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## **September 2020 Stratford Hall Wine & Oyster Festival Canceled Due to COVID-19 Pandemic**

STRATFORD, VA – Stratford Hall announces the difficult decision to cancel its annual Wine & Oyster Festival, scheduled for September 19 & 20, 2020, due to the ongoing pandemic. Based on current public health information and state and local guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the two-day festival cannot move forward as planned. The 18th-century historic site will continue to offer on-site tours and grounds passes as well as present virtual events and experiences and offer new digital content throughout 2020.

Stratford Hall President John Bacon said, “It was with great regret that we made this decision. The Wine & Oyster Festival is a signature event at Stratford Hall and brings together the local and regional community of vineyards, oyster growers, breweries, artisans and musicians. While we are disappointed to not present the two-day experience we were planning for the 2020 festival, we know this decision is necessary to ensure the health and safety of our staff and community. Since we reopened at the end of June, we have enjoyed welcoming visitors back onsite and we look forward to continuing to provide innovative and engaging opportunities to experience all that Stratford Hall has to offer.”

Stratford Hall’s programming and education team has created a robust lineup of virtual lectures and programs titled “Colonial Foodways & Culture.” This programming, made possible by Virginia Humanities and a Forrest E. Mars, Jr. Chocolate History Research Grant from Mars Wrigley, will feature a beginning selection of topics including “Colonial Milling and Brewing” with historical chef Justin Cherry and Mount Vernon Director of Historic Trades Steve Bashore and “African American Foodways” with interpreter Dontavius Williams. Fall and winter programs include “Food, Politics and Colonial Women” with Dr. Nancy Siegel, professor of art history at Towson University, “Colonial Christmas Cuisine” with interpreters Cheyney McKnight and Williams and “Colonial Chocolate in the Atlantic World” with culinary historian and teacher Dr. Leni Sorenson. The full calendar of events can be found at [www.stratfordhall.org/events-](http://www.stratfordhall.org/events-)

[programs](#). In addition to the current on-site offering of self-guided audio tours and grounds passes, virtual tours and digital content will continue to be offered through Stratford Hall's social media and website.

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### **About Stratford Hall**

A National Historic Landmark, Stratford Hall preserves and presents the history of the Lee family and a diverse plantation community, inspires an understanding of America's past, and encourages commitment to the ideals of leadership, honor, independent thought and civic responsibility.

Established by Thomas Lee in the 1730s, Stratford Hall is one of the great houses of American history. Four generations of the Lee family passed through its stately doors including Richard Henry Lee and Francis Lightfoot Lee, the only two brothers to sign the Declaration of Independence, Revolutionary War hero "Light Horse Harry" Lee and his son, Civil War General Robert E. Lee, who was born at Stratford Hall in 1807. For more information, visit [www.stratfordhall.org](http://www.stratfordhall.org).