Grants Help New Historic House Tour Model Move Forward

Following the efforts of Stratford’s national “Rediscovering the Historic House: Creating a New Model for the Visitor Experience” symposium held in October 2009, Stratford has received two grants totaling $25,000 to help in the planning phase of a new tour model for the historic house.

“We are grateful for the support from both The Fidelity Foundation and from The 1772 Foundation for this essential project,” said Paul Reber, Executive Director. “Our ultimate goal for this project is to create a new model for the visitor experience that is replicable, will attract larger audiences and enable Stratford and other historic house museums to be more compelling and relevant educational institutions.”

Since the public opening of Mount Vernon in 1852, the house tour has been the mainstay of historic house museum programming. Virtually no other form of attraction has remained as stagnant as one. One result is that many house museums have seen declining visitation and many have closed their doors. Changing audience expectations, competition from other attractions, increasingly expensive preservation standards, and the need for paid staff contribute to declining visitation and financial instability.

To address the issue, Stratford’s Rediscovering the Historic House symposium brought together a diverse team, including representatives from a socially-conscious gaming company, a social studies teacher, a consultant from an audience research firm, a professor in storytelling, an exhibit designer, a cultural reporter, a leader in historic house museums, and the director of a museum studies program.

The symposium was divided into two days, the first of which the team worked together to develop new ideas for programming using Stratford as a case study. On the second day the experts presented their findings to other museum professionals who attended the conference from several cities along the East Coast.

As a result of that conference, 90 percent of attendees stated that they would recommend the conference and/or proceedings to their colleagues, 81 percent requested a follow-up in six months to a year and 70 percent of the audience left with specific ideas to implement at their sites. Over fifty percent of those attending responded that they would like to participate in a pilot project to develop a new visitor experience based on the ideas and technologies presented.

With planning funding now in-hand, Stratford will be serving as the lead organization for a project to plan a new visitor experience for up to six pilot sites. This new experience will be based on the art of storytelling, gaming strategies, smart phone technologies, and the use of sensory elements. It will also include significant new media content, including web sites, blogs and videos designed to enhance the pre- and post-visit experience.
On several occasions in his recent State of the Union address, the President emphasized the need for greater attention to math and science education. This has become a standard refrain across our country in recent years as we compete with India and China’s apparent success creating the high tech jobs of the 21st century. In our renewed rush to create a new generation of American engineers, scientists and mathematicians, however, the significance and importance of the humanities are being lost.

This trend has not gone unnoticed. Recently, University of Chicago Law Professor Martha Nussbaum in her book, “Not for Profit,” made a compelling case that education should not focus solely on teaching job skills that are profitable in the global marketplace, but it should also challenge the mind to be active, competent and thoughtfully critical in a complex world. To achieve the latter objective our education system must produce students who are competent in literature, history and philosophy as well as math and science.

Nussbaum is a philosopher, and I may differ with her on the order of priorities, but there is indeed a real danger that the humanities are increasingly marginalized in our modern society. The challenge is not in our institutions of higher education that have long been devoted to a broad liberal arts education, but in our primary and secondary schools where a combination of federal policy and the demands of the marketplace undervalue the study of humanistic pursuits.

In a nation increasingly concerned with its standing in the global marketplace, it is easy to understand the inclination to place more value on math and science. As Nussbaum reminds us, the Chinese are more interested in a citizen who can contribute to economic growth than one who is trained to think critically about their government. Critical thinking skills are essential in a democratic society like the United States, where citizens are required to make a choice between competing ideas and philosophies at the ballot box.

Nussbaum is correct to remind us of the importance of the study of the humanities and to urge that they not be lost in the rush to sustain our global competitiveness. What Nussbaum fails to mention is that these skills cannot be sustained through our educational system alone. Good citizenship requires that we have regular reminders about the lessons of the past, the virtues of ancient philosophy and the imagination of great authors.

It is precisely for this purpose that museums like Stratford Hall were created. The Lees, in particular, are useful examples of how the study of history and philosophy has shaped our nation’s history. If the Lees and their peers had studied math and science only, Virginia would likely still be a British colony. Museums have an obligation and responsibility to fulfill this purpose by making the stories of these people useful and accessible to the widest possible audience.

If you have been reading our newsletter carefully during the past two years, you will note we have made significant investments that will enable us to fulfill our obligation to our visitors and the Lees more effectively. Perhaps the stories of no other American family can better help us understand how the study of history and philosophy can shape ideas and ultimately influence the course of human events. These initial improvements are the first elements of a much broader effort to make Stratford Hall a more compelling and relevant historical attraction. We thank you for the support of these efforts and hope to see you here.

Paul C. Reber
Executive Director
May 7 & 8, 2011
CONCERT and COACHING ON THE OVAL at Stratford Hall

Coaching has been a Stratford Hall tradition for nearly 40 years. This year join us on Mother’s Day for a special celebration with your grandmothers, mothers and daughters. As well as traditional coaches and carriages, you will see…

Antique cars
Heritage breed animals
Sheepherding demonstrations
Tailgate competition
Artisans, crafters & food vendors
Sarah Schwarz, Slack Rope Artist
Grammy-nominated artist Adrienne Young-Ramsey

and an opportunity to help preserve Stratford Hall’s vital place in history.

*Events on May 7 for event sponsors and benefactors. General Admission tickets for May 8 events (listed above). Tickets and Sponsorships available online at www.StratfordHall.org or call 804.493.8038 x 8919.
**Blue Ridge Friends of Stratford Committee**

The Blue Ridge Friends of Stratford Committee held a luncheon and flower-arranging demonstration on November 10, 2010, in Middleburg, Virginia. Executive Director Paul Reber gave an update on Stratford’s activities and upcoming programs. Following lunch, Louise Lynn, floral designer and member of the National Cathedral Flower Guild, gave a flower-arranging demonstration. Special thanks to Susan Wallace, Blue Ridge Chairman and the members of the Blue Ridge Committee for planning such a successful event.

**District of Columbia Friends of Stratford Committee**

On January 16, the District of Columbia Friends of Stratford Committee and the History Department of American University hosted a lecture and reception at the Katzen Arts Center at American University. Sumpter Priddy presented “Rediscovering the Federal Furniture of Washington D.C. 1795-1820” to a crowd of over 150 people. The event honored the life of the late Nancy Flather, former Director for the District of Columbia. Special thanks to Flather & Perkins, Inc. for sponsoring the event and Susan Lloyd Graham, District of Columbia Chairman and the members of the District of Columbia Friends of Stratford Committee for planning and organizing the event.

**Richmond Friends of Stratford Committee**

Several events were held in Richmond, Virginia to commemorate Robert E. Lee’s 204th birthday. On January 16, the Richmond Friends of Stratford Committee held a special wreath-laying ceremony in the State Capitol. Mr. S. Waite Rawles III gave the keynote speech. A wreath was placed at the Robert E. Lee statue in the old hall of the House of Delegates.

On January 19, Carol and Ted Price hosted a cocktail party at their home. Carol Price, Stratford’s Virginia Director, welcomed Richmond area guests and other members of the Board of Directors as they observed Robert E. Lee’s birthday.

Left to right: Mary Blair, Ellie and Olivia McLean place wreath at the Robert E. Lee statue.
Several summer camp programs have proved to be so successful that they have been included as one of Stratford’s school field trip offerings. Through these field trips, thousands of students are instructed and inspired by the Stratford story. One of these activities is “Duty Calls.”

In “Duty Calls,” the young recruits are inducted into the Virginia Militia, and then drilled into a precision (well, not quite precision) military group. They also experience hands-on, making a musket cartridge and, with one snip of the scissors, cutting a star for the so-called Betsy Ross flag. There are, of course, many educational and fun-filled activities that are unique to the summer grandparent/grandchild camps.

To obtain details about the myriad of 18th century activities at summer camp, go to Stratford’s web site www.StratfordHall.org or call (804) 493-8038 (ext. 1026).

Camp Coordinator Bill Doerken is pleased that advance enrollments for 2011 have exceeded expectations and an additional camp session has been added. The grandparent/grandchild camp dates are: July 12-14, July 19-21, and August 2-4.

This year a discount is being offered to families exceeding two campers and to repeat campers. The cost of the camps is $310 per person for the three days, including comfortable lodging and all meals.

It is rewarding to see how many grandparents come back for a second (and even a third) summer—usually with a different grandchild. One pair of grandparents is coming with three grandchildren. What a wonderful family bonding experience—one that they will remember for a lifetime.

"Staff overlooked nothing… a delight to be part of this program"

"My granddaughter and I had a wonderful time, lots of bonding, fun and learning together"

"Captivating, content-full, well-paced, a gem of a setting"
Cheek Guest House
Renovations Underway

Lodging makes a perfect place for group meetings and retreats

Following a total make-over for the Astor Guest House in 2009, renovations are now underway on the Cheek Guest House. With 15 guest rooms, the Cheek Guest House is the larger of Stratford Hall's two lodging facilities. Originally completed in 1980, with an addition in 1986, the Cheek Guest House is named for the late Mary Tyler Cheek McClenahan, former Director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and Stratford Director from Virginia.

Major renovations underway this off-season include adding soundproofing to the bedroom walls, installation of individual room heating and air conditioning units, as well as new carpeting. A second bedroom has also been made handicapped accessible.

Tucked into a quiet, wooded area, the Cheek Guest House features a spacious living room where guests can chat, read, or watch TV. The large deck off the living room is a tranquil spot to relax and enjoy the natural beauty of Stratford.

Guest rooms have either two twin beds or a king-sized bed and are equipped with private baths, electric coffeepots and wireless Internet access. The Cheek guest house is conveniently located within walking distance of Stratford's other lodging facilities and the dining room.

In addition to overnight accommodations, Stratford also has several facilities available for use for meetings and events. They include the Council House, the duPont room in the Jessie Ball duPont Memorial Library and the Preservation Gallery in the Visitor Center. And Stratford's Dining Room can cater your event.

From the magnificent view of the Potomac River to the formal gardens and quiet nature trails, Stratford is a great place to stay for your next group meeting. For more information on our lodging and meeting facilities, visit our website at www.StratfordHall.org or call 804-493-8038 ext. 9696.
Planned Giving
Futuri Society Recognizes Those Not Unmindful of the Future

How Planning Ahead Can Benefit You and Your Family

The Lee family’s Latin motto, *Non Incautus 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 their decisions would have on future generations.

Today, *Non Incautus 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 preserved and furthered for the benefit of future generations.

Charitable trusts, gift annuities, and bequests can benefit you, your family and your charity of choice. You and your family may benefit from substantial tax savings. 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 be recognized as a member of the Futuri Society.
Calendar of Events
For more info visit StratfordHall.org

**April 23**

**Easter Egg Hunt on the Oval**
Sponsored by the Northern Neck Lodge 32 of the Fraternal Order of Police, this annual event is free for participants and their parents. Event begins 11 a.m. sharp on the Oval. No rain date. Be sure to bring your own basket or bag to collect eggs. Prizes are awarded in several age categories.

**May 7-8**

**Concert & Coaching on the Oval**
Coaching has been a Stratford Hall tradition for nearly 40 years. This year join us on Mother’s Day for a special celebration with your grandmothers, mothers and daughters. As well as traditional coaches and carriages, you will see antique cars, heritage breed animals, tailgate competition, artisans, crafters and food vendors, as well as Grammy-nominated artist Adrienne Young-Ramsey. General admission and tailgating tickets are available online at www.StratfordHall.org

**May 21**

**Traditional Trades Fair**
Join site preservation specialists, members of the Preservation Trades Network, Midwest Tool Collectors, trades and food vendors for a fascinating day of exhibition, demonstration and discussions. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**June 4**

**Lees and Independence**
Enjoy activities for kids, Revolutionary War re-enactors, a book signing from noted author Jim Thompson and an unforgettable appearance by Richard Henry Lee himself. Enjoy an outdoor concert and presentations from the Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society and the George Washington Young Friends. This free event is in honor of the two Lee brother signers of the Declaration of Independence and their kinsman “Light Horse Harry” Lee. 3 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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The Chronicle is a newsletter published quarterly by the Marketing and Public Relations Department. The Robert E. Lee Memorial Association is a private, non-profit organization that has owned and operated Stratford since 1929.

Stratford preserves the physical and intellectual legacy of the Lee family and its plantation community to inspire an appreciation of our nation’s past and encourages people to pursue the Lees’ ideals of leadership, independent thought and civic responsibility.

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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.