

# Saxe Gotha Dispatch



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## Museum to Host Member Family Day

On Saturday June 21 from 10 am to 2 pm, the Lexington County Museum will host its first ever member family day. This event, which will be free for members, will feature children's activities such as playing with historic games and toys and learning about everyday items used by people in the nineteenth century for children. These activities, which are based on the programs we do for school groups, are hands-on so kids can learn and play at the same time. Children will get to play with toys such as Jacob's ladder and perform activities such as churn butter.

The museum will also be hosting a Civil War encampment the



### Native American Program

weekend of June 21-22. Living historians will participate in drill demonstrations as well as show what camp life was like. This will be a great opportunity for adults and children to come and learn about the daily life of the average soldier, including the weapons they used, their

uniforms, and what they ate.

Visitors will also be treated to free hot dogs and drinks. This event will allow members to learn about Lexington history while having fun.

Call the museum for more information about the member family day.

## Museum Past and Upcoming Outreach Efforts

Museum employees have continued to try to get the word out about the museum. Museum staff members had a table at Lexington's Kids Day festival. Children

could write with a quill pen and learn more about the programs we offer.

Museum staff members will also be giving a presentation at Agape

assisted living facility and will host a class from the University of South Carolina's history program. This class is studying historic sites and museums.

## Meet Historical Interpreter Coco Saavedra



*“Despite the seeming cultural differences between her Puerto Rican background and the early inhabitants of the county whose history she interprets, Coco says that that she has always felt attached to the history of the place”*

Maria Socorro “Coco” Saavedra Crespo is one of our museum’s most vivacious guides. She was born in Western Puerto Rico in a coastal city named Quebradillas. Coco says that the name of the city means a lot of little creeks and she describes it as a place of great natural beauty. She remembers lying in her bed as a child and listening to the sounds of the ocean coming through her open window. Her peaceful childhood was shattered at the age of three when her mother died. She was then raised by her grandmother. When she was eight she was given the opportunity to move to Virginia to live with her Aunt and Uncle. Coco spent much of her young adult life in the Washington D.C. area and later moved on to the Los Angeles area. In the mid 2000s she decided that the West coast was too crowded and she moved to South Carolina with a friend. Coco says that she’s always been attracted to the South and impressed

by its rich history and architecture. Part of that attraction was what helped her finally decide to leave the sunny city of Los Angeles and settle in Lexington, South Carolina.

Having a native Spanish speaking guide has been an asset to the museum. Coco even helped translate the museum’s brochure into Spanish. Despite the seeming cultural differences between her Puerto Rican background and the early inhabitants of the county whose history she interprets, Coco says that that she has always felt attached to the history of the place. Coco says her favorite house is the Fox house and she also loves the Ridgell Kitchen, mentioning that she likes to imagine it as a working kitchen 150 years ago. She muses that when she set foot into the Fox House as a new guide several years ago she felt like she was walking into her own house. She says that putting on her costume also adds another layer of familiarity. She half-jokingly remarks that she

was probably a 19<sup>th</sup> century housewife or soldier in a past life.

As a practicing Buddhist, Coco takes pride in her open-mindedness and brings a positive attitude to her work and her life. For instance, when she was diagnosed with cancer in 2011 she says she simply made the decision that she would beat cancer and put her mind to it. After extensive medical treatment and frequent meditation she has been cancer-free since December 2012. She asserts her survival is a testament to the benefits of positive thinking she credits her practice of Buddhism to improving her life. Coco’s distinctive outlook also helps guide her work. She says that she likes to approach each tour as a unique experience and tries to personalize her tours based on each guest. This technique ensures that she never gets tired of giving tours and that she always learns something new from the wonderful array of people who visit the museum.

## Museum Awarded a SC Humanities Council Grant

The Humanities Council of SC has awarded the Lexington County Museum a grant in the amount of \$1,500 for the completion of our exhibit on Lexington County history. This exhibit will be featured in the Horace Harmon Exhibit Hall on

the grounds of the museum and will focus on the history of the county from the Native American period to the time around the Civil War. The exhibit will put special focus on Native American artifacts, as well as Edgefield pottery and artifacts that

show the German heritage of what is now Lexington County. We thank the Humanities Council for their generosity and support. The exhibit should be completed at the end of June. Be on the lookout!

## Spring Open House a Great Success

The Lexington County Museum, in conjunction with the Friends of the Museum, hosted its annual Spring Open House on May 4. Around 300 people, with some visiting from as far as the Netherlands, attended the annual event this year which was made even more enjoyable by the great weather.

Visitors were treated to a variety of demonstrations of historic trades and crafts such as soap-making, spinning and weaving, blacksmithing, and pinestraw basket weaving. Children were also able to play with historic games and toys and enjoy a demonstration about the Cherokee who once lived in the upstate and visited Lexington County to hunt and trade. As with all our open houses, nearly all of the historic structures were open to the public. This event was free and refreshments were served. Be sure to join us for our next open house in December!



## Museum Visitation in March and April 2014

As the weather changes, the museum begins to see a substantial increase in the number of visitors.

In March, the museum saw 1,091 total visitors including visitors from sixteen states other than

SC as well as the United Kingdom and France.

April was another busy month as many tourists continued to visit the museum. 1,231 people visited the museum including visitors from

nineteen states other than SC and four foreign countries.

School groups from districts in Lexington, Richland, Edgefield, and Barnwell Counties took part in our free programs for children as well.



## Museum Calendar of Events

June 21, 2014 –Members Family Day

Free for Members of the Friends

10 am to 2 pm

Lexington County Museum Complex

October 16 and 17 – Haunted History Halloween Program

Times TBD

Call the museum at 803-359-8369 or email [museum@lex-co.com](mailto:museum@lex-co.com) to find out more about these events.

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## Museum to Host Pine Straw Basket Weaving Class

The Lexington County Museum will be hosting two classes on pinestraw basket weaving on May 31. One will take place from 10 am to 12 pm and the other will be from 1 pm to 3 pm. Attendees will learn about this ancient art from Professor Al Graves. Professor Graves demonstrated pinestraw basket weaving at the Herb Fest that the museum hosted as well as at the museum's Spring Open House. These classes are a great opportunity to learn a craft that was practiced by Native Americans as well as the early European settlers and their descendents. These baskets are also quite beautiful. To learn more, please contact Professor Graves at 803-664-4615. Spaces are limited.

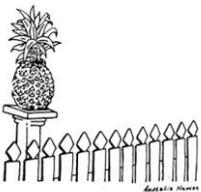


## Lexington County Museum

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*Gateway to  
Yesterday*



**We're on the Web!**  
**[www.lex-co.sc.gov/museum](http://www.lex-co.sc.gov/museum)**

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, including the project described below. The Friends group has raised over \$270,000 for the museum so far. To learn more about the Friends or to join, visit the museum's webpage ([www.lex-co.sc.gov/museum](http://www.lex-co.sc.gov/museum)).

## Highlighted Artifact from the Museum's Collections

Our late 1890s surrey is the artifact for this month's issue. This horse-drawn carriage has two bench seats to comfortably carry four passengers. It is doorless with a leather top (as opposed to a "Surrey with the Fringe on Top"). View this carriage along with our other horse drawn vehicles at the Lexington County Museum.

