Formally platted in 1815, the Western Suburb is an epicenter of Lexington history. It is one of Lexington’s oldest suburban neighborhoods with structures dating as far back as 1795. Its varied architecture reflects more than 200 years of housing styles, economics, and the lifestyles of merchants, craftsmen, and laborers.

Land constituting the Western Suburb was originally part of a large tract belonging to Colonel John Todd, a Revolutionary War officer and Virginia legislator (and Mary Todd Lincoln’s great uncle). When Colonel Todd was killed in 1782, his daughter, Mary Owen, inherited his vast estate, including the land that would become the Western Suburb. Perhaps the wealthiest woman in Kentucky at the time, Mary married James Russell in 1799 but was widowed just three years later.

Early residents of this area included merchants who found it convenient to live close to their downtown businesses. Many carpentry shops, liverys, blacksmith shops, lumber yards, and coal yards were located on or next to the owners’ residence. Later, these commercial areas became sites for new houses, which contributed to the eclectic range of architectural styles in the district. This was also the neighborhood where the venerable madam Belle Brezing (1860-1940) conducted her business as the queen of Lexington’s red light activities at the turn of the century.

The Western Suburb continues to be the home of Lexington citizens of all races, professions, and income levels. With property owners that value these historic buildings and landscapes, this special neighborhood is sure to remain a treasured place for generations to come.

The Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit advocate for historic preservation that strives to protect, revitalize, and promote the special historic places in our community to enhance the quality of life for future generations. The Trust is guided by three tenets – education, service, and advocacy.
The Parkers, Mary Todd Lincoln’s grandmother, owned the property.

Parker, Mary Todd Lincoln’s grandmother, owned the property.

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