Stratford Hall Plantation

AN ADDRESS (with slides)

by

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Thomas Lee purchased the property upon which Stratford was built from Mrs. Nathaniel Pope in about 1716. Presumably, he started his building of Stratford shortly after his marriage to Hannah Ludwell in 1722, and it took approximately eight years or so to complete it— that means the completion was around 1730. Now, the house represents a significant flow of our nation's story; it is a reflection of the actual transplanting of the culture and getting ready for a new nation.

The Lees, as you know, were all very active in politics and right down to the famous General Robert E. Lee. Their bywords were duty and commitment.

So now we will start looking at some of the slides that I have brought. This is how the house looked back in 1928. Some of you, of course, may be aware of the fact that a Dr. Stewart was occupying the house at that time. In fact, we have people who go through the house that actually were there when Dr. Stewart lived. Mrs. Charles Lanier purchased Stratford and formed the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association, and then it was opened to the public in 1934. Obviously, in those five years there were some adjustments on the external parts of the house, such as this stairway and porch. Much of the other external part of the house was left intact. Now we will have a more up-to-date version of the house—a beautiful view—a long shot view in the spring of the year with Stratford being surrounded by the lovely dogwood trees. Now we are going to look at some of the areas that you may not have seen before on your visit to Stratford. This is the beach area. Now, try to go back in time and imagine this as a wharf. We actually have jetties here now because the erosion has been about a foot a year over that period of time. Back in the days of the Lees, fifteen ships would come into this port, just about one every other day, and that was a very busy community unto itself. Ships' captains had to pay duty on the cargoes and they also were interested in exporting the tobacco which was the principal crop back in those days.

Now the next building that we have has a whole story in itself and is of our mill. Now, as far back as 1740 there was a deed reflecting the use of that mill that is used today to grind cornmeal. It also was destroyed and later rebuilt by Philip Ludwell Lee, who was the second master of Stratford and that date was about 1770. Unfortunately, it did go to ruins because of the flooding by the dam, and again, in 1860, it was reconstructed by a Mr. Muse and a Mr. Jenkins, who leased it from Mrs. Stewart, who was the occupant of Stratford at that time. Again it went to ruination, and in 1906 Dr. Stewart, decided he really didn't have any need for that, so again it was abandoned. Money was donated by Senator and Mrs. Jesse Metcalfe from Rhode Island and machinery to run it was donated by General Mills from Milwaukee, so in 1939 it was put back into operation. In 1958 it had to have more repairs on it, but since that date it has been in continuous operation. On the second and fourth Mondays it actually is operated to grind the flour. And it is an example of the earliest grist mill in the country. It has always been on the original spot. We have one more slide of that to show you the actual mechanism there.

Now the next slide is going to depict the Lee crest. The Latin phrase, Ne Incautus Futura, translated into English is, “Not unmindful of the future”; the squirrel at the top of the crest is, of course, symbolic of the Lees. We like to think that they used that because the squirrels do stow away and I think the Lees were very astute businessmen and they did understand the importance of property and they always looked to the future. The outside crest that surrounds the main crest and the names under it—obviously you cannot see that from this slide—but they are the names of the families the Lees married into. So if you are ever over to Stratford and you have a question, the first building where you start your tour, take some time to look at it (crest) and you will see the names there of the various families that actually became the descendants of the original Lees.

Now we are going to look at some of the Lees that you may or may not be familiar with; this is Richard I and he was the grandfather of Thomas Lee and also it is from him that stem the American branches of the family name. His fifth son, interestingly enough, Hancock, actually was the grandfather of Kendal Lee who built Ditchley which I'm sure you are familiar with. And also one of the daughters of the Ditchley line married into the Taylor line and thus we have Zachary Taylor who was our

12th President of the United States. So you can still see the Lees have certainly spread out in many, many areas.

Now, the wife of Richard I, who was the grandmother of Thomas Lee was Ann Constable. She was the ward of Governor Wyatt at the time. And then the father of Thomas Lee was Richard II, a scholar who had a large library dedicated to theological and classical work. He was a member of “His Majesty’s Council” and also a naval officer of the Potomac. His wife was Laetitia Corbin and she was from a very prominent Northern Neck family. Now we have Thomas Lee who was the builder of Stratford. He happened to be the fourth son; he was educated in Virginia but he also went beyond that and taught himself Latin and Greek, using the books from his father’s library. And at the age of 23 he had already assumed a very prominent role in politics in the local area. He was a justice of Westmoreland County and a member of the House of Burgesses and a naval officer of the Potomac. He obviously did inherit his father’s and grandfather’s sense of business because although he started out at Stratford with about 1400 acres, his land holding soon rose to over 30,000 acres.

The next slide will be on his wife, Hannah Ludwell. Her family owned the plantation near Williamsburg called Greensprings which is no longer standing. She certainly added a lot to the wealth and was the very beloved wife of Thomas Lee. They had eleven children (eight reached maturity) and there were six boys and two girls; five of these boys and one of the daughters were all born at Stratford. Philip Lee, the eldest, was the one who inherited Stratford at the time of Thomas Lee’s death and that started the second generation of occupancy of Stratford Hall.

Let’s look at some of the other Lees, and particularly this year, and around this area, and I heard you all talking about the up-coming events to celebrate the constitution — many of the Lees played a significant role in that. Now, Richard Henry, as you know, was one of the brothers who signed the Declaration of Independence. He also was anti-Federalist because he had a great fear at that time of the power being in the hands of a few. He was married twice and had a very large family and his home was in Caroly. His brother, Francis Lightfoot, was the other brother who signed the Declaration of Independence, and, interestingly enough, he chose the side of the pro-Federalist; and he married Rebecca Taylore from Mt. Airy, and I’m sure you know where that is; and their home was Menokin. Now the next brother, and I might add that Richard Henry, Francis Lightfoot, William and Arthur whom we will be looking at shortly, were called the “Patriot sons”; he (William) was the only American elected to sheriff of the city of London. The first generation of Lee boys actually went over to England at the age of twelve to complete their education. However, William and Arthur really spent much of their adult life in England. He (William) also held other very prominent posts in Berlin and Vienna. He lived at his mother’s home in Greensprings ultimately. And then the other brother, Arthur Lee, was a physician, lawyer and diplomat. He also chose the anti-Federalist side. His estate was in Landsdowne in Urbanna. However, he did not purchase that until his later years and he only actually lived there for about a year or a year and a half.

Then we have Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee who was the third master of Stratford by virtue of marrying his second cousin, Matilda. He also was very active in politics and a very famous military man. His second wife, as you know, was Anne Hill Carter from the Shirley plantation and they actually bore Robert E. Lee at Stratford. He chose the role of pro-Federalist. He also was the one who had been selected to write and give speech reviews to George Washington who was his mentor. And this is where we get the famous saying that he wrote for George Washington: “First in war; first in peace; first in the hearts of his countrymen; second to none in the humble and endearing scene of private life.” Unfortunately, he did come upon some hard times. But later when he was in debtors’ prison he wrote the memoirs of a boy in the Southern part of the United States. I might add that is still the text that is used for that portion of the Revolutionary War.

And then, of course, we have the famous Robert E. Lee, who was born at Stratford in January, 1807. He moved to Alexandria at the age of about 3½, but we do have a letter on file that states that he always loved Stratford and hoped one day to go back there and buy it, but that never materialized. He died in Lexington on October 12, 1870. As you know, he was the President of Washington College for the five years following the Civil War and a year after he died the trustees renamed Washington College to Washington and Lee University.

Now Henry Lee IV was the last Lee who occupied Stratford. He sold it to a Mr. Sommerville and then it was followed in occupancy, of course, by the Stewarts. Henry Lee ultimately went to Paris with his wife and both of them died there and they are buried there.

The great house has 18 rooms and 16 fireplaces; all the bricks were made on the plantation. You will notice a water table here separating the first and second floors. A lot of people think that this brick around the windows is faded but it really isn’t; it was hand rubbed in order to give you a little different texture — it looks better. And, of course, the cluster of chimneys with the catwalk around and you can go up and look out for the ships at sea. We have determined very recently there was a promenade connecting these two clusters of chimneys. I imagine they really did have very special times going up there and having such a beautiful vista over the Potomac as they were partying and having their musicians play for them.

Now we are going to have an aerial view. But again, here is the main house and these four dependencies are the original buildings to the house. This is the southwest dependency where you actually started the tour. It was occupied by a coachman and his family, plus indentured servants. You continue down the path. This is the school house where Thomas Lee’s children were tutored. And then you come on across from there to the gardens of another dependency, an interesting array of tools in there. And now, of course, our famous kitchen where we serve the cookies and juice and where they did their main cooking for at least two generations of Lees. Now to the upper right, our formal boxwood gardens that were restored through the efforts of the Virginia Garden Society. And down here we have a floral garden and a vegetable garden, that I might add represent about one-eighth the size the Lees had. And there is this octagon building. We really don’t know, factually, what that was used for; however, it was rebuilt on the original site. It probably could have been used for a gazebo or a garden house. We really don’t know but eventually we may be able to uncover what the original use of that was.

Now we are going to start a quick house tour. The first thing we are going into is the bedchamber wing. This room is immediately off to your left—the resident chamber. These four rooms were occupied by children coming out of the nursery at the age of four and anyone coming to visit Stratford. We have another shot of this bedchamber. If any of you ladies do needlework that
cover canapes, this one is about 285 years old.

For you gentlemen, this was a type of wash and shave stand they had and this is a cover and they could bring it up to their chin, strap it around their head or bend over and it would protect their blouses from being wet. Now, directly across from this is the green bedchamber. They did not have closets which we have today so they would have layered the clothing in that fashion upon a chair. Going down the hall, we will see the boys' dormitory; five or six boys slept in the same room and they had their private entrance to make it easier to get out to the school house. Directly across from here we have the lovely blue bedchamber; and this is one of the pieces that belonged to the descendants; that cradle actually belonged to the descendants of Hannah Lee who was one of the daughters born at Stratford.

I'm sure you are aware of the fine antique furniture that we have—all authentic antiques. Much of the Chippendale throughout the house is the result of the donation called the "Faulk Collection"; Mrs. Faulk had an excellent collection of American antique furniture, donated to us back in the mid-1970's.

Now we leave this first wing and go into the center of the house which was used as a plantation office. First, it did not have a fireplace so I'm sure they hurriedly went about their business affairs. As you know, they pressed their documents which they rolled up and then had to press them out which made them easier to utilize later.

Now we are going into, first, the east wing, and as we go in—this is the only inside staircase in the house—that is a primary staircase and did not alter anything structurally inside the house.

Off to your left, we have the rooms where the governess stayed, or actually tutored Thomas Lee's granddaughters. They did not have reason for a separate school house at that time. She would not have lived in this room and her bedchamber would be in the first wing which was actually adjacent to other rooms where the granddaughters would have stayed.

Directly across the hall from that is where the housekeeper lived. She was probably a member of the family and stayed with the family helping the young girls learn how to read and spin and administer medicine and do other things the mistress felt was within her right to do. Adjacent to this room is the warming kitchen. Now we are upstairs. This is that lovely chamber, used in those days for a variety of purposes. The lady of the house would do her needlework there. This is a rather famous room as far as we are concerned because 17 Lee children were born in this room, including Robert E. Lee. The next slide actually shows the cradle Robert E. Lee was placed in after he was born. It is the only piece of furniture in the house that was here at the time of the Lees. Another shot of this multi-bedroom chamber allows you to look into the nursery where the children would stay until the age of four. The next slide is actually of the nursery; this is not child furniture. It is miniature furniture that furniture makers would bring around to the various plantation owners to indicate the type of furniture that could be made available to the very wealthy; so they brought their samples as well.

This is the smallest fireplace in the house. I'm sure that any of you who have been here have heard the story about this fireplace. Dated about 1735, it had a little cherub box in it. When Robert E. Lee left here, when about 3½, and they couldn't find him, he was up there saying goodbye to the angels and asking them to look after Stratford until he returned.

Now directly across from there is the dining area. This is the dining room closet. Depending on which Lee lived there, they would have used it either for a dinner party, or as a music room or for early afternoon tea. It was adjacent to the main dining room. This picture depicts one more shot of the dining room area, and it compliments each other very, very well.

Now we are going into the great hall. Now this has been described as one of the most beautiful rooms in America. I might add this spinet is still operational.

And there you see that we are going in now to the far wing and there are four rooms in that far wing that we will be looking at. You know the Lees were very active in politics as I have mentioned. They would have a room to meditate—to think about various things and write all those famous papers and letters; and this would be their library and this would be their room where they would have that sanctity in.

Now the ladies were not being ignored because directly across the hall was the ladies' parlor. We have one more slide which gives you a better view of that: had a card table; also this book case actually belonged to Robert E. Lee that was, I'm sure, loaned to us by the Custis-Lee mansion in Arlington County. That room was enlarged, probably during the time Philip Ludwell passed away and prior to Lightfoot Harry Lee who took over the estate.

Now, two other rooms are left on the upper floor. Imagine now this is the door going out to what is considered the main entrance. Since the carriage rides were very difficult in those days the gentlemen would have been escorted over to the right, relaxed and refreshed themselves and greeted by the host and hostess. The ladies would be escorted to the room directly across from that; but that's where we believe we derive the name "powder room" from; they would have powdered either their hair or wigs.

Now we have one inside picture of the kitchen. This is the kitchen where the bulk of the main cooking was done for the first two generations. It does have a 30' wide fireplace, 6' high. This is a still that was used differently from a wine cellar. This, which you can barely make out, is what is called a clock spit, associated with a weighted object. Interesting enough, they could put a very large piece of meat on there; by virtue of winding it up, it would free itself up in about 30 minutes and be free to do other things.

The Essex Mill  

by FRANKLIN Y. HUNDLEY*

My topic is about the Essex Mill. Now, the Essex Mill is an old grist mill and I know most of the young people don't know what a grist mill is. First, let me tell you its location which is off U.S. 17, near Dunnsville, and on Route 609. You go down 609 about one-half mile and you come to this mill pond, on the left-hand side, that covers about 47 acres, and the old mill on the right-hand side, that covers 25 acres—about 75 acres in the whole project.

Now as to its ownership, there is some question about the various ownerships and I'm not going into all the titles and exchanges that took place over the years except to say my father, Judge Deane Hundle, purchased the mill before 1920 and operated it until his death in 1966.

*Delivered before the Essex County Historical Society, at the courthouse, Tappahannock, Virginia, Sunday, October 18, 1987.
Thereafter, my sister, Sally Hundley Magill, brother, Dr. Deane Hundley, Jr., and I jointly operated the mill until about fifteen years ago. The mill was sold about five years ago; it has not been in operation since we last owned it.

The mill was originally known as Covington’s Mill and a fellow by the name of James Webb owned it. I’m going to read you an extract which comes from the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission and recorded there as such: “For the love of beautiful scenery and good fishing, no place could be more inviting than the Essex Mill Pond.”

There were three mills on Mill Creek—it’s a creek that feeds into the Piscataway Creek and then into the Rapahannock River; the mill known as “Smith and Wright’s Mill” which was located near Ozeana, and has been out of existence many years; and then there was a mill known as “Ware’s Mill” and that went out of existence many years ago also. These two mills, of course, being at the head of the stream, coming this way, presented a problem. They had dams, just like we did, to hold the water. And should there come a heavy rain in which we had a heavy flood back in 1934, I believe it was, or possibly in ’36, those two mill dams broke and all that water came rushing down and it was a sight to behold; it ran through the mill up to the second story, ruined all the equipment in it and it took months to get the mud up. The dam, of course, went out and had to be rebuilt.

Now, let me describe, just for a moment, what a grist mill is. So many young people don’t know what a grist mill is and rightfully so—they have never seen or heard of a grist mill. What is a grist mill? A grist mill is simply a mill—a manufacturing plant that grinds corn into meal, wheat into flour and the by-products used as feed for the livestock, animals, etc., now, we talk about a horse and wagon. I find some children have never seen a horse and wagon. Well, of course with television and all in this day and time, naturally they wouldn’t be thrown into contact with these things.

But let me just go through briefly—I want to talk not so much about Essex Mill but the decline and final death of most of the grist mills in the State of Virginia and elsewhere throughout the United States.

First, let me say we don’t know when this mill (The Essex Mill) was built; the original building was either torn down or burned but anyway it was known as Covington’s Mill. The present mill house was built in 1808 and it has been there ever since. At that time there was a “bake house,” as they called it, built across the way which made bread to go to Hobb’s Hole—that’s Tappahannock—for the ships coming in there; they used to buy bread that was made at this bake house. This bake house later became a country store which my uncle, Lamar Hundley, operated for a number of years, then closed down.

At that time, there were three grist mills within five miles of the Essex Mill. It was a very important entity in the community; you had to have it. We didn’t have any roads—dirt roads, yes, some of them terrible—horses and wagons, no automobiles. So why did we need any roads?

Well, the wagons would come, and every little farmer, or every property owner, whether he was small or not, had his own cow, or several cows, maybe, more than one; horses, mules, sheep, cattle, they all had hogs, cattle, poultry. So, the food had to come from somewhere; we didn’t have Purina and Southern States and all those then. So, the wagons would go to the mill and I have seen them lined up. Now, this is true of all mills that I know of and I don’t think there are many more in existence.

Farmers would go to the mill and they would start their day’s journey, some as far as ten miles away; I have seen them from Center Cross, from King and Queen Courthouse, all over there. Sometimes they would be lined up—maybe the farmer had ten bushels of wheat, maybe eight bushels of corn—they wanted to get it ground and take it back, get the flour. It had already taken him half a day, and another half to get back. Now, if he left it there, which is what he had to do because there were others waiting too, thus they would have to make another trip back over here. So, that developed a toll system. Now you think of tolls on highways, etc., but this was a toll system at the mill: on every bushel that came in that you wanted ground, one peck, 25% of it, would be taken out of it as toll; that was taken out for service. So, a lot of these farmers had other things to do so time was of the essence to them so they would exchange their eight bushels of wheat or six bushels of corn for the equivalent of meal and flour after the toll was taken out. Now that went on for many years—I guess from early 1700’s to about 1910 or ’15, something like that—when we began to get improvements in the highways; when we began having transportation vehicles—trucks, etc. Now, business was good at these mills and they made a good living for the owners and operators, as well as rendering a community service.

By the early 1900’s the water power was insufficient to drive both corn and wheat mills, so a 20-horsepower Fairbanks-Moss engine was installed. You would think 20 horsepower isn’t much but this 20 horsepower would take most modern automobiles and pile them all up together because the flywheel was 7 feet in diameter and that was used to supplement your water power. I don’t remember World War I but during World War II, I am told, that it ran day and night and never ceased; and I can remember as a child hearing the engines chugging away early in the morning or late at night, pumping away down there.

All right, good roads came and here came the trucks. The bakeries in Richmond began to make bread deliveries to the local grocery stores and the first thing you know everybody has gone to baker’s bread. But we didn’t want to have to use that baker’s bread—that stuff wasn’t any good that came from Kansas City—we didn’t want to use that stuff anyway. But gradually it took over; more and more people felt they had more time for themselves if they didn’t have to make biscuits, loaf bread, rolls, etc., and they began to buy bread. Right there and then, the sale of flour fell right off because flour was only used for bread. Now, the machinery—to give you an example of what has happened here—the machinery at the wheat mill was made by the Wolf Company and came from Chambersburg, Pa., and I knew some of the fellows up there because we had to write to them, back and forth, back and forth. It was unique machinery made for the grinding of the wheat and for the sifting and the filtering and had all these sieves, etc., and we had to order parts from them. Well, they went out of business in 1940; had no demand anymore for their parts. Other mills had come on, the roller mills, the new, modern mills, etc., had come to take their place. The machine shop here in Tappahannock is very expensive. However, finally we just had to close the wheat mill down. Of course, the demand had dropped anyway. But we continued with the feed. But as time went by, most people found out that with the new grocery chain stores and everything, they could buy milk, so why keep the cows, make the butter and have all the trouble? They could buy the eggs, buy the poultry, so why do that? So, in this county right now, and I think knowledgeable county people will confirm this, we have probably three or four large beef herds and some smaller beef herds of cattle—and no other cattle—nobody has a
milk cow any more; they don’t even know what it is. There is no poultry in this county whatsoever. You may find a few hens but someone told me the Commissioner of Revenue’s Office thought there are about fifty hens and roosters in the entire county, which isn’t very many, of course. And no hogs any more; there are no hogs raised in the county any more, only several large hog farms. Of course, the health laws have something to do with that too. But they are just trouble; it’s much easier and cheaper to buy them. And so the demand for feed dwindled. The demand for meat declined, however.

There is a real science in making the meal; these two stones have to work together and they have got to work in such a fashion as not to grind it too coarse or too fine and you can do it by the feel of your hand. Now, Francis Johnson was the miller there for fifty years. He saw the end coming because business was slowing down. And Eddie Howard, who had been there for many years, stayed on. And Eddie could feel that meal and tell you whether it was coming out right—the consistency was right for that particular meal—it has to be just right. At times these stones would become dull so that you would have to take the stones apart and do what we called “peck” them—make them rough again—so they would work again.

The meal business continued and we had people from miles—we had people down here on vacation and would come—and other people who had moved away and they would come back, come miles to buy that meal. Well, it kept on for a while but then the regulatory authorities came in. Believe me I know a lot of them over there now; the Environmental Protection people, Food and Drug Administration, the HEW—we had them all. And there we were operating in an operation that had just gotten down to part time, with one man working part time and they were on our backs every which way we could turn. That old 20-horsepower engine had a smoke stack which wasn’t much bigger than one of these exhaust pipes on one of these big trucks and didn’t have nearly as much exhaust—smoke just spattered. Well, we hadn’t run it for 10 years; didn’t have any need for it. “You have to cover it up or you have to put a filtration system up at the top,” they said and this would be very costly. “Got to cover it up or you have to take the whole thing down,” they said, so we decided to cover it up, which we did so we couldn’t use it any more—had to cement the whole top in and close it down. All right, then the fellows would come in and they would walk all through there and look around this old mill, like old grist mills everywhere with exposed rafters, dirt daubers’ nest at the top. “You have got to close it in, close the whole thing in,” they said. Well, that would ruin the aesthetic value of it completely. “You got to screen it. You got to put new floors in here because these floors are wide boards with cracks in them; insects will get in the cracks,” they said. We had two pages of that.

One day three of them arrived at the same time—three inspectors arrived at the same time. Two of them walked the dam for most of the morning pitching pebbles into the pond while one was writing this up. We were summoned to court in violation of every food law on earth I guess. “I don’t know, you would think we were. So we had to close down because we couldn’t sell anything for human consumption. We could still sell for cattle, livestock, and poultry.

So we had a lot of good customers who wanted to buy a bag of meal—5-pound bag of meal would cost 65 cents or something like that—or ten-pound bag of meal, and people would come there regularly. And poor Eddie, who now lives on the hill near the mill, was the last miller. He’s still living; he is 88 years of age. He went there when he was 15. He cannot read or write but he can handle money, and he can figure when it comes down to tolling a bushel of wheat or a bushel of corn. Anyway, he’s still living down there on top of the hill. Now it got so bad that Eddie had these feed bags where you would put feed in for poultry and cattle. You could stick the meal in the feed bag and stick them up in a place where you could get to them through a trap door—nobody could ever find them. This is why only the customers that we knew who came there did we dare let have any meal. We were black marketing, of course. Well, we kept it going for a while, and then one day they staked us out and rushed in when someone came in to buy. Eddie always kept a lot of feed around and he would hand them a bag.

Well finally we just had to close down because of the authorities, because the business dropped off and there really wasn’t any need for it anymore. In 1976 we closed the mill. Eddie was in bad health—it was in October. From January through October the total receipts, all from meal, came to $858.96, and Eddie’s pay was $25 per month; of course he was drawing social security and he had a little house on the hill we furnished for him. Now, the total expenses for that year so far was $2,785; the total receipts were $858.96. So you could see what was happening.

So that was the end of the mill. Eddie was there about 61 years and still lives up on the hill. It is a very interesting spot. I’m sorry—the present owner had good intentions, or led me to believe he did and was planning to restore the mill, maybe either having an antique shop in conjunction with it or a restaurant. He explored—but we had explored before that a long time ago—all the possibilities to keep it going. In the meanwhile he became involved in a bankruptcy proceeding so nothing was done. In fact, it has deteriorated very rapidly. Still, it’s an interesting and historic spot with a beautiful pond. The present owner, Mr. Harvey, lives there. He is very pleasant and he would be glad for you to visit and look around.

MINUTES OF THE SOCIETY

THE ESSEX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY met on Sunday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. July 19, 1987 at the Court House in Tappahannock with our president, Mr. Hill B. Wellford, presiding. Due to the absence of the secretary no minutes were given. Mr. Ludwell Smither, treasurer, reported a balance in checking account after paying printing bills, etc. $140.11 with balance in Savings $1,501.33.

Mr. Wellford then called on Mr. Carroll Garnett, Vice President, in charge of programs to introduce our guest speaker. Mr. Garnett introduced Mr. and Mrs. Don Moore, who were dressed in colonial costumes as both are employed at Stratford Hall Plantation, famous home of the Lees. Mrs. Moore’s title is “Historic Interpreter.” Joan is a native of New Jersey, attended the University of Virginia, and retired in 1985 from the C & P Telephone Co. with 34 years of service. Since this retirement, she and her husband, Donald, who will help with the slide projector, moved to Essex County where they have a lovely home on a peninsula in Piscataway Creek across from “Deep Landing.”

Mrs. Moore delivered a most interesting and enlightening talk about Stratford, the home of the Lee family, and the surrounding area and how it represents a significant flow of our nation’s history. Excerpts from this address...
are a part of this bulletin so that members who were not present to hear Mrs. Moore’s address will not miss entirely this excellent program.

After thanking Mrs. Moore, our president thanked the hostesses for our social hour following in the Woman’s Club, Mrs. Eldon Christopher, Chairman, Mrs. Ludwell Smither, Mrs. Tyler Bland, Mrs. Lawrence Payseur, Mrs. Charles Warner, and Mrs. Vincent Montsinger, the meeting adjourned to the Club House.

THE ESSEX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY met in the Court House at 5:00 p.m. October 18, 1987 with our president, Mr. Hill B. Wellford presiding. Mr. Wellford thanked our refreshment committee for today’s social hour, Mrs. Spotswood Taliaferro, Chairman, Mrs. Robert Ellis, Mrs. Ludwell Smither, Mrs. Daisy T. Gouldin, and Mrs. Hill Wellford.

There were no minutes of the July meeting as the secretary Mrs. Wright had not been able to attend that meeting. They will be reported in the next bulletin. Mr. Ludwell Smither, Treasurer, reported present funds totaling $1647.21.

Mr. Wellford appointed Mr. Gordon Lewis, Mr. Charles Warner, Mrs. Jeannette Ellis, and Mrs. Daisy T. Gouldin to the Nominating Committee, to bring in a slate of officers at our January, 1988 meeting. Mr. Wellford then turned the meeting over to our Vice President in charge of programs, Mr. Carroll Garnett.

Mr. Garnett introduced John Bradford, Kevin Wyatt and other students from William and Mary who are interested in getting some historical data on early churches and glebes, etc. from Essex County and Mr. Garnett asked that we help them in any way that we could in answering their questions. Mr. Garnett introduced Mr. Franklin Y. Hundley, our guest speaker, who gave a very interesting talk about one of Essex County’s oldest mills. This address will also appear in this bulletin. Mr. Wellford thanked Mr. Hundley and following an interesting observation by Mr. Charles Warner that the representatives of Essex County to the Virginia Constitutional Convention to adopt the U.S. Constitution voted against it. They were Meriwether Smith and James Upshur. They followed Patrick Henry and voted against it because they wanted a bill of rights, which at this time were not a part of the U.S. Constitution. However, the constitution, which adoption we are now celebrating, later included the Bill of Rights. This was a result of efforts by men like Meriwether Smith. He was chairman of the first committee in the House of Burgesses to have a statement of rights drafted. George Mason wrote the final Bill of Rights for the Constitution.

The meeting adjourned to the Club House for a social hour.

Anne T. Wright, Secretary

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Officers of the Society

President .................. Hill B. Wellford
Vice President ............... Carroll Garnett
Treasurer ................... Ludwell Smither
Secretary ................... Anne T. Wright

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Charles W. H. Warner, Chairman
Mrs. William A. Wright, Mrs. J. M. Evans

Meetings are held quarterly in the Essex Court House, or in an historic home or church of the County. Dues are $5.00 per year. For copies of publications send $2.00 to Mrs. J. M. Evans, Box 8, Tappahannock, Virginia 22560.