

Speaker 1 ([00:00:00](#)):

Okay, welcome everyone. And thank you so much for joining us tonight. My name is Ann Bennett. I'm the executive director of the rural historical society. The other panelists, do we have our members of our exhibit committee. So you'll see some of the familiar names here on our screen. I want to thank everyone for not only joining us tonight, but I want to thank my panelists and thank our exhibit committee. And also think all the names that aren't listed there because there's a lot of people that helped with the setup of the exhibit, all the display, the research that aren't listed here. So it takes a quite a team to pull off an exhibit that we do every year. So we thought tonight we would just kind of go through and we would chat about the exhibit that we put forward for the 150th anniversary celebration of the city of Laurel, as we all know that didn't turn out quite as we had hoped.

Speaker 1 ([00:00:50](#)):

So we are bringing you a virtual exhibit instead. So we hope that you will learn a little bit about the history of Laurel, but more importantly, the stories that the artifacts have to tell and a little bit about what it takes to put on a museum exhibit. So we're going to share with you some of our behind the scenes stories and just kind of go along and hear the stories that these artifacts have to tell as well. Just a little bit of housekeeping for tonight. We are recording this out as webinars. So we're going to try to post that on our websites coming up in the next couple of days, you do have the chat feature. You should see that down in your toolbar depending if you're on your phone or a tablet or the computer. We also should have a question and answer session for for you as well. So if you have a question myself or any of the other panelists can try to answer that as we go through, I do want to start off just before we get started by launching a whole actually. So the first poll question is, have you been to the Laurel museum before? Yes or no? There's no, no other choice in between

Speaker 2 ([00:02:01](#)):

[Inaudible]

Speaker 1 ([00:02:02](#)):

And then you can just hit yes or no and then submit

Speaker 2 ([00:02:18](#)):

[Inaudible].

Speaker 1 ([00:02:18](#)):

Okay. So we have most people voting, so I'm just going to end the poll and let's see here share the results. So it's good. So almost the overwhelming majority, 89% have been to the museum before. So we thank you for coming out to the museum. And if you haven't been we are so temporarily closed, unfortunately, but this is one of the reasons we're putting forth the virtual it's for tonight. And we invite you whenever it's safe to come and open against you definitely come. And you, the great things that we have on display at the museum. So I'm gonna see if I can advance the screen here.

Speaker 1 ([00:03:12](#)):

Okay, good. We go. So, all right, so welcome. Again, so this is going to be the tale of unpacking Laurel's past 150 years on display from 1870 a year. Laura was incorporated through 2020. And so just a few dates to throw out at you that we did have a great exhibit opening February 2nd, at 2020 of this year. It seems so long ago, but we're very excited. It was the very first event for the passport program that unfortunately was canceled for the city of Laurel. And then just about six weeks later, we closed the museum due to COVID. So on March 16th because the museum but the good news is we have decided to extend the exhibit all the way through next year. So we will keep up what we have or change it around a little bit and extend it all the way into next year. And we'll be talking about the changes that we have plans coming up at the end of our lecture.

Speaker 1 ([00:04:07](#)):

So again, what are wanting to talk about was a little bit about Laurel's history through these artifacts. And my background as an archeologist is really centered around things and around artifacts and every artifact can tell a story that's true of the pieces that we have in the museum. It's true about the pieces that you have in your house. If you look around things, have a story, things have a meaning, and it's up to us as curious curators and keepers on these items in our collection to help tell those stories. So these are really some of the the focus points that we wanted to bring to this exhibit. As we started our research in our, as we started our planning of this exhibit, we wanted to make sure that we chose artifacts that represent the changing society of Laurel that over this past 150 years, Laura has changed so much geographically, ethnically, culturally religious diversity.

Speaker 1 ([00:05:04](#)):

And we wanted to reflect that and the artifacts that we chose for display, and we wanted to connect the past and the present, not just for all the Laurel lights or the people that live in Laurel now, but for the visitors that would come because we're all connected to the sense of place that the people who lived in the, in that house before it was museum and the visitors and the residents alike can all share this connection to the place and learn these same stories. And then it was also important that we wanted to document daily life in Laurel, because we tried to, we tried to get away a little bit from some of the big flashy items and just put ordinary pieces in the exhibit because they help to tell the stories too, of what it was like day in and day out in more over the last 150 years.

Speaker 1 ([00:05:53](#)):

So this is just kind of a cool picture, a little panoramic view of what we have in the East gallery. So what we're going to do is we're going to go through section by section. And one of the things that we decided to do was avoid the chronological approach. So many times what you see in anniversary celebrations or exhibits a is a chronology going through each year, each decade. And that's really nice to ground your exhibit in a historical context, but we thought we could tell the better stories and display the items best in more of a thematic approach. So we broke it down into different sections, and we're going to go through kind of idea by idea rather than a strict chronological approach. And we'll be talking about the different sections and the ways that we did that coming up. So what you would see if you came to the museum and you walk into the introduction part is you would see a couple of things that would stand out to you right away.

Speaker 1 ([00:06:59](#)):

The idea is that this introduction to the exhibit is introducing Laurel's past and the Laurel of today. And it's a little dark to see in this picture, but you'll see in that display cue that there's two artifacts in there, and it's a great juxtaposition of the past and the present. So that kind of dark lumpy thing in the front is an iron Nutcracker. So it's in the shape of a dog and it was made at the, a, the Laurel iron works, a Diven iron works in an 18th century. And that is really very representative of the manufacturing past of Laurel. How I started out as a no town grew as a factory town and different industries grew out of it from the Ironworks different mills, the pots and mill the nature of factory. Ruby has a very strong labor history in the early days of Laurel.

Speaker 1 ([00:07:56](#)):

But if we fast forward 150 years we'll see that what we wanted to represent was there's a lot of diversity in the town. And in the background, we have bilingual menu from one of the the Peruvian restaurants in town representing the, the growing Hispanic community, as well as the African African American, Asian, Indian, and other communities that we have here in Laurel. And you also noticed that at the bottom of our introduction panel, you go, we have, for the very first time, our text pa panels are in Spanish. So we have the introduction printed in English and Spanish, and all of the interpretive panels are also translated into Spanish. And if you would come to the museum or when we're able to come to the museum, you would have a printed guide or all the text panels and Spanish as well.

Speaker 1 ([00:08:53](#)):

So that was something we wanted to do to reach out and to, to show that diverse community as well. So let's see what we have. There we go. So we're going to start kind of going through section by section now. And before I bring in her section I just wanted to kind of set the stage and tell you just a little bit about the early discussions that we had for this museum exhibits. So the anniversary here is 1870, but as we know, Laurel, didn't spring up suddenly in 1870, it was around for decades as a factory town starting in the late 1830s and especially growing in the 1840s. But before that there, it was home to a bow for thousands of years to the native Americans in this place. So it was important when we talked about the history of Laurel that we take a step back and we can tell the story of what happened in 1870 and why it was so important or it's incorporation without telling the story of what Laura was like before 1870.

Speaker 1 ([00:10:02](#)):

And one big part of that was acknowledging the land that we're on. Now, the land that world started on when it was founded in 1840s. So this was land that predates the middle that predates the Snowden family. And so we were honoring and recognizing that heritage that continues to the present day by highlighting some of the prehistoric artifacts we have in our collection. So we have some projectile points and some stone tools as well that we have in our display case. And then I'm gonna pass it over to Karen to talk about some of the other artifacts that predate the incorporation of oral. Can you hear me? Yes. Okay. So as you can see in the picture, this is how we set it up in the exhibit. And what I've done is I actually took some of these, cause some of these are some of my favorite objects from the exhibit and show what happens when you get to do some research, because we found some interesting new information. I don't want to stop,

Speaker 3 ([00:11:04](#)):

Wait, no, wait, sorry. You want to continue? Yes. Whoops. I don't know what I did. I just wanted to share this screen. There we go. Sorry.

Speaker 1 ([00:11:17](#)):

This is Karen. If you want to share your screen, you can do that. I just stopped sharing mine. Okay. I, yeah. I want to share. Yeah.

Speaker 3 ([00:11:23](#)):

Okay. There we go. Is that going to work? Sorry, folks, but it doesn't seem to be shit, sheriff. Okay.

Speaker 1 ([00:11:34](#)):

Got it. So what we have here is on the left is the 1845 ledger from the Laurel historical society. That you've probably, if you've come to the museum before you've had, you've likely seen us talk about the mill ledger, because it has the signature of Horace Capron and down here at the bottom, I can even use my thing right down there, who was one of the founders of

Speaker 3 ([00:11:54](#)):

Laurel. And that's an important piece. One of the other pieces that we now have on display is the, is the ledger that relates to the Laurel odd fellows hall. Which many of you now, if you walk main street, this is the, this is the Odd fellows hall. It's now hope reality house. But in the course of doing the research for this, the ledger itself lists many prominent people from Laurel in the 1850s, who were members of the odd fellows, which was which was a civic association. And, and one of the kind of places that people who were anybody in town would go to. And we discovered a, an article from July yeah, 1860, which is just before the civil war, which is really interesting. And what it tells us, number one is gave an entire description of how the odd fellows hall was actually laid out, which was wonderful to give an idea of what this place actually looked for.

Speaker 3 ([00:12:52](#)):

Like when it originally happened, because this was only about four days after the for three years after the, that we have. And as a side highlight, what it also talks about is the 4th of July celebration over in the woods West of Laurel, which is what we now know as the Grove. And one of the things that we had discovered from the NY diaries and now have reaffirmed in here is that even before this was known as the area for the black community, it was an area of town that people went to to celebrate the 4th of July. So it's had played many roles in the community's history. The other interesting piece that happened out of the research, and then we'll we'll move on was we had something that we had been calling the Milstead ledger because we thought it was all about Milstead's hotel, which was down here around 1880.

Speaker 3 ([00:13:47](#)):

We know it was down in the, his general area down here. However, the ledger itself deals from 1857 that we have. And so when we looked at it really more closely, it, we realized that it actually was referring more to payments made to mr. Warfield. And even though the Milstead name appeared, it was clear that the payments seem to be going to mr. Warfield for different things. And we, when you look on

the 1861 map of Laurel, which is what this is, you see that there's a Warfield store right here. So, and when you look at the 1870 census, you see a William Warfield who was retired, dried goods manufacturer and reasonably well off \$15,000 worth of items. So putting those two together, we decided that it's very likely that the ledger we had was not the Milstead hotel ledger, because the Milstead's weren't registered as running a hotel until 1880. But in fact, what we have is, is the legend from the war fields. And we just thought that was really interesting. So let me stop sharing screen there. Okay. There you go. Okay.

Speaker 4 ([00:15:07](#)):

[Inaudible]

Speaker 3 ([00:15:08](#)):

See. The next slide is, so in these two maps, we talked about the first one, which is the 1870 before 1870, since about 1861. And this one on the left is it's in there because it's just one of our favorite maps. Marlene will come we'll confirm that this is the map of Laurel 1862 down by the railroad station. That's one of our most prized things to have when we did our civil war exhibit. It actually shows where all the union soldiers were laid out. And that's why we like to put it in the exhibit. Cause it's a real highlight of what happened before 1870 in Laurel.

Speaker 3 ([00:15:53](#)):

So the other section that I worked on was the the city of Laurel. And so there are a number of items in this one that were very interesting. And I'm going to go back into the share screen and hope. And so if you can, let me go back into that. Okay. Oops, sorry. Folks who were there. Let's see. Do I do have this in the right way? No, I have this backwards. Great. Okay. So the first thing, when you do the research, sometimes there's just a real treat that you, as the researcher get to do. And I have to tell you, the thrill for me in this exhibit was I went over to city hall and asked to see if they had any of the early minutes. And did they possibly have a copy of the city's charter? And it turns out that they actually do the poor woman who was in the city council office when I'm sitting there gingerly going through this material.

Speaker 3 ([00:16:47](#)):

And I was literally jumping up and down because when you're a historian, part of what makes things exciting is when you go to see, this is the actual document that we're talking about for the incorporation of the city of Laurel. It's not a copy. It's not, it's not some additional piece that's been scanned or something. This was the actual one that was given to the city of Laurel when the city was incorporated. And I just found that really exciting. And I just wanted to throw that in there. We were hoping to possibly borrow it at some point during the year to incorporate into the, into the exhibit. And I think the city is actually having it preserved and or concert because the materials were very fragile and so they really needed to be conserved. So this is the very end of that same document where Joseph was approved on April 4th, 1870, which was going to be a big day in 18 in the 200, a hundred and 50th anniversary celebration because we were going to have the actual day that we were selling that the city had been incorporated anyway.

Speaker 3 ([00:17:49](#)):

So I thought that was, that was a highlight for me and the research in the city of Laurel section, which document, which has different pieces of items that relate to civic organizations and political people who've been involved in city and say, one of the people that we uncovered was we had this plaque that says Ruth assessment in it. And I knew nothing about routes of assessment. We knew nothing about her. I'd never heard her name and I've lived in Laurel for 30 plus years. And it turns out she was actually the first woman to serve on the Laurel city council, which was very interesting to know, didn't know anything about her. She owned a dry goods store on main street here. This is from 1924. So that's a picture of Ruth when she was younger.

Speaker 3 ([00:18:39](#)):

And she was the first person to serve on the city council and she served for more than 10 years. So it's really nice to have an opportunity in this year of women getting suffrage to acknowledge a woman who was then able to serve in the Laurel city council and as an extra highlight of that in the, in her obituary and reading that and noted that just, just prior to her leaving the administration, the mayor presented a plaque to miss assessment and cross inscribed presented to recess. And for 10 years faithful service as a member of the city council world. And that's the exact plaque that we have in our exhibit, which makes a nice tie in. So that's part of the fun of doing research, the items that you see have a little bit of a backstory, and it just makes it fun for us to do, and then fun to be able to tell you the stories. And then we, so let me get out of here. There we go. Okay. Back to Anne

Speaker 4 ([00:19:43](#)):

[Inaudible].

Speaker 3 ([00:19:43](#)):

Okay. Thank you, Karen. So you can see that we have it set up with different display cases. We have some cubes on the wall. We have different cases. We have the pictures in the middle here. You can see our current mayor, mayor Moe on the rights. And then we have the earliest let me see, move to here. We have the earliest mayor in Laurel as well. And one of the things that, what are we searched took us on the exhibit committee is that I took us through a list of all of Laurel's commissioners and mayors. And there was a distinction that very early years of Laurel one is incorporated that there were a commission. And then there were commissioned presidents that functions similar to the city council and the mayor and how they govern today. But it wasn't until 1890 that the switch to governing as mayor and city council took over. So in that first couple of decades, we have the list of the very first commission presidents,

Speaker 1 ([00:20:49](#)):

Starting with James curley and going all the way to Jesse Smallwood. And then we also have the list of mayors all the way up to our current mayor and the exhibit as well. I'm going to pass it back over to Karen, just to talk we have this next next slide. If I click this it's going to go just real quick. Hopefully it'll share the screen and not talk.

Speaker 4 ([00:21:18](#)):

[Inaudible]

Speaker 1 ([00:21:19](#)):

Not sure what, okay. So is it going to play, I don't know. I don't really want it to play right now, but it's just a quick clip of our YouTube video that we posted. So we have information on the municipal pool token. And so this is just a quick reminder for me to tell you that we have a YouTube channel and we have what we're calling the one tape tours of the exhibit. So if you're interested or your curiosity is peaked about anything that you're hearing tonight as part of our virtual exhibits, you'll be able to go onto our YouTube channel section by section and take a look at some of these sections in a little more depth as well. So that was my prompt to myself to remind you of our YouTube channel. But Karen, did you want to talk about the pool token and its significance?

Speaker 1 ([00:22:09](#)):

Sure. this pool token is, is, is a really interesting object because it's a very, very small object. And all it basically says is city of Laurel municipal pool, I think on the two sides of it. And the reason that we find it that we think it's really important is because of the story behind that is so important to the history of Laurel, the rural city pool with many of you know, now we're no where the municipal pool is. It right next to the Laurel museum was on the side of the Laurel mill. And when the mill was torn down in the, in the early 18, early 1950s and late 19, 1940s, the citizens of Laurel got together and took the land and made it into a private swimming pool. And it was an object, an idea of great civic pride that they had been able to raise the money and build this pool and everything.

Speaker 1 ([00:23:03](#)):

Well, the only problem with that was that the pool was actually segregated. It was a private pool and it was segregated. And by the 1960s, there was a lot, there's a 1967. There was a lot of upheaval in Laurel, a lot of concerns over at the Grove that had been expressed. And during the, and one of the issues that they wanted to address was the fact that the pool was segregated. So at that time, the city of Laurel actually purchased the pool for a minimal amount of money. It was like a dollar and took the pool public and made it an integrated pool to go to the pool. You needed a pool token. And so this token represents the real change in the city of Laurel for taking the initiative to turn something that had been segregated. And that kept out many of the citizens of moral from going to the pool and opening it up to the public.

Speaker 4 ([00:24:04](#)):

[Inaudible]

Speaker 1 ([00:24:05](#)):

Okay. Thank you, Karen. Yeah. That's, this is a great example of how does the littlest things that take up barely any space in our collection can tell some of the biggest and most important, impactful stories in our history. So I'm going to just talk about briefly a few things coming up. So remember when I said that, one of the things that we wanted to focus on was daily life and Laurel well, this isn't daily life, this, this is beyond the ordinary items in our collection. And to talk about the behind the, behind the scenes decisions. One of the things we talked about was in addition to not doing a chronological approach, but taking more of a thematic approach was how are we going to actually frame this exhibit? How are we going to decide which artifacts that we want to show? And one of our early discussions was, Oh, wouldn't it be cool if we did 150 artifacts for 150 years not necessarily, you know, one object for one year, but just having 150 objects 150 years, and that will tell the complete story.

Speaker 1 ([00:25:12](#)):

And then we thought, well, 150 objects. That's a lot that is a lot to research. That's a lot to put on the wall. So we won't, we won't do that 150. Does anyone remember on the exhibit committee, how much we actually ended up with? So I, I think we ended up with 300 and something . It was over doubled the one, the number that we thought was too much it was about 340 items. Again, one of our exhibit committee members went through and counted. So that does include a lot of the digitized version. So some of the the documents and the photographs that we have printed on the panels and not actually shown that does include that in the total. But one of the things that we'd also decided in addition to digital, rolling out all of the objects was now, this is the time to really bring out the best items in our collection.

Speaker 1 ([00:26:03](#)):

The ones that just really kind of shine through on that. We probably wouldn't ever be able to show again, that it wouldn't really fit with any of the upcoming exhibits that we have every year as it changes. And so I have not been shy about the fact that this is my favorite item and the exact Mamie Eisenhower's evening gown. What's it doing in Laurel? Well for a very brief time before they were president and first lady the Eisenhower's did live in Laurel when when Eisenhower when I was stationed at Fort Meade. So there was a brief connection in right around the first world war. And then this came to us through our, a private donor. So we do have her evening gown. This is the picture of the gown on display, on the right's the picture on the left is actually not from our collection, but I put it in because I just want to dive very briefly into really Eisenhower.

Speaker 1 ([00:27:04](#)):

I think this is like a great piece. This gown is top of the line at couture. I am a total costume costume nerd, and it was the best thing that I've done the museum so far was to Mount this dress and to put it in the exhibits. The silk that it's made of is fabulous, and there are all types of inner couture in place that hold it very close to the body. And you can see in the picture that this is not the same gown, but you can see that she definitely has a style that she likes the off the shoulder look at highlights of her neck, shoulders, and the neck. And so this was a gown that she wore during the time that she was a first lady in the 1950s but not in Laurel, but we do have a connection with the Eisenhower's in Laurel.

Speaker 1 ([00:28:00](#)):

And I did additional research remotely through the presidential library. The Eisenhower presidential library and was told that made me, did have designers that she favored in Washington, DC. But she also was a fan of shopping off the rack. So she wasn't afraid of going to places like JC Penny's and having her, her stylists that kind of style the gown to her body. So she was also a big bargain Hunter, so that was kind of my behind the scenes and geek out moment. This is my favorite item, and we included it in the exhibit just because, because it was a great piece that we have a, it tells a story that many people don't know that's our connection to the national history of our country. And it's really probably the only time we'll be able to exhibit it.

Speaker 1 ([00:28:53](#)):

So that's my, that's my moment for Mamie Eisenhower's dress. And I hope that you get a chance to see it when, when we open up in the museum again Marlene, do you want to talk about just real quick the

display that we put together for the past celebrations, we collected many, many things from 125th anniversary to see the city very, very big deals, really, really to celebrate anniversaries. There's one shelf here in the anniversary for raid the green dress you saw previously in the beginnings piece, it was worn by a woman Jean here to sell things for our yeah, this was her dress. She wore when she was in the shop, she wore it as part of the celebration of the hundredth anniversary. And it's a treasure. She, she still has it occasionally her grandchildren. There are lots of pins and buttons and cups and plates in that exhibit that people bought helped finance the celebration. Here's an object from time capsule. They have tee shirts. It was really, really a big deal. And the the first of our history books was published during that time, John Brennan, and it's still my best friend friends.

Speaker 1 ([00:31:01](#)):

Okay, great. Thank you so much. Finally now it's, it's great to kind of see that there was a, this precedence for the last 50 years or so. I'll be celebrations, but again, we did some research and when Karen was having her geek out moment in the yard is not Uber dresses, but over manuscripts. One of the things that she researched was that looking at the previous minutes, that there really wasn't big celebrations in Laurel of previous anniversary celebrations really before the hundreds. So there wasn't really much at the 25th, the 50th 75th that kind of thing. So the hundred is really when these L anniversary celebrations took off and we were hoping to continue that momentum on what the hundred and 50th.

Speaker 1 ([00:31:48](#)):

So again, one of the things that we did was this thematic approach, and we couldn't really talk about the history of Laurel without really talking about entertainment and all the different ways that residents and visitors and commuters have entertained themselves in, in Laurel over the years. So of course, that's going to focus on Laurel park, which opened in 1911, and we have some memorabilia with the hats. There's a bobble head of a horse in the display case as well. We also have things related to the bowling alley that is closed. So we have the pin and the shoes from that. We have information relating to the old Academy of music. We have, and you can see, we have some of those digitized as well. We have plays playbills from the old red wing theater, the Boral, a Playhouse and something that you'll see in the, kind of the lower right hand corner is we had information from performances of from performance from the grand old Opry.

Speaker 1 ([00:32:54](#)):

And really what is the connection? What, why do we have these posters? This was a really a last minute addition to the exhibit and to the entertainment section with a recent loan and donation. And as you can see that the Knights of Pythias who were still around this was one of their charity fundraisers that they would some of these really big stars from the grand old Opry came to Laurel. And it was at the Willis hall community park and West Laurel now kind of where the 95 interchange is over at one 98. And you can see some really famous names there, like Porter Wagner and do some Merle Haggard and some really great names. And to think that all these performers were in Laurel to us. So that's a nice kind of surprise addition to our entertainment section.

Speaker 1 ([00:33:45](#)):

But we also had some really deep discussions on this exhibits, and it wasn't just having fun things like horse bobbleheads and singers and songwriters. There was really dark history and Laurel, especially when it comes to race and ethnic relationships in moral. And we have items in our collection actually more than one that we would think today is completely inappropriate. It's offensive, it's racist. And it's just not something that we would want to show, let alone interpret, but you'll see a kind of in the upper right portion. And that, that yellow program is from the lions club minstrel show from 1953. And we actually have quite a few programs of these in our collection dating all the way back into the thirties. And as you can see, it's very small on your screen here, but what the minstrel shows were is they were a white performers in blackface, and this was considered an acceptable form of entertainment.

Speaker 1 ([00:35:01](#)):

At the time it was part of the lions come fundraisers for their activities. But we have these in our collection. We have these discussions of, should we even show these, if we put these on display, are we just adding fuel to the fire? So to speak of you know, kind of these you know, the racial, the racial tendencies and the tendencies toward racism in our country and these, this way, these were discussions that we had months before all of the, the protest that broke out this year as well. And this is something that museums, small museums like ours up to large museums across the country in the world have to deal with. And we finally decided that it is completely offensive and inappropriate, but it's part of the history of Laurel that needs to be talked about.

Speaker 1 ([00:35:55](#)):

So instead of empowering or enabling this offensive material and this chapter and laws history, it's a way to learn about it and to take the power away from it. So we can learn from the past, we can learn that this is not something that is good. This is not the history that we want to project, but it's, it's the history that we are not going to cover up. So we made what we were kinda think was an uncomfortable decision to put that in the exhibits, and it has raised some eyebrows and to has raised some questions. And I don't know if anyone else wants to speak to their personal perspectives with that. But this is something that we decided that was important. And the history to use this, a talking point about about racism, about the, the changing nature of the history of Laurel and the history of race relations in our town.

Speaker 5 ([00:36:54](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 1 ([00:36:54](#)):

Okay. So again some of the history is, is not is not easy. It's not comfortable but it's our history. And when we go through this, that's part of the story too. And so that's what we, why we wanted to share when we talk about that. And that's just going through the next section, we have the business section and I'll let Karen tell the story since she was really the one that stumbled across it, but just to set the stage, what we have here are just some digitized pictures of some of the, kind of the classic world businesses. A lot of these names, you all old town residents will remember the old Safeway market enhances candy store. We have McDonald's from the 1960s there. And then the picture on the far right is all the objects that we have in our display case.

Speaker 1 ([00:37:48](#)):

So we have floats from the melody food factory. Of course we have boots with its connection to the Laurel park. We have the war hardware store bags and the meat markets. And of course on the left, we have one of the cows from the meat markets and it was actually very serendipitous how it came as for our collection. So Karen I'll let you tell the story since you were the first one that came across. Well, this really was, this really was a serendipitous event and, and I was scheduled to have coffee down at sip, which is at the corner down the street from the meat market at the time it happened to be when the meat market was completely closed and clearing out the building completely. I mean, there was almost nothing, excuse me, almost no, excuse, almost nothing left.

Speaker 3 ([00:38:36](#)):

And I happened to be walking there from my house, which is just on Prince George street. And I peeked in the window and I saw these two cows kind of sitting up there and realized that they were literally taking everything out of the building and they were going to be empty shortly. So somebody who was related to the Miles family was there. And I kind of said is there any chance that the Laurel historical well society could have the cows? And she has said, well, yeah, yes, if you want them. So I dashed down to sip and said, at the end, we have to go and get the cows right now. Unfortunately she had a station wagon. So we could do that. And not to say that they were dusty would be an understatement. . Yes. Yeah, so we can see the back of my heart fits exactly to cows from the meat markets. And yeah, we, we got some raise eyebrows and some odd looks from Marlene who's the chair of our collections committee and, and Charlie are a volunteer register registrar. But yeah, we had to do some cleanup before they went on the exhibit and also trying to find places to put very large number stuffed cows and our collection area, but we would have one day later they would have been gone. So there you go. And I liked the calves.

Speaker 3 ([00:39:59](#)):

Okay. So moving onto our next section Michelle, do you want to talk a little bit about some items here? Yeah, thanks. So we know Laurel was a great community and people were coming to oral from when it was oral factory to lay down their roots. And one of my geek out moment was the photos. I would get lost looking through these photos just trying to picture what everybody was thinking and how they were feeling. And the one, one of the ones that really just got to me was the one that we're looking at at the upper, right. And that was a marathon that was run from, I think from 1909 to 1939 in front of what was a world hotel. And this marathon would go from either bald, from Laurel to Baltimore or DC. And it turned out it was one of a qualifying events for the U S Olympics. So it was pretty awesome, tons of baseball teams and tons of photos of Riverfest and main street festivals. But another awesome thing that we have is a trivia game that was developed in 1987 which is all about Laurel history of that time and before, which I think that would be a really great zoom evening to have like a world game. So that is our community.

Speaker 6 ([00:41:38](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 3 ([00:41:41](#)):

And then we have transportation also some major geek out moments on this one, which is since I am new to the exhibit committee, everybody was telling me the one photo that we have on the upper right. Which was the first photo of the Laurel trolley that started in 19. Let's see the trolley was eight, 1902, which was mayor Phelps. And I know this photo has been around Laurel for a while, but for me it was, you know, it was brand new and it was just as big off. And then right next to, it was a photo of 13 conductors of 1925, which was the end of the trolley. And these guys just, they just wowed me. Cause I, I don't know this for a fact, but I think this was the last photo of the trolley era in Laurel, which went from sick, which went from main street down to DC the treasury department.

Speaker 3 ([00:43:05](#)):

And of course we have the Mark station and in our panel we have a lot of the train tickets from 1902 to some of the recent tickets that Mark is now taking, which are digital. We don't have too much information about the two photos below, but one of them on the lower right is from right in front of the world Democrat office and then a horse and buggy. And of course, you know, the save our stop, which was very important few years ago when we almost lost our Mark station. So that's some of our transportation. Great. Yeah. Thank you, Michelle and Michelle I, it has a nice personal connection to the transportation. Since you lent us some of her recent Mark tickets, you have to take a screenshot of her phone and it's just kinda nice to see that display of tickets across, across the decades and a connection to Baltimore and to DC, and really just how wonderfully situated Laurel is perfectly along all these commuter lines, just for the entertainment reasons we talked about earlier, let's you extend this community into

Speaker 1 ([00:44:32](#)):

These major cities and the next section, we kind of lumped together. So in the exhibit we have the high school section up on the first floor, and then we were able to expand the exhibit down into the basement level where we have our museum shop and our children's interactive area dividends den. And we put appropriately enough the grade score, the elementary school items down there. So Marlene worked on both of these sections. So I'm gonna pass it over to you just to talk a little bit about the items we have there.

Speaker 7 ([00:45:07](#)):

Fair. Laurel placed a high premium on education in its early days, but high school was the first high school in Prince George County. And there's a picture of it on the panel. The last class to graduate from that school had a huge reunion. The new high school is of course, over on cherry lane and we have lots of pictures of different sports teams and prom invitations and all sorts of things like letters, sports letters that sort of reflect, give me that feeling of, you know, high school. And then in the grade school days, we have four, actually five grade schools there. Why st. Mildred's Academy which was run by the st Mary's church and then four public grade schools grade school. Number one was up on my street where the heat and frost insulators building has just been redone on that same plot of land. That was school number one, school number two was the colored school. And the building still stands on eighth street. Then grade school, number three was on Laurel Avenue in the 300 block.

Speaker 7 ([00:46:42](#)):

And that's where Alice McCullough, whose name you may know because of color, field talk. And this is her hand bell that she called the students into school for classes from their recess. There were all, some other schools, there was ODB fair and other little grade schools. But as the population of children Rose and fell, they came in with children of course always had tours. And this little soldier is found in the basement of the museum. And this little doll is fascinating. It's a penny, but they call it a penny doll cause they only cost a penny and she's white porcelain and she, her arms and legs don't move. And she's called a frozen Charlotte because she's named after a young woman, who's going to a dance and didn't want to put a pillow on to mess up her dress. By the time the carriage got to the dance, she had frozen to death. It's sort of a different attitude to give a child cause I'm chair. And in fact, many of them are presented in little tiny cardboard coffins. So they had a different outlook on things. That's about it.

Speaker 1 ([00:48:08](#)):

I do want to tell the story of the photo here.

Speaker 7 ([00:48:12](#)):

Yeah. The photo. This is from the road school. That was the fourth, but didn't have a number. The fourth grade school. This photograph was very, very bad condition. But, uMichelle, did you, yes. UMichelle has a, a fine hand with photographs. I was able to restore it to this point, which is just amazing to me.

Speaker 1 ([00:48:47](#)):

This is one of the few objects that we have from the Grove school. We have one photo and a photo of the class, and I'm gonna just put out the pitch here that if any, anybody out there has other photos of those, that school or the class, isn't it. We would sure like to have a copy of it, to be able to tell the story of the students, because these were the second, this is the segregated school. So the school was one of the, with the other cut with the colored school. And so it was segregated until schools were segregated in Laurel

Speaker 7 ([00:49:19](#)):

And it's it's, we have hundreds of pictures of classes from the other group. You know, the, the white grapes was, this is the only one we have either of the photos. So it would be wonderful to have some more

Speaker 1 ([00:49:38](#)):

No, that's great. Thank you. And I'll just reiterate what Karen and Marlene said. We tried very hard with this exhibits to capture the entire history of Laurel with, you know, start as a mill town, a factory town and then the evolution it took along with entertainment and transportation sectors, but there are just some real gaps in our collection and we are trying very hard to overcome those gaps, but if anybody has information or items that can help fill in those gaps in our collection particularly for history of the Grove and the African American community, and also the growing Hispanic community we, we really need to curate those artifacts and those, and get those stories. Also, we can make a make sure that we're telling the most complete picture. We can, the

Speaker 8 ([00:50:31](#)):

Straight up Laurel,

Speaker 1 ([00:50:35](#)):

Oh, let me see. There we go. Okay. So my sections are in the next couple of slides, so I'm just going to go through pretty quickly. So when I said about looking at daily life, this is a section that I met, not Mamie Eisenhower scalp, but daily life every day in and day out. This is home, the heart of laurels. So the idea behind the section was to showcase ways that Laurel is, is kind of similar to every other town in, you know, where you grew up might not be Laurel. I didn't grow up in Laurel, but I know that a lot of this is familiar to me no matter where you grew up you can kind of make some connections to home. And now that you live in Laurel, this is your home now. So it's that connection to place.

Speaker 1 ([00:51:22](#)):

So we talked about earlier but I just want to highlight the, the technology aspect of this. And that was a big challenge. I know for myself. And I think for some of the other exhibit committee is that, you know, we're so focused on the history and the past and trying to find the oldest and the coolest thing. And it was a struggle to really include things from like the seventies and the eighties and the nineties even two thousands, you know, all the way up to 2020 in this exhibit, because it seems just so everyday it seems it's in common memory. So to really kind of push ourselves to include things like the river Fest poster items from the main street festival. And so this is what it was so cool about this exhibit is that we were able to highlight some of the changes around the home over the last 150 years, particularly in the technology area.

Speaker 1 ([00:52:16](#)):

So we didn't have to look too far to find an old school computer. That data processor was sitting up in the attic of the museum and the dates, I think to what, 1986, it was used to store all the early files of the Laurel historical society on my dad lent us five and a quarter, a floppy or a five and a half floppy disks. And it just kind of blow everyone's mind that you would have to have stacks and stacks of these floppy desks to have the equivalent of just one tiny thumb drive that we have today. A lot of the millennials not to pick on them, but a lot of the millennials and the children's groups, especially before we closed, really got a kick out of the old rotary phone that Marlene lent us where you have to kind of dial around the the, the circle there.

Speaker 1 ([00:53:09](#)):

And if you had a zero or a nine and your phone number that you had to dial, you were going to be there for quite a while. We have the old typewriter in the background as well. And those were before Koba. Those were the hands on items that we had to encourage children, people to connect to the ways of life in the past, the technology section, just real quick. Other things we had in the, in the home section included we had a, kind of a Tableau of Maude Phelps and that was her wedding dress. From 1923, I will spare the geek out for the costumes on this one, but does know it an extraordinary piece. And if you want me to go into a 10 minute tirade, sometime you can just email me and we can talk about Lodz dress there. But we have also on display her wedding invitation her marriage certificate and pictures of her and her husband Norris. And then we also have information about life on the home front, on world war two. The jacket that you see that little bed jacket was made out of parachutes. So that was brought home from a soldier in world war II and his wife made a little bit jacket out of it.

Speaker 1 ([00:54:23](#)):

And then just very quickly, one of the last sections that we have here is building faith and Laurel, again, highlighting that growing diversity of Laurel this way, this time along faith lines and the faith based congregations. There were Christian churches along main streets starting with very early in the 1840s, really pretty much as soon as that factory got up and running there was a, the United Methodist church st Maryville's Catholic church and st. Phillips Episcopal church. They were all on main street. They all trace their roots back to the 1840s, but very soon we had other congregations us. We have st Mark's United Methodist church, really the anchor of the Grove community there. And we have other congregations like the OCA Shalom Jewish congregation, and now the Islamic community center, as well as some of these, this kind of non-denominational just congregations that you see pop up and churches of their own, or in just little store funds and some of the strip malls that we have in Laurel.

Speaker 1 ([00:55:28](#)):

And we have, in some of the display cases, we have items related to the different congregations and some of the personal religious devotions that you would see. So we have a hymnal book from st. Mark's Sunday school. We have rosaries and Bibles and then we do have the pump organ. And this is probably the biggest item in our collection. Uit's certainly something that once you put it in place, it's going to stay there. Ubut it's a pump organ or, or a harmonium. So you have to pump the pedals to get air through the bellows,uto play. And it is functional. And,usome of our volunteers have been able to play it,uwhen we first put it on display. So that's just a really fun piece to have.

Speaker 1 ([00:56:16](#)):

And then I'll just set the stage out. It's like Karen, talk a little bit about her research as well as we kind of wind down our here, but as we expanded the exhibit into the basements one of the things that we were able to do was to get a popup display, just kind of a little cardboard box from the national archives. And the exhibit is the traveling version of their rightfully hers display looking at the women's suffrage movements are all the way up to the passage of the 18th amendment. And then also kind of the history after that, in terms of you know, the, the voting acts and having full enfranchisement for all women and men regardless of their ethnic or racial backgrounds. So we have that story kind of anchoring it. And then we found some movie great pieces in our collection to tell the local story of that.

Speaker 1 ([00:57:06](#)):

So, cam, do you want to talk a little bit about your research with the full books? Oh, the poll books were really interesting and you kind of look at them and you say, well, that's interesting, it's a registrar of the people who are registered to vote, but then we realized that one of the poll books is from 1922, which when you're looking at the municipal elections for the city of moral, it turns out that that was the first year that women would have been able to vote in Laurel because the elections in Laurel were in April and may of 1920, which was the year that this year that the hundredth anniversary happened in, in August. So in August, in April of 1920 women couldn't vote in Laurel. So the first election that they could vote in was the 1922 one, but what's really fun about the poll books is when you open them up, the registrar had registered men separately from women.

Speaker 1 ([00:57:58](#)):

So on one side, he would have the men listed. And on the other side, he would say females who had registered to vote and also of interest in those was that there were a number of people who are identified as colored voters, which is interesting why you needed to identify that who knows. And those were all men, there were no women who were colored that were listed or identified as such. So, so when you look at the, at the registrar on the one hand, it just tells you who was eligible to vote per se, but just how it was written down and what they clearly perceived as important for a 1922 election was interesting, at least to me, I thank you. And again, it's incredible to have this in your hands and to look through the names. And a lot of the old family names are familiar, but then to think that, you know, some of these girls, you know, just turns you know, age to vote.

Speaker 1 ([00:58:58](#)):

And this was their very first election that they could vote in along with you know, people who had been waiting for the chance to vote you know, their whole lives. So it's, it's really incredible to have that local piece of history. Right. And I'd like to add that we've seen from our Laurel leaders of about that time period, that the editor, for example, of the moral leader, didn't really support boats for women, didn't think it was a particularly good idea. And, and there was some opposition, even among women, would you, you found during the suffrage movement, but what's also interesting in the list of the women there, you often will find, what's clearly a mother daughter voting in the polls, which is kind of nice and inspirational.

Speaker 7 ([00:59:45](#)):

We also have some newspaper articles about a women's suffrage March that came through oral. And the reaction of the, like the hotel owner did not want to rent the rooms for the night, but the city apparently came at, came through and said, no, no, you got to do that. So it, wasn't interested in please.

Speaker 1 ([01:00:10](#)):

Thank you, Marlene. And we have a lot to tell about the history of suffrage and Laurel and, and how this national movement it has a connection to our town here. So we're hoping to continue to do research and go beyond the anniversary year of 2020 with that. So I know we're a few minutes over our hour here, but I encourage you to stick around for a few extra minutes just to show how we're going to transition our exhibits that we have on display now into next year. So we are going to have a hundred and I guess 51 years on display, we're definitely going to include all of 2020 in the exhibit. So we're going to keep almost everything that we have on display now, and we're going change outs, some pieces. So some of the textiles like Mamie's dress and Jean Wilson's dress, we'll probably have to go off display because they're more fragile than some of the other items, things that are sensitive to light and humidity we'll have to change those out.

Speaker 1 ([01:01:08](#)):

So we do hope to have at least a little bit of open hours before the end of this year, before we change it out. So we will include 2020 in the exhibit, and we're going to kind of switch up the sections to talk about Laurel's response to several of these, these massive life changing events that happen in 2020. And so one of them is telling the coronavirus story and moral, and this is just a reminder that we are collecting your memorabilia, your stories, your photographs your, your, just your experiences of, of what it was like to live in Laurel throughout this pandemic. And if you have masks or signs, or if you're

associated with their business, especially we encourage you to donate your photographs. We'll be having some drop off days coming up in the future where you can add your your experience personally, to our collection for the coronavirus.

Speaker 1 ([01:02:12](#)):

But also along the same lines, we are also collecting materials related to the protests for social justice, not only in Laurel specifically in Laurel of because that's our focus, but throughout our nation and our country, again, we're seeking to document what life was like in Laurel during these challenging times and what your response was. So if you took place participated in some of these marches in Laurel, and you had signs, we encourage you, as you can see in the other pictures, if you made signs on there, just kind of hanging around your house and you don't know what to do with them, please consider donating them to the Laurel historical society. The same thing with pictures, if you have them on your phone, just to send them over to us. And we'll, we'll put them as part of our digital collection, the app, because it's important to document history as it's happening.

Speaker 1 ([01:03:11](#)):

So often as you've seen us go through it, it's talking about these things in the past, but we have a real chance to document history as it's happening, and to really tell the story and make a complete picture, or the generations that come after us that wonder what life was like during this pandemic. And then finally, the last, actually I lied two things I'm going to solicit from you is again, if you have experiences going back to school virtually, or even going back to work virtually, let us know. We have a couple of pictures here of you know, some of our family members who are going back to school virtually and what their workstations look like. So again, if you have pictures, if you have stories share that with us, because that is all part of these times that we are living.

Speaker 5 ([01:03:57](#)):

No.

Speaker 1 ([01:04:00](#)):

And then finally, if you got a Laurel leader today, you would see that we made the front front page of it. And our assistant director Monica Sturdivant is really taking the lead on a project that we're doing with the liberal arts council. And that is submitting a postcard to the local historical society. So it does become part of our collection. And it's a way to kind of artistically or in a create rate of creative writing fashion document your response to the pandemic, to the protest to what is happening in life and moral in 2020. So we have these postcards at city hall and you can mail it back and and you can be part of our collection as well.

Speaker 1 ([01:04:52](#)):

I just very briefly, I know we're over, but bear with me there, we have two more upcoming virtual programs. You were part of our very first virtual webinars tonight. So thank you so much for participating and hanging in with us through all of our learning curve here. So we have on November 12th, we're going to be doing archeology in Howard County. This was a talk that had been scheduled for April during archaeology month but it to be canceled because of the pandemic. So we're gonna be doing that virtually in November. And then we're going to be talking about Victorian Christmas traditions and

the history of early Victorian Christmas, and kind of again, what life was like in the 1840s and what maybe some of the no workers who lived in town in 1840s, the, what their Christmas would have been like.

Speaker 1 ([01:05:42](#)):

And again, I just want to say, thank you. We miss you, thank you to all the panelists and all of the hard work that they've done on the exhibit committee. Thank you to you know, for everyone who's come to the museum and supported it. I will just put a let me see a plugging here if I can get it is that you know, we will appreciate donations for the virtual program. If you go to our website, Laurel historical society, doc.org, and go to our store you can send a couple of dollars our way to support our virtual programs and some of the transitions that we're doing to keep keep our programming and keep our community engagement alive and well during these, these trying times. So if there's questions we can I'm happy to answer anything that's come up, come along. There was a question that came through and we're gonna need some clarification, Oh, it was already answered the 1889 iron piece came from that was in the transportation section that was over top of the bridge over, across the production river on route one. And we actually have pieces of kind of pieces of the bridge in difference the orientations and the plaques around the bridges as well.

Speaker 7 ([01:07:08](#)):

Here's another question from someone who wanted to know if we knew that a Laurel high school yearbook was in a Harrison Ford called clear and present danger. I had no idea, but I'd like to know more about that.

Speaker 1 ([01:07:20](#)):

I would say. Yeah. I just saw that. Come in. Thank you for reading that. No, I did not. It's.

Speaker 7 ([01:07:27](#)):

If Kay Miller would please send us an email or information.

Speaker 1 ([01:07:33](#)):

Yep. Our email's still on the screen. So it's info@laurelhistoricalsociety.org or mine is director at laurel historical society.org. So again, these are great little connections that Laurel has to national history and kind of pop culture. And so well, we hope you enjoyed this. Look at the exhibit is kind of a virtual tour of the exhibits, and we really hope that you will be able to see it in person by the end of this year, and if not, then continuing into 2021. So again, we hope you learn a little bit more about the history of Laurel, some of the facts that you might not have known before. Maybe it peaked your curiosity to look at some of our YouTube videos that we have on the exhibit as well. I'll put on some hope and give you a better idea of what it's like to to work in volunteer in a museum and kind of the fun and cool stuff that you can come across, whether it's the, the, the stories that Karen eeks out of the, the documents or the photographs that Michelle geeks over or to some of the really great pieces that Marlene gets to hear the rate.

Speaker 1 ([01:08:37](#)):

There's, there's a lot to learn about Laurel’s history. So he invites you to keep making those connections with the local historical society panelists. Is there anything that you want to add?

Speaker 9 ([01:08:48](#)):

No, thank everybody for coming.

Speaker 1 ([01:08:51](#)):

Nice. Well, thank you. We'll stop the recording. And like I said, we'll try to post that on our YouTube channel on our website. We'll make that available as well as the slides for the presentation. And we hope to see you sometime in the next virtual webinar or online though with our social media. So thank you for attending our very first virtual webinar. I hope you have a wonderful rest of your night and it can be safe.

Speaker 9 ([01:09:19](#)):

Right. All right. Thank you.