The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation in Richmond has awarded Stratford Hall a $100,000 matching grant to support the restoration of the Parlor in the Stratford Great House. This restoration is part of the $1.3 million Lee Heritage Plan, which includes the installation of a new heating and cooling system in the Great House and a comprehensive restoration of the Great House interiors.

In the past year, implementation of this plan has advanced significantly. The installation of a new geo-thermal heating and cooling system was completed this summer. Planning for the restoration of the northwest stairway, a key component of the renovations completed by Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee, are underway and restoration will commence later this year. We also completed the renovation of the southwest dependency, including the removal of outdated controls equipment. Plaster repair and repainting of this space will commence next year.

Funds from the Parsons Foundation will support the restoration of the Parlor. This space was significantly altered by Light Horse Harry, and the planned work will enable us to restore a number of architectural features removed or altered in the 1930s restoration. These features include an important plaster cornice as well as window seats. The firebox will also be returned to its c. 1790 dimensions.

The purpose of the Lee Heritage Plan is to restore the house so we may accurately interpret the lives of all four generations of Lees who called Stratford home. This important family made significant contributions to American history, and the completion of the restoration will enable us to tell their story more effectively.

We hope that our Friends will choose to make an additional contribution to Stratford this year-end to help us meet this match. Gifts for your Friends of Stratford membership cannot count towards the match. Your support will enable us to make permanent improvements to the educational experience at Stratford Hall. Gifts may be directed to our Development Office, 483 Great House Road, Stratford, VA 22558.
Executive Director’s Report

Dear Friends:

This has been a remarkable year so far at Stratford Hall. Our attendance has increased substantially over last year and contributions from the Friends of Stratford have reached a new high. These are both significant developments and are an indication that our mission and purpose are attracting greater support and attention, both from our local supporters and Friends across the nation.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find an article announcing the $100,000 challenge grant from the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation. This grant has been made in response to our request for support of the $1.3 million Lee Heritage Plan, a comprehensive effort to restore the mansion so that we may better and more accurately present the stories of all four generations of Lees who called Stratford home. We are grateful for the Parsons Foundation’s support and hope you will consider making a gift so that we may meet this challenge.

The Parsons’ challenge presents an opportunity to remind ourselves of the importance of the Lees to American history. In preparation for a series of remarks I have been asked to present next year, I have been delving into the correspondence of the five generations of Lees who lived here. We are grateful for the contribution of outstanding family researchers and the support and attention, both from our local supporters and Friends across the nation.

My early research has provided only a hint of the enormity of their collective contributions. Two brothers, William and Arthur, were busy at work in London, agitating for the rights of Americans to their English friends and providing valuable intelligence to their brothers back home in America. This intelligence played a pivotal role in the debates of the Continental Congress where another two brothers, Richard Henry and Francis Lightfoot, served as delegates from Virginia. It also played a role in Williamsburg, where yet another brother, Thomas Ludwell, served in the Governor’s Council and was on the Committee of Safety. It was no accident that Richard Henry was the delegate who made the motion in the Continental Congress that the American colonies “are and ought to be free and independent states.” After this momentous event, these brothers continued to work both in the administration of our nascent national government and in procuring weapons and funds to wage the war.

There is much more that can be said of the concerted actions of these five men. Suffice it to say that without them there would have been no Declaration for Jefferson to write or an army for Washington to fight with.

The Parsons grant will allow us to do a more effective job of telling the stories of this remarkable family to our visitors. Their accomplishments and sacrifices deserve no less. We hope we can count on your support.

Sincerely,

Paul C. Reber
Executive Director

Pulitzer Prize Winning Revolutionary Scholar Speaks at Lee Circle Event

Attendees at the 2007 Lee Circle black-tie dinner held on Friday, October 19 heard from one of the foremost scholars of the American Revolution in the country, Gordon S. Wood. Dr. Wood is an Alva O. Way Professor and Professor of History at Brown University. His books include The Creation of the American Republic 1776–1787 (1969) for which he won a Bancroft Prize in 1970, The Radicalism of the American Revolution (1991) for which he won a Pulitzer Prize in 1993, The American Revolution (2002), The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin (2004), and his most recent publication Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different (2005).

On Saturday, October 20, attendees heard presentations regarding the recent discovery of some notable Lee letters, learned about the new Lee-Grant exhibit at the Virginia Historical Society, and heard about current and upcoming plans for interpretation and expanding exhibits at Stratford Hall. In addition, several activities and tours were also held for attendees. The Lee Circle event concluded with lunch on Saturday.

The Lee Circle was established to recognize those individuals, families, foundations or corporations who annually give $5,000 or above to Stratford Hall. Gifts to the Lee Circle provide essential support to Stratford Hall’s programs and help further its mission. The annual dinner event is a means of recognizing those who have contributed to the Lee Circle during the current year.

Two New Acquisitions Added to the Collections

A portrait miniature and a commemorative pitcher are two new recent acquisitions to the collections. According to Stratford Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

The second acquisition is a commemorative pitcher, Richard Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

The second acquisition is a commemorative pitcher, Richard Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

Two New Acquisitions Added to the Collections

A portrait miniature and a commemorative pitcher are two new recent acquisitions to the collections. According to Stratford Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

The second acquisition is a commemorative pitcher, Richard Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

Two New Acquisitions Added to the Collections

A portrait miniature and a commemorative pitcher are two new recent acquisitions to the collections. According to Stratford Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

The second acquisition is a commemorative pitcher, Richard Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

Two New Acquisitions Added to the Collections

A portrait miniature and a commemorative pitcher are two new recent acquisitions to the collections. According to Stratford Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

Two New Acquisitions Added to the Collections

A portrait miniature and a commemorative pitcher are two new recent acquisitions to the collections. According to Stratford Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

Two New Acquisitions Added to the Collections

A portrait miniature and a commemorative pitcher are two new recent acquisitions to the collections. According to Stratford Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

Two New Acquisitions Added to the Collections

A portrait miniature and a commemorative pitcher are two new recent acquisitions to the collections. According to Stratford Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

Two New Acquisitions Added to the Collections

A portrait miniature and a commemorative pitcher are two new recent acquisitions to the collections. According to Stratford Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

Two New Acquisitions Added to the Collections

A portrait miniature and a commemorative pitcher are two new recent acquisitions to the collections. According to Stratford Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

Two New Acquisitions Added to the Collections

A portrait miniature and a commemorative pitcher are two new recent acquisitions to the collections. According to Stratford Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

Two New Acquisitions Added to the Collections

A portrait miniature and a commemorative pitcher are two new recent acquisitions to the collections. According to Stratford Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.

Two New Acquisitions Added to the Collections

A portrait miniature and a commemorative pitcher are two new recent acquisitions to the collections. According to Stratford Hall’s Curator Gretchen Goodell, the first acquisition is an oval-shaped portrait miniature of an unidentified man, watercolor on ivory, from the 18th century. This miniature has a history of ownership by descendants of Robert E. Lee and is believed to depict a member of the Lee family. It was purchased through the Foulke Endowment.
Historical Haunts Proves A Haunting Good Time

Tricks, treats and Halloween fun! On October 27, Stratford Hall successfully hosted its first-ever Historical Haunts! Visitors dared to brave eerie ghost walks through the Great House. They listened to spooky stories read by Stratford’s book witch and got their pictures taken as Frankenstein. Some tried their hands at pumpkin painting and yarn-doll making. And when their tummies gave mighty growls, they munched on cookies and sipped hot chocolate.

The haunted evening culminated with prizes for the creepiest costumes and a drawing to win an autographed copy of The Ghosts of Virginia, donated by Stratford’s Gift Shop.

If you missed out on the thrills and chills, we hope you’ll join us next year, because this “haunting good time” is sure to grow bigger and better!

Food & Harvest Festival Celebrates The Northern Neck

The sound of bluegrass music and the smell of kettle corn was in the air as families flocked into the Northern Neck Food and Harvest Festival at Stratford Hall on Saturday, September 22. In addition to the food and music, there were hayrides, a petting zoo, colonial games, wine tasting from the Northern Neck Wine Trail, displays from eight Northern Neck museums, Northern Neck artisans and several Virginia’s Finest vendors.

The Great House was also open for tours, the Grist Mill was in operation and Dr. Douglas Sanford and students from The University of Mary Washington were on hand to discuss what they found during their archeological digs in the Oval area.

Participants in this year’s festival included the Northern Neck Wine Trail featuring Arena Vineyards and Winery, Northumberland County; Belle Mount Vineyards, Richmond County; Ingleside Vineyards, Westmoreland County; Oak Crest Vineyard and Winery, King George County; the Northern Neck Tourism Council and the Northern Neck Wine Trail. A special thanks goes to our sponsor, People’s Community Bank.

Ashland Bassets and Farmington Beagles Will Be Returning For Triennial Coaching Day on April 27, 2008

Coaching has been a Stratford Hall tradition for nearly 40 years. Held once every three years, the event is an occasion for coach owners from around the country to bring their coaches and horses to Stratford for both competition and public viewing. It also represents a rare opportunity for the general public to see a spectacle that would have been an ordinary event in early America—seeing colorful coaches pulled by teams of horses.

In 18th- and 19th-century America and England, the only scheduled overland transportation was via public road coach. Also, wealthy families like the Lees owned their own coaches. The advent of the automobile and railroad virtually ended this form of transportation, and so the sport of coaching was born. Today, only a handful of people preserve the unique art of handling a coach drawn by a team of four horses.

Stratford Hall’s coaching event is among the most established in America and attracts 10 or more coaches and teams, including the famous Budweiser Clydesdales. The public is invited to view the coaches in action as well as other activities including performances by beagles and basket bounds. Special areas are set aside for tailgating with prizes awarded for the most creative displays. The Sunday event attracts upwards of 3,000 people.

Coaching is Stratford Hall’s signature event and generates funds needed to preserve one of America’s finest 18th-century buildings and to operate the educational programs that attract thousands of school children to Stratford Hall each year.
Lee and Grant Exhibit Opens in Richmond, Will Travel the Country

Ironically, the two generals who sought victory over the other in our nation’s Civil War are linked—through their actions during and after the surrender at Appomattox—as makers of reconciliation and peace. A new exhibit, Lee and Grant, opened October 20 at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, Virginia, and focuses on the lives and influence of these men in shaping American history.

Stratford Hall’s contributions to the long-awaited exhibit include a little known sketch of Robert E. Lee by Thomas Nast and Ulysses S. Grant’s “Terms of Surrender” to Robert E. Lee on April 9, 1865. The pivotal surrender document was given to Stratford in 1955 by Charles Marshall, son of Col. Charles Marshall who was the only member of Lee’s staff present at the surrender. Grant’s Terms, perhaps more than any other document from the war, reflected Lincoln’s desire for reconciliation as well as Grant’s own understanding of victory and peace. Grant’s generous terms allowed the Confederate officers to keep their side-arms, horses and baggage.

Cartoonist Thomas Nast, who had fought for the Union, admired Lee’s post-war efforts to promote the restoration of peace in the South. In 1890, Nast sketched with pen and ink a vignette of Lee surrounded by quotes on peace from Lee, Grant, and Lincoln. Nast’s framed drawing, from Stratford’s collection, takes its place beside the “Terms of Surrender” in the Virginia Historical Society’s attempt to define Lee and Grant within their personal and historical contexts. The exhibit will remain in Richmond until April 2008 and then travel to venues in Missouri, New York, Houston, and Atlanta.

...In the absence of a home I wish I could purchase Stratford. That is the only place I could go to, now accessible to us, that would inspire me with feelings of pleasure and local love...”

—Robert E. Lee to his wife Mary Custis Lee (December 25, 1861)

Order Your Gift Baskets Now

These wonderful Gift Baskets, filled with Stratford Plantation products, are available from the Gift Shop. Please use the convenient order form provided here, phone your order to (804) 493-8038 ext. 9796 or fax to (804) 493-0333. Custom Gift Baskets can also be ordered.

Stratford Holiday Basket
Includes a 3-pound Virginia Hamlet (fully cooked and boneless), Apple Chutney and a General Lee and Santa Claus book.
$70.00

Stratford Party Basket
Includes a 22 oz. can of Virginia Peanuts, Vidalia Onion and Peach Salsa, Apple Chutney, Stratford Playing Cards and Stratford Cocktail Napkins.
$45.00

Stratford Tea
Includes Stratford Blend Tea in a Custom Tin, Stratford Mug, Scone Mix and a Stratford Linen Potholder.
$45.00

Taste of Stratford
Includes Fruit Cake, Strawberry Preserves and Pepper Jelly.
$40.00

Preserves Sampler
Includes Cherry, Peach and Strawberry Preserves.
$35.00

Limited Edition Revolver Honors R.E. Lee

LTD of Loveland, Colorado, has produced a Robert E. Lee 200th Birthday Limited Edition revolver. According to Wellington, the revolver is modeled on one of the most popular revolvers in the Civil War, the 1851 Navy Revolver in .36 caliber. It is strictly limited to 200 worldwide with edition numbers starting from REL001 to REL200. This beautiful work of art is nickel and gold plated and makes a beautiful canvas for honoring this great American. The cost of the gun is $2,295 and a portion of the proceeds from the sale will be donated to Stratford Hall. To order, please contact Wellington LTD at 866-895-9355 or visit www.wellington.com
Summer Camps Will Offer Unique Learning Experiences

Registration is now open for Stratford Hall’s popular summer camps. For 2008, there will be a grandparent/grandchild camp held July 29–31. During this three-day and two-night camp, participants will build precious family bonds while experiencing plantation life in the 18th century. Cost for the camp, including lodging and all meals, is $275 per person. Children should be ages 6 through 12. Activities include making and laying bricks, hunting for fossils, fishing in the Mill pond, marching with muskets and drums as the Virginia Militia, and hammering hot iron on a blacksmith’s anvil.

There will be a summer day camp to be held June 23–27. This camp is for ages 8 to 12. Camp hours are from 10 am to 4 pm each day. The cost is $245.

In addition, there will be an intergenerational Elderhostel/Stratford program held July 14–18, 2008. This program is an expanded version of Stratford’s grandparent/grandchild camp and is five days and four nights. It is open to adults age 55 and older and a young relative or friend. For additional information and/or to register, please call 800-454-5768 or log on to www.elderhostel.org. Registration is not through Stratford Hall directly.

Registration for the two Stratford camps is on a first-come first-served basis, so be sure to register early. A deposit of $100 per camper is due at least six weeks prior to the camp start date. For more information or to register, contact Bill Doerken, 804-493-7700 or by email bdoerken@stratfordhall.org.

Calendar of Events

January 19

Robert E. Lee’s Birthday
Activities will commemorate the 201st anniversary of the birth of Robert E. Lee at Stratford Hall. Al Stone will portray the General and the popular Lee for Children tours will be offered. Evergreen Shade will provide period music. 9:30–4 pm.

March 22

Easter Egg Hunt
Join us for this fun annual event for children ages 1 to 12. Sponsored by the Northern Neck Lodge 32 of the Fraternal Order of Police. No admission charge for participants and their parents. Regular admission applies for Great House tours. Be sure to bring your camera. The hunt begins exactly at 11 am on the Oval. No rain (or snow!) date.

April 27

Coaching Day
Visit Stratford Hall for this rare opportunity to see a spectacle that would have been an ordinary event in Colonial America—colorful coaches being pulled by teams of horses. This event only happens every three years and is a must see. Tailgate contest and other activities. Advance general admission tickets are $12.50; $15 at gate. Tailgate tickets are $75 and sold only in advance.