

Saxe Gotha Dispatch

Museum to Host Haunted History Halloween Program

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The Lexington County Museum will host the nineteenth Annual Haunted History Halloween program at 231 Fox Street in Lexington this year.

As ghoulish guides lead guests on a spooky but not too scary journey of the museum property, visitors will hear ghostly stories, including strange and unusual events in Lexington County's colonial and antebellum history.

Guests will hear amazing stories and meet memorable specters along the way. Visitors will also learn about some of the superstitions held by Lexington County residents. Watch out for

frights and surprises around every corner!

Tours will last around forty-five minutes each and will take place on the evenings of Thursday October 22 and Friday October 23 at 7:00, 8:00, and 9:00 pm. Tickets are \$6.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children under 12.

Members get in free with a membership card. This event frequently fills up so

reservations are required. To make a reservation, call the Lexington County Museum at 803-359-8369 or email the museum at jfennell@lexingtoncounty.sc.gov. This event is a great way to learn about Lexington history and is educational, family-friendly and, most importantly, fun!



Museum Past and Upcoming Outreach Efforts

Museum staff members stayed busy throughout the summer of 2026 speaking to community groups about the museum and county history. Over the past few months, museum employees have spoken to the Swansea, Lexington, G-S, and Cayce-West Cola Libraries, Cornerstone Church, the

Cayce Museum, and Meadow Glen Middle School. In the future, museum staff will speak to the Lexington County Main Library, Zion Lutheran Church, the Richland County Public Library, and the Lexington Shepherds Center. 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, the history of Lake Murray, and the history of alcohol in Lexington County.

Friends of the Museum Summer Lecture Series a Success

The summer lecture series sponsored by the Friends of the Lexington County Museum was a great success. Attendees at the three lectures heard from speakers who provided information on different aspects of the Revolutionary War in Lexington County and South Carolina. The first presenter was museum director J.R. Fennell who gave an overview of Lexington County in the American Revolution. The speaker in July was Dr. Sean Gallagher who spoke on the motivations of those who fought in the militia in SC and the role of the enslaved. Finally, the speaker in August was Dr. Alice Taylor-Colbert who presented on the Cherokee and other Native Americans during the war. The museum would like to thank the sponsors who helped make the lecture series possible: First Community Bank, Hoover Trusses, Dr. Ginger Macaulay, Pine Press, and WP Rawl and Sons.



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Museum To Host West Columbia Murders and Mysteries Walking Tour

Come out to the Riverwalk Amphitheater on September 18th at 8 pm to join us on the West Columbia Murders and Mysteries Walking Tour. Attendees will learn about some of the spookier and more gruesome aspects of West Columbia's history as we will discuss murders, crimes, and mysteries that occurred along Meeting and State Streets. This free tour will begin at the Riverwalk Amphitheater and end on Center Street. Some uphill walking will be necessary. Because of the mature subject matter, we ask that attendees be over 18 or have parental permission. No reservations or tickets are needed, just show up!



Summer Programs at the Branches of the Lexington County Library

By Beth Haggard and Patricia Shandor

Our staff recently partnered with the Lexington County Public Library System to provide engaging learning opportunities to school children during their summer vacation. Two separate programs were adapted for the library audience based on educational programs we currently offer to school groups at the museum.

The Dave the Potter program was designed for older elementary and middle school children to teach them about the life, works and poetry of David Drake, the most famous enslaved potter from Edgefield, SC. During this program our Collections Coordinator, Patricia Shandor, brought along pieces of pottery inspired by Dave's work for participants to examine. Participants were also able to shape their own tiny versions of pots using modeling clay.

To commemorate the 250th celebration of the Revolutionary War, the second program involved teaching children how to write a letter with quill and ink and seal that letter with a wax seal. The program was designed for preschool and elementary children. Our Visitor Services Coordinator, Beth Haggard explained to children how the Declaration of Independence depended on a bird and an insect to get the job done. The bird provided the quill feather, and the insect provided the oak gall for the ink. Interpreter, Kristen Spangler showed children how to make a tricorn hat with a cockade, just like patriots would have worn.

These programs saw a total of 300 participants at over 11 locations.



Museum Visitation in July and August 2026

Visitation continued to be high despite the high temperatures of summer

In July, 768 visitors came to the museum, including visitors from five states other than SC as well as Puerto Rico and Iceland.

In August, the museum saw 864 visitors, including tourists from eleven states other than SC. We also had visitors from Czechia and Guatemala.

The number of school groups was low as school

was out for the summer.

We had various public and private groups from Richland and Lexington Counties come out for field trips.

Summer Events Photos



Museum Mourns the Loss of Cayce Museum Curator Andy Thomas

The Lexington County Museum mourns the loss of Andy Thomas, the curator of the Cayce Museum. Andy was a great historian who delighted in educating the public about the rich history of the Cayce area and preserving the artifacts at the Cayce Museum. Andy also loved the history of food and drink in the South. Andy volunteered often with the Lexington County Museum. He cooked in our ca. 1840 kitchen and baked bread and pies in our bake oven at our open house. He also gave presentations with museum director J.R. Fennell at various libraries and museums across the state on the often-overlooked Yamasee War. Andy will be missed.



Museum Director J.R. Fennell Wins “Male Young Professional of the Year” Award

The Lexington County Museum is pleased to announce that director J.R. Fennell won the Male Young Professional of the Year award at the Lexington Chamber of Commerce's awards banquet on August 26. This is wonderful honor. Fennell is grateful to all those that support him and the museum.



Museum Calendar of Events



- Sept. 18 “Murders and Mysteries” West Columbia Walking Tour
8 pm
Tour begins at the Riverwalk Amphitheater
109 Alexander Road West Columbia, SC
Free to the public/No reservations or tickets needed
Attendees will learn about some of the spookier and more gruesome aspects of West Columbia’s history as we will discuss murders, crimes, and mysteries that occurred along State and Center Streets. Because of the mature subject matter, we ask that attendees be 18 or over or have parental permission.
- Sept. 24 History of Lake Murray Presentation
12:00 pm
Richland County Public Library
1431 Assembly St Columbia, SC
Free/Reservations Required
<https://www.richlandlibrary.com/event/2026-09-24/lake-murray-lakes-untold-story>
Attendees will learn about the history of Lake Murray and the Dreher Shoals Dam
- Oct. 16 Superstitions of Lexington County and the Dutch Fork
4:00 pm
Batesburg-Leesville Branch Lexington Public Library
203 Armory St Batesburg-Leesville, SC
Free
Attendees will learn about the belief in witches, ghosts, and a practice called using in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- Oct. 22 - 23 Haunted History Halloween Program
Tours start at 7 pm, 8 pm, and 9 pm
Lexington County Museum Complex
231 Fox Street Lexington, SC
\$6 for adults/\$3 for children/Free for members
Reservations required
Come out to experience a spooky tour of the museum and meet memorable specters along the way.

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

Lexington County Museum

231 Fox Street
Lexington, SC 29072

Phone 803-359-8369
Fax 803-808-2160
E-mail museum@lex-co.com

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 \$300,000 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

This issue's highlighted artifact is one of our newest additions. It is a ca. 1840 rifle made by Lexington County gunsmith Elijah Hall in the Samaria section of the county. The Hall family moved to Lexington County from NC around 1820. Visit the museum to see this rifle and several others made by Elijah Hall.

