

La Montague, Lees of Va, 1967.

THE LEE HALL and LEESYLVANIA LINE

Henry Lee (1691-1747) inherited from his father, Richard Lee II, a portion of the Machodoc plantation and built there a mansion which he called Lee Hall. He inherited also from his grandfather, Henry Corbin, a large tract of land at Freestone Point on the Potomac, in what later became Prince William County. He acquired for himself additional lands in Westmoreland County and on the frontier in what later became Fairfax County. He married Mary Bland and had three sons and a daughter.

The third son, a second Henry Lee (1729-1787), inherited his father's lands in Prince William and Fairfax counties. At Freestone Point he developed a plantation which he called Leesylvania. He married Lucy Grymes and had five sons and three daughters. He was County Lieutenant and Presiding Justice of Prince William, a Burgess, and a member of the revolutionary conventions.

Three of the sons of Henry Lee and Lucy Grymes are of particular note. The eldest, a third Henry Lee (1756-1818) called "Light Horse Harry", was a daring leader of light cavalry during the Revolution and a young favorite of General Washington. He was afterwards a leading figure in the Virginia convention on the ratification of the Federal Constitution, in 1788, Governor of Virginia, 1791-1794, and a member of Congress, 1799-1801. It was he who in Congress eulogized Washington as "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen". The second son, Charles Lee (1758-1815), was Attorney General of the United States under Presidents Washington and Adams, 1795-1801. The third son, Richard Bland Lee (1761-1827), a member of Congress, 1789-1795, was instrumental in bringing the Federal Capital to the Potomac. His home, Sully, built in 1794, is now maintained by the Fairfax County Park Authority.

"Light Horse Harry" Lee married, first, his second cousin, Matilda Lee, the heiress of Stratford, and, second, Ann Hill Carter of Shirley. Robert Edward Lee (1807-1870) was a child of this second marriage, but was born at Stratford because his father continued to

reside there until his eldest son, Matilda's heir, came of age. Thus Stratford is now maintained by the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation as a memorial to R. E. Lee, although he was not actually a member of the Stratford branch of the family.

In 1831 Robert Lee, a lieutenant in the U.S. Corps of Engineers, married Mary Anne Randolph Custis, the heiress of Arlington. She was his third cousin by descent from that Ann Lee who married William Fitzhugh. Having no home of his own, Robert Lee came to feel at home at Arlington. He spent some part of almost every year on leave there and lived there during a tour of duty in Washington, 1834-1837. On the death of his father-in-law, in 1857, he became the master of the plantation. The passage of time having healed the wounds of war, the National Park Service now maintains Arlington as a memorial to the foremost general of the Confederacy.

Robert Lee was strongly opposed to both slavery and secession, but in the circumstances of 1861 he felt that his duty lay to Virginia—that a Union which could be held together only by force of arms had already ceased to exist. No provincial, he understood from the first that the South lacked the means to maintain its independence if the North proved sufficiently determined to prevent that. The object of his military operations was to convince the North that it could not prevail at an acceptable cost. In this he almost succeeded, but of course failed in the end, despite his many brilliant victories. He was not sorry to see the Union restored and slavery abolished, although he deeply regretted the cost of the war in death and destruction. He devoted his last years to the education of the rising generation, as President of Washington College, now Washington and Lee University.

General Lee's sons, George Washington Custis Lee (1832-1913) and William Henry Fitzhugh Lee (1837-1891), were major generals in the Confederate Army, as was his nephew, Fitzhugh Lee (1835-1905). This second Fitzhugh Lee was later Governor of Virginia, 1886-1890.