Heritage Breed Devon Cattle Returning in Numbers to Fields at Stratford

There has been a tradition of livestock at Stratford Hall stretching back to the 18th century and continued intermittently since the acquisition of Stratford Hall by the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association in 1929. A small herd of Devon cattle, a historic breed, has been maintained since the termination of the last active cattle program in 2003.

Through a new partnership with Lakota Farms, one of America's foremost sustainable Devon producers, Stratford is once again home to a significant cattle operation. This winter 46 Devon cattle took up residence in the Poplar strip and nearby fields. This new program will be about more than just production—it will provide our visitors with an opportunity to get a close-up view of these animals and to learn the issues related to their care. Lakota is a grass-feeding producer, so its values are consistent with our growing organic program.

Devon cattle were an integral part of agriculture in Southwest England. Records of red cattle in that section of England date from as early as 23 B.C. It is thought that Devon cattle developed from the same strains which ultimately produced the Hereford and the Sussex.

Devon cattle came to America in 1623 as a shipment of “red cattle” brought from England to the Massachusetts colony. According to an article on Devons in the *Colonel Williamsburg Interpreter*, an advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* in 1775 listed a “red cow and calf” and a “red steer” among strays taken from a plantation in Hanover County. “Red cattle” probably would have been found at Stratford in the 18th century. Livestock inventories and tax records of Thomas Lee, Philip Ludwell Lee and “Light Horse Harry” Lee list numerous cattle and oxen.

In colonial times the Devon’s foraging and milking abilities and its strength made it an excellent multi-purpose breed. But Devons fell out of favor in the 20th century as other breeds were developed for a single purpose, such as being milk producers or beef feedlot cattle, while mechanization replaced the need for oxen.

Milking Devon cattle almost became extinct in the United States in the 1970s and still are listed as “critical” by the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy. Beef Devons are now on the rebound and are listed as “recovering” by the Conservancy. As farming returns to its organic roots, so Devon cattle have also returned to Stratford Hall in numbers.
Increasing income and wealth inequality has been the subject of enormous debate in recent months and will surely be a significant issue in the upcoming presidential election. It is not my intention to comment on tax policy; we will leave that to the politicians. However, it will be no surprise to readers of this column that I believe a little historical perspective may be useful to this very important debate.

Economic historians view the issue of the equality of wealth distribution during the colonial period from two perspectives: one group argues that wealth distribution was stable and a second argues it was increasing. These two perspectives have important implications for our understanding of the American Revolution. Increasingly unequal wealth distribution implies that the motivations for revolution may have been related to the need to either protect or undermine the established economic order. On the other hand, stable wealth distribution would support the notion that the American Revolution was about the protection of democratic ideals.

It needs to be noted that the present debate in America is about income inequality, not wealth inequality. There was no income tax or Internal Revenue Service during the colonial period, so historians have to rely on data that reflect individual wealth like probate documents and records of land ownership and other property. In any event, wealth is a good proxy for income. These data generally reflect a society where a small number of individuals had significant assets and property, a large middle class owned some property and a third group owned nothing at all. These distributions varied from colony to colony. Significant differences in wealth inequality were found in the South, where large landowners controlled extensive amounts of land and slaves. The most equal wealth distribution was in the middle colonies, especially Pennsylvania, where slavery was not as prevalent and the population was dominated by small landholders. Pennsylvania was referred to as “the best poor man’s country” for good reason.

Evidence from colonial probate inventories shows the top ten percent of the population holding anywhere from 30 to 50 percent of the wealth in rural and urban areas in the North. In the South, the top ten percent held a little more than 50 percent of the wealth. In 2007 the top ten percent received 72 percent of the total income. The much discussed one percent received 34.6 percent. Since 1922 the percentage of wealth held by the one percent has varied between 44.4 percent in 1929 and 19.9 in 1976. These two numbers are evidence of how the composition of wealth and income has changed since the colonial period. Both 1929 and 1976 represented periods of dramatic boom or decline in financial markets, which did not exist until late in the 18th century and did not play a major role in American wealth creation until late in the 19th century. Before then, wealth was primarily composed of real property. In this respect, one percent of the people in the colonial period were very much in the same boat as many of their less affluent neighbors: when land prices declined, all landowners were affected.

Another important idea to consider is wealth destruction. During the last economic downturn, this destruction had a far greater impact on the 99 percent than the 1 percent because 99 percent of the population held a greater portion of their wealth in real estate. As we all know, the decline in real estate values was at the heart of the recent recession. Financial markets have recovered much of their value. Wealth destruction, however, has often had dramatic effects on members of the one percent, knocking them out of this distinguished group entirely. This is certainly the case with the Lees. Because of their financial setbacks late in the 18th century, excessive use of leverage, and partible inheritances, very little of the enormous wealth accumulated by Thomas Lee remained by the turn of the 19th century. Difficult financial circumstances left Robert E. Lee’s mother dependent on the charity of family and friends. This volatile nature of wealth is precisely the argument made by economist Robert Frank in his recent book, The High Beta Rich. Eighteenth-century Americans didn’t need to read Frank’s book to know the one percent may not be the same one percent for long. Consequently, there is very little evidence to suggest that wealth inequality had anything to do with the American Revolution. It did have a lot to do with the distribution of political power, but we will leave that idea for a future column.

Paul C. Reber
Executive Director
Civil War Programs Will Commemorate the 150th Anniversary

Songs and Remembrances: Civil War on the Northern Neck: May 19; Surgery and Medical Advances during the Civil War: November 3

Two special programs on the Civil War are being offered this year in addition to the annual Robert E. Lee Symposium on Civil War History.

**Songs and Remembrances** will provide an opportunity to listen and learn about memories of the Civil War as it was waged on the Northern Neck of Virginia. In cooperation with the Library of Virginia’s 150th Legacy Project, this event will be held on May 19, 2012, from 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Admission is $10 adults/$5 children/children under 5 free; Friends of Stratford and donors to Library of Virginia Project also qualify for free admission for this event.

Activities scheduled include: performance of Civil War music by the Chamber Chorale of Fredericksburg; local tips on researching your Civil War ancestor by genealogy expert Laura Hazel; bivouac on the Oval by Civil War re-enactors of Company H, 53rd Virginia; and digitization of photographs and Civil War-related documents by Library of Virginia staff members for inclusion in their 150th Legacy Project.

The Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission and the Library of Virginia have partnered to create a state-wide online collection of original Civil War manuscripts that still remain in private hands. Bring your treasures to the duPont Library from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and they will be recorded for posterity. Donors to the project will have free admission to the event. Appointments are encouraged and a limited number of walk-ins will be accommodated. Following the digitization process, donors may elect to have a CD made of their scanned images, which will be mailed to them after the event.

**Surgery and Medical Advances during the Civil War** symposium will be held on November 3, 2012. Some of the topics to be covered in this one-day symposium are: the emergence of modern emergency room methodologies, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the Civil War soldier, African Americans in medicine during the Civil War era, and an overview of Civil War medical practices.

The symposium fee is $75.00. Lunch is optional and available in Stratford Hall Dining Room. Because of limited seating, early registration is recommended. This program is free to Friends of Stratford. To register for, or to get more information about this program, please either e-mail rsvp@stratfordhall.org, call Jon Bachman at 804-493-1972, or leave a voice-mail message at 804-493-8038, ext. 7787.
Friends of Stratford Committees Host Events

Our Friends of Stratford Committees and Board of Directors continue to promote Stratford around the area and the country by hosting events to thank donors and introduce Stratford and the heritage of the Lee family to new audiences.

District of Columbia

The District of Columbia Friends of Stratford Committee held a lecture and reception at American University on January 15. There were nearly 100 people in attendance. Jeffrey Wirt, noted Civil War expert and author, was the featured speaker. His works include *A Glorious Army: Robert E. Lee’s Triumph, 1862-1863*.

Florida

Ted and Carol Price, Past RELMA President and Virginia Director, hosted a Robert E. Lee birthday party at their home in Vero Beach on January 16. The party was an opportunity to honor Robert E. Lee, as well as to thank donors and introduce Stratford Hall to new guests. Many other members of the Board of Directors also attended this special evening.

Richmond, Virginia

The Richmond Friends of Stratford Committee held its annual wreath laying to commemorate Robert E. Lee’s birthday. On January 22, according to custom, this year’s event was held in the Old House Chamber of the State Capitol in Richmond where a wreath was placed at the Robert E. Lee statue. Stratford’s Executive Director, Paul C. Reber, was the keynote speaker.

Alexandria, Virginia

The Alexandria Friends of Stratford Committee hosted its annual reception on March 8. This year’s event was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Montague, IV. This event was a great evening that allowed us to meet and thank so many of our Northern Virginia donors and supporters of Stratford Hall.

Become a Friend of Stratford and Plan Your Visit Today!

The spring and summer months are perfect times 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 804-493-8919, 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 won’t miss out on all the exciting things happening at Stratford Hall. Join us today!
Join us for an event for the whole family…and it’s FREE! Come to Stratford Hall on June 2 from 4:30–8:30 p.m. and enjoy displays, pony rides, games, barrel rides, a band concert, a cartoonist, colonial games, Great House tours, food and much, much more.

Blending fun and showcasing our deep involvement with one of the most crucial events in American history, Lees and Independence Family Fun Festival celebrates the date June 7, 1776, when Richard Henry Lee introduced the resolution for independence to the Continental Congress:

“Resolved, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.”

This resolution led to the writing, and subsequent adoption, of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. Richard Henry Lee and his brother, Francis Lightfoot Lee, were the only two brothers to sign the Declaration of Independence.

Come celebrate with us! On hand for the event will be: Frank Megargee will portray Richard Henry Lee; Phil McKenney, a local artist, providing caricatures; the Westmoreland County 4-H Livestock Association displaying miniature animals; the George Washington’s Young Friends demonstrating colonial games; the Washington and Lee High School Band providing a concert from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Treakle’s Trains providing barrel rides for kids and adults; Blymeyer’s Pony Rides offering rides for the kids; and tours of the Great House and food will also be available.

Schedule of Activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Event Begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30-8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Westmoreland Co. 4-H Livestock Association exhibit near Coach House</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30-8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Treakle’s Train — a barrel ride for all ages</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30-8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Phil McKenney, cartoonist, draws free caricatures</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30-8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Colonial games</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30-8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Signing the Declaration of Independence activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30-8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Stratford Dining Room food tent</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30-8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Colonial dress up and photos</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00-7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Great House tours</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00-8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Blymeyer Pony Rides</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00-8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Washington &amp; Lee High School Band Concert</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Gate closes</td>
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Make a Significant Impact with a Planned Gift

Stratford Hall’s Futuri Society offers donors the opportunity to make a lasting legacy through planned gifts such as bequests, named endowments, Charitable Lead Trusts, Charitable Remainder Trusts, and Charitable Gift Annuities. As you think about estate planning, please consider making Stratford Hall a beneficiary to continue your philanthropic legacy.

We are very honored to be the recipient of several recent bequests. These special gifts will have a lasting impact on the preservation, research and education programs at Stratford Hall for many years to come. We would like to thank the following donors who generously named Stratford Hall in their estate plans:

- William Eley
  *Virginia Beach, VA*

- Mary B. Hamilton
  *Richmond, VA*

- Ethel Riley
  *St. Simons Island, GA*

- Anne C. Williams
  *Arlington, VA*

Help us honor the Lee Family motto, *Non Incautus Futuri: be not unmindful of the future*. By making a planned gift now, you will help sustain Stratford’s future while also ensuring that your individual needs and long term estate goals are met. If you are interested in learning more about the Futuri Society, please contact the Development Office at 804-493-8919 or rpitts@stratfordhall.org.
Where Generations Come Together

2012 Camp is being offered in June, July and August

Stratford Hall’s summer Grandparent/Grandchild Camp is a “wonderful opportunity to bond with grandchildren”, according to a grandmother from a past camp. She added, “That’s happening while you both are learning so much about the Revolutionary period, the Lees of Virginia and life on a plantation like Stratford.”

There are three opportunities to enjoy Stratford’s Grandparent/Grandchild camps this summer: June 26-28, July 10-12, and August 7-9. Campers are advised to register early because space is limited. Many grandparents come back for a second or third summer, sometimes bringing a different grandchild each summer. Grandfather John Elliott said that “camp exceeded expectations.” Grandparents Lynn and Art Gambell added, “We cherish every moment we can spend with our grandchildren.”

Grandparents may register on-line at www.stratfordhall.org or by contacting camp coordinator, Bill Doerken, at (804) 493-8038 or email bdoerken@stratfordhall.org.

The camp tuition, $330 dollars per person, includes not only a wonderful three days of hands-on activities taking campers back to the 18th-century lifestyle, but all meals in the Stratford Dining Room and comfortable accommodations in the air-conditioned Cheek Guest House.

The camps feature activities such as blacksmithing, dancing, finding shark teeth fossils on the Stratford beach, archaeology, ghost hunting, colonial games, and history-based drawing and music activities. Children enjoy re-enacting a 1781 British skirmish at the Stratford Potomac River landing, defended by Richard Henry Lee and the Virginia militia. This activity concludes with a solemn “burial” of a British soldier in the sand. One of the camp activities may be seen on the Stratford Hall section of YouTube—an 18th-century bucket brigade, “Fire in the Henhouse.”

Stratford’s camp programs offer the experience of a lifetime at the home of the Lees of Virginia, key figures in our country’s early history, by bringing to life the land, the lives and the legacy of the Lees.
Calendar of Events
For more details visit StratfordHall.org

April 21
Birding at Stratford: Songs and Calls: No Idle Chatter
This talk by Andrew Dolby, PhD, will introduce the anatomy, physiology, and ecology of bird song along with modern tools that are being used to decipher their hidden messages. For the birds, singing is serious business. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

May 5
Yoga Fitness for Gardeners
This user-friendly, chair-based instruction with Kay Hawkins, Certified Yoga Instructor and Therapist, helps you prepare for, and recover from, the demands of gardening. No yoga experience is necessary. A tour of Stratford’s gardens will round out the day. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

May 9
Down on the Farm Tour
The Northern Neck Down on the Farm Tour 2012 will take place Saturday, May 12, at seven farms in King George and Westmoreland Counties. The farms to be featured are: Stratford Hall, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Ingleside Winery, Westmoreland Berry Farm, Waterloo Farm, Friendly Cottage Farm, and Evening Skies Alpacas. The farms will be open to the public from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The farm tour is free of charge, and food will be available for purchase at various locations on the tour.

May 19
Songs and Remembrances: the Civil War on the Northern Neck
Enjoy a concert by the Chamber Choral of Fredericksburg and visit with Civil War re-enactors. Also, in cooperation with the Library of Virginia, Stratford will host The Civil War Legacy Project, an opportunity to have historic documents scanned to preserve their valuable content. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Important Notice: Our Phone Numbers Have Changed!
Please note that, when calling us, phone numbers for the various departments at Stratford Hall have now been changed. The main number remains 804-493-8038, but departments and staff can now be reached through a direct line number. Below are numbers for the main departments that you may need to contact. If there is a number you need but don’t see here, please contact us at the main number. Thank you for your patience as we institute the new system.

Visitor Center 804-493-8038
Accounting 804-493-1977
Collections 804-493-1943
Friends of Stratford 804-493-8919
Dining Room 804-493-1968
Education, Programs, Camps 804-493-1973
Gift Shop 804-493-1969
Lodging 804-493-1968
Library 804-493-1940
Preservation 804-493-1975
Public Relations 804-493-1971

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.

Executive Director: Paul Reber
Editor: Jim Schepmoes

Questions, comments and address changes should be directed to:
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Phone: 804-493-1971
Fax: 804-493-0333
www.StratfordHall.org

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.

Join us on Facebook!
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