Laurel Historical Society

(Virtually) Unpacking Laurel's Past

Exhibit Committee: Karen Lubieniecki, Marlene Frazier, Charlie Hessler, Doug Hayes, Irene Ohlmacher, Michelle Keating, Amy Dunham, Monica Sturdivant, Ann Bennett
Exhibit opening: February 2, 2020
Museum closed due to COVID-19: March 16, 2020
Exhibit extended to: December 19, 2021
Artifacts as storytellers

REPRESENT A CHANGING SOCIETY
Reflect the cultural, ethnic, and geographical diversity of our community

CONNECT PAST AND PRESENT
Residents and visitors play a part in the evolving story of Laurel

DOCUMENT DAILY LIFE IN LAUREL
Objects that show us how Laurel is unique, yet similar to many small 19th-century factory towns
Iron Nutcracker

This “Old Dog Tray” nutcracker manufactured by Laurel’s Diven Iron Works sometime in the 19th century opens a window to Laurel’s manufacturing past. Laurel’s manufacturing history included numerous mills and foundries including the Laurel Cotton Mill, E. Rosenfeld & Co., nightshirt factory, Avondale Mill, and a machine shop near 7th & Main.

All are now gone.

Bilingual Menu

Laurel’s population is increasingly diverse, with residents representing Hispanic, African, Asian, Indian, and other communities and their cultures becoming part of the town’s cultural fabric.

This bi-lingual menu from Sarita’s Peruvian Chicken Restaurant & Carryout is representative of the rich and varied dining experiences these new groups have brought to the town.
Native American artifacts remind visitors that Laurel’s history began long before the Snowden’s arrived or the mills were built. The town is located on what was once the homeland of Native America tribes. We used the opportunity to acknowledge and honor their culture and heritage.

Three ledgers tell different parts of the early town history

**Laurel Mill Accounts Ledger, 1845**

**Store Ledger, 1857 - 1859**

**Odd Fellows Ledger, 1852-1854**
Laurel before 1870
City of Laurel
# City of Laurel

**LAUREL'S COMMISSIONERS & MAYORS**

## Commission Presidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Service Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Curley</td>
<td>1870-1872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Cradle</td>
<td>1872-1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Brown</td>
<td>1873-1874</td>
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<td>William H. Diven</td>
<td>1874-1875</td>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>John A. Talbott</td>
<td>1875-1876</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edward J. Phelps</td>
<td>1876-1878</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Haslup</td>
<td>1878-1879</td>
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<tr>
<td>John W. Whitesides</td>
<td>1879-1881</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lawrence A. Ellis</td>
<td>1881-1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. John Cronmiller</td>
<td>1882-1886</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. M. Bond</td>
<td>1886-1888</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jesse Smallwood</td>
<td>1888-1890</td>
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Municipal Pool
Token
First Lady Mamie Eisenhower's evening dress, 1950s
Past Celebrations

Celebrating the 100th anniversary in 1970 and the 125th in 1995.
As Laurel’s population has grown and diversified since the city was incorporated, so have the forms of entertainment available for its residents. Early on, folks were able to attend a vaudeville show at the Academy of Music or watch a silent movie at the Red Wing Theatre. Later, audiences could occasionally attend carnivals, big top shows or, what would today be considered racist, a minstrel show. For many years, our local drive-in theater projected movies on the big screen. Horse racing has been available for over a century. Today we also have the latest in multiplex cinema and live performing arts venues for our enjoyment.
(1) Hance’s Candy Store, c. 1890
(2) Baublitz Garage, c. 1923
(3) Donaldson and Harrison General Store, c. 1900
(4) McDonald’s, 1968
(5) Safeway Market, c. 1945
(6) Rosenfeld Shirt Factory, c. 1910
(7) Mid-City Restaurant, late 1940s
Community of Laurel

Community
Transportation
Grade School Days and High School

Children growing up in Laurel could go to public school as early as 1850 when school #1, the "upstairs school," was built. This was followed by school #2, the "colored school," and school #3, the "downtown school." During the time of segregation, white and colored children attended separate schools. By 1925, all public grade school students attended the same elementary school on Montgomery Street. Several other public schools, such as D. W. Phair Elementary on West Street, opened and closed as the number of children in Laurel rose and fell. St. Mildred's Academy started in 1883 and later became St. Mary of the Mills grade school and the feeder school of Laurel High School.

Children in Laurel could attend grade school until 7th grade in the early years. They then had the option to further their education because Laurel had the first high school in Prince George's County. It opened in 1899 and the first graduating class consisted of five students, all women. The last class graduated in 1901, and the high school then moved to its current location on Cherry Lane.
HOME - THE HEART OF LAUREL

Stepping into the small room of this 1840s building, you’ll notice that some things have changed greatly over the last 150 years. The changing technology reminds us how much invention and industrialization have impacted our community and households.

But other areas remain nearly untouched, connecting us with generations of past Laurel residents: home-cooked meals, household chores, daily wear and special-occasion outfits. All of these items tell the history of how a house was turned into a home in Laurel – then, as well as today.
Even before Laurel was incorporated as a city, several different faith-based congregations became established here and continue to shape our town today. First United Methodist Church, St. Mary of the Mills Catholic Church, and St. Philip’s Episcopal Church all trace their roots back to the 1840s. The growth of new congregations in the 19th – 21st centuries, such as St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, Oseh Shalom Jewish Congregation, and the Islamic Community Center, reflect the increasing diversity of religious groups. The items displayed here tell stories of public places of worship and individual expressions of belief – all as rich and diverse as the city they serve.
WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE EXHIBIT

"You can go to meetings; you can vote resolutions; you can attend great democracy. But, after all, the only occasion where the American citizen expresses his act of power is at the ballot-box."

—Anna A. Dickinson, address of the New York Suffrage Convention, January 1893
Updating the Exhibit for 2021
THE CORONAVIRUS STORY IN LAUREL, MARYLAND

Laurel Park is closed to the public.

Anne Arundel County and Prince George public libraries are closed.

Many businesses, like Panera Bread, require face masks.

The Main Street Post Office limits the number of people inside.

Grocery stores like Wegman’s enforce social distancing.

Many small businesses and restaurants are temporarily closed.
Laurel Social Justice Collection

Laurel Historical Society
Laurel, Maryland

Help us document recent events for future generations!
Contact us to donate photos, signs, or stories.

Director@LaurelHistoricalSociety.org
LAUREL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

How are you going back to (virtual) school?

SHOW US YOUR WORK SPACE!

SUBMIT YOUR VIRTUAL EDUCATION PHOTOS AND STORIES TO
INFO@LAURELHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG
A COLLABORATION BY THE
LAUREL HISTORICAL SOCIETY &
LAUREL ARTS COUNCIL

THE LAUREL
POSTCARD PROJECT

We need your help with building a collection of responses to what is happening in the world right now. Your response will become part of the Laurel Historical Society’s collection and part of an online gallery in the near future. It will also give future generations a glimpse of what it was like in Laurel during the year 2020.

Take a postcard, remove the instruction sheet, answer the question below, and mail the card. Thank you!

QUESTION:
HOW HAS YOUR LIFE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND PROTESTS FOR RACIAL JUSTICE?

Laurel Historical Society
info@laurelhistoricalsociety.org www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org

Laurel Arts Council
laurelartscouncil@gmail.com www.cityoflaurel.org/boards/commissions/laurel-arts-council

All submissions become property of the Laurel Historical Society and may be used in exhibits or social media posts by LHS or IAC.
Upcoming Virtual Programs

ARCHAEOLOGY IN HOWARD COUNTY
Thursday, November 12
7 pm

EARLY VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS HISTORY & TRADITIONS
Thursday, December 10
7 pm
Thank you!

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info@laurelhistoricalsociety.org

WEBSITE
www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org

DONATE
https://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/store/p120/Virtual_Program_Donation.html