

LEARNING

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LEXINGTON

Lexington Market: 1800s - 2017



LEARNING *FROM* LEXINGTON

Learning from Lexington is a UMBC course where students research the history, culture, and stories of the iconic Lexington Market, a public market located in the westside of downtown Baltimore. Students are creating a series of public history zines and a ten-minute podcast exploring the rich history of the market and how it has continually changed with the city. At the Learning from Lexington free public event on Saturday, December 9, students will share their research with the public and celebrate the culture and stories of Baltimore's Lexington Market.

TO LEARN MORE:

EMAIL

baltimoretraces@gmail.com

VISIT

preservingplaces.wordpress.com

**SAVE THE DATE: Sat. Dec. 9 from 2-4pm
Lexington Room @ the LM**



1782 - 1804

The *Lexington Market* entrance sign reads "Since 1782." However, the real story is a little different. In 1782, Col. John Eager Howard drew a plan of his land on Howard's Hill which showed a market. It was not until 1803 that the legislature authorized selection of land for a market. In 1804, the city signed a long-term lease for Howard's land and purchased some land from two other men. In 1818, the market was so successful that additional land was bought from the Howards. The market may have been John Eager Howard's idea in 1782, but no market was built until the turn of the nineteenth century.



1900

During the nineteenth century much of the *Sun* newspaper coverage of the Lexington Market focused on petty crime such as stealing, marauders, gang fights, and drunk folks passed out in the Market after hours. By 1900, the Lexington Market had been in operation for almost one hundred years and needed improvements. The first city council resolution to replace the Market occurred in 1900, but the thought of change made some unhappy—a recurring theme in the history of the Market.

James and Eliza Herndon Early Produce Vendors

At the turn of the twentieth century, a produce vendor named **James E. Herndon** was just beginning to develop his business. He opened a produce stall in Lexington Market which he ran with his wife for over five decades.

Herndon was born in the late-nineteenth century in Oxford, North Carolina, and migrated to Baltimore for better opportunities. He married **Eliza Burwell** in 1903 and shortly after they went into the produce business. They began their business with a small store on Vine St. near the Arch Social Club, and later moved to Pearl St. above the Lexington Market. A feud with an Italian fruit dealer named Salvatore Fertitta led to an extended legal battle in the late-1930s. However, the couple operated a profitable produce business in Lexington and Hollins Markets for over five decades. They were deacon and deaconess at the Sharon Baptist Church, and they had one son, Ralph H. Herndon, who took over the produce stall after his father's death in 1961.



2 STALLS IN LEXINGTON MARKET—Mr. and Mrs. James Herndon, married 51 years ago, then went into produce business. Assistant is Tom Page. Mr. Herndon's day starts at 3 a.m. at wholesalers. Best seller, potatoes, next fruit. He is deacon, she deaconess at Sharon Baptist.

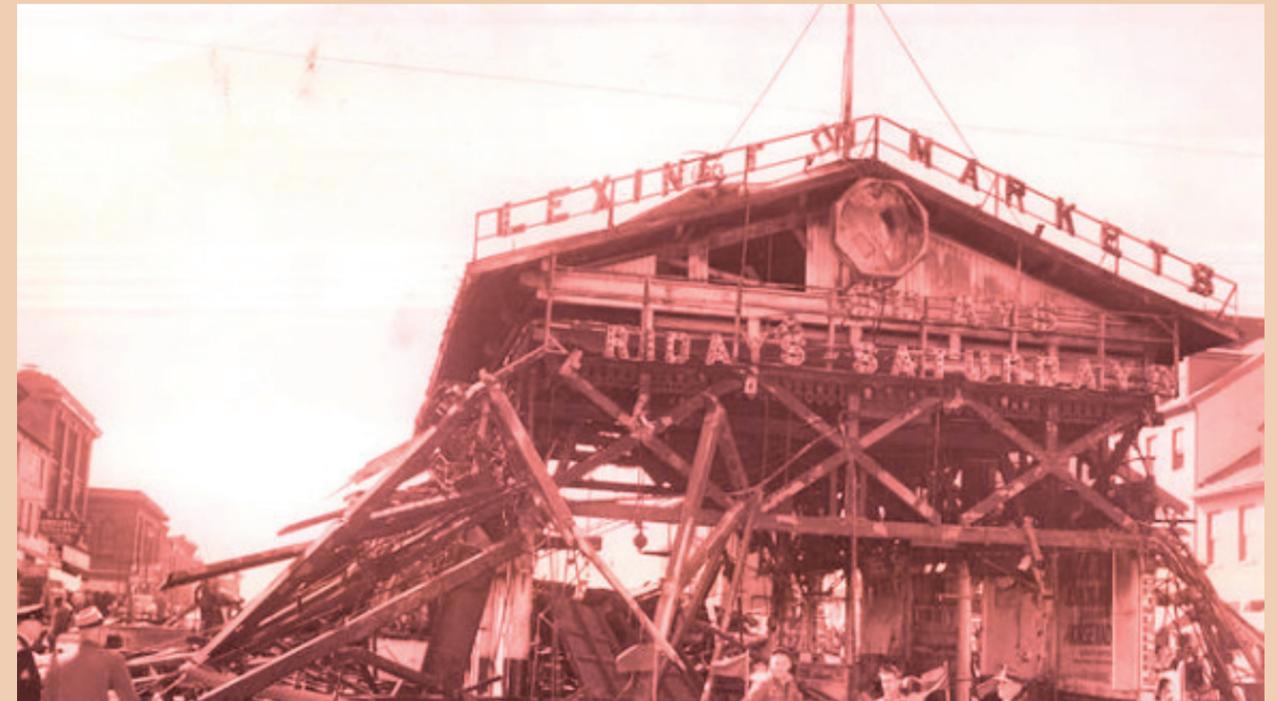


James and Eliza Herndon



1940

Faidley's is the oldest stall in the Market. It opened in 1887. In 1941, John Faidley hired Robert Rawls to cook for his restaurant, where Rawls worked until his death in 1999. During his 58-year career, he became a central character in the market community, and locals often joked about his long history. "I found a dinosaur bone the other day, and his name was carved in it," chided his friend Johnny Richter. Faidley's grandson-in-law Bill Devine once remarked that Rawls was worth 10 workers. Loyal employees are the heart of Lexington Market.



1949

In 1949, a six-alarm fire caused by an electrical wire destroyed the Lexington Market building. Up until the fire, there was a long debate about how to modernize the market building, but unfortunately, nothing was decided until after the tragic fire. The fire broke out at 3:30 AM. Two men saw the flames when they were putting ice in a produce stall. They ran down to the nearest fire station, and soon the Fire Department sent 33 vehicles to put it out. Within two hours, most of the Market was gone.

The New Market Emerges



1952

The fire allowed the city to make changes some vendors had been resisting for 50 years. The old building was a large open shed which allowed twice as many vendors on the streets outside than in the new building. At its peak in the early twentieth century, there were over 1,400 vendors at the market. In 1945, there were 809 stalls, 377 of them inside. The new market, which opened in 1952, had 417 indoor stalls but eliminated the street stalls, a major change. Today, there are under 100 vendors in the market. In the new market, all vendors lease rather than own their space. Stall owners took the issue to court, but eventually lost. The city wanted the market to have enough income to be self-supporting and made many adjustments rebuilding a modern market after the fire.





1982

The Arcade Emerges...

The same year that the Harborplace redevelopment opened in the Inner Harbor, the Arcade, a food court with an atrium plus seating and space for entertainment, was added to the Lexington Market. The Arcade serves as the most open public space within the Market. Generations of Baltimoreans show up on Saturdays to see and be seen.

Who Remembers Tubbs Restaurant and Lounge?

Tubbs Restaurant & Lounge (201 N. Greene Street)

Beneath the Parking Garage adjacent to the West Market is where Tubbs Restaurant and Lounge, previously known as Bryant's Restaurant, was once located from 1987 until 1990. From the now-closed business patrons can walk through to access the catacombs of the Market where meat was cured and whiskey aged. The catacombs were discovered in 1951 when the parking garage was being built. Tubbs made news in December 1988 when the go-go dancers who perform during the its night hours were banned. According to a manager at the time, LeRoy Mason Jr, this was just a political act to save face by the city since it is a publicly owned market and the city didn't want to appear to be managing a space that allowed that activity. Tubbs was popular during the afternoon lunch rush in Lexington Market and as a bar featuring "jazz and rhythm and blues in a disco setting" in the evening after the Market closed for the day.

The Future Of Lexington



In August 2016, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and Lexington Market, Inc. the non-profit that manages the market, released a new master plan for Lexington Market. The plan calls for erecting an entirely new market building on the surface lot adjacent to the current facility, demolishing the 1952 market shed and 1982 arcade, creating space for outdoor uses and re-opening Lexington Street to pedestrians.

The new market building may consist of...

- Space for exterior retail, events, and community uses north of the new market
- Lexington street will be reopened to pedestrians
- Human-scale tenant stalls, new storage facilities, customer seating spread throughout the market, and clear sightlines
- Mix of products such as specialty food (bread baked in the market, cheeses, coffees) and ethnic food
- Hands-on teaching kitchen will be added to address diet related health problems and serve more residents

The total cost of this renovation will be between \$35-40 million and will take about 26 months to complete once the project has been completely funded.

What Do you
Think about The
Future of
Lexington ?

Write your
thoughts
down below



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