

New signs tell of Manassas history

By [STAFF](#)

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The eight signs recently erected throughout Old Town Manassas tell the story of the birth of a city, even in the midst of Civil War, fire and devastation.

The historic signs, a project done by the Manassas Museum and the City of Manassas, illuminate 80 critical years in the city's development and complement the existing 10 Old Town Civil War Trails signs, which focus on the city's significant role in that conflict.

Mayor Harry "Hal" Parrish II will officially unveil the signs during a ribbon-cutting ceremony July 27 at 5 p.m. on the corner of Main and Center streets.

"These historical signs will create daily awareness for residents and visitors of the place Manassas holds in history," said City Manager Lawrence D. Hughes. "The renovated signs will answer many of the "I wonder what, when or who?" questions people have as they walk through the Old Town area."

The museum staff hopes the signs will inform readers about the persistence of those who built the city and about the significance of the historic streets and neighborhoods where thousands of commuters, residents and visitors tread each day.

They include research and photographs from the museum's collection, as well as modern-day photographs of noted landmarks.

"As we approach the commemoration of the Sesquicentennial [150 years] of the Civil War, an influx of visitors are expected to visit our community to learn more about this period of history and the vital role that Manassas played in it," said John Verrill, director of Historic Resources for the city. "These signs will help to inform them about the war but also the history before and after when Manassas grew into the vibrant community we know now."

Seven of the signs are a walking narrative throughout Old Town, while two are positioned at nearby historic sites.

Liberia Plantation, the Museum's 1825 historic house on Mathis Avenue, has a sign explaining the home's significance as a prosperous plantation, Civil War military headquarters and dairy farm. A ninth sign commemorating the dairy barn at the Manassas Industrial School/Jennie Dean Memorial on Wellington Road, will soon be installed and dedicated.

The signs recount the growth of the city from a sleepy railroad junction once known as Tudor Hall, to the importance of the railroad, both before and after the Civil War. The signs also commemorate a devastating 1905 fire, and the heroic efforts of residents to rebuild the town that we know today.

— Bennie Scarton Jr.