

MOLLY LAUMAN



Mary Elizabeth Dever was born across the river from Lucasville, in Morgan Township, on June 13, 1865, the fifth of nine children of Joseph and Rebecca Wheeler Dever. Her father's family was among the first to arrive in Scioto County, even before Ohio was a state. Her mother named her Mary Elizabeth, but soon everyone called her Molly.

When she was eleven years old, her father died, leaving her mother with five children at home. Molly was charged with helping take care of her younger brothers & sisters. But the family had a good life; while not wealthy, the children received a good education in the schools of Morgan Township.

Molly had long known Ohio Senator Gordon Lauman. He built a beautiful home for his wife, Lucretia, on Bear Creek, overlooking State Route 104 & the Ohio-Erie Canal. And, being a man of means, the home was a showplace with all the finest furnishings and household goods that could be found in Ohio. But Lucretia suffered from a weak heart, and she passed away in 1892.

A few years after her death, Senator Lauman "came calling" to the Dever home and asked if Molly might like to take a carriage ride with him. And very quickly, she fell in love with the intelligent and charming man. They were married in 1895 and spent over 20 happy years together. That ended in 1916, when Senator Lauman died. And per his request, he was buried in Waverly, Ohio, with his first wife, his parents, and other family members. The Senator and Molly also had no children, nor were there any children by his first wife, Lucretia.

After Mr. Lauman died, Molly took over operation of their extensive 800+ acres of farm land & timber. She quickly established herself as an excellent businesswoman. But she was not in the best of health, and outside of business, led a quiet life of reading, tending flowers, and writing daily in my diary. Some say her diet may have contributed to my health issues; her favorite foods were ham, biscuits, pies, chicken, baked potatoes, and corn on the cob.

Molly's attorney for both business and personal affairs was Joseph Horchow. His wife, Florence, became Molly's good friend. Florence told her of the wonderful work that the Girl Scouts did to bring up young lasses. And Molly knew of the scouts from when they would visit her lands for camping & excursions. So as the end of her life approached, Molly donated over 100 acres of land to the Scioto County Council of Girl Scouts, in 1930 & 1931. But she kept her business interests in mind when Molly specified that the scouts could clear land for use of the camp, but they were forbidden to sell any timber. And Molly specified that if they decided not to use the lands for a camp, the land should come back to her (or her heirs if she had passed on).

Molly Lauman died on March 13, 1933 and is buried beside her mother in the Lucasville Cemetery. The girl scout camp came to be known as "Camp Molly Lauman", in honor of her generous donation.