Welcome to this edition of the *History Hunt*, the newsletter from the Genealogy/Local History Room at the Lexington Public Library.

We are continuing our efforts to provide Davidson County residents with an extensive collection of genealogical and historical materials that will assist in your research. You may be unaware that we receive many requests for information from other counties, states and countries. Many of these people take the opportunity to visit Davidson County to see first-hand our collection.

Did you know that we have a collection of maps? During the first quarter of 2018, we received the donation of a map cabinet full of North Carolina Topography maps compiled and released by the United States Geology Department. I have been working to organize, catalog and repair our maps so patrons will be able to use these valuable resources in their research.

In collaboration with the Davidson County Historical Museum, we will be starting an oral history project. We invite anyone who has worked at Dixie Furniture or has had relatives who worked there to consider participating in this endeavor. We will be conducting interviews with the goal of preserving the historical records and details of one of the most important industries in the history of Davidson County. For more information you may contact the Genealogy/Local History Room at 336-242-2935 or Stephen Harris at the Davidson County Historical Museum at 336-242-2036.

I invite you to visit https://www.digitalnc.org/. We have been working with the Digital NC Center by sending materials for them to digitize and make available online. Lexington/Thomasville City Directories, Local High School Yearbooks through 1968, Lexhip Newspapers from 1924 and the late 1940s/early 1950s, as well as our BBQ Festival posters are now available.

Our next meeting for our Historians Book Club will be on 26 April 2018 at 5:30pm. We will be discussing the book, *Best Land Under Heaven: The Donner Party in the Age of Manifest Destiny* by Michael Wallis. You may visit one of our local library branches to check your or reserve your copy.

Lastly, if anyone is interested in beginning your genealogical research and would like to learn how contact the Genealogy/Local History Room and make an appointment for a one-on-one session with me!

—Tonya R. Hensley, Genealogy/Historian
Ruth Bright Stoner Genealogy/Local History Room

The Genealogy/Local History Room at the Lexington Public Library is known as the Ruth Bright Stoner Genealogy/Local History Room after the donation of resources by the first president of the Genealogical Society of Davidson County. The room has grown over time and has moved as well. The current home of the Ruth Bright Stoner Genealogy/Local History Room can be found at the Lexington Public Library Annex located at 612 South Main Street in Lexington, NC.

The Genealogy/Local History Room is part of the Davidson County Public Library System and upholds its mission. The Library's mission is to provide comprehensive resources and services in support of the research, teaching, and learning needs of the citizens of Davidson County. The libraries and museum will serve as centers of enrichment, reliable information, will support the educational, civic and cultural activities within the community.

Hours of Operation

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday: 9am-5:30pm
Thursday: 9am-8pm
Last Saturday of Each Month: 9:30am-3:00pm
Please contact the Genealogy/Local History Room for availability

Contact Us:
Tonya R. Hensley, MLIS
612 S. Main St.
Lexington, NC 27292
336-242-2935
Email: genealogy@DavidsonCountyNC.gov
Tonya.hensley@davidsoncountync.gov
Website: http://www.co.davidson.nc.us/Library/Genealogy.aspx

“If you don’t recount your family history, it will be lost. Honor your own stories and tell them too. The tales may not seem very important, but they are what binds families and makes each of us who we are.”
-Madeleine L’Engle
One-On-One Search Assistance

If you need assistance in your hunt, you may contact our genealogist on staff and schedule an appointment.

Because of the time constraints we are unable to perform the research for you. We can offer you however, tips and search strategies to aid in your research.

Appointments are available in one (1) hour increments.

To schedule your session today, contact Tonya R. Hensley, Genealogist/Historian at 336-242-2935 or genealogy@davidsoncountync.gov

Meeting Dates:

3 April 2018
1 May 2018
5 May 2018
What’s New?

Be sure to check out these new arrivals to our Genealogy/Local History Room:

- Murder in the Courthouse: Reconstruction and Redemption in North Carolina Piedmont by Jim Wise
- North Carolina Tobacco by Billy Yeargin
- Piedmont Soldiers and Their Families: North Carolina by Cindy H. Casey
- African Americans and Cherokee Nurses in Appalachia: A History 1900-1965 by Phoebe Ann Pollitt
- Deep River Coalfield: Two Hundred Years of Mining in Chatham County, NC by James H. Chapman
- Silent Speedways of the Carolinas: The Grand National Histories of 29 Former Tracks by Perry Allen Wood
- Kinfolk of Jacob Conrad by Julia Harris O’Daniel and Laura Conrad Patton
- Records of Holly Grove Lutheran Church Davidson County, NC Beginning March 15 1898 by Douglas K. Conrad
- May the Chain Be Unbroken: Major Benjamin Hardee and Christina Virginia Foster Line of Descent
- Davidson County Marriages-Black 1868-1938 by Belinda

Break Every Yoke: The NC Manumission Society 1816-1834 by Roger Kirkman

In the early 1810s, North Carolina Quakers used a vagary in North Carolina law to protect slaves under their care and provide them with as much education and training as the law would allow. By 1826, these anti-slavery advocates took steps to give these ex-slaves, approximately 2,000, opportunities for freedom outside the South or to remain under the care of the North Carolina Yearly Meeting. By 1830 the Manumission Society had completed this task and went on to attempt to convince the North Carolina Legislature to abolish slavery, to little effect. About half of the Manumission Society delegates left the state for Indiana, where they continued to work for freedmen and abolition.
Memorials & Honorariums

Have you thought of honoring your loved ones and friends by a gift of a book or books to the Genealogy/Local History Room of the Davidson County Public Library? Nothing could be more lasting, and give more pleasure than books as memorials.

A book is a permanent memorial which may bring enjoyment to hundreds of people, since it may be used over and over again. A book plate is placed in each memorial and honor book. The library will send an appropriate card to the family to inform them of the establishment of your donation.

We accept both books and money as gifts. However, be aware that we will not be able to accept duplication of books or materials that we may already have in our collection. For more information contact our genealogist

Memorials & Honorariums January-March 2018

- Elizabeth Hayworth in memory of Jackie Lynn Hensley
Here are a few of our electronic resources that can assist you in your research. If you have any questions please contact the Genealogy/Local History Room.

Ancestry.com library edition can only be used for FREE at the Genealogy/Local History Room or at any branch of the Davidson County Public Library.

Heritage Quest includes the Federal Census Records as well as full-text books. With a valid DCPL System library card users may access this resource from home.

Like Heritage Quest, users may access Fold3 from home with a valid library card. Fold3 is a database full of war records starting with the American Revolution.

With a valid DCPL System library card you can access genealogy resources from NCLIVE. Visit our website at http://www.co.davidson.nc.us/Library/Genealogy.aspx. Simply click on the eLibrary tab. The collection of databases available include: Archive Grid, DigitalNC, Historic NC Digital Newspapers,
The featured resource for this edition of the History Hunt is the Historic NC Digital Newspaper Collection. Anyone with a valid Davidson County Public Library System library card can access this from any device you might have. This collection includes historical newspapers from NC that are full-text and searchable. Our own Dispatch is available from 1882-1922 as well as Thomasville’s Davidsonian from 1910-1915. Additionally, papers that are no longer in publication that have ties to Davidson County can be found here. These include the Carolina Watchman and The Greensboro Patriot.

Researchers can find any number of important genealogical material using this resource. Such things as obituaries, weddings, criminal cases, and travel logs are available for printing. You may also save your clippings for later use.

To use this resource, visit our website at http://www.co.davidson.nc.us/Library/Genealogy.aspx. Simply click on the eLibrary tab. From there you select NCLIVE, By Subject, Genealogy & Historical Maps, then Historic NC Digital Newspapers.
On 8 May 1901 the last of the machinery was installed and 60 employees began producing the first piece of furniture. Using two buildings totaling 90,000 square feet, they produced bedroom furniture. Dr. E.J. Buchanan served as its president, while W.H. Walker as its secretary/treasurer and J.W. Crowell as the superintendent (8 May 1901 and 14 Feb 1906, Dispatch).

The Dixie Furniture Company quickly experienced misfortune. Just five months after opening, a great portion of the structure collapsed, trapping three men underneath the rubble (23 Oct 1901 Dispatch). A building that was two stories tall had been built on brick pillars. So great was the weight of the building, that it could not withstand the pressure. The first indication that anything had happened was when the Dixie steam whistle sounded. People from all around the community came to assist. The estimated cost of damage to the plant was between $1,500 and $3,000. When it was rebuilt, the company also added more square footage, which would gave Dixie the ability to install electric lighting (23 Oct 1901, Dispatch).

In the lead up to the first World War as the fighting raged in Europe, the demand for furniture exports dropped. Another problem consisted of not being able to import necessary resources. For these reasons, Dixie Furniture as well as other furniture manufactures in the area were forced to cut wages and hours of employees. In August of 1915, the employees at Dixie went on strike in protest (19 August 1915, Enterprise, Albemarle, NC). Management had promised to keep the five day work week and to restore the pay grade once business improved. This demonstration only lasted a few days until the employees gave in and returned to work (17 Aug 1915, Charlotte Observer).

However, this peace accord did not last long. In October of 1915, Dixie Furniture employees again took to the picket line. This time, they were more organized and formed a committee of workers to speak on the behalf of all. They went before management and demanded their salaries be increased, back to what it had been before the cut. The organization agreed and the workers went back to work.

Other factories in the area such as the Elk Furniture Company had faced similar problems and finding it necessary to cut the pay of its workers. When administrators of these other facilities saw what occurred at Dixie Furniture, they felt the need to follow suit and raise the pay back to previous levels (13 Oct 1915, Dispatch).
Working at Dixie Furniture was not without danger. Over its history, there have been six major fires. In 1904, 1911, 1957, 1964, 1966 and 2017. The deadliest of these occurred during 1966. Three employees, Ray Lindsay Crook 45, Henry Jackson Clodfelter, 49 and Clyde Wilson Musgrave, 50 were caught in an explosion on 2 July 1966 while cleaning out the dust pit. All three men succumbed to their burns in the days following the accident (7 July 1966, Dispatch).

The most recent fire happened in December 2017. The Dixie Furniture building or Plant 1 as it referred to had been closed since 2003. However, the City of Lexington had purchased the facility in 2006 for $1.05 million and planned to incorporate the building into part of the City's Depot District (20 December 2017, Dispatch).

Through collapsed buildings, strikes and fires, Dixie Furniture Company continued its growth within the furniture industry. By 1960s, Dixie was comprised of four plants: Dixie Furniture Company, Link-Taylor, Young-Hinkle, and Henry-Link (Smithsonian National Museum of American History). Each branch of the conglomerate specialized in a particular line of furniture.

By 1986, as Lexington Home Brands, Dixie was the ninth largest furniture maker in the world with over $205 million dollars sold per year and employing over 4,500 employees. At this time, 1 in 4 residents of Davidson County were employed at one of the plants (Slaughter, Furniture Today, 2003). In its zenith, Dixie Furniture in Lexington had grown to nine city blocks on thirty-one acres.

But hard times all across NC doomed furniture manufacturing. Lexington Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Bob Stec said in 2003, that the closing of Dixie Furniture was prompted by two major factors:

- The age and layout of the facility-The layout with its size and numerous buildings all on various levels made it impossible to maintain the workflow and to incorporate more low cost methods of production
- The increased use of imports-As the years went on most consumers were buying more imported furniture and the production began being outsourced to other countries (Slaughter, Furniture Today, 2003).

The Dixie Furniture Company closed for good in 2005.

Sources:


Genealogical Society of Davison County

The Genealogical Society of Davidson County was established as a non-profit organization in November 1980 and has grown to one of the most active and fastest growing genealogy societies in the area.

Membership in the society is open to anyone interest in genealogy. Yearly dues are renewable January 1. of the year.

The society meets four (4) times a year and a newsletter and a 50 page journal are published quarterly and mailed to all members free of charge. The journal has as its aim to be a useful, informative, and interesting source of information for genealogists and historians researching connections in Davidson County and its parent counties: Rowan (before 1822), Anson (before 1753) and Bladen before (1734).

To become a member of the Genealogical Society of Davidson County or for more information you may contact the Genealogy and Local History Room located at the Lexington Public Library.
Davidson County Historical Museum

Did you know that not only do we have a wonderful Genealogy/Local History Room at the Lexington Public Library, but another member of our Davidson County Public Library System family is the Davidson County Historical Museum.

The Davidson County Historical Museum is located in the 1858 Davidson County Courthouse on the Square in Lexington, NC.

A 12-month exterior restoration of the 1858 Courthouse completed in 2014. One of North Carolina’s most distinguished antebellum buildings, the Old Courthouse is one of the only historic buildings in the area open to the public. The Davidson County Historical Museum maintains a permanent collection highlighting the natural history and culture of Davidson County which is available to the public through regularly scheduled exhibits and education programs.

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.” Marcus

Exhibitions

The H. Lee Waters Photograph Gallery
The H. Lee Waters Photography Gallery: Movies, the Cinema, and Uptown Culture, features photographs of historic uptown Lexington - the city’s cultural epicenter where people worked, congregated and even saw themselves on the silver screen. Beginning in the 1930s through the 1940s, Lexington’s studio photographer, H. Lee Waters, travelled throughout North Carolina and neighboring states making movies of “Everyday People.” Regardless of gender, age, skin color or, socioeconomic status, a few moments of fame could be yours.

Cabinet of Curiosities
Wunderkammern, or cabinets of curiosities, arose in sixteenth-century Europe as collections of exotic and intriguing objects. This cultural phenomenon is considered a precursor to the modern day museum. We’ve created our own wonder room featuring curious items from the permanent collection, including a wicker casket, a 167-year-old frog, and a local photographer's original invention. As you enjoy curiosities you will also learn about how museums came to be - a story beginning nearly 2,500 years ago.

Lexington...the County Seat Comes of Age
Lexington is named the county seat in 1824 and incorporated by the General Assembly in 1828. By it's 101st birthday the city is straddling rail lines sparking local ambitions and will soon become a booming manufacturing center and hub of socioeconomic development. Learn about the county's emergence during 20th century Industrial Revolution.

Digital catalog records have been added to almost 50% of the Collection have been added to the Collections Database and is now available at http://www.co.davidson.nc.us/HistoricalMuseum/virtual_exhibit/index.htm. For information on the Davidson County Historical Museum, contact Caitlin Williams, Curator at 336-242-2035.