

THE Bluegrass Historian

SPRING 2022

FUNDING
OUR

Future

Strategic Plan Goals 2022

Lexington's
Oldest **HOUSE**

The Adam Rankin House

Famous Lexington
Mustard

LEXTalks Events

Prohibition in Lexington

Our Mission: To inspire our future by collecting and preserving Lexington's history and telling our stories.
Lexington History Museum, Inc. | www.lexhistory.org

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Lexington History Museum, Inc.

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Lexington, KY 40588

Cover photo: Christopher Riley

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Lovers of History:

I wonder, is your love of history as seemingly illogical as mine? Consider the 1971 photo on page 4 of the Adam Rankin House as it was being moved from its original location on High Street. There it sat, precariously perched on a lowboy trailer, looking fragile and kind of forlorn, as a crowd gawked at this rare sight. The story has a happy ending because this lovely house—a 1784 log cabin beneath its clapboard—now resides in the South Hill Historic District at 317 South Mill Street. Over 50 years ago, the efforts of Alex G. Campbell, Jr., and the Blue Grass Trust saved this gem from urban renewal demolition. Little did Mr. Campbell know then that the Lexington History Museum would move into what is now the oldest remaining residence in Lexington and that he would be our landlord today!

If you think about it, it was completely illogical for him to contribute such a large amount of money to save and move a dilapidated house just around the corner—a building that by today's standards is too outdated and cramped to serve as a home. But there it is, preserved, a tangible reminder of a frontier settlement in stark contrast to the Lexington we know today. Thanks to Mr. Campbell, the Rankin House is so much more than a dated photograph.

History does repeat itself. The recent plan presented by Kentucky Utilities to develop the former Bluegrass Stockyards property with assurances of preserving the William McConnell house echoes the saving of the Rankin House. Zach Davis, a real estate broker and planning commission member, observed in the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, "Maintaining old houses is not easy. It's a love affair because it is not logical."

I couldn't agree more. To those of us so smitten with history, it makes perfect sense to want to help out in any way we can. Despite generous grants and donations this fiscal year, we've raised only 80% of our operating budget. We need your help to start the new fiscal year with sufficient operating funds. Please use the enclosed donation envelope, or save the postage by going to www.LexHistory.org and making a secure online donation.

Read further to learn more about our ambitious plans for LexHistory's future. We need your help!

Jim Dickinson
Chair, Board of Trustees

WELCOME to our relaunched newsletter, *The Bluegrass Historian*, which originated as a small format newspaper in July 2000. The newspaper versions were edited and published by Lexington History Museum's first Executive Director, Ed Houlihan. Ed was instrumental in the Museum's original vision, establishing it in the old courthouse building and guiding it during the early years until his death in 2008.

A NEW HISTORY OF LEXINGTON, KY

Lexington Power Poll

See page 2



Join us for
LEXTalks
May 15

Best Seat in the House

Panelists Fred Mills and Whit Whitaker will discuss the history of two very remarkable theatres—the **Kentucky** and the **Lyric**. **Sunday, May 15, 2:00 pm** at the Lexington Public Library Northside Branch. *More details about future events can be found on page 6.*



The Rankin HOUSE

Learn more about the Adam Rankin House and plans to preview our newest house exhibit beginning on page 3

University of Kentucky Special Collections Research Center

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Lexington Mustard page 9

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Lexington page 11



Visit our new website!

www.lexhistory.org

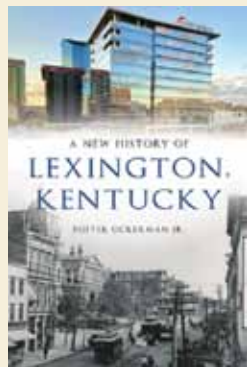
now has a fresher look and better functionality. We will be adding new content as it becomes available. The popular Wiki-Lex research and reference tool will return soon. Consider making a secure online donation today!

A NEW HISTORY OF LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

LexHistory's Chief Historian, seventh-generation Kentuckian and Lexington native Foster Ockerman, Jr. has authored *A New History of Lexington, Kentucky*. The book is available at Joseph-Beth Booksellers and all Arcadia Press retailers.



Foster Ockerman, Jr.
Chief Historian
Lexington History Museum



We want to take a moment to acknowledge the many contributions he made to the Lexington History Museum. It would be a vast understatement to say that in the course of the past six years he has accomplished a great deal. In fact, it has been nothing short of astonishing. In March of this year, Foster decided to step down as President but will continue to function as our Chief Historian on a volunteer basis for the foreseeable future.

Lexington Power Poll

In April, a majority of Power Poll members said they **support city funding** for the Lexington History Museum.

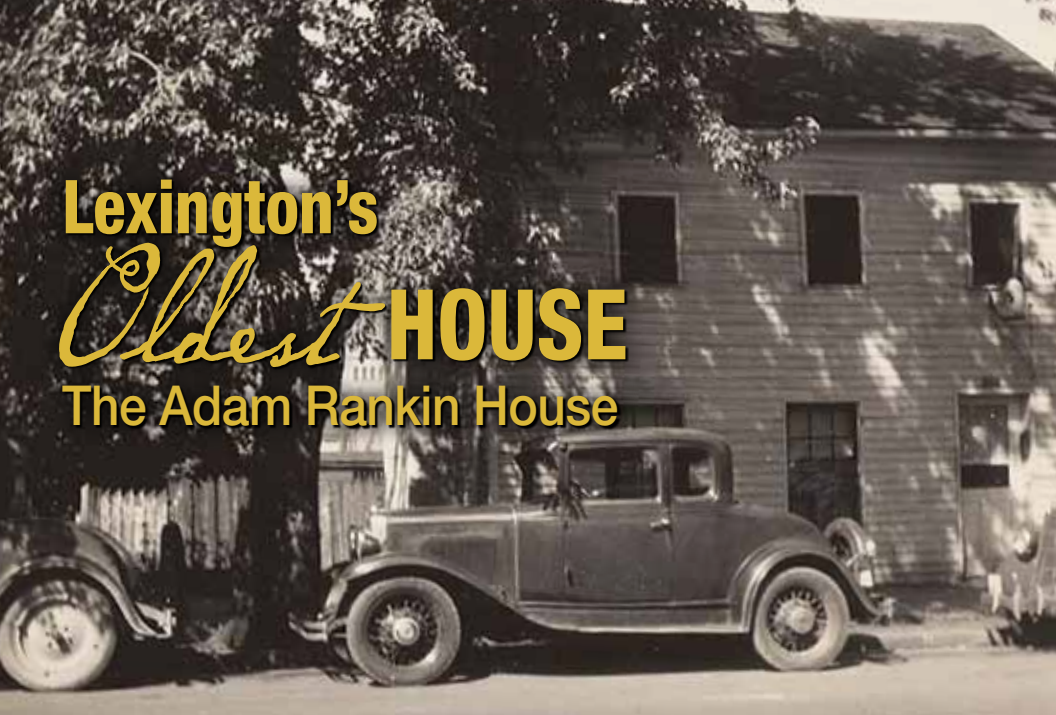
54%
yes!

28%
no

18%
no opinion

Results courtesy of Tom Eblen, the Lexington, Ky., Power Poll correspondent and former managing editor and columnist with the Lexington Herald-Leader. Power Poll is a civic engagement platform that brings together the most influential and powerful leaders across business, civic, media and political sectors.

Lexington's *Oldest* HOUSE The Adam Rankin House



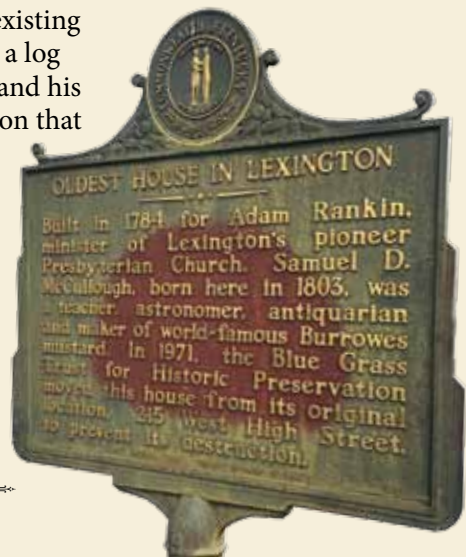
Bullock photographic collection, Special Collections, Transylvania University

Lexington's South Hill neighborhood, a historic district recognized by the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places, is the location of LexHistory's current headquarters in the Adam Rankin House. According to the National Park Service, "In 1781, Lexington's five-man Board of Trustees successfully petitioned the Virginia Assembly for 710 acres of land that was divided into half-acre and five-acre lots, according to a town plat. "The south hill" was made up of larger lots located outside of the town of Lexington that were soon subdivided. South Hill is so named because in pioneer days the area overlooked the Town Branch of Elkhorn Creek..."

Often referred to as Lexington's oldest existing home, the Adam Rankin House, started as a log cabin built in 1784 for Rev. Adam Rankin and his young family when they moved to Lexington that year. He served as one of the first ministers in the area and had affiliations with several historic churches over the years. (See page 5 for more information about Rev. Adam Rankin.)

The Rankin House is noted by several sources as Lexington's oldest existing house, including the historical marker

continued next page



Lexington's Oldest House, continued

on the property. However, even this deserves qualification because the Robert Patterson Cabin (circa 1780), currently on the Transylvania University campus, predates it by several years. The Patterson cabin has been moved over the years and stood for a number of years in a Dayton, Ohio, public park, where a grandson of Robert Patterson had moved it in 1902. In 1939 it was returned to Lexington due to local efforts by the State Highway Department and Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

“Until recently, the oldest building in Lexington *on its original site* was the log house of Rev. Adam Rankin.” [*Italics added.*] The house originally sat at 215 West High Street, roughly across the street from the current First United Methodist Church, and with its back to the Town Branch, just down the hill.

Lancaster’s “recently” refers to June 28, 1971, when widespread Urban Renewal projects threatened the Rankin House and other older Lexington residences and commercial

buildings. In order to save the house, the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation and local business man and philanthropist Alex G. Campbell Jr. worked in concert to move it around the corner to its current location at 317 South Mill Street.

The main core of the house was a three bay (a door and two windows on the first floor), two-story structure, or as Lancaster wrote, “a rudimentary townhouse plan.” The addition on the east end of the house was added about circa 1794, and it is likely that clapboard siding was added to the entire house at that time to give it a more unified appearance. Based on Lancaster’s commentary and

restored drawings, the feature that distinguishes it from other contemporary log structures is its “separate stair hall connecting the 13x18-foot



Kentucky Historical Society, Charles Bayless Collection

Moving Day on June 28, 1971. In order to save the Rankin House, the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation and local business man and philanthropist Alex G. Campbell Jr. worked in concert to move it from 215 West High around the corner to its current location at 317 South Mill Street.

In his 1991 book *Antebellum Architecture of Kentucky*, architectural historian Clay Lancaster makes the simple but compelling distinction:

main room” on the first floor to “three small chambers on the second floor.” Originally, a large chimney, likely of stone, stood on the west end of the house. This was later replaced by a narrower brick chimney, matching the one in the addition. The nature of these fireplaces, indicate that the kitchen was probably in a separate building on the property, as was the custom in those days.

In May 2020, LexHistory entered into a rental agreement and moved into the Rankin House, re-establishing a physical base of operations. Prior to this, the Museum had rented the old Fayette County Courthouse from the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government since the Museum’s inception in 2000. However, in 2012 the Museum was required to vacate the courthouse due to the discovery of mold and lead paint. During this interim period, LexHistory has housed its collections in a variety of storage locations.

In historic preservation documentation, it is the custom to refer to a house either by the name of its original owner or resident or by that of a later owner of prominence or historic significance. Despite this being the case with the Rankin House, subsequent residents are notable in their own rights: One, Nathan Burrowes, the founder of a popular mustard brand and another, Samuel McCollough, a respected astronomer, who also continued the production of Burrowes’s famous mustard.



A simple, but beautifully made newel post in the Rankin House. A period hanging cast iron fireplace kettle. The original cabin’s chimney and fireplace were likely stone, instead of brick.

REV. ADAM RANKIN

Rev. Adam Rankin was an important figure in the religious history of Lexington, one of the earliest clergymen in the area. He was an ordained Presbyterian minister, who arrived in Lexington in October 1784 to pastor the Mount Zion Church. He immediately found himself in the midst of a large congregation, which during sacramental occasions would number as many as 500 people drawing people from some distance surrounding Lexington. A short time later, he took charge of Pisgah Church in what is now Woodford County, splitting his time between the two.

Rankin was born in Greencastle, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania in 1755. He attended and graduated from Liberty Hall Academy, now Washington and Lee University. He met and married his wife, Martha McPheters in Augusta, Virginia. Genealogical sites list them as having had nine children.

The Mount Zion Church he founded likely started as a log structure and was located at or near the current site of Scovell Hall (the former UK Agricultural Experiment Station) on South Limestone, outside the city limits owing to a pre-Revolutionary War Virginia law prohibiting “dissenters” from having a house of worship in a county seat.

continued next page

*Make plans to join
us this summer for*

LEXTalks

JULY: Open House at Rankin House

Sunday, July 3, 2022 • 2:00-4:00 pm

317 South Mill Street



Also, mark your calendars for a *Spooky* **LEXTalks**
Sunday, October 23 at Transylvania!

REV. ADAM RANKIN, CONTINUED

In 1789, when the First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States Convened in Philadelphia, Rankin attended—uninvited and without “commission” or official standing—to plead with his fellow Presbyterians to abandon the hymns of Isaac Watts, in favor of the old “Rouse” versions of psalms that were standard. Rankin was fanatical about this theological issue.

Rankin’s Lexington congregation officially criticized him in 1789, and Pisgah congregants circulated petitions against him in 1791. The Presbytery stripped him of all ministerial functions. Nonetheless, a majority of his congregation followed him. In 1797, he built a rival Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, but in time found himself at odds with it as well. In 1818, he was suspended from the ministry, at which time, he and his congregation simply declared themselves independent. Suffice it to say that Rev. Adam Rankin could be controversial.

George W. Ranck’s 1872 *History of Lexington* describes Rev. Adam as a “talented, intolerant, eccentric, and pious man, [who] was greatly beloved by his congregation, which clung to him with devoted attachment through all his fortunes.”

The Rev. Rankin sold his property in Lexington in preparation of a trip to the Holy Land. He stopped in Philadelphia on his way, and died there on November 25, 1827. He is said to be buried without a marker in the Spruce Street Cemetery (now known as the Mikveh Israel Cemetery).

Learn more about Rev. Adam Rankin and see the house during our LexTalks event on July 3.

GIVING & RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES

LexHistory is deeply grateful to you—our donors who invest in our mission and vision. We welcome gifts of any amount. In appreciation of your support, we offer the following levels of recognition:

Annual Fund Investors *(Unrestricted Annual Gifts)*

- Lexington Circle (\$1-\$499)
- Fayette Circle (\$500-\$999)
- Bluegrass Circle (\$1,000-\$4,999)
- Kentucky Circle (\$5,000+)

Thomas D. Clark Endowment Investors *(Unrestricted Endowment Gifts)*

- Pledged over a maximum of five years
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- Thomas D. Clark Fellows (\$10,000+)

To make your donation, use the envelope provided or use a credit or debit card securely through our website link to Paypal at www.lexhistory.org/donate—even if you don't have your own Paypal account.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES		WEBSITE	SOCIAL MEDIA	PRINTED MATERIALS	ONSITE SIGNAGE
EXHIBITS					
Rankin House Museum – PRESENTING Sponsor	\$20,000	●	●	●	●
Corporate Sponsor: GOLD LEVEL	\$4,000	●	●	●	●
Corporate Sponsor: SILVER LEVEL	\$2,500	●	●	●	●
Corporate Sponsor: BRONZE LEVEL	\$1,000	●	●	●	●
Pocket Museums					
Corporate Sponsor: GOLD LEVEL	\$2,000	●	●	●	●
Corporate Sponsor: SILVER LEVEL	\$1,000	●	●	●	●
Corporate Sponsor: BRONZE LEVEL	\$500	●	●	●	●
EVENTS & COMMUNICATION*					
Newsletter – PRESENTING Sponsor	\$15,000	●	●	●	
LEXTalks – PRESENTING Sponsor	\$10,000	●	●	●	●
WikiLex – PRESENTING Sponsor	\$5,000	●	●	●	

* These sponsorships also available at Gold, Silver and Bronze levels.
For more information, visit our website at www.lexhistory.org



LOOKING TO *Our Future*

In May 2021, undaunted by past challenges, the LexHistory Board of Trustees approved a new four-year strategic plan that reimagines its future and expresses a renewed commitment to a bold mission, vision, and strategic objectives leading up to Lexington's 250th anniversary in 2025 and beyond.

Mission

Inspire our future by collecting and preserving Lexington's history and telling our stories.

Vision

Be the recognized and respected leader on Lexington's history.

Goals and Objectives:

PRESENCE

Be the most visible and accessible resource on the history of Lexington for all residents and tourists...anytime, anywhere, and on any device.

Create Comprehensive Marketing Plan

Create Virtual LexHistory Museum

Create Temporary LexHistory Museum

Create Permanent LexHistory Museum

PARTNERSHIPS

Form and lead strategic partnerships that maximize our capacity, resources, outreach, and impact.

Create the LexHistory Partnership Council comprised of government, business, and civic leaders.

Create the Lexington History Collective comprised of representatives of all of the diverse and inclusive groups that collect/preserve/exhibit unique aspects of Lexington's history.

PRESERVATION

Collect, archive, and preserve the essential, relevant, and accurate records and artifacts of Lexington's history.

Develop a LexHistory Collection Management System

Complete an inventory and catalogue for the current collection.

Consolidate collection into a temporary, centralized location.

PROGRAMMING

Offer diverse and inclusive educational and engagement opportunities to the broadest possible audiences using multiple methods of communication, settings, and formats.

Expand the LexHistory Speakers Bureau to enlist an array of internal and external subject matter experts on Lexington's histories to offer to the public.

Create LexHistory Press and Productions to develop and produce historical content and educational curriculum in a variety of accessible formats.

Please help us fulfill our important mission—donate today!



The Famous Lexington *Mustard*

Burrowes' Lexington Mustard started out as a "cottage industry" or as we might say today a "home-based business," but it grew and met with international acclaim.

Nathan Burrowes moved to Lexington from Pennsylvania in 1792, the year Kentucky gained statehood. He worked for four years to develop a machine to remove leaves and debris from hemp stalks used in Central Kentucky's burgeoning hemp-growing and rope manufacturing industry. His device was effective, but was soon copied by others. With no compensation from those who infringed on his design, he suffered financially.

Burrowes applied the lessons from this experience to his successful foray into mustard. First taking an interest in cultivation, he had by 1810 perfected a recipe for table mustard and a proprietary or secret method for processing the seed. This process was effective in preserving mustard's natural antibiotic properties and pungent yet appealing flavor, especially during hot, humid weather. Burrowes' Lexington Mustard was born.

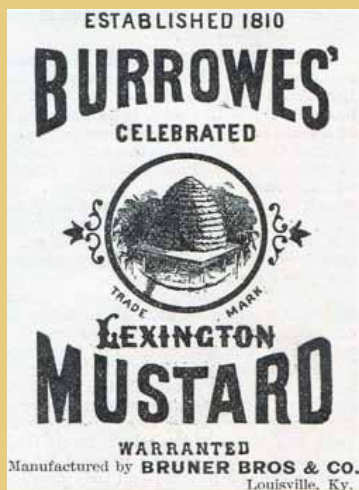
Burrowes' Mustard—branded and advertised in various ways over the years—was a family business too.

Mary McBride, was a good friend to the mother of Samuel D. McCullough, who had been born in the Rankin House in 1803. She became *de facto* McCullough's foster or adoptive mother.

Nathan Burrowes and Mary McBride Burrowes married in 1810 and lived in the Rankin House with McCullough until their deaths. When Nathan died in 1841, Mary and Samuel continued the business, though the nature of their roles is not entirely clear.

The brand was sold in many markets in the eastern U.S. and internationally. Burrowes' Lexington Mustard won a gold medal at the Great Exposition of 1851 in London, where it found favor

continued next page



Nathan Burrowes launched his "Lexington Mustard" in 1810. When he died in 1841, his widow Mary McBride Burrowes and foster son Samuel D. McCullough continued the business. With four subsequent owners, the mustard brand survived until manufacturer Bruner Brothers & Co. discontinued operations with the Panic of 1893 looming large.



MUSTARD: CONDIMENT OR MEDICATION?

Among the label details for Burrowes' Mustard were compelling words and phrases such as "Warranted Pure," "Best Superfine Flour of Mustard" and "Pronounced by Physicians the best mustard in the world for prompt action." Remember that this was before the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, which sought to protect the public from adulterated or mislabeled food and drug products.

Mustard was considered both a food product and a medicinal product. A "mustard plaster" can indeed have some healing properties if not left on the skin too long. Mustard itself has antibiotic properties, so in a time when water was often impure and illnesses such as cholera and yellow fever were common, pharmacies kept mustard in stock. Its medicinal uses were many.

Unlike today when most mustards are "prepared" and sold in a bottle or jar ready to use, before the early 1900s most mustard was sold as dry powder and prepared at home using water, vinegar or other liquid. Adding something acidic helped prolong the mustard's beneficial qualities and freshness. The Burrowes' vintage label directions were:

Keep it dry & cool Mix into a batter with Cold Water one hour before using on the table.

Given that foods were not refrigerated in those days, eating mustard with other food was likely a hedge against the ill affects of spoiled food—hence both flavoring and medicinal!

"All other brands purporting to be 'Lexington Mustard' or 'The same as made at Lexington, Ky.' are wicked counterfeits."

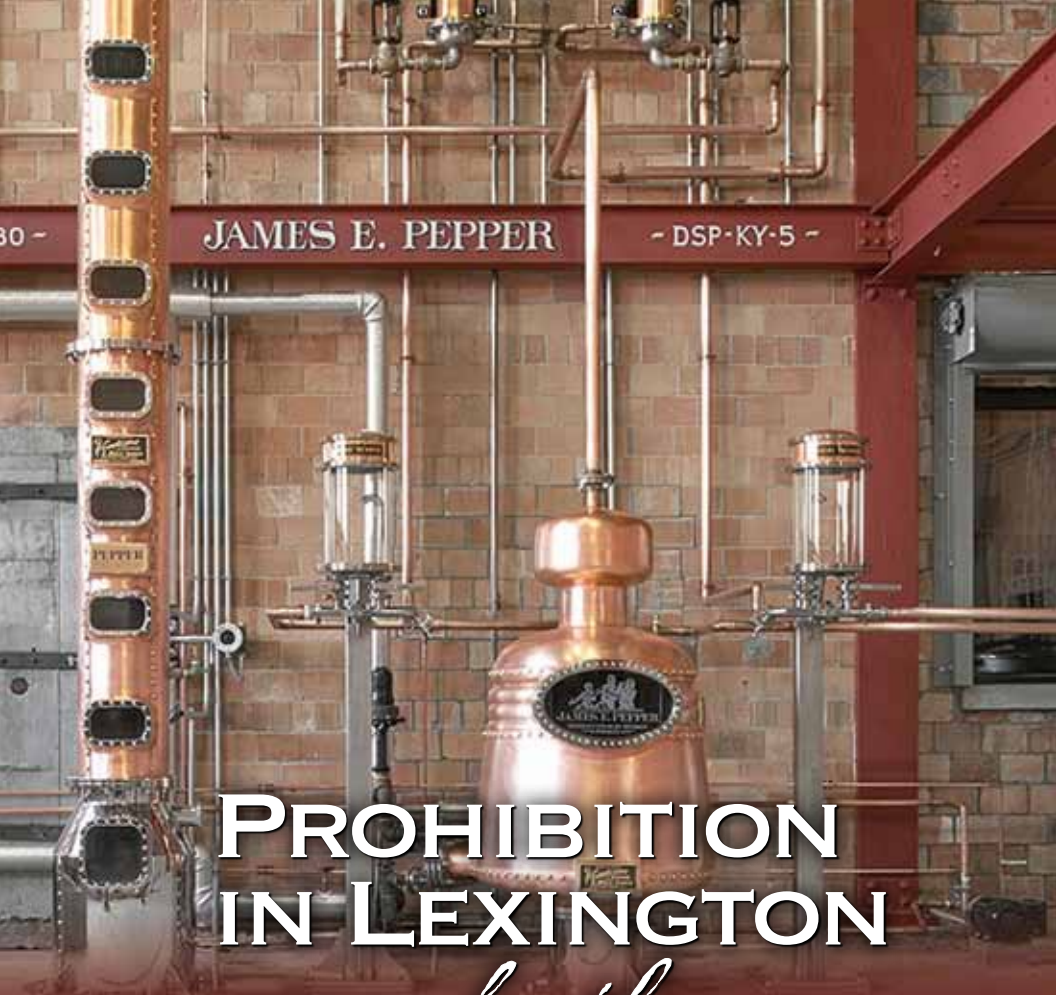
with Queen Victoria, and Henry Clay had introduced it to acquaintances who judged it superior to the Parisian brand Maille.

Following Mary's death Samuel operated the business until selling it to Yates & Dudley in 1869. In the ensuing years, the business was acquired by John H. Brand & Co. (1877), Piatt, Macauley & Co. (1884) and Bruner Bros & Company (1888). In 1873 Henry C. Metcalfe copied the product, right down to the label design and verbiage, but called it "H.C. Metcalfe's Lexington, Kentucky, Mustard." Later, he even purchased the former Burrowes factory on Water Street left available when Brand moved the mustard operations to Louisville. Brand and Metcalfe became embroiled in the trademark infringement case, *Metcalfe v. Brand*, which was settled on appeal.

The label for the genuine article read, "All other brands purporting to be 'Lexington Mustard' or 'The same as made at Lexington, Ky.' are wicked counterfeits." Ironically, Metcalfe's product included this verbiage as well! The court ruling—albeit in Brand's favor—allowed Metcalfe to continue using the name, but required him to change packaging elements to avoid confusing the consumer.

As late as 1891, Lexington Mustard was still being advertised. Its manufacturer at this time—Bruner Brothers & Co., which produced other spices and sauces—discontinued operations with the Panic of 1893 looming large.

Material used in the article "The Famous Lexington Mustard" came from the book Burrowes' Lexington Mustard by LexHistory board member William M. Ambrose. Material used in the article "Lexington's Oldest House" came from Peter Brackney's website www.thekaintuckeean.com. For additional references and further reading, see www.lexhistory.org/newsletter/.



PROHIBITION IN LEXINGTON

LED TO *bootleggers,*
GANGS AND
ROGUE COPS

By Brad Canon

The national Prohibition Amendment, the 18th of the U.S. Constitution, took effect more than 100 years ago. Lexington's "drys" celebrated Jan. 17, 1920, with all-day services at Broadway Christian Church, while "wets" had mourned their future the previous evening, with final legal drinks in the town's 97 restaurants and saloons.

Local distilleries on Manchester Street, including James E. Pepper and Old Tarr, closed as well as did those around the Blue Grass. During the next two years, several armed robberies of the distilleries occurred, resulting in wounded watchmen, one fatally.

continued next page



Previous page: Interior view of working copper still at the new James E. Pepper Distillery, a National Historic Landmark, that has been renovated and rebuilt after being abandoned for over 50 years.
Above: Rendering of the Pepper Distillery, ca 1894.

The government soon moved all whiskey, released only for medicinal purposes, into one warehouse.

Breweries also closed, except for Dixie Beer on East Main Street, which was partly owned by Mayor Tom Bradley. The police wouldn't act in this case, and Dixie continued brewing until federal agents raided it that summer and dumped the contents of its 5,700 bottles in the sewer system. The downtown reeked of a beery smell for a week.

Naturally, some bootleggers arose to quench thirsts and developed sophisticated networks to obtain liquor from out of town. Low riding cars and trucks with revved up engines roared into town in the middle of the night, and heavy suitcases, trunks and boxes appeared at railroad stations. A pint of pre-Prohibition whiskey sold for \$3 or \$4; it was about \$60-\$75 now.

While hardly reaching Chicago's level, bootlegger gangs formed. The main ones were Ike Miller's, who owned a farm where Cardinal Valley is today, and "Patrolman" Piercy's. Piercy had been on the police force from 1912 until he saw bootlegging as a more lucrative vocation. Gang violence flared up on occasion, the most serious being the Battle of Jersey St. (near UK) in June, 1921, leaving several wounded including Miller.

Also, moonshine was produced in many a bath or wash tub in town or trucked in from Eastern Kentucky's hills.

Despite the 18th Amendment, it wasn't difficult to get a drink in Lexington. A number of businesses, for example gas stations and barber shops, sold hidden beer or liquor to known customers.

Mary Todd Lincoln's former home fronted as a candy store with whiskey in the back rooms. Some homes in the Jefferson Street area sold "moonshine" or liquor.

This liquor was called “blind pigs,” because you didn’t quite know what you were buying.

There were many speakeasies, such as restaurant back rooms or upper floors, where those known to the management could consume alcoholic drinks. Also, physicians could prescribe liquor for “illnesses.” They were allowed 100 Rx’s every 90 days filled by drug stores, but limited to one per “patient” in a 10-day span.

The Prohibition Bureau initially hired 60 enforcement agents in Lexington and the Blue Grass area, but employed over 120 by the mid-1920s. Agents were armed with Browning Automatic Rifles, among other weapons. They often engaged in high-speed chases of whiskey runners in trucks or hollowed out cars on the narrow two-lane roads leading into Lexington. A sharp turn on the Paris Pike became known as “Dead Man’s Curve.”

The federal court in Lexington soon averaged 75 prohibition cases on its docket each month. A good number were dismissed for absence of a warrant, or led to hung juries or acquittals by sympathetic jurors. Penalties were a \$1,000 fine for the first offense, a year in jail for the second and five years for the third.

Ike Miller eventually was convicted a third time, spending five years in the Atlanta penitentiary. Percy went to the state prison after an arrest for burglarizing a home where a lot of liquor was stored.

National Prohibition ended in December 1933, when the 21st Amendment repealed the 18th. Kentucky’s constitutional prohibition wasn’t repealed until November 1935, but little local effort was made to enforce it. Lexington hotels, restaurants, bars, and package stores began selling alcoholic beverages in April 1934.

Dr. Brad Canon is a retired professor of political science at UK and serves on the Lexington History Museum board.



Front of the Mary Todd Lincoln House prior to renovation and opening as a museum in 1977.

The Lexington History Museum has many artifacts related to the bourbon industry as well as Prohibition in its collection. Of special note is Belle Breezing’s liquor license.

Currently, the museum’s collection is still being housed in a storage facility. However, we continue our cataloguing work in anticipation of raising funds to reopen in temporary exhibit space and ultimately a permanent museum.

Our bold Strategic Plan initiatives position us to realize our vision for a permanent, state-of-the-art Lexington History Museum by 2025. Please consider supporting these efforts by making a donation today.

Learn more at
www.lexhistory.org



Lexington History Museum, Inc.
PO Box 748, Lexington, KY 40588

LEX*Talks*

MAY 15: Kentucky & Lyric Theatres History • Lexington Public Library Northside Branch

JULY 3: Open House at Rankin House • 317 South Mill Street

OCTOBER 23: A Spooky **LEX*Talks*** • Transylvania University



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