Although most Americans know little about the War of 1812, this conflict played a crucial role in shaping American national identity. It provided a young nation with new military heroes, future political leaders, a skilled navy, and a popular song that would become the national anthem. Alexandria and its inhabitants played a key role in these events, and the experiences of the Lee family of Alexandria were typical of those of their fellow citizens.

The war was the result of the United States’ efforts to enforce its right to trade freely with France while that country was at war with Great Britain. To stop supplies from reaching France, Britain regularly stopped American ships and seized their cargos. They also forcibly drafted, or “impressed,” American sailors to serve in the British navy. These practices had a huge impact on Alexandria and other port cities over a period of many years (1798-1812). With few American ships willing to risk a voyage across the Atlantic, warehouses stood empty and sailors were out of work. Without the income from overseas trade, the shops and businesses that supported that trade were also out of work. Businessmen like Philip Fendall were unable to pay their debts and declared bankruptcy. His cousin, Cornelia Lee Hopkins, wrote of the “necessary comforts of life [becoming] scarce” during this time.

Despite these hard times, many Alexandrians opposed the war when it came. They believed that the United States should partner with Britain against France. Revolutionary War hero “Light Horse Harry” Lee was nearly killed by a Baltimore mob for his anti-war opinions shortly after war was declared. The British navy terrorized the undefended Chesapeake Bay throughout 1813, seizing needed supplies from coastal towns while destroying barns, mills, and other structures. British raiding parties often stole personal property as well. Alexandrians feared what would happen if the British arrived in their town.

These fears were suddenly realized when British warships cruised up the Potomac River as part of the forces that captured Washington, D.C., in August of 1814. Rather than risk destruction, Alexandria surrendered without resistance on August 28. City councilman Edmund Jennings Lee negotiated the surrender terms along with Mayor Charles Simms. After six days, the British sailed away with 21 captured ships filled with flour, cotton, and tobacco.

When the war finally ended that winter, the country began the slow process of recovery. Richard Bland Lee was appointed a commissioner to supervise the rebuilding of the capital city. He hired his nephew, Philip Fendall, Jr., as his assistant. Later, Richard Bland Lee would serve as a claims commissioner reviewing claims for property damage caused by the war.

Learn more about this story on one of the museum’s War of 1812 walking tours. Upcoming tour dates can be found online at www.leefendallhouse.org under Calendar of Events.
This summer the Historic Alexandria Foundation awarded the Lee-Fendall House a $10,000 special project grant at their annual Spring Garden Party on June 9. These funds were spent on upgrading the museum’s window protections, which help preserve the integrity of the museum’s collection.

Sustained exposure to regular sunlight entering through the house’s windows can cause fading and other damage to furniture, textiles, and historic documents. Fortunately, much of this damage can be reduced by installing special filters to block the ultraviolet (UV) radiation in sunlight. The museum had installed UV filtration film on its windows in the past, but after years of service, this film had deteriorated.

With the awarded funds, the Lee-Fendall House purchased museum grade UV-protective window inserts that fit snugly inside the window frames in each exhibit room. These inserts improve the museum’s UV protection as they are long-lasting and create a stronger barrier than the earlier UV film. The inserts, installed by The Sustainability Guys, also provide extra thermal insulation, resulting in an energy savings for the museum estimated at 20% by the manufacturer.

The Historic Alexandria Foundation has been an advocate of preservation efforts in Alexandria since 1954. We are thankful for their continued support of the Lee-Fendall House!
Lee-Fendall House Intern Highlights!

**Sheridan Small**  
**EDUCATION**

Sheridan worked as the education intern at the Lee-Fendall House this summer. She is a Museum Studies graduate student at George Washington University. As the education intern, she led tours and planned and implemented our story times and hands-on history family programs. She designed and wrote interpretive materials for the museum, including an exhibit poster detailing the first successful blood transfusion of the Civil War, which occurred at the Lee-Fendall House. Catherine Fendall Wendell was born into a distinguished but impoverished branch of the Fendall clan in 1900. Her family moved to London when she was very young in the hopes of eventually marrying their daughters into the English aristocracy. This scheme proved successful for Catherine in 1922 when she married Henry Herbert, Lord Porchester, who would become the 6th Earl Carnavon the following year. Along with his title, Lord Porchester inherited Highclere Castle, the estate where Downton Abbey is filmed. Catherine lived in the manor house familiar to so many viewers today for fourteen years and raised two children there.

Although the Crawleys of Downton Abbey and Philip Fendall’s family in Alexandria are separated by a hundred years (and an ocean!), there are remarkable similarities between their two worlds. Although not as grand as those in Highclere Castle/Downton Abbey, the parlors and dining rooms of Lee-Fendall House were used for similar social occasions. Both households included a substantial number of domestic workers that enabled the estate owners to enjoy lives of luxury.

The Lee-Fendall House will celebrate its ties to the popular world of Downton Abbey through a series of programs this fall. Check out these and other upcoming events on our website at www.leefendallhouse.org.

**Savannah Jelks**  
**COLLECTIONS**

Savannah was this summer’s collections management intern at the Lee-Fendall House. She is an Alexandria native and a rising senior majoring in Public History at Union College in Schenectady, New York. As the collections intern, Savannah managed the museum’s PastPerfect collections database – tracking down objects, updating their location, writing condition reports, and accessioning and deaccessioning items in our collection. She assisted the museum’s research volunteers in studying several specific items from our historic textile collection. She also worked to update the docent reference binders located in the period exhibit rooms, adding in new information about objects on display that can help docents answer questions from visitors. Additionally, Savannah reorganized the museum’s third floor storage rooms to optimize space, ensuring collection objects were in proper climate-controlled conditions and also easily accessible.
Mark Your Calendars!

Saturdays, September 7 & October 5, 10:00 AM
**Prohibition in Alexandria: A Walking Tour** ★
Discover the forgotten stories of teetotalers and bootleggers on this walking tour of Prohibition-era Alexandria. Learn about the dramatic campaign to ban alcohol in Virginia and its threat to the production and sale of alcohol in Alexandria.

**Downton Abbey at Lee-Fendall!**

Sundays at 2:00 PM
September 8, 15, 22, & 29 | October 6 & 13

**Downton Abbey Tours** ★
The current owner of Highclere Castle, the real-world site where Downton Abbey is filmed, is a direct descendant of the Fendall family. Explore this surprising connection and learn about the people who inspired the characters.

September 28, 1:00 – 3:00 PM
**Downton Abbey: Movie Release Party**
Celebrate the release of *Downton Abbey: The Movie* at an ancestral home of the current owner of Highclere Castle. Come and enjoy refreshments and Downton Abbey festivities!

Saturday, September 14, 10:00 AM ★
**The General’s Tour - Robert E. Lee in Alexandria**
This guided walking tour of Robert E. Lee sites in Alexandria’s Historic Old Town will address the complicated legacy of the Confederate general’s life in Alexandria, his hometown from the age of five.

Saturday, September 14, 7:00 – 10:00 PM
**Sips & Secrets: A Speakeasy Night**
Join us at our annual fundraiser this September! This event celebrates the house’s Prohibition-era history with a night full of speakeasy fun. Enjoy drinks, jazz, dancing, and more! All proceeds support the museum’s mission to explore our shared history and its relevance to today.

Saturday, September 21
**Smithsonian Museum Day**
Stop by the Lee-Fendall House for a free house tour as we participate in Smithsonian magazine’s annual museum day celebration of culture and curiosity.

Saturday, September 21, 10:00 AM ★
**The War of 1812 in Alexandria - A Walking Tour**
A guided walking tour of people and places in Old Town associated with the War of 1812.

Friday, October 4, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
**Homeschool Day**
Homeschool families are invited to participate in hands-on, educational activities that explore how life in America has changed over time. Our theme this fall will focus on the history of gardens as a source of food, medicine, and recreation.

Fridays & Saturdays, October 25 & 26 | November 1 & 2
**Tours at 7:30, 8:30, & 9:30 PM**

**Grief & Ghosts Tours** ★
Celebrate Halloween with a look at Victorian mourning traditions coupled with stories of tragic deaths and mysterious occurrences at the Lee-Fendall House. Explore mourning clothes, funeral practices, and séances by candlelight at night in the house.

Saturday, October 26, 10:30 AM, 12:30 PM, & 2:30 PM
**Halloween Pumpkin Hunt**
Alexandria’s ghosts and goblins fill our garden with hundreds of colorful toy-filled pumpkins for children to discover! Other activities include crafts, spooky stories, and a costume parade.

Saturday, November 9, 7:00 PM
**EXCLUSIVE Book Lecture! Cluverius v. The Commonwealth: Virginia’s Murder Trial of the Century** ★
Join author D.N. Wilson as he discusses his new book and the shocking crime that inspired it. Drawing on true historical events, Wilson brings to life the men and women who found themselves at the center of this murder trial that gripped Virginia in the late nineteenth century.

Saturday, November 23, 2:00 PM
**The Women of Lee-Fendall House Tour** ★
Join us as we trace the experiences of the women who have lived in and shaped the Lee-Fendall House over the centuries. This tour will coincide with the last opportunity to view the exhibit *The New Woman: Life in Progressive Era Alexandria, 1890-1920.*

**Visit www.leefendallhouse.org:**
- View the most up-to-date list of upcoming programs
- Get full event details and ticket information
- Purchase tickets for your favorite events

*Space at seasonal programs is limited and fills quickly — advanced purchase of tickets is recommended.*