

# Descendants come back to Leesylvania

By DEBORAH HENLEY  
of the Potomac News

4/29/85

For the Lees, this weekend's dedication of Leesylvania State Park in Prince William County was a proud pilgrimage.

Descendants of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee and members of the Society of the Lees of Virginia traveled from around the state and beyond to commemorate their common ground—the former Lee family homestead, Leesylvania.

For county residents, the ceremony was a recognition of Prince William County's place in Virginia history.

Don Curtis, a local resident, historian and leader of the movement to preserve Leesylvania, captured the sentiments of nearly 150 Lee descendants, state and local officials and county residents attending Saturday's ceremony.

"I hope all of you feel the mystique of Virginia today—Leesylvania is certainly a big part of it."

Leesylvania State Park was designed to preserve a historical site now entered in the National Register of Historic Places, protect the river bluffs and sandy beach of a peninsula on the Potomac River and provide more than 500 acres of



By Deborah Henley—Potomac News  
Eleanor Lee Templeman, historian for the Society of the Lees of Virginia, unveils a commemorative plaque at Leesylvania park

outdoor recreational area, Mr. Curtis said.

The dedication was co-sponsored by the Society of the Lees of Virginia and the Virginia Division of Parks and Recreation.

The society presented a plaque to mark the Lee family graveyard in

Leesylvania. The plaque will be placed at the burial site of Henry Lee II, Gen. Lee's grandfather, and Henry Lee's wife, Lucy Grymes.

The family cemetery sits on a knoll west of the ridge where the family home was built.

State officials unveiled plans for the 500-acre state park during the ceremony. Virginia's Secretary of Commerce and Resources Betty J. Diener announced that the first phase of the park will be completed by 1987. Leesylvania Park will feature motorboat and sailboat launches, a picnic area, parking areas, nature trails and a beach.

Plans include a swimming pool, expanded picnic areas, additional trails, a nature center and beach area with concessions.

Henry Lee II served as a lieutenant in the Prince William County militia and presiding justice of Prince William County. He represented Prince William in the House of Burgesses and in the Virginia Revolutionary Conventions.

Eight children were born to the Lee family at Leesylvania. Among them was "Light Horse Harry" Lee, Revolutionary War hero, governor of Virginia and Gen. Robert E. Lee's father.

Another, Charles Lee, was an attorney general of the United States. Richard Bland Lee was elected the first congressman from Northern Virginia and Edmund Jennings Lee was as mayor of Alexandria.