



The Laurel Light

May 2013
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The Laurel Light
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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

I've said it over and over again, but I'll repeat my mantra; the Laurel Historical Society is able to do all that it does through the hard work of volunteers. At our annual meeting in the beginning of May, I was reminded of this once again. In my report I shared that in 2012 we were up in Museum attendance to almost 2,500 visitors. We had partnerships with more than 50 different organizations. We successfully found new funding sources through grants and private sources. We even recruited some really great new volunteers. All of this is a reminder to me of how small I am and how much of the work I do is enabled by the volunteers who serve in so many ways. Alas this makes what I am going to say next, well, predictable!

We're moving forward with a lot of exciting new programs as well as those that have been around for many years. And for that we need, you guessed it, volunteers! Our House Tour Committee is planning to meet soon to start working on the specifics for the house tour in December. The past two tours have been chaired by Bobbi McCeney who introduced some really thoughtful changes and built on the work of previous chairs. I'm hoping the new chair continues with my personal favorite that of collecting business card ads for the House Tour

booklet. At \$20 per ad these were a "can't be missed" opportunity and significantly increased the income of the tour. If you're interested in learning more about Laurel's history through its buildings this could be the committee for you. Consider joining us as we get ready for the 2013 tour! Also, if you're intrigued by the idea of having your house or business on the tour, get in touch. We're always looking for a good find in Laurel!

As we head into summer, the Membership Committee is looking for members. This committee evaluates the benefits of membership, plans Member's Only events, and brainstorms ideas for way to increase our service to the community. We have a new Chair, Mike Boivin, who has done a lot of work with our Genealogy Group. Mike has some great ideas for ways to improve the membership experience and I am personally looking forward to making his vision a reality.

And last, but not least is the Museum Shop. After over five years as the Shop Manager, Frieda Weise is taking a step back from that role. Under Frieda's tenure we've focused on getting more Laurel related items as well as exhibit related items into the shop. We've had our best selling ornament--the Laurel Christmas Tree and added items crafted by local artisans. As we move forward we're

hoping to continue with all of this! If you are interested in becoming more involved with the shop, now is the time! We are looking for people to fill specific roles all of which seem quite manageable and many of which will allow your creativity to flourish!

So whether you're already very involved with the LHS or interested in dipping your toe in the water, we're happy to have you. Please email me directly to hear more about the many volunteer opportunities. My email address is director@laurelhistoricalsociety.org. And again, thank you to our many volunteers who do such great work and allow us to continue doing the work that we do!

Lindsey Baker

BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

LHS Board meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each January, April, July, and October. The next meeting is July 25, 2013. Members are welcome to attend. They are held in the Pool Meeting Room at 7:30 PM.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As you know, the Society's primary mission is to preserve the history and culture of our fair city. We use the gala as our major fundraiser of the year which means that its success is essential in the journey to educate the community, both big and small, on what makes Laurel such a great place to live, work and play.

I am proud to report that "*Stationed in Laurel: A Gala Evening*" was another successful event! Although we had fewer attendees than usual, we still enjoyed

getting together with family and friends to dine, dance and bid the night away. Our guest list including many distinguished guests as well as some old friends from near and far. Guests entered the Carriage Room to see a wonderful vignette of Lincoln on the back of his Inaugural Train passing through Laurel. This really happened! The cut-outs of the soldiers completed the scene.

I would again like to thank the Gala Committee. These women have worked every Tuesday night from September until April, made zillions of calls and trillions of miniscule decisions. As co-chairperson of the Gala Committee, a public thank you to these ladies (and especially to Holly Lilienthal, my co-chair this year) just doesn't ever seem enough. So many thanks and dinner on me to: Holly Lilienthal, Eileen Collins, Margie McCeney, Mariam Thakkar, Sara Fox, Kathy Crawford, Regina Mima, Lisa Losito and Bobbi McCeney. The evening would not have happened without you! This year we also had a little help from our friends; an extra thank you to the Development Committee and Lindsay and Monica at the Museum. Your assistance was priceless.

Thank you again to all of the sponsors, donors, attendees and volunteers; it was my honor to co-chair this event this year. If you are interested in serving on the Gala Committee or have any questions or comments, please email the Museum. And as I said the night of the gala, "I'd like to remind you over and over again to support the businesses that support us."

Jhanna Levin

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Volunteer Francis Brooks; Photo by Margie McCeney

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***PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR
SUPPORTERS!***



Lincoln on his Inaugural ride; Photo by Margie McCeney



Troops skirmish in the field; Photo by Amy Junewick

CIVIL WAR RE-ENACTMENT HERE IN LAUREL!

Submitted by Karen Lubieniecki

For the first time in almost 150 years Civil War soldiers re-occupied their former campsite in Laurel on April 13, 2013. The 2nd MD Infantry and 28th Massachusetts, 3rd USV re-enactors set up camp. Hundreds of visitors had the opportunity to learn about camp life, women's Civil War era clothing, food, dress, jewelry, drills and other aspects of Union and Confederate soldiers' lives. The afternoon's highlight was a "skirmish" in the woods between the Union and Confederate Troops that demonstrated the difficulties of fighting with Civil War era front-loading weapons in foliage-filled terrain. Held on the grounds of American Legion Post 60 at 2 Main Street in Laurel, Maryland, the living history day was on land that was part of the actual encampment of Union troops stationed in Laurel from 1861-1865. The day was such a success that the re-enactors, who included Laurel High School History teacher Dale Brennan(Union), and Michael Kreger (Confederate), the American Legion and the Laurel Historical Society are seriously looking at holding another event next year.



Daniel Wilson & George Kreger; Photo by Karen Lubieniecki

MUSEUM NEWS NEW ACQUISITION FOR THE LHS

The Laurel Library will be closing to allow for new construction this year. They will no longer house the bound copies or the microfilm of the past Laurel Leader newspaper in the new building. They have offered this valuable resource to the Laurel Historical Society and we are very happy to receive it. Work is under way to arrange suitable storage in the museum and arrange for transport of the books.

Stationed in Laurel



Our Civil War Story

Lyman C. Gibbs – Research on a Young Soldier Uncovers a Tragic Lie

Submitted by Karen Lubieniecki

Somewhere in an unknown Laurel cemetery lies a young Union soldier, Lyman C. Gibbs. According to **Historical Sketches Relating to Spencer, Mass. (1901) Vol. 3**, Lyman C. Gibbs, age 18, joined Co. C. 21st MA volunteers on July 21, 1861. Gibbs was newly arrived in Spencer from New Salem, and was working there for a local farmer. September 6, 1861, two months after he enlisted, Gibbs was guarding the rail line in Laurel.

Sentinels were posited on beats along the railroad with an extra one on a bridge over the Patuxent River. Gibbs, who was on duty at the bridge, was run over and killed by the cars. ...men and lanterns went to the bridge, [and] found the mangled body of Gibbs on the track.... Leave was obtained to bury his body in the little cemetery at the village of Laurel and a grave was dug there for him. ...Lieut. Harlow read the burial service and his comrades in arms fired a last parting salute over poor Gibbs. Sadder funeral was never attended in

peace. (Sketches Relating to Spencer, Mass. Vol. 3 #111)

Who was this young man? Searching census records we discovered there was a Lyman C. Gibbs living near New Salem, MA in 1850 with his parents Charles and Sarah and four sisters. Lyman was listed as five years old. Ten years later, in June 1860, a Lyman C. Gibbs, was living only eight miles from Spencer. His profession was listed as shoemaker (Spencer was home to a major shoe manufacturer). He was fifteen.

How old was Lyman Gibbs? Based on our census findings, it is clear that the young man who joined the army on July 21 was not 18, but **just 16 years old**. Did the romance of war entice a young man bored with shoemaking or farm work to lie about his age and join the army? We don't know. His roots in Spencer were shallow, and it might have been easy to lie about his age. The **Sketches** notes he "was a capital story teller." Did he immediately regret his action? Did his parents find out? **The Sketches** states: "He wished in a few days he had not entered into the contract but when he failed to present himself for duty an officer was sent for him and without hesitation he gathered up his small personal estate and went with him." Two months later, more than 370 miles from home, he was dead.

Stationed in Laurel: *Our Civil War Story* runs through December 2013. The Laurel Museum is open Wednesdays and Fridays 10 AM - 2 PM, and Sundays 1 - 4 PM and is free. Visits by school groups and tours over 10 people can be scheduled on other days by appointment. The John Brennan Research Library is open Mondays by appointment. For more information visit www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org.

MEMBER NEWS

Please welcome our newest members:

Kristina Gilbertson

Cathy Rosenberger

Barbara Strang

Frank & Dawn Turney

We are happy to have you!

Membership Committee

As the new Chair of the Membership Committee I would be interested in hearing your ideas as to how we can make membership in LHS interesting. We strive to involve our members more and to be responsive to your interests and needs. I can be reached at mikeb98159@aol.com or on the phone at 301-385-6090. Looking forward to your input. Mike Boivin



Children's Corner

Students entering 2nd through 6th grade are invited to register for a **free** program, Science in the Summer, at the Laurel Historical Society on August 5-9. Now in it's second year, this summer's program explores magnetism, static electricity, electrical currents and circuits. Students will make a compass, an electromagnet and use an electrostatic generator. The curriculum promises a "hair-raising" experience. The program is taught by certified teachers to groups of 15 students in two age groups: children entering 2nd and 3rd grades (Level I) and children entering 4th through 6th grades (Level II). Science in the Summer is sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) in partnership with the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Volunteers needed to help!

Welcome New Volunteers

No one this time...how about you!

Volunteers Needed!

The museum is in need of volunteers for second, third and fourth Sundays from 1 – 4 PM. Two volunteers are scheduled for each shift. 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 assist@laurelhistoricalsociety.org or 301-725-7975. 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!

MUSEUM SHOP NEWS

Submitted by Frieda Weise

If you visit the shop, you may notice we have upgraded to a new charge system called Square. We hope for more efficient and predictable processing of your charge purchases. Please visit our Museum shop in person during Museum hours or on line at www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/shop.

MY MEMORIES OF LAUREL

Submitted by Joe Robison

The Katherine Shop was an ice cream shop located at 207 4th Street. It was owned by Katherine and Rodger Donaldson. I took Joanne Donovan on our first date there on October 2, 1948. It was her 16th Birthday. I had earned my money by working picking apples up in Howard County at Mr. Moore's Orchard. I took her to the Laurel Movies and after the movie we stopped by the Katherine Shop and had a snack. I also

purchased her a doll in a paper box. We were married six year later in St. Mary's Church, Friday May 13, 1955.

The Katherine Shop was the place to go to in the 1940's and 50's to just hang out. We knew everyone and especially the soda jerk. I would stop by on the way back to the Post Office and get a cold slush and it was really good but it gave you a head ache if you drank it too fast. Rodger was in a wheel chair and could not move around very well. He later was given cortisone shots and it helped him so much he could walk. They moved to Southeast Virginia and Bobby Joe DiPietro (former Mayor) and Bobby Danton would go down and swim or the James River with their boy. This was not the only place to go but it was the best place. The shop was later run by the Turtle family and both boys work at the post office. Today an insurance agency is in the space. The original owner of the insurance agency was Harry Lines. It now belongs to his son, Ken Lines.

LET'S TAKE A WALK PART I **Childhood Memories of Main Street in the 1930s**

Submitted by Elizabeth Lee Miles Compton

Let us start our walk at our home 123 Second Street. The big white framed house, faced east toward Anne Arundel County. Second Street was a short, quiet, tree-lined lane from Laurel Avenue to Main Street, running north and south. Across the street was a grassy field. A three-sided hay barn was located on the south side. In the late summer, we climbed between the bales with flashlights calling to one another in the cloudy straw-filled atmosphere. We were all scolded for this dangerous activity when we arrived home late for dinner. The remainder of the lot was an open field, which the owner, J.R. Jones moved so we

could play ball. The rest of the space included a tiny stream where pollywogs and little fish skittered and wildflowers grew. It was an exciting area to play.

Our front porch was a gathering place after dinner on summer evenings. Our grandfather Welsh sent my uncle through the alley to the Maryland Drug Store for a round scoop of ice cream dipped in chocolate. Pap, as we called him (our father was "Daddy"), had my brother and me sit with him during thunderstorms to hear the rumbling thunder, watch streaks of lightning and rain drenching and cooling the air. My grandmother, otherwise a brave woman, feared storms. Papa did not want us to be afraid of them. After the rain, we would run barefoot in the wet grass and dance in the little puddles absorbing the freshness of the moment.

South meant Washington. Our neighbors to the south were the Fishers who had a green lawn between our house and theirs where flowering shrubs and a large butterfly bush grew. I remember the many colorful butterflies hovering over and around it and lighting for a sip. The plant was aptly named.

*Southward were two large Victorian homes where the Whitakers and Israels lived. Up the hill was what we called the Newman farm because they had animals, a big garden and a well. Once after a storm there was a problem with the city water supply. Everyone in the area drew water from the Newman well for days. On the other side of the street was another large home with a mansard roof. Beyond this was a piney woods. The house on the east side of the street was the Chaney home on the corner of Second and Little Montgomery Street. This street led to the Jones Feed Store on First Street...**to be continued!***

Laurel Historical Society

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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)725-7975.

Laurel Historical Society
817 Main Street
Laurel, Maryland 20707
301.725.7975
info@laurelhistoricalsociety.org
www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org

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Laurel Historical Society Calendar

June 2013 – September 2013

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

June 7th 6:30 PM
Fine Wine Fridays at Snow Hill
Manor

June 13th 6:30 PM
LHS Friends and Family Picnic
on the Museum Grounds
Pot Luck – Bring a dish to
share!

July 5th 6:30 PM
Fine Wine Fridays at Snow Hill
Manor

August 2nd 6:30 PM
Fine Wine Fridays at Snow Hill
Manor

August 5th – 9th
Science in the Summer at the
Laurel Pool Room
Laurel Museum also open from
9:30 til 12 PM

September 6th 6:30 PM
Fine Wine Fridays at Snow Hill
Manor