

The French Botanist Micaeux was impressed with Lexington when he came in 1803. "its buildings were mostly of brick, and merchants offering practically everything found in Philadelphia save fresh seafood." Besides selling supplies to travelers he found that there were ropewalks, tanneries, paper mills and a large number of skilled workmen making all things from whiskey stills to silverware. The booming economy kept everyone occupied but they still had their eye on possible War Clouds north of the Ohio.

In 1810 Lexington 1,795 in habitants, "of whom 23 were Indians and 439 were slaves." There were 24 retail stores, 8 taverns and 30 carriages. The city's eyes were still on the north where the Indians were being rallied by the Shawnee Chief Tecumseh who wanted to expel the white men from his beloved homeland. In 1811 General Harrison led an army into Indiana where his force met and defeated an Indian force led by Tecumseh's brother, 'The Prophet.' This battle of 'Tippecanoe' would make Harrison President in years ahead but at the time it led to yet another and bigger war; the War of 1812.

Kentuckians felt that the British were behind the Indian unrest and they demanded action. There was a group of young lawmakers in Washington, D.C. known as the War Hawks who were more than willing to push for a war with the British. Abraham Lincoln would later define what a War Hawk done, "when he said how often he noticed that the men who were the loudest in proclaiming their readiness to shed their last drop of blood were generally the most careful not to shed the first."

The leading War Hawk Henry Clay, who never wore a uniform, and others, "speeches in the House of Representatives made clear the aims of the Americans had for starting the war." I will be quoting from Robin Kelly's book, 'The British at the Gates' in much of the following paragraphs. Those aims were:

"The restoration of maritime rights and the end of impressments (of American sailors by the British navy). The final destruction of the Indian threat to frontier lands and the annexation of Canada." The Kentucky land speculators were mostly motivated by the taking of Canada. There would be incredible profits from the sale of these vast lands to incoming settlers. However Robin Kelly said, "the greatest single cause of the war was nationalism."

On the floor of the House many congressmen arose to justify the annexation of Canada. Richard 'Tecumseh' Johnson stated, "The waters of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi interlock in a number of places, and the Great Depositor of Human Events intended those two rivers should belong to the same people."

Congressman John Harper said, "it appears that the Author of Nature has marked has

our limits on the south, by the Gulf of Mexico; and on the north, by the regions of eternal frost." Felix Grundy offered to receive the Canadians as adopted brothers. John Randolph "indicated how easy it would be to march through the wilderness", to Canada.

All wars require massive spending and "heavy taxation and massive increases in duties were approved by Congress on March 4 (1811) but on condition that they would not become effective until the war was declared." To his credit Henry Clay recognized that funds were needed before the war to raise and equip the troops. He "insisted that the militia must be available to carry the war onto foreign soil- in fact for the invasion of Florida and Canada- but it didn't pass. Even members of the war party didn't support Clay."

Some foresaw the results of not funding the war before it started. John Randolph scornfully said, "It seems this is to be a holiday campaign-there is to be no expense of blood or treasure, on our part"

The writer Robin Kelly noted "surely no nation ever contemplated making war from a position of such total unpreparedness as the United States in the winter of 1811-1812."

The Methodist Bishop Asbury was uneasy at the thought of war. On the 8th of August, 1812 he noted in his journal, "I feel a deep concern for the old world and the new world; calamity and suffering are coming upon them both-I shall make but few remarks on this unhappy subject; it is one on which the prudent will be silent; but I must need say it is an evil day." The Bishop had to be prudent as many Americans retained the memories of how the Methodists did not support the Revolution and to be against the popular War of 1812 would hinder the growth of Methodism.

The Declaration of War was received and, "Lexington greeted the news with a brilliant illumination and great rejoicing---a company of militia was quickly formed." Six companies of Lexington men and a few women joined the 4,000 soldiers the Old Indian Fighter Governor Shelby would lead off to war.

The Limestone Road began outside of the Phoenix Hotel and as the soldiers former up there ladies stood outside the hotel and waved as the soldiers set off to as yet unknown battlefields. Among the men that marched off was, "an adventurous and exceedingly useful female." Who served as a washerwoman, a common practice in the armies of the times. She became a prisoner at the Battle of River Raisin and was taken to an Indian village where she was attacked by a mob of Indian women. She fought so hard against the mob; out of respect the Indian men stopped the fight and forbid the Indian women to attack her again. She returned to Lexington but her name has become lost to history.

The troops marched off without proper clothing, boots, equipment or food, "provisions

and other supplies were brought to Leestown from the interior and then shipped on flatboats to points on the Indiana shore nearest our troops. The ladies of Franklin County (Frankfort) sent two wagon loads of clothing for the troops."

'Our troops' froze to death, starved to death and died of a number of illnesses. In the East the British Army burned down our Nation's Capital. Everyone was eager for the war to end. One of Kentucky's War Hawks, Henry Clay, went to Europe to negotiate a Peace Treaty. Robin Kelly wrote, "When the treaty was concluded---those Americans who demanded war found that none of their stated objections had been achieved. An unnecessary war and costly war had ended in a draw."

Henry Clay had brought on a war in which Kentucky lost many of its finest men and when he negotiated a Peace Treaty he became a Hero. I despise the man.

In the minds of most Americans today all that is known of the War of 1812 is a battle that happened after the war was over. On January the 8th, 1815 General Andrew Jackson defeated the British at the Battle of New Orleans.

The Kentuckians sent to defend New Orleans went without any of the basic supplies needed to form a fighting force. General Jackson saw the Kentuckians and said. "I had never seen a Kentuckian without a deck of cards, a dog, a jug of whiskey or a gun."

With the close of the War of 1812 the merchants of Lexington had twenty-some years in which to further develop the city before the next war. Prior to the War of 1812 the New Englander James Prentiss and his brother Thomas built a manufacturing center west of town. This area was named after England's Manchester. This strip along the Town Branch, today's Manchester Street, had been lightly settled before they came.

Two stone houses were built there in the 1790's and both stand today. The oldest stone house in Lexington was the James McConnell which is located "at the site of McConnell Station at the Boyle Spring on Town Branch." The house is "a one-story, three-bay, half parlor stone house on a high cellar with interior chimneys on each gable end. The embankment of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad (tracks) leans against the back wall of the McConnell house."

William McConnell built two similar houses; the first at Sinking Spring on his 1,400 tract of land now honored as McConnell Springs Nature Preserve. This house is gone. The second house is still standing and is a national Register Historic site. Manchester Street becomes the Frankfort Pike going out of town. This stone house is on the north side of Frankfort Pike and across the Town Branch. I use to tell people it sat next to the Bluegrass Stockyards but the Stockyards have burnt down.

A partnership was formed by Thomas Prentice and James Johnson (Robert 'Tecomseh'

Johnson's brother) and invested \$150,000 in the Manchester area. The huge stone building they had erected housed the Lexington Manufacturing Company, commonly called the woolen mill. Here every year 100,000 pounds of wool and 100 tons of rags were converted to cloth and paper. They bought farmland and Merino sheep to supply the mill with wool. They also provided housing for their workers.

The mill went into production in 1816 but by 1818 it was having financial difficulties. The mill was sold and James Johnson moved the paper mill to Georgetown. The Bank of the United States held much of the debt for the woolen mill and in 1820 they sold the building which became a jail and then a workhouse for the very poor that were lodged there."

Investing heavily in the Kentucky Insurance Company James Prentess became its President in 1817 and people alleged that "through fraud and deceit" James plunged the Insurance Company "into ruin while he fled Lexington." Perhaps James had cheated the company; perhaps Thomas Prentess and James Johnson were poor businessmen. However; in 1818 a "Panic" or what we call a Depression hit the entire country and many businesses were swept into bankruptcy. The city's merchants also realized that the cities that were on the Ohio River were beginning to take business away from Lexington. The reason those cities prospered and Lexington didn't was due to the steamboats which began plying the rivers. Lexington of course didn't sit on a river.

Lexington did have steamboat years before the steamboats ran the rivers. In 1793 Edward West successfully operated a model steamboat on the dammed up Town Branch on Vine Street near Patterson Street before a crowd of hundreds. West was an amazing man as he was a silversmith, watch and clock maker, had invented a nail-cutting machine he'd sold to an Eastern firm for 10,000 dollars, conceived of an idea for a planetarium he had Thomas Barlow of the Sayre School build and acting on his theory that Rheumatism was attracted by iron he turned out iron bands in great quantities to be worn around the wrists and ankles of sufferers to draw out the Rheumatism.

His friend Thomas Barlow said West got all his wisdom "from a cyclopedia." His steamboat was made about the time Fulton was experimenting with steamboats but Barlow claimed that West "was the first person in the United States to make a steam engine. It was a two inch cylinder and a four inch stroke. It had no air pump-this was a defect & could not be compensated for by having two condensers." This boat was driven by oars and not a paddle-wheel and was not large enough to carry a man.

"This miniature steamboat" according to Collins History, "had no fly wheel to overcome dead points, the piston rod was made to strike metallic springs at every return motion given by the steam." Maude Lafferty said, "the cylinder, piston rod, frame work, supply and escape pipe were preserved for more than fifty years in the Museum of the Adelphi

Society of Transylvania and have since been transferred to the Museum of the Eastern State Lunatic Asylum." Perhaps it was thought the West's invention had been a crazy idea.

There were many merchants and companies operating in Lexington. The "Oldham Todd Co. offered for sale '5,000 Yards of Coarse Colored Negro Jeans of superior quality, cheap. Also---10, yards of Negro Shirting."

The Lexington Steam Mill Company processed grains into flour and was located on Steam Mill Street (Bolivar) where it used leased water from "John Maxwell's plentiful springs"; now on the grounds of the University of Kentucky's President Home. Partners Hallett and Stevens operated the mill and Stevens invented the rotary valve on the steam engine which greatly improved the efficiency of their operation.

Peter January's log home still stands opposite the Patterson cabin which sits on the Transylvania campus. His extensive ropewalk once sat close to his home but is now gone.

In 1810 there had been "eight cotton, three wool and one oil cloth factory in town. Plus thirteen large ropewalks, five bagging and one duck (cloth); which turned out \$500,000 worth of goods each year. The writer Mary Verhoff said that by 1817 there were sixty factories in town, twelve of which were, "cotton, 3 woolen, 3 paper, 3 gristmills, gunpowder mills, lead factory, foundries for cast iron and brass connected to a silver plating establishment, 4 hat factories, 4 coach, 5 tanneries and three tobacco ones."

Tobacco had been grown and smoked in the area as far back as 4 to 5,000 years ago. The Ancient People had made pipes of baked clay or had carved them out of soft stone; often making these "Totem Pipes" in the form of animals or birds. A large bird pipe was found on the Peter's farm on Newtown Pike just outside of Lexington.

Except for a few, mostly women ~~who~~ smoked a pipe after her days labor ended, most people chewed their tobacco. It wasn't until the Civil War when the soldiers learned to smoke cigarettes that a large number of men smoked. Lexington's tobacco factories made chewing tobacco by stripping the tobacco leaf from the stem and then dried it before storing it for two to three years. The Indians had twisted leaves of tobacco into a rope-like foot long 'twist. They would add 'sweetening' as the green tobacco was very bitter. The factories also used 'sweetenings; early on it was maple sugar and later molasses was added to their 'Plugs.'

When men felt the need for a "Chaw", they reached in their pocket, put the plug in their mouth and bit off a chunk. As tobacco juice filled their mouth they would spit a stream of amber juice out. In the old country stores they would spit against the red-hot pot-bellied stoves and in low class taverns they spit on the floor. In better sorts of places there were brass cuspidors to spit in. I have sat in an old, old church where the

floorboards at a man's feet were on hinges so they could be pulled up so the men could spit onto the ground below.

Women of the lower class 'Dipped' shredded tobacco and put it between their lip and gum while women of the higher class who considered themselves ladies put a pinch of finer ground tobacco called snuff, up their nose. This caused them to sneeze; in a delicate and ladylike manner of course.

The first Snuff Mills "were made by cutting a conical hole in a large block of pebble conglomerate stone; a second stone was cut into a conical form to fit the hole in the first stone. The inside cone was turned by handspikes set into its top." The turning of this was usually done by slave labor.

As the demand for snuff increased watermills were needed to produce the volume needed. The leaves and stalks of tobacco were aged several years and then fermented. The excess oil, acids, and nicotine were then removed. Cloves, lavender or other spices were added to give it a delightful smell. Fancy, high priced snuffboxes held the snuff of high priced ladies.

All my many Kentucky Aunts and Uncles grew up on tobacco farms and they and most Kentuckians would have thought that their ancestor's most profitable crop would have been tobacco.; but it wasn't,Hemp was the money making crop. Hemp factories in Lexington produced the bagging cotton growers in the Deep South used to wrap the huge cotton bales sweating slaves loaded on the steamboats. The Rope Factories, using hemp, made small ropes to tie these bales and larger ropes for seagoing ships rigging.

The merchant John Wesley Hunt had set up a mercantile business in 1794 at 314 West Main Street where Steven Collins tavern sat next door to the old Statehouse in 1792. The Hunt family lived upstairs in a luxurious apartment. This building is now gone but it was said to have had the Ghost of a Black man haunting it. In 1795 President John Adams appointed him Post Master and Hunt established a Pony Express to deliver mail between Lexington and Washington, D.C. The round trip took two weeks.

The Scotsman John Brand's sailcloth business failed and he fled to America and once in Lexington partnered with John Hunt. The pair was reputed to be Lexington's first millionaires after their bagging factory proved successful. Brand prospered and "purchased the west side of the block on Limestone Street between Four and Fifth Streets. On the south portion of the property he set up a "rope walk", a large shed-style building where hemp fibers were twisted into rope, and on the north end he built the beautiful Rose Hill in 1812."

Rose Hill is a "five bay brick house, flanked by lower wings on either side, is enhanced

by its entranceway with elliptical fanlight and wide leaded sidelights with clustered colonnades (colonnades)." Clay Lancaster in 'Ante Bellum Homes of the Bluegrass' says, "No house in Kentucky better deserves to be preserved and maintained for its architectural merits." There are many such mansions in town but there's not space to tell of them all.

John Hunt also had a ropewalk. Rope was spun much like thread or yarn but the spinning wheels were much larger. While a young boy spun the wheel the 'Spinner' walked backwards twisting two lengths of yarn, one in each hand. After the yarn was spun it was put on giant bobbins by threading it through holes in a plate and then into a tube which compressed it into a single strand. The spinning process was done by a machine mounted on a railroad like handcart which ran on wheels the length of the rope walk."

The Rope Works consisted of many buildings. There were storage houses, weaving houses and the ropewalk. The ropewalk was a building that stretched out the length of the ropes being twisted. The dust in these buildings led to many lung problems for the workers. The horrible working conditions kept most white workers away so it was mostly Black men who worked in them. John Hunt used only slave labor and kept Free Blacks out of his buildings as he felt the Free Blacks brought whiskey and "ideas" into the workplace and this led to problems with the workmen.

Accidents could occur at any time in the workplace and like most slave-owners like John Hunt, who had a ruthless attitude towards his slaves, suspected the slaves of deliberating causing accidents. The dry hemp which was piled everywhere in the rope works was easily set on fire by the smallest spark. John Hunt had two of his rope works burn down. A young slave boy Hunt had leased from Green Clay, another First millionaire of Kentucky, was hung for the first rope work burned down. Slaves were property in the sight of the law so the State of Kentucky paid Green Clay for the loss of the slave boy.

After the second rope works burned two teenage slaves were convicted and sentenced to be hung but they were pardoned by Governor Scott who doubted they had set it because of their young age. A local newspaper fumed over the pardon and asked, "What is this but declaring infancy is a protection for crime?" The paper thought other children might burn rope works or even houses if an example wasn't made by hanging children.

"Hopemont" was the beautiful home built by Hunt and it will told be told of later.

William "Lord" Morton, his title "derived from his grand manner and scale of living," came from Baltimore and established a number of business "that soon provided him with the wealth to build" the 'Morton House.' "The house sits well back from Limestone Street at the corner of Fifth Street. The entrance door, nearly ten feet high, and the two Palladian-style windows on either side, almost eight feet wide give the passerby the

impression of a larger scale building.

In 1836 Cassuis Marcellus Clay purchased the Morton property for \$18,000 saying the Morton House was "the most elegant in the city." Cassuis lived here while he published his controversial anti-slavery newspaper, 'The True American.' It was here he recruited soldiers for his company in the War with Mexico. He would sell the property and moved to White Hall in Madison County before the Civil War. In 1913 the property was given to the city of Lexington and is now the site of Duncan Park.

All merchants prospered as trade boomed. Dr. Elisha Warfield's store was opposite the courthouse had had a luxurious apartment on the second floor. A walled garden in the rear ran down to the Town Branch and across the front of the store was a balcony where he and his family and friends gathered on summer afternoons to watch horse races. The city would ban horse races on Main Street and Dr. Warfield built a mansion on his race horse farm, later known as 'Patchen Wilkes.' This farm is now under the Hamburg Shopping Center.

In 1830 an unknown Eastern came to Lexington and wrote, "At one of the principal bagging and bale rope establishment there are employment from 60 to 100 negro slaves, of all ages-all stout, hearty, healthy, and merry fellows, some of whom contribute to while away the time and drown the noise of the machinery by their own melody."

"On the floor of a very large stone building was the kitchen, a room where the hatching (or hacking was done; men swung their clubs to break down the hemp stalks), and in the rear of that a ropewalk. In front on the second floor, over the kitchen, is the sleeping apartment, where the greater portions of the laborers are accommodated on a sort of long table (or sleeping bunk), which extends around two sides of the room. Everything in this apartment appeared to be comfortable, and as neat as could be expected. In the rear of the room is an apartment, 60 yards long, where the 'warp' for the bagging is spun; the best spinners are selected for this; the labor required of them is moderate; and I was informed that one of the young men had received between eight and nine hundred dollars for his 'overwork'.

The Eastern didn't realize he was being lied to. Slaves did receive small bonuses but nothing like eight or nine hundred dollars. Most white workmen didn't receive much more than a dollar a day; Free Blacks worked for less than that.

His piece went on, "Each piece of bagging is made 60 yards in length, the wheels for spinning being placed at both ends of the apartment, so the men spin going and returning- thus saving half the time-and when the 'warp' is completed the treads are of uniform length and ready for immediate use."

"In the third story were some dozen men weaving the bagging-a labor which they performed with much expedition, showing more skill in the management of their machinery than I supposed that the slaves processed." Black men and women were supposed to have such low mental capacity that they could only perform the most basic tasks. There were slaves who realized that not much was expected of them and they performed at a low level which meant they did ^{not} work as hard as they could have.

"Still above this was another long apartment, where there were 18 to 20 boys, of 8 to 15 years old, spinning the 'filling'. Each boy selects his hemp and tow in such portions as suits himself, weighs it in the presence of an overseer and is obliged to return it at the same weight, in the shape of twine for filling. I have never seen a happier set of workmen than these boys." He would not have been upset at seeing eight years old boys working as the Eastern textile mills employed eight year old white boys and girls at the spinning looms. These children worked twelve hours days and Christian mill owners were praised for having the children work just eight hours of Saturday so the children could prepare for Sunday School on the Lord's Day.

"There was no overseer in their apartment; each boy placed his raw material beside his wheel, spun his tread the length of the room, returned to his place, and after winding his thread upon his reel, went on spinning with the utmost regularity and good order, singing the while with great earnestness, and not altogether without melody."

"After it was woven, the bagging goes through another operation---in which it is trimmed. Every man and boy in this establishment, as I before mentioned, had his allotted portion or his stint to perform, and each one is paid for what he does beyond it. This keeps them contented, and makes them ambitious, and no one, who knows anything of mankind, will doubt that more, of mankind's labor is obtained from the same number of hands can possibly be forced from them by severity." The man was saying that kindness and being paid well produces more than treating workers brutally.

There were many slaves that were treated brutally and a few of them gave violence for violence. An old court record shows that, "Sam, a slave of Charles Clark was charged with 'setting fire to and burning the Old & Phoenix Cotton Mill, the property of Andrew Caldwell" on April 1, 1839.

The Easterner finished with, "There are made at this one establishment fifty-six pieces per week, of from 50 to 60 yards each-something being lost after the 'warp' is spun. Bagging is worth about 16 cents per yard, and the business, if not extensively profitable, at least, is worth carrying on."

In 1818 Joseph Bruen built a foundry which ran for fifty years. The giant whistle at foundry would, "Usher in with hoarse blasts the first day of the New Year." In the 1830's

