HIDDEN NO MORE

LAFAYETTE WOMEN IN STEM

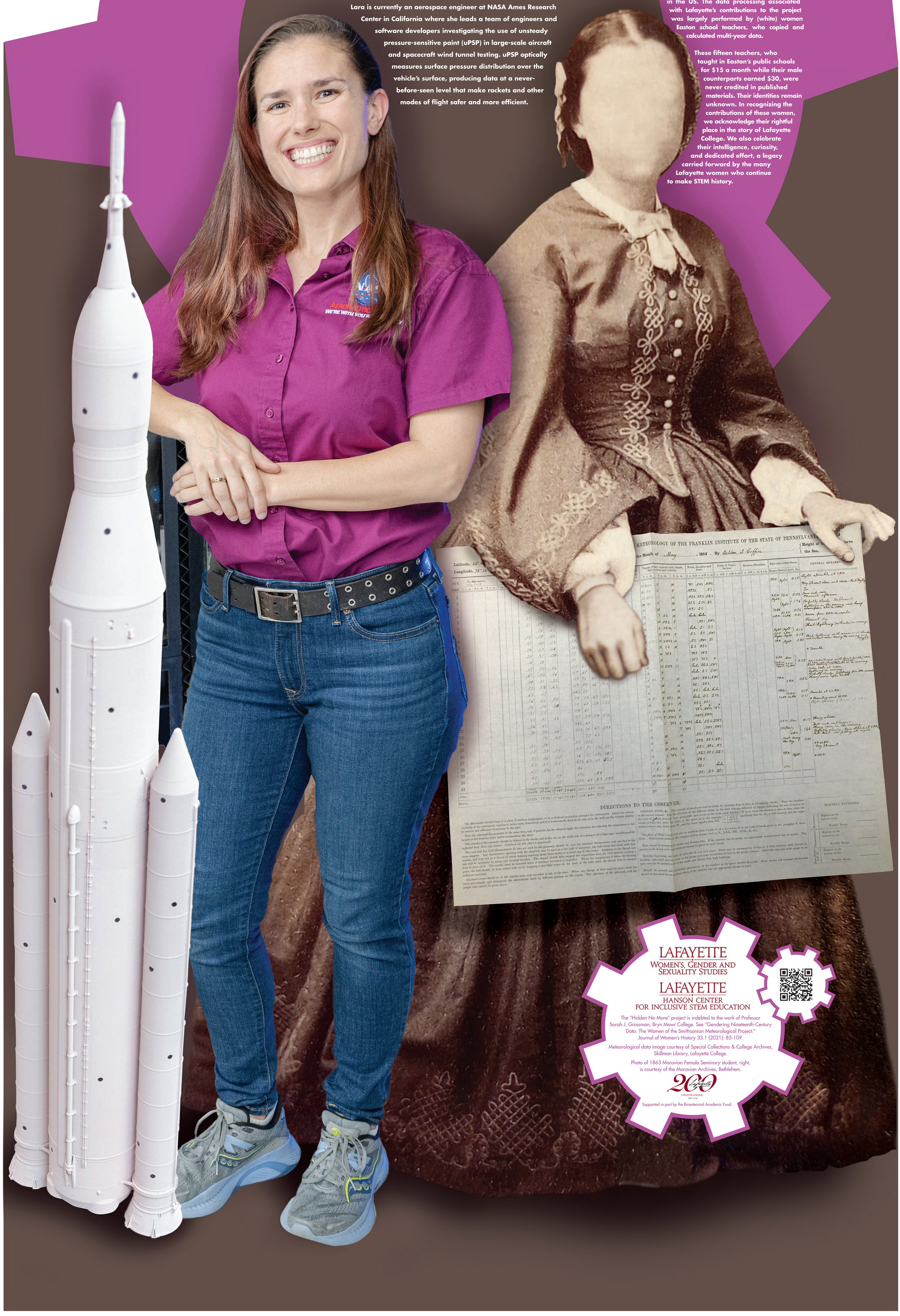
DR. E. LARA LASH '13

Dr. Lara Lash graduated from Lafayette with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and a minor in History. She went on to earn an MS and Ph.D. in aerospace engineering from the University of Tennessee.

Lara is currently an aerospace engineer at NASA Ames Research Center in California where she leads a team of engineers and software developers investigating the use of unsteady pressure-sensitive paint (uPSP) in large-scale aircraft and spacecraft wind tunnel testing. uPSP optically measures surface pressure distribution over the vehicle's surface, producing data at a never-before-seen level that make rockets and other modes of flight safer and more efficient.

In the 1850's, Lafayette Professor James Coffin was mathematical head of the Smithsonian Meteorological Project, the first settler-operated weather data collection project in the US. The data processing associated with Lafayette's contributions to the project was largely performed by (white) women Easton school teachers, who copied and calculated multi-year data.

These fifteen teachers, who taught in Easton's public schools for $15 a month while their male counterparts earned $30, were never credited in published materials. Their identities remain unknown. In recognizing the contributions of these women, we acknowledge their rightful place in the story of Lafayette College. We also celebrate their intelligence, curiosity, and dedicated effort, a legacy carried forward by the many Lafayette women who continue to make STEM history.



LAFAYETTE
WOMEN'S, GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

LAFAYETTE
HANSON CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE STEM EDUCATION

The "Hidden No More" project is indebted to the work of Professor Sarah J. Grossman, Bryn Mawr College. See "Gendering Nineteenth-Century Data: The Women of the Smithsonian Meteorological Project." Journal of Women's History 33.1 (2021): 85-109.

Meteorological data image courtesy of Special Collections & College Archives, Skillman Library, Lafayette College.

Photo of 1863 Moravian Female Seminary student, right, is courtesy of the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem.

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