



*Image courtesy of Sweet Tea Photography.*

# 2013 Annual Report

*Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden*

VIRGINIA TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

614 Oronoco Street

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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## **I. Executive Summary**

The Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden is a historic home and garden in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia. Built in 1785 by Phillip R. Fendall of Maryland on land purchased from his cousin, General Henry “Lighthorse Harry” Lee, the House was home to 37 members of the Lee family until 1903. The Downham family purchased the house in 1903, living in it until 1931. Labor activist John L. Lewis purchased the house in 1937, living here till his death in 1969. In 1972, the Virginia Trust for Historic Preservation acquired the house and established it as the Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden. In 2012 the Trust continues to oversee its operations.

The following report is a review and description of the Museum’s activities and operations conducted in fulfillment of its mission during 2013. The Annual Report published by the Trust/Museum is available in hard copy and electronically on the Museum website, [www.leefendallhouse.org](http://www.leefendallhouse.org). The report concludes with an assessment of 2013, and plans for the Museum during the next year. The Museum continues to enjoy the goodwill of its neighbors, the respect of the professional community, and the guidance of a professional staff and talented Board of Directors. Its challenges continue to be met with strategic planning and collaborative teamwork.

## **II. Mission**

The mission of the Virginia Trust for Historic Preservation is to promote historic preservation and education by preserving, rehabilitating, maintaining, and interpreting the Lee-Fendall House Museum, gardens, and collection, thus serving as a community resource for the city of Alexandria.

To these ends the Virginia Trust for Historic Preservation:

- Maintains the Lee-Fendall House according to the best preservation standards to assure its enjoyment for future generations
- Develops, conserves, maintains and uses a collection of tangible objects
- Interprets to a wide public, through exhibits and educational programs, the role of the inhabitants of the Lee-Fendall House from 1785 to 1969 in the development of the City of Alexandria, the region, and the nation.



*Living history programs are a growing part of the museum's educational offerings.*

### III. 2013 Events

#### A. Public

- **House Tours**

The Museum offered 40-minute public tours according to a regular schedule of Wednesday through Sunday. The Museum continued to be open in January and February to serve as a year-round resource and gathering place for the community. Although attendance in these two months was thin, it was comparable to similar sites for this low-visitation period of the year. Total visitorship figures were 4420 people at our events and rentals.

- **Lee Birthday Celebration**

Michael Cecere, author of a new biography on Light Horse Harry Lee, was featured as a guest lecturer at this year's annual birthday celebration. The lecture was sold out, with standing room only.

- **Easter Egg Hunt**

The 2013 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Easter Egg Hunt added a third day to the schedule, with two sessions offered on Friday, making a total of seven sessions over the weekend. Attendance continued to be full for Saturday and Sunday sessions. One Friday session sold out, but the other saw little attendance. Although both Friday sessions did not sell out, the return was worth the work involved and it is believed attendance will increase in 2014.

- **Wine Receptions**

The wine reception series was discontinued in 2013 based on declining audience attendance interest in 2012 and turnover in the Executive Director position.



*The annual Easter Egg Hunt continues to be one of the museum's most popular public programs.*

- **Victorian Teas and Etiquette Programs**

The Museum offers two types of tea programs: one for Girl Scouts, designed to meet badge requirements for relationship-building, behavior, and personal responsibility; and another designed for the general public to be conducted on a reservation basis. One scout group and one private group booked these events, a decrease from the previous year.

- ***Attics & Alleyways***

Each Saturday in May, Lee-Fendall House celebrated National Preservation Month with 3-hour walking tours of the four major historic sites in town and the neighborhoods that connect them. The series was successful and will be repeated in 2014.

- **Historic Garden Week in Virginia**

Lee-Fendall House participated in the Historic Garden Week in Virginia's annual open house tour. Unlike previous years, no additional programming was offered.

- ***Labor at Lee-Fendall***

For Labor Day weekend, the Museum offered a special tour focused on the theme of labor history at Lee-Fendall House. The tours were highlighted by several regional events listings and attendance was good.

- ***Spirits, Suffering & Society: Death in Civil War Alexandria***



*Volunteers and museum staff portrayed hospital patients and medical personnel during the event..*

This reenactment program was repeated for 2013. Although the projected attendance and revenue from the event was not met, attendance increased by 50% from the previous year's program. Several volunteer groups provided assistance for the program, including the Victorian Society of Falls Church, several independent reenactors, the Lee-Fendall House volunteer staff. The event will be repeated for 2014, and staff will examine increasing attendance by changing admission prices.

- **Special Promotions**  
The museum participated in the state-wide Governor’s Office Historic House Weekend and Smithsonian Museum Day promotions in September. Each event offered free admission to visitors with a free pass coupon available online. Attendance was good.
- **No Admission November**  
To increase visibility and attendance, the Museum offered free admission throughout the month of November. Over 320 guests visited the museum that month, many of them local residents. Attendance increased from last year’s promotion, but the loss of revenue from admissions did not meet visitor donations.
- **Historic Alexandria Candlelight Tours**  
The Museum participated again in the Office of Historic Alexandria’s Historic candlelight Tours. Poor weather kept attendance below previous years, but revenue still exceeded projections.
- **Special Exhibitions**
  - A. “Beyond the Battlefield: Civil War Hospital Care and Lee-Fendall House” opened on October 31 with a reception at the museum. The exhibit highlights medical treatment during the Civil War and the role the Fee-Fendall House played as a hospital. The exhibit was developed by guest curator Kyle Dalton, with the help of assistants Zack Whitlow and Teresa Martinez. Over \$500.00 in donations were raised to fund the exhibit through Razoo, an on-line donation service.

#### **IV. Social Media and Communications**

##### **A. Social Media**

The museum continued its social media efforts, primarily led by the Museum Assistant. We participate in eight social media outlets, with a total readership/followship of over 1600 individuals.

##### **B. Website**

Dreamhost, which provides its shared-server space to nonprofits at no charge, continues to host the website and the staff emails. We are successfully using the website to post information on upcoming events, our events schedule, and as a portal for the public to purchase memberships, tickets to special events, and to make donations.



*Wedding reception in the Lee-Fendall House garden.*

## **V. Private Events**

- Wedding rentals continued to represent a strong stream of income for the Museum in 2013. There were nine weddings and three other private events.
- The Museum offered its services as a gathering place for the IACP's Iraqi Law Enforcement Officers' May reception free of charge. The event, which was the first time Iraqi female law enforcement officers have been brought to the US for training, was attended by dignitaries from the State Department, including the Undersecretary.
- For several years the Museum has hosted the Society of the Lees of Virginia for their annual board meeting. This one-day event brings together the Society's leadership for a day of business and fellowship. The Museum is proud to host this group, and will continue to do so in 2014.
- Special Events Manager Emily Rusch and new Executive Director John Christiansen reviewed and updated the museum's rental rates and policies over the summer to reflect changes suggested by outgoing director Emily Adams and to solve ambiguous language in other areas. Board Member Tal day reviewed the policy and it was placed in effect for all rentals for 2014.

## **VI. Personnel**

### **A. Executive Director**

- In August, Erin Adams resigned her position as Executive Director to seek other opportunities. She voluntarily remained active in the search for a replacement.
- The President of the Virginia Trust for Historic Preservation formed a search committee and placed a position description and request for applicants in industry media. The Search Committee received numerous applications and conducted numerous interviews both in person and telephonically. The Search Committee

recommended Mr. John Christiansen as the new Executive Director. He had an opportunity to meet with representatives from the Board of Directors and the Museums Assistant. Subsequently the Board voted to offer Mr. Christiansen the position as the Lee-Fendall House Garden and Museum Executive Director.

- Ms. Christiansen accepted the offer and assumed his duties on June 13, 2013.

#### **B. Departures**

Lauren Maloy departed as Museum Assistant in February. The vacancy was filled by Karen Fossum, who departed in June.

#### **C. New Hires**

Before Karen's departure, Nicole Foronda, who served as the winter educational programs intern, was selected as the new Museums Assistant. The Museum Assistant position assists the work of the Executive Director in the execution of a variety of museum functions and is responsible for volunteer coordination, managing media, advertising, private rentals, and museum housekeeping in addition to general administrative and visitor services assistance. Although the position budget was increased this year to provide for 24 hours of assistance per week, in September Nicole's hours were reduced to fourteen hours per week due to scheduling conflicts with her other activities.

#### **D. Institutional Memberships**

The Museum reinstated or renewed several of its institutional memberships, which are crucial to keeping the Museum connected to its professional relationships. As of the end of 2013, Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden is a member of the Alexandria Association, the Alexandria Convention & Visitors' Association, the American Association for State & Local History, the Historic House Museum Consortium of DC, the American Alliance of Museums, and the Virginia Association of Museums.

Although not formal institutional memberships, the Museum also participates in local and regional planning groups to unite efforts between similar sites and to bring attention to larger initiatives. These initiatives include the War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission, the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, Special Events Sites Marketing Alliance (SESMA), and Antiques in Alexandria.

### **VII. Interns and Volunteers**

#### **A. Interns**

One intern served the Lee-Fendall House Museum during 2013. His work represents more than 160 hours of volunteer service to the Museum.

- Erick Chiang—George Mason University; Collections management

#### **B. Docents**

In the fall, Dianne Murphy, Nicole Foronda, and John Christiansen reviewed out volunteer contact list to identify active volunteers and classified them according to tasks they fulfill at the museum – docents, special events, and garden. Our final count of volunteers for 2013 stands at fifteen.

2013 closed with eight trained docents on the volunteer roster. The museum still does not have enough volunteer docents to provide full coverage for all of its hours of

operation. As a result, the Executive Director has had to fill in to run the daily operations of the museum, taking time away from administrative and management duties.

The training manual continues to be evaluated for consistency and current information regarding historical background, visitor services and emergency procedures. This manual will continue to be updated as we reexamine changes to the interpretive plan and functions of the museum in the future.

The Junior League of Washington provided four volunteers for the year's special events. The annual agreement between JLW and the Museum, which usually provides us with many more volunteers, was renewed for 2013 and 2014.

The museum continues to struggle to find volunteers to manage small projects in the garden, such as weeding, pruning, and removing the abundance of English ivy from many of the beds and trees.

The Museum Volunteer of the Year award was given to long-time volunteer Pauline Perry. Mrs. Perry received the award for 2013 in recognition of the assistance she provided in forging partnerships between the museum and the Victorian Society of Falls Church

### **C. Volunteer Representative to the Board**

Dr. Dianne Murphy continued another year of service as Volunteer Representative to the Board of Directors. Dr. Murphy has served in this capacity with wisdom and enthusiasm. She continued in the role of unofficial volunteer coordinator through September, when those tasks were assumed by the Museums Assistant. Her efforts have been appreciated by the staff and volunteers alike.

## **VIII. Collections**

The Museum added the following objects to its collections in 2013:

- **Three copies of the Alexandria Gazette, owned by Philip R. Fendall, Jr. dated Nov. 9, 1959, Jan. 19, 1860, and Feb. 2, 1860,::** These issues of an early Alexandria newspaper bear Philip Fendall's signature. Donated by Robert Stadler and Nicole Foronda.
- **Two Rococo Revival chairs:** Donated by William Dakin.
- **Calling Card Tray, gilt and silverplate, manufactured by Reed & Barton of Easton, Massachusetts, 1870:** Donated by Larry Herman.

## **IX. Restoration and Maintenance**

### **A. East (Kitchen) Chimney**

The sloping east chimney remains in need of stabilization. Initial estimates performed by Victorian Chimney Services of Kensington, Maryland in 2012 estimated repairs at \$30,000-35,000. Although the museum is passively soliciting donations for this project through its website, additional sources of funding remain to be identified after a more complete analysis of the chimney.

## **B. Garden**

Although the construction design documents were delivered in 2012 for providing additional bricked surfaces in the garden, changes have not yet been implemented, pending acquisition of additional project funding.

Spring projects included planting a new rose bed, with a \$1000 grant from the Yacht Haven Garden Club, cleaning out the herb bed, trimming tree limbs, and cleaning out the privy.

The electrical hook-up in the garden was down to only two functional outlets by fall of this year. Don and Ellen Stanton donated the parts and labor to have the outlets repaired.

## **C. Window Washing and Gutter Cleaning**

Blue Sky Windows was contracted in the spring to clean gutters and wash the museum's windows. Neither task had been performed in some time and clogged gutters were leaking water and resulting in the wood on the front and back porches rotting. Mesh screens were placed over some gutter spouts to prevent them being clogged with debris and leaking and causing damage to the woodwork.

## **D. Telephone System Upgrade**

The Museum's telephone system was upgraded in the fall thanks to the generous donation by Jack Smith of a new cordless phone system and his knowledge and expertise. The cordless hub system greatly expands the number and flexibility of phone handsets within the museum. Furthermore, Verizon improved the connection between the house and the exterior telephone lines, and the system ground wire.

## **E. Fuel Conversion**

This year the Museum completed the conversion of the heating system from oil to natural gas. The environmental stewardship, energy efficiency, and improved financial burden to the Museum will reap substantial future benefits. Washington Gas generously donated the cost of the gas line installation. T.J. Fannon & Sons of Alexandria installed the new equipment. The work was completed in April. The final project cost came to \$7895, \$3000 of which was a donation from Pat Sanders.

## **X. Financial Report**

Throughout 2013, the Museum conducted programs, special events, fundraising campaigns, and membership drives to meet operational expenses and strengthen its financial position. As with previous years, these efforts have met with varied success. The Museum benefited from generous donations from several private individuals and businesses, as well as continuing grants from the Society of Lees of Virginia and the Camp-Younts Foundation.

In April, the Museum also participated in the Alexandria-wide Spring2ACTion day of giving event, which raised over \$1800 in donations and matching funds. At the end of the

year, the Museum hosted its annual Holiday Party as a thank you for its supporters, staff, and volunteers, and to call attention to its end-of-year Annual Appeal.

In the fall, the museum launched a corporate sponsorship package to secure and recognize new financial contributions from the Alexandria and Washington regional areas. Jandos Rothstein was contracted to design the sponsor packet information based on material supplied by the Board and Executive Director. Board members are currently approaching potential sponsors with this material.

Despite these efforts, the Museum's expenses exceeded revenues by approximately \$6500. To improve its financial situation in 2014, the Museum will continue to develop its gift shop as a source of revenue and add an additional appeal for financial donations into the calendar year. Events like the annual Holiday Party can be developed into fundraising events.

## **XI. Fund Raising**

### **A. Individual Donors**

Ms. Marian L. Adams	Ms. Shari Elter	Mrs. Kara Newbury
Mr. & Mrs. James G. Aldige III	Hon. Frank Fannon IV	Mrs. Faye M. Padgett
Ms. Sharon L. Annear	Mrs. M. Susan Farr	Judge & Mrs. Michael T. Paul
Ms. Lois Ancona	Mr. Bill Fendall	Mrs. Anne S. Paul
Ms. Ellen M. Andrus	Ms. Connie Graham	Ms. Laura Phelps
Mrs. Franklin P. Backus	Mr. & Mrs. Willard S. Grant	Mr. & Mrs. Gant Redmon
Ms. Barbara B. Ballentine	Ms. Frances A. Greene	Capt. & Mrs. Carter Refo
Ms. Opal M. Beverly	Mr. Larry Herman	Ms. Lillian M. Remers
Mrs. Mary Ann Bier	Ms. Jeri Hesson	Ms. Virginia V. Rocen
Ms. Patricia M. Braun	Mr. David Halle, Jr.	Dr. Patricia Sanders
Mr. L. Fitzhugh Brown	Mr. & Mrs. Edward Heiden	Mr. & Mrs. Gerhardt H. Schrage
Mrs. Sherry Browne	Mr. & Mrs. Ed Horn	Mr. & Mrs. John Seidenburg
Ms. Angela Calanni	Ms. Jean S. Hurley	Ms. Jean Sidley
Mrs. Joyce Caldwell	Ms. Sally Hurley	Mr. & Mrs. William F. Smith
Ms. Carol Cardarelli	Mr. & Mrs. John Hyland	Dr. & Mrs. Daniel Smith
Ms. Jennifer Clarke	Mr. & Mrs. Robert M. Jenkins	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Stalder
Hon. William F. Clinger, Jr.	Ms. Marie L. Karl	Ellen & Donald Stanton
Mr. Richard L. Coleman	Ms. Kathleen M. Kelly	Mr. & Mrs. Douglas P. Stuart
Mr. Leonardo Contardo	Mr. & Mrs. James A. Kennedy	Mr. & Mrs. Ramon vonDrehle
Capt. John S. Craighill	Mr. & Mrs. Mark J. Kington	Ms. Kathleen Waugh
Dr. & Mrs. H. Talmage Day	Mr. Christopher G. Lee	Ms. Marianne Weitz
Mr. & Mrs. Kent Duffy	Mr. & Mrs. Lonnie Marchant	Mr. Richard Whelan
Mr. & Mrs. H. Stewart Dunn, Jr.	Mr. & Mrs. Peter Mattheis	Ms. Deanna Wilson
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Dye	Mr. & Mrs. Charles M. Moncure	Dr. Robert K. Wineland
Mr. William Elwood	Mr. & Mrs. Richard Muller	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas A. Wolf
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Ellsworth	Dr. Dianne Murphy	Dr. & Mrs. Robert Zapalac
Mr. Daniel Bairley	Mrs. Anita Mann	

**B. Business Donors**

Gartner  
TechSoup  
TeleworX  
Thorsen Construction  
Rent-All Center

**C. Grants**

The Alexandria Association  
The Camp-Younts Foundation  
The Historic Alexandria Foundation  
The Society of the Lees of Virginia

**XII. Board Membership**

**A.** At the January 2013 meeting of the Virginia Trust for Historic Preservation Board of Directors, the following officers were elected or reconfirmed:

President:	Dr. Patricia Sanders
Vice President:	Ed Horn
Treasurer:	Carter Refo
Secretary:	Ellen Stanton
Volunteer Representative:	Dr. Dianne Murphy

Other Board members who served were H. Talmage Day, Timothy Graham, David Heiden, Kara Newbury, Robert Stalder, Rebecca Thorsen, and Hendrik Woods. Thomas Wolf and Margaret Reagan served as ex-officio members, representing the Society of the Lees of Virginia.

**B.** Hendrik Woods and Rob Stalder moved out of the area and resigned from the Board over the summer. Kara Newbury, a docent volunteer for several years and the museum's representative to the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, was admitted to the Board in October. Thomas Wolf's term as representative of the Society of the Lees of Virginia expired in September; his position was assumed by Margaret Reagan. We are short of the fifteen voting members authorized in the By-Laws and are actively seeking new Board candidates.

**XIII. Outlook for 2014**

**A.** Despite the financial deficit in 2013, the outlook for 2014 is good. A strong schedule of events and programs is scheduled for the coming year, and the Museum is continuing to strengthen its partnerships with other cultural institutions in the area. The development of the new Corporate Sponsorship package provides the Board of Directors with a strong tool for attracting new financial supporters.

**B.** The Museum remains challenged in its efforts to recruit new volunteers and to retain part-time support staff. Although the Lee-Fendall House receives strong support from the Junior League in terms of volunteer staffing, the week-day schedule has proven extremely difficult to fill. For the Museum to fulfill its publicly advertised schedule, it must offer 108 tours per month. Without adequate volunteer staff, the Museum must either reduce its hours of operation or the Executive Director must conduct day-to-

day operations, taking away from administrative duties. Although the creation of the new Museums Associate position on Saturdays will provide some assistance, the need for additional volunteers cannot be understated. The Museum has placed listings with volunteer services associations in order to attract more volunteer staff.

- C.** Despite efforts to focus attention on the gift shop and set aside a gift shop area that will be accessible to guests during the Museum's operating hours, the Museum has not succeeded in generating gift shop sales. Staffing the gift shop consistently has proven to be a challenge. Without consistent revenue from the shop, the Museum has not developed a strong selection of Museum Shop merchandise for sale. The Museum Shop remains an unrealized revenue stream for the Lee-Fendall House.
- D.** Renovation projects for 2013 include completion of the fuel conversion, window and gutter cleaning and repair, the rebuilding of two porches, and replacement of the telephone system.
- E.** Private Rentals trends are anticipated to remain consistent for 2014, with three events on the calendar as of December 2013, and with four events anticipated to be finalized in January 2014. Adjustments made to the rental contracts and rate schedule are expected to drive additional business for 2014. If we keep up our income from grants and donations Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden looks forward to a great year.

