

THE Bluegrass Historian

FALL 2023

 LEX HISTORY



WE ARE
OPEN!

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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Executive Director

Katrina Dixon
Curator & Exhibit Manager

McKenna Natzke
*UK Graduate student,
2023-24 intern*

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**Lexington History
Museum, Inc.**

PO Box 748
Lexington, KY 40588

Lexington History Museum
201 North Broadway, Lexington

Hours: Thursday & Friday Noon-4:00 pm
Saturday 10:00 am-4:00 pm.

School & Group Tours available by appointment.

General admission: \$10 | Under 5 years: Free
Special rates available for seniors, military and groups.

*Lexington History Museum is positioned to rise
to new levels of visibility and achievement as the
steward of Lexington's history thanks to:*

*A dedicated Board of Trustees, who adopted an
ambitious plan in 2021 to breathe new life into this
organization through a bold new mission and vision.*

*The leadership of Lexington Mayor Linda Gorton
and members of the Lexington-Fayette
Urban County Government through a three-year
capacity-building grant.*

*And to the late Foster Ockerman, Jr., for his
perseverance, steadfast devotion, and commitment
to the museum for more than two decades.*

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KEENELAND 

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Join the Museum!



BECOME A LEXHISTORY MEMBER!

Lexington History Museum members support our mission to inspire our future by collecting and preserving Lexington's history and telling our stories. Membership dues help fund our exhibitions, research, education programs, and more!

Lexington History Museum members not only make a positive impact on Lexington's cultural community, they also receive:

- Free admission to the Lexington History Museum, including the permanent exhibition, *All Roads Lead to Lexington*
- Discounted admission for guests of members during regular museum hours
- Free admission to LexTalks events (four per year)
- *The Bluegrass Historian* newsletter
- Special members-only mailings and emails
- Invitations to members-only events, exhibition openings, and programs
- Discounted admission to select LexHistory-supported events
- Free admission, gift shop discounts, and much more to 400 organizations in more than 45 states across the country through the *Time Travelers Network**

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

LexHistory Membership fees run on an annual, calendar year basis.

Student/Educator	\$25
Individual	\$40
Household**	\$80

***free admission for up to six household members*

Join today! Online, in person, or by mail. Scan the QR code at left or visit www.lexhistory.org/join. *Downloadable form available.*

*** Time Travelers** is a free reciprocal membership network for historical museums, sites, and societies throughout the United States. Currently, the Time Travelers program includes over 400 organizations in more than 45 states across the country. Members of these organizations can receive a variety of exclusive benefits and privileges, such as free admission, gift shop discounts, and much, much more.



Grand Opening!

The Lexington History Museum reopened in late August with more than 300 people stopping in to see us! On August 24, the Mayor joined us for a preview event with our families and long-time supporters, and on August 26, we opened our doors to the public for the first time in over a decade.





SPECIAL THANKS

It takes a community to build a museum. We're grateful to the following individuals, organizations, and corporations for their support in helping us re-open:

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Bill Straus Photography
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The University of Kentucky
Special Collections
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VisitLex

Welcome to the Lexington History Museum—where everyone who visits will see a part of their own history within our exhibits. We are a museum for ALL of Lexington, telling 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.

Whether you're a longtime resident or a first-time visitor, LexHistory has something new for you to learn—about the history of the area that became Lexington; our signature industries; or some of our infamous citizens. You will see tools of some of the area's earliest inhabitants and type on an IBM Selectric typewriter produced in Lexington—all within the same walls. We want to be your first stop on any history tour—providing the context and connections to other historic sites throughout Central Kentucky.



Our museum explores vignettes of Lexington history, highlighting the people, animals, and landscapes of Lexington and Fayette County.

This area has sustained human life since at least 9,500 BCE. Learn more about the earliest inhabitants of Lexington and how Euro-Americans encountered the region in the late 18th century.

“Athens of the West” tells how 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?

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.

Checking In: Although the Phoenix may be the hotel many Lexingtonians most often mention,



LexHistory Members enjoy free admission to the Museum and discounted admission for their guests during regular museum hours. Become a Member today!

downtown was home to several other lodging and dining options. They were anchors for the core business district of the city. We are fortunate to have a number of artifacts from the former Drake, Lafayette and Phoenix hotels to share with visitors.

From data processing to type elements, Lexington's 20th century expansion was remarkable. Step into a mid-century office and learn about the expansion of IBM in Lexington

and its role in shaping modern Lexington and Fayette County.

Tandy Park, once known simply as "Cheapside"—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 itself.

UPCOMING
2024

LEXTalks

FEBRUARY 18:

“Lexington, Kentucky: Segregated by Design”

Rona Roberts and Barbara Sutherland of BlackYarn document how government and private interests perpetuated residential segregation in Lexington and the ongoing impact those past policies and practices have on our community today.



APRIL 14:

The Heart Of The Turf: Racing’s Black Pioneers

Keeneland Library Director Roda Ferraro will expand on the stories presented in *The Heart of the Turf* exhibit.

From racetrack superstars to behind-the-scenes caretakers, *The Heart of the Turf: Racing’s Black Pioneers* showcases select stories of the countless African Americans who forged their way in Kentucky

and beyond from the era of slavery to the present, making the racing industry what it is today.

In OCTOBER, Carly Muetterties will join us with her book Bluegrass Bold highlighting the contributions of Kentucky women in conjunction with the Woman’s Club of Central Kentucky exhibit.

Our **LEXTalks** events are FREE to members (\$10 for non-members) and take place at the Museum, 210 North Broadway.

Admission to the Museum is included, doors open one hour prior to event for viewing exhibits. Advance registration required for all who attend.

Upcoming Exhibits

FEBRUARY 29 - MAY 5, 2024

Keeneland's traveling exhibit, **Heart of the Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers** will be on display at the Lexington History Museum Feb. 29, 2024-May 5, 2024. The exhibit highlights the lives and careers of 80 African American horsemen and horsewomen from the mid 1800s to the present through exhibited interpretive panels, photographs, artwork, and more.



FALL 2024

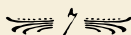
130 Years of the Woman's Club of Central Kentucky exhibition will explore the Club as a "dynamic force for cultural and political advancement," in Central Kentucky from its founding in 1894 through today. The exhibit will feature oral histories, artifacts, and images highlighting WCKC's impact on Lexington and the region.



LEXINGTON'S 250TH!

In June 2025, we'll celebrate Lexington's 250th birthday with a new exhibition featuring 50 people or groups who shaped Lexington history. You can learn more about the city's plans for 250Lex at www.250lex.com.

To be among the first to see these exciting exhibits, become a Museum member! Exhibit previews and other special events are benefits of membership!



COLLECTIONS CORNER

The **IBM PC Convertible 5140**,

released in 1986, was the company's first laptop computer and the first to use the 3.5-inch floppy disk (that soon became the industry standard).



This revolutionary computer weighed less than 13 pounds and cost consumers approximately \$2000. The convertible system was light enough to be carried around but could also function as a primary desktop machine, with a detachable LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) screen. With no internal operating system, the computer ran on operating disks in the floppy drive and was introduced with 265K of RAM and memory, a modem, and dual 720K 3.5-inch floppy drives. While the computer did not fare well in the market, many of the components first introduced in this model became standard in future models, including the dual 3.5-inch floppy drives, the “suspend” mode feature (which allowed the computer to sleep rather than be turned off completely when pressing the Power button), and the option to run on battery power.

The PC Convertible had difficulty in the marketplace since other laptops had more built-in features. However, it enjoyed some success with business users, who saw its battery life and portability as selling points. Even after the release of the Model 3 in October 1987, which fixed some of the prior model's issues, lack of built-in features remained a pain point. The parallel, serial and video ports all required adapters, while competing machines included these as integrated features.

LexHistory's PC Convertible was donated by Paulo Peres, son-in-law of the late James Rice, who was the lead engineer on the design team for the laptop. Peres approached LexHistory after saving the PC Convertible from being thrown away in 2010. Along with this pristine PC Convertible, we received a modem, battery pack, carrying case, a framed photo of the design team, and original marketing materials. We are very pleased to feature these items in our IBM exhibit, which also includes the 026 Key Punch machine, the Model B typewriter, the legendary Selectric, whose technology changed the office environment.

*Visit the Museum to see our IBM exhibit—
and type on a legendary Selectric typewriter!*



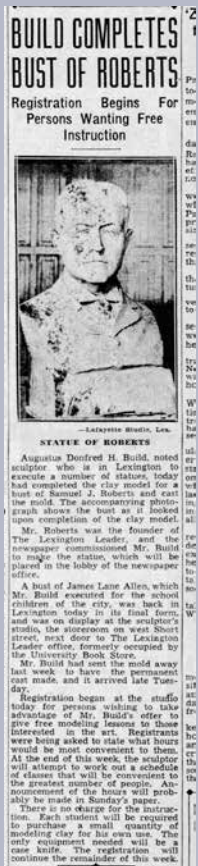
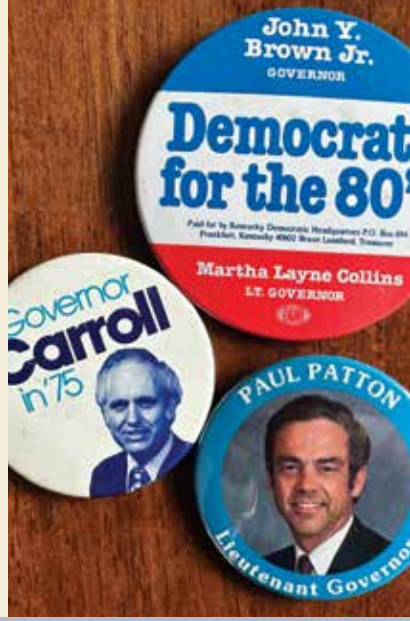
Meet Our Intern!



McKenna Natzke is a graduate student at the University of Kentucky. Her research interests include the Reconstruction and Victorian era Lexington, African American women, and public history and preservation.

LexHistory hired her as an intern in October 2023, and she has hit the ground running! McKenna researched, photographed, and documented a new collection of political buttons for long-term stewardship in the museum collection.

James L. Dickinson donated these campaign buttons in memory of his mother, Mildred Lockhart Dickinson, who had collected them.



A Traveling Con Artist

Posing as a world-renowned sculptor, a former prison inmate tricked prominent Lexingtonians into high-paying art commissions.

A *Lexington Leader* column ran on March 8, 1934, announcing that a critically-acclaimed sculptor named Augustus Donfred H. Build was commissioned by the newspaper to sculpt busts of poet James Lane Allen and *Leader* founder Samuel Roberts. Build claimed that his exhibitions “Grief,” “Antagonism,” “Duality,” and “Transition” were displayed in Florence, Italy.

Though Build was indeed a skilled artist, his claims of classical training and other renown were false—Build learned to sculpt while serving a prison sentence in Atlanta.

In addition to busts of Roberts and Allen, Build received commissions for a former superintendent of schools, champion horses, pedigreed dogs, and many others. For a statue of the trotting stallion Guy Axeworthy, Build told his Lexington acquaintances that he received \$15,000 (about \$300,000 today).

Build’s story ends abruptly, but no less dramatically than his rise. The sculptor was pulled over in Tennessee, traveling with his wife and a “truck-load of chickens” in tow. He had at least six pending criminal charges against him in the state. Build escaped on foot from the attempted arrest, leaving his wife and chickens stranded with the automobile. Perhaps not shockingly, his flight was successful, and Build was never apprehended.

THE PORTRAIT GALLERY

Loretta Gilliam Brock Clark

was born in Lenox, Kentucky, in 1919. Her father, Reverend Adolphous Gilliam, served as minister of Methodist churches in Lexington and Central Kentucky for forty years. Mrs. Clark was a graduate of Sayre College (today, Sayre School) and Centre College in Danville. After graduation, she taught mathematics at Irvine High School and in Lexington schools. During WWII, she was a research assistant at the University of California Sonar Research Laboratory in San Diego, and she taught radio theory to combat pilots in St. Louis.

Mrs. Clark served as the Lexington YWCA Young Adult Director before marrying Walter Brock, a Lexington Attorney, in 1952. She was a talented musician and artist, and taught piano out of her home while her children were young. For a time, she also acted as director of the children's choir of First United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Clark was an active member in many areas of the Woman's Club of Central Kentucky before becoming President from 1977-1979. During her administration, the then-Mrs. Brock made many enhancements to the Thomas Hunt Morgan auditorium, including hanging the first velveteen backdrop, installing stage lights, rewiring and augmenting the sound system, and also gifting a movie projector. Years later, she researched and penned *A History of the Woman's Club of Central Kentucky 1894-1994*. The history was published by the Woman's Club of Central Kentucky in January 1996, with an introduction by her future husband Dr. Thomas Clark, who wrote:

"Loretta Brock has written a spritely history of a gallant organization... Reading her historical narrative is comparable to taking a vicarious journey back into other days when community relationships were more personal and more graceful. Modern readers of this history may find it difficult to comprehend the status of women during those changing times in both nation and state."

Loretta Brock and Dr. Clark, who were both widowed, married in 1998. Dr. Clark passed away in 2005, and Loretta Gilliam Brock Clark passed away in 2020.

Clark'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



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< Learn more.

Your Name is Important! We have carefully reviewed the names listed in this newsletter. However, in a listing of this length, errors may occur. If your name has been omitted, misspelled or incorrectly listed, please accept our apology and bring the error to our attention so that we may correct our records. Call the Museum at 859-440-1582 or email mandy.higgins@lexhistory.org.

A History of Our Own

The Lexington History Museum, Inc., was established in 1998 at the direction of then-mayor Pam Miller, who appointed State Historian Dr. Thomas D. Clark as the first chair of the Board of Trustees. Under the leadership of Edward T. Houlihan, Jr., our first executive director, the museum opened in the former Fayette County Courthouse on Main Street in downtown Lexington, which provided 14,000 square feet of exhibit, office, and storage space.

That imposing Richardsonian Romanesque edifice, constructed in 1899, gave the Lexington History Museum a prominent presence and convenient location at the center of the city's downtown business district. At its peak, the museum welcomed over 10,000 people from all 50 states and 60 foreign countries.



In 2012, the museum was forced to vacate the Old Courthouse space when hazardous lead paint dust and mold were discovered by the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, the building's landlord and caretaker at the time. Unable to secure an appropriate, permanent home, LexHistory suffered a reduction in community engagement and financial support due to diminished public presence and awareness.



Dr. Thomas D. Clark

In 2016, Foster Ockerman, Jr., a charter member of the Lexington History Museum, agreed to serve in a part-time role as president and chief historian. During the ensuing years, museum leadership and volunteers worked to fulfill LexHistory's mission through such initiatives as pocket museums, a speakers series, rotating exhibits in public spaces, expanding its online WikiLex resources, converting several exhibits to virtual formats, publishing a new history of Lexington, participating in LexArts Gallery Hops, and producing several documentary videos.



Edward T. Houlihan, Jr.

In 2020, LexHistory's administrative offices moved into leased space in the Adam Rankin House, Lexington's oldest surviving home located in the South Hill district on Mill Street. Despite its own history and significance, the Rankin House was not a long-term solution to housing and exhibiting the LexHistory collection. In 2021, Ockerman spearheaded an ambitious strategic planning process that re-energized the Lexington History Museum. He was serving as the museum's historian emeritus when he passed away in 2022.



Foster Ockerman, Jr.

In May 2022, under the leadership of Lexington Mayor Linda Gorton, the members of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government approved a three-year capacity-building grant for LexHistory. In August 2023 we re-opened to the public in our new home at 210 North Broadway.

*You can also play an important role in the education of future generations by **becoming a member** and helping to provide opportunities to learn and engage with the past in order to help better understand the future. We are a valuable community asset that transcends generations, helps to preserve our cultural heritage, and that tells the stories of our past that otherwise could be lost or forgotten.*



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