Stories of Lexi the Museum Mouse
March 2020

By Esme Cohen, Angelina Ding, Adina Gershon, Kiera McCafferty, Maya Spitz, Addie Weiler, Julia Xu

The Prompt, announced on January 15, 2020

Calling All Mouselorians - Historic Mouse Discovered in Historic House!

There's an historic mouse in an historic house, but how did she get there? Lexington Historical Society is calling on local kids to investigate and create her story!

While packing up Lexington Historical Society’s archives at Hancock-Clarke House this winter, staff discovered a nest made up of crumpled up tour brochures in the fieldstone basement. The wee mouse was surrounded by a small book, a miniature American flag, and a little pewter mug, and she appeared to be wearing a tiny tricorn hat. This was no ordinary nest – it looked like an extraordinary mouse had made her home there!

Historical Society staff and volunteers have named the mouse Lexi and adopted her as a mascot. Local artist Sheila Foley has provided a delightful watercolor rendering of Lexi the mouse in her nest. However, we don’t know much about Lexi’s origin story – will you help us fill in the gaps?

Send in your story of Lexi the Mouse: When do you think she was born? Who is her family? Where does she live? What does she like to eat? What is her story?

Contest closed on February 22 and the winning entry was announced on March 20, 2020.
Lexi the Lexington Mouse
By Addie Weiler

Many years ago, a little mouse named Lexi lived with her grandmother, Marrett, in Belmont. Growing up, Lexi got postcards with images of the Old Belfry, Buckman Tavern, and Munroe Tavern. They were never signed. They had messages like, “come here”, “follow your name” and “wish you were here.” Lexi always wanted to go to Lexington, where the postcard images were taken and solve the postcard mystery. “Who would send me these?” Lexi wondered.

The next day, Lexi was walking down an alley to take out the trash, when a truck stopped right in front of her. “Mike el-sins Shoes” Lexi read off the side of the truck. Lexi remembered that her grandmother told her about famous stores in Lexington. Michelson’s Shoes were one of them! Lexi touched the postcards in her pocket. She ran into the back of the truck! The delivery man started to drive. Five minutes passed…Ten. Fifteen…Twenty. After 25 minutes, the delivery man opened the back of the truck. At the same time, Lexi sprinted out of the truck and ran down the sidewalk into a doorway. Lexi pulled out her postcard, looked at it, and then looked straight ahead. Buckman Tavern!

Lexi ran right in and gazed at all the humans. She found a circular hole in the wall and made her way in. Lexi looked up and there was a giant banner that said, “MMOL: Mouse Museums of Lexington.” Then Lexi realized that she was not the only mouse there! There were mice all over looking at the historical artifacts. “Did you send me these postcards?” Lexi asked, waving her postcards in the air. All the puzzled mice said no. Lexi, feeling disappointed, made her way to the gift shop and bought herself a tricorn hat. Next, Lexi found her way to Munroe Tavern and The Old Belfry and did the same thing. Still not having any answers she picked up a pewter mug, an American flag, and a book along the way. Lexi planned to stay in Lexington for about a week.

After a couple days Lexi got a letter from her grandmother. It read, “Dear Lexi, It’s me, Grandma. You might be wondering, who sent you those postcards? I did. Growing up, someone actually sent me postcards with similar messages. I had the exact same adventure as you did. I planned for the Michelson’s truck to be there. I planned for you to go to the Mouse Museums. I planned everything! The trash bag I told you to take out had nothing in it but tissue! I even watched you catch a ride in the truck. I have friends who work in different Mouse Museums gift shops in town. They have been reporting back to me because I miss you so much! It makes me proud to know you are willing to take a risk to go on an adventure and chase your dreams, my fearless little mouse! You can stay in Lexington for as long as you want! Make sure to check out the Visitor Center! There is so much history in that great town you’re named after. Love, Grandma.”

Lexi went all around Lexington on mouse tours trying to find a home to temporarily live in. She constantly sent letters and postcards to her grandmother Marrett. Lexi tried living on the battle green. There were too many people. She tried living in Cary library. There were too many awesome books to distract her. She tried living in the Hancock-Clarke house basement. Perfect! Every day, she would take one tour brochure and crumple it up so she had a little nest. She always treasured the souvenirs from her journey.

Lexi stayed in Lexington for 3 years and still lives there today. She and her grandmother became pen pals and Lexi constantly visits the Mouse Museums of Lexington. Lexi is living her happily ever after. If you decide to visit Buckman Tavern, The Old Belfry or Munroe Tavern, keep your eye out for little mice with little artifacts in a town with a big history.
Lexi’s Story
By Esme Cohen

“Aghhhh!” little Lexi Nibbles screamed as she woke from her bed of crumbled up tour brochures. She scurried over to her father’s bed. “Papa,” Lexi called. “Papa! Wake up! Bad dream — I had a horrible dream!”

“Well, what was it about?” her father said, rubbing his eyes with his front foot. “There were... lots of loud noises... and smoke. Men yelling — there were men with guns yelling.” Her father shifted around until he was comfortable and paused a moment before replying. Lexi’s fear made her impatient to hear one of her father’s comforting stories. He always had the right stories at the right time. “Have I ever told you,” he began, “about your ancestors and the Battle of Lexington?”

“No,” Lexi said, as she settled into his warm furry arms. “What’s it about?”

Mr. Nibbles decided now was a good time to tell Lexi the story of her family’s noble history in the Hancock-Clarke House.

“A long time ago, in fact thirty-five generations ago in the Nibbles family,” he said, “word was spreading among the humans about a possible skirmish with the Regulars. The whole Clarke family was restless. Lucy, one of the Clarke children, was especially worried — much like you are now. Throughout her young life, Lucy had heard adults constantly talking, sometimes in hushed tones, sometimes in outright shouts, about things like taxation without representation, the burning of tea, the boycotting of English goods. The Boston Massacre had happened when Lucy was little more than a baby. Some time later came the Boston Tea Party. Those were scary stories for a girl to grow up hearing. Lucy knew she had to be brave but it was hard. Hard for everyone. It even scared all the mouse families of Lexington. Your ancestors were more scared than you are right now of your dream. In fact, there was one mouse in particular living in this very house, who was terrified.

That night, while Lucy lay in bed, she heard little paws scurrying around the bedroom. She opened her eyes and slowly sat up. After climbing carefully over her sleeping sisters who were curled around herself, Lucy slowly sat up. After climbing carefully over her sleeping sisters who were nestled in tightly next to her, Lucy tiptoed to the corner of the room. There she saw a little mouse — your dear relative — curled around himself, terrified, just terrified. The frightened mouse was goldish brown with a cute little pink nose, just like you!

Oliver froze with fear as Lucy approached him. When he realized that there was no place to run, that she had him cornered, he grinned, trying to be friendly. ‘Hi, there,’ Lucy hunched down and whispered to Oliver. ‘Nice to meet you,’ he squeaked, his heart pounding with fear. Lucy, however, didn’t understand him. She said, ‘Poor little guy,’ and gently picked him up. The soft, loving way she touched him made him think that maybe this girl didn’t mean any harm. He waited to see if that could be true, and so he didn’t bite her or scratch her or anything.

Lucy carried him to her bedside and set the mouse down beside her. He knew now that she really meant to be nice. He shifted a bit, then settled in next to her. ‘If you want to know the truth,’ she told him, ‘I’m scared as you. But I’m going to protect you, okay? You don’t have to worry anymore. I’ll hide you from my father.’ She gave him a kiss on his nose, said goodnight, and closed her eyes. He couldn’t believe his lucky cheeses! How was this possible? Just hours before, Lucy’s mother had been chasing him around the house with a broom. Now here was this little girl, giving him a kiss, promising to hide him, sleeping next to him even! Maybe humans weren’t all bad.

The night went by quickly. Lucy slept

By Esme Cohen
more soundly than she had in a long time, and woke up a little earlier than usual to make sure no one saw her new pet. She lightly tapped him awake and cupped him lovingly in her palms. Under the bedsheets, she whispered: ‘What should I call you?’ ‘My name is Oliver,’ he said. But to Lucy’s ears, she could only hear squeaks. ‘How about, Oliver?’ she said, as if she’d read his mind. Oliver hopped up and down and showed his approval. ‘Good,’ she said. ‘We think alike. Now…’ she looked around the room. ‘Now, we just need to hide you while I do my chores.’ Lucy decided to hide Oliver in the corner of the room where she had originally found him. But this time, she covered him with a rag doll and said, ‘Hide here. If anyone starts to enter the room, I’ll shout to you, “The Regulars are out, the Regulars are out!” Okay? That’s a warning for you not to make a sound. Understand?’ Oliver hopped up and down and Lucy said, ‘Good luck, little friend!’ She ran downstairs.

At the breakfast table, crowded in with her noisy brothers and sisters, after the Reverend said grace, Lucy quickly ate her bowl of porridge. Then, slyly, she took a small piece of bread and asked to be excused from the table. Her parents weren’t pleased that she ate so fast and didn’t want to have family time. But Lucy seemed well rested and happy this morning. She’d been worried for weeks about the possibility of war, and had so many nightmares lately, that it was a relief to her parents to see her excited and happy again. So they gave her permission to leave the table.

The house had fallen silent after everyone had finally retired to the various rooms. The children were all nestled into their beds. And little Oliver was in the corner of the room on the new bed that Lucy had sewn for him from homespun cloth. During those days, not only had the people in town burned all their tea, they refused to buy cloth from England and the women started spinning it themselves. It was a lot of work and so the homespun cloth was precious. Lucy had taken a risk by sneaking a bit of it to make Oliver’s bed, but she’d grown to love her little friend and wanted him to be comfy and safe. Lucy saw that Oliver was also awake, so she tiptoed over to him and picked him up. ‘I can’t sleep,’ Lucy whispered. ‘Me neither,’ Oliver squeaked, which was almost so quiet that Lucy couldn’t hear. After all, he was as quiet as a mouse. ‘You too?’ said Lucy, reading Oliver’s feelings. ‘I am not sure why but I feel like something big is going to happen tonight. Don’t you feel it?’ Little did they know, that night would change not
only their lives but the lives of many others, too.

Not too far away from where Lucy and Oliver were whispering in the night, two men on horseback were galloping as fast as they could toward the Clarke house to deliver a serious message to John Hancock and Samuel Adams. The two horsemen, Paul Revere and William Dawes, were coming to warn them that British troops would soon be passing through Lexington to arrest Mr. Adams and Mr. Hancock, before moving on to Concord, where lots of ammunition and supplies were being stored by the rebels.

It was now around midnight when Oliver and Lucy were startled by loud banging on the front door. Lucy's siblings also woke up, feeling something scary was about to happen. Lucy hid Oliver in her hands and stood up along with her siblings. Their father, the Reverend Jonas Clarke, had come into the front room that was connected to the children's bedroom. He opened a window to see what all the ruckus was about. Despite her fear, Lucy ran over to the open window to see what was happening. Paul Revere explained to the Reverend what was going on and the children listened intently, their heads peering out the windows. Then their alarmed father responded saying that he would be right down. By this point, the whole family had gathered around. 'Shouldn't these children be returning to their beds, Mistress Lucy?' Jonas Clarke said as he turned around to face the family. 'Yes, of course,' said the reverend's wife as she ushered the children away.

Back in the bedroom, no one could sleep a wink. Only a couple hours later, what Lucy had long feared had begun: war. She heard drums and guns and screams. Lucy picked up Oliver and took him to the window with her siblings. All of them stood there, speechless, gazing at the scene outside their window. Seven hundred British troops. Bleeding men on the ground with fatal injuries. Other men running. Women and children watching from windows, terrified. One of their neighbors, Jonathan Harrington, was shot, crawled to his doorstep, and died at his poor wife's feet.

Lucy knew that the fight for a peaceful home and a free country was going to be a harder battle than anyone had ever thought. The world would never be the same. During those war years, her parents discovered that Lucy had adopted Oliver. Her mother didn't chase him with a broom anymore and her father didn't call him rascally, either. They could see that the mouse brought some joy to their daughter. And in times of war, you take any joy you can find.

As the war finally came to an end, Lucy and Oliver had stuck together through it all. Things started getting better for everyone. Against all odds, America had won the war. Lucy felt truly safe for the first time in her life.

And Oliver eventually met a pretty mouse named Margaret. Her friends called her Peggy. Oliver and Peggy made a comfortable home together in one of the old shoes that was concealed within the wall. Together they had many children, to whom they told the very same story I'm telling you right now.

Lucy and Oliver remained friends for the rest of Oliver's days. To recognize him as a true patriot mouse, and to show her appreciation to him for keeping her spirits up during the war years, Lucy sewed a small American flag and a tiny tricorn hat for him. She even made a special pewter mug out of an old thimble, so he could drink like a gentleman. Oliver cherished and took great care of these gifts. They have been passed down many times through generations of the Nibbles family. Now, my sweet daughter, Lexi, I am passing them on to you. This is not just Lucy and Oliver's story. This is your story. This is your home. You may have nightmares, but they are only dreams.

The Clarke family is long gone from this home, but the stewards and visitors who come here now honor and respect the legacy this and other patriotic Lexington families left behind. And they know that our family, the Nibbles, live here in peace. They even ask little children all around Lexington to tell our story. Know, then, that you are always safe and loved here."

With those words, her father's story was finished and he took out an old matchbox. From inside, he pulled out the tiny tricorn hat, pewter mug and the Betsy Ross flag that Lucy had made all those years ago. He placed the hat on Lexi's head, the mug in her hand, and wrapped the flag around her. "And when I am gone, Lexi," he said, "it's your responsibility to tell your own children about Oliver, Lucy, and our beautiful home."

The End.
Lexi

The Mouse

Angelina Ding

A story about the adventure of little mouse Lexi who is a fan of Paul Revere and she followed Paul Revere’s path from Boston Common to Lexington.

She met a good friend Cheese at Mystic River and both of them found their hearts at the Hancock-Clark House.

2nd Stop: Mystic River

Lexi met her friend Cheese. They decided to go together since they were going to the same way.

Lexi: Hello!
Cheese: Hello!
Cheese: Where are you going?
Lexi: I’m following Paul Revere.
Cheese: Me too!

Lexi’s ears became pink after she met her good friend Cheese.

First Stop: Boston Common

Lexi said goodbye to the Duck Family. The mother duck gave Lexi a farewell gift mug.

Lexi: Bye, the Duck Family!

3rd Stop: Isaac Hall House

Lexi and Cheese asked for a map to Lexington and they received two brochures.

Lexi: I’m going to follow Paul Revere since I’m a big fan of him.

Mother Duck: Have fun! Here is a cup. Have fun following Paul Revere.

After they found a guide to Lexington, Lexi had a pair of pink ears and two dimples. Cheese also became a bit yellow.
4th Stop: Buckman Tavern

So Lexi and Cheese kept walking till they met the minute woman who gave them two tricorn hats.

After a minute woman gave them two tricorn hats, Lexi had a pair of pink ears, two dimples, and the shape of a heart. Cheese also became more yellow.

5th Stop: Lexington Battle Green

Lexi and Cheese were welcomed by Captain John Parker with two American flags.

After they met the minuteman, Lexi had a pair of pink ears, two dimples, and a rainbow heart. Cheese also became even more yellow.

6th Stop: Hancock-Clarke House

Lexi and Cheese made it to the Hancock-Clarke House!

Lexi and Cheese finally found their hearts at the Hancock-Clarke House!
The Mouse Who Lives Under The House
By Adina G Gershon

Mr. Adams and Papa stood in the living room whispering under the light of the moon. And in the basement and in the gloom little Miss Handcock only 8 who crept out of bed to stay up late. Looking through a small crack she could see the fight and the smoke like the enemy was not afraid of dynamite. But as she shivered in her shoes as another sat humming the blues. She sat on a chair behind a book and climbed up to give her a sad look.

“Oh dear. Oh dear. You told me there would be no fighting here.” said little Miss Handcock.

She sat in a chair sobbing and her heart throbbing.

“No this is not bad, yes it is sad, but in the future you will see you’re helping us establish a new country.” Said little Lexi warm in her bed. “It is ok little one when the war is over we all will have fun. Let me read to you in my warm bed in this book there is no blood shed.”

After the sun rose a lad said “It’s all over—it’s all over and only ten lay dead on the clovers.” A few days later we went to the funeral a moving ceremony Papa said. He asks if I was scared I nod my head.

“I was crying (and I’m not lying!) and thanks to a mouse who lives under the house. I did not weep so hard or try to sing like a bard. Lexi was as firm as General Parker. She kept her spirits as bright as a yellow marker.”

That night little Miss Handcock didn’t go to bed. She sat down with her needle and thread, and made a hat with three corners and a flag the size of a rag with 13 stars and a book that could fit into the smallest nock in the wall. Every so often she would have tea with her and Lexi would always curl up into a ball and fall asleep. Whenever Miss Handcock saw Lexi she would never weep when Lexi falls asleep.

Lexi’s Ride
By Kiera McCafferty

It was a cold April night in 1775. Two bright stars glared down at a huge ship. The huge ships passed a tiny boat. The ship had many men, all packed together like sardines, and dressed in red. Paul Revere got off the boat, got on his horse, and began riding. Lexi nibbled on a strawberry as she stuck her pointed snout outside from the pocket of Paul Revere. She felt the wind brush her face. She folded her small rounded ears to block out the loud voice yelling “the regulars are coming!” over the steady taps of horse hooves. She looked at the two lanterns glaring down on red uniforms. The horse hooves skidded to a stop, and dust danced around them. A ghost of the house’s shadow loomed over Lexi.

Then her eyes stole a glance at miniature floppy ears followed by a scaly, snake-like tail. It sulked into the shadows and faded. Lexi squirmed out of Paul Revere’s Pocket, and then plopped onto the ground. Her eyes scanned the whole area, but the mouse seemed to have disappeared. She dashed swiftly toward the mouth of darkness until shadows gulped and swallowed her whole.

She was just the quick rhythm of tiny feet scattering, some force that was stalked by the predators of walls and cans, waiting patiently to attack. All of a sudden, light rattled at the darkness’s walls, and out burst a rushing river of warmth. The portal’s magic blinded her, even though it was normal light. A tiny, floppy eared shape showed her the way, the darkness’s souvenir. The blurry little figure slowly fused into a young mouse. His eyes were bright, black eyes that shone iron silver, and were filled with seriousness. “The Regulars are coming!” Lexi burst out. She had to tell him the news. But his gaze was deep and knowing. He led her out into a tiny room, and the emptiness of it didn’t seem right, and she smelled more mice. Then, ears began to poke out from behind objects. Soon, about ten more mice stood in the room. She stared at one that had seemed to roll.
That’s Hancock Jr.” Lexi turned around to notice the squeak belonged to the mouse who guided her here. “I’m Nibbles,” he said. Nibbles introduced Lexi to the other mice, Pip, Squeak, Whiskers, Peanut, Amber, Sniffles, Fuzzy, Cheddar, Blueberry, and the little deaf mouse named Flop. “Come sit down, you must be tired from your travels,” Nibbles invited. “Sorry,” said Lexi. “I have to find Paul.” “I’ll go with you,” Pip volunteered. “Me too,” whispered Amber shyly. Lexi raced through the long hall. But her old enemies, the walls and all the litter scattered on the floor were not so scary now that the pattern of more paws followed her. Lexi dashed through it, but the pain of stumbling didn’t matter any more. Just as she approached the way to freedom, the clatter of horse hooves sounded, than faded away. “No!” moaned Lexi, “He’s gone.”

The cold breath of the wind covered Paul Revere, as he thought of how cold he was. Then his mind drifted to his poor pet mouse, Lexi, who must be freezing. He reached into his cold pocket, then shivered as he felt what was in there: cold, heavy emptiness. “Where are you Lexi?” He thought. To Lexi, Lexington green looked so different when it was filled with minutemen and Redcoats. “Disperse,” said Captain Parker. Flop, the mouse who was deaf was perched on a minuteman’s soldier. “Oh, no!” whispered Nibbles. “He didn’t hear it!” Flop walked over and hit the musket’s trigger. When the British where fired at, they fired back. Lexi ran and ran, away from the battle, away from fear. When she reached the house, panting, Paul Revere was just getting ready to walk back to his house. “Oh, there you are Lexi!” he exclaimed. “Come on.” But as he held his hand out, Lexi stubbornly refused to move. Paul Revere knew that she wanted to stay here, with all of the mice around her.

“Goodbye, Lexi,” he whispered. “I’ll look forward to visiting you.” Lexi faded into the shadowy hall, and the Silversmith Paul Revere disappeared into a tiny phantom shadow running under the light of two starry lamps.
The Story of a Mouse Named Lexi
By Julia Xu

There once was a mouse named Lexi Angelou. She and her family lived in the woods next to a large, yellow house. They were completely forbidden to go inside this house by Lexi’s mother. But obviously she went inside a few times.

Outside this house was a little garden full of herbs and berries. Lexi’s family often got their food from this garden in the summer. Lexi’s mother would gather some berries and seeds from this little garden and they would eat them. Every year, before winter comes, they would store dried berries, seeds and dried herbs under a log near the garden. Lexi’s favorite food was the tiny crumbs of cheese or little bits of creamy chocolate they could rarely find. Every year on Lexi’s birthday, her parents would give Lexi a big hunk of cheese and a piece of chocolate (which were both her favorite foods). Lexi had a little brother named Timothy who, on the other hand, disliked chocolate. “How could anyone dislike chocolate?” Lexi had asked, on a chilly fall morning. Timothy shook his head. “Too much sugar. It makes me hyper!”

Illustrated by J. Chen

One day, Lexi’s parents asked her to go outside to get some food for her family. Lexi went to the garden to get some dried berries and peppermint. Just as she reached the log, it started snowing, really hard. Lexi knew that by the time she collected food and went back she would be buried into the snow so her only choice was to go into the big yellow house and stay there until it stopped snowing.

Lexi headed off toward the big house. When she was near the house, she noticed a crack under the door just large enough to fit her. So Lexi scurried under the door. It was hard but when Lexi had gotten through. A blast of hot air hit Lexi’s face like a warm soft pillow. Suddenly, she heard a noise and quickly scurried away from sight under a small cabinet. She could hear some people coming in so she scurried off to the next room, and quickly hid under a chair.

Over time Lexi got bored and she decided to eavesdrop on what they were saying as she perked up her ears. Lexi heard them talking about history and how the house was so old. Lexi became fascinated and followed them around. “All my life I’ve lived right next door, without even knowing what it really was!” she said quietly to herself as she scurried back home to tell her family.

From that day on, Lexi went back to the house every single day to learn more. It was like her treehouse. One day, she was again caught in a snowstorm. So she stayed overnight in a little nest she made for when she liked to curl up and read a tiny book. Lexi had a little collection of things she had found, a little American flag, and a small book she loved. Lexi had also brought over from her house a little pewter mug for drinking water or peppermint tea. She had worn a tiny tricorn hat her mother had sewed for her because it was cold. Lexi was so tired that day that she forgot to even take off her hat!

And Lexi the moustorian fell fast asleep. Even though she didn’t know it at the time, she could feel that it was a different day – a day of exquisite cheeses and a turning point in her life.
Lexington Historical Society by the numbers:

4
Four historic buildings, three of them museums, are operated and cared for by Lexington Historical Society: the Lexington Depot, Buckman Tavern, Monroe Tavern, and the Hancock-Clarke House.

10
Ten organizations partner with LHS on average throughout the year to present programs. In 2018 Lexington Historical Society partnered with Cary Memorial Library, Indian Americans of Lexington, CAAL, Lexington Veterans Association, His Majesty’s 10th Regt. of Foot, the Lexington Minutemen, the Lexington Field and Garden Club, the League of Women Voters, the Lions Club, and the Lexington Town Celebrations Committee.

50
Fifty is the average number of public history programs Lexington Historical Society presents throughout the year. We present programs for both adults and children, and they are often free of charge.

100
In 2018, Lexington Historical Society’s archives and collections departments answered over 100 research inquiries. These ranged from residents researching their homes, to students working on school projects, to professional scholars writing books.

2,706
2,706 students visited Lexington Historical Society’s museums in 2018 on field trips. Student field trips come from all over the country.

20,000
Lexington Historical Society’s museums welcome an average of 20,000 visitors each year who travel from around the world to see where the American Revolution began.