



ANNUAL CONFERENCE
JUNE 8-10, 2025
LEXINGTON, KY



KMHA Conference Session Descriptions Day 1: Sunday, June 8, 2025

10 am - 1 pm

African Cemetery No. 2 Preservation Project
419 E 7th St, Lexington, KY 40508

3:30 - 4:30 pm

Tour of the 21c Museum Hotel Galleries
167 W Main St, Lexington, KY 40507

5 - 7 pm

Opening Reception at Ashland - The Henry Clay Estate
120 Sycamore Rd, Lexington, KY 40502

7:30 - 9:00 pm

Drinking About Museums meet up at the Lockbox, 21c Museum Hotel
167 W Main St, Lexington, KY 40507

KMHA Conference Session Descriptions

Day 2: Monday, June 9, 2025

*Note: Conference sessions will take place at
Cowgill Center, Transylvania University*

8:00 am Registration Open at the Cowgill Center, Transylvania University

9 - 10:15 am Session A: **Rethinking the "Conjure" Chest**
Deana Thomas, University of Kentucky
Session Location: Classroom A

The conjure chest has been a part of Kentucky history since it was donated to the Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) in 1976 and has since that time been called the deadliest piece of furniture in the world and been featured in a number of books and paranormal TV shows and podcasts. But through analysis of the chest's original source, a 1946 letter from Virginia Cary Hudson to her daughter, as well as genealogical research on Hudson, the story of the chest falls apart. Additionally, the history of how KHS interpreted the chests raises issues with the limitations of family stories.

Session B: **How Do You Do That?**
Sally Rogers, South Union Shaker Village
Session Location: Classroom B

It is not uncommon for professionals in this field to take on multiple roles and responsibilities, oftentimes having to "figure it out" along the way. When professionals work together to share their knowledge and expertise, we enhance each other's skills sets. This working group will feature round robin-style discussions with input from participants on how different institutions handle certain topics/issues. Topics discussed will include collections management, education, fundraising, marketing, and more. This will be a collaborative and interactive time, so come prepared to participate!

10:15 - 10:30 am Morning Break with Refreshments

KMHA Conference Session Descriptions

Day 2: Monday, June 9, 2025

*Note: Conference sessions will take place at
Cowgill Center, Transylvania University*

10:30 - 11:45 am

Session A: Introduction to the Kentucky Heritage Emergency Response Network (KHERN)

Leah Craig, Kentucky Historical Society

Rusty Heckaman, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives

Ruth Bryan, University of Kentucky

Session Location: Classroom A

If disaster strikes your institution, where will you turn for help? This panel presentation will introduce attendees to the newly formed Kentucky Heritage Emergency Response Network (KHERN) and how organizations can participate. Panelists will also discuss tips for the first actions to take if a disaster strikes and share resources for cultural organizations to prepare for disasters.

Session B: To Protect and Serve: Security Issues at Small Museums, Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Historic Sites

James Seaver, Kentucky Historical Society

Susan Brown, Transylvania University

Gwen Thompson, Mary Todd Lincoln House

Session Location: Classroom B

The staff who manage small museums, galleries, libraries, archives, and historic sites across Kentucky face a daunting challenge: how to protect the collections in their care while simultaneously maximizing their accessibility to serve public audiences. It's a delicate balancing act. Theoretical best practices are often tempered by practical limitations imposed by staffing levels, physical infrastructure, and funding issues.

This roundtable forum aspires to create a space where attendees can discuss security issues they're facing at their respective institutions or sites, brainstorm possible solutions with likeminded peers, and learn from teachable moments and tested strategies offered by the panelists. Please come prepared to participate in a lively discussion!

12:00 - 1:30 pm

Lunch provided by KMHA at the Zim's Cafe, Old Fayette County Courthouse
215 W Main St UNIT 25, Lexington, KY 40507

Leah Craig, Kentucky Historical Society, to deliver Advocacy Update

KMHA Conference Session Descriptions

Day 2: Monday, June 9, 2025 (Continued)

1:30 - 2:45 pm

Session A: **Ancient Histories, Archival Collections: The Kentucky Geological Survey's Efforts to Organize and Share Geologic Resources**

Cheyenne Hohman, Kentucky Geological Survey, University of Kentucky

Liz Adams, Kentucky Geological Survey, University of Kentucky

Session Location: Classroom A

Cheyenne Hohman and Liz Adams will give an overview of the Kentucky Geological Survey's recent efforts to organize, store, and build accessible collections of digital and physical resources for public use. The KGS collection spans nearly 200 years of records, maps, publications, geologic specimens, photographs, data sets and more. With a multi-faceted, future-focused approach, KGS has made steady progress towards the goals of sharing scientific findings to help keep the Commonwealth safe, informed, and curious about what lies beneath our feet.

Session B: **Objects ARE Evidence: Founding Era Material Culture and the 250th**

Zachary Distel, National Society Sons of the American Revolution

Session Location: Classroom B

Are you ready to engage your collection to interpret the American Revolution and early Kentucky in 2026? This session will explore the diverse material culture of the colonial and founding eras and present resources to help you research, interpret, and identify examples in your collection.

2:45 - 3:00 pm

Afternoon Break with Refreshments

KMHA Conference Session Descriptions

Day 2: Monday, June 9, 2025 (Continued)

3:00 – 4:15 pm

Session A: Goldilocks and the Three Museums: Best Practices for School Tours at Museums of All Sizes

Betsy Huggins, Speed Art Museum

Emily Dippie, Kentucky Derby Museum

Michelle Amos, The Little Loomhouse

Session Location: Classroom A

This program features presenters from a variety of institutions each offering their best practices for school tours. Representatives from organizations of all sizes ranging from the Kentucky Derby Museum, which hosts 15,000 students annually, to the Speed Art Museum with 5,000 students each year, and the Little Loomhouse, which sees about 1,200 students annually will share their experiences and strategies. All aspects of school tour planning will be covered including nitty gritty logistics, effective tour strategies, and engaging on-site programming. Like Goldilocks, finding the "just right" balance is key. Attendees will explore what works best for different groups and settings. Bring your own ideas, exchange them with others, and leave with strategies to enhance the school tour experience.

Session B: Supper Club: Inspiring Cultural & Culinary Conversations

Alissa Keller, Museums of Historic Hopkinsville and Christian County

Matthew Brown, Chef Emeritus and Wandering Kentucky Founder

Session Location: Classroom B

Bring your appetite to this session that explores the diversity and history of communities through the food that they share. The Supper Club is an established event in Hopkinsville that is designed to build community belonging. With compassion at heart and a journey with history, the goal is to build a community that understands and promotes cross-cultural dialogue with our neighbors. This session will demonstrate how food can remove barriers to allow museums to serve as comfortable spaces for community conversations.

Session C: Tour of Transylvania University Archives

Susan Brown, Transylvania University

Session Location: Off-site, Meet in Cowgill Lobby

Join Library Director, Susan Brown, on a guided tour of the Transylvania University Archives.

5 pm – 6:30 pm

Tours of LexHistory and the Bluegrass Trust for Historic Preservation
210 N Broadway, Lexington, KY 40507

6:30 – 8:30pm

Food, Drinks, and Tours at West Sixth Brewing
501 W 6th St #100, Lexington, KY 40508

KMHA Conference Session Descriptions

Day 3: Tuesday, June 10, 2025

*Note: Conference sessions will take place at
Kentucky Horse Park*

8:00 am Registration Open at the Kentucky Horse Park

9 - 10:15 am Session A: **That's All She Wrote!: Lessons Learned from the Publication Process**
Jessica Whitehead, Kentucky Derby Museum
Session Location: Classroom A

Sitting on a manuscript or an idea for a great book? Learn some of the ins and outs of turning that manuscript into something bound and beautiful with author Jessica K. Whitehead. Whether you are looking to publish on behalf of your institution or are working as an independent writer/scholar, Whitehead has some tips and tools for navigating your book proposals, manuscript development, editorial relationships, peer reviews, rights and reproductions, and more!

Session B: **From Abstraction to Action: Engaging Visitors with Hands-on History**
Megan Jones, Louisville Water Tower
Session Location: Classroom B

The Louisville Water Tower & WaterWorks Museum is uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between past and present understanding of the water treatment process through innovative, hands-on exhibits. This presentation explores how the museum has transformed complex concepts, like water filtration, engineering innovations and public health milestones – into accessible and engaging experiences for visitors of all ages.

10:15 - 10:30 am Morning Break with Refreshments

KMHA Conference Session Descriptions

Day 3: Tuesday, June 10, 2025

*Note: Conference sessions will take place at
Kentucky Horse Park*

10:30 - 11:45 am Session A: **The Vital Role of Museum Gift Shops in Cultural Institutions**
Delaney Thomas, Kentucky Historical Society
Sally Rogers, South Union Shaker Village
Session Location: Classroom A

The presentation "The Essential Contribution of Museum Gift Shops to Cultural Institutions" highlights their role in enhancing the museum experience, generating revenue, and promoting cultural education through unique merchandise. It also addresses challenges like online competition and the need for innovative marketing, underscoring the vital contribution of gift shops to the sustainability and outreach of cultural institutions.

Session B: **Ask An Educator: Insights and Inspiration from the World of Teaching**
Maddie Menz, Kentucky Historical Society
Brett Pritchett, Museums of Historic Hopkinsville Christian County
Session Location: Classroom B

Museum Educators build programs to support teachers, but what do teachers actually need? Join a diverse group of educators as they share unique perspectives and insights into the world of teaching. In this interactive panel, attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions, explore best practices, and discuss the evolving role of museums in education. Whether you're an educator, museum professional, or simply curious about the intersection of museums and education, this session will offer inspiration and practical advice for making learning in museums impactful.

12:00 - 1:30 pm Lunch provided by KMHA and Annual Meeting at the Kentucky Horse Park
Mandy Higgins, LexHistory Museum, to discuss the 250Lex Commemoration

1:30 - 3 pm Tour of the Kentucky Horse Park