

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO FREEDOM

GENERAL INFORMATION

Type (pick one):       Site                       Facility               Program

Name:                      **Leesylvania State Park**

Address:                  **2001 Daniel K. Ludwig Drive**

City, State, Zip: **Woodbridge,      VA    22191**

County: **Prince William**

Congressional District: **3**

Physical Location of Site/facility (if different):

Leesylvania State Park is located at Freestone Point, sometimes identified in documents as Lees Neck, on the east side of the Potomac River in Prince William County, Virginia 1). The Park is bounded on the south side by Powells Creek; on the north by Neabsco Creek, and to the west by a north-south running valley. Originally a 2,000 acre estate patented in 1658, most of the Leesylvania estate was sold by heirs of the Lee family in 1825 to Henry Fairfax with a small remaining western portion sold in 1831 to Richard Stonnell. The estate was again divided by Henry Fairfax's will in 1847, leaving 544 acres of Freestone Point to John W. Fairfax (most of John Fairfax's inheritance is now Leesylvania State Park). In Henry Fairfax's will, Martha Lindsay Fairfax Robertson, sister of John Walter Fairfax, was left the more westerly portion of the property, "excepting the fishing shore they are to belong equally to the two children Martha Lindsay and John Walter and all the bildings [sic] on the shore, these shores is to be rented out and the rents annually divided betwixt the said two children"(Prince William County Wills P:333-338). John W. Fairfax called his property "Freestone Farm", Martha Fairfax Robertson called hers "Ohio Farm". Charles Lee referred to "Leesylvania Farm", and at times separated out the fishery in his accounts as "Freestone Point Fishery" and at times combined them both to "Leesylvania Estate" (Gardner, William M.; Hurst, G.J.; Snyder; Bryant, T.; Phase I Archeological Survey of 44PW873 and Limited Testing of 44PW7, Leesylvania State Park, Prince William County, Virginia, July, 1995).

Address not for publication?

Date Submitted:              **July 15, 2006**



**Summary:** Describe in 200 words or less, the significance to the Underground Railroad, of the site, program, or facility nominated for inclusion in the Network.

Leesylvania State Park, Prince William County, Virginia, a 508 acre tract of a 2,000 acre estate patented in 1658, is significant to the Underground Railroad because of fifteen runaways. Leesylvania, which means "Lee's Woods," was the circa 1750 home of Henry Lee II and birthplace of Henry Lee III, Revolutionary War hero and father of General Robert E. Lee. Nineteenth century owners were: Charles Lee; Martha Lindsay Fairfax Robertson; and Lt. Col. John Walter Fairfax. A significant part of all of the owner's farms was the fishery at Freestone Point (due to the fishery income) which is retained in the present park acreage.

Cate and Sinah, the 18<sup>th</sup> century runaways, were advertised in *Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser*, Oct. 21, 1784, Leesylvania.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century runaways listed in *Alexandria Gazette* are: Andrew and James, June 12, 1807, Leesylvania Farm; Daniel, Feb. 25, 1848, Freestone Farm; Henry and Betsy, June 26, 1856, Ohio Farm; and (Henry, Betsy), Tom, Armstead, Littleton, Abram, and Moses, Ohio Farm, August 15, 1856. Five negroes (four men and one woman) escaped to the *U. S. Steam Sloop Seminole* on September 23, 1861, reporting Confederate troop numbers and the Freestone Point Confederate Battery location.

**FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE USE ONLY**

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ site \_\_\_ facility \_\_\_ program is included in the Network to Freedom.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Owner/Manager (Share contact information  Y  N)

Name: **Commonwealth of Virginia  
Department of Conservation & Recreation**

Address: **203 Governor St., Suite 302**

City, State, Zip: **Richmond, VA 23219**

Phone: **804-692-0403**

Fax: **804-786-9294**

E-mail:

---

Application Preparer (Enter only if different from contact above.) (Share contact information  Y  N)

Name: **Patricia Ilura Williams Knock, Historic Preservationist**

Address: **13004 Orleans Street**

City, State, Zip: **Woodbridge, VA, 22192**

Phone: **703-4918-4954**

Fax:

E-mail: **[piknock@aol.com](mailto:piknock@aol.com)**

Name: **Avery Ames Born, Park Interpreter**

Address: **3260 John Robinson Lane, #11**

City, State, Zip: **Dumfries, VA, 22026**

Phone: **804-814-8178**

Fax:

E-mail: **[Avery.Greenhalgh@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:Avery.Greenhalgh@dcr.virginia.gov)**

---

**Privacy Information:** The Network to Freedom was established, in part, to facilitate sharing of information among those interested in the Underground Railroad. Putting people in contact with others who are researching related topics, historic events, or individuals or who may have technical expertise or resources to assist with projects is one of the most effective means of advancing Underground Railroad commemoration and preservation. Privacy laws designed to protect individual contact information (i.e., home or personal addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers, or e-mail addresses), may prevent NPS from making these connections. If you are willing to be contacted by others working on Underground Railroad activities and to receive mailings about Underground Railroad-related events, please add a statement to your letter of consent indicating what information you are willing to share.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom to nominate properties, facilities, and programs to the Network to Freedom. A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Response to this request is required for inclusion in the Network to Freedom in accordance with the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act (P.L. 105-203).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 15 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the National Coordinator, National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, NPS, 601 Riverfront Drive, Omaha, Nebraska 68102.



**SITES:**

In addition to the responses to each question, applications must also include the following attachments:

- 1) Letters of consent from all property owners for inclusion in the Network to Freedom (see sample)
- 2) Text and photographs of all site markers
- 3) Photographs illustrating the current appearance and condition of the site being nominated
- 4) Maps showing the location of the site

**S1. Site type:**

Building                       Object                       District (neighborhood)  
 Structure                       Landscape/natural feature                       Archeological site  
 Other (describe):

**S2. Is the site listed in the National Register of Historic Places? X\_Y**

The Leesylvania house is believed to date to the 1750s. As an archaeological site it is (44PW7: File 76-45). It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 (National Park Service 1991:835) (Gardner, William M.; Hurst, G.J.; Snyder; Bryant, T.; *Phase I Archeological Survey of 44PW873 and Limited Testing of 44PW7, Leesylvania State Park, Prince William County, Virginia*).

**State or National Register:**

Freestone Point Confederate Battery (added 1989 - Structure - #89001059)  
Also known as DHL No. 76-264  
At Potomac River off VA 610 in Leesylvania State Park, Woodbridge  
Historic Significance: Event  
Area of Significance: Military  
Period of Significance: 1850-1874  
Owner: State  
Historic Function: Defense  
Historic Sub-function: Fortification  
Current Function: Landscape  
Current Sub-function: Forest  
Leesylvania Archeological Site (44PW7) \*\* (added 1984 - Site - #84003565)  
Also known as 44PW7



Address Restricted, Dumfries  
Historic Significance: Information Potential  
Area of Significance: Historic - Non-Aboriginal  
Cultural Affiliation: Plantation  
Period of Significance: 1750-1799  
Owner: State  
Historic Function: Agriculture/Substinence, Domestic  
Historic Sub-function: Single Dwelling  
Current Function: Landscape  
Current Sub-function: Park, Unoccupied Land

**S3. Ownership of site:**

Private                       Private, non-profit (501c3)                       Multiple ownership  
 Public, local government                       Public, state government                       Public, federal government

**S4. Describe the site's association and significance to the Underground Railroad. Provide citations. Supplemental chronologies are encouraged.**

“Virginia was the largest of the new United States, in territory, in population, in influence—and in slaveholding. Virginians owned more than 40 percent of all the slaves in the new nation.”

Edmund S. Morgan - *American Slavery American Freedom*

In the 1810 census in Prince William County, slaves comprised 46% of the population. Free whites were 5,733 persons, slaves were 5,220 persons, and all other free persons (to include free blacks) were 358 persons (Como, T., Personal interview, Relic Room librarian, Prince William County, 2006).

There was a long tradition of enslavement at what is now Leesylvania State Park in Prince William County, Virginia (VA). In Henry Lee I's will written on July 13, 1746: “I give and bequeath to my Son Henry and to his Heirs forever Twenty Slaves vizt. Tom, Dinah, Hannah, Moss, Daniel, Frank, little Dinah, Dick and Cato, now at Neapsco Quarter [Leesylvania],



and at Salsberry plains Quarters . . ." (probated 27 August 1747: Westmoreland County Wills 10:364-368). Henry Lee II (1729-1787), the youngest son of Henry Lee and Mary Bland of Lee Hall, Westmoreland County, was eighteen at the death of his father when he became owner of Leesylvania. In November of 1751, he added to the Neabsco/Leesylvania property with the purchase of Freestone Point from Bertrand and Frances Ewell (Prince William County Deeds M:207-211). This additional property bordered the Potomac River from Neabsco Creek to Powells Creek.

While a practicing attorney in Williamsburg, Virginia, he married Lucy Grymes (1734-1792) on December 1, 1753. It is assumed that he moved to Prince William County, very near the colonial town of Dumfries, Virginia, in 1754 to assume his appointment as Deputy Attorney for Prince William County. In May, 1755, he became a military officer (Prince William County Order Book 1754-1755:5, 263) and was elected County Burgess on Mary 11, 1761, (Prince William County Deeds P:68-73). The Leesylvania house is believed to date to the 1750s (44PW7: File 76-45) and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 (National Park Service 1991:835).

For Henry Lee II's personal property taxes in 1787, his listing appears with 1768 acres of land and eight lots in Dumfries (Prince William County Taxes 1782-1787). He was also assessed for 55 slaves, 16 horses, 72 head of cattle, and a four-wheeled carriage (Schreiner-Yantis and Love 1987:903). Only one other man had more slaves taxed that year (Robert Hamilton). Of the top ten slave owners that year, excluding Hamilton and Lee, the other slave owners held on the average 25 slaves, half of what Henry Lee II had. Lee appears to be the second wealthiest man in Prince William County in 1787. Besides the numerous properties he owned in Prince William, were his additional properties (and likely more slaves and livestock) in other Virginia counties and in Kentucky (Gardner, W.M. et.al 44PW873/44PW7, 1995). The estate inventory for his will recorded on December 19, 1787, lists 83 slaves, carpenters tools, a wheat fan, a still and worm, plantation and blacksmith tools, livestock, cart and wagon, mahogany drawers and a book case (Prince William County Wills G:391-392). In the will of Lucy Grymes Lee (death 1792) were named the slaves left to her by



husband Henry II, and who she bequeathed to son Charles Lee: Daniel, Rachel, Judah and Bailey (Prince William County Deeds Y:187-189).

Henry Lee II's farm at Leesylvania produced tobacco and corn. No farm accounts are available for the Henry II time period, but in a letter dated June 28, 1773, his first cousin Richard Henry Lee hints at his success in tobacco farming: "The twenty hogsheads shipped by Col Henry Lee (Henry Lee II) are about 1400 (pounds) neat and his tobacco is generally of a superior quality" (Knock, P.I.W., *History Brochure Leesylvania State Park*, 1993).

This is not to suggest that the business of tobacco provided a steady profit, the market was unstable, ruining some while making others wealthy, depending on the years that the crops were grown coinciding with high demand and profit (Wells, C. "The Eighteenth Century Landscape of Virginia's Northern Neck", *Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine*, XXXVII December 1987, 42).

Leesylvania was also the site of a successful fishery at Freestone Point. The several buildings relating to the fishery were on land directly bordering the Potomac River. The Freestone Point Fishery brought known profits as recorded in late eighteenth century accounts of son Charles who was bequeathed the property on his father's death.

The Leesylvania property now in the State Park is associated with the flight of Cate and Sinah advertised in the *Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser*, Oct. 21, 1784. This first known runaway account was during the time period of Henry Lee II and wife Lucy Grymes Lee. The ad is extremely detailed, offering the women's physical descriptions; their suspected destination, Alexandria; the mode of travel, walking; and route, King's Highway. Interestingly, this incident is a second escape attempt for Cate, states the advertiser. Henry Lee II lived on the property from 1747 until his death in 1787. His ad states:



*FIVE POUNDS REWARD – Ran away from the subscriber in Prince William County, two likely Mulatto Slaves, viz CATE, a light Mulatto, about 22 years of age, about 5 feet high, full faced, expressive eyes, of a pleasant countenance, an high forehead, fine teeth, bushy long hair, is well set and broad shouldered...I suppose she [Cate] will endeavor for Fredericksburg or Alexandria, as she made an attempt to get off about 18 months ago and was taken up on the road to Alexandria, and said she intended for Philadelphia. She is very handy, spins well, and has been used to both house and plantation work.*

*SINAH, about 20 years of age, rather of a darker completion [sic] than Cate, has a sunken bumpy face, a very unbidding look, has a decay and holes in two of her upper foreteeth, a sulky ill natured countenance, well shaped, of the middle size, low forehead, and very bushy hair...She has been brought up in the house, is a good seamstress, and spins well. Whoever will deliver them to me at my house, or secure them in any jail so that I get them again shall receive the above reward of fifty shillings...*

*Henry Lee  
Prince William County*

(Turner, R. R. *Prince William County Virginia 1794-1860, Newspaper Transcripts*, 2000, 2).

The escape of two women is an unusual occurrence, as women's role as mothers and child caretakers had the effect of keeping women closer to home. Women were often alone carrying for their children as fathers were residing on different plantations or living away in a work environment. James Curry notes this effect in his autobiography. As a young married woman, Curry's mother had attempted to seek freedom along with her husband. Posing as free blacks, but eventually captured and returned home, Curry states, "Having young children soon, it tied her to slavery" (Blassingame, J. W. 1977, 129).





The destination of Alexandria, and also Fredericksburg, makes sense, since both of these cities were sites of significant free black populations that could hide runaways. (Knock, P. I., *Context Statement, UGRR, Prince William County, 2005*).

Documentation is lacking to verify the oral history of the Leesylvania house's destruction by burning in the 1790s, but the 18<sup>th</sup> century wood construction of Potomac River houses made them more vulnerable to fire. Rippon Lodge of wood construction, built in 1745, and still standing on property bordering Leesylvania to the north across Neabsco Creek, shows evidence of a fire on the roofing surrounding the center chimney (Hanafin, B. Personal interview, 2006).

Charles Lee (1758-1815) was the heir of Leesylvania, but never resided there, maintaining it with a series of overseers. Some of the overseers were: Samuel Lamkin (1800-1803); (1804) unknown; John Stone (1805); Reuben Kirk (1806-1807); and William Simmons (1808-1812) (Gardner, W.M. et.al 44PW873/44PW7, 1995).

Charles Lee was taxed for Leesylvania acreage from 1795 to 1825. In a lease agreement with Rowland Gaines made in 1789, he leased the land, slaves, livestock, the husbandry utensils, copper still and miscellaneous, and in that agreement named the slaves remaining at Leesylvania in 1789: "Gumby, Phil, Ben, Stephen, Abel, Dovey, Tom, Davis, Old Frank, Beck, Jenny, Minah, Yellow Moll, Black Moll, Eve, Cato, Harry," and "the following young slaves: Robin, Ally, Henny, and Amy – also the boy Jesse so long as Mrs. Lucy Lee will choose to keep Moses in her employment who may be substituted for Jesse whenever the said Lucy Lee shall consent thereto" (Gardner, W.M. et.al 44PW873/44PW7, 1995).

Probably nothing suggests daily activities of the enslaved at Leesylvania better than the listing of crops and farm activities indicated by equipment owned. At the termination of the lease with Rowland Gaines in 1791 are these crops: "corn, wheat, hay, flax, potatoes, pease, beans, turnips and flax seed, and timothy and clover seed measured by the bushell". Also listed are equipment for cider making, a copper still, and equipment for the



fisheries: “2 seine nets and lead line, 5 barrels of salt, and 20 fish barrels” (Peyton Papers 1758-1827). The enslaved at Leesylvania were skilled in raising various crops, as well as producing brandy, cider, and operating the fishery business.

Home for the enslaved in Virginia was in the “quarter”. “The quarter was the institutional embodiment of the slave community in the Chesapeake” (Berlin, I. 1998, 132). The neatness of the quarter depended on the inhabitants, their time constraints, and desires of the master or overseer. At Woodlawn Plantation in Fairfax County, Virginia, Nelly Custis Lewis writes to her friend in Philadelphia that “the quarter is not so neat, now that [slave] Nelly is pregnant” (Lewis, E.P.C., Brady C., *Letters, 1794-1851*).

At the larger plantations the quarters might more closely resemble those now reconstructed for interpretation, like those at Carter’s Grove in Colonial Williamsburg. In Northern Virginia, the housing there was very small dwellings of post-in-ground construction, surrounded by garden plots, paths, and animals.

But most of life was not lived out in the plantation quarter. The majority of life was lived out in the fields or in work that lasted from sun up to sun down. There were few daylight hours free for the enslaved. Days off were Sundays, Christmas, Easter and Whitsun [Whitsunday or Pentecost Sunday, also Whitsuntide, the first three days of the week starting with Pentecost Sunday]. The detailed explanation of Whitsun has a reason: two flight to freedom accounts for Prince William County name Whitsun as the timing for escape (Knock, P. I., *Context Statement, UGRR, Prince William County, 2005*).

One Whitsuntide account, June 12, 1807, occurred during the Leesylvania ownership of Charles Lee, with overseer John Stone in charge:

*“Twenty Dollars Reward. Ran Away from Freestone Point, near Dumfries, on Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> of last month, two Negro Men Slaves named **Andrew and James**, the property of Sarah Foushee, in Prince William County, and hired*



*of her until the end of the year. They had each of them a pass for three days, it being Whitsuntide holiday. Andrew is about 21 years of age, 5 feet 9 inches high, a black complexion, has a scar near the corner of one of his eyes, is a little \_\_\_\_\_, and has forward, impudent countenance. James is about 19 years of age, 5 feet 7 inches high, a black complexion, has a scar near his mouth of the size of a pea, reels and swaggers very much in his walk. Each of them had on when he went away a shirt and trousers of plain coarse Virginia cotton, and their other clothing is not known. A reward of TEN DOLLARS will be given for each of them, to any person who will apprehend them and deliver them to the subscriber, or to Sarah Foushee, living near Dumfries.*

*John Stone  
Prince William County*

(Turner, R.R. *Prince William County Virginia 1794-1860, Newspaper Transcripts*, 2000, 65).

Charles Lee's account books hint at Leesylvania's important income sources during the caretaking of the overseers/managers: crops of corn, wheat and hay, cords of wood cut, and freight paid to transport it. Another entry that illustrates slave hiring out practices is the hire of a carpenter (enslaved) of his neighbor's across Neabsco Creek, Thomas Blackburn. of Rippon Lodge "to hire of Mr. Blackburn's carpenter to have in 1803". In 1802, income from a crop of cotton appears. Cotton, like tobacco, is a labor intensive crop.

The fishery was also a good source of income earned. The yearly spring return of ocean fish that spawned in Potomac River creeks and tributaries were netted from boats and hauled to shore by hand. An entry for May 16, 1803, lists \$40 income from "6 barrels herrings & 2 whitefish" (Peyton Papers 1758-1827).

Even with the number of enslaved that are present, an 1803 account entry notes: "To wages of Hirelings at Harvest . . . \$20". In addition to hiring extra workers, Charles Lee's accounts note the occasional sale of a slave; "Sept. 30, 1805, Negro Sukey sold to G. Gale . . . \$266.67". As a value



comparison, that same year, “March 7, 1805, To John Stone’s wages as overseer for 1805 . . . \$150.00”, and “June 10, 1805, To Homer & Piles for waggon . . . \$97.17”. The reason for the sale of Sukey is not known: whether for an excess of workers, income desired, for the removal of uncooperative person, or a good price offered.

The fishery job also paid off in knowledge of the waterways to the African American fishery workers. African Americans who worked the fisheries and other port and river jobs were experts at running to freedom using the water escape route. Slave owners became wary of hiring out their slaves to places near water. Here are a few of the restrictions in Prince William County hiring out agreements: “ (in 1841) . . . we also bind ourselves to employ said slave on our own farm and not employ said slave on or near the necks rivers or creeks or on any public works under a penalty of one thousand dollars.” For the sixty dollar yearly hire of Jesse Bruce for the year 1845, Henry Love and George Cockrell promised: “the said Jess Bruce shall not haul the ?[seines], go in long boats or be rehired with the consent in writing.” Edward Shepherd promises for the hire of a slave named John: “not to work him on a quarry – rail road – fishing – or in long boat” (Turner, R.R. *Prince William County Virginia 1794-1860, Newspaper Transcripts*, 2000, 184).

Fish caught in the spring runs were subsequently gutted and salted for preservation. Salted fish was one of the main protein sources for Potomac River farms’ enslaved residents. In the lease agreement with Rowland Gaines, herring for the use of Lucy Lee’s slaves is considered: “ (to furnish) the slaves of Mrs. Lucy Lee with a sufficient quantity of fresh herrings for their use to be cured at her expense” (Peyton Papers 1758-1827).

Charles Lee’s account expenditures note purchase of salt, nets, tar (for boat bottoms), cork, and purchase of a scow (boat) – all for the fishery. Also are sales of livestock: pork, beef, lamb, and large quantities of butter. Butter was a way of conserving milk for longer use as we do today in the production of cheese. Women were the producers of butter, and the large quantity of butter attests to the productive work of the female enslaved residents. Poultry: chicken, ducks and “turkies” listed for sale were also



likely raised and tended to by the women. Miscellaneous income came from brandy distilling.

Charles Lee died June 25, 1815, at his residence in Leeton Forest, Fauquier County, Virginia (*Virginia Herald* 1815: 3). After his death the sale of livestock, farming equipment, and slaves from the Leesylvania estate is noted, with the purchasers Edmund J. Lee in account with his widow, Margaret Lee, administrator of his estate. Walter Jones, son-in-law of Charles Lee bought the slaves: Alice, Louisa, Sally, William, Harrison, Cynthia, "Eleanor daughter of Jamy", Sophia, Henry, Charles, Harry, "Tom son of Eve" and Mary (Lee 1800-1815: 153, 154). The estate settlement for property was argued in Chancery Courts in Fredericksburg in 1817 and 1821, and partitioned in 1827 in Fairfax County. After a complicated settlement, the tract Leesylvania or "Lees Neck" was sold by Alfred Lee to Captain Henry Fairfax for \$9,600.00: ". . . bounded by the mail or Stage road from Alexandria to Dumfries and from the said road, down Neabsco Creek to Potomack river, thence down the Potomac to the mouth of Powells creek, thence up Powells Creek and run to the aforesaid stage road" (Prince William County Deeds 10:290-292). The remainder of Leesylvania was deeded from Robert Eden Lee to Richard Stonnell on October 17, 1831, and was west of what is now Route 1, and is outside of Leesylvania State Park (Prince William County Old Plat Book:53-54).

Captain Henry Fairfax obtained his rank from staff service with the 36<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment during the War of 1812. He had come to Virginia from Charles County, MD., and was a shipping agent and prosperous landowner. He married three times: first, to Sarah Triplett Carter, second to Sophia Scott, and third to Elizabeth Lindsay, mother of John Walter and Martha Lindsay Fairfax, the twelfth and thirteenth children of Henry Fairfax (Buck-Thompson, C., Personal files, 2006).

Martha Lindsay Fairfax was born May 19, 1826, at "Prospect Hill" in Dumfries, Va., as was her younger brother, John Walter on June 30, 1828. John Fairfax attended the University of Pennsylvania's medical college for a few weeks, but was called home by the deaths of his parents in the autumn of 1847. John assumed the responsibilities of managing the extensive Fairfax



properties, and executing his father's will (Buck-Thompson, C., Personal files, 2006).

The estate was again divided by Henry Fairfax's will in 1847, leaving 544 acres of Freestone Point to John W. Fairfax (most of John Fairfax's inheritance is now Leesylvania State Park). In Henry Fairfax's will, sister of John Walter Fairfax, Martha Lindsay Fairfax Robertson was left the more westerly portion of the property, "excepting the fishing shore they are to belong equally to the two children Martha Lindsay and John Walter and all the bildings [sic] on the shore, these shores is to be rented out and the rents annually divided betwixt the said two children"(Prince William County Wills P:333-338). John W. Fairfax called his property "Freestone Farm", Martha Fairfax Robertson called hers "Ohio Farm".

In 1848, John Fairfax married Mary Jane Rogers (1826-1871). Although the Fairfax family owned three estates, their primary residence from 1852 was at Oak Hill in Loudoun County, VA, a house built for President James Monroe. John Fairfax joined the Confederate Army, and initially served Colonel N. G. Evans at the Battle of First Manassas. After August 1861, he held this position with General James Longstreet. Fairfax obtained a formal commission in February, 1862, and ended the war as a Lieutenant Colonel (Buck-Thompson, C., Personal files, 2006).

Daniel, an enslaved laborer, escaped from Free Stone Farm while the property was being managed as one of John Walter Fairfax's three properties. Fairfax advertised February 25, 1848, for Daniel in the *Alexandria Gazette*:

*\$30 REWARD – Ranaway from the Free Stone Farm in Prince William County, VA., on Friday inst. Negro man DANIEL. He is about 5 feet 8 or 10 inches high and has lost some of his front teeth, is about forty-five years old and his hair is getting grey, he has a very husky voice and is a dark brown color, Daniel left the farm saying he intended seeing me in Alexandria but I have not heard of his being in this place and supposed he is endeavoring to make his way to a free state. \$10 if taken in Prince William County, \$20 if taken in any of the neighboring counties, and secured so that*



*I can get him. Daniel has a pass with him dated 27<sup>th</sup> February for two days which he may endeavor to have altered, it was given to him that he might go to Brentsville on the date of its date.*

*John W. Fairfax*

*Prince William County*

(Turner, R.R. *Prince William County Virginia 1794-1860, Newspaper Transcripts*, 2000, 222).

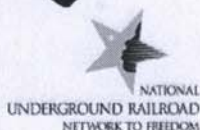
After the war, John Fairfax continue to manage his three properties, Oak Hill, Bellegrove in Leesburg, and Freestone, taking Freestone as his residence in the 1870s, after the death of his wife in 1871 and Bellegrove's destruction by fire in 1875. Although just 43 at the time of his wife's death, Fairfax never remarried (Buck-Thompson, C., Personal files, 2006).

Martha Fairfax married Thomas Bolling Robertson, a lawyer and a descendant of Pocahontas, on July 12, 1849, at Christ Church in Alexandria. The Robertsons are shown in the 1850 census living in Petersburg, VA, but in the 1860 census in Alexandria, VA (Buck-Thompson, C., Personal files, 2006).

In the 1860 slave schedule for Prince William County, James W. Havener is listed as employer and T. B. Robertson of Alexandria, VA, as owner for fifteen slaves from age 82 to a child of two. Seven are female, eighteen and over, and three are children. The males are: 62, 45, 38, 35, 35, 30, 29, and 13. The females are: 82, 50, 32, 18, 18, 9, and 2. The 82 year old female is listed as "fugitive from the state". The "number of slave houses listed" for Ohio Farm is four (Como, T., Personal Interview, July 2006).

Two runaway ads pertain to the Ohio Farm, bringing the total number of ads that qualify nomination of Leesylvania State Park to five. The first ad is for Henry and Betsey. The second ad repeats Henry and Betsey and adds Moses, Abram, Littleton, Armstead, and Tom:

*\$200 REWARD -- Left the overseer on my farm a week or two ago, Henry and Betsy. Henry is of medium size, black, muscular and very likely about*



*reward will be paid if taken and secured out of the state, or ratably for such as may be secured, or \$700 or ratable if taken and secured in Virginia.*

*T.B. Robertson  
Alexandria, Va.  
August 15, 1856*

*(Turner, R.R. Prince William County Virginia 1794-1860, Newspaper Transcripts, 2000, 282)*

During the Civil War , for five months, from October 1861 to March 1862, the Confederate military succeeded in blockading the Potomac River, the Union's main river supply route. The flow of much needed military supplies and civilian goods were hindered; the blockade in addition was an embarrassment for Union leaders.

The Confederates had built the northernmost of their gun emplacements along the Potomac River at Freestone Point, on a cliff where the Potomac River and the southern shore of Neabsco Creek meet. (Wills, M. A. *The Confederate Blockade of Washington, D.C. 1861-1862*, 10).

Freestone Point Battery (Leesylvania State Park), Prince William County, VA, is significant to the Underground Railroad because escaping contrabands from Ohio Farm revealed the target and number of Confederate men and cannons to the Union Army in Sept 1861. The following official report describes the group of freedom seekers:

*U. S. S. STEAM SLOOP SEMINOLE  
Potomac Flotilla, September 25, 1861*

*SIR: I have the honor to report that this morning at 7 o'clock a party of contrabands, consisting of four men and one woman, was picked up by a boat from this ship while making their way out from the Virginia shore in an old scow. They claim to be the property of one T. B. Robinson (sic), of Ohio Farm, Virginia, and report that there are in [and] about that vicinity about 400 armed men, and that two days since they commenced erecting a battery on Freestone Point, about 4 miles from our present anchorage, and that 200 men with two heavy*





*siege guns passed through their place yesterday. They tell a consistent story, but none have positively seen the aforesaid battery....*

*I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,*

*C.S. Norton*

*Lieutenant, and Commanding Officer*

A subsequent letter states that the four men and one woman were taken to the Navy Yard, where their known location and disposition ends. Further research may reveal their eventual outcome.

The large number of runaways that left the Leesylvania State Park landscape, fifteen, with evidence of runaways from every owner of the Leesylvania property makes an impressive record of the desire of the enslaved for freedom. The Leesylvania story is an important story about the enslaved of Prince William County and of Northern Virginia. The personal descriptions of the men and women, their intended destinations and interesting circumstances offer a huge amount of information for public interpretation, not only at this popular Virginia park, but throughout Virginia.

**S4a. Type(s) of Underground Railroad Association (select all that apply)**

- Station     Assoc. w/ prominent person     Rebellion site     Legal challenge
- Escape     Rescue     Kidnapping     Maroon community
- Destination     Church w/active congregation     Cemetery     Transportation route
- Military site     Commemorative site/monument
- Other (describe):

**S5. Provide a history of the site since its time of significance to the Underground Railroad, including physical changes, changes in ownership or use of the building(s) and site.**



Henry Lee II lived on the property, still called Leesylvania today, from 1747 until his death in 1787. Their mansion burned soon after Mrs. Lee died, five years later, but the site is on park property. Eight children were born at Leesylvania, including Henry Lee III (Light Horse Harry), a cavalry colonel in the revolution, governor of Virginia (1791-1794) and father of Robert E. Lee.

In 1825 the property was sold to Henry Fairfax. His son John, later an aide to CSA Gen. James Longstreet, inherited the property in 1847. The Fairfax house burned in 1910, shortly after John's death, but many remnants, including a large chimney that has been restored, remain on the site. In addition, Freestone Point was the site of a Confederate force and gun emplacement during the Civil War.

Leesylvania was occupied between 1928 and 1943 by the Wheelock Hunt Club. Hunt Club members and their guests stayed in the two-story frame lodge which was located on a hill at Freestone Point. An out-building behind the lodge housed ten ice boxes in which ducks were stored. The RF&P railroad stop at Neabsco made the Club easily accessible to hunters visiting from distant cities.

In the 1950s, the beach area beginning at Freestone Point was opened and advertised as "the Washington area's first luxury recreation and beach resort." Three swimming pools, one mile of picnic area, a kiddie playland, and snack bars were part of the resort. A dock was built into Maryland waters to dock the S.S. Freestone, an entertainment ship for dining, dancing, and gambling.

The 508 acre park was donated to the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1978 by Daniel K. Ludwig. A national historical society, the Society of Lees of Virginia, was instrumental in securing the donation. The park was officially opened in 1989, but had to close to the public due to lack of funding. The park re-opened full time in 1992. Visitors can enjoy hiking, picnicking, boating, and learning about Leesylvania's rich history through interpretative programs and displays in the Visitor Center.



Today, Freestone Point is part of Leesylvania State Park, a recreational area. In the area of Freestone Point there is a fishing pier and a beach. The point rises 95 feet above the Potomac River. The battery has four individual earthen gun emplacements, all formed by a large, deep, rectangular depression with high earthen berms (which along with Cockpit Point batteries are the only remaining Potomac River blockage batteries). They were oriented on the point in such a way as to be able to fire out into the Potomac River and back towards the mouth of Neabsco Creek.

The staff has cleared the brush, and incorporated the battery into its interpretive program. The setting is natural, with hardwood forest behind and the Potomac River in front. The forested Maryland shore is about three miles to the east across the river, and Mason Neck State Park and Mason Neck Wildlife Sanctuary are to the north. The views from the site, the setting, and the earthen structures have changed little since the Civil War (National Register nomination).

**S6. Describe current educational programs, tours, markers, signs, brochures, site bulletins, or plaques at the site. Include text and photographs of markers.**

The area being nominated has been incorporated into a 2-mile historical hiking trail, called the Lee's Woods Trail. Visitors use the trail heavily during the spring, summer, and fall. Ranger-guided hikes occur several times a month and are free and open to the public. The trail received heavy use from local elementary schools during April and May. The park has an annual Haunted History Hike in October and we are working on adding information about Leesylvania's freedom seekers to the program.

**S7. Identify historical sources of information. Include a bibliography.**

**Books**

Berlin, Ira. *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South*. New



York: Oxford University Press, 1974.

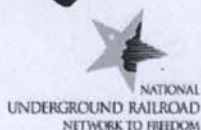
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America." *American Historical Review* 85, February 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Many Thousands Gone, The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 1998
- Berlin, Ira, Barbara J. Fields, Thavolia Glymph, Joseph P. Reidy and Leslie S. Rowland, eds: *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867. Series I, vol.I, The Destruction of Slavery*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Blassingame, John W. *Slave Testimony Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997.
- Blockson, Charles L. *The Underground Railroad*. New York: Berkley Books, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Escape from Slavery: The Underground Railroad," *National Geographic*, July 1984, 3-39.
- Brown, George B. *A History of Prince William County*. Prince William, Virginia: Historic Prince William, Inc. 1994.
- Costa, Thomas. <http://etext.virginia.edu/subjects/runaways>, University of Virginia's College at Wise website for Virginia Runaways: Runaway Slave advertisements from 18<sup>th</sup> century Virginia newspapers.
- Curtis, Donald E. *The Curtis Collection: A Personal View of Prince William County History*. Prince William, Virginia: Prince William County Historical Commission, 1988.
- Evans, D'Anne. *Prince William County, A Pictorial History*. Norfolk/Virginia Beach: The Donning Company, 1989.
- Genovese, Eugene D *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1974.
- Harrison, Fairfax. *Landmarks of Old Prince William: A study of Origins in Northern Virginia*. Vols.1-2. Baltimore: Prince William County Historical Commission, 1987.



- Hill, Daniel G. *The Freedom Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada*. Agincourt, Canada: Book Society of Canada, 1981.
- Historic Dumfries. *Records of Dettingen Parish Prince William County, Virginia, Vestry Book 1745-1785, Minutes of Meetings of the Overseers of the Poor, 1788-1802, Indentures, 1749-1782*. Dumfries, Virginia: Historic Dumfries Virginia, Inc. 1976.
- Horton, James Oliver, and Lois E. Horton. *In Hope of Liberty*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Isaac, Rhys. *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.
- Jones, Absalom. *A Thanksgiving Sermon, Preached on January 1, 1808, in St. Thomas's or the African Episcopal Church, Philadelphia: On account of the Abolition of the Slave Trade*. Philadelphia: Fry & Kammerer, 1808.
- Kulikoff, Allan. *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake 1680-1800*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986.
- Larkin, Jack. *The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790-1840*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.
- Levine, Lawrence W. *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Lewis, Eleanor Parke Custis with Patricia Brady editor. *George Washington's Beautiful Nelly; the Letters of Eleanor Parke Custis Lewis to Elizabeth Bordley Gibson, 1794-1851*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1991.
- Lounsbury, Carl. *An Illustrated Dictionary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Malvin, John. *Autobiography of John Malvin*. Cleveland, Ohio: Leader Printing Company, 1879.
- Mayer, Henry. *All on Fire, William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery*. New York: St. Martins Press, 1998.



- Middleton, Arthur Pierce. *The Tobacco Coast A Maritime History of Chesapeake Bay in the Colonial Era*. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984.
- Nagel, Paul C. *The Lee's of Virginia: Seven Generations of an American Family*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Netherton, Nan; Donald Sweig, Janice Artemel, Patricia Hickin, Patrick Reed. *Fairfax County, Virginia, A History*. Fairfax Virginia: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, 1978.
- Peters, Joan, *Slave and Free Negro Records from the Prince William County Court Minute and Order Books: 1752-1763, 1766-1769, 1804-1806, 1812-1814, 1833-1865*. Broad Run, VA: Albemarle Research, 1996.
- Phillips, Christopher. *Freedom's Port, the African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860*. Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1997.
- Purdue, Charles L., Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-slaves*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976.
- Quarles, Benjamin. *Black Abolitionists*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Ratcliffe, R. Jackson. *This Was Prince William*. Leesburg, Virginia: Potomac Press, 1978.
- Rush, Richard, Lieut. Commander U.S. Navy and Mr. Robert H. Woods. *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894.
- Royster, Charles. *Light-Horse Harry Lee and the Legacy of the American Revolution*; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.
- Siebert, Wilbur H. *The Underground Railroad, From Slavery to Freedom*, New York: Macmillan Company, 1898.
- Sobel, Mechal. *The World They Made Together, Black and White Values in Eighteenth Century Virginia*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987.
- Sprouse, Edith Moore. *Mount Air, Fairfax County, Virginia*, Fairfax, Va.: Fairfax Office



of Comprehensive Planning, unknown year.

Sprouse, Edith Moore. *Along the Potomac River: Maryland Gazette 1728-1799*.  
Westminister, Maryland: Willow Bend Books, 2001.

Sprouse, Edith Moore. *Colchester; Colonial Port on the Potomac*. Fairfax, Va.: Fairfax  
Office of Comprehensive Planning in cooperation with the Fairfax County  
History Commission, 1975.

Steward, Austin. *Twenty Two Years a Slave and Forty Years a Freeman*, 1857, ed. Jane  
and William Pease: Reading Mass., 1969.

Still, William. *The Underground Railroad*. Philadelphia, 1872, Reprint by Johnson  
Publishing Co. Inc. Chicago, 1970.

Turner, Ronald Ray. *Prince William County Virginia 1794-1860, Newspaper  
Transcripts*, Manassas, Virginia: copyright 2000 by author.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Prince William County Virginia, Edmund Berkeley's Evergreen  
Farm Day  
Book 1851-1855*, Manassas, Virginia: copyright 2003 by author.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Prince William County Virginia, Clerk's Loose Papers, Volume II,  
Selected Transcripts 1808-1860, Deeds and Slave Records*. Manassas, Virginia:  
copyright 2004 by author.

Walsh, Lorena S. *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: the History of a Virginia Slave  
Community*. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1997.

Wills, Mary Alice. *The Confederate Blockade of Washington, D.C. 1861-1862*; McClain  
Printing Company, Parsons, West Virginia, 1975.

Woodson, Carter G. *The History of the Negro Church*. Washington: Associated  
Publishers, 1921.

Writers Program, Works Project Administration in Virginia. *Prince William: the Story of  
Its People and Its Places*. Bicentennial Edition, Manassas, Virginia. The  
Bethlehem Good Housekeeping Club, 1976. (Originally compiled 1941.)

## Archaeological Reports



**Much of the historic research for this report was taken from the historic context sections of the following archaeological reports. The late Dr. William M. Gardner was responsible for leading a number of excellent investigators into revealing the history of Leesylvania State Park, both through historic research and fine archaeology.**

*A Phase I Archaeological Survey of 44PW873 and a Limited Testing of 44PW7, Leesylvania State Park, Prince William County, Virginia;* Gardner, William M., Gwen J. Hurst, Kimberly A. Snyder and Tammy Bryant. Report prepared by Thunderbird Archeological Associates, Inc. for the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, July 1995. Unpublished ms. On file with Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

*Archaeological Investigations at 44PW6 and 44PW608, Leesylvania State Park, Prince William County, Virginia;* Gardner, William M., Gwen Hurst and Tammy Bryant. Report prepared by Thunderbird Archeological Associates, Inc. for the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, March 1999. Unpublished ms. On file with Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

### **Personal Interviews with Local Historians**

Buck-Thompson, Personal interview, Civil War historian, and reenactor for Martha Fairfax Robertson, July, 2006, copy in author's files.

Como, Tish, Personal interview, Relic Room Librarian, Prince William County, July, 2006, copy in author's files.

Hanafin, Brendon, Personal interview, Civil War historian and Historic Preservationist, July, 2006, copy in author's files.

### **Newspapers**

*Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser*, Oct. 21, 1784  
*Alexandria Gazette*, June 12, 1807; Feb. 25, 1848; June 26, 1856;  
August 15 1856.

S8. Describe any other local, state, or federal historic designation, records, signage, or plaques the site has.

**S9. Is the site open to the public, and under what conditions?**





Freestone Point and part of both Leesylvania, Freestone Farm, and Ohio Farm (fishery) are within Leesylvania State Park boundaries. The park is open to the public year round, from dawn to dusk (times change depending on the season). There are special overnight group camping areas, restrooms, and a marina that maintains seasonal hours. Visitors pay a \$3.00 parking fee per car Monday – Friday, and \$4.00 Saturday and Sunday.

**S10. Describe the nature and objectives of any partnerships that have contributed to the documentation, preservation, commemoration, or interpretation of the site.**

One of our most significant partnerships is with the Civil War Trails, who donated the trail marker at the beginning of the Lee's Woods Trail (see photograph). The park is supported by the Friends of Leesylvania State Park (FoLSP), who put in hundreds of hours of volunteer service including trail maintenance, letter-writing, and leading interpretative hikes. The Society of the Lee's was active in acquiring the land originally donated to the Commonwealth of Virginia. We have formed partnerships with the Chesapeake Bay Living Classrooms for educational purposes, and of course work with other state parks and agencies.

S11. Additional data or comments. (Optional)

