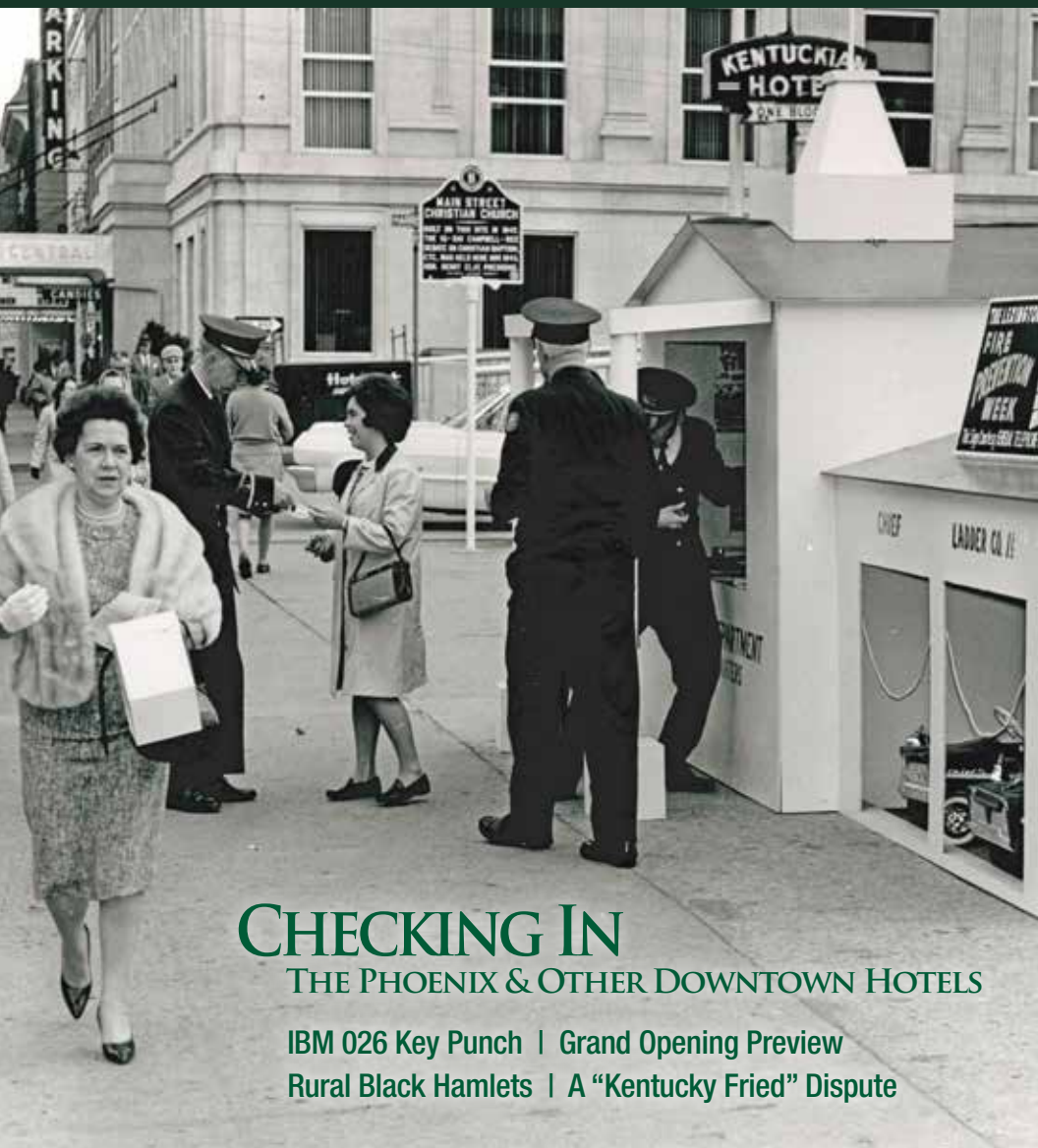


THE Bluegrass Historian

SPRING 2023

 LEX HISTORY



CHECKING IN

THE PHOENIX & OTHER DOWNTOWN HOTELS

IBM 026 Key Punch | Grand Opening Preview

Rural Black Hamlets | A “Kentucky Fried” Dispute

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

Katrina Dixon
Curator & Exhibit Manager

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

James L. Dickinson, *Chair*
*Administrative Hearing Officer/
Attorney*

Allen Eskridge, *Vice Chair*
E&A Consulting

Laura Cullen Glasscock,
Secretary
Kentucky State University
The Kentucky Gazette

Amelia Adams, *Treasurer*
Stoll Keenon Ogden

William Ambrose
Author & Historian

Jeff Beard
Lexmark, retired

Dr. Bradley Canon
University of Kentucky, retired

Alan Lytle
WUKY

Josh Mers
Energy Insurance Agency

Terry Smith
Fender Funeral Directors

Bill Swinford
Attorney & Genealogist

Adrian Wallace
Bishop & Chase Consulting

**Lexington History
Museum, Inc.**

PO Box 748
Lexington, KY 40588

Cover photo from John P. Malick Collection,
Lexington History Museum

History Collective

LexHistory's ambitious strategic plan called for the development of the Lexington History Collective to connect LexHistory with diverse and inclusive groups who preserve unique aspects of Lexington's history to ensure that these stories are told, and to assist in Lexington's 250th anniversary celebrations in 2025.

We hosted the inaugural meeting in January, with more than 15 local groups involved in an open discussion about Lexington's history community, its needs and goals, and how we can work together to create meaningful opportunities for Lexington residents and visitors to engage with local history. At the January meeting, we established a first-in-Lexington history listserv for local groups to share news and ask for assistance.

Lexington History Collective Participants

African Cemetery #2

Ashland, the Henry Clay Estate

Blue Grass Trust for
Historic Preservation

Civilex

Daughters of the
American Revolution

Kentucky Historical Society

Junior League of Lexington

Lexington Public Library
Kentucky Room

Lexington Public Safety
Museum

LFUCG Archives

LFUCG Historic Preservation

Mary Todd Lincoln House

Sayre Upper School
History Faculty

Sons of the American
Revolution

Waveland State Historic Site

Webb Museum for
Anthropology, UK

The History Collective will meet quarterly for now and may increase meetings as the city's plans for Lexington's 250th anniversary celebration develop. We are so pleased to be working with our friends and colleagues from history-minded organizations across Fayette County!

Do you work with an organization that would like to be involved in the History Collective? Please contact Mandy Higgins for more information!



The Bluegrass Historian is sponsored in part by

KIRKPATRICK & Co.

www.kirkfarms.com

CONTENTS



The IBM 026 KEY PUNCH

page 3

PREVIEW OUR REIMAGINED MUSEUM PLAN

page 6



THE PHOENIX HOTEL

page 8



A “Kentucky Fried” Dispute

page 12

Support the Museum!



About the cover: The Lafayette, Phoenix and other downtown hotels supported Lexington Fire Prevention Week each year. In October 1964, firemen built a model fire station and handed out fire prevention literature near the Lafayette Hotel. The cover image, part of our John P. Malick Collection, shows the model station and firemen. Note in the background a directional sign for the Kentuckian Hotel and the ground floors of the Lafayette Hotel, now the Lexington-Fayette Government Center.

BRINGING LEXHISTORY

Back to Life



After more than a decade, LexHistory is poised to welcome visitors back to the beginning of a reimagined museum on August 26, 2023, at our new home, the Thomas Hunt Morgan House (210 North Broadway).

As one of the region’s most important cultural organizations, LexHistory is an energetic partner in re-engaging the community with its vibrant and interesting history.

We need your financial support—through your personal philanthropic contribution or your company’s corporate sponsorship—to help us create a fantastic reopening with meaningful content, educational displays, and memorable experiences for our visitors.

*For more details, see pages 6-7
or contact Mandy Higgins.*

2023 LEXTalks

MARCH: Central KY Women & the 1964 March on Frankfort

In March, Dr. Le Datta Grimes and Joanna Hay shared their work on the *March on Frankfort Project* that encompasses new oral histories with participants in the 1964 March, discussion about the roles of Kentuckians in pushing the Breathitt administration to adopt the 1966 Kentucky Civil Rights Act, and additional educational resources. Oral History participants Sharyn Mitchell and Jim Embry attended and shared their experiences during the 1964 March and other Civil Rights activities in and around Lexington during the era.



JUNE: Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of Lexington's Human Rights Commission

Our June event featured a roundtable discussion with Human Rights Commission executive director Raymond A. Sexton as well as current and former commission members. The panelists discussed the history and creation of the commission, its service to the community, and its plans for the next 60 years.



Mark Your Calendar!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

3:00-6:00 PM

***CLAY 1613: An American Family in Black and White* documentary in partnership with the Henry Clay Memorial Foundation**

Join us for a special screening of *CLAY 1613*—a 60-minute documentary inspired by the family research of Leontyne Clay Peck and the Clay Family Society. The film connects Black, White, known, and unknown descendants of planter John Clay, a forefather of Lexington's Henry Clay.

Our **LEXTalks** events are FREE and take place at the Thomas Hunt Morgan House, 210 North Broadway. Registration required. Learn more at www.lexhistory.com

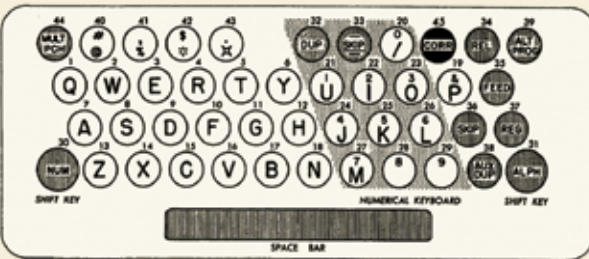
The IBM 026 KEY PUNCH

Some form of punched cards date back to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when they were used to “program” cloth-making machinery and looms. Later, Herman Hollerith invented and developed a punch-card tabulation machine system that revolutionized statistical computation, filing for the first patent in 1884.



Hollerith’s system, including punch, tabulator, and sorter, allowed the official 1890 census count to be tallied in six months; in another two years, all the census data was completed and defined. The cost was \$5 million below the forecasts and saved more than two years’ time. His later machines mechanized the card-feeding process, adding numbers, and sorted cards, in addition to merely counting data. In 1896 Hollerith founded the Tabulating Machine Company, forerunner of the Computer Tabulating Recording Company (CTR). In 1924, CTR changed its name to the International Business Machines Corporation—IBM.

As late as the 1970s, punch card systems were used to process large amounts of data for storage on computer systems of the day. Today’s more capable programming and computers have rendered them obsolete but no less fascinating.



How does it work?

The IBM 026 Key Punch or Printing Card Punch—*like the one in the LexHistory collection*—was introduced in July 1949. Blank cards were fed into the punching station

continued next page

The IBM 026 KEY PUNCH, continued

from the input hopper one by one. The card faced the operator on the right, just above the keyboard. The previous card was in the center. When a card was completely punched, the previous one moved to the left position and then flipped up into the output stacker. The current card became the previous card, and a new card was fed into the hopper to take the current position.

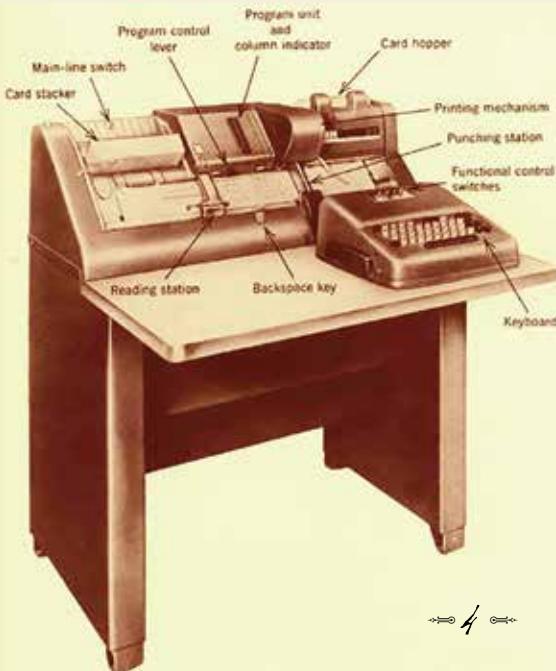
The operator pressed keys to punch holes in the cards. Each “data key” on the main keypad—uppercase letter, digit, space bar, or punctuation—moved the cards one column to the left. Data characters were printed across the top of the card on the 026 in their column positions. On the keyboard unit, above the keys, were three Functional Control Switches: Print On/Off, Program On/Off, and Autofeed.

The machine could be programmed with a program card, which was an ordinary punch card wrapped around the program drum (housed in the top, center compart-

ment). The drum turned with the card-column, and was read by little toothed wheels. Control codes (i.e., for DUP or SKIP) were entered in the desired column positions, making it possible to duplicate preceding cards automatically.

The key punch machine and its compatible devices revolutionized data processing and made mass data entry possible without human calculation. Key punch noise was abundant, especially when many punches were operated in a confined space. An expert key punch operator in data-entry applications could punch 200 cards per hour. There was a huge market for key punch operators in the 1950s and 1960s, and 91 percent of operators were women.

The punch card machines were eventually replaced by more advanced data processing computers, but today’s data entry specialists fill a role analogous to punch operators of this earlier time.



The IBM 026 Key Punch is one of the many IBM and typewriter-related artifacts that are a core part of the LexHistory Collections. LexHistory also preserves multiple versions of the IBM typewriter (produced here in Lexington beginning in 1957), the first IBM laptop—the PC Convertible—and myriad advertising materials, blueprints, and other ephemera from Lexington’s IBM and Lexmark facilities.

Help us tell more of IBM’s Lexington stories by supporting our reimagined museum. See pages 6-7 for more details.

Images: www.columbia.edu



A Sense of Place: Remembering and Restoring the History of Fayette County's Rural Black Hamlets

At least 20 rural Black hamlets in Fayette County were formed between 1826-1924. These communities grew outside Lexington's urban core and do not include downtown neighborhoods like Adamstown or Davis Bottom. The rural hamlets were developed by Black families who purchased—or rarely were given—land by white landowners to build homes and farm. Each rural community included churches, schools, grocery stores, and lodges.



Located off Old Todds Road near Liberty Road, originally on about 40 acres, Cadentown is one such hamlet. The first Cadentown School was built around 1879 on a portion of the Cadentown Baptist Church lot. In 1923, with support from the Cadentown residents, Fayette County Public Schools and the Rosewald Fund, it was replaced by what is now called the Cadentown Rosenwald School. Of five such schools in Fayette County at one time, it is the only extant Rosenwald building in Lexington. Mainly built throughout the rural South, these schools grew from the friendship, partnership and shared vision of African-American educator and leader Booker T. Washington and Jewish German-American Julius Rosenwald, the retailer and philanthropist, who amassed a fortune through his part ownership of Sears, Roebuck & Co. The Rosenwald Fund contributed to 155 schools in Kentucky between 1917 and 1932.

As Lexington and Fayette County have continued to grow, many of the hamlets have lost their distinct characteristics and histories. A Steering Committee formed under the direction of LFUCG Councilmember Kathy Plomin and LFUCG Parks and Recreation are working to continue preservation efforts and utilize the Cadentown Rosenwald School, church, and cemetery to educate the public about the history and heritage of Fayette County hamlets. "The community's reaction to this initiative has been overwhelmingly positive and appreciated. The recognition of the historical impact of these Black hamlets is long overdue and our steering committee is committed to making it a reality for our community," Councilmember Plomin said.



LexHistory Executive Director, Mandy Higgins, serves on the steering committee, along with representatives from the hamlets, the Lexington Public Library, the Mayor's Office, and local historians. The Museum will help collect and preserve materials donated or loaned for display at the Cadentown school. We will also help develop interpretative texts and provide guidance on exhibit design.



The Cadentown Rosenwald School (pictured at left) is the only remaining Rosenwald school in Fayette County. Many of the rural hamlets continue to support churches and cemeteries, but are most identifiable through road names such as Jonestown Lane (shown above).

Images: Lexington Herald-Leader

To learn more about *A Sense of Place*, the steering committee's charge, and our work so far, join us at Cadentown Baptist Church on Juneteenth (June 19) at 11:00 am.



Telling Our Stories

ALL ROADS LEAD TO LEXINGTON

The permanent exhibition at the Thomas Hunt Morgan House will explore vignettes of Lexington history, highlighting the people, animals, and landscapes of Lexington and Fayette County.

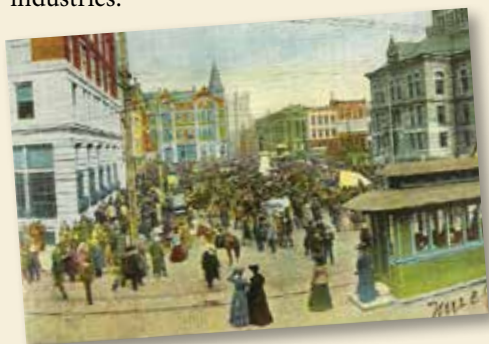


TECHNOLOGY & Typewriters

From data processing to type elements (balls), Lexington's 20th century expansion was remarkable. Step into a mid-century office and see the expansion of IBM in Lexington and its role in shaping modern Lexington and Fayette County.

BOURBON, HORSES & Belle

The limestone that helped build Lexington in the 19th century, continues to drive the city's signature Bourbon and equine industries. From the Kentucky Association Track to Old Tarr Distillery and back again, the city's history is intertwined with these industries.



GOVERNING LEXINGTON

Tandy Park, once known simply as "Cheap-side"—the city's public courthouse square from its earliest days—has seen the best and worst Lexington has to offer. Explore the development of Lexington's city government, notorious events, as well as the history of the Lexington History Museum.

SCIENCE & THE FRUIT FLY GUY

Thomas Hunt Morgan was the son of the prominent Lexington Hunt Morgan Family and the first Kentuckian to win a Nobel Prize. This exhibit will explore his life and legacy, including his time in Lexington, the history of the home where he grew up, and his groundbreaking work with genetics.



Athens of the West

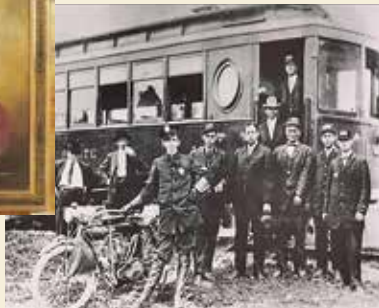
Lexington grew from a rural outpost with few inhabitants to a major commercial and agricultural center of the 19th century. What crops, people, and animals made this possible? What really was *The Athens of the West*?



Finding Lexington

The area now known as Lexington and Fayette County has sustained human life since at least 9,500 BCE. This vignette will explore what is known about the earliest inhabitants of Lexington and how Euro-Americans encountered the region in the late 18th century.

From the earliest people in the area to our friends and neighbors today, Lexingtonians have contributed much to the world. We look forward to displaying collected artifacts—including agricultural items, portraits of Lexington families, hand-sewn quilts, an original land deed signed by Patrick Henry, and more. Our mission is to tell the stories of our past that otherwise could be lost or forgotten, while educating new generations to give them the context to understand the future.



CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Museum Underwriter \$20,000

Sponsors at this level will be recognized in all publicity and events as well as prominent visibility to all visitors at the Thomas Hunt Morgan House.

Permanent Exhibits

Long-term exhibits that will remain the core of the museum's interpretation of Lexington's history for visitors.

Gold	\$7,500
Silver	\$5,000
Bronze	\$2,500

GIVING & RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES

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)

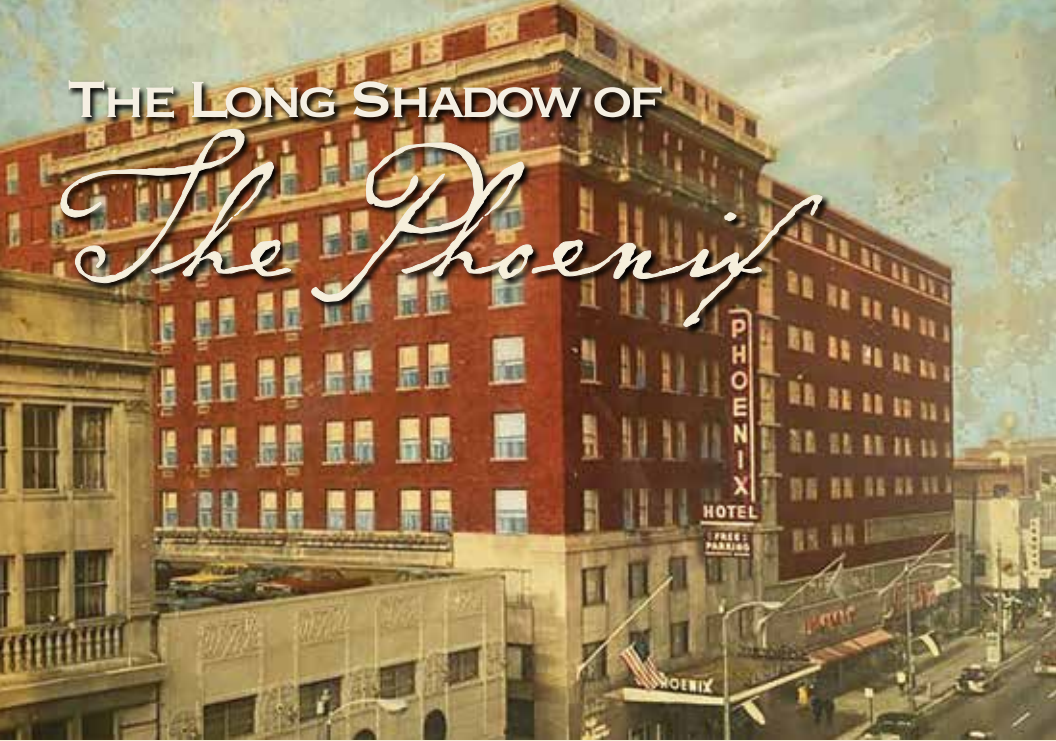
Pledged over a maximum of five years:

Thomas D. Clark Society (\$5,000-\$9,999)
Thomas D. Clark Fellows (\$10,000+)

To make your donation, use the envelope provided or donate securely through our website at lexhistory.org/donate

THE LONG SHADOW OF

The Phoenix



Many major decisions affecting the growth of Lexington from the early 19th century through the mid-twentieth were made inside the Phoenix Hotel.

The intersection of Main and Limestone Streets has been a central location for Lexington since the very beginning of the city—welcoming visitors and residents alike.

Mayor Linda Gorton's proposed fiscal year 2024 budget request includes \$2 million to reimagine Phoenix Park.



From 1800 to 1977, a tavern, inn or hotel operated at the corner of Main Street and Limestone. John Postlethwaite opened a tavern in 1797 and quickly added 12 rooms for overnight travelers. Postlethwaite's was the center of early Lexington commerce and socializing, serving as the unofficial headquarters to the Lexington Jockey Club and the Lexington Debate Club. Postlethwaite was the proprietor of the hotel until his death during the Cholera Epidemic of 1833.

In September 1833, Postlethwaite's son-in-law and a partner purchased the hotel and reopened it as the Phoenix—it having risen from the ashes of an 1820 fire and the devastation of the epidemic to again welcome travelers and locals to the finest food and drink Lexington could offer, including eggs and milk produced at the Ashland estate by the men and women enslaved by the Clay family.

Many major decisions affecting the growth of Lexington from the early 19th century through the mid-twentieth were made inside the Phoenix Hotel. The Kentucky Equal Rights Association met at the hotel in 1915; the Kiwanis Club began in the Phoenix din-

ing room in 1919; the Rotary Club met at the Phoenix, as did the Business and Professional Women's Club. The Kentucky State Legislature held banquets and meetings at the hotel as well. Deals were brokered there because every major city organization used the hotel as a place for socialization and business.

The Phoenix was the site of personal celebrations including weddings, retirement parties, and birthday gatherings. But, for most of its existence, the Phoenix was a segregated facility—white people could socialize and enjoy the atmosphere, but Black people were only welcome as employees, specifically servers, cooks, laundresses, and housekeeping staff. On October 17, 1961, five African-American basketball players from the Boston Celtics and two from the St. Louis Hawks boycotted an NBA exhibition game in Lexington after being refused service at the coffee shop in the Phoenix Hotel. Two of the Celtics players, Thomas “Satch” Sanders and Sam Jones, went to the café to grab a meal. While allowed to stay with the team in the hotel, the coffee shop denied them entry. Sanders and Jones informed Celtics teammate Bill Russell of what had happened. Russell, along with Sanders, Sam Jones, K.C. Jones, and Al Butler of the Celtics were joined by Cleo Hill and Woody Sauldsbury of the Hawks in refusing to play and left town. Celtics Coach Red Auerbach urged the players to stay, and the white players of each team stayed behind to play the game.

Sparked by the boycott, The Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.) picketed the Phoenix and other segregated businesses in downtown Lexington. The protest was documented by local photographer Calvert McCann (1942-2014). McCann photographed demonstrations downtown, sit-ins at lunch counters, the protests at the Phoenix Hotel, and



The Kiwanis Club of Lexington first met at the Phoenix Hotel dining room in 1919 and was officially chartered on January 8, 1920. They met at the Phoenix for one year, then moved their meetings to the Lafayette Hotel, where they remained until the mid-1960s. The group met at other area hotels, including the Holiday Inn East and the Continental Hotel throughout the 1970s. The sign, now in the Lexington History Museum collection, noted meeting times and locations.

the March on Frankfort led by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Following the protests—and Louis Armstrong's refusal to cross the picket line to play a private party—the Phoenix quietly desegregated. The hotel continued to welcome guests and host events until it closed in 1977, following years of decline and increased competition with suburban hotels and shopping centers.

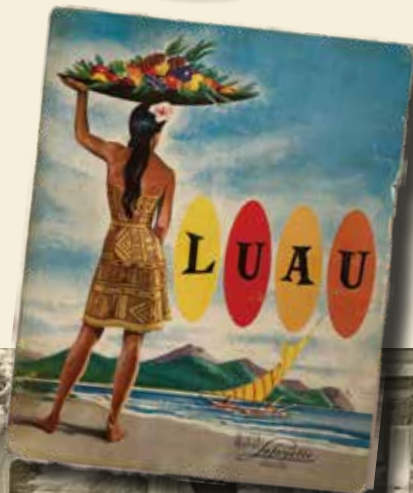
In 1981, Wallace Wilkinson purchased the property and demolished the hotel. Initially, Wilkinson planned to build the World Coal Center, but the funding never materialized. In its place, the city established Phoenix Park, Park Plaza Tower was built, and the Central Branch of the Lexington Public Library opened.

CHECKING IN—OTHER DOWNTOWN HOTELS

Although the Phoenix is the hotel long-time Lexingtonians most often mention, downtown was home to several other lodging and dining options. They were anchors to the core business district of the city. Hotel dining rooms hosted local civic and business clubs, including the Kiwanis Club of Lexington and the Rotary Club. The hotels were sites of dances and weddings, hosted travelers passing through and future Lexingtonians looking for homes, and were places for Lexington residents to see and be seen.

Notably, the Lafayette Hotel opened in 1920 at the corner of Walnut (now MLK) and Main Streets. Today, the Lexington-Fayette Government Center is in the building. Former Lexington Mayor Jim Gray moved the Mayor's office into the Lafayette's ballroom on the first floor in 2012. Other former hotels include the Drake, Henry Clay, Kentuckian, Palace, and Savoy.

LexHistory is fortunate to have a number of artifacts from the former Drake, Lafayette and Phoenix hotels, including room keys, menus, a dining room center piece, and letterhead. We look forward to sharing these pieces and others related to Lexington's hotel industry in our permanent exhibition.



THE PORTRAIT GALLERY

Edward Wilder served as Trade Board Secretary and then Executive Secretary for the Lexington Chamber of Commerce from 1925 to 1964. In that position, Wilder had an active role in the growth of Lexington for forty years.

Wilder was born in Shelbyville, Kentucky, in 1894. Prior to his time in the Chamber of Commerce, he was a reporter for the *Louisville Courier*, and assisted national newsreel and motion picture organizations in filming scenes of the Bluegrass area and eastern Kentucky. He spent a short time in Jackson, Tennessee, as the trade board secretary for their Chamber and returned to Kentucky to help grow Lexington.

Wilder's vision for the city's expansion was rooted in his devotion to education.

He was instrumental in bringing IBM to Lexington as well as in the construction of New Circle Road. After a Chamber meeting at the Phoenix Hotel, Wilder penned the letter to the U.S. Public Health Service to locate a prison in the area following the Porter Act. Wilder helped bring the Veterans Administration Hospital, oversaw—and was frustrated by—the development of the first section of what is now known as New Circle. At the time, it was called the Belt Line and Wilder did not want to see commerce or storefronts on the roadway. The first section—from Broadway to Richmond Road remains commercial today. Wilder was part of the discussion to establish the Urban Services Boundary, which protected his own farm from development.

Wilder's vision reflected the status quo in Lexington at the time, reinforcing segregation while helping develop economic opportunities for the city's educated white population.

In his personal life, Mr. Wilder was an artistic introvert, known for sitting just outside of the crowd, pipe in hand, staring out the window. He was a sculptor and writer. He and his wife had a farm outside the city boundary where he enjoyed gardening and tending to their horses. They were members of a variety of social clubs in the city, including the Iroquois Hunt Club, and so well known as citizens of Lexington that a newspaper reported their arrival home from vacation.

To honor his many years of service, past presidents of the Chamber commissioned a portrait of Wilder in 1967, which hung in their offices on North Broadway. It was eventually removed and his granddaughter, Sara Hicks donated it to the Museum in 2023. In his retirement, Wilder was working on a novel that he never published. His research took him on a tour of Southern cities where he studied land deeds and family histories. He passed away in 1980.

Wilder's portrait is one of many in the Lexington History Museum Collections. The portraits include 19th, 20th and 21st century Lexingtonians, in a variety of styles, from amateurs to professional portrait artists and oil paintings to pencil drawings. Our portrait collection will be featured in The Portrait Gallery section of future newsletters, and you can see some of the portraits on display in the museum beginning in August!



A “Kentucky Fried” Dispute

By Clay Walton, LexHistory Intern

KFC sued Lexington’s Parkette Drive-In in 1971 in a trademark dispute. The local restaurant, though famous for its Poor Boy sandwiches, used the term “Kentucky Fried Chicken” for another popular menu item. John Y. Brown, Jr., who had bought the fast-food chain in 1964 from Col. Harlan Sanders, filed his claims in the U.S District Court. The *Lexington Leader* reported KFC’s claim that Parkette used the phrase “long after the plaintiffs and their services and products have become widely identified by the trademark.” KFC’s suit, if successful, would have seen Parkette barred from use of the term “Kentucky Fried Chicken,” and Parkette would have had to destroy any existing advertising bearing such branding. Additionally, KFC demanded that Parkette account for “any and all profits derived” from the restaurant’s use of the trademark. Such a ruling could have amounted to quite a large sum for a small business.

Parkette was not so easily intimidated by the fast-food giant. In fact, restaurant founder Joe Smiley claimed he could prove his coinage of the term. Smiley was not merely bluffing, as the case was instead settled outside of court despite KFC’s massive financial advantage. In fact, KFC is reported to have paid Smiley to not use the term “Kentucky Fried Chicken” on his menus. A later owner of the restaurant estimated the settlement amounted to around \$45,000 (approx. \$340,000 in 2023). The sum has been reported differently over time. The *Herald-Leader* reported in 1992 that Col. Harlan Sanders had bought the name “Kentucky Fried Chicken” from Smiley for \$30,000. A date is not included with the statement. At the

time of the lawsuit, however, Sanders was not the owner of the company. What exactly Smiley used to prove his case is unclear. It is true that Parkette opened its doors along Lexington’s Belt Line (New Circle Road) in November 1951, and that while Sanders began selling his fried chicken recipe in





Left: The iconic Parkette sign. The drive-in was a Lexington family favorite for decades. Above: Joe Smiley with a Parkette Drive-In menu featuring “Kentucky Fried Chicken” (inset). Below: The Parkette in 1952, showing a dirt road that later would become the first section of New Circle Road (The Belt Line). Images: Lexington Herald-Leader

1930, the first “Kentucky Fried Chicken” franchise did not open until 1952. A photo of Smiley holding an old Parkette menu with “Kentucky Fried Chicken” printed in large font was taken several decades after the fact, perhaps suggesting that Smiley used this as his proof. Smiley is alleged to have been a friend and business partner of Col. Harlan Sanders in the years before the latter franchised his recipe, further muddying the origin story. Though “Kentucky Fried Chicken” was served at Parkette for the first decade of KFC’s franchising, the Colonel never took legal action against Parkette. It was only after Brown acquired the recipe and franchising rights that legal action was initiated.



Lexington has many culinary histories to tell! From family-owned diners who’ve nourished generations to James Beard Award winning chefs, food history is Lexington history. In the future, we hope to exhibit more of Lexington’s food-related stories. Do you have artifacts from Lexington restaurants or memories of a favorite Lexington menu item? Share them with us!



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