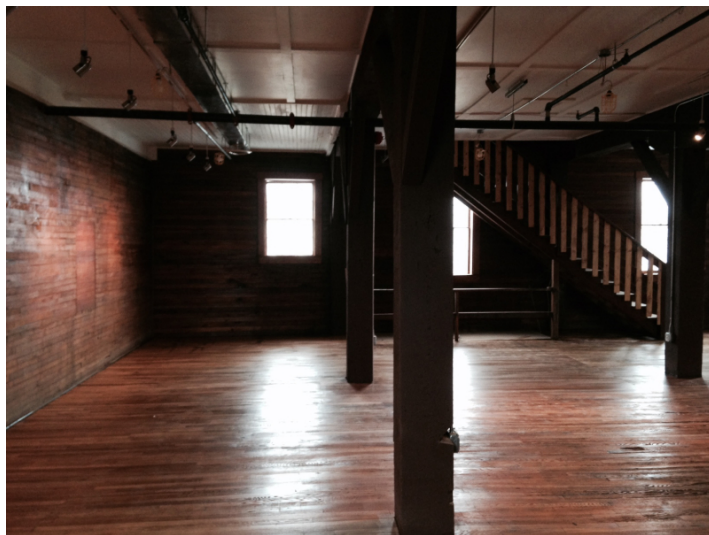


Happy Holidays from AFHA!

Darden Mill Progress



*The recently finished second floor of the Darden Mill.
Photo: Scott Prouty*

As 2014 comes to a close, renovations continue on the second floor of the Darden Mill, which will house the West Virginia Railroad Museum as well as a meeting room. AFHA AmeriCorps have been involved in the latest work of sanding and staining the floor, as well as in every stage of the project to date. The Darden Mill, currently closed for the season, will reopen in the Spring with new exhibits from the Railroad Museum and the Appalachian Forest Discovery Center.

Becoming Christmas

By Amy Lewis
AFHA AmeriCorps Heritate Team Member



Experience the heritage of your area! *Sites of the Month* spotlights events and locations within the region, based on AFHA's four themes: forestry, history, culture, and nature.



The [Gaudineer Scenic Area](#) (3,996 feet) on Shavers Mountain in Randolph and Pocahontas Counties is noted for around 50

For more than a month, I have been researching Christmas and putting together the **Becoming Christmas** exhibit for the Greenbrier Historical Society (GHS). The exhibit opened on November 23, 2014, and will be available until January 3, 2015.



Teddy & Freddy, the Christmas Bears

The exhibit features antique teddy bears, on loan from Sue McKinney, a local antique toy collector. I wanted to make the exhibit very child-friendly, so I created Teddy and Freddy, the Christmas Bears. There are panels all throughout the exhibit, in which Teddy and Freddy describe the history of some of our favorite Christmas traditions, such as Santa Claus and Christmas trees. I also created other panels which talked about the history of Christmas. Sue brought and set up the teddy bears, dolls, and their accessories, and I set up Christmas decorations, with the help of the GHS staff, and the panels that I had designed. It all went together amazingly well, and so far the exhibit has been a great success.

timber that was overlooked due to a surveying error by logging companies. The red spruce, beech, red maple and other hardwood trees here can be up to 300 years old and as large as 40 inches in diameter. Gaudineer Knob (4,432 feet) and Summit Cheat Fort are nearby. Part of the Monongahela National Forest (designated in 1964), the Area easily accessible, sitting just off US-250 five miles from Durbin.



The [Iron Furnace](#) in Lonaconing, MD (Allegany County) was built by the George's Creek Coal and Iron Company in 1837 as the first coal and coke fueled furnace used for the production of cast iron. Constructed of sandstone in the shape of a pyramid at 50 feet high, it operated commercially until 1855, producing up to 75 tons of iron per

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The Becoming Christmas Exhibit, North House Museum, Lewisburg,. September 2014.

Photo: Elizabeth McMullen, Director of the Greenbrier Historical Society

Christmas was first established by the Christian Church in the 4th century AD. When the church instituted Christmas, it incorporated several pagan festivals into the celebration of Christ's birth, which helped the holiday appeal to a wide range of people. For centuries, the Christmas celebration was a raucous affair in which people partied and drank. By the early 19th century, Americans were ready for a change, and altered how they celebrated the holiday. This included making Christmas a family centered holiday, with decorations and gift exchanges. By the early 20th century, our modern Christmas celebration had become established. Of course, there is much more to celebrating Christmas than this, but learning all

supporters of the furnace are exploring the possibility of restoring the structure.



Opened in April 2000, the Ice House in Berkeley Springs houses the [Ice House Artists Co-op](#) as well as the [Morgan Arts Council](#). The Artists Co-op is a gallery that showcases more than 30 regional artists, including photographers, textile artists, painters, printer makers, potters, jewelers, glass blowers, and knitters. The Morgan Arts Council has its own gallery and hosts events at the Ice House including concerts, theatrical productions. Arts classes for kids and adults are offered there as well as dance and fitness classes.



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AFHA AmeriCorp program to thank for it. If you happen to be in Lewisburg before January 3, please stop by the GHS's North House Museum, and check out our **Becoming Christmas** exhibit!



AFHA AmeriCorps Members including Megan Bischof (with glasses) and Benjamin Cantor-Stone (with hat) participate in the Historic Gravestone Conservation Workshop at the Spring Hill Cemetery in Huntington as part of the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia Conference, September 2014. AFHA Program Associate and Hands-on Team Supervisor Alison Thornton is at left. Photo: Hallie Borstel

[Preserve](#) lies on the edge of the Eastern Continental Divide at the high elevation of just under 4,000 feet and is adjacent to Dolly Sods. It is one of the most beautiful places in the state, unique for an isolated ecosystem which includes rare plants and animals typically found much further north. This windy high elevation heathland also includes stunted trees and ice age remnants such as tundra plants. Bear Rocks Preserve is owned by the Nature Conservancy.

Do you have a suggestion for *Sites of the Month*?

Email us at:

info@appalachianforest.us

and let us know your favorite sites throughout AFHA!

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