Payne Family Descendants Gather for Reunion
Activities include wreath-laying ceremony at slave graveyard

With an oral tradition that their ancestors were slaves owned by Thomas Lee, Payne family members held a reunion at Stratford Hall on Saturday, June 25, 2011. The program featured day long activities including music, African slave tales, and tours of the Great House and Uncle Wes Cabin. Over 100 people attended the event according to Lois Johnson, family coordinator. The previous Payne family reunion was held in 2001.

“The Payne family history is an important part of the history of Stratford Hall,” said Paul Reber, Executive Director of Stratford Hall. “As we continue to research and document the landscape and Great House at Stratford, nothing can be more relevant to the understanding of the past than the stories and the lives of those who lived here.”

While very few records of the African-American community at Stratford exist, it is possible that the Paynes descended from the slave West who was listed in Philip Ludwell Lee’s estate inventory of 1782.

The first recorded Payne at Stratford was William Payne (1833–1927) who was born on the plantation and worked, both before and after the Civil War, as butler and house servant for Mrs. Elizabeth Storke. He married Hannah Jackson from nearby Popes Creek Plantation. William’s brother Roderick Payne was Mrs. Storke’s driver. William “Bill” Payne is buried in the Shiloh Baptist Church cemetery, directly across from Stratford’s entrance, and his wife Hannah is buried at Stratford.

William Wesley Payne (1875–1954), son of William and Hannah, grew up at Stratford during Mrs. Storke’s ownership of the plantation. After Wesley married Louisa Mary Johnson in 1901, she worked as cook

Continued next page…

From left to right: Lisa Payne, of King George, Joyce Payne, of Centerville and Angela Tate of Montross tour the cabin built as a monument to their ancestor William Wesley Payne.
for the Stuart family who inherited the plantation from Mrs. Storke. The couple made their first home in the outbuilding northeast of the Great House. Wes (sometimes called West) worked at Stratford Hall except for four years after the death of his wife when he had to care for his youngest children. Wesley Payne is best remembered for his lively interpretation of the kitchen after the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation purchased Stratford. Mrs. Lanier, President of the Foundation, offered Wesley Payne his choice of a monument marking his birth site. He preferred that a cabin, similar to the one in which he was born, be built on the knoll across from the Great House. The cabin, built to Wesley’s description, was constructed in 1941. Wesley Payne is buried in Shiloh Baptist Church cemetery.

Wesley and Louise Payne had ten children. Their son Ulysses Sylvester “Joe” Payne (1909–1985) worked at Stratford for fifty-three years. A veteran of World War II, Joe Payne began working for General and Mrs. B. F. Cheatham, Stratford’s first resident superintendent, and served as Head Gardener for many years. He married Dorothy Johnson, who became a historic interpreter at Stratford after her retirement from teaching school. Like his father and grandfather, Joe Payne is buried at Shiloh Baptist Church.

Thomas Payne, Wesley’s brother, also grew up on Stratford. Laura Payne was one of his thirteen children. Laura lived in the west brick room of the Great House while working as cook for the Stuart family from the late 1920s to 1932. After her marriage to Leon Streets, who worked on the farm at Stratford, they lived in a tenant house that was moved to build the Executive Director’s house. In 1940 they built a home a short distance away on Route 3. Laura worked at Stratford for 57 years, mostly as head cook in the Plantation Dining Room. Laura and Leon’s daughter, Vernell [Cruse], was born at Stratford in 1936.
I n June 2011 the United States Department of Education released its National Assessment of Educational Progress. This report is issued on a regular basis and addresses educational progress in a variety of disciplines. The June report is an assessment of progress in the knowledge of United States history. The last report on United States history was issued in 2006 and the first in 1994.

It should be no surprise that the report is not encouraging. While there has been progress since the first report was issued in 1994, there has been no progress since the last report was issued in 2004, despite nearly a billion dollars invested by the Federal government in training history teachers. This is mainly due to countervailing programs, like the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which emphasize reading and math. As I noted in a previous column in The Chronicle, our current President’s additions of science and engineering to the education priority list will do little to help the cause of American history.

In a recent article in the Journal of American History, Stanford University historian, Sam Wineburg, puts this recurring issue in historical perspective. Wineburg points to a test administered to Texas students in 1915–16 that demonstrated that many could not distinguish between Jefferson Davis and Thomas Jefferson or the significant date 1492 from 1776. A 1943 survey of college students found that only six percent could list the original thirteen colonies. A similar result was revealed in a 1976 study. Wineburg argues that students have never performed well on tests based on factual knowledge and that this constant hand-wringing over our knowledge of history is evidence of our own “amnesia of past ignorance.”

According to Wineburg, the test makers, rather than the test takers, are really to blame for this predicament. The tests are designed to create a bell curve of results, so you have a few students who can answer only a few questions, a larger group who can answer most of the questions, and a smaller group who can answer them all. Questions that everyone gets correct—the ones revealing general knowledge of an event or time period—are eliminated. As a result, tests end up as a series of trivial, fact-based questions. For example, it certainly is not important that students know the names of all thirteen colonies.

In addition to creating a better test, we also need to do a better job of creating history educators. There are graduate courses in teaching mathematics and science, but the teaching of history is often lumped into the broader field of “social studies” where an instructor may have majored in an unrelated field like psychology or child development. In one state, teachers are qualified to teach history if they passed a history course in the 7th grade. If future history teachers do not study history seriously at the undergraduate level, they will not understand that history is about argument and clashing interpretations instead of facts.

All of this is well enough, but any solution to this problem will have to involve history museums like Stratford Hall. In the past few years, we have worked very hard to develop school programs that encourage students to think critically about the past and to understand that history is more than just facts. These efforts are paying off. In the first half of 2011, our school program attendance reached record numbers. Our reputation for providing a unique and quality experience is spreading; some school groups came from as far away as the Washington, DC suburbs.

Like many things in our nation, the challenges of history education in our public schools have become a political matter, so we can expect that not much will be done in the public school systems. This means that it will fall on places like Stratford Hall to help provide the experiences that will enable school children (and adults) to become useful citizens. Stratford Hall is making a big investment to ensure that we are prepared to meet this important responsibility and that our young visitors will be top performers on their history exams.

Paul C. Reber
Executive Director
A rich and beautiful book is always open before us. We have but to learn to read it.

Those words, written by the renowned landscape scholar J. B. Jackson in 1951, capture the central theme of Stratford Hall’s fourth annual cultural landscape symposium.

Reading the Landscape at Stratford Hall on October 22 and 23, 2011, will offer for the first time the opportunity to “read,” or interpret, a landscape through four distinct viewpoints: the perspective provided by traditional natural history, the insight offered by the local American Indian experience, the knowledge revealed by the archaeological record, and information uncovered by current computer-based imaging and landscape analysis technologies.

For two days, registrants and guests will walk the grounds of Stratford Hall estate, visiting long-buried archaeological sites, American Indian landscapes, forests, fields, and streams, and in turn, discovering how a wider and deeper view of a landscape may be achieved through shared observations.

Guest authorities on site will include Dr. Jeff Kirwan, emeritus professor of Forestry at Virginia Tech, noted author, and nationally-respected botanical expert; Deanna Beacham, American Indian program specialist for the Virginia Governor’s office, and consultant on Virginia and Chesapeake Bay Indians; Dr. Douglas Sanford, Prince B. Woodard Chair of Historic Preservation and Professor of Historic Preservation at the University of Mary Washington; and Dr. Eric MacDonald, Assistant Professor at the University of Georgia’s College of Environment and Design.

Reading the Landscape at Stratford Hall will offer attendees an opportunity to deepen their understanding of human and natural history as revealed in the land. This event is intended for those who would like to discover new ways of experiencing places they thought they already knew.

The symposium will benefit environmental educators and planners, civic and political leaders, landowners, conservation policy makers, landscape architects, historic landscape managers, and anyone who is actively involved with community or public decision-making, as well as academic and research professionals. The symposium will provide participants with opportunities to discuss, share, and learn through presentations and on-site exploration, all offered in a collaborative and collegial atmosphere.

Space in the program is limited to 40 participants. The program fee is $435, $385 for members of Friends of Stratford. Lodging is available at Stratford Hall for an additional fee of $128.15 per night per person. To register or request additional information, please email rsvp@StratfordHall.org or leave a voicemail message at (804) 493-8038 ext. 7787.
Our Friends of Stratford Committees continue to promote Stratford around the area by hosting events to thank donors and introduce Stratford to new audiences.

Charlottesville Friends of Stratford

in Charlottesville on July 27, about 70 people gathered at the home of Anne and Thad Jones. The Jones, along with fellow Friends of Stratford members Michelle and Joe Jennings, hosted the gathering that brought together longtime supporters with several people who were just learning about Stratford Hall and our important mission of education, preservation and research. Several RELMA Directors were on hand, along with former Stratford Executive Director RADM Thomas E. Bass III to discuss history, education and the Lees role in the origin of our nation.

Delaware Friends of Stratford

RELMA President Martha Anne Jackson will host a gathering of the Delaware Friends of Stratford this fall. Executive Director Paul Reber will be on hand to discuss what’s going on at Stratford Hall, to thank some of our longtime supporters and to meet people who are interested in learning more about us.

Fredericksburg Friends of Stratford

The Fredericksburg Committee is planning their annual event for October 14. Ann Sears and Tom Wack will host the event at their home. We look forward to this opportunity to thank many of our Friends of Stratford donors and to share Stratford's story with new acquaintances.

Become a Friend of Stratford and Plan Your Visit Today!

Now is a perfect time to take advantage of all the benefits of a Friends of Stratford membership. Cardholders receive free admission so you can 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 where you might 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 your subscription to The Chronicle continues, so you don’t miss out on all the exciting things happening at Stratford Hall. Join us today!
One of the new fun activities being included to this year’s wine festival will be a wine stomp. Participants will be able to stomp in barrels of Chambersin grapes. Everyone taking part can get an optional photo and an “I stomped at the Stratford Hall Chesapeake Bay Wine Festival” certificate for $2. Tee shirts with the same slogan will also be available for purchase. And yes, there will be towels and hoses for clean up!

So 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.

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. To get updated information on the festival, visit Stratford’s website at www.StratfordHall.org.

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 www.chesapeakebaywinefestival.com, 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.

Attendees sample the many great wines available from vineyards along the Chesapeake Bay Wine Trail.
Planned Giving
Futuri Society members to be honored in October

Members of The Futuri Society choose to leave their legacy at Stratford Hall, ensuring that Stratford’s goals of preservation, education and research can be sustained and furthered for the benefit of future generations. Becoming a part of the Futuri Society allows you to incorporate your desire to support Stratford Hall into your overall estate plan.

On Saturday, October 15 Stratford Hall will honor those who have made plans to support Stratford Hall through their estates. Board members, supporters, staff and other guests will gather to thank those who have joined the Futuri Society and to memorialize those whose gifts have been realized.

If you would like to join this important group in showing your lifelong commitment to Stratford, we hope you will consider making arrangements through your estate. Along with your gift to Stratford for future generations, a planned gift can provide you with lifetime income, reward you with a substantial income tax deduction, or reduce your tax burden and that of your heirs. The Futuri Society offers other benefits as well, including special recognition and inclusion in exclusive Stratford Hall events like the one on October 15.

You may have already taken this important step, and provided for Stratford Hall in your estate. If you have, please let us know so that we can recognize you for this generous commitment. You can contact Regina Pitts at 804-493-8038 ext. 8919 or rpitts@StratfordHall.org with questions or for assistance with your planning.

Futuri Society Members

The Lee family’s Latin motto, “Non Incautus Futuri,” means “Not Unmindful of the Future.” Through the support of these committed Futuri Society members and their planned gifts in various forms, Stratford Hall’s goals of preservation, education and research can be sustained and furthered for the benefit of future generations.

Anonymous
Mrs. Robert M. Blake
*Wellesley, MA*

Mrs. William Houston Blount
*Birmingham, AL*

Mrs. Ruth Buchanan
*Washington, DC*

Mr. and Mrs. Franklin L. Burke
*Atlanta, GA*

Mr. and Mrs. John Cowles III
*St. Paul, MN*

Mr. William Eley
*Virginia Beach, VA*

Mrs. Dorothy P. Gilbert
*Villanova, PA*

Dr. and Mrs. James C. Greene
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Mrs. Walter Speed Rowland
*Wilmington, DE*

Mrs. Hugh G. Van der Veer III
*Pittsburgh, PA*

Mrs. Beverley Watson
*Wellington, New Zealand*
Grandparent/Grandchild Summer Camps Continue to Grow as Enrollment Doubled in 2011

Hands-on experiences make camps popular with both adults and kids alike

Registration has already begun for the grandparent camps scheduled for 2012—a wise choice considering that some campers had to be turned away this summer. Enrollment in this summer’s camp program just completed doubled to 78 people.

There will be three widely spaced camps scheduled for summer 2012 to better suit everyone’s availability: June 26–28, July 10–12, and August 7–9. For registration information contact Bill Doerken, Special Programs Coordinator at (804) 493-8038 (ext. 1026) or visit the website at www.StratfordHall.org.

A significant number of campers have come back for a second (and even a third) year for a repeat of the fun or with another grandchild. The myriad of hands-on experiences include looking for shark teeth fossils, fishing, and marching as the colonial Virginia militia. Children and adults alike enjoy playing music on a recorder, trying out a harpsichord and experiencing projects in the visual arts. Campers may try their hands at bricklaying, surveying, archeology, working the tobacco field and baking a pie in the open hearth kitchen and so much more. Some new program activities are introduced in alternate years to spice things up.

Out-of-state campers may arrange to stay additional nights at Stratford to facilitate their travel arrangements and perhaps enjoy some other area sites, e.g., Washington, D.C. or Colonial Williamsburg.

Stratford’s summer camp puts the “grand” in “grandparenting.” Three days of fun-filled, educational activities offer a memorable family bonding experience while participants are re-living 18th-century life on a Virginia plantation. So be sure to make your reservations early as the camp makes an excellent Christmas present for that special grandchild.

What have participants said?

“great job of giving children an idea of life on an 18th century plantation”

“staff made every child feel special”

“loved the way children all made new friends and gained independence”

“lots of time for us (grandchild and grandparent) to enjoy things together”

“excellent. I wish all children had this opportunity”

“well thought out, organized, and thoughtfull—excellent staff”

“whole experience was wonderful and we made some delightful family memories”

A wide range of hands-on activities including fishing at the Mill pond, playing music on a recorder, and reenacting a scrimmage with the Britiib on the beach, help make the summer camps a popular choice for grandparents and their grandchildren.
Investigative Medium Laine Crosby Returns with Two Ghostly Programs this fall

Psychic Time Travel Program to be followed by the Ghosts of Stratford Hall—an Investigative Weekend

Investigative Medium Laine Crosby will return to Stratford this fall for two programs. On October 8 at 7 p.m., Laine will reprise her Psychic Time Travel program that saw a standing-room only crowd last year in the duPont Library. And on November 4–6, she will present The Ghosts of Stratford Hall—An Investigative Weekend.

In Psychic Time Travel you will learn about the life and times of the spirits of Stratford Hall that Laine has discovered on her many visits here. You will listen to the stories not found in history books, and experience the past through Laine’s eyes, body, and soul.

You’ll learn about history from those who lived it, and you’ll enjoy her conversations with the dead, and what she has learned about the other side.

Laine will share her stories of Jamestowne settlers, soldiers at Gettysburg, and slaves in her own house, the eighteenth century Maryland plantation she now calls home. You will hear about her many adventures and see her ghost pictures on the big screen.

Laine grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, and after completing her education, she worked in corporate America, juggling the work and mother dichotomy until she relocated to Maryland in 2004, and literally woke up one morning talking to dead people—and they talked back! Experience her fears, excitement and anticipation as she talks about the journey from her first profoundly clairvoyant experience to her everyday surrender and acceptance of life as she now knows it.

The Psychic Time Travel program will be held from 7 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 8, 2011 at the duPont Library. The cost is $10.00 per person. A reception will follow the program. Reservations will be accepted. For reservations or additional information, please email Jon Bachman or call 804-493-8038, ext. 1039.

The Ghosts of Stratford Hall—An Investigative Weekend will give participants the chance to investigate the paranormal while learning about history. You will hear what Laine and Mark Nesbitt have learned from the spirits on previous visits, and you will find out how to capture electronic voice phenomenon (e.v.p.), daylight spirit photography, and how to use your psychic abilities as your best instrument. You will also learn how to use high tech equipment for paranormal exploration. Investigations will be led by Laine Crosby, Ghosts of Gettysburg author Mark Nesbitt, Paranormal Expert Patty Wilson, Tech Advisor Scott Crownover, and Carol Nesbitt. The weekend is a joint venture of Stratford and TEAMGhostChannel TV. Cost of the program is $325 and includes meals and lodging at Stratford.
What’s the Buzz All About? Stratford Hall Honey!

Gift shop now features all natural honey

This summer the Cliff field has been abuzz with activity, literally, as approximately 50 beehives are now in place as the result of a cooperative effort between Stratford and Stoneleigh Farms of Warrenton, Virginia.

For its part, Stratford will be hosting and feeding the bees with plantings of sunflower, alfalfa and buckwheat, and Stoneleigh Farms will be producing the honey. Jars of honey are now available at the Stratford gift shop for $9 and online on the shop’s webpage.

Stoneleigh Farms does not use any chemicals, drugs, or other medications and heat is never applied which can destroy the beneficial ingredients of honey. The result is a pure, raw, all natural local honey containing everything the bees put into it.

As the “locally grown” and “farm to table” movements continue to gain momentum, consumers are realizing that most honey found in the grocery store is heated, blended, and mixed with honey from outside the country. Looking for a healthy alternative, consumers are seeking out pure, locally produced all natural honey.

That in turn has led Phillip Ramsey, owner of Stoneleigh Farms, to develop his unique production system. The system includes the use of polystyrofoam instead of traditional wood for the hives. This helps keep the bees cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. Ramsey has also developed an elaborate cooling system along with a natural irritant to bee mites to help his hives produce 225 to 250 pounds of honey a year versus the 85 pounds of honey most beekeepers get from their traditional wooden hives.

For more information on Stoneleigh Farms, visit www.stoneleighfarms.com. To order Stratford Honey, visit the gift shop in person, order by phone at 804-493-8038 ext.9796, or online at www.StratfordHall.org.

The Stars to Come Out On the Oval

Solar and star gazing part of free astronomy event

The movement of the stars and planets were signatures of the seasons to the Lees of Stratford Hall. By the mid 18th-century rapid advances were being made in the science of astronomy: the determination of the spherical shape of planets, and the mapping of the moon, the recording of the first return in 1758 of Halley’s Comet, and the observation of the aurora borealis by Benjamin Franklin.

Visitors to Stratford Hall on the afternoon and evening of October 1 will have their opportunity, free of charge, for astronomical exploration. On that date, members of the Rappahannock Astronomy Club (RAC) will be conducting a solar observing session and star party on the Oval, in front of the Great House. One of the most important aspects of RAC is to educate the public about astronomy and to raise awareness of the negative aspects of light pollution. With limited nighttime light sources in the immediate vicinity of Stratford’s location, the Oval is perfect for star gazing.

This free event, weather permitting, will begin with solar observing at 4:00 p.m. Making use of the club’s solar telescope the club will conduct a completely safe viewing of the sun. The solar observing will provide exciting views of solar prominences, sunspots and temperature dependent granulations visible on the solar disk. Needless to say, one should never look directly at the sun without the presence of expert help and use of proper safe solar filtering equipment. The solar observations will begin at 4:00 p.m., with sunset at 6:53 p.m. and star party to follow.

Star parties are evening observing sessions at which RAC amateur astronomers make their telescopes available for public viewing of the night sky. The visitors will be treated to views of the Moon in crescent phase in the early evening. As the sky darkens, the constellation Cygnus the Swan, with its rich Milky Way star fields and colorful star systems, will be high overhead. The planets Uranus and Neptune will be visible in the eastern sky, and Jupiter will rise late.

RAC outreach events are primarily telescopic observing sessions, with a minimum of astronomy history and theory. The focus is on the workings of amateur telescopes and the nature of objects that can be viewed with small telescopes. There are no slide shows or tutorial presentations. Introducing astronomy to the public is an important part of Rappahannock Astronomy Club’s mission.
Order Your Gift Baskets from the Stratford Hall Gift Shop in Time for Christmas 2011!

These wonderful gift baskets, filled with Stratford products, are available from the Stratford Hall 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. Visit us on the web at www.StratfordHall.org.

Gift Baskets

**Stratford Holiday Basket**
Includes a 3-pound Virginia Hamlet (fully cooked and boneless), Apple Chutney and Sweet Potato Butter.  
$75.00

**Stratford Party Basket**
Includes Virginia Peanuts, Vidalia Onion & Peach Salsa and Pepper Jelly.  
$38.00

**Taste of Stratford**
Includes Fruit Cake, Strawberry Preserves and Apple Chutney  
$38.00

**Breakfast Basket**
Includes Stratford Grits, Pancake Flour and Stratford Honey.  
$30.00

**Stratford Cornmeal Gift Box**
Includes a 2-pound Bag of White Cornmeal Ground at Stratford, Reproduction Seasoned Mini Corn Breadstick Pan and Booklet of Southern Cornmeal Recipes compiled from the Family Archives of the Georgia Director for the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association.  
$20.00

Order Today!

**BILLING:**

Name __________________________________________________
Address _________________________________________________
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**SHIPPING:** ☐ Same as above

Name __________________________________________________
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Subtotal __________
VA residents add 5% sales tax __________
Shipping and Handling (add $12.95 per basket) __________

Total __________

**CREDIT CARD:**

Charge to: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard
Card#: ____________________________________________
Exp. Date: ____________ Security Code: ____________
Signature: _______________________________________

Please make checks payable to: Robert E. Lee Memorial Association, Inc. (RELMA)

December 15—last date to order for Christmas delivery. Additional charge for oversized boxes and air service. No discount on gift baskets.
Calendar of Events
For more info visit StratfordHall.org

October 8
Psychic Time Travel: History Through the Eyes of Investigative Medium Laine Crosby
Join us for an unforgettable evening with noted paranormal researcher, and journey back in time to days long gone. Learn about the life and times of the spirits of Stratford Hall who find this beautiful estate so difficult to leave. 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

October 22–23
Reading the Landscape at Stratford Hall
This is the fourth in a series of cultural landscape seminars offered by Stratford Hall. This year Dr. Eric MacDonald and students from the University of Georgia will join a team of noted naturalists as they decode the history of Stratford Hall landscape from the prehistoric to the present.

October 29
Historical Haunts
Featuring special “ghost tours” of the Great House, Halloween crafts and refreshments. This is a family-friendly activity that is suitable for children and adults of all ages. 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. No reservations are required. All activities will begin in the Visitor Center. Join us for a spooky good time.

November 4–6
The Ghosts of Stratford Hall: An Investigative Weekend
Laine Crosby and her colleagues, America’s top experts on the paranormal, will demonstrate techniques and methods and share their mission. An “out of this world” experience! This is a three-day workshop and will include meals and lodging at Stratford.

November 24
Thanksgiving Dinner
Stratford Hall’s Dining Director Benedicte Merian invites you to join us for a traditional southern feast. This event is a sell-out every year, so make your reservations early! Dinner seating at noon and 3 p.m. Dinner and lodging are available by reservation only. Visit the website for the complete menu.

December 10
1774: A Stratford Hall Christmastide
Experience the Lees’ Great House as they might have known it December 10, 1774. This immersive and self-guided experience will offer a deeper insight into the life and times of late 18th-century Stratford Hall. The event will include spirited conversation with living history persons, live music and dance of the 18th century, craft making and refreshments. 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Make dining and lodging reservations early.