In recent months restoration efforts at Stratford have included the Northwest Stair Passage, transformation of the Southwest Outbuilding, and the enhancing of exhibits in the Slave Quarters. Work is now currently underway to return the Parlor in the Great House to its 1790s appearance, including the installation of a new cornice, new paint colors, and minor architectural changes.

While this restoration work is underway in the Great House, the Parlor is the subject of a new temporary exhibit in the Visitor Center. The exhibit features many objects that have been removed from the Parlor due to the renovation work, including a portrait of Thomas Lee Shippen by Gilbert Stuart, a corner cupboard, pedal harp, armchair, square piano, as well as old photos of the room and how it has changed over time.

Since its restoration by the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation (RELMF) and architect Fiske Kimball in the 1930s and 1940s, the room has been furnished and interpreted as a parlor.

Although many portions of the Great House were restored to an early 18th-century appearance, RELMF and Kimball retained much of the circa 1790s woodwork in the Parlor. Architectural investigations from the 1980s to the present day have helped to uncover the evidence of the appearance of the room in the 1790s.

Although the Stuart family sold Stratford to the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation in 1929, the family continued to live in the house until 1932. Photographs from this time period detail the manner in which later residents, like the Stuarts, used the Great House.

Early restoration of the Parlor involved reworking the firebox, repairing and replacing plaster walls, and repainting. Furnishings on display in these early years were a mixture of time periods and geographic origins.

By 1958, the room was being referred to as the “Harry Lee Parlor” because Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee III directed its renovation in the 1790s.

Furnishings added to the space in the early years of restoration included Federal Period antiques, like a crystal chandelier, and family-related objects such as a secretary-bookcase that originally sat at Arlington House, the Custis-Lee property near Washington, D.C.

The new exhibit on the Parlor in the Visitor Center includes many objects as well as a history of how the room has changed over time.
Executive Director’s Report

Understanding Robert E. Lee’s role in the Civil War requires more than an opinion article

On April 25, 2011, The Washington Post published an editorial by Richard Cohen entitled “Dispelling the Myth of Robert E. Lee.” We cannot reprint the editorial here, but if you want to read it in its entirety it can be found at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/dispelling-the-myth-of-robert-e-lee/2011/04/25/AFrXC1iE_story.html. The thrust of Cohen’s argument is not new: that Lee fought to protect slavery and is therefore not entitled to the attention he has received over the past 150 years. Cohen added the obligatory comparison to Hitler for good measure. What follows is my response, which The Post did not publish.

The Civil War Sesquicentennial is now upon us. It is fervently hoped by many that this event presents an opportunity to have real national debate on the origins and legacy of this conflict — something that was decidedly absent from the previous commemoration of the Civil War in the 1960s. This last commemoration was centered on a narrative of the conflict that virtually erased slavery as a cause, ignored the role of blacks in the war and its aftermath, and primarily celebrated the valor of both Confederate and Federal soldiers. This vision of the war, widely referred to as the “Lost Cause,” was a Southern creation that was equally embraced by the North.

In his article of April 25, Richard Cohen takes a swipe at one of the main figures of this Lost Cause narrative, Robert E. Lee. Cohen is right to dispell the mythic Lee along with the Lost Cause; it was an ahistorical political construct that only served to confuse the real issues about the war. We are all indebted to Elizabeth Brown Pryor, whose work Cohen cites, for her excellent scholarship that has helped us better understand the complicated cultural, political and social issues that confronted the loyalties of Lee and many other Americans in the spring of 1861.

Unfortunately, Cohen misses an opportunity to help us all understand the issues that confronted Lee by reducing his decision to a simple choice between our modern definitions of good and evil. This oversimplification is not merely bad history; it also hinders a real understanding of the causes and consequences of the Civil War. The war resulted in a political and economic disaster for Lee and his fellow Southerners that took a century to repair. Whether or not you honor him, Lee remains one of the pivotal figures in American history. We owe it to ourselves to understand fully his world and the choices it presented; otherwise, one day we may suffer a similar fate. Cohen’s banal comparisons of Lee to Hitler simply will not do.

It is not useful to reduce this story to a few paragraphs in a newspaper. To truly understand the Civil War and Robert E. Lee’s role in it requires a lot more effort. Sadly, we are too often willing to settle for Mr. Cohen’s oversimplified version of the past. This is especially unfortunate because the survival of our nation depends on our ability to think imaginatively and critically about our history. As resources for teaching history in our schools are diminishing, it will increasingly fall upon places like Stratford Hall to provide a place for citizens to engage with the stories of our collective past. Stratford Hall is in the midst of making significant improvements that will enable us to fulfill this role more effectively. You can follow the progress of these efforts in this Chronicle, and we hope we can count on your support.

Paul C. Reber
Executive Director
Springing Forward With School Programs

Teachers and students appreciate hands-on activities

Despite high fuel prices and continued cuts on school systems’ budgets, this spring has produced a significant increase in the number of children visiting Stratford. Schools that have booked for years have returned, while internet searches for “plantation + museum + Virginia” brought new schools from as far as Fairfax County.

The smallest school was just 16 students, while the entire fifth grade from another school (360 students) attended over three days. In total, almost 20 different schools visited, bringing approximately 1900 visitors.

Preparation for this spring’s school visitation began last fall, according to Abigail Newkirk, Stratford’s Director of Education, when new and enhanced programs were introduced. The interpretive staff spent the fall and winter familiarizing themselves with the new material and getting ready for school visits that run from March to June.

The feedback has been fantastic. Comments from a King George County teacher included “Fabulous! The kids loved all the hands on stuff—kept their attention and helped them keep their learning fresh,” and from a Fairfax County teacher, “Excellent enrichment and hands on activities—unique!” “We’ll be back—well worth the drive.”

Using a quill pen and finding a shark tooth are just a couple of the ways Stratford’s educational program gives each child the opportunity to learn about those who lived and worked here, the environment, and the landscape.

For more information on the school programs, contact Abigail Newkirk at 804-493-8038 ext. 1029, or by email at ANewkirk@stratfordhall.org.
Become a Friend of Stratford and Plan Your Visit Today!

The spring and summer months are a perfect time to take advantage of all the benefits of a Friends of Stratford membership. Cardholders receive free admission to make unlimited visits to:

- Walk the grounds and see the beautiful gardens and wildflowers in bloom
- Hike the nature trails and see a variety of wildlife and enjoy some bird watching
- Visit the beach to find a sharks tooth or just relax and enjoy the Potomac River view
- Tour the Great House — no matter how many times you've seen it, there is always something new to learn
- Check out the Gift Shop and use your 10% member discount to find a special treat for yourself

Memberships start at just $35. Use the enclosed envelope, join online at www.stratfordhall.org/give, call 804-493-8038 ext. 8919 or better yet, plan a visit and join while you're here. Your membership also ensures that your subscription to The Chronicle continues, so you don't miss out on all the exciting things happening at Stratford Hall. Join us today!

Friends of Stratford Committees host Spring Events

Alexandria, District of Columbia and Charlottesville FOS Groups Hold Events

Our Friends of Stratford Committees continue to promote Stratford around the area by hosting events to thank donors and introduce Stratford to new audiences.

Alexandria Friends of Stratford

The Alexandria Friends of Stratford Committee hosted a reception on March 31 at the home of Mrs. Frank L. Wright. There was a wonderful turnout for the event with 90 people in attendance. Special thanks to the Alexandria Committee for planning this annual event.

District of Columbia Friends of Stratford

The District of Columbia Friends of Stratford Committee hosted their annual spring reception on May 1. We are most appreciative to The Hon. and Mrs. Williamson S. Stuckey, Jr., for hosting the event at their home again this year. Over 70 people attended this year’s event.

Charlottesville Friends of Stratford

We look forward to an upcoming event on July 27 in Charlottesville, VA. Ann and Thad Jones will welcome members of the Board of Directors and other guests to their home.
Drink in History at Stratford’s Wine Festival

September event will showcase Northern Neck wines

Be sure to mark your calendar and join us on either September 24 or 25 (or both days) for the 5th Annual Stratford Hall Chesapeake Bay Wine Festival. This year’s festival will run from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Plans for 2011 are now underway to offer more vendors, more variety in food offerings, and just a little excitement!

At its heart, Stratford’s Wine Festival is a showcase for the variety and quality of the vineyards of the Chesapeake Bay Wine Trail. The rich tidewater soils and the mild climate of the Northern Neck of Virginia provide an ideal environment for the wine grower. Whether it may be the white grape varieties such as; Chardonnay, Trebbiano, Viognier, or for example the reds: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot or Norton the results are equally delicious offerings.

Vineyards, vendors, petting zoos, artisans and craft demonstrators, unique food offerings, will all mix with the gentle rhythms of jazz and Latin on the Oval in September.

Advance tickets are $20 adult; $10 designated driver (non-drinking) or under 21; $5 children 6-11; free for children under 6. Advance tickets can be purchased on site at each participating winery and at Stratford Hall, or on line on the Chesapeake Bay Wine Trail web site with a PayPal account or major credit cards. Tickets purchased at the gate on the day of the event will be $25 for adults (prices for designated drivers and children remain the same as above). Adult tickets include a complimentary wine glass for tasting. All tickets include a tour of the historic Great House.

The wine festival gives everyone a chance to learn about the wineries in the Northern Neck, enjoy hay rides around the plantation, and get close to alpacas like “Hot Jazz” from Camillo Valley Alpacas.
Planned Giving
Making a difference by joining the Futuri Society

The Lee family’s Latin motto, *Non Incutus Futuri*, means “Not Unmindful of the Future.” Generations of the Lee family viewed their motto as a solemn charge to be aware of the impact its decisions would have on future generations.

Today, *Non Incutus Futuri* also contains a message for supporters of Stratford Hall: as philanthropists, you can actively help sustain the Lee family legacy and its ideals of leadership, independent thought, and civic responsibility. Through your support, Stratford Hall’s goals of preservation, education, and research can be continued for the benefit of future generations.

Charitable trusts, gift annuities, and bequests can benefit you, your family and your charity of choice while Stratford Hall benefits by putting your assets to work preserving this special place and supporting our education programs.

As you think about estate planning, we hope that you will consider Stratford Hall as a beneficiary of your estate. Estate planning options offered by Stratford include:

- Bequests
- Named Endowments
- Charitable Lead Trusts
- Charitable Remainder Trusts
- Charitable Gift Annuities

To find out more about planned giving at Stratford Hall, please contact our Development Department at 804-493-8038 ext. 8919 or by emailing plannedgiving@stratfordhall.org. Stratford Hall can work with you and your legal team and/or your personal estate planning attorney to find an estate planning option tailored to suit your individual needs and the long-term goals of your estate. As a Planned Giving Donor, you will automatically become a member of the Futuri Society.

Donate your Pick-Up

Stratford Hall Security and Grounds staff need late model pick-up trucks to use in the course of their work taking care of the property we are entrusted with preserving.

If you have a vehicle you are interested in donating, please contact our Development Department to discuss the details of this charitable, tax-deductible contribution. Call 804-493-8038, ext. 8919 or email mboldren@stratfordhall.org. We can help you determine the value of the vehicle and provide you with documentation of the donation to declare it in your tax records.
You Can Own a Piece of Stratford
Gift shop features hand-turned bowls from wood harvested at Stratford

Looking for a unique gift or accent piece? The Stratford Gift Shop is your place to go to find one-of-a-kind hand-turned wooden bowls made from wood harvested at Stratford.

Made by artist Kirk McCauley of North Garden, Virginia, the bowls come in a variety of sizes and shapes and were made from walnut, oak and dogwood.

McCauley’s lifelong love for the outdoors and nature comes to life in his hand-turned wood artwork. A love for wood and its natural beauty can be found in each and every piece. McCauley is a member of the Central Virginia Woodturners and the American Association of Woodturners. He has produced pieces from other historic sites, including Monticello.

Trees, especially oaks, have always played a significant role at Stratford. A branch of the oak tree, surmounted with a squirrel eating an acorn, forms the crest on the Lee Family’s coat-of-arms. Oak, as well as poplar, pine and walnut from the plantation, was used for the elegant, paneled walls of the center hall in the Great House. Oak planks from Stratford, sold by “Light Horse Harry” Lee to James Hoban, were used for construction of the first White House in Washington, D.C.

Generations of Lees at Stratford shared specimens of their trees with other planters, such as George Washington, and acquired new varieties for transplanting. In his later years, Robert E. Lee recalled the plantation entrance “adorned with cedars, oaks, and forest poplars.” His brother, Charles Carter Lee, described the Stratford gardens as containing ornamental trees as well as “more useful” walnuts.

Stratford has allowed local artisans to reclaim fallen trees of the types historically significant to the Lee family’s period of occupation at Stratford. A portion of the sale of these unique, handcrafted items benefits Stratford and its mission of education, research, and preservation.
July 23–24  
**A Midsummer Night’s Scream!**  
Join investigative medium Laine Crosby and author/historian Mark Nesbitt for a lecture, tour of Stratford, and afternoon picnic. Night investigations of ghostly findings are recapped during breakfast.

July 28–30  
**Economic Landscapes of the Tidewater: An Institute for Teachers of Virginia and U.S. History**  
A three-day residential institute will introduce pre-collegiate teachers to the interplay of economic, cultural and physical geographies of the Tidewater region and its connections to the global economic system in the colonial period.

August 2–4  
**Grandchild/Grandparent Camp**  
Three days of full-filled, educational activities for kids 6-12 and their grandparents offer a memorable family bonding experience while participants re-live 18th-century life on a Virginia plantation. The myriad of hands-on experiences include looking for shark teeth fossils, fishing, and marching as the colonial Virginia militia.

August 5  
**Sprouting Success: A Professional Development Workshop for K-5 Teachers**  
Presented by Agriculture in the Classroom, this one-day workshop (9-2) is free to teachers. Pre-registration required. SOL-aligned, cross-curricular lessons using proven methodology, hands-on activities designed to be incorporated into daily curriculum, and practical ideas ready for instant use in the classroom.

August 12  
**Basic Photography & Yoga**  
Northern Neck award-winning photographer Ann Tate will hold a workshop on basic photography, including an optional yoga stretch from 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. with local therapist Kay Hawkins. To register e-mail rsvp@stratfordhall.org — class size is limited. Participants must bring their own cameras.

August 13  
**Basic Watercolor & Yoga**  
Accomplished Northern Neck watercolor artist Holly Harmon will show you the secrets to watercolor success with an optional yoga stretch session with Kay Hawkins. The workshop runs from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Class size is limited to 15, so register soon. Cost of materials are included in the fee.

If you would like to receive our e-newsletter, you can sign up on our website. Scroll to the bottom of the homepage and you will see a box to click on for the e-newsletter sign up form. Also be sure to join our Facebook page.

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