



## Traces of War

Hours before dawn on December 11, 1862, Union engineers started to work on pontoon bridges on the river near Chatham. Confederates across the river opened fire. In response, Union cannon north and south of Chatham bombarded the town. Union officers rushed to the house, which soon became both a hospital and command post.



**Look closely, and you will see the traces of those who came before us.**

On the grounds at Chatham are the graves of three unknown Union soldiers, left behind when more than 130 were removed to the Fredericksburg National Cemetery in 1866.



Throughout the house soldiers left graffiti—some carved, some written. Some still survives, especially in the dining room. Private Richard Wells of the 108th New York infantry probably

carved his mark on an outside door frame while on picket duty in 1863.

*Photography courtesy Larry Stuart and Buddy Secor*



*Washington, 1772*

*Lincoln in the field, 1862*

## Footsteps of the Famous

As you walk the grounds of Chatham, you will be walking in the footsteps of the famous: Clara Barton, Walt Whitman, George C. Marshall, and Thomas Jefferson all came to Chatham at some point.

Chatham is likely the only private home in America that hosted both George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Washington grew up just two farms south of Chatham, and stopped at least twice in the 1790s.

Lincoln visited Chatham on May 23, 1862. After discussing strategy and touring nearby camps, he and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton ate dinner with nearly a dozen Union officers in Chatham's dining room.



# Chatham

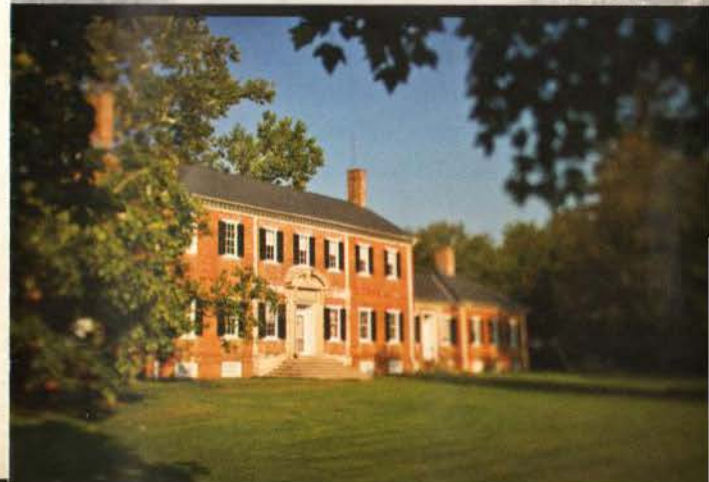
*On Stafford Heights*

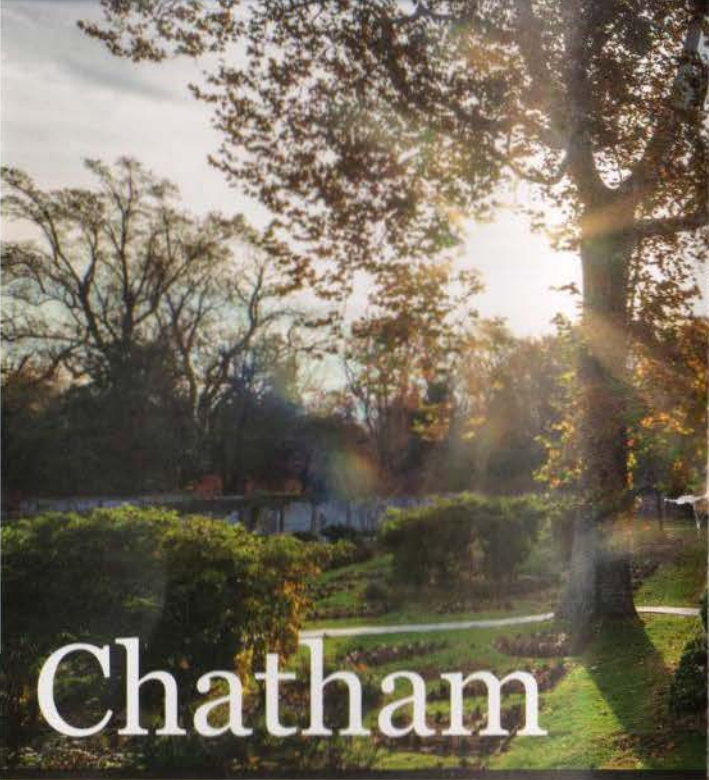
**A Symbol of Power**

**...Sustained by Slaves**

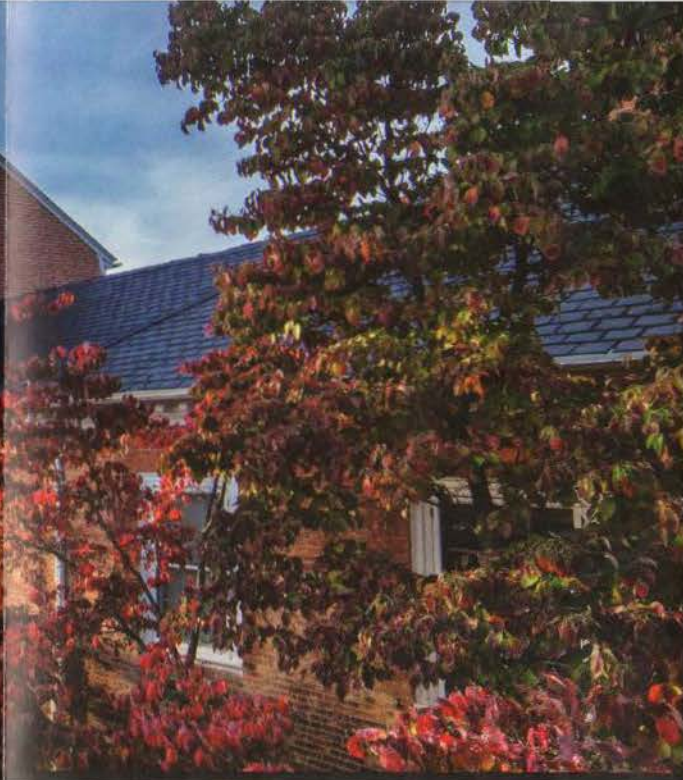
**...Ravaged by War**

**...Transformed and Reborn**





# Chatham



## A Place of Status and Toil

Once visible for miles around, Chatham projected the power and status of its first owners, William and Ann Randolph Fitzhugh. William Fitzhugh inherited both vast tracts of land and the expectations placed upon Virginia's upper class. He had Chatham built in 1771. For the next three decades, the Fitzhughs hosted an unending procession of visitors that taxed both their larder and their pocketbooks.

Behind the image of gentility worked as many as 100 enslaved people. They pressed the linens, tended the fields, groomed the horses, placed the china, and prepared the meals that helped sustain Chatham, its owners, and the image they sought to present.

## Wartime Destruction

The approach of the Union army in 1862 forced Chatham's owners, the Lacys, to flee, and Union officers soon turned the house into a headquarters. To Chatham's enslaved work force (the majority of Chatham's residents), the arrival of the Union army meant freedom. The Civil War ended the system of labor that had sustained Chatham for nine decades.

War also brought fame and destruction to Chatham. The house served as both a Union headquarters and a hospital. Soldiers serving picket duty along the river sought refuge from the cold. Some left still-visible graffiti on the walls. The house survived, but suffered serious damage.

## Postwar Transformation

The end of slavery meant a new era for Chatham. The Lacys had to sell in 1872, and successive owners steadily sold away Chatham's land, until only 30 acres remained in 1921. Trees grew around the property, and Chatham receded into the landscape.

In the 1920s, new owners Daniel and Helen Devore brought new life to the old house. They removed the massive portico on the river side of the house and created the elaborate landscape we see today. The gardens at Chatham would become as famous as the house itself.

Chatham's last owner conveyed the house to the National Park Service in 1975.

