



*Lee-Fendall House, ca.1855  
Image courtesy of Alexandria Public Library*

## **2014 Annual Report**

*Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden*

**VIRGINIA TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
614 Oronoco Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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## **A. 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 “Light Horse 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 2014 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 2014. 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 2014, 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.

## **B. 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.



Volunteer docents provided engaging, informative tours to nearly 5,000 visitors in 2014. The museum could not operate without its dedicated corps of volunteers.

## C. 2014 Events

- **House Tours**  
 The Museum offered 40-minute public tours according to a regular hourly Wednesday through Sunday. Total visitor-ship figures were 4801 people at our tours, special events, and rentals.
- **Lee Birthday Celebration**  
 Amateur historian Steven Campbell presented a lecture on “Robert E. Lee: Not Just a Soldier” for this year’s birthday celebration. The lecture was sold out, with standing room only. The lecture was paired with a whiskey tasting featuring Virginia distilleries. The Light Horse Tavern provided refreshments.
- **Easter Egg Hunt**  
 The 2014 Annual Easter Egg Hunt continued with a three-day schedule with a total of six sessions over the weekend. Attendance continued to be full for Saturday and Sunday sessions. Most sessions sold out in advance, and all events sold out at the gate.
- **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. The Museum has partnered with Calling Card Events to cater its tea programs.

*The Lee-Fendall House's Tea programs have proven popular with adult and children's groups.*



- **Downton Abbey Programming**  
The Museum developed a special Downton Abbey tour offered weekly in February to emphasize the museum's connection with the popular television series. These tours proved to be extremely popular, with the last two tours above capacity. The museum also rebranded its Victorian Teas as "Downton Abbey" Teas, with the tour included. These teas also proved very popular, with 3 private tea reservations and one public tea program sold out.
- **Lectures**  
Author John Beakes gave a presentation on his book "Light Horse Harry Lee and the War for Independence" on May 5. Copies of the book were available for sale in the gift shop and sold well.
- **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. This program is conducted in partnership with the other historic house museums in Old Town. The series was successful and will be repeated in 2015.
- **Historic Garden Week in Virginia**  
In April, Lee-Fendall House again participated in the Historic Garden Week in Virginia's annual open house tour.
- **Slave Dwelling Project**  
Joe McGill of the Slave Dwelling Project ([slavedwellingproject.org](http://slavedwellingproject.org)) spent a night in the home on May 17 as part of his effort to highlight historic structures connected to enslaved life. Mr. McGill talked about his experiences with the project to a small audience the following day.
- **History Unleashed**  
The museum developed a special tour featuring the stories of animals at Lee-Fendall House on June 7. Lee-Fendall House partnered with the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria to offer animal adoptions and pet care advice in the garden as part of the program.
- **Walking Tours**  
The museum developed a walking tour of Lee family homes associated with the War of 1812. The tour was offered in August and November and was very successful. This tour will be offered again in the future.

- **Labor at Lee-Fendall**

In honor of Labor Day, the museum offered a special tour focused on the theme of labor history at Lee-Fendall House on the weekend of September 6-7. Attendance was poor, with few visitors aware of the program. The tours were highlighted by several regional events listings and attendance was good.

- **War of 1812 Bicentennial**

In addition to creating an original exhibition and walking tour as part of Alexandria's War of 1812 Bicentennial, the museum played a key role in assisting with the planning of the city's other commemorative programs throughout the year. Executive Director John Christiansen served as volunteer coordinator for Alexandria's signature event on August 31, which attracted over 5,000 visitors.

- **Halloween Pumpkin Hunt**

The museum built on the success of its annual Easter Egg Hunt by offering its 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Halloween Pumpkin Hunt on October 24-25. One session was offered each evening, and both sold out. This program will be repeated and expanded for 2015.

- **Special Promotions**

The museum participated in Smithsonian Museum Day promotion in September. This event offered free admission to visitors with a free pass coupon available online. Attendance was good.

- **Historic Alexandria Candlelight Tours**

The Museum participated again in the Office of Historic Alexandria's Historic Candlelight Tours. Excellent weather and fewer participating sites resulted in attendance and revenue above previous years.

- **Special Exhibitions**

- A. "Beyond the Battlefield: Civil War Hospital Care and Lee-Fendall House" closed in June.

- B. The new exhibit "Their Fates Intertwined: The Lees of Alexandria in the War of 1812" opened on August 23. The exhibit was developed as part of Alexandria's War of 1812 Bicentennial commemoration activities. The exhibit will continue into 2015.



*A new exhibit highlights the Lee family in Alexandria during the War of 1812.*

## D. 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/ follow ship of over 2000 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.

## E. Private Events

- Wedding rentals continued to represent a strong stream of income for the Museum in 2013. There were nine weddings and two other private events.
- 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. In addition, the Museum hosted the Society's annual meeting in May. This marked the first time that the Lee-Fendall House had hosted this event, which is open to all Society members. The Museum is proud to host this group's needs, and will continue to do so in 2015.
- The museum served as a location for one photography shoot and for two documentary film projects: "Star Spangled Story" for the Smithsonian Channel, and "Notes From the Capital – Temporary Insanity," an independent production.



*The Lee-Fendall House served as the White House for scenes for a Smithsonian Channel documentary on the Star Spangled Banner.*

## **F. Personnel**

### **A. Executive Director**

John Christiansen continues in his capacity of Executive Director.

### **B. Departures**

Nicole Foronda left her position as Museum Assistant in June to pursue other opportunities. The vacancy was filled by Museum Associate Emily Cain.

### **C. New Hires**

Emily Cain was hired as a Museum Associate in February. This position assists in the everyday operations of the museum and gift shop. Upon Nicole's departure, Emily, was selected as the new Museums Assistant.

### **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 and the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission.

## **G. 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.

- Zack Whitlow—George Washington University; Collections Management

### **B. Volunteers**

Emily Cain and John Christiansen began aggressively recruiting new volunteers in the summer by posting volunteer positions on several online volunteer matching services. This effort generated a tremendous response, 2014 closed with 24 volunteers on the volunteer roster: ten trained docents, three special events volunteers, four research volunteers, and eight gardens and grounds volunteers. The museum has not had this many volunteers on its roster for several years, and is close to its goal of providing full coverage for all of its hours of operation and special events. In addition, research volunteers are discovering valuable information about the objects in the museum's collection, and buildings and grounds volunteers may allow the museum to eliminate its contracts for snow removal and garden maintenance.



*The Lee-Fendall House Museum's volunteers are one of its greatest resources!*

The training manual continues to be evaluated and improved 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 three volunteers for the year's special events; however, two of these volunteers soon dropped out of the program due to other commitments. The annual agreement between JLW and the Museum, which provides us with many volunteers for events throughout the year, was renewed for 2014 and 2015.

### **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.

### **H. Collections**

The Museum added no objects to its collections this year...

### **I. Restoration and Maintenance**

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

The sloping east chimney remains in need of stabilization. The chimney was reanalyzed for stability and repair requirements in the fall. Prior estimates for repair remain accurate 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.

**B. Garden**

Plans for providing additional bricked surfaces in the garden have not yet been implemented pending acquisition of additional project funding.

The irrigation system required minor repairs to its water pump and the replacement of several sprinkler heads.

**C. Basement**

The sump pump in the basement failed in the spring during a period of severe rainfall, resulting in flooding in parts of that area. No museum materials were affected by the flooding. A new pump was installed.

**D. Roof**

Deterioration of the flashing along the roof downspouts contributed to a leak from the ceiling of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor hallway in April. Colbert Roofing was contracted to repair and replace the damaged section of roof.

**E. Plumbing**

Extreme cold during the winter caused water in the pipes to the kitchen and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor restroom to freeze. The pipes did not burst, but a frozen standpipe caused water to overflow from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor toilet and leak through the ceiling of the main hallway below. There was no significant damage to the museum structure, and no damage to collections objects.

**F. Porch**

Clogged drains on the porch roof in combination with heavy rainfall in the spring and summer caused buckling of the front porch flooring. Accumulation of water beneath the porch caused by improper drainage has contributed to rot in the structure. The porch will need to be repaired in 2015. Estimates for repair have not been sought at this time.

**J. Financial Report**

In 2014, the Museum developed new programs, special events, fundraising campaigns, and membership drives to meet operational expenses and strengthen its financial position. The Easter Egg Hunt was an outstanding success, bringing in nearly \$7,000 and the new Halloween Pumpkin Hunt event promises to be another successful revenue stream. 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.

The Museum participated in several online giving events, including Spring2ACTION and Giving Tuesday, which together raised over \$4500 in donations and matching funds.

2014 proved our best year financially in several years. The Executive Director did an outstanding job of minimizing expenses and came in \$2,000 under budget. Revenue

from grants and events increased. The Lee-Fendall House Museum and garden had a surplus of over \$13,000 for the year.

## **K. Fund Raising**

### **A. Individual Donors**

Ms. Marian L. Adams	Mr. Bill Fendall	Ms. Teresa Martinez
Mr. & Mrs. James G. Aldige III	Ms. Karen Fossum	Mrs. Kara Newbury
Ms. Sharon L. Annear	Ms. Sharon Gajewski	Mrs. Faye M. Padgett
Ms. Lois Ancona	Ms. Connie Graham	Judge & Mrs. Michael T. Paul
Ms. Ellen M. Andrus	Mr. & Mrs. Willard S. Grant	Mrs. Anne S. Paul
Mr. Daniel R. Bairley	Ms. Frances A. Greene	Ms. Laura Phelps
Mr. Don Barnett	Mr. David Halle, Jr.	Mr. & Mrs. Paul Reagan
Mrs. Emily Benson	Ms. Sara Hassan	Mr. & Mrs. Gant Redmon
Ms. Maria Berman	Mr. Larry Herman	Capt. & Mrs. Carter Refo
Ms. Opal M. Beverly	Mr. & Mrs. Edward Heiden	Mrs. Emily Rusch
Mrs. Mary Ann Bier	Mr. William Holt	Ms. Lillian M. Remers
Ms. Patricia M. Braun	Mr. & Mrs. Ed Horn	Ms. Virginia V. Rocen
Mr. L. Fitzhugh Brown	Ms. Jean S. Hurley	Ms. Leslie Rosenbaum
Mrs. Sherry Browne	Mr. Michael Hobbs	Dr. Patricia Sanders
Ms. Angela Calanni	Ms. Christine Hollins	Mr. & Mrs. Gerhardt H. Schrage
Mrs. Joyce Caldwell	Mr. & Mrs. John Hyland	Mr. & Mrs. John Seidenburg
Ms. Carol Cardarelli	Mrs. Mathann Jackson	Ms. Jean Sidley
Mr. John Christiansen	Mrs. Kathleen Jeffers	Mr. Jeremy Skog
Ms. Jennifer Clarke	Mr. & Mrs. Robert M. Jenkins	Dr. & Mrs. Daniel Smith
Hon. William F. Clinger, Jr	Ms. Cornelia Jordan	Mr. & Mrs. William F. Smith
Mr. Richard L. Coleman	Ms. Marie L. Karl	Mr. & Mrs. Jack Smith
Mr. Leonardo Contardo	Ms. Kathleen M. Kelly	Ms. Britt-Marie Stejskal
Capt. John S. Craighill	Mr. & Mrs. James A. Kennedy	Ellen & Donald Stanton
Dr. & Mrs. H. Talmage Day	Mr. & Mrs. Mark J. Kington	Mr. & Mrs. Douglas P. Stuart
Mr. Richard Drew	Mr. Christopher G. Lee	Mr. George Taggart
Mr. Robert Dugger & Ms. Joan Huffer	Ms. Kathleen Leenhouts	Ms. Kathleen Waugh
Mr. & Mrs. Kent Duffy	Ms. Laura Lieberman	Ms. Marianne Weitz
Mr. & Mrs. H. Stewart Dunn, Jr.	Ms. Nancy Lieberman	Mrs. Hollie White
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Dye .	Mr. & Mrs. Lonnie Marchant	Mr. Zachary Whitlow
Mr. William Elwood	Mr. & Mrs. Peter Mattheis	Mr. Richard Whelan
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Ellsworth	Mr. & Mrs. Charles M. Moncure	Ms. Deanna Wilson
Ms. Shari Elter	Mr. & Mrs. Richard Muller	Dr. Robert K. Wineland
Hon. Frank Fannon IV	Dr. Dianne Murphy	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas A. Wolf
Mrs. M. Susan Farr	Mrs. Lauren Maloy	Dr. & Mrs. Robert Zapalac

### **B. Business Donors**

TeleworX

**C. Grants**

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

**L. Board Membership**

**A.** At the February 2014 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, and Kelly Jeffers. Margaret Reagan served as ex-officio member, representing the Society of the Lees of Virginia.

**B.** Kara Newbury resigned her position on the Board in April to pursue a career out of state. We are short of the fifteen voting members authorized in the By-Laws and are actively seeking new Board candidates.

**M. Outlook for 2015**

**A.** The outlook for 2015 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.

**B.** Attracting private rentals is a continuing concern, as a significant amount of the museum's projected budget relies on expected rental income. Although total rentals remain about the same, wedding receptions are trending downward. The museum conducted a self-analysis of its wedding policies in the fall in an attempt to identify ways to attract rental business, and has begun tracking numbers of rental inquiries with successful rentals.

**C.** The number of new volunteers recruited under the direction of Museum assistant Emily Cain has reenergized the museum's spirit and morale and has nearly reached the goal of full docent staffing every day the museum is open. Furthermore, the recruitment of garden and maintenance volunteers indicates that the museum may be able to eliminate these contracted services from its budget.

**D.** The museum gift shop sales exceeded budget projections by nearly 300%. Successful volunteer recruitment enabled the museum to keep the gift shop open more regularly. The gift shop will need to be restocked for 2015, providing an opportunity to reexamine the number and types of merchandise offered.

- E.** Renovation projects for 2015 include, the rebuilding of the front porch columns and floor, repair of the kitchen and gift shop entrance steps, and repairing the parking area's brick pavers. In addition, the museum needs to fund basement humidity control and continues to seek funding for the kitchen chimney repair. The museum plans to develop a capital campaign project to funds these repairs in 2015 in addition to seeking grant funding and donations.
  
- F.** The museum will continue to expand and improve its public programming for 2015 to alleviate potential loss of income from private rentals. If we keep up our income from grants and donations Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden looks forward to a great year.

