GEORGE'S CREEK REGIONAL HISTORY EXHIBIT

170 years of history has left many artifacts and records, now kept in display cases and filing cabinets in the main meeting room of the George's Creek Regional Library.

Visitors are welcome to view the collection, including the Lefty Grove American League trophy, during regular library hours.

And If you have a question about our local history, we'll try to find an answer from our many interested amateur historians.

**Located on Main Street
Geo. Creek Regional Library
Lonaconing, Maryland**

LONACONING   MARYLAND

Started as a worker's village during the 1837 construction of the Iron Furnace, Lonaconing is now a pleasant mountain community of a thousand people.

With usually quiet streets, a small but useful retail center, and various small parks, it's an inviting place to tour -- and sometimes to stay.

Quiet? But not on Festival Days! Like: Coney Days, the Fall Festival, Street Time, Memorial Day and the annual Fireworks Display.

The Lonaconing Iron Furnace

MAIN STREET, LONACONING MARYLAND

www.lonaconingtown.com /ironfurnace
IronFurnace @ web8,cc

**George's Creek History Exhibit
POB 240, Lonaconing, MD 21539**

The *George's Creek Coal and Iron Company,* a corporation chartered by the State of Maryland in 1834, began building Furnace Number One, the first of four intended, iron-rendering blast furnaces to occupy the present site at the foot of Dug Hill, a spur of the Savage Mountain Ridge, a few hundred feet from what is now Main Street (State Route 36) in the middle of Lonaconing, Maryland.

Just finished, on May 16, 1839 the furnace was filled with ore, coal, and additives and lit. On May 17th, the iron outlet plug was removed and the first pour of liquid cast iron ran out of the furnace, through the distribution channels, and into the molds -- the first commercial run in the U.S. which used bitumenous coal -- perhaps the first run in the world to use the basic, coal-fired iron production method still in use today. This furnace is the only intact furnace of its kind in the world.

From the beginning, Furnace One was planned as an experimental blast furnace, which would use raw coal, rather than charcoal, as the furnace fuel. The production of charcoal, burning wood with insufficient air inside an oven, was a slow, expensive process. Operation with pulverized coal, straight from the mines, resulted in a large cost savings. In the money of the time, the Iron Furnace was expected to produce cast iron ingots (pig iron) at $15/ton with a wholesale price at the loading dock of $25/ton. A batch required 12 to 24 hours, and furnace's best output was 75 tons/week.

The other three furnaces were never built, and the George's Creek Company became a coal mining operation, but the furnace operated until 1855; when the local markets were overstocked, larger and more efficient furnaces had been constructed, and cheaper imported pig iron competed with local material in the water-front cities. The construction and operation of the Iron Furnace was documented in the "Lonaconing Journals" -- these were edited and published by K. Harvey in 1977.

George's Creek Coal and Iron Company
Furnace Number One

The furnace structure is approximately fifty foot square at the base, fifty feet high, and converging to thirty foot square at the top; it was built into the hillside, using retaining walls, to permit ore and coal cars easy access via an arched bridge to the loading port at the top; the furnace combustion chamber height was recorded at 18 feet high. The brick cupola and the flagstone cap at the top of the furnace, and wood-constructed weighing house at the front of the bridge are gone. To the best of local knowledge the fire-brick-walled furnace chamber, where the ore/coal mixture burned, is intact and protected from further weather by debris. The steam engines, compressor, and other valuable items were sold before the Civil War and the auxillary furnaces dismantled for their masonry value.

In 1973, the Lonaconing Iron Furnace was listed as Structure No. 73000886, National Register of Historical Places.