

Laney's legacy lives on

By Lynn Davidson

Staff Writer

Saturday, June 11, 2011

Although it has been more than 75 years since her death, Lucy Craft Laney would've been happy to see all the children's activities at her home Saturday.

The Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History's 20th anniversary celebration began in the morning with arts and crafts, storytelling, face painting, an inflatable ride, and tours of the Augusta Fire Department's fire engine. Entertainment included the Belle Terrace Drum Line and Creative Expressions Singers.

"Miss Laney was not a woman of words. She was a woman of action. So she would've loved to have seen the drummers and the kids painting faces and the arts and crafts. That's the kind of thing she lived for," said Corey Rogers, a historian at the museum.

Five girls, all with bows in their hair, sat in the art exhibit room, slurping on Creamsicles between entertainment acts.

"I like the crafts. I made a bracelet out of beads," said Jada Walton, 9.

"I like the drums. They were a little bit loud," 5-year-old Janie Brown said.

Her mother, Joy Brown, said it was the first time she had toured the museum at 1116 Phillips St., off of Laney-Walker Boulevard, which was Laney's home.

An influential educator, Laney was instrumental in establishing education opportunities for blacks in the Augusta area in the early 1900s, and founded several schools.

Rogers said the anniversary celebration introduced new people, such as the Browns, to the museum and Laney's legacy. The historian said his morning had been full giving local people tours of the museum.

"People who live here in Augusta don't realize the history that's right here," he said. "Not just in Augusta, but everywhere, people don't appreciate the history until it's gone. Then, they become sad when a house is about to be torn down or a school becomes vacant."