

# Saxe Gotha Dispatch

## John Fox House Parlor Receives New Wallpaper

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Thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Friends of the Lexington County Museum we have been able to replace the wallpaper in the parlor of the John Fox House. The wallpaper that had hung in the parlor for over 50 years was beginning to peel away, show signs of wear and needed replacing. We selected a 1840s pineapple pattern made by Adelphi Paper Hangings LLC of Sharon Springs, NY as its replacement.

Wallpaper has long fascinated historians because unlike furniture and other decorations which one could often change in and out of the house, wallpaper remained. Because it was so much easier to just



cover over the paper with another type of paper we often see homes with several different layers of wallpaper left on the walls. These layers illustrate the changing fashions and taste of the occupants over time.

In the early days companies produced the paper using a block printing method. The manufacturers would place each section of the paper under a wood block that had

been carved in relief.

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## Museum Past and Upcoming Outreach Efforts

Museum staff members continue to speak to community groups about the museum and county history. Over the past few months, museum employees have spoken to the Lexington Main Library, Gilbert-Summit Library, the Aiken County Museum, and led a 2 Gals and a Fork tour.

In the future, museum staff will speak to the Lexington County Main Library, Gilbert Library, and the B-L SCV.

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, Lexington County-made rifles, and the history of alcohol in Lexington County.

## Museum Receives Enhancements

The museum recently had a section of picket fence replaced and our sign repainted. The picket fence along Fox Street in front of the historic John Fox House had deteriorated due to age and the damage tree roots and moisture intrusion had done. The County of Lexington's Building Services Department stepped in however and rebuilt our fence. Because removing the old pickets usually damaged them, Building Services staff members decided to cut new ones, which was not an easy task. Thanks to employees of Lexington County Building Services for all their hard work!

The museum's sign on Columbia Avenue (Highway 378) was in dire need of repainting after years of being in the elements. Door Dame was chosen to repaint the sign, making it much brighter and more visible to passers-by.



(Continued from page 1) Paint or stain would be applied to the wood block and the block would be stamped upon the surface of the paper. When the block was lifted, the design would appear. Each color had to be applied separately and extra colors added to the overall cost of the roll. Most wallpapers had at least two different colors in order to make them more appealing. Those wealthy enough could afford multiple rooms hung with multi-colored paper resembling expensive textiles, famous places, oriental or classical motifs. Manufacturers of these fine papers were based in France and England and exported their goods to America.

By the early 1800s the middle class grew and the demand for wallpaper increased. Companies began producing relatively inexpensive versions of wallpaper with simpler blocked designs and some American manufacturers began making wallpaper to sell regionally as well. Wallpaper from this time period has even been discovered on the walls of cabins within the American frontier, indicating a desire by these settlers to establish a level of domestic comfort even in their rustic environment.

During the 1960s the museum restoration team documented an example of the 1830s wallpaper that remained pasted directly onto the wood boards of the walls in the parlor of the John Fox House. This paper features a scrolling floral design in green and blue on a white background.

(Continued on next page)



Eventually the restorers placed drywall over the boards and installed a newer wallpaper that matched the character of the original paper. They selected a pattern inspired by a historic print known as “Schulyer Manse” that dated back to the late 1700s. If you have toured the museum between its opening and 2025 you’ve seen this wallpaper in the parlor.

In 2023 staff removed sections of the drywall in an attempt to locate a large enough sample of the original wallpaper for the purpose of commissioning a recreation. While a large section was eventually uncovered, the exposed sample remained too degraded to provide enough detail necessary for large-scale reproduction. It was determined that an alternative wallpaper would be needed. The staff left the original parlor wallpaper on display for visitors to view just to the left of the fireplace. In 2016 museum researchers documented wallpaper remnants visible in the ca. 1760 John Kibler home in the Dutch Fork near Prosperity, SC. The pattern was of repeated pineapples hand-printed on a blue background. Experts dated the wallpaper back to the 1840s. Adelphi originally reproduced this wallpaper pattern after they discovered it lining a wooden box made in New Hampshire in the second quarter of the 1800s. They date the paper to the 1830s or 1840s and mention that it resembles other examples popular in New York, New Hampshire and Vermont in the 1840s.

Why was this pineapple print so popular in the 1800s? Pineapples have been used in traditional decorations throughout much of the South as a symbol of hospitality. European explorers to South America brought the native fruit to Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> century as a representation of the riches available in the “New World.” By the 1700s and 1800s pineapples were more widely available worldwide. Despite being prized as one of the world’s most delicious fruits they were so expensive that some households would often choose to display the fruit rather than eat it. Pineapples were depicted in many examples of decorative art throughout this time period.

We selected this wallpaper pattern because of its documented use in our area and because we still often use pineapples in our décor for the Fox House, especially at Christmas. The fundraising Gala held in 2024 raised enough money to secure the purchase of the paper and cover the installation done by Wallpaper Pros. of Columbia, SC in May of this year. We are excited to debut the parlor’s new old-fashioned look to visitors at the museum.



Photo of the original wallpaper in the Fox House Parlor.

Wallpaper in the Kibler Cabin



## Museum Visitation in May and June 2025

The numbers of visitors remained high despite some very hot weather in June.

In May, 721 visitors came to the museum, including visitors from seventeen states other than SC and

one foreign country. In June, the museum saw 767 visitors, including tourists from eleven states other than SC and fifteen foreign countries.

The number of school groups visiting the

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



Summer Event Photos



## Museum Calendar of Events



- August 1 "Murders and Mysteries" Irmo Walking Tour  
8 pm  
Tour begins at the Irmo Town Park  
7330 Carlisle Street Irmo, SC  
Free to the public/No reservations or tickets needed  
Attendees will learn about some of the spookier and more gruesome aspects of Irmo's history as we will discuss murders, crimes, and mysteries that occurred in Irmo and the Dutch Fork. Because of the mature subject matter, we ask that attendees be 18 or over or have parental permission.
- August 19 Quilts and Decorative Arts of Lexington Presentation  
6:30 pm  
Lexington County Public Library  
5440 Augusta Road Lexington, SC  
Free  
Come learn about the quilts, textiles, and furniture of Lexington County and the Dutch Fork at this free presentation.

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



## Lexington County Museum

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### *A Story Behind Every Door*

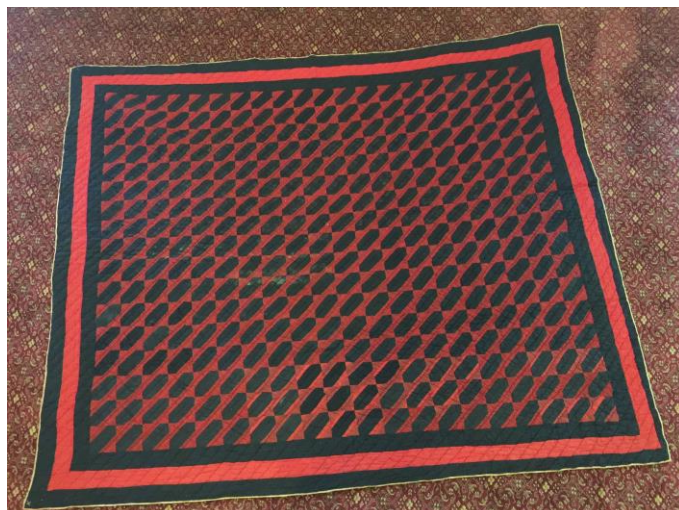


The Lexington County Museum was started in 1970 to collect, preserve and present the history of Lexington County. After initially having only one historic house, the museum expanded and now has thirty historic structures over seven acres in downtown Lexington. Through exhibits in historic houses, the 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 \$290,000 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

Our highlighted artifact is a circa 1900 quilt made from mourning clothes worn to the funeral of Jacob Mark Harman (1855-1896). This wonderful and unique quilt was donated by Trudy Steele Bouknight, who inherited it from Essie Harman Steele (1890-1980), Jacob Mark Harman's daughter. This hand-pieced and hand-quilted quilt was probably used by the family to remember and mourn him. The quilt was passed to his daughter Essie who was only six years old at the time of his death. Perhaps the quilt provided her with comfort during her time of grieving.



### We're on the Web!

<https://lex-co.sc.gov/lexington-county-museum> and  
[www.lexingtoncountymuseum.org](http://www.lexingtoncountymuseum.org)