cabot Street, where it has remained to the present day occupying the three upper floors of that building.

When the Club was first formed, bonds to the amount of Thirty-five Hundred ($3500) Dollars were subscribed voluntarily by the members without any great effort. This was an indication of the enthusiasm and spirit of the founders. Until the bonds were paid, only bond holders could be directors of the Club. Under the able leadership of Dr. Lamoureux and his first officers, the bonds were paid during his term of office or within two years.

It was in October 1919 that the Club at a meeting especially called for a new location decided upon the "Bowers Castle" on Wannalancit Street. Dr. F. N. Labelle was then President of the Club. When the Club left that location in January 1924, it had a farewell banquet known as a "Farewell Dinner". The Committee which was appointed to secure the new location consisted of Messrs. Joseph Gagnon, Z. A. Normandin, and F. N. Labelle. It was then that this Committee recommended the present location. While the new club rooms were being remodeled and furnished, the Club was temporarily located in the Vigeant property at the corner of Cabot and Merrimack Streets. Between $7,000 and $8,000 was raised among the members and bonds were given to pay for the renovation and alteration of the new club house. These bonds were all paid up in short order. The following members have served as Presidents of the organization since its inception: Dr. Joseph E. Lamoureux, 1913-14-15; Albert J. Blaison, Esquire, 1916; Ernest J. Dupont, 1917; Zephirin A. Normandin, 1918-19; Dr. F. N. Labelle, 1920; Arthur J. Lambert, 1921; George H. Boucher, 1922; George E. Dozois, 1923; Arthur J. Lambert, 1924; Alphonse J. Couture, 1925; Andre L. Southillette, 1926; Zenon Chouinard, 1927; Samuel T. Robitaille, 1927-28-29; Emile Gagnon, 1930; Elphege Phaneuf, 1931-32; Alphonse Couture, 1933-34; Dr. Leo F. King, 1935; Albert L. Bourgeois, Esquire, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940.

During its existence the Club Lafayette has aided materially various French causes, having contributed among others to the Oblate Fathers for their Centenary celebration, St. Therese's Church of Dracut, L'Association Educatrice, St. Louis Parish, to the 50th Jubilee of the Oblates, to St. Joseph's College, St. Joseph's Convent, Le Salle Paroissiale and Ste. Jeanne d'Arc Parish. Besides it has contributed to several causes such as the Community Chest, Red Cross and other things.

In 1919 it had the great French-Canadian nationalist, Henri Bourassa, as a guest who gave a very inspiring speech.

In 1935 the Club donated a room at St. Joseph's Hospital to be known as the "Club Lafayette Room." In May 1935 it held a formal celebration in honor of the first proclamation by the Governor of Lafayette Day, the anniversary of the death of Marquis de Lafayette.
It was felt appropriate for the Club to hold this inasmuch as it was named after that great patriot. Besides, the President of the Club, Representative Albert L. Bourgeois, had charge of the bill in the House of Representatives. At that meeting, Professor Leroy Grigaut, a native of Paris, gave in beautifully flowing French a very interesting address on Lafayette.

In 1936 the Club had a most successful Mardi Gras celebration which it hopes to have each year.

The Club today enjoys a very high standing in the community. It is one of the few clubs which has successfully withstood the depression. It has among its members the Mayor of the City, the first French Mayor of Lowell, the Honorable Dewey G. Archembault. It has the first French Judge of Lowell, the Honorable Arthur L. Eno. It has the first French Clerk of Courts in Lowell and the only in Massachusetts, Raymond P. Bourgeois, Esquire. It has the two key men of the two largest banks in Lowell, the Honorable Joseph E. Legare, President of the Appleton National Bank and Homer W. Bourgeois, Cashier of the Union Old Lowell National Bank. It has the two former Franco-American postmasters of Lowell, Mr. Legare and Xavier A. Delisle, Esquire. It has members of the House of Representatives, doctors, attorneys and businessmen within its ranks, all of whom have played a conspicuous part in the development of the City of Lowell.

In two years the Club Lafayette will celebrate its 25th anniversary which will mark a milestone in its history.

Today it takes the opportunity to congratulate L'Étoile on its 50th anniversary. It appreciates the great work that L'Étoile has done for the Franco-American population. It knows that the Franco-American population of Lowell and surrounding towns are fortunate in having had such a paper in its ranks and it knows how other Franco-American centers which do not have a paper like L'Étoile have missed it. It wishes to L'Étoile continued success and prosperity as it continues on towards its one hundredth milestone.