Moving outside to the Kitchen, be sure to stop by the Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society. Moving upstairs, watch the courtly dance of the enslaved at Christmas through her historical on the lower floor, one of Stratford Hall’s gifted House. Proceed into the Great House, where, light refreshments. Cross the seasonally trimmings and deserts at the Inn at Stratford Hall’s Dining Room. Reservations for dinner and for lodging are required and may be made by calling 804-493-1966. Walk off that dinner by touring the Great House and grounds, and shopping in the Gift Shop.

December 12
A Stratford Hall Christmastide Come, enjoy and ponder the worlds of the privileged and the worlds of the enslaved through history, song, dance, and stories. Enter the Visitor Center and enjoy some light refreshments. Cross the seasonally lighted bridge, stop by the bonfire and make a “Christmastide wish” by tossing a holly sprig into fire. Follow the candle lit path to the Great House. Proceed into the Great House, where, on the lower floor, one of Stratford Hall’s gifted interpreters, Rita Wraggstaff, will tell the story of the enslaved at Christmas through her historical interpretations, gifted storytelling and song. Moving upstairs, watch the courtyard dance of the Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society. Moving outside to the Kitchen, be sure to stop by to visit with another of our interpretive staff, Martha Newman, as she is preparing a sumptuous and savory Christmas meal on the kitchen open hearth. Leave the kitchen and pass by the reconstructed slave cabins before returning to the warmth of the bonfire and the refreshments in the Visitor Center. Story on page 10.

January 9
Winter Birding with Andrew Dolby Join Dr. Dolby at the Jessie Ball duPont Memorial Library at Stratford Hall at 9 a.m. on Saturday, January 9, 2016, for a talk on winter birding, “Waterfowl and Other Overwintering Birds.” A behavioral ecologist who holds a Ph.D. from Ohio State University, Andrew Dolby is an Associate Professor and Chair of the University of Mary Washington’s Department of Biological Sciences. His talk will be followed by a walk about the Stratford Hall grounds to identify winter species of birds. The walk will end at noon.

January 16
R.E. Lee’s Birthday Celebration There will be FREE ADMISSION on Saturday, January 16, 2016, in honor of the 209th anniversary of Robert E. Lee’s birth at Stratford on January 19, 1807. Join us for a birthday celebration and free tours of the historic Great House. There will be free refreshments in the Visitor Center, and kids can go on a scavenger hunt.

January 19
Robert E. Lee’s Birthday There will also be FREE ADMISSION on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 in honor of Robert E. Lee’s Birthday. Join us for a birthday celebration and free tours of the historic Great House. There will be free refreshments in the Visitor Center, and Kids can go on a scavenger hunt.

February 19
Reading Lee Series with Bud Robertson For 2016’s “Reading Lee” series lecture, join author and noted Civil War expert Bud Robertson at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Rappahannock Regional Library Headquarters Theater, 1201 Caroline Street, Fredericksburg, Virginia. The talk is free to the public. For more information about the program, please contact Jon Buchman by email or by calling 304-493-1972. If you require special assistance, please notify the library one week in advance at 540-372-1144.

STANDING ROOM ONLY
Crowd Gathered at Memorial Service for Dr. Paul G. Reber, Stratford Hall Executive Director
Representatives from the museum community, historic sites, the tourism community, cycling community, family, friends and the extended Stratford Hall family gathered on the Oval at Stratford Hall on Friday morning, August 21, to honor the memory of Dr. Paul C. Reber, Stratford’s Executive Director for the past nine years. Dr. Reber, 56, passed away July 23, 2015, at VCU Hospital in Richmond as a result of injuries he received while riding his bicycle near his home in Westmoreland County, Virginia. He had been an avid cyclist. Dr. Reber had 25 years of experience in museum management with an emphasis on history and historic house museums.

Speakers at the event included Brian F. Boland, Esq., a long-time colleague and friend of Paul’s; W. Jay Abbott, a long-time cycling friend; Beverly M. Bridge, Past Executive Director of Great Camp Sagamore, Raquette Lake, New York; William E. Garner, Executive Director, George Washington Foundation, Fredericksburg, Virginia; Custis S. Glover, President, Board of Directors, Robert E. Lee Memorial Association; Martha Anne Jackson, Past President, Board of Directors, Robert E. Lee Memorial Association; and Alexander W. Reber, Paul’s son. The Reverend R. Ellen White, Rector, Cople Episcopal Parish, Hague, Virginia, officiated. The Reverend R. Ellen White, Rector, Cople Episcopal Parish, Hague, Virginia, officiated.

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CONTINUITY

The people of Stratford Hall

It has been a sad time here at Stratford since the news of Paul Reber’s tragic accident on early evening of July 22 while riding his bike not far from his home in Kinsale, Virginia. As the news spread the next day, I think that my reaction was much like everyone in the Stratford family, that of initial disbelief followed by complete shock.

Paul was my friend. We had known each other since he arrived at Stratford. We seemed to sit together on the bus during the Robert E. Lee Symposiums. We talked about history and how it keeps being reinterpreted. Our last email exchange was about a new podium for the Council House.

So this news could not possibly be true, but sadly it was. There were more than a few tears shed that day as reality set in. Although visitors still came and tours were conducted, Stratford paused for the first time in probably two hundred and fifty years.

Nonetheless, there was a lot of apprehension, when I met Custis that Saturday morning and walked into the administrative offices. But this job can’t be any harder than launching from an aircraft carrier on a pitch black night, loaded with ordnance and headed into harm’s way. So, deep breath, and into the arena.

For me personally, the pause was short. Thursday evening, the Board President, Mrs. Custis Glover telephoned to ask if I would consider stepping in as the Executive Director until a new person could be identified to replace Paul. Of course. There is only one possible response to a question like that. The word DUTY comes to mind.

Stop that night was fitting. What had I gotten myself into? Sure I had been a long time supporter of Stratford and had commanded navy squadrons and ships, and knew a bit about running a house museum, but it was nothing compared to the large operation at Stratford Hall. Fortunately, I knew many of the people on the staff as well as having met most of the Directors on the Board.

As it has been over the ages, that baton is in the hands of the people at Stratford Hall and with God’s grace and some luck, they will carry on the great work that Paul Reber started. Since it was constructed in 1738, the Great House at Stratford Hall has represented a continuity that has been maintained through the years by the people of Stratford Hall. Those people are still there and the continuity remains intact as ever.

- Captain Carter Reño, Executive Director

Just in time for Christmas!!
Order a Stratford Hall Gift Basket

These wonderful gift baskets, filled with quality Stratford products, are available online from the Stratford Hall Gift Shop.

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Includes a 22 oz. can of Virginia Peanuts, Pepper Jelly and Sweet Pickles

Includes a 3 lb. Virginia Hamlet (fully cooked and boneless), Apple Chutney and Peach Butter.

Includes Fruit Cake, Strawberry Preserves, and Stratford Honey

Includes Stratford Grits, Pancake Flour, and Stratford Honey.

Includes a 2 lb. Bag of White Cornmeal ground at Stratford, reproduction seasoned Mini Corn Breadstick Pan and Booklet of Southern Cornmeal Recipes compiled from the family archives of the Georgia Director for Stratford Hall.

ORDER FORM

Mail to: Stratford Hall Gift Shop • 483 Great House Road
Stratford, VA 22558 • (804) 493-1969

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VA residents add 5.3 % sales tax ________
Shipping & Handling add $1.595 per basket ________

TOTAL ________

Order your Gift Basket online at www.stratfordhall.org/shop/gift-baskets or call (804) 493-1969 or fax form to 804-493-0333
Colin Woodward, Ph.D., has joined the Stratford Hall staff as Editor of the Lee Family Digital Archive. The Lee Family Digital Archive (LFDA) is an online repository of the collected papers of the Lee family of Virginia. When complete, the LFDA will consist of a comprehensive annotated edition of all the known papers of the immigrant founder Richard Lee (c. 1618-1663/4) and his lines of offspring (7-8 generations). This rich documentary legacy, spanning roughly the first three centuries of American history, is offered to the public at http://leefamilyarchive.org/ free of charge for research and teaching purposes.

“We welcome Colin and the expertise he brings to this very important project for Stratford Hall,” said Carter Refo, Executive Director. “Bringing together in one place all of the Lee family papers is a tremendous project, one that we are excited to have move forward with a full-time editor.”

Woodward has a Ph.D. and Masters Degree from Louisiana State University and a Bachelors Degree from Trinity College. He most recently served as archivist at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He has also been a manuscript processor at Smith College, Massachusetts, a project archivist with the Virginia Historical Society, and research assistant and reference librarian at the Valentine Richmond History Center. He served as assistant professor at Virginia State University, and as a Graduate Assistant and Instructor at Louisiana State University. His book, *Marching Masters: Slavery, Race, and the Confederate Army during the Civil War*, was published by the University of Virginia Press in 2014.

“My first priority will be Robert E. Lee,” said Woodward, noting that the project will be drawing on the resources of Stratford’s duPont Library as well as other archives. “We hope to not only have the transcripts available for researchers and teachers, but scans of the actual documents as well.”

The Lee Family Digital Archive was formerly a project of Washington and Lee University, and was transitioned over to Stratford Hall in October 2014. This initiative was made possible in part to a generous grant from the Ratcliffe Foundation. The LFDA currently houses over 3,000 Lee family documents.

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Lee Family Digital Archive
Up & Running
with Full-Time Editor, New Website

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Reservations are also available for dinner in the Inn at Stratford Hall’s dining room and may be made by calling 804-493-1966. For more information on the event, please visit www.StranfordHall.org
A team from The Fairfield Foundation was onsite for several days at Stratford in September, continuing investigations to verify the 1930s archaeological research done from the Great House to the East Garden. This is part of an ongoing effort to understand and to restore the landscape around the Great House, including the east and west garden areas.

The team opened several trenches just above the first terrace at the beginning of the formal east garden. The Garden Club of Virginia visited the site for a first-hand look at the investigation in conjunction with their meeting in the duPont Library on September 9. Fairfield’s work follows investigations in 2013 by archaeologist Denis Pogue and a crew from Dovetail Cultural Resources Group in Fredericksburg, Virginia, that found evidence of long, narrow planting beds of dark soil lined at the bottoms with unmortared brick trash. Fairfield will return to also do investigations into the west garden area.

Established in 2000, the Fairfield Foundation began with a focus on archaeological research and public outreach at Fairfield Plantation in Gloucester County. Its mission and reach have expanded to include archaeological survey, excavations, historical documentation and public outreach across the region. Today the Fairfield Foundation is the preeminent archaeological research and preservation organization on the Middle Peninsula.

Restoration of the East Garden originally began shortly after the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation bought Stratford in 1929. The assistance of The Garden Club of Virginia was sought, and the East Garden became one of the organization’s first restoration projects. Arthur Shurcliff, a Massachusetts-based landscape architect, was hired and began archaeological investigations beginning in July and ending in September 1930. During this time Shurcliff and his assistants uncovered the ha-ha wall on the south side of the Great House and found another ha-ha wall at the end of what is now the East Garden. The investigation would resume again in 1932 under the direction of Morley Jefferis Williams, a faculty member of the Harvard School of Design, assisted by a graduate student, Charles C. Pinkney. At this time other features of the garden area were discovered, including the system of terraces. Williams submitted the restoration plan to The Garden Club and the Foundation Board of Directors in 1932.
Nathan Parker, 11, of Arlington, Virginia, had joined some family friends to take part in “Stratford Under Our Feet” program in August with Dr. Robert Weems, retired paleontologist with the United States Geological Survey. During the afternoon he was screening gravels downriver from the Mill and came across a unique item. He immediately brought it to the attention of Jon Bachman, Stratford’s Event Manager, who was assisting Dr. Weems with the tour of the beach.

“In 30 years of collecting and studying the fossils at Stratford I had never seen anything like it,” said Bachman. “Initially I thought it was horse or perhaps camel, but the size stumped me.”

The object was then shown to Dr. Weems who initially suggested that it was a dugong or Manatee.

Dr. Weems then arranged to meet Dr. Domning at the Smithsonian and showed him the tooth. Dr. Weems states, “It is an upper right last molar of a sea cow, Metaxytherium sp. At some point in the future it probably could be identified to species, but our present understanding of the taxonomy of coastal plain sea cows doesn’t allow this. There is a Miocene species named from Maryland and another from Florida, and the type material for each is not overlapping in critical taxonomic areas, especially the skull, so there is no way to be sure if they are the same species or two different species. Thus, for now, all we can say for sure is Metaxytherium sp. There is a sea cow humerus in the USNM collections from Westmoreland S.P. near the Stratford end of the park, but there is no information as to where it was found in the cliff. The reddish color of parts of the bone, however, leads me to think it probably is from the Choptank Formation. The new tooth almost certainly is from the Choptank. No sea cow material has ever been found in the Eastover Formation, which is the only other possible source bed, so that seems quite unlikely. It is your first record of a Choptank sea cow and therefore of permanent interest.”

Thanks to Nathan, the new fossil find will be exhibited in the Visitor Center’s temporary exhibits along with his photo.

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The Lee Integrity Award Given Posthumously To Dr. Paul Reber

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Thanks to Nathan, the new fossil find will be exhibited in the Visitor Center’s temporary exhibits along with his photo.
Two long-time foundation friends have issued challenge grants to support the restoration of Stratford Hall’s iconic Great House. The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation will award a $150,000 grant and the Robert G. Cabell III & Maude Morgan Cabell Foundation will award a $100,000 grant when Stratford Hall has raised the equivalent in matching funds. These challenge grants expire April 30, 2016, so Stratford must raise the match before that time.

Comprehensive restoration of the Great House, the first since Stratford Hall opened its doors to the public in 1935, is a signature project of our campaign Securing a Place for the Past. This project is a nearly $2.3 million initiative and $1.5 million has been raised.

“These challenge grants come at a strategic time as we look to complete this important restoration,” Executive Director Carter Refo states. “Once we raise the matching funds and receive these grants, we will be nearing the home stretch of our fundraising.”

This is a project that both foundations have previously supported. “The last Cabell Foundation grant helped to fund our restoration of the Northwest Stair Passage, and the last Parsons challenge grant was instrumental in our work in the Parlor,” Refo said. “We are very grateful for the continued partnership and generosity of these Richmond foundations.”

Over 264 individuals and foundations were instrumental in helping to meet the previous challenge grants from these two foundations. “With good work and with the continued generosity of our Stratford friends, I am confident that we can meet these challenge grants in the required time,” Refo continued.

The $750,000 needed to conclude the restoration of the Great House will help to complete the furnishing of the Dining Room & Alcove, restore the Southeast Bedchamber (where Robert E. Lee was born), as well as the Blue Bedchamber, the Library and the Passages. “This restoration is based on the latest scholarship, technology and know-how. This is a legacy project for Stratford Hall,” Refo concluded.

Enclosed with this issue of The Chronicle is an envelope you may use to send in your matching gift to help us meet these two important challenges. Along with gifts via check and credit card, gifts of securities and multi-year pledges qualify as acceptable matches. In addition to your continued support as a Friend of Stratford, we hope that you will consider giving generously to help Stratford Hall successfully meet these challenge grants.

Foundations Offer Challenge Grants For Great House Restoration

Grandparent Grandchild Camp Schedule Announced for 2016

Each year the Grandparent/Grandchild camp has gotten more popular. It gives the chance for both the adult and child to bond while experiencing programs and activities, such as surveying like Young George, cooking over an open hearth, 18th-century deportment and Rules of Civility and dancing the Virginia Reel, blacksmithing, and colonial agriculture (including tending the tobacco field, building a zig-zag fence, and threshing and winnowing wheat. Playing colonial games is also a favorite activity. Campers will weave baskets, make and lay bricks, spin wool into thread, find shark teeth fossils on the beach, hunt for ghosts in the Great House, dig like archaeologists and much more—including substantial hands-on activities. The three days of fun-filled, educational activities offer a memorable experience while participants are re-living 18th-century life on a Virginia plantation.

Camps will be offered three times in 2016: June 21-23, July 5-7, and August 2-4. Camps were sold out in 2015, so early registration is recommended to avoid disappointment. The suggested child age is 1st grade completed through age 12, but there is a provision (and a large discount) for teen alumni campers to enroll with their grandparents, as camp assistants. The all-inclusive cost is $415 per person and includes two nights comfortable lodging in the Stratford Inn and all meals in our dining room. Additional lodging is available for the night before the camps begin (and the night after) for those who have to travel a considerable distance to Stratford.

Enrollment is limited to only 20 children plus their grandparents, so early registration is strongly recommended. The camp makes an excellent Christmas present. For more information, please visit www.startfordhall.org, click on Educational Resources and then click on Camps.