This transcript is being provided in a rough-draft format. The transcript reflects the transcriber's best effort to express the full meaning intended by the speakers. It is not a verbatim transcript.

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(MUSIC) I’ve been around this great big world. Nothing I’ve seen can top it. Yes, I am talking about this place. The world famous Lexington Market. Slurping up Oysters. Chowing down on fries. Give me some of that Wonton soup and more sweet potato pie. Sushis, smoothies, slaw. Food from the Caribbean. Tacos, ham hots, bagels and lox. And everything in between. I’ve been around this big world. Nothing I’ve seen can top it. Yes, I’m talking about this place. The world famous Lexington Market. Slurping up Oysters. Chowing down on fries. Give me some of that Wonton soup and more sweet potato pie.

Thank you everyone. Hi everyone, My name is David London and I am the Chief Experience Officer at the Peale, and allow me to be the first to welcome you and thank for joining us for todays' Lexington Market Storytelling Event.

You just heard Bob Jacobson singing his original Lexington Market Song, and we will be hearing from Bob again later on in the program.

Today’s event will last approximately one hour, and we have left time at the end of the program for anyone who joined us today who wished to share their own Lexington Market Story. I hope you will do as well.

Today's event includes ASL Interpretation, as well as live transcriptions, which are available within zoom, by clicking the CC button at the bottom of the screen.

I would like to thank our interpreter, Antonio who you see here beside me, as well as our transcriber, Katrina, who is working today behind the scenes today.

If you need any questions, or have any suggestions for accessibility, you can email access@thepealecenter.org

In the event of any technical difficulties or unforeseen circumstance during today’s broadcast, please watch the chat box to your right, or your email, for further instructions.

If you need any technical help with today’s broadcast, you can email online@thepealecenter.org.

You can also reach us on social media: we are @ThePeale on Twitter and FB, and ThePealeBaltimore on Instagram

These handles will also be in the chat. If you have any questions or comments, please leave them in chat. If we have time, we will be able to answer any of those. If you have any stories, you can share there as well.

The Peale, is a multidimensional cultural institution, whose physical space is on Holliday Street in downtown Baltimore City. The oldest museum building in the country, the Peale is focused on preserving and sharing authentic stories of Baltimore’s people and places.
Taking a cue from the museum’s original founder Rembrandt Peale, the Peale today is a center of innovation. It strives to reinvent the urban museum for the 21st century.

The Peale, as a home for Baltimore’s stories, aims to be a safe space for the city’s voices. A place where a diverse community can be heard.

Our storytelling initiatives are how we discover and preserve the history of our people and of this place. And to date, the Peale is proud to maintain the region’s largest collection of stories from and about Baltimore.

All the stories we’ve collected from around the city, can be heard on our website, at www.thepealecenter.org.

Our building is currently undergoing renovation and we are in the final moments of our Capital Campaign. If you would like to support our efforts to bring the building back to life, you can do so by visiting thepealecenter.org/campaign,

and the link is being put in the chat as well. We are down to the final days of our matching campaign, where donations will be matched dollar for dollar.

We begin this event by acknowledging, with humility, that the lands where the Peale and Baltimore is situated today are the traditional ancestral, and unceded lands of Piscataway, Lenape, and Susquehannock Indigenous peoples.

The vast coastal area today known as Baltimore City, Maryland, sustained Indigenous peoples until the arrival of Europeans beginning in the 1600s.

Over the next 400 years, many Piscataway, Lenape, and Susquehannock communities were decimated, absorbed by larger villages or tribes and/or forced by the US federal government to move west beyond the Mississippi River with larger tribes.

Since then, other tribal peoples have moved here in diaspora, including Lumbee peoples.

On January 9, 2012, two tribes of Piscataway—the Piscataway-Conoy Tribe and the Piscataway Indian Nation became the first tribes recognized by the state of Maryland.

In 2017, the state also recognized the Accohannock Indian Tribe. We acknowledge the Peale stands on stolen lands, and I would also like to acknowledge that this history and thanks was adapted from an original text authored by Ryan A. Koons, Peter Dayton and Ashley Minner of the Lumbee Tribe.
Now, I’d like to introduce Dean Krimmel, who was hired to document the history of Lexington Market, also a board member at the Peale. He will provide a quick history of the market.

Dean I will hand it to you.

Dean: Thank you. Good to see everyone. I will talk for five minutes. A few things about Lexington Market history that have come to light. Some which we knew. Some we dug deeper into. We're all thinking about Mary Marvis, hearing that tune and the pictures.. It's noon. Thinking about food. I will take us back and cover two specific stories. Or two questions that were burning at the beginning of this project.

First one - when was the market founded? Second, were enslaved people sold there?

Certainly there is tons of stories and material that I'm turning up as part of my project. What I'm doing is trying to nail down a lot of the dotting I's and crossing t 's. Public archive for people who want to learn more about the history of the market. A lot of information about people and families in the market.

Let's go to the first slide. I will read some of these. Helen Tangires was a former Peale employee who wrote a lot about public markets. See quote on slide.

The beginnings of the market. Public markets in Baltimore were for a boom town. This is a map of Baltimore in 1801. If you go to the bottom, orientate yourself there. That's the inner harbor. Letter A and four numbers on there. This is Baltimore in 1801 at a time of 25,000 people living here.

A is Baltimore and (inaudible) streets. Public market there, first market. As Baltimore's population starts to boom with wheat and back country of central Maryland and Pennsylvania becoming wheat grown regions. Baltimore was a port further west and took advantage of that. We still do today.

And became a major export port. The town was booming. In the 1780s, three markets were built. The first, Hanover market which is gone. It was on Hanover street, east side.

Second market - and these all opened within about a year - that was a massive complex that grew quickly over night. Served the bulk of people in Baltimore.

Third was Fell's point. There was an existing market there.

This is Baltimore is growing. People are moving to west side of what we call downtown. The area around the letter four is where a new market was built as the land is developed by Johnny Howard who inherits a lot of property from his father.
In 1790s. People want a market closer. The locals said close Hanover and put a market here. Took four years of complaining for the county - this is not city property. The county commissioners, state of Maryland had to authorize new markets. 1803, authorized new market in western precinct.

1803, authorized. Land is acquired. Purchased in 1804. Market is built in 1805. This is a slide of a few newspaper articles from then. Market is not finished yet. And already there is ads and notices saying it's near the new market. Market becomes an immediate economic anchor. Raising property values.

These ads - one for a business someone trying to rent property using the market as a landmark.

The market opens when rules and regulations are formulated and published. 1806. Market rules are established in May. Hours start in June.

This is contrary to what we grew up. The idea that Howard laid out property. If you have questions, I can tell you more after.

Today, it's to say that market opened in 1806. Earlier origins.

Fourth market that Baltimore had.

1818, the city expands. This becomes part of Baltimore city. This is a plan showing the location of the first market. Was centered on Packet street. Shorter went from Packet to alley which is Jasper street now. It's a different place. Serving the city of 16,000 people.

So, next question. There is evidence that there are auctioneers - Nicholas Strike, for example - getting license to auction all kinds of goods. There are ads for slaves.

First ad was general notice he would work the various auctions. Doing it at Hanover market.

Look at the right side - valuable negro woman for sale. This is happening more commonly at a time when White americans did not try to hide the fact they were selling people. Seems to be mostly a private affair.

What about Lexington Market? People looked around the Baltimore Sun archives. People found this ad. This is the sole ad I can find for anyone enslaved sold at Lexington Market. This is for a girl named Rosetta. Who was sold after her slave holder went bankrupt. His property is being sold from February to April of 1838.

My fear would be that this is a period in the 1830s with major slave traders. These slave traders are buying people and shipping them down the river from the 1820s to 50s to feed that demand in the south, Texas, Arkansas, major plantations.
I will wrap up with a picture. This is a view of Lexington Market in 1869. Full three sheds. Shows the marketplace itself. It was a sprawling place that there would be outdoor stalls going on Lexington, starting at Howard, going past Pearl and Arch street. On Utah up to Saratoga down to Fayad. Imagine Lexington Market as this six block mass of people coming together with wagons and horses.

20th century, continues to be just as a big. Congestion and such is a different story.

I want to thank librarians, archivists, history keepers. Rob Schoberlein digitized a lot for us. Other people on this list. Also Patricia Schultheis wrote a book about this. A few people in here - their family had stalls. Peers that did their own research. Community story telling also exists when it comes to documentation of the history.

Thanks for having me here. I will mute myself. Go back to the program.

David: Thank you Dean. That was enlightening. Going back to the early days of the Lexington Market. At the Peale, we believe history is happening every day. Now we want to share a small collection of stories we have so far as part of the Lexington Market story telling initiative. The program will last about 25 minutes. Then we will open it up for anyone who joined us on this call for anyone who would like to share their story.

Give me a moment to pull this up. I hope you enjoy the program. We will see you all very shortly.

My name is Jayson Williams. I'm CEO of (inaudible) companies. I grew up in Lexington Market - my great grandfather became the bell ringer in the 1960s. He was selected by those managing the market. He took it with great pride. It was an important position. It created energy. He got a top hat, really nice tuxedo. He wore that every day when he rang the bell to open and close the market.

On his 80th birthday, the shop owners who were mostly white shut down the market and brought him a birthday cake.

My older cousins, my mom, uncles, my great grandfather got them all jobs in the market. My mom started at 14 at one of the concession stands. He owned two shoeshine stands.

I read an old article about when he passed away how they honored him. It talks about his shoeshine stands and medical supplies and herbs. So he had three small businesses in the market. Each of my family members all worked for him before they worked anywhere else. Around 14, everyone started working. Guys shined shoes. Ladies worked in different stands. He was the first person you saw coming into the market. Smart business man. People knew him. Called him Mr. Carpenter.
They did not call him boy, James. Mr. Carpenter because he was respected as a small business owner. I started my small businesses about five years ago.

Like every young person, I think I'm the first one out there. I posted something on social media four years ago after my first year in business. Glad to be a small business owner, start my own business, I'm here doing it, et cetera. Glad to be the first in my family... My uncle, cousins and my mother almost called me and said we're so proud of you but let's correct something here.

Your great grandma was a business owner. And he was a business owner in a time when it was hard to be a black business owner. Even now we talk about our struggles now. But his struggles then being in business that long ago.

Before he became a business owner, he worked on the railroad, in restaurants downtown. Worked for the electric company. He did a lot of things before deciding to start his own businesses.

Also to my excitement that you can be a small business owner anytime. He did not start his until he was in his 60s. Also sad to me because I did not know him growing up. Even though he was such an important point for my uncles and stuff. The stories they told me. Getting their first job. Making sure they showed up on time. Tuck your shirt in. Call people sir. Count the money right. That shoe shine isn't right. Make the noise.

Woman: Those little principles and nuggets.

Jayson: He knew it. With little formal education back then. When I think about my great grandfather, my great great grandparents were former slaves. He was a son of former slaves. So the history and the willingness to fight for adversity. Family of next generation. My great grandmother owned a restaurant on Pennsylvania avenue. Called all people's market.

He was a deacon in his church. Believed in giving back. He coordinated with so many of the shop owners and said hey, you all throw away about 3-4 days before the food spoils. Would you be willing to give it to me on Fridays so I can take it into neighborhoods? Would take it and teach people how to cook their food. And give it out to communities in need.

We talk about someone who was an entrepreneur but understood the responsibility of a business owner to give back to community. Really important.

He was an incredible guy. I keep learning new things about him. I find articles. My mom was moving downtown into Baltimore. She was worried about the high school I was going to did not have strong programs.

But now she moved back to the city to be home. And as she was moving her stuff out of the house, we found more articles about him. When he passed away, the city honored him. The mayor was at his funeral. City council. They shut down Lexington and a street that passed the
market. And blessed his funeral as the procession. Rang the bell for the last time. Did not ring the bell again.

Police escort. My mom said she never saw anything like that. Never saw an African-American man have a police escort at the funeral or a mayor. He used to shine the mayor's shoes.

So you find these little tidbits about your family. As African-Americans, we have to do better about tracking our past history. Because I would have never known his impact on people's lives if I did not get told the stories. Finding more stuff about what he did to advance African-American's businesses in Lexington Market.

Rob: This is Rob Lee from (inaudible) I wanted to chime in on some memories of Lexington Market. It'll be brief. But overarching memories of going down to the market. Playing hooky from school. Usually my dad and I and brother would go down there. We would go to different locations down there. (inaudible) candy stall next to the hot dog stand. Chili dogs. Would go to the deli. Was always around food. Corned beef sandwiches that were huge. We're going there almost (inaudible)

We would go at night sometimes. And my dad had a specific ice cream. Would go next to where Bergers cookies was at. He would get an odd combo. Pineapple ice cream. And walnut ice cream. That was the culmination. Lexington Market, go there. Get stuff in the morning. Come back later in the day. It was a food oriented trip. (inaudible) smell the roasted nuts. We know we're in the right place.

We would get the hot dogs and chili dogs. It was definitely family and food. That's what I remember from Lexington Market. Those were my fond memories there. Thank you. Great project.

Kendrick: My favorite memory about Lexington Market is during the holiday season especially Thanksgiving and Christmas. Lexington Market was like Whole Foods today. It had the best produce, meat, fresh fish. You could pick up fresh flour. Specialty stands for chocolates and candies. Baltimore was known for having roasted peanuts outside. When you arrived at Lexington Market, you knew where you were. No matter where you were from in Baltimore, what your economics was, everyone would meet at Lexington Market. It was a great place for families to shop.

My mother's sister and I would get breakfast at Lexington Market. She would take me to breakfast to spend time together.

Very special moments. Your aunt or uncle is like a second parent. She's no longer with me. But we would eat at this one breakfast place. I believe it was called Sandwich King.
It was a little stall with a seating area. Had a stationary table. And we would sit there and have breakfast. It was the only place to have breakfast. Everyone has their favorite deli or breakfast place or grocer.

And that was my Aunt's and I favorite stall. I asked my cousin earlier. She believes the name may have changed. But it's called the Sandwich King.

There was a special spot my mother would go introduce me too. It's a place that was important to me. It was where I received my care packages when I went away to college. My mom would go to this stall for cookies and gummy bears. Through out my college days, I would receive from Lexington Market cookies and gummy bears from one stall.

Like I said, it holds fond memories. As a child, I went there and got these things. And my mother continued that treat for me when I got to college. We had specific places. Everyone had their favorite.

And crab cakes in the back of Lexington Market. A different world. You go into the fish market in the back. It was magical. People would sit around eating raw oysters. Every visit, my cousin came from New York, we would have to take him back to the fish area to eat raw oysters. I would watch the entire - a well planned out theatrical performance on how he ate the oyster. Throwing his head back. Really fun to watch my big cousin eat these oysters. We would get crab cakes. And mom would get fish to take home.

Bob: I'm original from Providence, Rhode Island. I moved to Baltimore in 1973 to go to the university of Maryland school of social work. A few blocks from Lexington Market. I went there often on lunch breaks. Really fell in love with the place. The first time I went there in fall of 73, I used to enjoy tongue sandwiches as a kid. A less expensive of corned beef. I never thought about what tongue was.

So, I went to this deli in Lexington Market on my second trip there. When I first arrived here, a friend from college from Baltimore gave me a tour of Baltimore including the Lexington Market.

This was my first trip alone. I went to this deli. I saw they had tongue on the menu. I hadn't had it in so long. So I order a tongue sandwich. The clerk grabs this immense tongue. Like a foot long. Huge pink thing. Stiff as a board.

And puts it on the slicer. And I'm thinking oh my god. That's what a tongue is?? Oh no.

So... I had the sandwich. But I can't say I really enjoyed it. I'm thinking about this big cow that gave up its tongue the whole time. That was the last tongue sandwich I had in my life.

Unique: My name is Unique Robinson. Former educator and west Baltimore native. Story about Lexington Market from my perspective. It raised me. Kept my belly full. Fried shrimp that my
cousins did not take from me. Kept the community buzzing. Maternal family was raised in the projects, this was the back porch.

It was stopping at your favorite stall. Depending on what you had a taste for, (inaudible) Mary Mary. Always had a massive people crowd. Corned beef sandwiches were a favorite. Everyone was in a hurry. People slicing quickly. They had two stalls.

They would get into an altercation with the clerk. About how to slice the meat. My mother asked the clerks to hold it up to check for precision. This pissed the clerks off. And customers in line.

I would stare at the cartoon characters wrapping around the stall. Donald Duck, Simpson, Snoopy. Saying how good the food was.

It was true. Rival deli spot was in front called the Baron. Frequently under populated. Ghosttown in comparison.

Other times my mom would crave for fried chicken. (inaudible) lines were long. I would have the same craving in high school. My friends and I would rush out of school.

We would go to Statley's for crab cakes and raw bar. Raw bar was an essential key of understanding me as a child. I was the only child at the raw bar often. My dad was from Saratoga. Friends with Lou. Would slice them up for me. Would wipe his hands off. And slide the plate of clams to me. I could barely see above the counter.

I never liked oysters as a kid. I thought they looked like a fucked up toenail. But tasted similar to clams. But I chose clams because I liked chewing them. My dad always got horseradish which I was grossed out by it.

Fried shrimp takes me to the next part of my story. My parents separated when I was young. My experience with each was separate. I would go (inaudible) with my dad. My mom, we'd go to old market. I would ask why is it the old market? When did the new happen? She explained the old market was the original. And new was built in the 70s.

I will end it there. Wanted to share how near and dear Lexington Market is to me. And always will be. Thank you.

Alright. We are back live. Thank you to all of the storytellers who shared their Lexington Market story with us. That was only a sampling we collected.

Most of those photos- Daisy Brown, storytelling Ambassador,- heard Daisy's voice Daisy is available to interview and help record your Lexington Market stories you may have. Or anyone you might know.
At the end of that, we would now like to open it up to those who joined us who would like to share their story. If it's easy for you, you can either raise your hand or put in chat you have a story.

We have one presenter who is ready to go. Napoleon Sykes. I will let you take it away from here. Thank you so much for sharing live.

Napoleon: No problem. How are you doing? I know I have seven minutes and I'm long winded. I will try to make it as brief as possible. I grew up in mount Washington area.

Growing up, my mom is from Baltimore. Dad from North Carolina and moved up here in the 40s. One of the things that was really important in our house was learning black history, Baltimore history, our family history in the home.

And one of the things that I was a big athlete growing up. One of the things that connected my father and I was boxing. I can remember growing up, he had these VHS tapes of the world's greatest fights. Joe Louis, Jack Dempsey. And as a kid, the guy I fell in love with was Mohammad Ali. He's flashy. Talking trash. He backs it up.

He was amazing human.

Naturally, I draw to him. That was one of my dad's favorite boxers. Got to see him fight a few times. Always told me stories.

One day, B103 with Frank Ski and that group. They advertised that Ali would be at Lexington Market. So, obviously we had to go.

When I saw the first slideshow, I'm sure everyone has the experience. When you see the pictures of Lexington Market, you can immediately smell it.

There are things attached to memories in the warm peanuts is attached to everything.

And so, my dad's like we have to see Ali.

And naturally, we pull in, park our car. And it feels like thousands of people there. You have an opportunity to see the world's greatest.

So, we bounced through the crowd. And we're looking. We can't find him or get near him.

So for me, my father was my superhero. It's weird I feel and see so much of him in myself right now.
And it was just one of the coolest experiences because you know, you can feel his energy as
soon as he got out of the car. We felt the same. Two kids walking through a crowd trying to find
Mohammad Ali. We were there for over an hour. We were a little late because I played soccer.

Finally we were like... I don't think we'll see him. You could see the childish disappointment on
his face. As we pushed through the crowd, we saw a conversion van with a crowd of people
around it.

As I push through, there was a man sitting in a chair with a bunch of people around him. So the
one guy asked me - you want to see the champ? I'm like yeah. That's what we came here for.

So as we were leaving a little let down we could not see him. But still the energy of being there
and having an opportunity to see him and see the amount of energy he put in the people
around. There were tons of people just trying to see him.

And so, as I pushed through the crowd. This man tells me do you want to see the champ? Yes...

He pulls me through the crowd and Ali is sitting there. He gave me a big hug. He would shadow
box with you. We got the opportunity to take a picture with him.

I know I have the picture somewhere. That was a moment in my life. I can just remember seeing
- you get to see your parents and joy from your parents when you have grandkids. But as a
child, I got to see this childish joy on my dad's face and experience that moment with him.

We both got to see someone that meant so much. One of the cooler moments in my life.

And Lexington Market just became a place for us. We lived in that Mt Washington area. Went to
church at St Francis.

I played club soccer. My dad and I on Sundays would swing through Lexington Market after
church before soccer.

That experience - getting to be there at a place that was part of our Sunday ritual and see
someone that meant so much to us. And that joy on my father's face. That was just remarkable.
It was an experience I will remember forever.

I can still feel like I'm there if I close my eyes. Thank you for letting me share the story. Hopefully
we can share more stories. Thank you.

David: Thank you so much. Great to hear that story for the second time. I love it. Thank you for
joining us today. We would like to open it up to anyone else on the call who might have a story
to share. I see Kristin Mitchell raised her hand. You can get ready. Take it away.
Kristen: Hi everybody. Enjoyed your stories. I'm the executive director of markets (inaudible). First, I need to say this work is sponsored by the Maryland center for history and culture through their Thomas Mike Miller History fund.

My story comes from a much more current time frame. I've worked in the area now. For the last several years, I have enjoyed going to the market around the holidays. And listening to the guy from Leslie's produce yell about holiday greens. Very melodic voice. Calling people to the stand with his holiday greetings.

And there is this amazing feeling in the air. So magical with everyone wandering around, seeing old friend, picking up goods for holiday meals. Always music in the background. It was so festive.

I know this was past the prime of Lexington Market. The days that most people remember for the prime. But I still feel that vibe. Very special place.

David: Thank you so much. Thank you for all your work with the market itself. And for sharing that story. If there is anyone else that would like to share, you can raise your hand or unmute yourself. And let me know.

Kristen, since you did mention the partner with Maryland center for History and Culture through the pathways grant. I thought I would mention other project partners - Baltimore Heritage, Baltimore Public Markets Corporation, Lexington Market, Inc., Market Center Community Development Corporation, Seawall. As well as Kristen mentioned the Pathways grant. Thank you to all our partners and funders on this project. Daisy, I see you have your hand up. Give me a moment to bring you into the conversation here.

Daisy: Hi everybody. Once again, I am the story teller ambassador for the Peale Center. And I will briefly share my story of memories of Lexington Market. There are many. The one that stands out which I'm sure a lot of people can relate to. Growing up, my mother would get our birthday cake from one of the bakeries in Lexington Market as a tradition every year. And we would order it during the week. Then we would pick it up Saturday morning. And have a neighborhood birthday party that afternoon. Many of my friends I grew up with - that was our thing. You ordered the cake during the week. Pick it up Saturday morning. Everyone had a sheet cake for their birthday. Fond memory. I will never forget it.

Ironically, later on I became a baker. So that's a tidbit on that. I hope that makes everybody happy.

David: Thank you so much Daisy. Thank you for all the work you have done on this project. Approaching the end of our time. But if there is one last person who wants to share, you can raise your hand or chime in by voice. I will give a few moments to think if you have a story.
While we do that, I will close out the event. If a story comes up, we will happily hear. Thank you for sharing your stories. If you are like me, your mouth is watering and you are ready for lunch. We will add all the stories we collected today. You can also contribute your Lexington Market story on the Peale's website through a variety of means. I will put a slide with more information on that.

In the meantime on behalf of the Peale Center and partners, thank you for joining us. Enjoy the rest of the beautiful day. Thank you once again for being here. And for sharing. And listening to these Lexington Market stories. Thank you so much.