The recovery of in-situ clothing at Catoctin Furnace gives us the unique opportunity to study how workers interacted with clothing, and its various repurposing and parallels to clothing worn by known individuals allows us to experience the lives of those at the Furnace.

Clothing at Catoctin

During the excavation of the Forgemaster’s House at Catoctin Furnace, nearly a hundred pieces of historic clothing were discovered under a layer of whitewash in between the roof and walls of the attic. The clothing recovered from the walls ranges from the Civil War period to the early 20th century, and shows us what working men and women and their children wore at Catoctin. This collection provides us with a remarkable glimpse into the past, as worker’s clothing is rarely preserved in the historic record. We invite you to explore the ways in which workers lived and used their clothing at the Furnace through this exhibit, and consider its place at Catoctin before it was ultimately used for insulation within the walls.