

THE KentuckyHistoricalSociety PRESENTS

LEADERSHIP & LEGACY IN KENTUCKY HISTORY

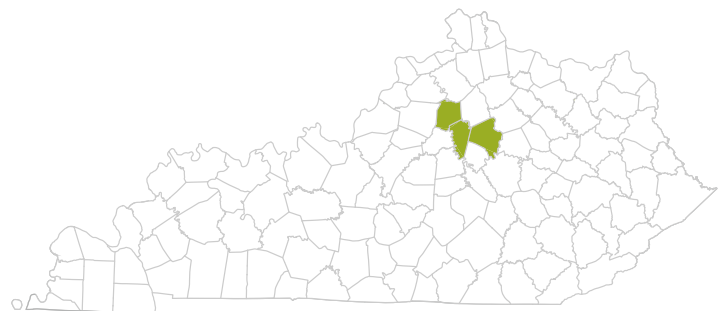
LUKE PRYOR BLACKBURN | 1816-1887



Prisoners at the Kentucky State Penitentiary in Frankfort reportedly made this heavily inlaid table for Gov. Luke P. Blackburn in recognition of his work on prison reform. (2011.146 Joseph Blackburn Wise Trust Collection, Kentucky Historical Society)

PRISON REFORM – The state penitentiary in Frankfort in the 19th century was often compared to the “Black Hole of Calcutta” – crowded, oppressive and deadly. When Dr. Luke Blackburn became governor he made prison reform a priority. Although he pardoned hundreds of prisoners to relieve overcrowding and he worked to get a new prison built, true changes were not seen until the 20th century. Because of his attempts to improve prison conditions and his belief in rehabilitation rather than punishment, the state named the Blackburn Correctional Complex in Lexington after him.

KHS Historical Marker #1466 gives a short history of the Dr. Luke P. Blackburn Correctional Complex. Search marker number 1466 [here](#) to read it.



Woodford County, Franklin County, Fayette County

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