

# A Tour of Downtown Lexington, KY of Sites Relating to Women's Suffrage History



Developed by Randolph Hollingsworth, PhD in support of Breaking The Bronze Ceiling — an initiative to build a monument commemorating women's history in the Bluegrass. See more at [breakingthebronzeceiling.com](http://breakingthebronzeceiling.com)

## West End

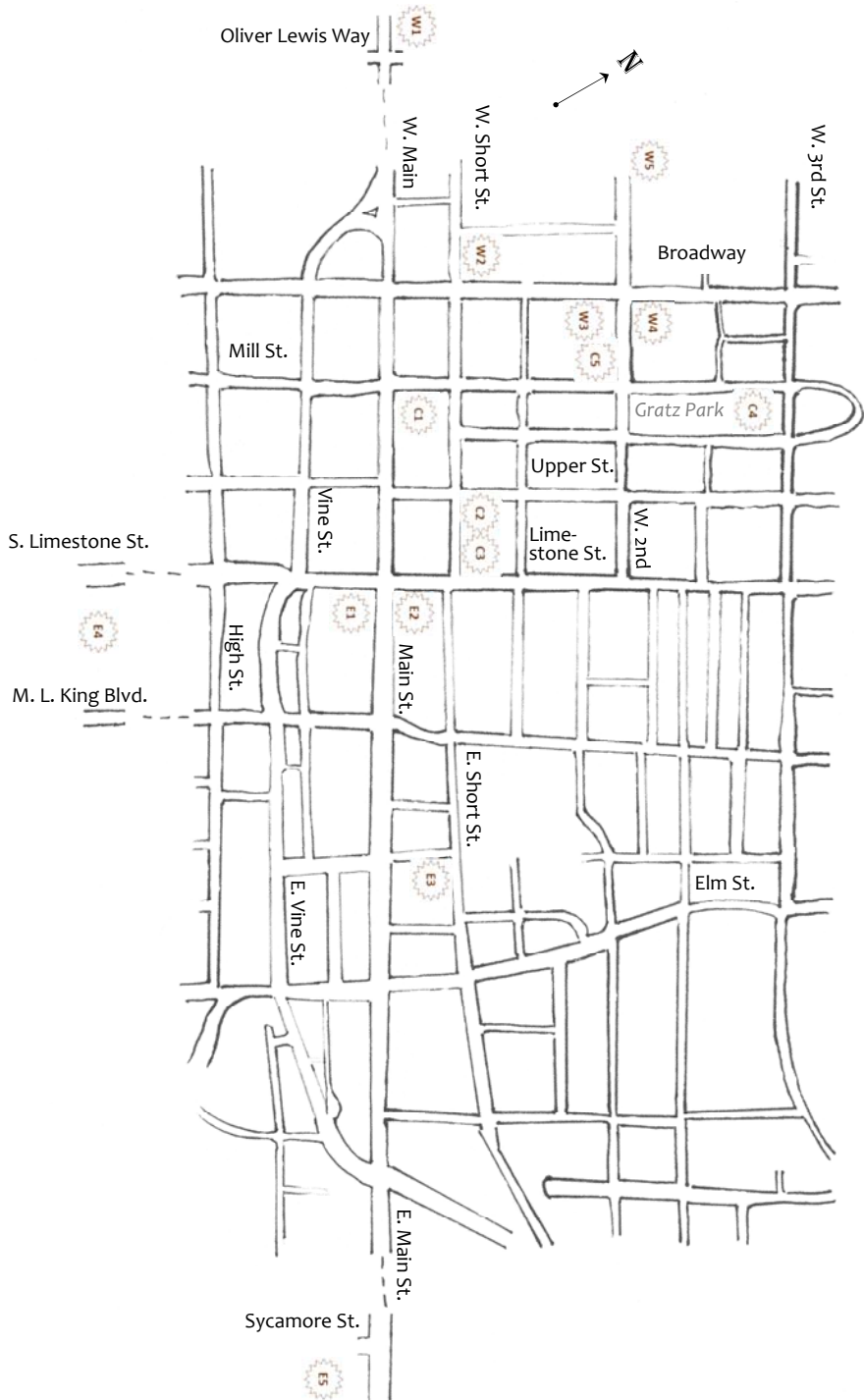
- W1—Lexington Public Cemetery
- W2—Opera House
- W3—Home of Mary Jane W. Clay
- W4—Woman's Club of Central KY.
- W5—Arts Club Building

## Central Downtown Lexington

- C1—Chenopside Park
- C2—McClelland Building
- C3—Merritt Building
- C4—Gratz Park
- C5—Home/Office of Laura Clay

## East End

- E1—Phoenix Hotel
- E2—Ben Ali Theatre
- E3—First African Baptist Church
- E4—Univ. of Ky. Patterson Hall
- E5—Ashland, the Henry Clay Estate



## Suffrage sites in the West End of Downtown Lexington

W1— **Lexington Public Cemetery** (833 W. Main) at least 10 nationally known suffragists buried there; Dr. Mary E. Britton's grave is in **Cove Haven Cemetery** nearby.



W2— **Opera House** (401 W. Short) and a theatre once on this same corner was a popular place for large crowds to hear speakers on women's rights.

W3— **Home of Mary Jane Warfield Clay** (182 N. Broadway) who hosted together with her daughters - Mary Barr, Sallie, Laura, Annie - meetings including to organize a petition drive in 1880 for presidential suffrage.



W4— **Woman's Club of Central Ky.** (214 N. Broadway) collaborated with other groups, inc. the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and KERA, to raise awareness for woman suffrage with educational programs and parades, lobby for school suffrage which was won in 1895 for all women in Lexington, revoked in 1901 and finally won back statewide in 1912.



W5— **Arts Club Building** (441 W. 2nd) Ky. Equal Rights Assoc. (KERA) Convention held here October 1912; Madeline McDowell Breckinridge was elected president - a position held by Laura Clay since KERA's founding in 1888.

## Suffrage sites in Central Downtown Lexington

C1— **Cheapside Park** (251 W. Main) open-air suffrage meetings held here, and served as the destination site for the largest suffrage parade in Kentucky, May 1916.



C2— **McClelland Building** (163 W. Short) Room 726 was the office of the Kentucky Equal Rights Assoc.

C3— **Merrick Lodge** (101 W. Short) built by Henry Tandy, architect of the old Fayette Co. Courthouse, where two statewide conventions were held: the 7th (1894) and the 11th (1899).

C4— **Gratz Park** (bounded by 2nd & 3rd Streets, Mill & Market) served as a meeting point to start suffrage parades, inc. in 1915 that ended at Duncan Park.

C5— **Home and office of Laura Clay** (corner of Mill & 2nd) now a parking lot was once a brick house rented by the KERA president who often traveled; she owned a farm in Madison County and when asked, identified herself as farmer.



*For more information, see the Kentucky Woman Suffrage Project portal at <https://networks.h-net.org/kywomensuffrage>*

## Suffrage sites in the East End of Downtown Lexington

E1— **Phoenix Hotel** (100 E. Main) once stood here, used by Ky. Equal Rights Assoc. (KERA) for suffrage conventions, including the last in 1920 when 19th Amendment was ratified.



E2— **Ben Ali Theatre** (119 E. Main) once stood across from the Phoenix Hotel, used by the Fayette Equal Rights Assoc. for suffrage lectures, including economist Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1913 soon after she had attended the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence of England, a member of the Women's International League for Peace.



E3— **First African Baptist Church** (264 E. Short) where Lucy Wilmot Smith's funeral was held in 1889—she was only 28 but had already established a national voice for women's rights.



E4— **University of Kentucky Patterson Hall** (335 S. MLK Blvd.) KERA lobbied for this first dormitory for women at State College, and the UK ERA club was founded here.

E5— **Ashland, the Henry Clay Estate** (corner of E. Main and Sycamore) childhood home of Madeline McDowell Breckinridge, president of KERA when Kentucky ratified the 19th Amendment and setting for receptions and dinners for prominent international guests and state legislators scheduled to speak at KERA conventions.