

LAUREL HILL MANSION NEWS



WFGP ANNUAL

SPRING TEA 05/23/21

Forty nine Tea Party guests enjoyed their first WFGP virtual tea fundraiser as they feasted on scones, tea, and treats mailed in advance to their homes by Tea Party Hostess, Jen Warfield. Lively conversation ensued and party games played with prizes awarded to eight fortunate patrons. Mr. Don Shump, of Philadelphia Bees, Inc. and beekeeper of the LHM hives entertained the guests with fascinating stories of bees and honey. Kindly visit his site: www.philadelphiabee.com

Message From The President of WFGP

As I take on the position of president of our organization, I am so pleased to announce that Laurel Hill Mansion is open once again. This has been a difficult and unprecedented year of loss not only within our own organization, with the death of Alma Jacobs and Alice Nugent, but also with the inability to have visitors at the mansion. It is now time to look to the future, and we are in the process of planning activities and events that will hopefully show the rich history of Laurel Hill Mansion as well as the 45+ years of our volunteer organization Women For Greater Philadelphia. There are many committees that could use additional members. Visit our website www.WFGP.org to see what might be of interest to you and join talented and eager women to make Laurel Hill Mansion come to life once again.

Our first major event of the reopening will be on Saturday, Sept. 11 (rain date Sept. 12) at 2 PM. The Florian Trio (Nancy Bean-violin, Lloyd Smith-cello, Allen Krantz -guitar) will perform outdoors on the lawn. Please bring your own chairs, blanket and picnic. Doors will open at 1 PM. Tickets are \$20 and will go on sale soon. Check www.laurelhillmansion.org for more information.

I hope you will come by and visit. Our hours are Thursday-Saturday 10-4. Also look for exciting new things happening in 2021-2022.

Barbara Frankl

President, Women for Greater Philadelphia/Laurel Hill Mansion

The WFGP Annual Meeting was held 05/15/21 and the Board of Directors was elected thanks to the diligent work of the Nominating Committee: BJ Maresca, Christine Smith, Sylvia Myers, Jacqui Martin, & Jeannette Gonsalves

Our returning Directors:

Thank you for your continuing dedication to Laurel Hill Mansion

Beth Bartle

Toni DeGeorge

Tish deTuro

MonaLisa Fiorentini

Athena Flamporis

Jeanette Gonsalves

Kathryn Holden

Pat Jordan

Phyllis Kauffman

Jacqui Martin

Tina Potchen

Christine Fisher Smith

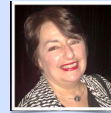
Bette Young



Meet the new WFGP/LHM Executive Board

Serving LHM from May 2021-May 2023

Chair of the Board: *Karen Phinney*



President: *Barbara Frankl*



Vice President: *Nancy Cohen*



Treasurer: *Jennifer Warfield*



Assistant Treasurer: *BB*



Corresponding Secretary: *Smokie Kittner*



Recording Secretary: *Terri Jones*



A Warm Welcome to our new Board Members!

Michele Bregande—Graphic designer, Master printer and public relations expert

Keren Kravnick Glick—Special Education/Autism educator, former Philadelphia Eagles cheerleader, and Special Olympics coach

Christine Mifsud—Long time WFGP member, Fairmount Park Guide, and Woodford Mansion docent

Kathleen Vissar—Visionary artist, Founder and owner of Wells Vissar, Inc.

Nancy Werner—Philanthropist and Past President of Montgomery County Business and Professional Women

Laurel Hill Mansion Musical Picnic

The renowned **FLORIAN TRIO** will be performing selected chamber music on the lawn of Laurel Hill Mansion

Saturday, 2:00 pm, September 11, 2021
 Rain date: Sunday, 2:00 pm, September 12, 2021

Patrons may arrive from 1:00 pm on. Please bring your own seating and refreshments. Enjoy a picnic and the concert on the lovely grounds.

The live music of Lloyd Smith, Nancy Bean, and Allen Krantz will begin at 2:00 pm

Tickets are \$20, make your reservation:
215-643-7923 or concerts@laurehillmansion.org or www.LaurehillMansion.org



LAUREL HILL MANSION IS REOPENED

LHM is open to visitors from Thursdays through Sundays, 10:00 am-4:00 pm. Guided tours of both the interior and the exterior will be led by Park Guide Anita McKelvey. Reservations are encouraged. Tickets: Adults \$8, Seniors/Students \$5, but admission is free for WFGP members and for active service members and their families through Labor Day.

visit@laurehillmansion.org
215-235-1776



Welcome back to LHM!



RAWLE DESCENDANTS TOUR LAUREL HILL MANSION

On June 25, 2021 LHM was graced with two direct descendants of Rebecca and Francis Rawle, they are Mrs. Page Elliot and her daughter Farar Elliot. The Elliots are progeny of Edward Rawle (1797-1880), a son of William and Sarah Coates Rawle. Edward graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1815 then moved to New Orleans, LA, where he met and married the daughter of a wealthy plantation owner. Edward lived an opulent southern lifestyle; he became a noted judge and founded a public education system. During the Civil War, Edward's sons fought as Confederates, pitted against their Rawle Union cousins.

Today, Farar Elliot, like many Rawle women, has forged an interesting career in Washington, DC where she is Lead Curator and Chief, Office of Art and Archives at the US House of Representatives. Ms. Elliot recently testified before the House Appropriations Sub Committee Hearing concerning damage incurred during the January 6th attack on the US Capitol.



Edward Rawle



Laurel Hill Mansion Shining Star, **BETTE YOUNG** by Christine Fisher Smith

We honor Bette Young who has been on the Women for Greater Philadelphia Board of Directors for many years and has contributed so much to our organization; though perhaps her most impressive endeavor has been developing the many aspects of our Education Program.

Bette has worked with the Philadelphia school district developing field trips, and partnered with Lemon Hill to give local children the opportunity to visit two historic mansions. To ensure that the students had information about the history of Laurel Hill and their residents, Bette did research and created two age appropriate booklets for visiting school children.

From beginning ideas to successful implementation, Bette orchestrated our Constitution Day Program. Bette coordinated this symposium with the oldest law firm in the US, Rawle and Henderson; Holy Cross School; and Laurel Hill's Education committee. The connection with Rawle and Henderson is important since William Rawle, son of Laurel Hill's Rebecca Rawle, founded this law firm in 1783. William Rawle also wrote **A View of the Constitution of the United States of America** which was used by the states for over forty years. Bette coordinates this annual program by arranging with Rawle and Henderson for the Pro Bono work of Scott Griffith, Esq. and other lawyers who moderate this event, make presentations, take questions, and encourage lively interactive discussions with the students.

Before coming to Laurel Hill, Bette was on the Board at Hope Lodge in Fort Washington. During an Ambler Bicentennial dinner/dance in late 1976, Bette met Alma Jacobs who suggested that Bette might like to join the team at Laurel Hill; Bette did, and has been a devoted member of WFGP ever since. Bette and her husband Bill have been very generous in their financial support of Laurel Hill Mansion as well.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Bette attended Frankford High School where she sang in the a cappella choir and began a lifelong joy of singing. At home she enjoys her beautiful doll collection. Bette and her husband Bill lead active and interesting lives. They are dedicated members of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown and they also love to travel, sailing on 47 cruises and visiting an impressive 76 different countries and 49 states.

With her gentle nature, Bette adds her lovely spirit and bright smile to all she touches. Whether she is in her LHM colonial dress greeting guests and guiding tours, baking delicious breads for our holiday shop, or researching and compiling information for students and tour guides; Bette is capable, creative, caring and kind. We are very fortunate to have Bette as part of our Laurel Hill family and treasure the many contributions that she has made over the years, but especially those that have made Laurel Hill Mansion and history come alive for our younger visitors. Our heartfelt appreciation is given to Bette Young.



COLONIAL GARDEN ATTRIBUTES

Colonial gardens in America were quite diverse, influenced chiefly by the regions from which the colonists immigrated, their level of wealth, and the specific size and needs of the family. On their journeys to the new world, Colonists brought with them, not only their native garden designs, but also transported seeds, plants, and roots on the ships from their country of origin, thus reflecting the styles of their homelands, primarily England, France, and the Netherlands.

Colonial gardens graced both city and country homes and proved distinct. Gardens in the city were constricted by plot size; and the gardens in rural areas were larger and often planted around structures such as buildings, fences, livestock pens, walkways, etc. Gardens differed based on the colonists' needs and the size of the garden was proportional to the size of the family.

The garden often contained small heirloom vegetables such as leeks, onions, garlic, carrots, peas, cabbage, with herbs and some flowers mixed in. Popular flowers included foxglove, hollyhocks, peonies, irises, and day-lilies. Though plantings consisted mainly of species from Europe shipped in containers or by seed, Native American plants such as squash, gourds, beans, pumpkins, groundnuts, and sun chokes were incorporated into gardens as the colonists learned their uses.



Narrow, rectangular, raised beds were placed in a garden near a house door to allow quick and easy access. Raised beds were necessary due to the harsh weather conditions, keeping the soil warm in the winter and providing superior drainage. The raised shaped beds also allowed gardeners to efficiently reach all plants from either side. Straight gravel or soil walkways surrounded each planting bed. Fencing, either picket or live fences of hedges and shrubs, was required by law in colonial times and served to protect gardens from wind and animals.

The wealthy colonists with more land nurtured larger, more elaborate gardens that included walk ups, benches, fountains, sundials, and gazebos. Furthermore, the herb and vegetable gardens of the well to do were located farther from their houses.

Most colonists did not plant dedicated herb gardens, instead, herbs were intermingled with fruits, vegetables, and flowers, creating a crowding plentitude of vegetation, providing both utility and beauty. Herbs were an important element of the garden since herbs served the colonist as apothecary/healing, preservation, fabric dye and spice rack. Most herbs were multifunctional; some used for healing, such as oregano, sage, fennel, thyme, mint, were interchangeable as culinary herbs. Parsley, tansy, madder, and bayberry were cooking herbs additionally used to dye cloth. Pungent herbs were used for cooking and equally as insecticide to repel insects and animals. Bee balm, used medicinally for its antibacterial and antimicrobial benefits, also served as a tea substitute after the Boston Tea Party when black tea imported from England was difficult or impossible to obtain.



As gardens evolved, fruit trees were slowly incorporated into the garden on the outer edges. Apples were critical to the colonists' well being, and most farms had an orchard. Apples stored well, so farm families kept them over the wintertime and fed the fruit to their livestock. Apples, peaches, and pears were further used to make cider and fermented brandy.

COLONIAL GARDENS (continued)

Limited information exists about the crops and gardens of colonial-era Laurel Hill Mansion. It is known that in 1760, soon after purchasing 33 acres from his brother-in-law Joshua Howell who owned Edgley Farm in the much larger adjoining parcel, Francis Rawle `planted an orchard of apple and peach trees somewhere on the LHM property. These fruits were often dried and stored in barrels, or the apples were turned into cider.

In later years, a tenant farmer worked the grounds across from Laurel Hill Mansion where the ball fields are today. The family lived in a stone farmhouse and had a large wooden barn. These structures — including the Edgley estate buildings — were torn down soon after the City purchased these properties and incorporated them into the new Fairmount Park.

Laurel Hill Mansion was confiscated during the Revolutionary War, but Rebecca was finally able to recover her property in 1783. The Chevalier de la Luzerne was leasing the property at the time and for him to leave, Rebecca had to buy out the remaining three years of the French Ambassador's lease. To raise cash to pay taxes and exit the lease arrangement with the Chevalier, Rebecca worked out an arrangement with her tenant farmer to grow strawberries and cabbages. They split the profits from the sales of these items at the High Street Market and with great effort she was able to regain access to her property.



Another crop possibly grown at Laurel Hill's fields was buckwheat. Rebecca's letters to Sam Shoemaker, living in exile in London after the Revolution, mention shipments of home-grown buckwheat flour, as well as dried and fresh pippins and peaches from Laurel Hill.

In 1786, Sam and some other Philadelphians returned to the City from London. Sam and Rebecca built an addition to Laurel Hill Mansion and lived there full time for a few years. Sam took great pleasure in gardening in his final years, no doubt greatly influenced by the English country gardens and homes he visited in England when he lived there after the Revolution.

By Nancy S. Cohen with research assistance from Anita McKelvey, site historian & tour guide at Lemon and Laurel Hill Mansions: authenticphiladelphia@gmail.com

We welcome WFGP Committee news and articles for the Newsletter about aspects of Colonial life that relate to Laurel Hill Mansion or to the Rawle and Shoemaker families. Please submit to: media@laurelhillmansion.org

Independence Day



07/04/21

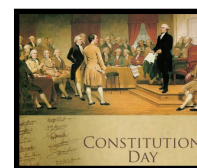


09/06/21

LHM Concert



09/11/21



09/17/21

Women for Greater Philadelphia, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation of volunteers. The goals of the corporation are to promote and enhance the historical, philosophical, educational and cultural value of Greater Philadelphia and to maintain and preserve Laurel Hill Mansion.