

IDEA GUIDE



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# CIVIL WAR HERITAGE

*Explore the History of the Blue  
and the Gray in the Bluegrass*

The story of the Civil War in Lexington and the Bluegrass is more than a story of battles. It's a story of strong personalities — of two Presidents, a First Lady, a “lion,” and a “Thunderbolt.” It's a story of contrasts — here you can visit both the site of a major slave market and a place where African-Americans received the emancipation papers that set them free.

And it is a story of ironies — of Union troops camping virtually in the front yard of a Confederate general, and of war dividing the family of a statesman who had devoted his life to preserving the Union.

**Bluegrass Note:** Of the more than 10,000 military actions of the Civil War, 453 took place in Kentucky, more than in Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina or Maryland.

In the Bluegrass, you are at the heart of Kentucky's exciting and diverse Civil War heritage. Of the 54 Kentucky sites included in the Civil War Trust's Civil War Discovery Trail

commemorating significant sites where visitors can learn about the conflict, 16 are located in Lexington and the Bluegrass region. And with its central location and easy access to major highways, Lexington is the ideal base from which to mount your own Civil War campaign to explore a state whose citizens supported both sides.

Here's a guide to points of interest in Lexington and the region.

## IN LEXINGTON

### A Union Saved, an Estate Divided

“Had there been one such man in the Congress of the United States as Henry Clay in 1860-61, there would, I feel sure, have been no civil war,” said Sen. Henry S. Foote in 1875.

As a senator and statesman, Henry Clay (1777-1852), known as “the Great Compromiser,” helped postpone the war between the states. But after his death his own family would divide along with the Union. As a result of dissension between Clay's sons and grandsons during the Civil War, his beloved Lexington estate **Ashland** was eventually auctioned. Ashland was also the site of a skirmish following the Battle of Perryville in October 1862.

Today, the Clay family home and 20 acres are open for tour as a National Historic Landmark. Ashland is located east of downtown at 120 Sycamore Road. (859) 266-8581

### Home of the Thunderbolt

The **Hunt-Morgan House**, at 201 N. Mill Street in Lexington's historic Gratz Park neighborhood, was the family home of Gen. John Hunt Morgan, the daring, and reputedly dashing, Confederate raider known as the “Thunderbolt of the Confederacy.” A Civil War museum on the second floor displays swords, saddles, photographs, uniforms and other artifacts from Morgan and his

men. Open spring through fall. (859) 233-3290

The **Bodley-Bullock House**, across the park from the Hunt-Morgan House at 200 Market Street, served as both Union and Confederate headquarters at different times during the war. The house is open for tour by appointment; call (859) 252-8014. Union troops used nearby **Transylvania University** as a hospital and camped in Gratz Park right in front of the Hunt-Morgan House. According to a Bluegrass legend, Morgan once rode up the front steps of the house, kissed his mother in the entry hall and galloped out the back door—with Union soldiers in hot pursuit.

## The Lincolns Slept Here

Abraham Lincoln's wife, Mary Todd, was born to a prominent Lexington family in 1818. The Georgian house in which she lived from 1832 until 1839 is open for tour, and includes Todd family furnishings as well as Todd and Lincoln memorabilia.

After their marriage in 1842, the Lincolns visited Lexington several times. Mary Todd's Lexington heritage followed her to the nation's capital: the fact that some of her Kentucky relatives, including several of her half-brothers, fought for the Confederacy, aroused suspicion against Mrs. Lincoln in Washington, D.C.

The **Mary Todd Lincoln House** is at 578 West Main Street. Open April through November. (859) 233-9999

## Insights into Slavery

Slavery was an important part of the antebellum economy in the Bluegrass, where slaves made up about one half of the population. Essential to the operation of the area's hemp plantations, slaves also were hired out by their owners for factory work and other jobs. Lexington was a major slave market to the Deep South from the 1830s to the 1850s. Original slave quarters at **Waveland State Historic Site** offer insight into the daily life of plantation

slaves in antebellum Bluegrass. 225 Waveland Museum Lane. (859) 272-3611

**Cheapside**, located on the west side of the

Fayette County Courthouse on Main Street, was the site of both slave auctions and impassioned abolitionist speeches. A small park commemorates the site today.

## Monumental Reminders

More than 500 Confederate and 1,100 Union veterans are buried in the park-like **Lexington Cemetery**, 833 West Main Street. They include

Confederate General John Hunt Morgan and John C. Breckinridge. Breckinridge was vice president of the United States under James Buchanan, unsuccessful presidential candidate against Abraham Lincoln in 1860, and Secretary of War of the Confederate States of America. (859) 255-5522.

Other Lexington Civil War-related monuments include the **statue of Breckinridge** at Cheapside Park, west of the Fayette County Courthouse, and the **John Hunt Morgan statue** on the courthouse lawn. Lexington tradition holds that the unveiling of the Morgan statue in 1911 caused quite a local stir because Morgan is shown astride a stallion instead of his well-known mare Black Bess.

## NEARBY AND NOTEWORTHY

### The Bloodiest Battle

Perryville, Kentucky, still looks much the same as it did on October 8, 1862. On that hot day during one of Kentucky's driest summers, both Union and Confederate troops were parched and searching for water when they encountered each other at Doctor's Fork Creek. Between 2:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m., 4,211 Union soldiers and 3,396 Confederate soldiers were killed, wounded, captured or missing, giving Perryville the dubious distinction of being Kentucky's largest and most deadly Civil War battle. **Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site** (859-

**Bluegrass Note:** Morgan and his raiders so fired the public's imagination that schoolchildren on both sides recited poems about them. The Yankee rhyme was: "I'm sent to warn the neighbors, he's only a mile behind/He's sweeping up the horses, every horse that he can find./Morgan, Morgan the Raider and Morgan's terrible men/With bowie knives and pistols, are galloping up the glen." Southern children had a different perspective: "I want to be a cavalrman, and with John Hunt Morgan ride/A Colt revolver in my belt, a saber by my side./I want a pair of epaulets to match my suit of gray,/The uniform my mother made and lettered C.S.A."

332-8631) includes the battleground, a museum and gift shop. The battle is reenacted each year during the first full weekend in October. *Perryville is about 49 miles southwest of Lexington. Take either Harrodsburg Rd. (US 68, through) or Bluegrass Parkway to Exit 59, then US 127 to US 68.*

**Bluegrass Note:** Not only were Abraham Lincoln and Confederate President Jefferson Davis both born in Kentucky (less than one year and 100 miles apart), but both spent time in Lexington. Davis attended Transylvania University in 1823 and 1824. Lincoln visited the city several times with his wife, Mary Todd, after their marriage in 1842.

## Battle Plans and a Lion's Hall

The **Battle of Richmond** in 1862, part of the Perryville campaign, was one of the Confederacy's greatest tactical victories of the war. A self-guided tour brochure of the three engagements are available from the Richmond Tourism and Main Street Department, 345 Lancaster Ave. (859) 626-8474.

Also of interest in the Richmond area is **White Hall State Historic Site**, home of one of Kentucky's most outspoken emancipationists, Cassius Marcellus Clay. Clay was a newspaper publisher, Minister to Russia and friend of Lincoln, and was called "the lion of White Hall" for his fiery oratory. (859) 623-9178. *Richmond is about 23 miles south of Lexington via I-75. An alternate scenic route is via Ky. 169 (Tates Creek Road), crossing the Kentucky River via the Valley View Ferry.*

## In Defense of the Kentucky River

Towering walls of rock prevented easy crossing of the Kentucky River, but Confederate soldiers still managed to cross and recross by ford or ferry, creating havoc for Union Forces. In 1863, African American soldiers constructed fortifications high above the ford and ferry at Boonesboro, entirely by hand. **The Civil War Fort at Boonesboro**, part of a network of small defensive works proposed by Union Captain Thomas B. Brooks, never mounted permanent artillery. 1250 Ford Road, Winchester. (859) 744-0556. *The Civil War Fort is 17 miles from Lexington. Head out Richmond Road all the way to the*

*River. At 1924, turn right and go one mile. The colorful murals of the parking lot will be on your left.*

## Capital Collections

The **Kentucky Military History Museum** on East Main Street in Frankfort includes an extraordinary collection of Civil War weapons, flags, uniforms and other artifacts. The building itself was a Union cartridge factory and supply center. (502) 564-3265

Several other war-related sites are found in Kentucky's capital city. The **Kentucky State Capitol Rotunda** on Capitol Avenue includes statues of Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. Federal reparation payments for war damage actually helped pay for the building. (502) 564-3449

The **Old State Capitol**, Broadway and Lewis streets in Frankfort, includes some Civil War memorabilia. Another point of interest is the **Frankfort Cemetery**, with its stately Confederate Memorial and wall memorial to all heroic Kentucky war veterans. 215 E. Main Street. (502) 227-2403 *Frankfort is about 27 miles west of Lexington via I-64. For a scenic alternative take Old Frankfort Pike and US 60.*

## On the Road with the Raiders

Col. John Hunt Morgan's forays included 1862 and 1864 battles in and around the small town of

Cynthiana in Harrison County. In the 1862 raid the Confederates captured the town, but in 1864, they were forced to retreat, for all practical purposes ending Morgan's raids in the state. A self-guided driving tour of the **Cynthiana Battles** is available from the Cynthiana/ Harrison County Chamber of Commerce, 201 S. Main Street. (859) 234-5236.

*Georgetown is about 12 miles north of Lexington via I-75 or US 25. For a scenic drive combining the Morgan sites, begin at the Scott County Courthouse on Georgetown's Main Street and head east on US 460 to*

**Bluegrass Note:** Although as a state Kentucky did not secede, 63 counties did – setting up a Confederate government at Bowling Green in Western Kentucky. A Bluegrass Kentuckian, George W. Johnson of Scott County, was elected first Confederate Governor of Kentucky. Johnson is buried in the Georgetown Cemetery.

*Newtown. Take Newtown–Leesburg Pike to US 62 (at the unmarked fork, go left), and follow US 62 into Cynthiana.*

## Enlistment and Emancipation

When the Union began to draft African-Americans into the army in 1864, **Camp Nelson**, in Jessamine County, was the state's most important recruiting station. Thousands of African-Americans and their families traveled to the camp for enlistment—and freedom. The installation also served as a refuge for the soldiers' families. John Fee, a founder of Berea College, established schools and churches for the African-Americans at Camp Nelson. Camp Nelson also was the state's chief center for the issuance of emancipation papers to former slaves. Four thousand Civil War soldiers are buried in the national cemetery located on part of the camp site. A 5-mile trail gives an overview of the supply depot and the northern line of defense. The restored officers' quarters are open Tuesday through Saturday, 9–5. (859) 881-5716. *Camp Nelson is located off US 27, about 20 miles south of Lexington.*

## From Pacifists to Pioneers

At **Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill**, the pacifist Shakers provided food, supplies and medical treatment to troops from both sides. The village's interpretive center includes information about the impact of the war. (859) 734-5411; toll-free (800) 734-5611.

**Old Fort Harrod State Park** in Harrodsburg includes a museum with Civil War artifacts and the cabin in which Lincoln's parents were married. (859) 734-3314. *Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill is 25 miles southwest of Lexington via US 68. Continue on US 68 a few miles to Harrodsburg.*

**Bluegrass Note:** More than 30,000 men left their Kentucky homes to fight for the Confederacy. Twice that many Kentuckians fought for the North, including 20,000 African-Americans, the second-highest number among all the states.

## Beyond the Bluegrass

Lexington can also be an ideal base from which to explore some of Kentucky's other Civil War sites.

The **Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site** features 116 acres of the farm where Lincoln was born and a granite memorial shrine enclosing a cabin symbolic of the one in which Abraham Lincoln was born in 1809. The Boyhood Home at Knob Creek is located in Hodgenville, Kentucky, 83 miles west of Lexington. (270) 358-3137. *Take Bluegrass Parkway to US 31 E.*

The earthwork forts at **Cumberland Gap National Historical Park** were used by both Union and Confederate troops. Of strategic importance to both sides, this pioneer gateway to Kentucky changed hands several times during the war. (606) 248-2817. *About 2 1/2 hours south of Lexington via I-75 and US 25 E.*

The **Underground Railroad Museum** in Maysville, north of Lexington, features exhibits about slavery and the escape route used by thousands of slaves. Open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and by appointment. (606) 564-3200 or (606) 564-4413 *About 65 miles north of Lexington via US 68.* 🐾

**Bluegrass Note:** Lt. William R. McEntire, a Southern commander at the final surrender of the Cumberland Gap to the Union on Sept. 9, 1863, had an unusual deathbed request. He asked his grandson to return to the gap 100 years after the surrender, stand at the pinnacle and curse the Yankees for five minutes, which the grandson did on Sept. 9, 1963.

For more information contact VisitLEX, Lexington's convention and visitors bureau, at 800-845-3959.

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