



# **A SENSE OF PLACE: REMEMBERING AND CELEBRATING THE HISTORY OF FAYETTE COUNTY'S RURAL BLACK HAMLETS**

This presentation explores the history and significance of historic rural black hamlets in Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky and updates to the ASOP Initiative.



# ASOP: INTRODUCTION



## History of Lexington, Fayette County

Explore the historical context and geographic locations of Lexington-Fayette County's rural black hamlets.



## Rural Black Hamlets

Investigate the establishment and development of historic rural black communities in the region.



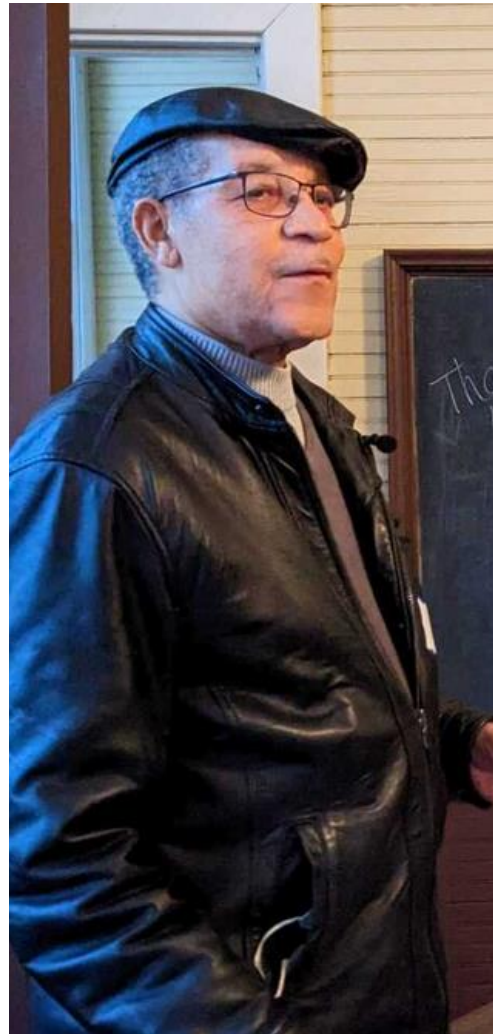
## Significance and Impacts

Discuss the cultural, social, and economic importance of these rural black hamlets. Honoring the heritage and culture by creating a dedicated space in the community to highlight their significance.

This introduction will set the stage for a deeper exploration of the rich history and legacy of Lexington's historic rural black hamlets.







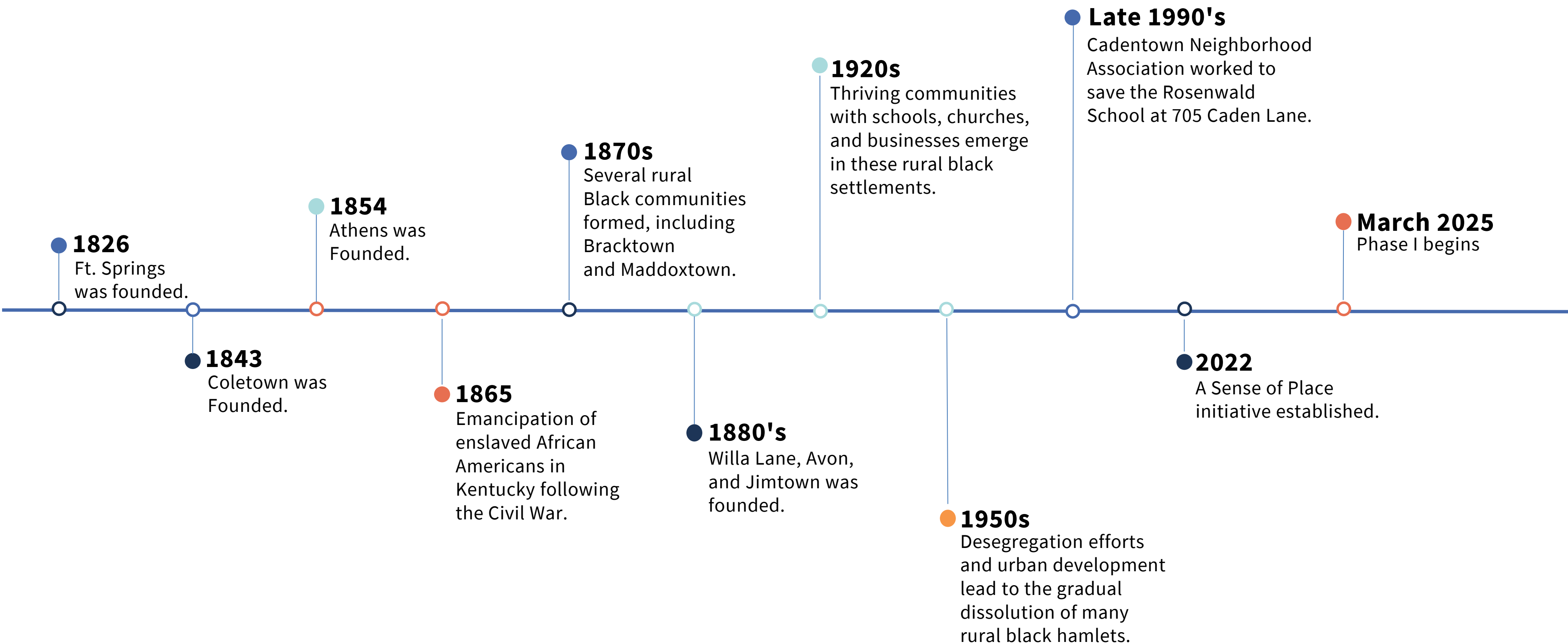
Steering  
Committee  
Members







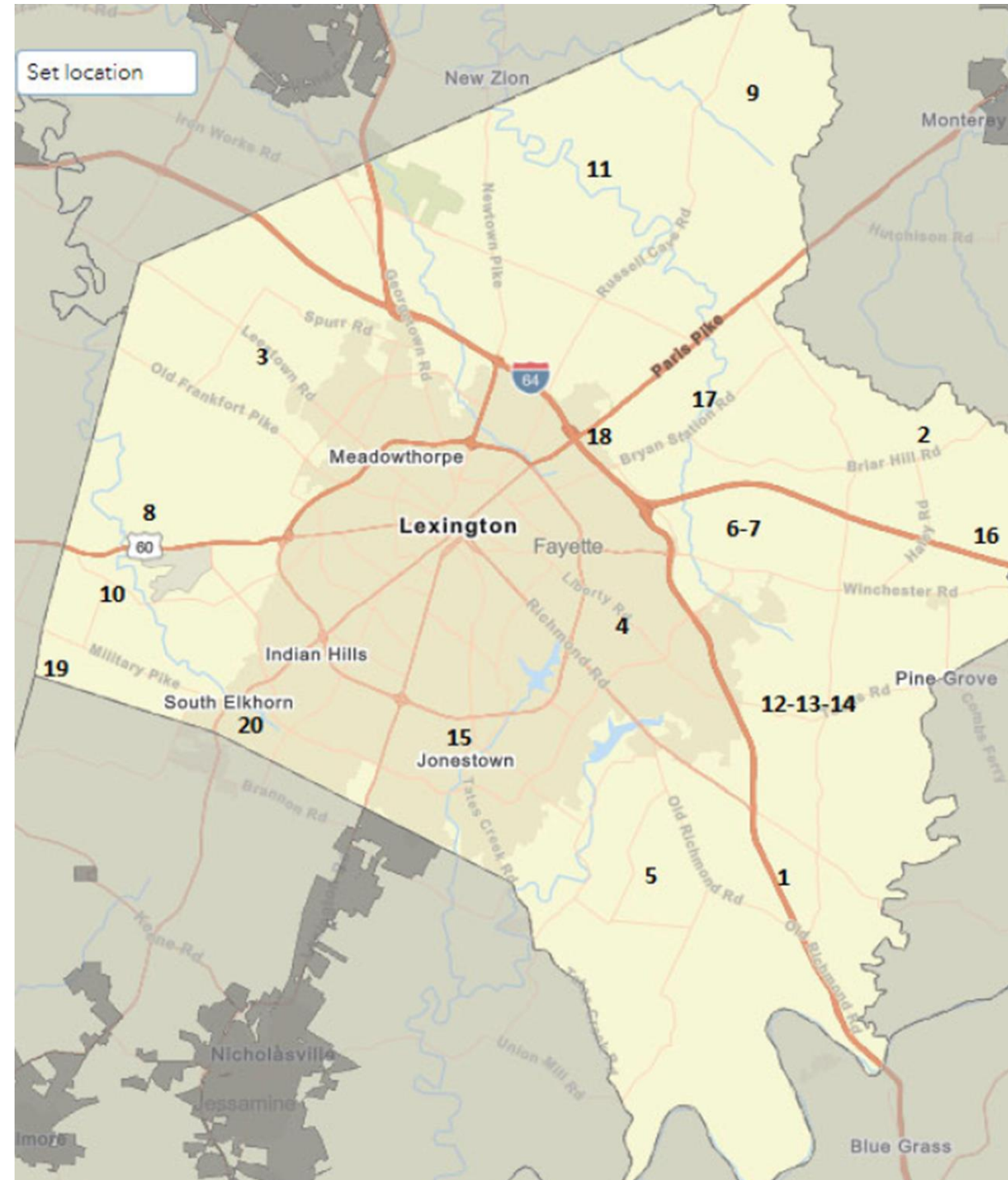
# TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS





# HAMLETS IN FAYETTE COUNTY

1.	<b>Athens/Cross Plains</b>	1854
2.	<b>Avon</b>	1888
3.	<b>Bracktown</b>	1877
4.	<b>Cadentown</b>	1869
5.	<b>Coletown</b>	1843
6.	<b>Columbus</b>	1893
7.	<b>Uttingertown</b>	1869
8.	<b>Fort Springs</b>	1826
9.	<b>Jimtown</b>	1888
10.	<b>Little Georgetown</b>	1872
11.	<b>Maddoxtown</b>	1871
12.	<b>Pricetown</b>	1870
13.	<b>Nihizertown</b>	1872
14.	<b>Centerville</b>	1868
15.	<b>Jonestown</b>	1893
16.	<b>Willa Lane</b>	1924
17.	<b>Muir Station</b>	1876
18.	<b>Warrentown</b>	1867
19.	<b>Mitchelltown</b>	1872
20.	<b>South Elkhorn</b>	1871







# HISTORY OF BLACK HAMLETS



## Schools

Education was an important part of the community. Just about every hamlet had their own school. Free school or a Rosenwald school.



## Cemeteries

Almost all the hamlets had either dedicated cemeteries or cemeteries on the property of their homes.



## Religious Traditions

Stories of baptisms in the creek at Ft. Springs.



## Economy

Local convenience and grocery stores were part of the hamlet's economy.



# ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

## Agriculture

- Farming, livestock raising, and crop production were the primary economic activities that supported these rural black hamlets, providing food, income, and sustenance.

## Skilled Trades

- Specialized crafts and trades, such as blacksmithing, carpentry, masonry, and textile production, were essential economic activities within the hamlets.

## Education & Religious Institutions

- Schools and churches were the anchors of the black hamlet communities. Beginning with the free black community's creation of private schools for their children in the 1840s and concluding with the desegregation of the city's public schools in 1956.

## Small-Scale Commerce

- Local stores, shops, and markets provided goods and services to the hamlet residents, fostering a vibrant community-based economy.

## Domestic Services

- Many residents found employment as domestic workers, cooks, maids, and caretakers in the surrounding white households and farms.

**“THE RURAL BLACK HAMLETS OF LEXINGTON,  
FAYETTE COUNTY, KENTUCKY WERE VIBRANT  
COMMUNITIES THAT FOSTERED A DEEP SENSE OF  
BELONGING, RESILIENCE, AND CULTURAL  
IDENTITY AMIDST THE CHALLENGES OF SYSTEMIC  
RACISM AND ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION.”**





# THE CADENTOWN COMMUNITY

Constructed in 1923 during a time when Fayette County's Black residents couldn't attend white schools, it ceased being a school in 1943, according to records.

The wooden, one-story building tucked into a once-rural neighborhood off Old Todds Road sits behind the former Cadentown Baptist Church. It's easy to drive by it on Caden Lane and not realize it's there — or its historical significance.

The property at 705 Caden Ln will become a dedicated cultural heritage hub that houses the history and legacy of all the hamlets in Fayette County.





# ASOP: PROJECT UPDATES

There are several components that will complete the first phases of this initiative to dedicate a permanent space in Cadentown to house the history and heritage of Lexington-Fayette County rural black hamlets.

Phase I - School	Phase II - Church	Cemetery	Exhibit Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repairs to wooden siding, envelope, windows, paint, HVAC.</li><li>• RFP to go out February 2025</li><li>• Repairs to begin March 2025</li><li>• Estimated completion June 2025</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ADA Accessible pathway from school to church, bathrooms, etc.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cemetery clean up and site identification.</li><li>• Met with Klausing Group to do invasive removal 12/17 with 4 treatments.</li><li>• Archaeologists will begin work once invasives removed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cultural heritage exhibit design with artifacts, oral histories, photos, etc. from hamlet communities.</li><li>• Feasibility Study of Site</li></ul>





# ASOP: FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Initial fundraising goal was \$500,000  
for school, church, cemetery and programming.

*Total Raised to Date*

**\$730,144.97**

Unrestricted

**\$432,271.00**

Endowment

**\$106,874.00**

Special Projects

**\$175,000.00**



# ASOP NAMED SPONSORS

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CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

**Columbia Gas**<sup>®</sup>  
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# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## 12 Public Community Engagement Meetings

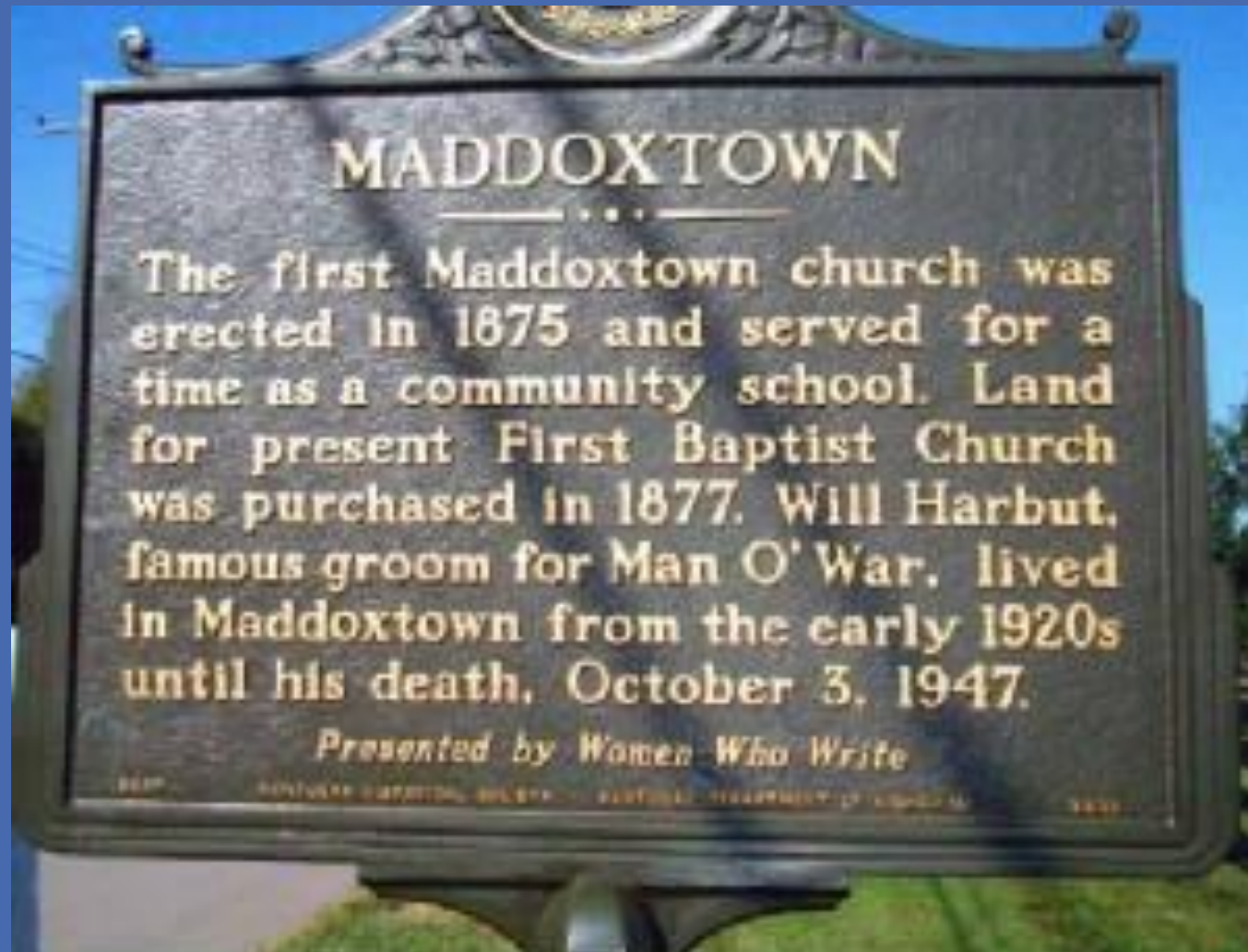
- Hamlet History surveyed, collection of oral histories and artifacts.
- Steering committee is comprised of members of the community, including hamlet communities.



# HISTORIC MARKER GRANT PROGRAM

The Sense of Place Historic Marker Mini Grant Program aims to support the installation of historic markers that highlight significant historical sites within our community. This program encourages local engagement in preserving and promoting our shared heritage.

- Design and production of the historic marker.
- Installation costs, including site preparation and labor.
- Educational materials related to the historic marker.
- Promotional costs directly associated with the marker's unveiling.





# ASOP PATH FORWARD

## Comprehensive Community Engagement

Continue our robust community engagement process to gather input from residents, stakeholders, and preservation experts on the unique needs and priorities of these historic black hamlets.

## Historic Resource Inventory and Assessment

Conduct a comprehensive inventory and assessment of the historic Black resources and landmarks within these hamlets, including buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes for future opportunities to educate and preserve the history of the hamlets.

## Targeted Preservation and Rehabilitation Efforts

Implement targeted rehabilitation initiatives to stabilize and restore the key historic structures in Cadentown, while ensuring the accessibility of these communities for current and future use.

## Capacity Building and Historic Tourism

Invest in capacity-building initiatives and economic development strategies to empower residents and support the long-term vibrancy and self-determination of these historic black hamlets.



**A Sense  
of Place**

Remembering and Celebrating  
the History of Fayette County's  
Rural Black Hamlets

# *Oral History*

## *Seminar & Collection*

APRIL 15, 2025

6:00 PM

**LEXINGTON HISTORY MUSEUM**

210 N BROADWAY, LEXINGTON, KY 40507

[WWW.LEXINGTONHAMLETS.ORG](http://WWW.LEXINGTONHAMLETS.ORG)





**QUESTIONS?**