



The

Generation

Next

Our Web Site is located at: [www.lexingtonillinoisfort.org](http://www.lexingtonillinoisfort.org)

318 West Main Street  
Lexington, Illinois 61753  
Email: [thefortoflex@aol.com](mailto:thefortoflex@aol.com)  
Telephone: (309) 365-4591

**Our building on Main Street in Lexington is open to patrons again.**

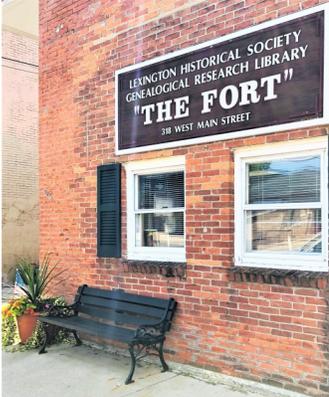
**New Hours:**

**Wednesday, Friday and Saturday**

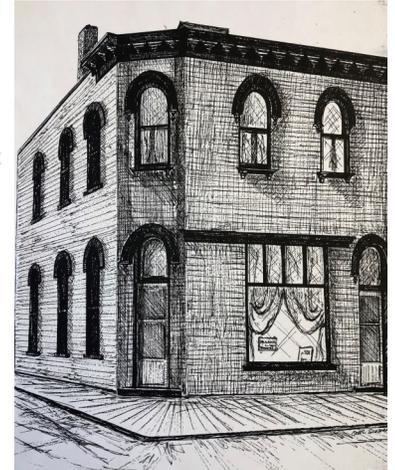
**from 9am—2pm**

Lexington Genealogical and Historical Society is ready and available.

**Reading our email daily,** so send requests to [thefortoflex@aol.com](mailto:thefortoflex@aol.com)



**THE FORT'S historical building**, a fortress protecting so many old area records, is suffering from the aging process. Mr. J. C. Mahan organizer of Lexington's first bank, in a small one-story building on Cedar Street just north of our present post office, also built the city's second bank in a new brick two-story building on Main Street in 1869—now our Fort building! Officially named The Bank of Lexington, but often called "Claggett Bank" by locals because S. R. Claggett was manager, was opened with \$50,000 in capital and a large vault, which the first bank did not have. This vault is still used by The Fort today, though the lock has been disabled for safety. In 1896, this Bank of Lexington holdings were transferred to the new State Bank of Lexington in the Dement building, now the home of our Lexington post office. The Fort building and its upper apartment were used for various things in the many years that followed, including the T. M. Patton Insurance office beginning in the early 1920's.

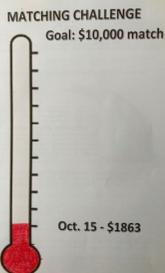


In 1979, with the help of community members, our Society purchased the old bank building for \$13,100. Fire in the adjacent business on February 3, 1981, destroyed the second floor of the Fort building and some records, though many were rescued by local citizens. After remodeling, the Fort was reopened in the now one-story building existing today. It's not surprising that this aging historical building is showing some wear and tear and needs repairs in order to remain alive and well for the future. Since the financial basis of our survival is donations, the building maintenance and repair must also come from donations.

A generous supporter challenged us to match a \$10,000 donation to make a huge impact on our needs for maintenance, technology, and preservation of records. We urge you to consider assisting in our ongoing **MATCHING CHALLENGE** effort for the next few months to keep the building in stable condition and to preserve Lexington history for another 150 years! Our total receipts by October 15 were \$1863! We need to average \$400/week over the 25 weeks of the campaign to achieve our goal! Will we be able to do it?

Thank you to the following who supported THE FORT in the **MATCHING CHALLENGE** by Oct 15....

- |             |                |                          |                        |
|-------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Norm Hiser  | Laura Walden   | Hon. Katie Edwards       | Bob and Debbie Barnard |
| Paul Harder | Barbara Farner | George and Beulah Lowery | Linda Cheever          |
| Ken Holford | Hilda Fry      | Tim and Melinda Moore    | Terry and Sue Killian  |



On the 15th of each month during the **MATCHING CHALLENGE** we will post a thermometer picture on our window at THE FORT and in our newsletter showing progress toward our goal. Our webpage at [www.lexingtonillinoisfort.org](http://www.lexingtonillinoisfort.org) will also accept payments and record totals "as we go," so you can check there to see more timely progress. Remember that ALL payments.. **dues, research, and donations** are being counted in the **MATCHING CHALLENGE** totals! Plans for updates to our building, technology, and newspaper digitization are already underway, too.

**Digitization project is underway!** Gridley Library shared their results from a company in an Oklahoma prison to train inmates for a timely profession in digitization. Comparison of quotes (\$9,000 to \$41,000) and seeing the



Gridley product, made it an easy decision. This first stage of our project will focus on our collection of some very old (1863) issues that have never been microfilmed and the Lexingtonians we have saved from 1992 –2010 that are still in paper form that have never been microfilmed by the state. Also included will be several reels of microfilm of older Lexington newspapers. All will be returned to us in a searchable digitized PDF format. These papers will then be available to use at THE FORT and our volunteers will be able to search and email results to patrons who make requests, just as we do with Newspapers.com already. We are excited to accomplish this worthy preservation project which will be funded by the **MATCHING CHALLENGE**.

**ACTIVITIES AT THE FORT THIS MONTH...** **Volunteers** are on duty Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays to greet visitors and help with their requests, along with their regular tasks to keep THE FORT humming...processing obits, adding to FAG, organizing records, and keeping things in order while socializing with a focus on genealogy and history.

Each day we also answer a variety of questions from our email: **Olivia Miller**, ROUTE MAGAZINE Editorial Intern needed information about ROUTE 66 MEMORY LANE at Lexington for an article. Check out their offerings on [www.routemagazine.us](http://www.routemagazine.us) and maybe Olivia's story based on our shared information about the Lexington attraction.

**Chris Wright Badiian** contacted us from Equador to locate a marker in Lexington Cemetery in preparation for a visit she planned in October. On the day of the visit she stopped in at THE FORT to thank us for the clear and precise directions to the place where several nurse friends gathered on that day to honor Lexingtonian Mary Ellen Lauher.

**Hon. Katie Edwards** made a substantial donation through our website, but none of us recognized her name. Some investigation showed she lives in Florida and a phone visit revealed she had visited our beautiful Lexington Cemetery, found markers of relatives, and saw stories about her family on our website...so decided to send thanks with a nice donation! She shares family ties with member **Mary Lou Norman**, so we hope they can make a new connection, too.

Long-time member **Ray Flesher** helped with a request from a prison inmate in California who wants to share family heritage with his children. Flesher burials in Indian Field Cemetery led the inmate to THE FORT and Ray's research offerings will keep him busy with information for his children, even though he has no access to a computer.

Questions about a tricky electrical plug brought the **local electrician** to THE FORT where he also noticed our spotty fluorescent lights, which we knew were rapidly becoming obsolete. He mentioned that AMERAN was offering a special 50/50 project to replace the old ceiling lights with modern LEDs to eliminate the old obsolete hardware. As the official CITY OF LEXINGTON HISTORIANS, the city joined in on the project and our ceiling lights are now shining brightly!

Our Lexington churches sponsor a monthly **SENIOR CITIZEN POTLUCK AND PROGRAM** in which THE FORT sometimes participates. In October we furnished the technology—computer and projector—for the speaker who had originally gotten part of her information from THE FORT! She owns two antique gas stations from old Route 66!

**Abraham Lincoln Library in Springfield** is the archive for all Illinois newspapers, so THE FORT sought archive copies for our digitization project and discovered several problems of concern. We continue to work with them to make sure the old papers will be available for future generations and that we will be able to acquire the copies we need, too.

**These are just a few of the many and varied contacts made during the last month at THE FORT.**



**Halloween.**  
Halloween passed off quietly enough this year. Five special police were sworn in to guard the lives and property of the citizens, and the town was well patrolled, but the pouring rain and muddy streets were more effectual hindrances to boyish pranks than the guards. The average "kid" has enough ingenuity to fool the police who interferes with his special priveleges on halloween night. One of the special police overheard a gang of a dozen boys planning to overturn a certain outhouse, and concluded to follow them up and catch them in the act. The shed was overturned and every mother's son of them escaped before the guard could get

of them escaped before the guard could get hands on them. He cried "halt!" and fired two or three pistol shots in the air, which had the effect of increasing the speed of the scampering urchins, who went down the alley like a drove of rabbits. Some of the members of the Council thought perhaps the boys would forget about halloween if the subject was not noised about or discussed in the newspapers beforehand. But when a boy forgets halloween, he will also forget when to play marbles or base ball, and when vacation time comes, and this old world will be a dreary place indeed.

Gibson City Courier 1900