

# Calvert Life

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## Monthly

*True Value*

**LUSBY**  
MOTOR COMPANY  
JOHN DEERE



**Lusby Motor Company**  
Family Business, 86 Years in Same Prince Frederick Location.....See page 2

## Cover Story

# Lusby Motor Company, Since 1921

Frances Dunkle Poling, Co-Publisher



*The first two generations at Lusby Motor Company—Maurice Sr., and Maurice T. Jr. circa 1930. Products on display include cigars (far bottom left display case), and narrow automobile tires (far right).*

Since its early days in 1921, Lusby Motor Company has been owned and run by four generations of Lusby family men and women. Still operating with its original name and in its original location on Main Street in Prince Frederick, it is Calvert County's oldest family-owned business.

Today, Maurice Lusby III and his brother Charles, along with Maurice's son, Wes, can be found at the store six days a week, Monday-Saturday, 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M., with closing extended to 7:30 P.M. on Fridays.

Through the years, the Lusby family owners have had the foresight to change along with the economy and consumer needs. What began as a store for used car parts is today a modern hardware store specializing in John Deere equipment for consumers and commercial use as well as products for homeowners and contractors. Getting from there to here was not always a straight path.

"Our family ties to the western shores of the Chesapeake Bay can be traced back to the 1600s," said Maurice Lusby III. Ancestors have been

Calvert County storekeepers since at least the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when Maurice's great-grandfather, Thomas Frank Lusby (1862-1935), had a general store south of St. Leonard. Family lore has it that "the postal service asked Thomas if his store could be used by the postal system for mail drop off and the site was named the Lusby Post Office." History buffs might be interested in knowing that this location is just opposite where Sollers Wharf Road turns south off old Route 2/4 in Lusby.

Thomas' son, Maurice T. Lusby, Sr. (1885-1965) started out as a plumber. He built many of the early windmills that operated well pumps in Calvert County, and he laid the pipes that brought this water to homes. Burying pipe in the ground was difficult during winter time. "Grandfather would tell us how they'd pour kerosene on the ground and set it afire to soften the ground so they could dig trenches for the pipes."

Maurice said his grandfather would "take his boat down the Patuxent River from Sandy Point (near the present bridge to Benedict) to Solomons

to pick up the metal pipe that came in by steamship." Around 1920, fully loaded, he was heading back up the river when a storm sank his boat and all of the cargo. "That is when he decided there must be a better way to make a living."

In 1921, Grandfather Lusby opened Lusby Motor Company, a filling station on Main Street in Prince Frederick where he also sold used parts for Ford automobiles. His wife, Lillian, was also active in the business. Later in the 1920s, the business expanded to sell new and used cars and trucks—Dodges and Chevrolets.

Across Main Street was the Martin Brothers' Hardware Store which burned down around 1934 and was not rebuilt. Customers started coming into the Lusbys' store asking for hardware. Another opportunity had presented itself, and the business began to sell hardware and farm supplies.

Maurice Sr. and Lillian had three children—Maurice T., Jr. (1911-1980), Lucille, and Thomas. The great depression hit as all three were pursuing higher education. Maurice T., Jr., was in his third year of engineering school at the University of Maryland, Lucille was training to be a registered nurse, and Thomas was planning a medical career.

"Something had to give," said Maurice. "My father (Maurice T., Jr.) had to leave College Park and return home to help his parents run the family business." In 1937 he married a young nurse at



*The original store and gas station on Main Street in Prince Frederick. Note the early John Deere farm tractor on display. This building was torn down around 1970 to make room for the southern addition to the current brick building as a place for Stuchie Lusby to set up her department for household items and giftware.*

Calvert Hospital, Julia Belle Payne. Old-timers will remember her fondly as "Stuchie," as she was always called. She became another Lusby in the family business.

Around 1938, the business became an authorized dealership for John Deere tractors and agricultural equipment. This had been a smart move, for the advent of World War II cut mightily into the automobile business when no new cars were made,

*See Lusby Motor Company, cont. on page 4*



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The current generations—Maurice Lusby III and his son, Wes. Maurice's brother, Charlie, is the other partner.

gasoline was rationed, rubber went to the military, and folks had little money to spend on vehicles.

By war's end, the third generation at Lusby Motor Company had begun. Maurice III and then Charles were born. According to Maurice, "By 1959 my grandfather had retired from the business, my brother and I were only 9 and 15, and the demand for farm tractors was decreasing. So it was only my father running the business, and he decided to give up the John Deere agricultural dealership."

"Through the years we acquired the three homesites north of the original store—my grandparents home, the Methodist parsonage and Hattie Goldstein's old home. These properties have made it possible for Lusby Motor Company to expand."

"In 1962, my last year of high school, we built a new brick building adjacent to the original cinderblock building and then used that old one for storage. I remember helping to set up the displays in the new store. Later on, around 1970, when my mother wanted to specialize in a line of household appliances and giftware, we tore down the old building and constructed what is now the left side of the store. Today that is where we have our John Deere, Stihl, and Husqvarna products."

"Charlie and I joined our parents in the business in the late 1960s and it was the four of us until our father died in 1980 and our mother in 1983. After our mother died, we kept her 'giftware' products for several years, but decided in 1987 to become John Deere dealers again—this time for the consumer and commercial products rather than the agricultural equipment."



Above and at left: John Deere equipment for homeowners and commercial users is on display and in stock. Purchasers receive delivery, set-up, and operation instruction. Lusby Motor Co. also offers factory-authorized service and repairs.

"My son, Wes, joined the business permanently in 2000. So he is the fourth generation. Wes takes care of all of the mechanical 'stuff' and manages the service department. Charlie and I run the store."

"A number of years ago, we joined up with American Hardware to make use of their cooperative buying power. Today this association is called True Value Hardware Stores, and it lets us offer hardware and lawn and garden products at competitive prices."

"People come to us because they like it that the owners are always in the store and available to them. Customers also appreciate that we can deliver products to their homes or businesses and that we can service what we sell."

Maurice concluded, "I'm here six days a week. I love this job, I love being around the public. I've worked in the store since I was a young boy and never considered another career. If I didn't have this job, I'd have to find another one just like it!"

Lusby Motor Company—small town service and friendliness at reasonable prices—for 86 years, and still going strong.

**Lusby Motor Company,**  
155 Main Street, Prince Frederick, MD 20678  
410-535-0442; 301-855-1130; 410-535-0306 Fax  
email: [lusbymot@verizon.net](mailto:lusbymot@verizon.net)  
website: [LusbyMotor.com](http://LusbyMotor.com)