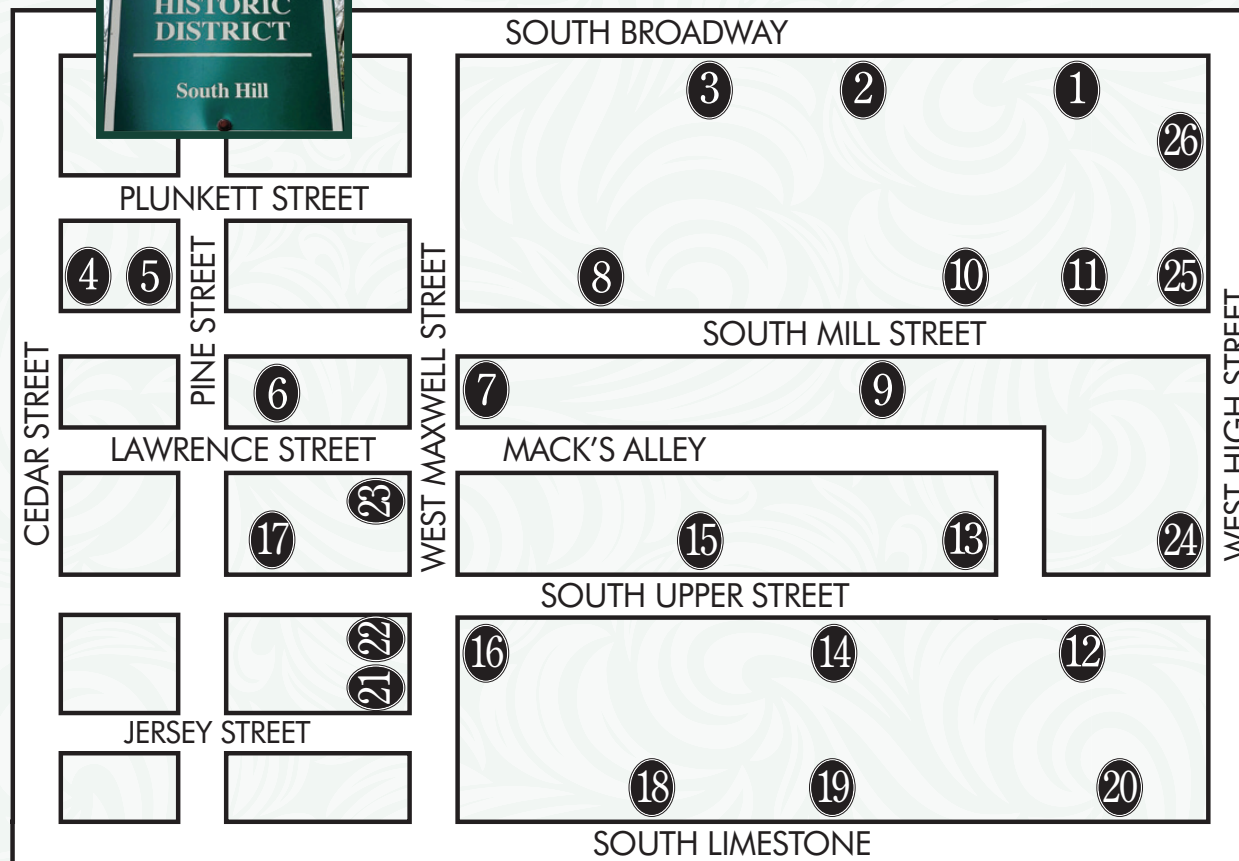


PROLOGUE

The land on which the South Hill neighborhood developed is situated on high ground overlooking the downtown and appears in the original 1781 plat of Lexington as outlots K-Q, the southernmost lots of the frontier settlement. The neighborhood's wealth of preserved historic structures, pedestrian scale, and narrow streets and lots form a cohesive illustration of life in 19th-century Lexington.

Like many historic urban neighborhoods, South Hill has witnessed demographic shifts over time, which is reflected today in the built environment. The first inhabitants of South Hill were affluent and middle-class whites and free African Americans, who built log houses as well as dwellings in the Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate styles, both unassuming and grand. Following the U.S. Civil War, the neighborhood became home to a predominantly working-class population, first largely composed of African Americans before their exclusion during the era of segregation, and, by the late-19th and early-20th centuries, of European immigrants, including a significant Jewish population.

In its 1978 National Register of Historic Places nomination, South Hill is described as "a pocket of urbanity not yet eroded by the ravages of time and neglect nor engulfed by commercial development...a natural neighborhood bounded by the downtown business district, the Lexington Civic Center, the Good Samaritan Hospital, the University of Kentucky and tobacco warehouses." The neighborhood has since experienced a renaissance thanks to the investment of property owners attracted to its ambiance, walkability, and proximity to downtown. Local historic district designation has helped manage change and maintain the distinctive character of South Hill, but pressure on its borders from commercial development and a growing university persists, affirming the need for continued, diligent stewardship of this special district in perpetuity.



Note: The numbers are not intended to prescribe an order to the tour; rather, they are merely for identification purposes.

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| 1. George Lancaster House
326 South Broadway | 8. 363 South Mill Street | 15. John Stilfield House
361 South Upper Street | 22. Bromley's Grocery
126 West Maxwell Street |
| 2. Rogers House
352 South Broadway | 9. Thomas J. Wilson House
336 South Mill Street | 16. 390 South Upper Street | 23. 208-216 West Maxwell Street |
| 3. 370 South Broadway | 10. James Lemon Houses
331-329 South Mill Street | 17. 425 South Upper Street | 24. First United Methodist Church
200 West High Street |
| 4. Robert Gray House
517 South Mill Street | 11. Adam Rankin House
317 South Mill Street | 18. 275 South Limestone
(Building No. 140) | 25. Wallace-Pilkington-Letcher House
300 West High Street |
| 5. Major William Dallam House
505 South Mill Street | 12. 312 South Upper Street | 19. Oldham House
245 South Limestone | 26. John Lowman House
316 West High Street |
| 6. 416-418, 422-426 South Mill Street | 13. 333 South Upper Street | 20. 207 South Limestone | |
| 7. Dudley School
380 South Mill Street | 14. 346 South Upper Street | 21. 120 West Maxwell Street | |



The Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation

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The Blue Grass Trust's series of historic Lexington walking tour brochures is made possible, in part, thanks to a grant from the Virginia Clark Hagan Foundation. The research of the Kentucky Heritage Council and the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, especially its Division of Historic Preservation, has been instrumental in the creation of this brochure and others in the series. Additionally, without VisitLex's steadfast promotion of Lexington's history, there would be less demand to experience it. Resources consulted in the making of this brochure include: the National Register of Historic Places nomination forms for the James Lemon Houses and South Hill Historic District; relevant works by Clay Lancaster; the Historic South Hill Neighborhood Association's informative brochure, "African American Presence: A Tour of Houses Built and Owned by Free Blacks Before the Civil War;" various entries of the Kentucky Historic Resources Survey; and the websites of the National Park Service and the Lexington History Museum.



The Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit advocate for historic preservation, and its mission is to protect, revitalize, and promote the special historic places in our community to enhance the quality of life for future generations. The Trust is guided by three tenets – education, service, and advocacy. Founded in 1955, it is the 14th oldest preservation group in the United States.

SOUTH HILL

Designated as a local historic district in 1972.
Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.



The James Lemon Houses, built ca. 1812
331-329 South Mill St.



BLUE GRASS TRUST'S
HISTORIC LEXINGTON WALKING TOURS

www.bluegrasstrust.org



1
George Lancaster House 326 South Broadway
 Local architect Cincinnatus Shryock designed this elegant Italianate urban villa for George Lancaster around 1875. Lancaster was a proprietor of a dry goods store on Main Street and a financial contributor to the Lexington Library and St. Joseph Hospital. Of brick construction, the house has features typical of the Italianate style, such as an asymmetrical floor plan, a bracketed cornice, and cast iron hood molds above the windows.



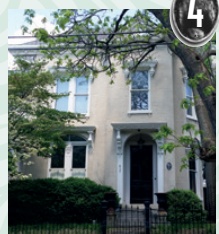
2
Rogers House 352 South Broadway
 Built between 1845 and 1848, Dr. Elisha Warfield commissioned this house for his daughter, Laura R. Rogers. Greek Revival in style, a tetrastyle, or four-columned, Ionic portico shelters its entrance. Tradition holds that local architect, builder, and inventor John McMurtry designed this house.



3
370 South Broadway
 This modest brick dwelling dates from the second quarter of the 19th century and is an example of a building that has undergone stylistic alterations over time. Built in the Greek Revival style, the building's entryway, with its transom and side lights, is original to the house. Italianate features in the form of slender 2-over-2 paned windows and an extended, bracketed cornice, as well as a Colonial Revival front porch, are later changes.

4
Robert Gray House 517 South Mill St.

Robert Gray, an African American who traded in tinware, including stoves and roofing, built this dwelling around 1889. He lived here from 1890 through 1925. The elaborate hood molds, cornice, and bracketed crown of the entrance are made of tin instead of the typical cast iron. Also note the spindlework at the corners of the main façade, as well as the decorative mullion dividing the three-part window next to the entrance.



5
Major William Dallam House 505 South Mill St.
 Maj. Dallam settled in Lexington in 1807 and had this Federal-style house built for his residence in 1813. He sold it on September 19, 1815. Dallam lived at several fine properties throughout Lexington, including Benjamin H. Latrobe's Pope Villa and the John Lowman House, the latter of which is on this tour. The wings were added to the main body of the house around the mid-19th century.



6
416-418, 422-426 South Mill St.
 Speculative housing development was not uncommon in South Hill. In 1836, prominent local merchant Thomas Huggins had these two modest duplexes constructed as rental properties. Residents of the two buildings have included Thomas Boggs, wagon-maker (1873-1874); C.J. Young, photographer (1883-1895); and J.P. Glen, clerk at the C.S. Bell Fruit Store (1887).



7
Dudley School 380 South Mill St.
 Dr. Benjamin W. Dudley of Transylvania University was a distinguished local surgeon who took a great interest in the public schools of Lexington. A city school was created in 1851 in his name. This Italianate building, completed in 1881, is the second iteration of the school, though it now houses restaurants and shops.

8
363 South Mill St.

This Queen Anne-style cottage built in 1897 is a later addition to South Hill. Its irregular form and roof shape are a departure from the massing of earlier houses in the neighborhood in the Federal and Greek Revival styles. This cottage features segmental arched window and door openings crowned with rusticated brick. A one-story porch with delicate spindlework columns and details shelters the entrance.



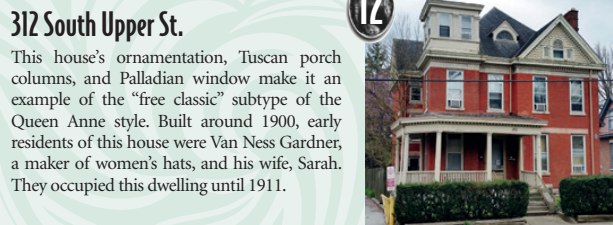
8
Thomas J. Wilson House 336 South Mill St.
 Thomas J. Wilson was an African American laborer involved in the building trades who built this two-story brick house himself around 1880. Attenuated elements of the Italianate style, such as brackets at the eaves and window pediments, provide ornamentation to what is an otherwise vernacular building form. Wilson resided here until 1902.



9
James Lemon Houses 331-329 South Mill St.
 James Lemon had this pair of Federal town houses constructed around 1812, although physical evidence suggests that the southern of the two was built first. The pair is typical of connected dwellings which were once prevalent in early Lexington. A native of Ireland, Lemon was a veteran of the American Revolution, a tailor, a farmer, and owner of a brick yard.



11
Adam Rankin House 317 South Mill St.
 Built in 1784 for Reverend Adam Rankin, founding pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Lexington, this is one of the oldest houses in the city. The portion of the building with the taller roof is the original core, which is of log construction covered in clapboards. The eastern two bays are a frame addition dating to around 1794. The house was relocated in the 1970s to this site from 215 West High Street to avoid demolition.



12
312 South Upper St.
 This house's ornamentation, Tuscan porch columns, and Palladian window make it an example of the "free classic" subtype of the Queen Anne style. Built around 1900, early residents of this house were Van Ness Gardner, a maker of women's hats, and his wife, Sarah. They occupied this dwelling until 1911.



13
333 South Upper St.
 Originally built for John P. Aldridge as a Lancastrian School in 1817, this building also housed Dunham's Lexington Female Academy – later changed to Lafayette Female Academy after the Marquis de Lafayette's visit to Lexington in 1825 – Luther H. Van Doren's Collegiate Institute for Boys, and later a residence. The roof eaves have been enlarged, brackets added, and in the 20th century, a fanlight doorway installed.

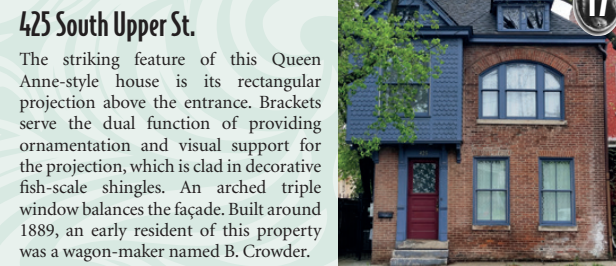


14
346 South Upper St.
 In 1829, free African American blacksmith and land speculator Rolla Blue purchased this house, which was built around 1816 for Robert McMullen. Blue never resided here but leased it to renters, at least one of whom was another free African American craftsman named Cypress Stover. Blue owned and rented several other properties in the area.



15
John Stilfield House 361 South Upper St.
 John Stilfield, a wagon-maker, built this log house around 1805. It was one of the first houses constructed when South Upper Street opened in the early 19th century. Clapboards protect the structure from the elements; a small cut-out on the north façade offers a view of the hewn logs beneath. In the late-1990s, the building was dilapidated and faced demolition, but the Blue Grass Trust purchased it, stabilized it, and found a preservation-minded buyer to complete the restoration.

16
390 South Upper St.
 One of the later additions to South Hill, this two-and-one-half-story brick dwelling was built around 1894. It is in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, one of the many styles of the Victorian era. Note the prominent use of semicircular arches and decorative stone and brick; these features are characteristic of Richardsonian Romanesque buildings.



17
425 South Upper St.
 The striking feature of this Queen Anne-style house is its rectangular projection above the entrance. Brackets serve the dual function of providing ornamentation and visual support for the projection, which is clad in decorative fish-scale shingles. An arched triple window balances the façade. Built around 1889, an early resident of this property was a wagon-maker named B. Crowder.



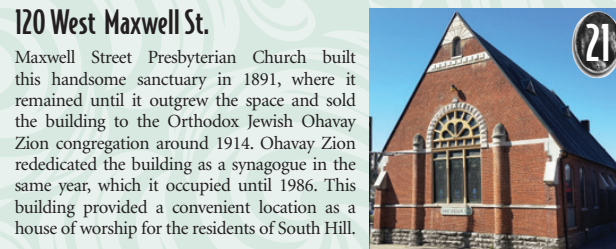
18
275 South Limestone (Building No. 140)
 This ostentatious Italianate house was constructed by 1871. In the early-20th century, it was connected in use as a hotel, the Kimball House, with the house to the north and the three houses to the south. Two of its early residents were W. H. Newberry, blacksmith and wagon-maker (1887-1890), and William P. Kimball, lawyer and County Attorney, for whom the hotel was named (1902-1907).



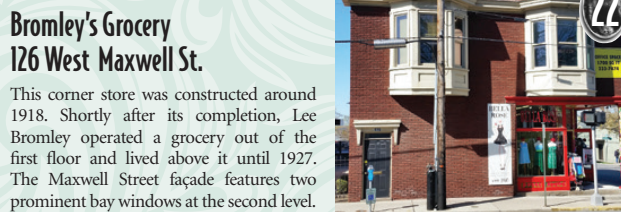
19
Oldham House 245 South Limestone
 Samuel and Daphney Oldham, proprietors of Caledonian Baths at 18 East Main Street, built this Federal-style house in 1835. Samuel Oldham was a free African American business owner and land speculator who also served as a barber and unofficial attorney for the city's free black community. In 1839, the Oldhams sold the property to William R. Bradford, one-time City Surveyor.



20
207 South Limestone
 In 1887, I.W. Miller, a grocer, resided in this T-plan cottage, which was built sometime between 1871 and 1886. Of frame construction on a raised, rusticated limestone foundation, the modest building features decorative brackets and chamfered columns on its northern entry porch. The side porch on the south façade was an early addition.



21
120 West Maxwell St.
 Maxwell Street Presbyterian Church built this handsome sanctuary in 1891, where it remained until it outgrew the space and sold the building to the Orthodox Jewish Ohavay Zion congregation around 1914. Ohavay Zion rededicated the building as a synagogue in the same year, which it occupied until 1986. This building provided a convenient location as a house of worship for the residents of South Hill.



22
Bromley's Grocery 126 West Maxwell St.
 This corner store was constructed around 1918. Shortly after its completion, Lee Bromley operated a grocery out of the first floor and lived above it until 1927. The Maxwell Street façade features two prominent bay windows at the second level.



23
208-216 West Maxwell St.
 Though now containing commercial uses, this group of one-story brick buildings was constructed around the late-1870s as cottage residences. Buildings of this type are commonly referred to as "shotgun houses." Each possesses decorative brackets and a quatrefoil motif in the gable. A carpenter, physician, artesian driller, and upholsterers called these buildings home throughout the 1880s and 1890s.



24
First United Methodist Church 200 West High St.
 This congregation established the first Methodist church west of the Allegheny Mountains. In 1842, after a period of growth, the congregation constructed the Hill Street Methodist Church on this site. The grand Neoclassical Revival sanctuary seen today was built in 1907, replacing the 1842 structure. This building's fine cut stone and colossal, two-story pedimented portico make for an impressive view from High Street.



25
Wallace-Pilkington-Letcher House 300 West High St.
 Major Thomas Bodley constructed this house in 1806 for Richard Higgins, a real estate developer and prominent merchant. It is a good example of the early Federal-style residences of the city, with some stylistic alterations and additions. Two other affluent merchants, Thomas Wallace and Samuel Pilkington, purchased the house in 1810 and 1826, respectively.



26
John Lowman House 316 West High St.
 Built by settler John Lowman in 1808, this is one of the earliest brick houses in the city. This structure has undergone stylistic alterations like the previous building at 300 W High Street, but was drastically enlarged prior to 1850. The one-story polygonal bay was added to the east side in the latter half of the 19th century, as well as the lunette opening and gable above the entrance.