Until recently, George Washington’s Ferry Farm was known for its preserved landscape, school children, families, and groups of visitors, large-scale archaeology excavations, and an amazing and extensive collection of artifacts. Now, construction is also visible as The George Washington Foundation charges ahead with its multi-year venture to physically develop Ferry Farm into an outdoor living history museum. Remarkable progress has been made on an interpretive replica of the Washington house, which serves as an anchor for the transformative first phase of this project.

Traditional tradesmen are hard at work on the construction endeavoring to reproduce the Washington house with authenticity, a keen eye to detail, and site integrity. Artisan mason Raymond Cannetti laid a foundation of hand-cut Aquia sandstone in an oyster-shell mortar. The foundation stones rest upon a hidden steel pile and concrete beam substructure. This revolutionary design in preservation systems supports the entire weight of the replica house, protecting the original archaeological remains.

Throughout September and early October, craftsmen assembled massive timbers of white oak and southern yellow pine with traditional mortise and tenon joints and wood pegs to form the frame of the structure. With the timber framing complete, restoration carpenters are covering the roof with hand-prepared wood shingles—each scalloped at its end. They are installing expertly-crafted exterior cornice boards, doors, and window sashes, and thereafter, beaded weatherboard siding. Interior features such as floor boards, stairs, door surrounds, molding, and wainscot paneling are forthcoming.

When finished, the Washington house will provide a stage for educational programs, equipped with reproduction furniture designed to encourage guests of all ages to fully immerse themselves in the Washingtons’ compelling story at Ferry Farm. The Foundation will take full advantage of the house as a replica with colonial America presented through innovative strategies unavailable to most historic house sites. Continued on Page 4

Each tour of Historic Kenmore is an unique experience! Refurnishing efforts began in 2012. Visitors may now enjoy refurnished spaces throughout the first floor of the house. Every addition is considered with the goal of accurately depicting Fielding and Betty Washington Lewis’ eighteenth-century home. A final piece for the drawing room was installed in July, a new Wilton carpet funded through a generous grant from The Richard C. von Hess Foundation. The rug is shades of green and blue on a cream field in a floral medallion

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From the Board of Trustees:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of The George Washington Foundation, it is a great pleasure to share this newsletter highlighting a very memorable year at Historic Kenmore and George Washington’s Boyhood Home at Ferry Farm. Our collective advocacy and philanthropic contributions make a tremendous difference and provide essential resources for archaeological, curatorial, and preservation projects, as well as educational programs for school children, families, and life-long learners. We hope you will tour both sites soon — and take advantage of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see expert artisans building the Washington house! April 2015 marked the beginning of the public phase of The Future of Our Past Campaign, a $40 million effort toward ground-gaining funding priorities including the comprehensive refurnishing of Kenmore and Phase 1 construction at Ferry Farm! We are charging forward with approximately $35 million raised to date. There is more to accomplish with your help, and importantly, much to celebrate together. We are truly thankful for your commitment and support.

With appreciation,
Ben Wafle, Trustee Chair

Kenmore Refurnishing

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When visiting Ferry Farm in the spring you often see a team of GWF archaeology staff, interns, and students systematically excavating the site, digging, discovering, and recording everything they reveal and analyzing artifacts. The goal of these field school digs is to learn more about the day-to-day activities of the Washingtons and how they lived at Ferry Farm. During the 2016 season, archaeologists excavated the area northwest of the main house, a space visible from the Rappahannock River and the city of Fredericksburg. Over the 2012-2014 dig seasons, staff identified a work yard northeast of the house that was not visible from the river or the city. Artifacts found in the work yard included wig curlers, utilitarian ceramics, and evidence of chicken butchering. In the area excavated during the 2016 season, archaeologists uncovered some objects, no evidence of garden pathways, and few colonial features — an archaeological feature is a type of material remain that cannot be removed from a site, for example a trash midden or evidence of a cellar. These findings infer that the Washingtons had specific purposes for each section of the...
THEATER IN WASHINGTON’S DAY

In the eighteenth century, theater was a popular and accessible form of entertainment throughout the American colonies. George Washington began attending theatrical performances during his youth and remained an avid theater-goer throughout his life, keeping highly detailed records of acting companies and productions he enjoyed, and often quoting Shakespeare in his papers. Period theater productions were elaborate and technical. An evening at the playhouse consisted of two plays, a mainpiece and an afterpiece. The mainpiece, or the first play of the evening, was typically a tragedy or ballad opera; the afterpiece, a shorter, light-hearted comedy, farce, or romance. Shakespeare’s comedies were sometimes thought too long to qualify as afterpieces and too light to be mainpieces. Eventually Shakespeare’s comedies were adapted and condensed for the eighteenth-century stage and presented as afterpieces. A popular example was Catherine and Petruchio, a revised version of The Taming of the Shrew.

The Foundation embraces Washington’s love of theater by staging colonial adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays. In June 2016 The Rude Mechanicals, a Fredericksburg-based theater company, performed Hamlet directed by Fred Franklin, at Kenmore as part of The George Washington Foundation’s Shakespeare on the Lawn. The same troupe offered The Taming of the Shrew in August and both were set on the preserved landscape with the mansion as the backdrop, enriching the presentations.

Please sign up for the Foundation’s eNewsletter, visit kenmore.org, or follow George Washington’s Ferry Farm and Historic Kenmore on Facebook to learn about upcoming performances and special events.

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

As The George Washington Foundation builds toward the future, the staff is often reminded of the sense of determination and dedication that runs through the organization’s history. From the patriotic lives of young George Washington and Fielding and Betty Washington Lewis, to the 1922 campaign to save Historic Kenmore, and the 1996 efforts to preserve Ferry Farm from commercial development, the Foundation’s properties are steeped in American legacies. We hope you enjoy reading about the significant projects made possible through your interest and support. Please visit again and plan to attend upcoming special events – such as the 30th Annual Gingerbread Contest and Exhibit. Thank you for your support of the Foundation’s efforts to present timeless lessons about the history of our great Republic at Historic Kenmore and George Washington’s Ferry Farm. There is much to be inspired by at both National Historic Landmark sites!

Sincerely and gratefully,
Bill Garner, President

ARCHAEOLOGY

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Ferry Farm landscape. For archaeologists, the absence of material culture provides insight into eighteenth-century life at Ferry Farm. The abundance of clean space may suggest that the northwest area of the yard was considered a formal space by the family to project their gentry status. It was planned, clean, and orderly and was intended to be viewed from the river and the city, in the same way manicured front lawns are today. In the 2017 dig season, the Foundation’s archaeologists will push toward the south and excavate closer to the Washingtons’ home. Their findings will continue to clarify elements of the landscape and give additional insight into the activities associated with the house and slave quarters on the Ferry Farm property.

For Updates on Historic Kenmore and George Washington's Ferry Farm:

Lives & Legacies blog: livesandlegaciesblog.org
The Rooms at Kenmore blog: kenmore.org/wordpress/
Sign up to receive eNews updates at kenmore.org
Construction at Ferry Farm

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Educators will light fires in the fireplaces, open windows, and invite visitors to sit in the accurately reproduced chairs. This unique environment will let guests experience the eighteenth century with all their senses. With the replica house in place, the Foundation will reconstruct additional support buildings, fences, and yards that surrounded and served the house. To date, staff archaeologists have unearthed remnants of a kitchen, quarter structure, trash and work yards, and a storehouse from the Washington period. As archaeology continues to reveal additional elements, they will be added to the landscape working to evoke early Virginia and portray what life was like for young George Washington.

We hope you will follow the Foundation’s efforts to build the Washington house on Facebook and in the Lives & Legacies blog. Though most importantly, please come to Ferry Farm to see the construction in progress. The iPad app, “Uncovering George Washington’s Youth,” enhanced for Ferry Farm construction, is available to guide your tour, an exhibit highlighting aspects of the traditional trades work is updated regularly in the visitor center, and an educator is stationed at the building site to answer every question.

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Clockwise from top left: Oyster Rick Burn at Ferry Farm, July Fourth at Ferry Farm, History Camp, and Twelfth Night at Kenmore.

Calendar of Events

Twelfth Night at Kenmore
January 6–8, 2017
A dramatic theater presentation set in January 1776 on the eve of the American Revolution.

George Washington’s Birthday Celebration
February 18, 2017
Enjoy George Washington’s birthday at Ferry Farm with crafts, games, educational programs, history theater, and cake!

Archaeology Day at Ferry Farm
February 20, 2017
A special opportunity to learn about archaeology at George Washington’s Boyhood Home.

Shakespeare on the Lawn at Kenmore
June 10, 11, 17 & 18, 2017
Presented in a period style as if a young George Washington were attending.

Fourth of July at Ferry Farm
July 4, 2017
Celebrate the Fourth of July at The George Washington Foundation’s annual, patriotic and family-focused event!

30th Annual Gingerbread House Contest and Exhibit at Ferry Farm
December 4–30
A holiday season tradition! 2016 Theme: “Home for the Holidays”

“A Wee Christmas” Dollhouses and Miniatures Show at Kenmore
December 4–30
A display of highly-detailed and festive replicas.

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