

Historic Franconia Legacies

Volume 1, Issue 1

Fall 2002

Franconia Museum, Inc.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE FRANCONIA MUSEUM

Last summer a small group of Franconia citizens, concerned that the fabric of their community was in danger of being swallowed up by the growth of Springfield and Kingstowne, began planning for a Franconia Museum.

Since then we have incorporated and have sponsored four popular "story swaps", one at the Helen Wilson Room in the Lee District Government Center, others at the Fire Station, the Laurel Grove Baptist Church and at All Saints Episcopal Church. Each session featured a panel of knowledgeable local residents as well as enthusi-

astic audience participation.

On June 15th, the first tour of Civil War and Historic Landmarks in the Franconia area was led by Board members Don Hakerson and Gregg Dudding. Morning and afternoon tours were filled to capacity, and some latecomers were disappointed by their failure to have made advance reservations.

We are planning ahead for October, which will launch "The Spirit of Franconia" Month, with events each weekend. Ideas and volunteers are welcome.

Edith Sprouse



The Founding Board Members of the Franconia Museum

EVERGREEN—THE OTHER LEE HOUSE

Once located on Franconia Road on the Burgundy plantation, this mid-nineteenth century house, distinguished by its Italian Villa style design, was moved from the original site in 1969 by Rufus B. Cooley (then principal of the Bucknell Elementary School) before a housing development was built on the land. Evergreen's chief claim to fame is its association with General Fitzhugh Lee, a former Governor of Virginia.

While he was running for Governor of Virginia, Lee rented Evergreen. His wife Ellen was a daughter of George D. Fowle who had owned the Burgundy tract for many years.

Fitzhugh Lee was the son of Sidney Smith Lee and the nephew of two Confederate Generals, Robert E. Lee and Samuel Cooper. Lee has the distinction of being the only governor of Virginia who was a native of Fairfax County. Lee was born at Clermont, his mother's family plantation, on Nov. 19, 1835. Before the advent of the Capital Beltway, the

present Clermont Drive ran north from Franconia Road past the site of his birthplace. Lee graduated from West Point in 1856. As his obituary later reported, "from early manhood his life was one of constant activity."

Lee fought Indians on the western plains and later returned to West Point to become an instructor. At the outbreak of the Civil war he resigned his commission and joined the Confederacy to become Chief of Cavalry in the Army of Northern Virginia.

After the war, with no resources at his command, he returned to his Richland tract in Stafford County and farmed, "with his old war horse hitched to the plow."

On April 19, 1871 the Alexandria Gazette reported that, "Gen. Fitz Lee was married in this city this evening, to Miss Nellie, daughter of the late George D. Fowle. Several ex-Confederate Generals were in attendance at the ceremony." In an account of a New Years Eve ball in Alexandria, the newspaper stated on

Jan. 5, 1875: "Among the ladies present were Mrs. Lee, the beautiful and accomplished wife of General Fitz Lee, who was very elegantly attired in orange silk founced with black lace."

The issue of May 20th stated, "At Richland, the residence of Gen. Fitz Lee, we were most forcibly struck with the air of general improvements and prosperity. This genial gentleman has gone to work in earnest since the war, by his example and advice, to restore Virginia again to her former position among the states."

In June of that year he was the speaker at the Bunker Hill Centennial celebration. At ceremonies on July 4, 1876 he was described, at age forty, as a man 5'6" tall, with brown hair and a red beard. The Lees had five children who survived infancy - Virginia, Ellen, Annie, and their brothers George and Fitzhugh. While the family was living at Evergreen, an infant died at that place.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Several years ago, Dana Kauffman, Supervisor for Lee District, appointed me to the Fairfax County History Commission. At that time, I was the only member from Lee District.

Later he appointed Bob Heitman, as another member from Lee District. When I was gathering information for the history markers at Franconia and Rose Hill, I started collecting pictures, stories, etc. in the Franconia area. I asked Dana if we could put some of the pictures up in the Helen Wilson Community Room at the Franconia Governmental Center. The next thing I know Bob and I began chairing a group called the Franconia Museum Establishment Committee.

We began meeting last summer (2001) with a small group of dedicated and hard working Franconians. The Franconia Museum incorporated in March 2002. Bob and I flipped a coin for the Presidency. I won the toss and had the choice. However, I did have a split second in which I almost gave the honor over to Bob, but he already does so much for the Community as our Transportation Commissioner. Dana has been our biggest supporter. Beginning a Museum in Franconia was one of his goals; Bob and I are just the tools. His staff, especially Christine Toilefson, has played a big part in making the Franconia Museum a reality.

I can only praise the members of the Board, who were also members of the establishment committee, in their willingness to take on the challenges of beginning a new non-profit organization. I can truly say everyone on this Board puts their weight and more.

We have already done four Story Swaps, two Civil war tours of the Franconia area, and are in the process of planning for "Spirit of Franconia" Month and a fifth story swap in October. Our mission is to preserve the past, present, and future of the Franconia area in pictures, artifacts, and stories. We will reach out by educating, enriching, and bringing together the greater community. We hope you will become a friend of the Museum and volunteer to help us fulfill our goals to protect the history and promote the heritage of the Franconia area.

Sue Patterson

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FIRST FOUNDING FRIEND

LYNNWOOD SHIELDS FITZGERALD, SR.

DECEMBER 26, 1923- MAY 29, 2002

Both Franconia and the Franconia Museum have lost a wonderful friend. Through his country grocery store business and real estate, he knew everyone and he loved everyone. He loved the town of Franconia. Lynn was very pleased that the history of his beloved town is being preserved. He became the first benefactor of the Franconia Museum, Inc. — the first Founding Friend. The penny candy case with artifacts from Fitzgerald Grocery is displayed in the Helen Wilson Room of the Franconia Governmental Center.

Born in Cornwall, Virginia, Lynn and his family moved to Alexandria in the 1920's, then to Franconia in 1933. Lynn started first grade at Franconia Elementary School and was in the 1942 graduating class from Mount Vernon High School. He was drafted into the U.S. Army and became a Master Sergeant in the (Continued on page 7)

The Way We Were on June 29 in History

Only in Virginia

BICENTENNIAL- Today, just 200 years ago, mint juleps were introduced into the Colony of Virginia, and where Virginians are found on the habitable globe there will be the bicentennial of this great historic event be celebrated, if ice, mint and spirits can be had for love or money.

RICHMOND WHIG- This centennial was in doubt here, and for fear it would pass unobserved; the lovers of the beverage have been celebrating it ever since the spring opened.

ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE, June 29- they celebrated the bicentennial of the introduction of mint juleps down in Fredericksburg The Herald comes to us printed upside down. Edith Sprouse

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

Sue Patterson, President. With a B.A. in History and Sociology from Delta State University, and a Masters in Public Administration from Golden Gate University, Sue is a Senior Systems Engineer and has worked for the federal government for 27 years including four years in the U.S. Air Force. Acting as President of her Homeowners Association and as a member of the Fairfax County History Commission and the Lee District Land Use and Transportation Committee, she has managed to sandwich in innumerable hours towards the formation of the new Museum.

EVERGREEN (Continued from page 1)

General Lee was elected Governor of Virginia in 1865. When he retired from the regular army it was with a rank of Brigadier-General. He subsequently served as Consul-General in Havana and Military Governor in Cuba. In the opening years of the 20th century planning began for the forthcoming 300th anniversary of the founding of Virginia.

Fitzhugh Lee took an active part by 1904 in prelimi-



Evergreen Circa 1970 (photo by E. David)

naries for the Jamestown Exhibition, traveling extensively to promote legislation among the several states on its behalf. He was on a train from Boston to Washington in April, 1905 when he was stricken with apoplexy.

Fitzhugh Lee died the next day in Providence Hospital, Washington, at 11:20 p.m. on April 28th. His wife and daughters came from Fort Oglethorpe, GA. One son, Lt. George Mason Lee, was stationed in San Francisco; Lt. Fitz Lee, Jr. was in the Philippines. This "peculiarly genial and lovable man," reported the *Fairfax Herald*, was buried in Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond.

The Virginia Historical Society, of which he was a member, eulogized him by saying that, "in every relation of life, public and private, he was worthy of the noble stock from which he came but to his comrades he was known simply as "dear old Fitz."

by Edith Sprouse

Good Books about Local History



Read about the men and women, North and South, who lived in the Tidewater, Goochland, Colchester, Shenandoah and Franconia areas during the Civil War era. By Don Robinson.

This Forgotten Land: A Tour of Civil War Sites and Other Historical Landmarks South of Alexandria, Virginia

Just Published! Get your copy today by calling 703-671-4884.

NEWS OF THE DAY: FRANCONIA

We learn that a move is out to secure a post office at Springfield on the Southern, near this place. Several of our best families have a petition to build a schoolhouse at Springfield.

The baseball club of Burke met the Franconia boys in a challenge game at this place on Saturday. In spite of the hope that they could "deliver the goods," the Burke boys went home sick. Come again, Burke, and bring your pretty girls along. Their charming personality did us good.

Mr. John J. Graham, accompanied by Dr. Moore and wife of Alexandria, Va., and Misses Elizabeth Graham and Mollie Broders are spending two weeks at Atlantic City.

Mrs. W.R. Broders expects to start in a few days to Wytheville, Va., where she will be the guest of Mrs. Geo. Foltz.

Mrs. Temple, who has spent several months with her daughter, Mrs. Will Broders, of this place, during this year, will return next week to her home in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Grace Cassell has returned to Washington, after a two-weeks stay with her friends near here.

Mrs. Minnie Harnden has returned from near Warrenton, Va., where she attended the New School Baptist Sunday School Convention, which convened with Zion Church in Fauquier County.

Miss Helen Duvall, of Springman, is visiting friends here.

The Misses Ruth and Dora Strows, near Falls Church, spent last week visiting the family of John Broders, of this place.

Mrs. Everett Triplett will give an ice cream festival on Tuesday of this week for the benefit of Olivet Episcopal Church at this place. The festival will be conducted by a large number of our best people, and we hope to have a large attendance in the grove at Olivet on Tuesday night.

The members of Oulah Baptist Church extended a call to Rev. Kelly Hobbs, and hope to have him installed as pastor at the next meeting, which will be on the 3rd Sunday in September.

The crops in this section are unusually good, except the fruit crop, which is scarce and of an inferior quality. Melons are getting ripe.

Tournaments are starting up, and for the next month times around here will be on a happy boom for the younger folks.

Should these jobs meet with your approval for publication you may hear from us again.

SCOTTIE

Transcribed by Edith Sprouse from the *Fairfax Herald*, August 23, 1907.

LIKE WHAT YOU SEE? Become a Friend of the Franconia Museum to continue to receive our quarterly newsletter, *Historic Franconia Legacy*.

FAMOUS FRANCONIAN: WILLIAM "BROTHER" SCHURTZ

A "quintessential Franconian", William E. "Brother" Schurtz died on April 10, 2002 at his beloved farm in Shenandoah County, Virginia, near Mount Jackson. "Brother" born on July 31, 1929, in Alexandria, spent his entire life as a resident of Franconia.

He was the son of Charlotte "Lottie" Lyles Schurtz and William McKinley Schurtz. Since his mother died after his birth, his Uncle and Aunt, Joseph and Emma Schurtz of Franconia on Beulah Street raised him. He married Ruby McClary in 1949. At the Franconia Museum Story Swaps in 2001, he entertained local residents with his stories of life in Franconia in the 30's, 40's and 50's. He never forgot a name or a date.

For 41 years, he was involved as a volunteer or a firefighter with both the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue and Franconia Fire Department. He started as a volunteer in 1947. His "life membership" in the Franconia Volunteer Fire Department included serving as a chief in 1958-1959 and again in 1985. From 1989-1997, he served as president of the organization. As a member of Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, he began as a firefighter in 1961. Throughout his 27 years career, he rose through the ranks and retired as a Battalion Chief in 1987. He was in the U.S. Army from 1952 to 1954 and served in Korea.

Brother Schurtz has left a legacy of hard work and devotion to this community and his family that will be hard to live up to by the rest of us.

Sue Peterson

BENEATH THE LAURELS OF FRANCONIA

Prior to the Civil War, one former slave and two descendants of slaves settled in the Franconia area, laying the foundations for a small but thriving African-American Community in the late Nineteenth Century and first part of the Twentieth Century. Although Thornton Gray, George Carroll, and William Jasper did not establish roots in the Franconia area until the 1850's, their ancestors had lived in slavery in the immediate vicinity since at least the late 1700's. Their ancestors, slaves of such august personalities as George Washington of Mt. Vernon and Lund Washington of Hayfield Farms, surely observed the unfolding events of our Nation's founding. In Franconia, the three free black Americans brought land, raised their children, and built a church and a school together - establishing a community. The achievements of this community can still be seen today in the quaint Laurel Grove Baptist Church and School (a Museum now) along Beulah Street.

Thornton Gray, one of the original Trustees of Laurel Grove Baptist Church, was the son of Tomison (Pomison) Jasper Gray, a slave of George Washington. President Washington emancipated her, probably at his death. Tomison was the daughter of Dick and Charity Jasper, also

Washington's slaves at Dogue Run Farm. The connection between this Jasper family and William Jasper, another original Trustee of Laurel Grove, is unknown.

Thornton was born in approximately 1813. He was registered as a free black in 1831, 1834, 1837, and 1852 in Fairfax County. He was described as a dark mulatto, about 6'2" with a scar over the left eye and one under the lip, a scar on the thumb of the right hand, a scar on the left thumb and a large scar on the right wrist. He probably had two wives: Selma or Malinda (dead by 1860) and Mary whom he married by 1866. He had at least nine children. In August 1852, he brought five acres of land from Thompson Javins off Beulah Street (formerly known as Windsor Road). This land had originally belonged to



Laurel Grove Church Today (photo by Bob Heitman)

Dennis Johnston of West Grove.

A Thornton Gray, described as a servant of George Washington, who was 110 years old, a descendant of African royalty and born in Westmoreland County, was extolled in a poem entitled "Thornton Gray" which was quoted in W. H. Snowden's *Some Old Historic Landmarks of Virginia and Maryland* published in 1894. This poem had also been mentioned in the *ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE* in 1876. The Thornton Gray mentioned in the poem is probably an ancestor of Tomison's Thornton Gray since the age precludes them being the same man.

In 1884, Thornton was listed as a Trustee of the Laurel Grove Church. His children married other members of the Church.

The small "Black Settlement" known as Carrolltown located in today's Kingstowne and Manchester Lakes area was named after George Carroll, another original trustee of Laurel Grove Baptist Church. His mother, Jane Carroll was a former slave of Dennis Johnston of West Grove. She and her children received 10 acres of land by 1856 from Johnston's estate. This land was located at the corner of Old Telegraph Road and Hayfield Road.

Eventually George's brother John lived on the original 10 acres and George brought an adjacent 121 acres in 1899 and 1903 from Dennis Johnston's heirs. In 1904, he sold approximately 50 acres to his

(Continued on page 5)

FRANCONIA HISTORY DAY

Saturday, October 19, 2002

Time: 10 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Take a historical bus tour of the Franconia area starting at Franconia Elementary School. The three hour tour begins at 10:30 A.M. Cost for Friends of the Franconia Museum is \$20. \$25 for adults and \$12 for children under 12. Tour participants receive a map of Historic Franconia (\$5 value). Reserve your seat in advance by sending payment to the Franconia Museum Inc. Bring lounge chairs or blankets to listen to music. Bring an artifact or photo related to Historic Franconia to share at the Community Show and Tell.

Other Activities include:

- Showmobile Stage with local music groups, (Folk, Gospel, Big Band.)
- Civil War Re-enactors
- Old Time Games for Children
- Speakers and Exhibits on Historic Franconia
- Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Bar-B-Que, Drinks, and T-Shirts
- Exhibits and Speakers on Franconia History

Co-Sponsors:

Fairfax County History
Commission
Laurel Grove School Assn.
Franconia Fire Dept.
Franconia Police Dept.
Item, Inc.
Jefferson Funeral Chapel
Springfield Courtyard
Marriott
American Bar B Que &
Catering Inc.

Location of activities:
Franconia Elementary School
6043 Franconia Rd
Alexandria, Va. 22310
Donations accepted

Parking will be at the Fire Station across the street
or parking lot next to fire station or in front of school.

Franconia Museum, Inc.

7011 A Manchester Blvd
Box #176
Alexandria, Va. 22310
Phone: 703-922-4674
Email: Franconiamuseum@yahoo.com
501 (c) 3 status pending



Franconia Museum, Inc.
franconiamuseum@yahoo.com

Date: October 5, 2002
Time: 10 A.M.

FIFTH STORY SWAP

OLIVET EPISCOPAL CHURCH
6107 FRANCONIA ROAD
ALEXANDRIA, VA. 22310
OCTOBER 5, 2002
10 A.M. TO 12 P. M.

The little white Olivet Chapel is the last remaining landmark of early Franconia and has been a meeting place for Franconia Episcopians for the past 100 years. Olivet was founded in 1853. The first location of the chapel was in the Bush Hill area. It moved to its present location in the 1890's.

Highlights on the history of the area:

- Olivet Episcopal Church
- Oak Grove
- Bigham Family
- Gunnell Family

Corner of Beulah St. and Franconia Road

Call Sue Patterson: 703-922-4674



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3011 A Manchester Blvd
Box #136
Alexandria, Va. 22310
Phone: 703-922-4674
Email:
franconiamuseum@yahoo.com
501 (c) 3 pending

BENEATH THE LAURELS OF FRANCONIA

(Continued from page 4)

brother John Carroll, Edgar Harris, Ella Carter, Belle Horad, Washington Horad, Senia Kelly, Elizabeth Baker, and Marshall Carroll, all family members.

George Washington Carroll, born February 22, 1855 or 56, was the son of Enoch and Jane Carroll. He married Harriett Harris, born in 1860, daughter of Edward and Maria Harris, at Shiloh Baptist Church on December 19, 1878. They had two sons, Luther and William. Harriett died in 1904. He married his second wife, Jane, by 1912. She was still living when George died in December 1917, in Franconia.

George ran a hog farm and a small general store on present day Kingstowne Village Parkway until his death. His store and family was the center of Carrolltown. George furnished the logs for Laurel Grove School and Church. His sons sold the land and the store after his death.

The Fairfax County History Commission has approved a history marker for Carrolltown. It will be erected in the Kingstowne area to commemorate this small African-American Community in the historic Franconia area.

In the early 1880's African-American families in Franconia had no place to worship except in their homes or had to travel 10 miles to the city of Alexandria. William Jasper became tired of walking to Alfred Street Baptist Church and also, he did not want his family to walk to school or church. In 1881, he and his second wife Georgianna gave 1/4 acre to the school trustees of the Mt. Vernon District, Fairfax County for a school-

house. In 1884, the Jaspers deeded another 1/4 acre for the building of the Laurel Grove Baptist Church.

William Jasper, born between 1797 and 1811, was the son of Eliza and Morris Jasper. He and his first wife, Sarah, born about 1823, were emancipated in Nov. 1848, by the will of William Hayward Foote of Hayfield Farm. Foote was the foster son and nephew of Elizabeth Foote Washington, wife of Lund Washington. Sarah and William had at least 6 children. She was dead by 1869. William was registered as a free black in July 1853, and Sept 1858. He was a 5' 6 1/2", black man with a scar on the back of the left hand and a scar on the ankle.

William brought 13 acres from Thompson Jarvis in November 1860, along Beulah Street (known as Windsor Rd then). William married his second wife, Georgianna, on December 9, 1869, at the Virginia Theological Seminary. They had two children, Richard and Georgianna. William died in 1896 in Franconia. After his wife's death, the land went to their daughter, Georgianna. Her descendants recently sold the land to the Fried Properties for re-development into an office park.

Today, the church and school remain. The Laurel Grove School Association and Fried Properties are restoring the school as a museum. The church and school's neighbors are office buildings, a shopping center and a residential development located on traffic-congested Beulah Street. Far removed from the open-air worship services held in a grove of Laurels, no more Bush Picnics are held by the congregation in the nearby woods, long gone.

Sue Patterson

LYNN FITZGERALD

(Continued from page 2)

239th Engineers, serving in the South Pacific in New Guinea and the Philippines. After WWII he joined his parents in the country store grocery business. Fitzgerald Grocery closed in 1972 due to the widening of Franconia Road. He then became a real estate broker and in 1973 formed Fitzgerald & Walsh Real Estate, which continues today as Fitzgerald, Walsh and Fogarty. He was a lifetime member of Franconia United Methodist Church and a charter member of Franconia Volunteer Fire Department. He belonged to the VFW Post 7327 and the Springfield Rotary Club.

His wife, Mary Glennia Schurtz Fitzgerald, preceded him in death. He is survived by his sons, Shields, Vernon and David; his sister Mary Jane Smith, and six grandchildren.

Jac Walker

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703-822-7174

Email: pakmail@erdc.com

WANT TO SEE YOUR AD HERE?

Become a Business Friend of the Franconia Museum. Contact Gregg Dudding for details at franconiainmuseum@yahoo.com

Give the Gift of History

The Franconia Museum is a private non-profit volunteer organization. We rely on support from the community to preserve and promote Historic Franconia and bring you events like the Story Swaps, Franconia History Day, and Franconia History tours.



Membership benefits include future versions of *Historic Franconia Legacies*, a beautiful pewter Franconia pin, and discounts on Franconia Museum lectures and tours. Contact Gregg Dudding at 703-971-4860 or franconiamuseum@yahoo.com to find out how you can support the Franconia Museum.

501 [c] 3 pending.

HELP! We are looking for volunteers to help us with Franconia History Day on Saturday, October 19th. If you are interested in getting involved with the Franconia Museum as a volunteer contact Christine Tollefson at 703-971-6262.

THANK YOU FOUNDING FRIENDS

LYNN FITZGERALD
CLEM GAILLIOT
RUTH T. GLOVER
DONALD AND JAC. WALKER
SUE PATTERSON
GREGG DUDDING
DON HAKENSON
GARY AND JENÉE LINDNER



Franconia Museum Inc.
7011 A Manchester Boulevard #176
Franconia, Virginia 22110



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