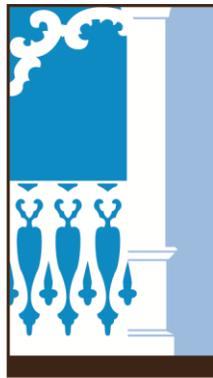


2017 Annual Report



Lee-Fendall House

MUSEUM AND 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 2017 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 2017. The Annual Report published by the Trust/Museum is available in hard copy and electronically on the Museum website, www.leefendallhouse.org. The report concludes with an assessment of 2017, 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.

▪

C. 2017 Events

▪ House Tours

The Museum offered 40-minute public tours according to a regular hourly Wednesday through Sunday schedule. A self-guided tour brochure was developed and offered to visitors who did not wish to take a guided tour. Total visitor-ship figures were 4640 people at our tours, special events, and rentals, a 35% increase from the prior year. The majority of museum admissions continued to come from tours and programs. Three school groups and one private group toured the museum in fall, an increase over past years.

▪ Thematic House Tours

The museum offered three thematic tours of the Lee-Fendall House in 2017.

- *“Under the Same Roof: Enslaved and Free Servants at the Lee-Fendall House”*: This tour explores the lives of enslaved and free African Americans who lived and worked in the house both before and after the Civil War. The program was offered four times during the year on Saturday afternoons. These tours have garnered much interest and frequently reach capacity. Following the tragic events in Charlottesville, the tours sparked dialogue among participants about how we remember our shared past and what stories are important to tell.
- *“This Tide of Wounded: The Lee-Fendall House as Civil War Hospital”*: This tour focused on the Lee-Fendall House’s use as a hospital during the Civil War. Developed as part of Visit Alexandria’s “Mercy Street” Partner Programming, this program was offered twice on Saturday mornings.
- *“Grief and Ghosts”*: The museum offered a Halloween themed “Ghosts & Grief Tour” on the evenings of October 19 and 27. This program paired information on Victorian mourning practices with ghost stories about the Lee-Fendall House. Over 60 people attended the programs.

▪ **Lectures**

Two lectures were offered at the museum in 2017.

- Furniture historian Hal Stuart presented “James Green and Thomas Day: Furniture, Family, and Race in 19th Century Virginia” on March 21.
- “The Story of Pie,” with guest lecturer Debbie Waugh, was offered on November 18.

▪ **Easter Egg Hunt**

The 2017 Annual Easter Egg Hunt continued with a three-day schedule on April 14-16 with a total of six sessions over the weekend. Attendance continued to be full for all sessions. All sessions sold out in advance.

▪ **Victorian Teas**

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. There were two private teas in December. The Museum continues to partner with Calling Card Events to cater its tea programs.

▪ **Attics & Alleys**

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 2018.

▪ **Historic Garden Week in Virginia**

On April 22, Lee-Fendall House again participated in the Historic Garden Week in Virginia’s annual open house tour. Visitor attendance for this program was 114 people.

▪ **Walking Tours**

The museum continued its walking tour programs.

- *“Beyond the Battlefield”*: This walking tour of Civil War Alexandria was offered seven times throughout the year on Saturday mornings, and was booked by one private group.
 - *“The General’s Tour”*: This tour highlights sites associated with the life of Robert E. Lee in Alexandria. It was offered twice in 2017 on Saturday mornings.
- **Bourbon in the Basement**
The Board of Directors organized a Prohibition themed fundraising event for the repair of the museum’s foundation and exterior brickwork on September 23. The event combined a specialty tour of the house with cocktails, food, music, and a silent auction. This event generated \$2845.65 for basement repair.
 - **Halloween Pumpkin Hunt**
The museum held its Pumpkin Hunt again on October 29. Three sessions were offered throughout the day, and each session reached capacity. This program will be repeated for 2018.
 - **A Victorian Christmas**
A new family program emphasizing Victorian inspired traditions, crafts, refreshments, and pictures with Santa Claus was offered on December 2.
 - **Historic Alexandria Candlelight Tours**
The Museum participated again in the Office of Historic Alexandria’s Historic Candlelight Tours on December 9. Inclement weather that day resulted in a lower visitor turnout than expected, but the museum recorded more visitors than some other participating sites located on Market Square.
 - **Rummage Sale**
Staff and volunteers organized a rummage sale on September 16 that generated \$200 in income.
 - **Special Exhibitions**
 - A. The exhibit “Their Fates Intertwined: The Lees of Alexandria in the War of 1812” continued in 2017.
 - B. A new exhibit, “John L. Lewis: Public Figure, Private Man,” opened on September 9.
 - C. A temporary exhibit, “The Golden Age of Toys: 1870-1920” highlighting Victorian toys from our collection was on display on the 2nd floor for the holiday season.

D. Social Media and Communications

A. Social Media

The museum continued its social media efforts. The Assistant Manager of Operations and several Board members were particularly active in effectively using this platform to promote our programming and engage with past, current, and potential visitors. We participate in eight social media outlets, with a total readership/ follower count of over 2750 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 and to make donations. The museum began using Eventbrite as its online ticket sales platform.

E. Private Events

Rentals continued to represent an important stream of income for the Museum in 2017 but fell short of expectations. There were 14 rentals booked for 2017: 4 weddings, 1 banquet, 4 meetings, 1 photography rental, 1 funeral reception, 1 engagement party and 1 private birthday party. There were also 2 teas for December. There were 3 cancellations in 2017. One of the cancellations was the week of the rental date, so the museum retained all rental fees.

F. Gift Shop

The gift shop was moved into the front hall to increase visibility and sales.

G. Personnel

A. Continuing Personnel

John Christiansen continues in his capacity of Executive Director. Allison Kelley continued as Museum Assistant until her departure in March.

B. New Hires

The Investment Committee met on January 5 and approved that Lee-Fendall hire a second full-time employee. The Assistant Manager of Operations position was advertised for 45 days on various museum professional sites from mid-February to the end of March. Over 100 applications were received from across the country. Six applicants were selected for interviews, with 3 candidates returning for a second interview. The position was offered to Amanda Roper, who accepted the offer and started Easter weekend.

C. Departures

Allison Kelley submitted her resignation notice as Museum Assistant in January. She remained on staff through March.

Katherine Monroe left her position as Collections Assistant in August.

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 2017, 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 participated in local and regional planning groups to unite efforts between similar sites and to bring attention to larger initiatives. These initiatives included Visit Alexandria's "Mercy Street" Programming Planning Committee and the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission.

H. Interns and Volunteers

A. Volunteers

Amanda Roper and John Christiansen continued aggressively recruiting new volunteers by posting volunteer positions on several online volunteer matching services. Volunteers were sought to fill positions as docents, researchers, and grounds workers. This generated a large number of responses for garden and grounds volunteers, particularly from people needing community service hours, and the museum was able to continue to operate without contracting with commercial vendors for snow removal and garden maintenance. Research volunteers continue to discover valuable information about the objects in the museum's collection. Volunteer docent tour guides were scheduled for nearly every day the museum was open to the public.

The training manual was updated and improved for consistency and current information regarding historical background, visitor services and emergency procedures. The information was presented to docents at a training session on June 17. 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. The annual agreement between JLW and the Museum, which provides us with many volunteers for events throughout the year, was renewed for 2017. The JLW also provided us with additional volunteers for programs such as the Easter Egg Hunt, Halloween Pumpkin Hunt, and Candlelight Tour.

I. Interpretation

The Lee-Fendall House has moved towards presenting the house as a timeline of furnished rooms using the collections items we currently have. The major theme of the Lee-Fendall House is now *change over time*. The Lee-Fendall House is unique because it was a changing, but continuously occupied family home for over 200 years. Through this theme we highlight how things were different in the past – the house, its fixtures and furnishings; the people who lived here; the daily life and material culture of those residents; and the major challenges and crises of the past and the changes they made on

people and places. This has led to some changes with the collections displayed in various rooms as objects have been relocated and other objects in attic storage have been placed on display. The focus of these efforts is currently on the first floor parlors.

The dining room has been cleared of collections items and interpretive material. This space was in almost weekly use in the fall from mid-October through then end of the year. This space could be more effectively used as a multi-purpose area for meetings, programs, rentals, and other activities.

J. Collections

The family of James Lewis met with Amanda Roper in the fall to contribute to the museum's oral history knowledge of Mr. Lewis, the valet and steward for John L. Lewis. They left the museum with a large collection of photographs, documents, and other objects relating to James Lewis and his employment at the house by John L. Lewis. Some items have been donated, while others are on loan. Of note are many John L. Lewis family photographs showing family members in different rooms of the house; handwritten recipe book used by James Lewis; and an apron, jacket, and cane used by James Lewis. Amanda has been researching and entering these items into the museum's collections database. Ways they may be displayed are under consideration, perhaps in a small portable exhibit in the dining room area.

K. Restoration and Maintenance

The museum's Facilities Committee developed a prioritized list of facilities projects to guide future restoration efforts and funding.

A. Exterior Shutter Repair and Replacement

Replacement shutters for the exterior of the House were purchased from T.W. Perry and delivered. Painting was completed by the end of the year. Total cost for shutters was \$7208.12, with \$5,000 covered by a grant from the Historic Alexandria Foundation. An additional \$5,866.59 was put towards this project from funds remaining after the completion of the chimney stabilization in 2016. Painting costs were donated by Ed Horn. Installation will take place in 2018; the museum is seeking firms willing to donate the labor for this project before allocating the remaining funds on installation.

B. Garden

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

Yard waste disposal in 2017 cost slightly more than \$500.00.

C. Garden Light

The Yacht Haven Garden Club of Alexandria donated \$1300.00 for the installation of a new lamp post in the northeast corner of the garden to provide extra illumination for caterers and other vendors during evening rentals. A new electrical outlet would also be included. This project will require approval from Alexandria's Board of Architectural Review in a public hearing. Approval and installation is anticipated in 2018.

D. Climate Control

New window air conditioning units were purchased for the Assistant Manager's Office and the South Bedroom at a cost of \$536.94.

E. Pest Control

The museum contracted with Pro-Tech in June to provide pest control management for rodents and termites.

F. Americans With Disabilities Compliance

The Board of Directors adopted an access development schedule on September 9. This schedule was posted on the museum's website.

G. Foundation Repair and Stabilization

The museum sought estimates for repair and stabilization of the Lee-Fendall House's foundation, including the brick, stone, and mortar inside and outside of the building. Estimated cost for complete stabilization is \$30,000-\$35,000. The museum began fundraising for this project with it's "Bourbon in the Basement" event on September 23, which brought in \$2845.65 for this project.

L. Financial Report

In 2017, the Museum continued to develop new programs, special events, fundraising campaigns, and membership drives to meet operational expenses and strengthen its financial position. The Easter Egg Hunt continued to be an outstanding success, and the Halloween Pumpkin Hunt, new house and walking tours, and other programs are also successful revenue streams. The Museum benefited from generous donations from several private individuals and businesses, as well as continuing grants from the Society of Lees of Virginia.

The Board's "Bourbon in the Basement" fundraiser in September was a great success in generating \$2845.65 for foundation stabilization and repair. The Board was able to get a number of items donated, including a tent from Rent-All Center, food from Main Event catering, and auction items from many local businesses. This event will be repeated for 2018.

The Museum participated in several online giving events, including Spring2ACTion and Giving Tuesday, which together raised nearly \$4000.00 in donations and matching funds.

Grants included a \$400.00 Opportunity Grant from the Junior League of Washington, DC which was used to purchase new shelving for the attic collections storage area. The Society of Lees of Virginia contributed a \$10,000.00 unrestricted grant. The Historic Alexandria Foundation awarded a \$5000.00 grant towards exterior shutter replacement and repair.

Fiscal year 2017 began with the addition of the 2016 Candlelight Tour revenue in the amount of \$3283.94. However, rental revenue did not meet expectations, and staff expenses increased with the addition of the Assistant Manager of Operations position. This resulted in an end of year shortfall of \$18,816.44.

The Bill Fendall Endowment Fund performed exceptionally well in 2017. The account earned 11.88% for the year 2017, including both earnings and market growth. The jewelry and flatware that came with the Bill Fendall Trust were liquidated by the Potomac Auction Company in September and the revenue from the sale placed into the Endowment Fund.

M. Fund Raising

A. Individual Donors

Mrs.	Leslie	Ariail	Ms.	Anita	Mann
Mr. & Mrs.	Nancy & David	Barbour	Mr. & Mrs.	Peter S.	Mattheis
Ms.	Patricia L.	Braun	Mr. & Mrs.	Roger	Monthey
Mrs.	Sherry	Browne	Dr.	Dianne	Murphy
Ms.	Angela	Calanni	Mrs.	Faye M.	Padgett
Mr. & Mrs.	Richard	Cheng	Ms.	Christine	Papio
Mr. & Mrs.	Tal	Day	Judge & Mrs.	Michael T.	Paul
Mr.	William	Elwood	Ms.	Laura	Phelps
Mr.	Shawn	Eyer	Mr.	John	Prevar
Ms.	Anne	Fortney	Mr.	Carter	Refo
Mrs.	Mary Custis	Glover	Mr.	Gregory	Regelski
Ms.	Jill	Gribbin	Ms.	Lillian M.	Remers
Mr. & Mrs.	David	Halle, Jr.	Ms.	Megan	Ritter
Mr. & Mrs.	Ed	Horn	Ms.	Virginia V.	Rocen
Mr. & Mrs.	Dan & Mathann	Jackson	Dr.	Patricia A.	Sanders
Mrs.	Kelly Newton	Jeffers	Mr. & Mrs.	Gerhardt H.	Schrage
Mr. & Mrs.	Joseph F.	Johnston, Jr.	Mr. & Mrs.	John	Siegmund
Ms.	Marie L.	Karl	Mr.	Jeremy	Skog
Ms.	Valerie	Keane	Mrs.	Nancy	Smith
Ms.	Kathleen M.	Kelly	Mr.	Robert	Stalder
Mr.	James	Kent	Ms.	Britt-Marie	Stejeskal
Mr. & Mrs.	Mark J.	Kington	Mr.	Richard	Tobin
Mr.	Randolph	Lee	Mr.	John	Urban
Ms.	Laura	Lieberman	Mr. & Mrs.	Tom	Wolf
			Mr.	Eugene	Zukosky

B. Business Donors

Columbia Firehouse

Irene Abdou Photography

Lavender Moon Cupcakery

Little Theatre of Alexandria

Main Event Caterers

Pacers Running Store

Jane Porter, Artist

Old Towne School for Dogs

Rita Restores

Spice & Tea Exchange

Studio Barre

The Enchanted Florist

Helen Olivia Flowers

C. Grants

The Historic Alexandria Foundation

The Junior League of Washington, D.C.

The Society of the Lees of Virginia

N. Board Membership

A. At the January 2017 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: Kelly Jeffers

Other Board members who served were H. Talmage Day, Dianne Murphy, Laura Lieberman, and Megan Ritter. Margaret Reagan served as ex-officio member, representing the Society of the Lees of Virginia.

B. Timothy Graham resigned his seat on the Board in January.

C. Jill Gribbin was elected to the Board in July. We are short of the fifteen voting members authorized in the By-Laws and are actively seeking new Board candidates.

O. Outlook for 2018

A. The outlook for 2018 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, large revenue generating events such as wedding receptions continue to trend downward.
- C.** Docent staffing during the museum's hours of operation greatly improved during the year. Success in the recruitment of garden and maintenance volunteers has allowed the museum to continue to eliminate these contracted services from its budget.
- D.** Renovation projects for 2018 include developing an ADA accessibility plan, repairing the garden porch, initializing the next phase of the garden improvement project, and repairing and stabilizing the building's foundation. The museum plans to develop a capital campaign project to fund these repairs in addition to seeking grant funding and donations. The board will hold a second fundraising event to support one of these maintenance projects.
- E.** The museum will continue to expand and improve its public programming for 2018 to alleviate potential loss of income from private rentals. Income from grants and donations supported by interest from the Fendall Endowment Fund place the Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden in a secure position for the coming year.