



# THE MUSEUM THEATER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

At the Accokeek Foundation's National Colonial Farm

**"There is history in all men's lives."**

**—Shakespeare**

This year the National Colonial Farm is pleased to offer the "Museum Theater Internship Program" (MTIP). As defined by the **International Museum Theater Alliance**, Museum Theater is "*the use of theater to enhance the educational experience that happens in a museum.*" The museum theater program will educate young theater students about the value of humanities to performance. Though *living history* is a form of theater, its emphasis is almost always on education rather than entertainment. Conversely, the *historical drama* is almost always driven by the story rather than by the facts, frequently resulting in historical inaccuracies. Our museum theater program will marry the passion and scholarship of the historian with the passion and approach to character of the actor.

**"Tis something so very contradictory to Humanity, That I am really ashamed  
of my Country whenever I consider of it..."**

**—Robert Beverly, Planter and Slave owner, 1761, on slavery**

The theme of this year's program will be on interpreting the African American experience in 18<sup>th</sup> century Maryland. When the **National Colonial Farm** was created as a living history museum in 1991, we considered whether to interpret a tenant family or a "poor land-owning family" (*which would have been slightly higher on the social ladder*). We decided to interpret a poor land-owning family, specifically to allow for the interpretation of slavery. The actual, historical family that has been used as a model for the farm owned a slave woman, Cate, and her son John Sharper. Cate's husband was a free man. Our museum theater program is designed to provide the public with a glimpse into the very specific lifestyle of that family, their slaves and those of a more prosperous neighbor.

Through this program, nationally-recognized historians and museum professionals will train our interns. Interns will study appropriate dialects and social norms, as well as period-appropriate costumes and skills to prepare them to portray life on a middling tobacco farm in colonial Prince George's County. Interns will then immerse themselves in colonial life by working the farm and presenting to the public their characters' unique perspectives on slavery.

This program begins in June 2006. Interns will work Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays throughout June and July from 10:00am until 3:00pm. During this time, interns will be developing characters and a theatrical piece for presentation to the public on August 5, African American Heritage Day at the National Colonial Farm.

For more information or to set up an audition time, please call Matt Mattingly, the Accokeek Foundation's Manager of Historic Interpretation, at 301-283-2113 ext. 17.