Milford-Lauralton Concert Association
LAURALTON HALL
Monday, December 15, 1941
AT 8:00 P. M.

TRAPP FAMILY SINGERS

Sopranos
JOHANNA VON TRAPP
AGATHA VON TRAPP

Mezzo Sopranos
MARIA VON TRAPP
MARTINA VON TRAPP

Contraltos
HEDWIG VON TRAPP
BARONESS MARIA VON TRAPP

Tenor
WERNER VON TRAPP

Bass
DR. RUPERT VON TRAPP

DR. FRANZ WASNER, Conductor
Lauralton Hall

The History of the Mansion

The Victorian Gothic "Mansion" dating back to the Civil War is the parent structure of the four building complex that now comprises Lauralton Hall. It presently houses the Development, Admissions and Alumnae offices and several classrooms. Built in 1864 for Charles Hobby Pond, a wealthy descendent of a Colonial Milford family, the "Mansion" was originally called "Island View," because of its tower view of Charles Island, a summer resort, which in those days was not obstructed by foliage or buildings. "Island View," as it was originally constructed, was an early Victorian farm. The farm offices-namely, the barn, slaughterhouse, and water tower were behind the main building.

The picturesque appeal of the Victorian-Gothic style "Island View" is achieved principally through much variety and irregularity in its design. The building is seen as a solid mass, its parts being held together by the massive roof, the sturdy granite wall and the encircling cornices. The dominant features are a high French mansard roof and two towers, one square and the other round.

The library and the parlor opened into the central hall by means of sliding doors. This hall housed the main staircase reserved for the adult members of the family, whereas the back stairs provided access from the servants' rooms to the kitchen offices where a door led to the farmyard.

Concern for convenience rather than for symmetry brought about the proximity of the kitchen to the serving room and the dining room. Adjoining the dining room was the library, where the men would retire after dinner to discuss business matters and politics. The parlor, which provided the women with some respite from the household tasks, was far removed. On the second floor, access to the individual bedrooms was brought about by the stairhall, so that no room was used as a passageway to another.
In 1889, the property was sold by the Pond heirs to Henry August Taylor, a New York financier. He renamed it Lauralton Hall after his mother and deceased daughter, both of whom were called Laura. This name is symbolized in the many laurel wreath motifs that are etched into glass windows and impressed on plaster carved throughout the building. As the Roman symbol of victory, the laurel wreath also accorded with the Taylor family motto: “Consequitur quod quonque petit” or “He attains whatever he seeks.”

Mr. Taylor did extensive remodeling to Lauralton Hall at this time. The round tower was added and the classical veranda and porte cochere were built.

The interior was also greatly changed. The richly carved mahogany staircase centered in the sumptuous and dimly lit entry hall is an addition made by Mr. Taylor. The stairs supported on either side with two massive Corinthian columns move gracefully in spiraling forms toward the circular stained-glass skylight.

In 1905, Mr. Taylor sold the estate to the Sisters of Mercy of St. Bridget’s Convent for $35,000. When Mother Mary Augustine Claven purchased the property, the Taylor Family requested that the name “Lauralton Hall” be retained. Lauralton suited the nuns very well because “Laura” in Greek means “a corridor of rooms set aside for academic pursuits or contemplation.” However, the word “Fides” was added to the family motto so that the school’s motto became “Faith attains whatever it seeks.”

Opening in 1905, the first class at Lauralton Hall numbered 25; in 1906 the first graduating class consisted of 4 young women. Today, there are 450 girls enrolled in the school as day students, grades nine through twelve.