battle from Chatham, while Union artillery batteries shelled the Confederates from adjacent bluffs.

Fredericksburg was a disastrous Union defeat. Burnside lost 12,600 men in the battle, many of whom were brought back to Chatham for care. For several days army surgeons operated tirelessly on hundreds of soldiers inside the house. Assisting them were volunteers, including poet Walt Whitman and Clara Barton, who later founded the American chapter of the International Red Cross.

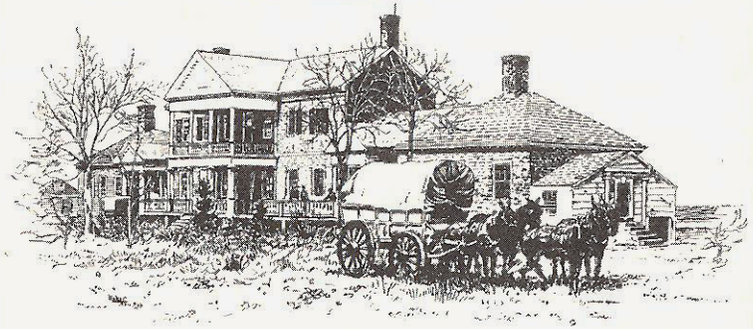
Whitman came to Chatham searching for a brother who was wounded in the fighting. He was shocked by the carnage. Outside the house, at the foot of a tree, he noticed "a heap of amputated feet, legs, arms, hands, etc.—about a load for a one-horse cart. Several dead bodies lie near," he added, "each covered with its brown woolen blanket." In all, more than 130 Union soldiers died at Chatham and were buried on the grounds. After the war, their bodies were removed to the National Cemetery. Three additional bodies were discovered years later. They remain at Chatham, their graves marked by granite stones lying flush to the ground.

In the winter following the battle, the Union army camped in Stafford County, behind Chatham. The Confederate army occupied Spotsylvania County, across the river. Opposing pickets patrolled the riverfront, keeping a wary eye on their foe and occasionally trading newspapers and other articles with them by means of miniature sailboats. When not on duty, Union pickets slept at Chatham and made themselves meals there. As the winter progressed and firewood became scarce, some soldiers tore paneling from the walls.

Military activity resumed in the spring. In April 1863, the new Union commander, General Joseph Hooker, led the army upriver, crossing behind Lee's troops. The Confederates marched out to meet him, and for a week fighting raged around a country crossroads known as Chancellorsville. At the same time, Union troops crossed the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg and drove a Confederate force off of Marye's Heights, behind the town. Many of 1,000 casualties suffered by the Union army in that engagement were sent back to Chatham.

The Postwar Years

By the time the Civil War ended in 1865, Chatham was desolate. Blood stains spotted the floors; graffiti marred its bare plaster walls. Outside the destruction was just as severe. The surrounding forests had been cut down for fuel; the lush gardens had been trampled out of existence; and the lawn had become a graveyard. Although the Lacys returned to their home, they were unable to maintain it properly. They sold the house in 1872. The property languished under a succession of owners until the 1920s when Daniel and Helen Devore undertook its restoration. As a result of their efforts, Chatham has regained its place among Virginia's finest homes. Today the house and 85 surrounding acres are open to the public thanks to the generosity of Chatham's last owner, industrialist John Lee Pratt. Mr. Pratt purchased Chatham from the Devores in 1931 and in 1975 willed it to the National Park Service. We hope that as you tour the property, like Mr. Pratt you will appreciate the beauty and history of this special place.



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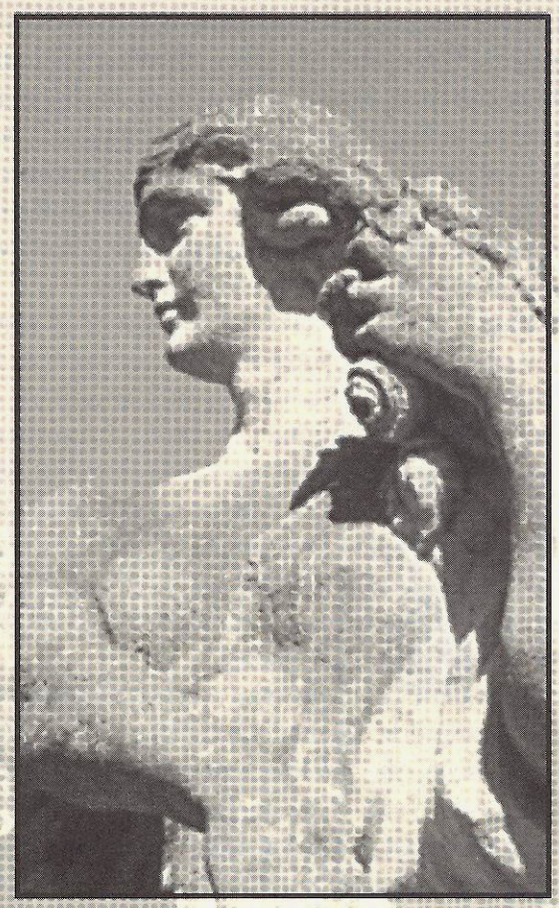


Chatham

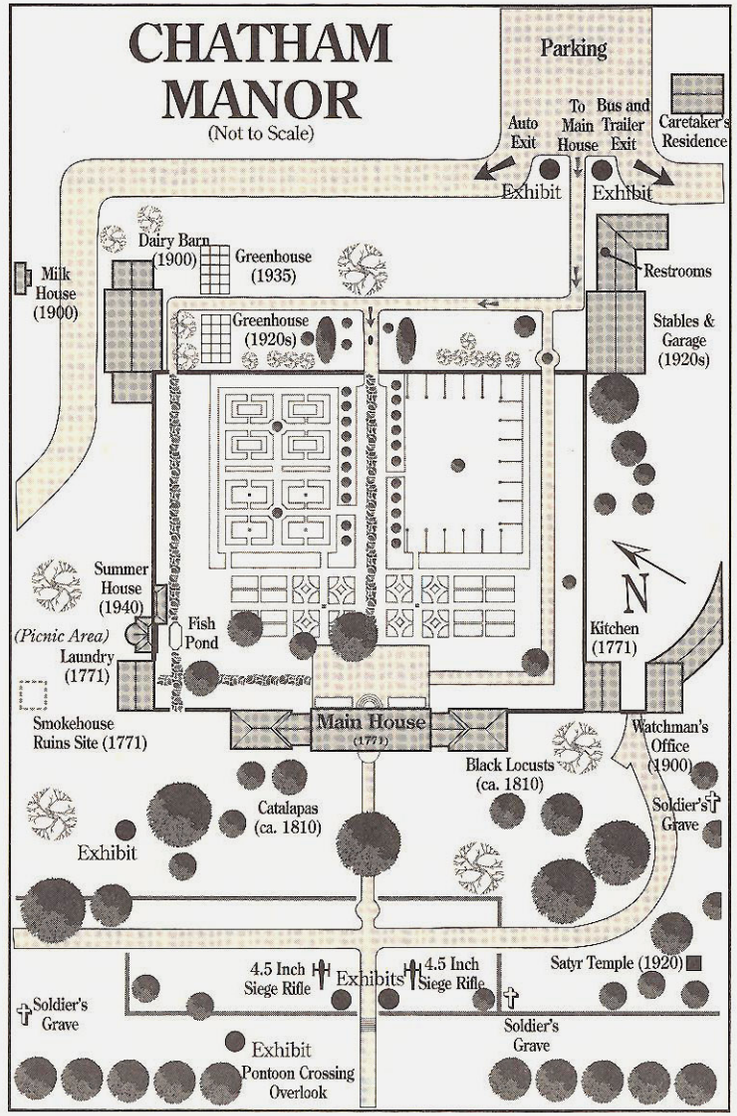
The Lacy House

Few houses in America have witnessed as many important events and hosted as many famous people as Chatham. Built between the years 1768 and 1771 by William Fitzhugh, this grand Georgian-style house overlooking the Rappahannock River was for many years the center of a large, thriving plantation. Flanking the main house were dozens of supporting structures: a dairy, ice house, barns, stables. Down on the river was a fish hatchery, while elsewhere on the 1,280 acre estate were an orchard, mill, and a race track, where Fitzhugh's blooded horses vied with those of other planters for wealthy purses.

Fitzhugh owned upwards of one hundred slaves. Most worked as field hands or house servants, but he also employed skilled tradesmen such as millers, carpenters, and blacksmiths. In 1805, a number of Fitzhugh's slaves rebelled, overpowering and whipping his overseer and four others. An armed posse put down the rebellion and punished those involved. One black man was executed, two died while trying to escape, and two others were deported, perhaps to a slave colony in the Caribbean.

At the time of the slave insurrection, Fitzhugh was living in Alexandria. He had moved there in the 1790s, in part to escape the hundreds of guests who came to Chatham each year. The expense of providing food and entertainment gnawed at aging landowner's pocketbook and undoubtedly contributed to his decision to move. Although the very idea caused him to "shudder," Fitzhugh left Chatham in 1796 and put the house up for sale.

Major Churchill Jones, a former officer in the Continental Army, purchased the plantation in 1806 for 20,000 dollars. His family would own the property for the next 66 years. Robert E. Lee was a guest at the home during the Jones's ownership, though there is probably no truth to the story that he courted his wife here. Lee was not the first famous Virginian to visit



Chatham. George Washington had stopped at the house on two occasions in the 1780s. Both Washington and Fitzhugh had served together in the House of Burgesses prior to the American Revolution, and they shared a love of farming and horses. Fitzhugh's daughter, Molly, would later marry the first president's stepgrandson, George Washington Parke Custis, whose daughter in turn wed Robert E. Lee.

The Civil War

The Civil War, which gave Lee fame, brought only change and destruction to Chatham. At that time the house was owned by James Horace Lacy, a former schoolteacher who had married Churchill Jones's niece. As a plantation owner and slaveholder, Lacy sympathized with the South, and at the age of 37 he left Chatham to serve the Confederacy as a staff officer. His wife and children remained at the house until the spring of 1862, when the arrival of Union forces forced them to abandon the building and move across the river. For much of the next thirteen months, Chatham would be occupied the Union army.

Northern officers initially utilized the building as a headquarters. In April 1862, General Irvin McDowell brought 30,000 men to Fredericksburg. From his Chatham headquarters, the general supervised the repair of the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad and the construction of several bridges across the Rappahannock River. Once that work was complete, McDowell planned to march south and join forces with the Army of the Potomac outside of Richmond. President Abraham Lincoln journeyed to Fredericksburg to confer with McDowell about the movement, meeting with the general and his staff at Chatham. His visit gives Chatham the distinction of being just one of three houses visited by both Lincoln and Washington (the other two are Mount Vernon and Berkeley Plantation).

Seven months after Lincoln's visit, fighting erupted at Fredericksburg itself. In November 1862, General Ambrose E. Burnside brought the 115,000-man Army of the Potomac to Fredericksburg. Using pontoon bridges, Burnside crossed the Rappahannock River below Chatham, seized Fredericksburg, and launched a series of bloody assaults against Lee's Confederates, who held the high ground behind the town. One of Burnside's top generals, Edwin Sumner, observed the