

Lee family burial site to be marked

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Betty J. Diener, Virginia's Secretary of Commerce and Resources, will visit Leesylvania State Park on Saturday to participate in ceremonies to commemorate the Prince William burial site of Robert E. Lee's family.

Ms. Diener, Ronald Sutton, who commissioner of the state's Division of Parks and Recreation, and local officials will dedicate a plaque commemorating the burial area.

Bryan Mitchell, executive director of the state's Division of Historic Landmarks, will be master-of-ceremonies for the 3 p.m. dedication.

The public is invited, and shuttle buses will run from a parking area at the Pilot House Marina on Neabsco Road to the site.

The 500-acre state park includes the former homesites of the Lee and Fairfax families, both prominent families in Virginia's history. Both family cemeteries sit on a hill in the park.

Recreational facilities are under construction at the park, which is bounded by the Neabsco and Powell's creeks, the Occoquan Bay and the Potomac River. Plans include beach and picnic areas, boat facilities, historic trails, nature trails and swimming areas.

Daniel K. Ludwig of the American-Hawaiian Steamship Co. donated the site to the state park

● Leesylvania Park will feature beaches, public boat ramps when complete — Page B1

system in 1977. Approximately 40 acres have been set aside for county Park Authority use.

The park site has a long and significant history. In 1608, Captain John Smith passed the Leesylvania peninsula as he sailed up the Potomac River.

The Lee and Fairfax families lived on plantations here. The first Lee family member to live on the property, Henry Lee II, was presiding justice of Prince William County, head of the county militia, and a member of the House of Burgesses, Virginia's colonial legislative body.

Henry Lee III, "Light Horse Harry," father of Robert E. Lee, was born at Leesylvania.

The park area was fired upon during both the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. A 110-foot cliff supported a Confederate artillery battery that successfully interrupted shipping lanes along the Potomac.

Locally, the site at times has been known as "Freestone Point." Historians believe this name was used for an area of the park where sandstone was quarried. They say early settlers may have used sandstone to build their houses.