



The Laurel Light

November 2012
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The Laurel Light
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The Laurel Historical Society, Inc.
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News and History from the Laurel Historical Society

The mission of the Laurel Historical Society, Incorporated is to encourage the understanding and preservation of the history and cultural heritage of Laurel.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Do you eat to live or live to eat? In a series of four programs jointly funded by the Maryland Humanities Council and Main Street Pharmacy, we came together to discuss Laurel's agrarian roots. We also learned about the importance of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), explored locally owned restaurants, and gathered for a community conversation about food.

So, what did we learn from our *Tasting Laurel* series? We learned that food will bring people together (we kind of already knew that). But we also learned just how much it will bring new people to our programs. We had approximately 250 people attend our programs focused on food.

We started with a behind the scenes tour of Gorman Farm. This tour not only brought us back to Howard County Laurel's agrarian roots, but also allowed us to explore the idea of community supported agriculture and organic farming. Additionally, we talked personally with a farmer who was passionate about both.

For our second program we hosted speaker

John Peter Thompson, from the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. The presentation was held at the Laurel Library, and helped us explore the science of farming throughout history, with a focus on the important work done at the BARC. Participants left with an understanding of just how important the BARC is to the world and just how close this gem is to Laurel.

For our third program, we held our *Fifth Annual Taste of Laurel*. We had 12 restaurants participating and approximately 175 people join us. The program was essentially the same as it has been in previous years and was a great opportunity for local business owners to connect and build relationships that will hopefully result in creating more "regular" customers. This year we charged an entrance "fee" of one canned good. A van full of canned goods was donated to Laurel Advocacy and Referral Services to be used by those in need in the area. It was a great program for all involved, and we expect to hold the *Taste of Laurel* again next year; our sixth year in a row!

In our final program we came together to discuss what we learned through the series. We also discussed what food we like to eat and how we make choices to patronize one restaurant over another, which restaurants

are no longer in Laurel (that we now miss), and our current favorite restaurants. It was here that we asked the question; “Do you eat to live or live to eat?” Feel free to respond to me directly at director@laurelhistoricalsociety.org or bring the conversation to our facebook page!

Lindsey Baker
Executive Director

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

It seems as though the year has just gotten underway yet year-end is right around the corner. In addition to serving as the Chairman of the Board, I am also the Society’s Treasurer. And at this time of year in my latter capacity, closing our fiscal year deficit that ends on March 31st is at the top of my agenda. Therefore, I would like to ask two things of you.

First, of course is for your participation in our Annual Appeal (letters will be mailed soon). Lindsey Baker and Monica Sturdivant have had another extraordinary year with the Society, with dozens of volunteers contributing their time and talent. Our current exhibit, “True Life: I am a Laurel Mill Worker,” will be closing soon and is a wonderful example of their work and that of our volunteers. If you have not seen it yet, you must. It is one of our very best exhibits to date and mounted with all “in house” talent. Please be generous to the Society this year. Costs are rising and so must our revenue. If you can, add to what you have given in the past; even 10 or 15 percent will be a big help.

Secondly, at this holiday time, please do something for a friend or neighbor – give them a one-year membership to the Society.

They will appreciate it and so will the Treasurer. It is astonishing to know how many longtime residents visit the museum for the first time.

Now I will put on my Chairman’s hat. Last month we radically changed the format of our quarterly Board meeting. We have done away with the reading of six or more reports. The reports are circulated in advance of the meeting, and only when one or more members believe there needs to be discussion on an item before a decision is made is a recommendation put to a vote. That saves time that can be devoted to discussion of our guiding principles; a very healthy exercise. All members are most welcome to attend any Board meeting.

Jim McCeney
Chairman of the Board

BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

LHS Board meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each January, April, July, and October. The next meeting is January 24, 2013. Members are welcome to attend. They are held in the Pool Meeting Room at 7:30 PM.

MUSEUM NEWS

Our latest exhibit, “True Life: I am a Laurel Mill Worker” and our accompanying exhibit “Field of Carnage & Personal Sorrows” continue until **December 23rd**. “Field of Carnage and Personal Sorrows” is a fabulous addition to the current exhibit, highlighting some very interesting information related to the Civil War and Laurel. Some of the most interesting artifacts and stories are highlighted here.

Personal Sorrows

In the early summer of 1862, Henrietta Stabler Snowden, wife of Lt. Nicholas Snowden, received word that her husband had been killed. From her home at Avondale in Laurel, she wrote to her mother, June, the following:



Letter courtesy Montpelier Mansion/MNCPPC, Helen Seymour Archival Collection Acc. #2003.001.01

7th Month, 6th day

My dear Mother

“I am calm, I try to be resigned, and I am truly thankful for all my many blessings...[I]t is a great comfort to us all to know that he died surrounded by his friends 6 of them bore him from the field and heard his last words which were “send all I have about me to my wife.”

“I mourn for him as I have done for a year past, but I am fully impressed with the fact that I have a great deal still in the world to be thankful for, ... when I reflect upon the many widows and orphans who are left destitute & entirely dependent upon strangers I know I ought not to murmur — tho it is a heavy, heavy, trial I used to think I never knew what trouble was until this war broke out.”

Field of Carnage

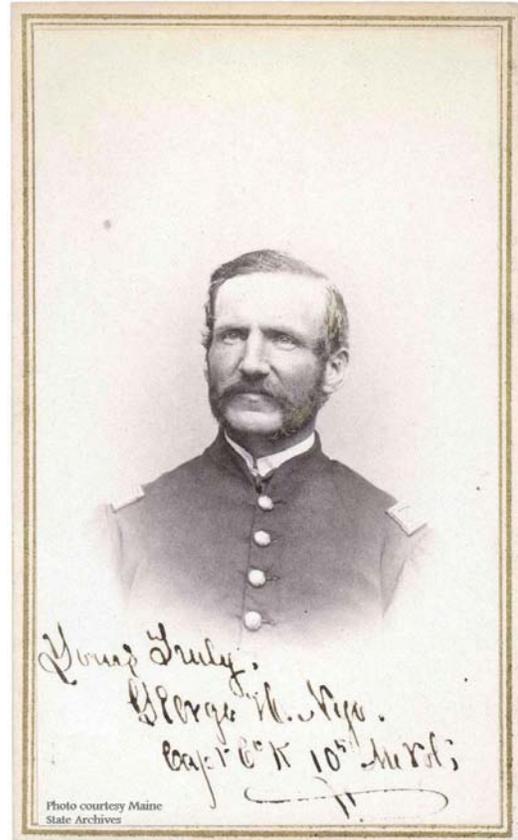


Photo courtesy of State of Maine Archives

George Nye fought in the Battle of Antietam 15 years before he came to Laurel as Mill Superintendent. September 17, 2012 marked the 150th Anniversary of the Battle. In honor of this milestone, The Laurel Museum is displaying a letter written by Nye right after the battle to his wife, Charlotte, plus his 1879 diary, which references the battle. Antietam was the bloodiest single day in American military history with more than 20,000 soldiers killed or wounded. Nye fought on the Union side in the battle of Antietam with the 10th Maine, which lost 20 men, and had 48 wounded. His experiences in the early morning hours of that battle were harrowing, and the memory remained with him throughout his life. An excerpt from his letter as follows reads:

“I heard a thug (the noise a bullet makes when it strikes a person) and looking over my right shoulder saw one of my boys James D. Eaton falling shot through the head. I looked more calmly on the field of carnage then I could a few years ago to have seen a sheep killed - The finer feelings of man are stunted at such times and I felt when I saw our boys taking in prisoners that there was a quicker way to dispose of them.”

Nye references other deaths in his letter, and talks about having “bad dreams” and wishing his dreams could be good dreams about his wife. He further writes:

“I think if I live to get home that my finer feelings will soon get back into their right channel again.”



Belt and bucklet worn at the Battle of Antietam and other Civil War Battles by George Nye. Photo by Karen Lubieniecki; items on loan from the collection of Nicholas Picerno.

Letter References Emancipation

President Abraham Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation September 22, 1862. George Nye clearly had heard of this important event. He writes:

“I don’t believe Davis will ever emancipate the slaves – if he should issue such a proclamation his life would not be worth much in my opinion.”

The Civil War and Map of Laurel

In addition to the George Nye materials, the Laurel Museum is exhibiting a Civil War display panel as a prelude to its larger Civil War exhibit opening in February 2013. The panel depicts the map of the town of Laurel in 1862 with Civil War sites, including encampments and Laurel’s Civil War Hospital. The exhibit panel also features quotes from Henrietta Stabler Snowden, and “Aunt Becky,” the woman who was the Matron (nurse in charge) at the Laurel Hospital, then located at 377 Main Street. Aunt Becky talks about the death of a soldier guarding the rails at Laurel. The panel, a snapshot of Laurel in 1862, reveals that even as battles were raging at Antietam and other places, the town was beginning to experience the war’s impact. The LHS has also installed an historic marker on the Civil War Hospital site at 377 Main Street. The Nye materials and panel will be on display through December 23rd.

NOTE: The exhibit “Field of Carnage and Personal Sorrows” was researched, designed, and curated by Society members Marlene Frazier and Karen Lubieniecki, with support from a grant from the Anacostia Heritage Trails Area.

Please visit the museum and shop on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM or Sundays from 1:00 – 4:00 PM. For more information on the exhibit or to schedule a group tour please visit www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org. Don’t miss these fabulous exhibits of life in Laurel!

We have tentatively titled our next exhibit “Stationed in Laurel: Our Civil War Story” to open in February 2013. If you have any artifacts, pictures or stories of the Civil War in Laurel you can share please call the Museum.

MUSEUM SHOP NEWS

LHS Holiday Open House

Looking for that unique gift for a friend or relative? Look no further; you can find it at the LHS Holiday Open House! Find lovely decorations to grace your home - especially the fresh pine wreaths decorated by Laurel's Snow Hill Garden Club, and buy the latest LHS annual ornament for your collection. This year we will be featuring locally made items such as toys, jewelry, and textiles for those special people on your list.

2012 LHS Ornament – Laurel Cotton Mill

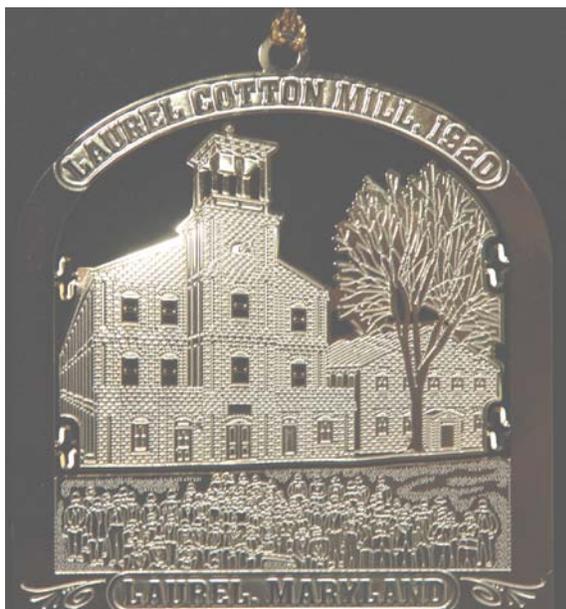


Photo by Frieda Weise

This representation of the Laurel Cotton Mill is based on a 1920 photograph. The Mill, which became a cotton mill in 1924, was the basis for the town of Laurel. It stood where the town swimming pool is now located and was demolished in about 1939. The new ornament is now for sale in the Museum Shop and via the Online Shop for \$18.00. Of course our entire

collection of ornaments from past years, including Laurel's Christmas Tree, will also be available.

Holiday Wreaths

Laurel's Snow Hill Garden Club is generously decorating and providing fresh pine wreaths again this year to benefit the Society. You may order in advance at a discount for \$30.00; or purchase when you visit the Open House for \$35.00. We will also have beautiful decorative Boxwood "Trees" and centerpieces, full of live, conditioned greens to use in your home for the holiday season.

Kids Stuff

Wooden toys are so much nicer than plastic! This year we are featuring hand-made wooden toys by a local wood artist. They include trains, cars, animals, and games. Additionally we have a wide variety of historical toys, games and books for the kids.



Photo by Frieda Weise

Local and hand-crafted items

New items made in Maryland feature Holiday and winter – themed kitchen textiles, jewelry made by local craftsman, hand-dipped candles, as well as handmade Christmas

ornaments and other items.

Laurel Collectibles

For family and friends near and far, don't forget we have Laurel collectibles. There are throws with Laurel scenes and buildings, t-shirts and polo shirts, key chains, tie tacks and pendants, tote bags, and books about Laurel and environs. Bookmarks and magnets are great stocking stuffers!

For those who want to shop from the comfort of home, you can find many of our shop items online. Check out the online shop at www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/shop. Please note that the last day to order on-line is December 9th for holiday delivery.

Please join us at the LHS Open House for fun, shopping and free refreshments:

Friday, November 30, 10:00 - 2:00

Saturday, December 1, 10:00 - 2:00

Sunday, December 2, 1:00 - 4:00

And don't forget...the museum shop is open on December 23rd for your last-minute shopping needs without the mall crowds!

UP KEEP ON "THIS OLD HOUSE HOUSE"

Our partnership with the City of Laurel means that the LHS is able to maintain

our historic structure with the help of many. However, we are always in need of volunteers to continue our work in and around the grounds of the Museum. The window sills, doors and outside stairwells are all in need of significant work. The landscaping can be challenging and we appreciate any help you can give with plantings and upkeep. Be assured that grant funding is sought regularly for this important upkeep and repairs, and that your donations are an additional source of income we depend on. Please contact Lindsey Baker at the Museum if you are able to help with our historic structure and grounds maintenance.



Children's Corner

Diven's Den has some new stations for kid's activities. The "den" is located on the lower level of the museum. Bring the kids for a tour and some fun!

We have completed the requirements for the Science in the Summer Camp through the American Association for the Advancement of Science and will sponsor a program again this year. Please keep this in mind for the kids and grandkids this summer!

LHS GENEALOGY GROUP

The LHS Genealogy Group assists members in conducting genealogy research. On **Monday, February 11th**, Angela Packer McGhie will be speaking on the topic "The LDS, Family Search and Genealogy." Ms. McGhie is a genealogical researcher, lecturer and instructor. She serves as the administrator of the Professional Genealogy or "ProGen" Study Program and is the past president of the local chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists. She is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and is an advocate for Family Search. Angela teaches at genealogy conferences and institutes and writes a blog on genealogy education at www.genealogyeducation.blogspot.com.

We would love to have lots of interested participants for this speaker so please put it on your calendar. For more information, contact Mike Boivin at mikeB98@aol.com.

MEMBER NEWS

Please welcome our newest members:

Michelle Freeman
Jacquelyn Stewart
Ruth Barton (inherited membership)

We are happy to have you!

Welcome New Volunteers

Please welcome are newest docents:

Lisa Everett
Rosalie Holder
Amy Junewick

We are so happy to have you! Thank you for volunteering!!

Volunteers Needed!

The museum is in need of volunteers for the second and third Sundays of each month from 1 – 4 PM. Duties include serving as a docent (greeting the public and giving tours) or handling shop sales in the gift shop. Training is provided! For more information, please contact Monica Sturdivant at the Museum. Thank you!

Volunteer Luncheons

Please consider joining other volunteers for our monthly luncheons at local restaurants. Dates and times are emailed to volunteers. Bon appétit!

“OLD LIZ” 1928 AMERICAN LAFRANCE PUMPER

Submitted by Joe Robison

In 1929, the Mayor and City Council, through a bond issue of \$10,000, purchased a 1,000 GPM American LaFrance pumper. This was the first pumper of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department No. 1, Inc. (LVFD), and it carried 80 gallons of water. The Engine was originally purchased for Baltimore City, but when it came in with the new pneumatic tires (air instead of hard rubber) Baltimore City refused to accept it. This pumper was purchased not only for fire department use but as a backup for the pumping station on Carroll Avenue. It was actually used in 1946 to pump water while the diesel engine at the pumping station was being overhauled.

The LVFD, aided by the municipal authorities celebrated the delivery of the new American LaFrance engine by holding a parade and ceremony at the Laurel Armory. The parade, led by the Fort Meade Band, left the Armory at 7:30 and was routed over some of the principle streets of the Town. The LVFD was led by Chief G. B. Timanus, and

Captain B. Ownes. The old hook and ladder, old reels, and the old Ford truck were in line ahead of the new 1000 gallon American LaFrance engine, which was now the pride of the LVFD. In the parade were also representatives of a number of county firemen's organizations, and Mr. Walter D. Lanahan's Fife and Drum Corps. Members of the local Boy Scout troop lent additional color to the parade. Upon arriving at the Armory, short speeches were made by Mayor James P. Curley, former Mayor George P. McCeney, Fire Chief Gustavus B. Timanus, Mr. William H. Anglin, Editor the Laurel Democrat, Mr. T. W. Venemann, Secretary of the Prince George's County Firemen's Association and Mr. I. J. Forsythe, Agent of the American LaFrance Company. Bouquets of roses were presented to Mayor Curley, Mr. John F. Curtin and Chief Timanus by the Ladies Auxiliary. Refreshments were served in the dining hall of the Armory.

Members of the LVFD dressed in blue shirts, black ties and blue pants for the parade. Ed Gorman was instructed to find a horse to pull the hook and ladder wagon. Volunteers to pull the reel included; Frank Stanton, A.S. Dodd, Francis Beall & Gilbert Sakers. Mr. Dodd offered his car to drive the Chief in the parade. Volunteers to ride the hook and ladder included; Andy Beall, Burke Beall, William Brown, Ed Gorman, Sam Wheeler and Lee Whitmore. Those who rode in the new truck included; Charles Reely, James Scaggs, Seymour Davis, George Baker, Captain Walter Brown and Assistant Captain Walter Robison.

Mini Exhibits in City Buildings

The history of Laurel is being displayed throughout the City and surrounding areas. Check out the mini exhibits in the Laurel Library, Greenview Pool Cabana, Gude

Lakehouse, Partnership Activity Center (Police Dept.), Armory, Municipal Center Laurel Pool Room and the Maryland City at Russett Library. Can you recommend other public places in Laurel for display? Please contact Lindsey Baker at the Museum.

BECOME A PART OF LAUREL HISTORY!

Purchase a personalized sidewalk brick and literally become a part of Laurel's history!! A Laurel Museum brick is the perfect way to celebrate your children, parents, grandparents or other family members. Businesses can also show their support and ensure that their involvement and support of the Laurel community will be remembered. You may purchase on line by visiting www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org or 301-725-7975.



Already have a brick? Purchase another and ensure that you and your loved ones continue to be on Laurel's historical path!

SHARE YOUR MEMORIES

We would love to have your story ideas particularly for the *Did You Know* and *My Memories of Laurel* sections of the newsletter! Please email The Laurel Light editor, Jeanie Anastasi at jmanastasi@verizon.net with your comments, suggestions or story ideas. Thank you!

Laurel Historical Society Major Donors and Sponsors

Starting at the \$250 Level

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Ms. Ann Wagner

Mr. Paul Keller and Ms. Frieda Weise

BECOME A MEMBER

Are you reading this newsletter but not a member? We'd love for you to join!

Membership enables the Society to:

- * Sustain the Laurel Museum
- * Research Laurel history
- * Preserve artifacts
- * House a research library
- * Host special children's events
- * Develop educational materials for schools and scout groups

Membership benefits include:

- * Quarterly Newsletter with articles about Laurel history, museum exhibits and programs
- * Member's only events
- * Member's only discount in the museum shop
- * Discounts on LHS events, including our annual gala
- * Contributing to the preservation of Laurel's past and present for future generations

Join today by visiting

www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org.



**Please consider the LHS in
your Planned Giving. It's easy.
For more information please
contact Lindsey Baker
(301)725-7075.**

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Laurel Historical Society Calendar

December 2012 – April 2013

For more information, visit: www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/pages/calendar.html

November 30 th 10 AM – 2 PM	December 24 th - January 2 nd Museum Office Closed	February 11 th 7:00 PM Laurel Municipal Pool Room <i>"The LDS, Family Search and Genealogy"</i> with speaker Angela Packer McGhie.
December 1 st 10 AM – 2 PM		
December 2 nd 1 PM – 4 PM LHS Holiday Open House	January 3 rd - February 9 th Museum Closed New Exhibit Installation	
December 23 rd 1 PM- 4PM Last Day to Visit Exhibits: "True Life: I am a Laurel Mill Worker" and "Field of Carnage & Personal Sorrows"	February 10 th 1:00 - 4:00 PM Exhibit Opening: "Stationed in Laurel: Our Civil War Story"	April 27 th Laurel Historical Society Gala Reserve the Date!!
		Stay tuned for updates!