

Saxe Gotha Dispatch

Museum to Host Christmas Open House

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The staff of the Lexington County Museum and the Friends of the Lexington County Museum invite you to come experience Christmas traditions of the past at the Museum as it hosts its Annual Christmas Open House on December 14th from 1 pm to 4 pm.

Many of the thirty historic structures on the Museum complex will be open and will feature period Christmas decorations. The event is free to the public! Light refreshments that would have been eaten by Lexington residents in the 19th century, including hot apple cider and gingerbread, will be served. Friends of the Museum member Constance Caractor



Flemming will be singing and playing live music in the Fox House. A blacksmith will be on site practicing his craft and educating visitors about smithing and a cooking demonstration will be taking place in our 19th century Ridgell kitchen as well.

The Christmas Open House is a great way to explore the museum's structures and collections on your own time, learn about the rich history of

the county, and get into the holiday spirit.

This event is family-friendly and fun. For more information, find us on Facebook, call the museum at 803-359-8369, or visit our webpage at lexingtoncountymuseum.org. Come join us for this great event!

Museum Past and Upcoming Outreach Efforts

Museum staff members continue to speak to community groups about the museum and county history. Over the past few months, museum employees have spoken to the Lexington Main Library, Generations of Chapin, the Chapin Library, and St. Stephens Lutheran Church.

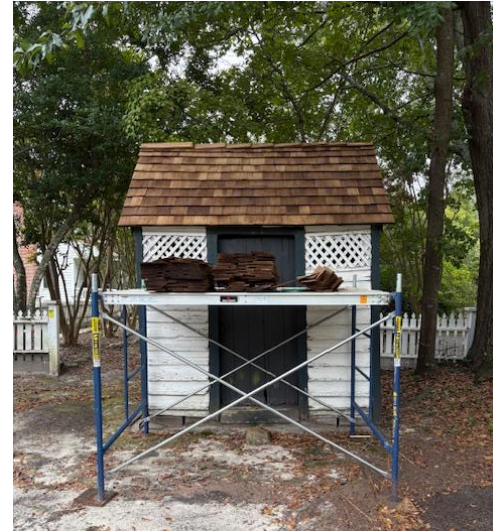
In the future, museum staff will speak to the Lexington County Main Library, Gilbert Library, the Cayce-West Cola Library, and will lead a Lex. Murders and Mysteries tour.

If you'd like to have a museum staff member speak to your group either virtually or in-person, don't hesitate to give

us a call. We can speak on a variety of topics related to the museum, the county, and its history. Some of the most popular topics include the quilts and other artifacts from the Dutch Fork, Lexington County-made rifles, and the history of alcohol in Lexington County.

Roof Replacements at the Museum

The museum's privy and the potato house recently received new shake roofs. The previous roofs had been in place for over twenty years and had deteriorated due to the sun, rain, age, etc. Lexington County's Building Services Department did the work and did a fantastic job. The privy was owned by the Luquire family and came from Greenwood County while the potato house was owned by Joel Ridgell, the brother-in-law of John Fox (whose house is on the grounds of the museum), and came from Batesburg, SC.



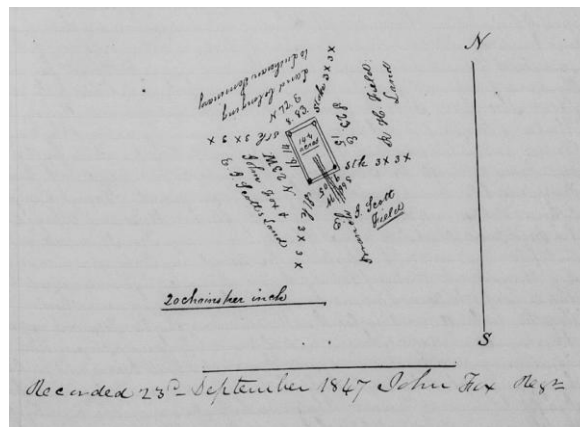
Museum Mourns the Loss of Friends Members

The Lexington County Museum and the Friends of the Lexington County Museum mourn the loss of two volunteers and members of the Friends of the Lexington County Museum, Mandy Derrick and Maria Shull. Both were long-time members of the board of trustees of the Lexington County Museum. Maria also volunteered at the museum's Haunted History Halloween program every year. She was always willing to help out in whatever part was needed. Mandy was also a volunteer who helped decorate the museum for the Christmas Open House and helped out at many events over the years. Both will be very much missed.

Using Property Records to Research the Past: Part Two

The previous two tracts not only are found in the RMC, but the fourteen-acre tract even has a plat showing dimensions measured in chains and links (this one is in Book P, Page 284). The plat shows dimensions clearly, which is not always a foregone conclusion, and since we can convert chains and links into feet, we can be sure that the dimensions drawn out on the map above are accurate (One hundred links to a chain, and a chain is sixty-six feet).

Meanwhile, the six-acre tract is known because of later plats done in the mid-20th Century which are available online through Lexington County's website. This leaves just the two-acre tract, which has a deed in the RMC from when Fox purchased it in 1847, but no plat. Still, we can figure out the shape of the two-acre tracts using Google Earth, which allows us to draw the shapes above. Since we know that the north side must border Fox's six-acre tract, the east side must border the 14.25-acre tract, and the west must have a space for the road and borders Berley's land, figuring out the southern property line is reasonably simple



Simple, but surprising. Using the measurements in the 14.25-acre plat above and measuring out the two acres of land that would fit into the corner as described while also bordering the road and Berly's land to the west, the land cannot possibly stretch as far south as the house which now sits on Saxe Gotha Lane. Instead, the western half of the property Jimmy and Peter purchased would have to be about where today sits a house which unfortunately burned down over a year ago.

What possible relevance does this have? Do these measurements mean that the story about the house on Saxe Gotha Lane being a former slave cabin is untrue? No, though it does strongly imply that the house purchased by Jimmy and Peter in 1866 is not that house. According to the Slave Schedule of the 1860 US Census, the people enslaved by John Fox were housed in eleven cabins. At least four are understood to have been at The Point, Fox's plantation which is now the Governor's Grant neighborhood off of Old Chapin Road (a statement which represents an entirely different, and quite lengthy, discussion). Two others on the Fox village property survive, and have been moved from their original position just north of the main house to be attached to the rear of that house. That leaves five others unaccounted for, which, if Jimmy's house sits under the ashes of the burned house on Fox Street, leaves us with four more mysteries to solve. Any historian worth his or her salt knows that that is good news indeed!

Museum Visitation in September and October 2025

Visitation remained high as school groups returned.

In September, 654 visitors came to the museum, including visitors from twelve states other than SC and Canada. In

October, the museum saw 1,229 visitors, including tourists from eleven states other than SC and one foreign country.

The number of school groups visiting the museum greatly increased

as children returned to school. We had various public and private groups from Richland and Lexington Counties come out for field trips.

Fall Photos



Museum Calendar of Events



- Dec. 4 History of Gilbert/Summit Presentation
4:00 pm
Gilbert-Summit Branch Library
405 Broad St. Gilbert, SC
Free to the public/No reservations or tickets needed
Attendees will learn about the early settlement of the Gilbert area, the coming of the railroad, and the development of the town in the 20th century.
- Dec. 12 “Murders and Mysteries” Lexington Walking Tour
8 pm
Tour begins at the Icehouse Amphitheater
107 West Main St. Lexington, SC
Free to the public/No reservations or tickets needed
Attendees will learn about some of the spookier and more gruesome aspects of Lexington’s history as we will discuss murders, crimes, and mysteries that occurred along Main Street. Because of the mature subject matter, we ask that attendees be 18 or over or have parental permission.
- Dec. 14 Lexington County Museum Christmas Open House
1 pm to 4 pm
Free to the Public
Lexington County Museum Complex
Many of the museum’s historic structures will be decorated in period fashion. A cooking demonstration will also take place.
- Dec. 24 – 28 Lexington County Museum Closed for Christmas

Call the museum at 803-359-8369 or email
museum@lexingtoncounty.sc.gov to find out more about these events.

Lexington County Museum

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A Story Behind Every Door



We're on the Web!

<https://lex-co.sc.gov/lexington-county-museum> and
www.lexingtoncountymuseum.org

The Lexington County Museum was started in 1970 to collect, preserve and present the history of Lexington County. After initially having only one historic house, the museum expanded and now has thirty historic structures over seven acres in downtown Lexington. Through exhibits in historic houses, the museum interprets everyday life in the town of Lexington and throughout Lexington County from the eighteenth century to the start of the Civil War. The museum offers guided tours to visitors for a small fee and has thirteen different hands-on programs for school groups free of charge by appointment. These programs attract schools from around the state and educate students about the history of Lexington County and about the everyday life of Lexington County residents in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Friends of the Lexington County Museum is a non-profit group founded in 1997 with an advisory board, officers, and a board of trustees representing all municipalities in Lexington County. Its mission is to enhance the Lexington County Museum through its duly appointed commission and to support, aid, and assist in the improvement and expansion of the Museum. The Friends group sponsors fund-raising projects to help further the Museum's valuable contribution to the county. The Friends group has raised over \$290,000 for the museum so far. To learn more about the Friends or to join, visit the museum's webpage (<https://lex-co.sc.gov/lexington-county-museum/friends-museum>).

Highlighted Artifact from the Museum's Collections

Our highlighted artifact for this issue is one of the newest additions to our collections. It is an engraving done by Lippincott, Grambo & Co. of Philadelphia, circa 1847. It shows four views of native artifacts from the Congaree Indians of South Carolina. The Congaree lived in what would become Lexington County in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

