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Oatlands Reaffirms Commitment to Descendant Communities with Upcoming Exhibit and Public Event

Leesburg, VA — August 12, 2025 — Oatlands Historic House & Gardens is proud to announce a renewed commitment to descendant communities through two major public initiatives this summer and fall: the *Black Patriots and Loyalists in the Revolutionary War* exhibit, open August 1st through September 28th and an annual *Descendants Day* celebration on Saturday, September 13, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Held in collaboration with the Black History Committee of the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library and local artist Gertrude Evans, *Black Patriots and Loyalists in the Revolutionary War* explores the contributions and sacrifices of African Americans during the Revolutionary War—on both sides of the conflict. The exhibit is on view at the Oatlands Carriage House, offering powerful historical insights alongside original artwork that honors those whose stories have often gone untold.

“This exhibit is not just about history—it’s about belonging, truth-telling, and expanding our understanding of the American story,” said Margaret Salazar-Porzio, Executive Director of Oatlands. “We are honored to partner with the Black History Committee and Gertrude Evans to present this important work.”

Building on the momentum of the exhibit, *Descendants Day* invites the broader public to join in a day of reflection, connection, and celebration on the grounds of Oatlands. This year’s gathering will feature a new oral history collecting initiative, guided tours, gospel music by local sensation Bryan Fox and Friends, SDS Soul Food Truck, and community dialogue centered on the lived experiences of descendants of the enslaved.

The event is free and open to all.



“At Oatlands, we recognize that historic preservation must include the preservation of memory, especially for those whose ancestors lived and labored on this land,” said Salazar-Porzio. “Our recommitment to descendant communities is a central part of how we move forward—together and with deep respect for each other.”

For more information about the exhibit, Descendants Day, or to support this work, please visit www.oatlands.org or contact **Communications Specialist Amanda Kopp** (MKopp@savingplaces.org) and **Executive Director Margaret Salazar-Porzio** (MSalazar-Porzio@savingplaces.org).

About Oatlands

Oatlands is a site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, encompassing over 400 acres of farmland, gardens, and historic structures in Loudoun County, Virginia. As a former plantation and now a place of public engagement, Oatlands is committed to telling the full story of American history through education and community connection. Learn more at www.oatlands.org.