

THE Bluegrass Historian

FALL 2022

 LEXHISTORY

OUR
NEW *Home*
Thomas Hunt Morgan House

Meet Dr. Amanda Higgins
Executive Director

Kentucky

Tall Case
Clocks

John P. Malick Collection

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

Amanda L. Higgins, Ph.D.,
Executive Director

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**Lexington History
Museum, Inc.**

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2022 MILESTONES

- January** Implemented new museum software to catalog our entire collection.
- January** Revised the LexHistory website and social media platforms.
- June** Received a generous three-year financial commitment from the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government.
- July** Continued our *LexTalks* series: exhibit and open house featuring the Rankin House on South Mill Street, one of Lexington's oldest houses and its notable inhabitants.
- September** Hired a new Executive Director to lead the organization.
- October** Partnered with the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation to secure museum space at the Thomas Hunt Morgan House on North Broadway.
- October** Hosted a "Spooky" *LexTalks*: Spooky Stories around Historic Gratz Park.
- November** Supported production of the second of three installments in the *Chronicles* documentary film series in partnership with Kentucky Educational Television (KET).
- December** Hired a new Collections/Exhibit Manager to professionally care for and display our collection.

With our sights keenly set on the celebration of Lexington's 250th anniversary in 2025, we will continue to rebuild our legacy and leadership as the city's history museum. To learn more about our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, visit: lexhistory.org/our-future/

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Stay connected!

Visit our new website:

www.lexhistory.org

Follow us on social media:



@lexhistory

LEXTalks

Our in-person events were enjoyed by many this year. Special thanks to our committee: board members Laura Glasscock, Alan Lytle and Terry Smith.



Above: Tours of the Rankin House in July

At right: a Spooky LexTalks in October at the Thomas Hunt Morgan House



Several of our IBM typewriters were on display at our event in July. A Selectric II was made available along with paper and an encouragement to type us a message. Our younger visitors were fascinated! Here is an excerpt:



"This typewriter is the coolest thing ever! I have no idea how to use this thing... but I wish I had one... so much fun to type with and makes a huge racket too! I'm sure it would drive my mom nuts! Thank you so much! - A budding typewriter :)"

Meet Dr. Amanda Higgins

Our New Executive Director



After a nationwide search this summer, the Lexington History Museum hired Amanda L. Higgins, Ph.D. as its new Executive Director. She earned her doctorate in history from the University of Kentucky. Prior to joining LexHistory, Dr. Higgins worked for the Kentucky Historical Society. She brings a passion for Kentucky, Kentuckians, and American history to her work and strives to pass along some of that energy to everyone she meets along the way.

Considering your passion for history and museums, what's your earliest or most special museum memory?

When I was a child, my grandparents would take us to the Behringer-Crawford Museum in Covington to see the train display each holiday season. At the time, it was a fun trip, and I didn't think much about the space as a museum. Now, when I reminisce about my childhood, those trips are always at the forefront of my mind. The trains were neat, but I was always very taken by the miniature city scape and the trolley on the first floor.

I also loved the Cincinnati Museum Center and especially the Natural History Museum. In graduate school, I worked for a summer program that served students attending schools in Downtown Cincinnati. We took students to the Museum Center to see a traveling exhibition. It was incredible to watch middle and high school students discover the Museum, see themselves in the exhibition content, and question why the rest of the permanent museum didn't reflect their experiences in Cincinnati. I loved helping them translate what they saw, ask hard questions of docents, and have fun in a place I loved too.

With a doctorate in history, you've obviously spent a great deal of time researching and writing on history topics. Tell us about a particularly rewarding project.

I am most interested in how change happens. Questions like: "How did a social movement create the language, network, and support to change a law?" or "What made this movement 'successful' and that movement a 'failure?'" or "What is success and failure in change making through a historical lens?" I'm interested in the histories of people who have most often been ignored, marginalized, or silenced in our traditional historical records.

continued next page

Meet Dr. Higgins, continued

Some of the best work I've done was in collaboration with my friend Dr. Patrick Lewis, the director of research and collections at the Filson Historical Society, when we were both members of the Kentucky Historical Society staff. Through his work with the Civil War Governors of Kentucky Digital Documentary Edition, we discovered a court case involving an enslaved woman named Caroline who was accused of murdering a child in her charge in Louisville in 1863. We were able to piece together parts of Caroline's experience in Louisville and to learn more about the family who kept her enslaved, but we weren't able to answer all of our questions about Caroline. She disappeared from the historical records we had access to when she was pardoned for the murder. We have no idea what happened to her after the pardon was issued. And that's often what happens with historical research. We get to know someone for the moments they appear in the records, and we ask questions, seek answers, and provide an interpretation that gets as close to the truth as the material will allow us to

be. And then, at some point, we just have to be okay with not knowing everything so we can share what we do know with the world. Historical research is most valuable when it's shared, which is what makes museums so exciting to me.

How has this translated to your work at the Kentucky Historical Society prior to becoming LexHistory's new Executive Director?

At KHS, I worked with a great team to bring Kentucky's histories to the people. I oversaw the Kentucky Oral History Commission and the Kentucky Historical Markers Program, which took all the skills I learned in graduate school plus some I picked up on the fly. The markers program, in particular, called upon my research, interpretation, and communication skills to present robust histories in a very small space. When we wrote marker text, we always started with the question, "so what?" meaning, "so, what matters about this topic or person?" and then shaped the text to answer that question. Sometimes that meant important, but secondary, details were left out of the pressed metal markers.

I tried to bring my historical thinking skills to all facets of my work within the institution. Those skills allowed me to think holistically about problem-solving and to bring a systems approach to management and change. I'm proud of the work I was a part of at the Kentucky Historical Society and know that I wouldn't have made it nearly as far as I did there without the skills I honed as a graduate student and early career professional.



Dr. Higgins administered the Kentucky Local History Trust Fund as part of her duties at KHS. The Trust Fund provides grants to Kentucky's history-minded institutions to do important work in collections, programming, education, and strategic development. The Fund has awarded nearly \$100,000 in grants in its 5 years of giving.



In 2016, Dr. Higgins moderated a panel on fashion history with a KHS research fellow and former Miss America, Heather French Henry, at the Frazier History Museum in Louisville. The panel was a way for Dr. Higgins and KHS to bring important scholarly research to the public and to showcase the connections between a KHS collection (Churchill Weavers) and current practices in fashion design.

As you think about reinvigorating LexHistory and reopening exhibit space to the public, what is your benchmark museum? Further, what aspirations do you have for LexHistory and the museum's visitor experience?

I cannot wait to open exhibit space to the public again! The Oakland Museum of California is a great benchmark for LexHistory. It's a much bigger museum, and thirty years older than LexHistory, but their mission to serve all of Oakland and to create a more vibrant future for Californians and their communities speaks to the vision I have for LexHistory going forward.

I want LexHistory to be a site of collaboration in the city—with our fellow museums, with civic organizations, and with the schools to make sure we're telling histories that speak to all of the city and not just some of it. I hope visitors leave the museum and tell everyone they know that they need to stop in, because they learned something new about Lexington, because they felt welcome to learn and question, and because they left with more questions!

People who are passionate about a subject often have an almost obsessive interest that comes off as nerdy or geeky to the rest of the world—what about you?

I'm pretty nerdy in general, but I think my hobby of counted cross-stitch is likely the nerdiest thing about me. I'm not into science fiction, and I don't love movies, but I am obsessed with cross-stitching. I carry works-in-progress in my purse and am known to stitch at my children's practices, waiting in lobbies before appointments, and during televised sporting events. I didn't start until 2021, when I needed a hobby during the pandemic, but have amassed quite a collection of materials related to the hobby. And, to up the nerd factor even further, I'm now constantly on the look out for historical samplers and other counted pieces.

Dr. Higgins hours are 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday-Friday. She is currently dividing her time between the Rankin House, the Thomas Hunt Morgan House and our storage units. She can be reached by email at: mandy.higgins@lexhistory.org

FROM OUR COLLECTION

IBM TYPEWRITERS, *Bourbon* & BELLE

The Lexington History Museum has many artifacts related to bourbon industry history, including Prohibition, in its collection. Of special note is Belle Breezing's liquor license.

We also have an extensive collection of IBM Typewriters—including the Selectric line, manufactured in Lexington, Kentucky.

Currently, the museum's collection still is housed in a storage facility. However, we continue our cataloging work in anticipation of reopening to the public in our new space in 2023.



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)

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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.*

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

You may invest in the LexHistory mission and vision in a variety of ways. Please consider which method is most appropriate for you in making a tax-deductible, charitable contribution.

Outright Gifts - Gifts of cash by check or credit card, either monthly, quarterly, or all at one time, that provide immediate financial assistance to LexHistory.

Pledges - A formal Declaration of Intent to invest in LexHistory by making regular annual donations over a specific time period.

Appreciated Securities (Stock Gifts) - Gifts of long-term, appreciated securities have two major advantages: (1) providing an income tax deduction and (2) eliminating capital gains taxes to the extent allowed by law.

Gifts in Honor or Gifts in Memory - Gifts may be made in honor or memory of a loved one, friend, colleague or business.

Endowment Gifts - Gifts made to the Thomas D. Clark Endowment are permanently invested. Only a portion of the annual interest income is spent each budget year.

Planned (Deferred) Gifts - These gifts are designed to maximize your investment in LexHistory and may achieve specific tax advantages for you or your designated beneficiaries, either now or at the time of your death. You should consult your tax- or estate-planning advisor about the type of planned gift that is most appropriate for you and your family.





Welcome TO OUR NEW HOME

THE THOMAS HUNT MORGAN HOUSE

The Thomas Hunt Morgan House, at 210 N. Broadway, and the adjoining H. Foster Pettit Auditorium, are the new headquarters of the Lexington History Museum. While the Rankin House served as a temporary, physical space for the Museum, moving to the Thomas Hunt Morgan House affords us greater access for visitors.

In the coming year, we look forward to inviting you into an updated exhibition space for telling the history of Lexington and rotating temporary exhibits that explore topics important to Fayette County's development, culture, and continued growth.

Before we get to any of that, the house itself deserves a bit of attention.

Built in 1866 and first occupied in 1869, the “townhouse” at 210 North Broadway was the home of Charlton Hunt Morgan, Ellen “Nellie” Key Howard Morgan, and their three children, Thomas, Charlton, Jr., and Ellen. The land was deeded to Charlton by his mother—Henrietta Hunt Morgan—who had taken up residence in Hopemont at the corner of Mill and Second, prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. Charlton was a Confederate soldier, serving with his brother John Hunt Morgan, and spending more time in Union prisoner of war camps than on the battlefield.

The home was designed by renowned Lexington architect John McMurtry, who built many of Lexington's post-war Italianate and Victorian era homes. When the home was complete, Charlton listed Nellie as the owner. The family moved into the home and went about making their lives in Lexington.

Nellie Morgan used the home to entertain, wield influence, and establish Victorian Era clubs. Nellie was a founding member of the Lexington chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy; she hosted the Fortnightly Club, which held salon style lectures in her parlor rooms, and was a devoted member of her church. According to the Women's Club of Central Kentucky, Nellie's entertaining was not loved by all members of the household. An obituary published in the *Lexington Herald* recalled that Nellie “kept vivid the memory of the Lost Cause, helping always and in every way

Confederates and the families of Confederates.” Following Charlton’s death, Nellie and her daughter Ellen (confusingly also called Nellie) opened the home to boarders. Ellen continued the practice until her death, when the home was sold to Christ Church Scientists.

The house at 210 North Broadway is named after Thomas Hunt Morgan—Kentucky’s first Nobel prize-winning scientist. Thomas grew up in the house and nurtured his scientific interests on the third floor of the home, where the dry sink he used for rodents and other animals he experimented on still exists. According to the Women’s Club, Thomas secluded himself on the upper floor of the home throughout his childhood and when the family sold the property, many of his early possessions remained in the home.

While the original footprint of the house remains in its Victorian grandeur, an auditorium was added in the early 20th century for church services. It still has beautiful, stained-glass windows, a raised stage, and a separate entrance, which will allow us to create a meaningful exhibit in a large space. The last piece of the home, what is now called the dining room, was added by the Women’s Club of Central Kentucky after purchasing the building from the Seventh Day Adventists. The Women’s Club has used the Thomas Hunt Morgan House and



Ellen Key Howard Morgan (1840-1925)
Reproduction of a painted portrait
Wife of Charlton Hunt Morgan
Mother of Dr. Thomas Hunt Morgan
Granddaughter of Francis Scott Key

H. Foster Pettit Auditorium since their purchase in 1965. In 2014, they sold the property to the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation. The Trust renovated the buildings, updating the auditorium, completely rebuilding the dining room, and preserving the house. Today, the BGT offices are on the upper floors and LexHistory is ready to make the first floor a world-class museum space.

Below are images of the auditorium portion of the building, used to host meetings and lectures, among other events. The 2650 sq. ft. space will become the permanent exhibit space for the Lexington History Museum while allowing the Women’s Club and the Blue Grass Trust to continue to host lectures and book talks on site.





THE FRUIT FLY GUY

Before **Thomas Hunt Morgan** was a Nobel prize-winning biologist, he was a curious kid from Lexington. Born at Hope-mont on September 25, 1866, to Charlton Hunt Morgan and Nellie Key Howard Morgan, Thomas grew up in the family home built on land deeded to Charlton by his mother, Henrietta Hunt Morgan.

Morgan spent much of his teen years at what would become the University of Kentucky, entering the Preparatory Department at 16 and graduating valedictorian of the 1886 class with a Bachelor of Science degree. He quickly followed that with a

Thomas Hunt Morgan in his fly room at Columbia University. Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society.

Master of Science degree from State College (UK) in 1888 and earned his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1890. Even as a graduate student, Morgan showed distinction, winning awards and the prestigious Bruce Fellowship, which provided \$10,000 for research trips.

Morgan became a world-renowned scientist and educator, with professorships at Bryn Mawr, Columbia University, and the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). At Bryn Mawr, he met his wife, Lillian Vaughn Sampson. Though Lillian paused her graduate work to raise the couple's four children, she made significant contributions to Morgan's research.

At Columbia, Morgan and his students used *Drosophila* (fruit flies) to study genetic inheritance. Through the eye-color of fruit flies, Morgan posited that some genetic traits were sex-linked (meaning male or female), that the traits were carried on the sex chromosomes, and that other genes were likely carried on specific chromosomes as well. His lab at Columbia, the "fly-room," became a model for genetic research because of the fruit flies' easily mutable genes and quick life-cycle.



Morgan left Columbia in 1927 and established the biology school at Caltech and helped found the Marine Laboratory at Corona del Mar. He was awarded the 1933 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his "discoveries concerning the role played by the chromosome in heredity." He split the 170,332 Swedish Kronor (\$42,500 US) prize between his and his collaborators' children and acknowledged the international science community's contributions to genetic research.

Morgan retired from Caltech in 1942 and died following a heart attack in 1945. Morgan's research remains the basis for much of our understanding of genetics today.

You can learn more about Thomas Hunt Morgan, his scientific contributions, and his legacy in our newest display opening in early 2023.



FROM OUR COLLECTION

Kentucky Tall Case Clock

Likely made between 1810 and 1815.

Case attributed to Elijah Warner (1787-1829).

Clockworks stamped "L. Watson Co. Cincinnati."

Gift of Mary Rount, 2006.

Cabinetmaker and clockmaker Elijah Warner, a Massachusetts native, built a successful business in Lexington, so successful that he employed a number of journeymen to work in his shop and enlisted others to sell his products regionally. Antique clock authorities believe that Warner made only clock cases, since no clockworks or dials signed by Warner are known.

The tall case clock—commonly known today as a “grandfather” or “grandfather’s” clock—was made to accommodate the use of a pendulum, which improved the clock’s accuracy. Kentucky clockmakers, while emulating cases made elsewhere, developed their own style characteristics, including use of local wood species, inlay techniques, etc. The inner workings or movements of these clocks were sometimes imported from England, while others were made in Eastern U.S. cities. Others still were made closer to the sources of the wooden cases, including in Cincinnati and in Paris and Lexington, Kentucky. Hence, the Kentucky Tall Case Clock is a special grandfather clock, prized for the quality and craftsmanship of its case, its movement and often its very provenance.

Curious Connections

In her 2009 doctoral dissertation entitled, “Spirited Away: Black Evangelicals and the Gospel of Freedom, 1790 to 1890,” Alicestyne Turley provides evidence of an interesting, if tenuous, link between this clock and Rev. Adam Rankin, for whom the Rankin House house was built. In 1826 Rankin auctioned his property, including the enslaved Lewis Hayden. Elijah Warner purchased Hayden at the auction, in trade for a carriage and a pair of horses. Turley’s research at least introduces the possibility that Warner used enslaved labor in his shop. Upon his death, Warner’s daughter continued to enslave Hayden.

In 1844, Hayden, his second wife, Harriet Bell,* and her son escaped to freedom in Ohio and continued to Detroit and Canada. They settled in Boston in 1846, where Hayden became a prominent leader in the abolition movement, politics and business. Hayden even won election to the 1873 Massachusetts House of Representatives (94th Massachusetts General Court).

Understanding the value of education, Hayden and his wife willed their estate valued at \$5,000 (an estimated \$182,000 in today’s dollars) to the Harvard Medical School in 1893, establishing its first scholarship fund for Black students: The Lewis and Harriet Hayden Scholarship exists to this day.

**Senator Henry Clay had purchased Hayden’s first wife and son, then sold them deeper into the South, thus permanently separating them from Hayden.*



FROM OUR COLLECTION

The Photography of John P. Malick

After 65 years in commercial photography, John P. Malick had accumulated an extensive private collection of Central Kentucky photographs. Malick generously donated his entire collection to the Lexington History Museum in 2018. *Special thanks to board member Jeff Beard, who was instrumental in obtaining this collection for the museum.*



Top: President Eisenhower visits Lexington (1957). Bottom row: Joyland Park (1940s); Purcell Department Store's front window during Fire Prevention Week (1942).



Above: Lexington Fire Department's 1926 Ahrens-Fox pumper truck, then in reserve, participating in the Christmas parade. Photo circa 1963 in front of Memorial Coliseum.



Left: Beloved Fire Dog, Flash, joined the Lexington Fire Department as a five-month-old pup in August 1951 and was the first to answer fire calls from the Central Fire Station.

John Malick was a former firefighter and the son of volunteer fireman, Chester H. Malick. From an early age, John accompanied his father on fire runs. In the early 1950s, he began photographing fires and selling some of the prints to the local newspapers. At the age of 18, he joined the United States Air Force as a photography lab technician. After two years serving his country, he joined the Lexington Fire Department in 1960. Assigned to Station No. 1, he achieved the rank of captain in the Arson Investigation Unit. Malick's tenure with the LFD lasted 12 years.

Special thanks to board member William M. (Bill) Ambrose for digitizing the Malick Collection. Many more fire images are included in the book, *Lexington Firefighting*, published in 2021, authored by Bill and Foster Ockerman, Jr. with an introduction by LFD Chief Jason Wells. *The book is available at Joseph-Beth Booksellers and Barnes & Noble.*





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