



# LEXINGTON HISTORY MUSEUM

*Our heritage lives here.*

December 2017 (updated January 2018)

## LexHistory Talks! Revived speaker's series presents range of topics

Can we talk? You betcha!

In 2017, the Lexington History Museum revived its popular speaker's program with what we call LexHistory Talks! The programs are free and open to the public.

"The best part of getting the LexHistory Talks! program going again has been seeing the diversity of our crowds," said Jay Prather, a board member who chairs the Talks! Committee. "We've had eight year olds, teens, octogenarians, and everyone in between. Every program has appealed to a different audience, and we've reached people from every part of town. Some have come from far beyond Fayette County."

"LexHistory Talks! is part of the museum's outreach to the community," Prather said. "During this time while we are without a permanent home, we have been able to take Lexington's story to the people of Fayette County, in the neighborhoods where they live."

If you want to attract people, it doesn't hurt to start with a little sin. So we began in January with Maryjean Wall, a former newspaper turf writer turned historian, talking about her book *Madam Belle: Sex, Money and Influence in a Southern Brothel*. The University of Ken-

tucky history professor's book is about Belle Brezing, the likely model for the Belle Watling character in Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*.

It drew a packed crowd to a large meeting room at the Lexington Eastside Branch Library.

The audience included a woman who had played in Brezing's last brothel years later, when it had been converted to apartments. And—a bigger surprise—it drew a man who still pays for the upkeep of Brezing's plot at Calvary Cemetery.

Foster Ockerman, Jr., the LexHistory president and chief historian, spoke in May about the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kentucky joining the young United States at the Beaumont branch. (We'd like to thank the Lexington Public Library, where all the talks have occurred.)

In July, Randolph Hollingsworth, a University of Kentucky assistant provost and adjunct faculty in the department of history, spoke at the Tates Creek branch about the important and little known role that white and black Kentucky women played in obtaining the right of all American women to vote. Hollingsworth is also the coordinator for the Kentucky Woman Suffrage Project, a collaborative effort to support the gathering of Kentucky women's experiences.

In September, as everyone was looking toward the World Series, we turned to the game of summer with "Baseball in the Bluegrass: The History of Baseball in Central Kentucky." This was a panel discussion with a lineup of Alan Stein, a founder of the Lexington Legends; Kentucky baseball enthusiast Jerry Sudduth; and State Rep. George Brown.

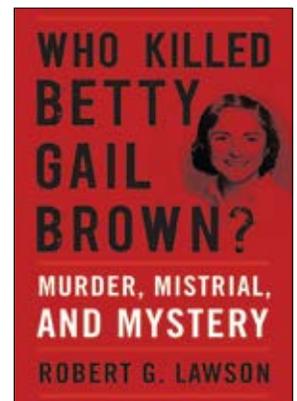
The discussion at the Northside branch ranged from the game's arrival to the formation of the Major League and the Negro League, as well as the role of Baseball Commissioner (and former Kentucky Gov.) Albert Benjamin "Happy" Chandler in Jackie Robinson's integration of the game half a century earlier.

We ended the 2017 series in November with a sensational "cold case" murder. Longtime UK law professor Robert Lawson discussed his book, *Who Killed Betty Gail Brown? Murder, Mistrial, and Mystery*, about the 1961 unsolved murder of a Transylvania University student who was found strangled with her bra in her car in front of Old Morrison. Lawson was one of the appointed attorneys for the only person ever charged in the case.

As you might expect, the talk also drew a capacity crowd to the Eastside branch.

If you have ideas for future programs, please send them to [info@lexhistory.org](mailto:info@lexhistory.org).

You can receive notices of LexHistory Talks! and our other events by following us on Facebook and subscribing to our email newsletters at [www.lexhistory.org](http://www.lexhistory.org).



Longtime UK law professor Robert Lawson discussed his new book, shown above, to a full house at the November LexHistory Talks! presentation.

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# Writing home from Lexington Cemetery in 1861, Union soldier reflects under Henry Clay memorial monument

Henry Clay, the Kentucky senator, statesman and three-time presidential candidate, had been dead and buried for nine years, and the Civil War he tried so hard to forestall was raging, when a Union soldier from Ohio visited his grave at the Lexington Cemetery.

Private William Knoop, of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Ohio Infantry, Company 1, put pen to paper on Nov. 7, 1861, to write to Fanny, his 12-year-old daughter. The Lexington History Museum recently acquired the letter from Cowan's Auctions in Cincinnati.

"Don't be surprised if I should get poetic for I am sitting by the side and my portfolio is lying on the grave of that once and great man Henry Clay," he wrote. "It is a simple sod cover grave not a stone to mark it except the small monument he had erected for his mother who sleeps by his side...."

Knoop was at the grave at an interesting point in history.

The monument that stands in the cemetery today had been completed by the previous Fourth of July. It was a 120-foot column of limestone quarried near Grimes Mill on Boone Creek, topped by a stone statue of the Great Compromiser himself. At the base of the

monument, the marble sarcophagi that now hold the remains of Clay and his wife Lucretia

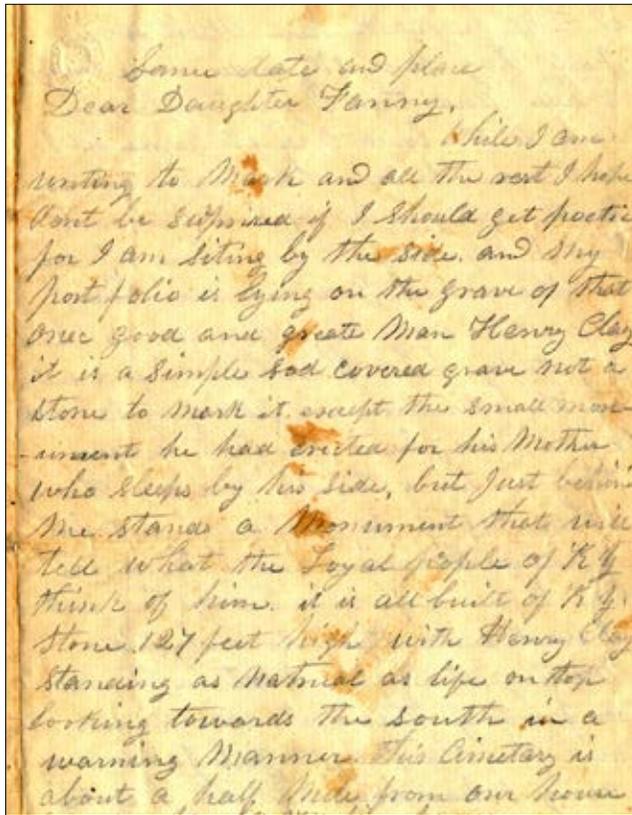
Hart Clay also were in place, but empty. When Lucretia died in 1864, Clay's body was moved

from the grave Knoop saw to the sarcophagus beside hers in the monument base.

The monument, which cost \$58,000, had been delayed by the war. The sarcophagi were carved and donated by William Stuthers of Philadelphia.

Knoop could, of course, see the monument as he sat beside Clay's grave the day he wrote the letter.

He was impressed: "...just behind me stands a monument that will tell what the Loyal people of Ky think of him," he wrote. "it is all built of Ky. Stone 127 feet high with Henry Clay standing as natural as life on top looking towards the south in a warming manner."



Above: A portion of the first page of the 1861 letter from Private William Knoop to his daughter.

## Mayor Yancey papers

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baseball great Ty Cobb collected and preserved by Lela Yancey, Hogan's younger sister.

There also is a typed transcript of a diary that Stipanowich's grandmother, Estelle des Cognets, Jr., began writing in 1907, when she was 15. It begins with her chronicling a few "affaires de Coeur" dating back to when she was 6 or 7. Stipanowich says she is looking for a publisher for the diary.

Stipanowich said she was glad to donate the artifacts, and plans to add more later.

Months before the Morgan statue was moved, Stipanowich had been contacted by Foster Ockerman, Jr., about whether she had any artifacts from her grandfather. Ockerman is LexHistory's president and chief historian. His father, Foster Ockerman, Sr., now 97, was once a law partner of Yancey's.

"I thought it would be very appropriate to donate it to a museum in Lexington where people could see it and perhaps learn about Lexington's past rather than leaving it in storage," she said.

**Yes, I want to support the work of the Lexington History Museum!**

**Enclosed is my donation of:**

- \$25.00  \$50.00  \$100.00  Other Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify.)  
 Thomas D. Clark Society, \$1,000.00

Make checks payable to: Lexington History Museum or use your  VISA  Mastercard

You can also make your gift online: [www.lexhistory.org/donate](http://www.lexhistory.org/donate)

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**Send this form with your check or payment information to:**

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## 'Model' Lexington Mayor Hogan Yancey

Sometimes history and current events match up in unexpected ways. As an example, we offer a box of photos and documents related to former Lexington Mayor Hogan Yancey and the statue of a Civil War figure recently removed at the direction of the city's current mayor.

Earlier this year, LexHistory obtained the Yancey items from Sky Yancey Stipanowich, a former Lexington television news anchor who is Hogan Yancey's granddaughter.

Yancey served as mayor from 1924 to 1928, and was well known for most of his life. He and his brother Worth were star athletes at Kentucky University (now Transylvania University). He played football, baseball and basketball at the school and later played professional baseball in Jacksonville, Fla., Rochester, N.Y., and the old Blue Grass League.

He organized the Lexington Building and Loan Association (later the Lexington Federal Building and Loan Association) and served as a director for decades. He practiced law in Lexington for more than 50 years.

When he died at 78 in 1960, The Lexington Leader called him "a friendly, cordial gentleman...known and respected by thousands of his fellow citizens."

That 20<sup>th</sup> century fame would not have put Yancey back in the news in 2017—until October, when the city removed the statue of Confederate Gen. John Hunt Morgan from the lawn of the Old Courthouse.

It turns out that when sculptor Pompeo Luigi Coppini created the equestrian statue more than a century ago, he needed a model for the general on a horse. He turned to the young, broad-shouldered athlete Hogan Yancey, who sat astride a

### New to LexHistory

## Portraits of three African-American jockeys

LexHistory added oil portraits of three African-American jockeys to its collection in 2017. The paintings were obtained from a Lexington residence through Everything But The House, an online estate sales company. They depict prominent African-American jockeys Alonzo "Lonnie" Clayton, James "Jimmy" Winkfield and William Walker.

African-American jockeys and trainers were especially important in the early decades of the Kentucky Derby, which began in 1875. Walker, for example, was only 17 in 1887 when he won the race aboard Baden-Baden.

Walker had been born into slavery near Versailles, Kentucky. Following a successful career as a jockey, he became an equine pedigree expert. Bloodhorse magazine said that "his encyclopedic memory was legendary in racing and breeding circles, although ultimately only footnoted or entirely ignored by many racing historians."

Clayton shined shoes before becoming a jockey. He was 15 when he crossed the Churchill Downs finish line in 1892, becoming the youngest jockey to win the Derby.

barrel. The statue, dedicated in October 1911, was paid for by the Daughters of the Confederacy and the Kentucky legislature.

WLEX 18 News did a story about the Hogan Yancey's connection to the statue, and talked by phone to Sky Yancey Stipanowich, who now lives in California. LexHistory was called on to furnish several photos of Yancey as a college athlete and adult lawyer. (The WLEX piece is on YouTube.com:



*Oil portrait of jockey William Walker, one of three paintings of African-American jockeys by Jean Esamen Walker recently acquired by LexHistory.*

Winkfield won the Kentucky Derby in 1901 and 1902 (and was the last African-American jockey to win the race). He later raced throughout Europe and won the Russian Derby five times.

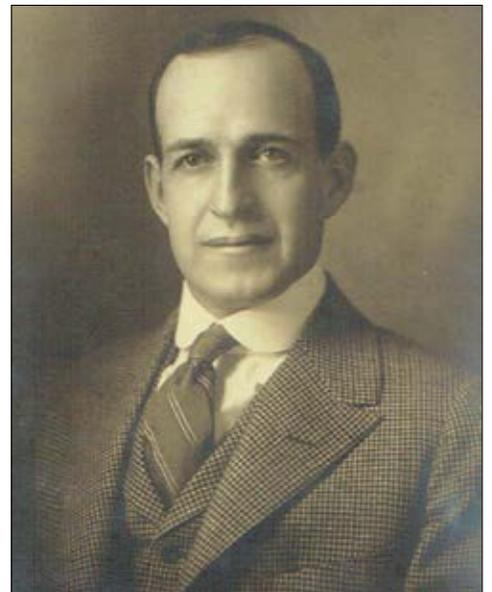
The jockey portraits were painted by artist Jean Esamen Walker in the 1980s.

<https://youtu.be/x9em1dQQ1w>.)

The Hogan Yancey Collection contains newspaper articles, scrapbooks and letters (including copies of a brief exchange between Yancey and

*See "Mayor Yancey papers" on pg. 2*

*Below: One of several studio photographs of Hogan Yancey in the donated collection.*



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*Mission: The Lexington History Museum engages all people in the discovery and interpretation of the history of Lexington, Kentucky, and the Bluegrass Region.*

The Lexington History Museum, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation.

*Newsletter written and designed by Andy Mead and Pace Cooke Emmons.*

# LexHistory making plans for busy 2018

A question we at LexHistory often hear is: "When are you moving back into the Old Courthouse?"

The answer is simple: We're not going back. But we are actively seeking a new brick and mortar home and hope to have an announcement about that in 2018.

It has been five years since asbestos issues forced the Lexington History Museum from the 1900 Romanesque building in downtown Lexington. It was a blow, but we survived and are gaining steam. We have continued to expand our collection of artifacts from the city's past, put on a series of LexArts Gallery HOP exhibitions, co-sponsored and presented the Kentucky Theatre premier of Doug High's documentary about Madam Belle Brezing, sharpened our fund-raising prowess, and revived both a dormant speakers series and published periodic newsletters, in print and electronic form.

We've added two new members to our board. Ed Reeves worked in higher education for 30 years, most recently as Director for the Center for Educational Research and Leadership at Morehead State University. Retired and living in Lexington since 2010, Ed said he is excited to join our board, where he hopes to make contributions in the areas of grant writing and exhibit planning. Also new is Johnna Waldon, the assistant branch manager at the Tates Creek Branch of the Lexington Public Library. She is also the president of the Kentucky Genealogical Society.

A confirmation we are alive and well came in September, when Commerce Lexington presented us with its Phoenix Award. The award is not given every year, just in the years when a member business or entity is considered to have risen from the ashes.

So why aren't we moving back into the Old Courthouse? Frankly, the city let us use the space when it was an empty building that wasn't otherwise needed. Now a \$30 million renovation is taking place, so the new tenants will be VisitLex's welcome center, offices, a restaurant, a bourbon bar and a rentable event space. Look for the renovated building to re-open in 2018. It will be a wonderful renovation, and we encourage you to check it out.



LEXINGTON HISTORY MUSEUM

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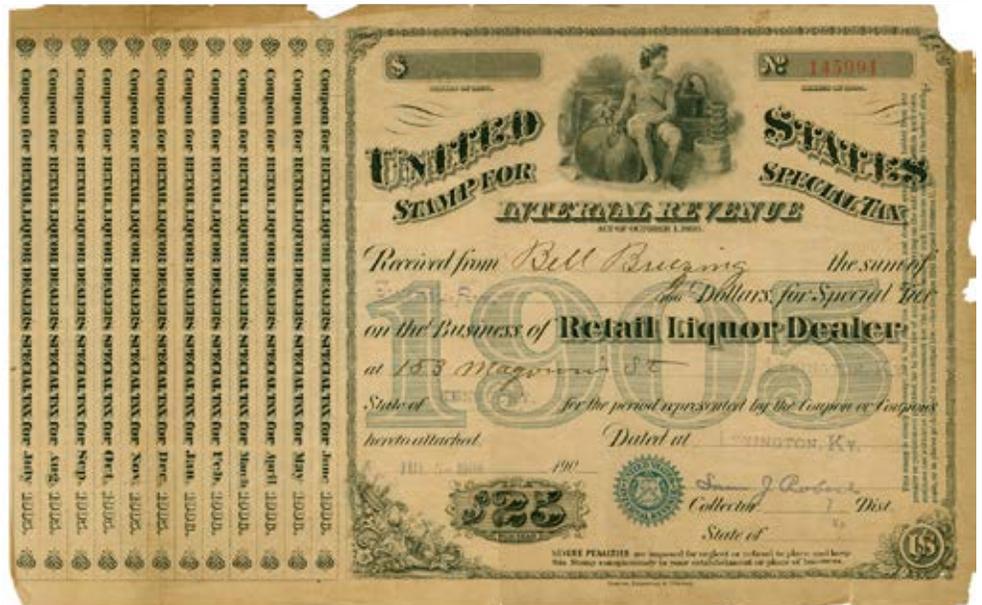
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## We need your help!

Now that our newsletter is published more often, it's expensive to print and mail copies. We'd like to distribute most future issues via email. You won't want to miss an issue, **so take a minute now to visit our home page, [www.lexhistory.org](http://www.lexhistory.org), to sign up for our electronic newsletter!**

We're also on social media. Please "Like" Lexington History Museum on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (@LexHistory) to keep up with facts about Lexington history and LexHistory events—there are many coming in the months ahead.



## Retail Liquor Dealer 'stamp' issued to renown Lexington madam in 1905 added to LexHistory collection

One of the more unusual artifacts obtained by the Lexington History Museum this year is a United States Internal Revenue Service retail liquor dealer tax stamp issued to Belle Brezing.

The Lexington madam paid \$25 for the stamp in 1905. It was for her business at 153 Magowan (now Eastern Avenue) in downtown Lexington. Brezing was required to "place or keep this Stamp conspicuously in your establishment or place of business." It does not note that the business was a house of ill repute.

LexHistory thanks retired Lexington lawyer Robert J. Turley for donating the stamp.

Brezing was born in 1860 and died in 1940. She was back in the public eye in 2017 in three LexHistory-sponsored events: A talk by historian Maryjean Wall, author of *Madam Belle: Sex, Money and Influence in a Southern Brothel*; the Kentucky Theatre premiere of Doug High's documentary "Belle Brezing & the Golden Age of the Bluegrass"; and a LexArts HOP exhibit of dresses designed and made for the documentary by costume designer Nelson Fields, associate professor in the theatre department at the University of Kentucky.