

*Join us on
the adventure
to learn
from Menokin
and preserve!*

*We are located
in the
Northern Neck,
4 miles north of
Warsaw, Virginia
on Route 690.*



Francis Lightfoot Lee's
MENOKIN
c. 1769

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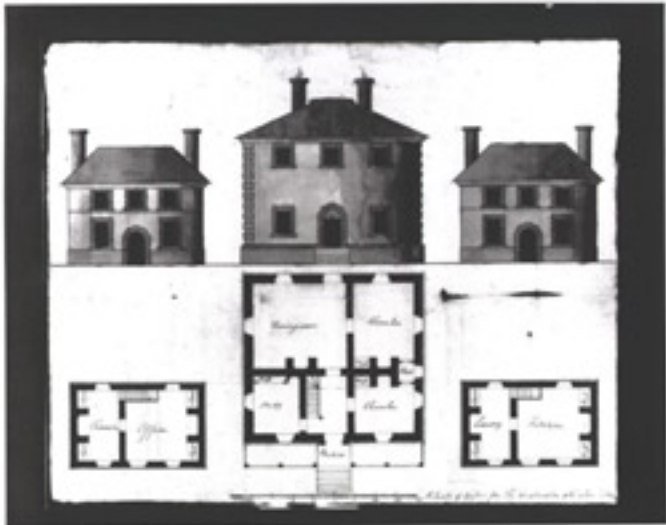
*A partnership project between the Menokin Foundation and
the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge.*

A Brief History of Menokin



Francis Lightfoot Lee

Menokin was built c.1769 on the occasion of the marriage of Francis Lightfoot Lee and Rebecca Tayloe. Rebecca was the daughter of John Tayloe II, who built neighboring Mount Airy. He gave the couple the large plantation on Cat Point Creek, and financed construction of the two-story stone Menokin and its dependencies. Soon after, Francis Lightfoot Lee joined the cause of American independence, served in the Continental Congress from 1775 to 1779 and signed the Declaration of Independence (together with



*1769
Presentation
Drawing*

his brother Richard Henry Lee) and the Articles of Confederation. Except the years when Francis Lightfoot Lee's term of service in the Continental Congress drew both him and Rebecca Tayloe Lee to Philadelphia, the couple lived at Menokin until they both died in 1797.

The Lees did not have children; Menokin reverted to the ownership of the Tayloes of Mount Airy, and was the home of John Tayloe Lomax, the first professor of law at the



*Menokin, north
façade, 1940*

University of Virginia. In 1823, Menokin was sold to Benjamin Boughton, who then sold the property to Richard Harwood of Essex County in 1836. Harwood lived in the house with his family and farmed the land until his death in 1872, after which the property passed to the Belfield family and then to the Omohundro family. By 1995, Menokin was owned by T. Edgar Omohundro and his sister, Dora Omohundro Ricciardi. Upon her death, she willed her share to her brother and on July 4, 1995, Mr. Omohundro gave the entire property to the Menokin Foundation.

*Staircase, 1940
Dining Room, 1940*



Menokin Today

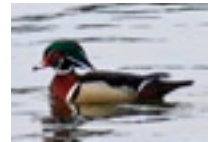
During the 1960s through the early 1990s, Menokin lay vacant and went into serious decline. The house never burned, but slowly collapsed over three decades. Today the northeast quadrant of the house still stands and approximately 80 percent of Menokin's original materials have survived, including the interior woodwork. In 1940, while the house and one outbuilding were still standing, the Historic American Buildings Survey produced detailed photography and comprehensive measured drawings of the property. In 1964, the original pen and ink presentation drawings for Menokin were discovered among some Tayloe family papers at Mount Airy. Four years later, as the house was in serious trouble of collapsing, the interior woodwork was removed by the Omohundro family and put into storage. The surprisingly intact woodwork is back at Menokin and can be viewed at the Foundation's King Conservation and Visitors Center.



Menokin, 2006

Menokin's Forests and Wildlife

Menokin's riparian forest contains large trees that lie along Cat Point Creek and smaller tributaries. Riparian forests are essential for healthy streams and rivers used by fish, other aquatic organisms, and waterfowl. The forest here is dominated by oaks, hickories, beeches, sycamore and tulip poplar



trees, but you will also see other species such as sassafras, ironwood, and sweet magnolia.

Depending on the time of year of your visit, you may spot an eastern box turtle on the forest floor. In the spring, look for warblers, tanagers, vireos, cuckoos, and gnatcatchers gleaning insects from leaves. Any time of year you may see a pileated woodpecker with its great red crest swooping past. Check under a log for a salamander or red-spotted newt. Near the water, observe the dragonflies and butterflies feeding there in the summer. You may also see a bald eagle nesting along Cat Point Creek or foraging for fish in its waters.



Menokin Foundation, Richmond County, VA
(NAD 83, Virginia South/4502)



See our "GUIDE TO THE PROPERTY"
on the last two pages of the brochure.

Learning from a Landmark

The Menokin Foundation preserves and interprets Menokin, home of a patriot and signer of the Declaration of Independence, to further the world's understanding of architectural conservation, archaeology, history, ecology, and other areas of the humanities.



Cat Point Creek

In 2005, the Foundation conveyed a conservation easement to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on 325 of its 500 acres. The property is managed as part of the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge to protect the outstanding fish and wildlife habitat that exists in and along the river. The refuge was established in 1996 to protect up to 20,000 acres along a 60-mile stretch of the river. For more information on the refuge, visit their web site at www.fws.gov/northeast/rappahannock.



*Menokin
Conservation Work*

The Menokin Foundation's vision is to inspire the public to be responsible stewards of the world's historic places. We want to educate students of all ages on the conservation of cultural and natural resources by using Menokin and its surrounding 500 acres of forest, wetlands, and shoreline as a teaching and learning center.

1 The Martin Kirwan King Conservation & Visitors Center

Built in 2004, the Center is named for the Menokin Foundation founder and first president, Martin Kirwan King (1932-2004). Mr. King moved permanently to Richmond County upon retiring from the Exxon Corporation and committed his life to the cause of historic preservation and education, particularly Menokin. At the Center, visitors can watch an introductory video on the property, see the interior woodwork from the house, some of which has been reassembled, and learn about the innovative conservation methods used to save Menokin.

2 The Slave Quarters Site

At the time of his death in 1797, Francis Lightfoot Lee owned 48 slaves. Through archaeological excavation, it is believed that the slave quarters were located at this location. The most important features that led the archaeologists to think that this was indeed the site of the slave quarters were post holes and associated post molds. These post holes and post molds indicate an earthfast domestic structure. This type of construction is commonly associated with slave quarters because it was an easy form of construction, and relatively inexpensive, as compared to more elaborate structures such as a main plantation house. The site at Menokin also includes evidence of sub-floor storage pits (root cellars), which were extremely common at early domestic sites in the Chesapeake region, especially at sites believed to be the dwellings of enslaved African peoples. These root cellars were used not only to store and keep food, but often to hide personal objects that the enslaved occupants wanted to keep private.

3 Historic Road to Cat Point Creek

This unpaved road is now used as a hiking trail. Visitors must first receive permission from the Menokin Foundation to ride vehicles of any type down the trail.

At the top of this trail, you will find an interpretive sign with information about the Rappahannock River Valley Wildlife Refuge. Along your walk you will see species identification signs, pointing out a large variety of trees and bushes. About half-way down the trail, you will come upon the remnants of a stone chimney, marking the site of a tenant house occupied during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

4 Menokin

Visitors may only enter the house accompanied by a Menokin Foundation staff person.

One of the great houses which survives from Colonial Virginia's age of dominion, Menokin is the result of a unique collaboration between John Tayloe II of Mount Airy and Francis Lightfoot Lee, the husband of Tayloe's daughter Rebecca. Instead of the cash dowry he bestowed on the husbands of seven other daughters, Tayloe gave Lee a life interest in 1,000 acres of his vast Richmond County estate and agreed to build a house, domestic outbuildings, and plantation structures. Construction of the house began in 1769, and it was probably ready for occupancy in 1771. Menokin is built of iron-infused sandstone, quarried only a few miles away. Its design appears to have been influenced by William Adam's *Vitruvius Scoticus*, a well known architectural work of the time. Of the two flanking outbuildings, only parts of the exterior walls of the plantation office exist. The kitchen, which presumably lay across the courtyard, is not documented by photographs or sketches and may have burned in the 19th century. On the south side of Menokin, traces of formal terraced gardens that fall toward Cat Point Creek are still evident.

5 Cat Point Creek

Enjoy a picnic lunch by Cat Point Creek, an unspoiled tributary of the Rappahannock River, where significant numbers of bald eagles nest and roost. Before the Menokin plantation was ever developed, this area along Cat Point Creek was home to the Rappahannock Indian Tribe. In 1608, Capt. John Smith explored the creeks that feed into the Rappahannock River and recorded his meetings with the Rappahannocks, which gives us a written glimpse into the area and its people at that time. The general plantation site was referred to as "Menokin" by the Rappahannocks. Francis Lightfoot Lee kept the name for his home.

6 Menokin Landing

During Francis Lightfoot Lee's occupancy, a plantation wharf existed in this general location where crops could be loaded onto barges and transported to the Rappahannock River about 4 miles downstream. Various crops were grown, including tobacco (tobacco rolling roads can still be seen leading to the landing), rye, barley, wheat and corn.