

# *The History of Belmont Country Club*

Belmont Manor House is a historical landmark nestled on top of one of the highest peaks in Eastern Loudoun County, Virginia. This five-part two-story Federal Mansion was built by Ludwell Lee, son of Richard Henry Lee, between the years of 1799-1802. Along with its beautiful foundation and exquisite exterior, the Manor House also brings a wealth of historical significance to Belmont Country Club. For instance, notable figures such as President James Madison were often noted visitors to the plantation. In fact, the Manor served as a safe haven for President Madison during the War of 1812. On August 24, 1814, British forces raided Washington D.C. setting a flame to all public buildings in the area including, the White House, the Capitol, and the Navy Yard, leaving our nation's capital in ruins.

Another notable figure to enter the Belmont Manor House is Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, whom often visited Ludwell Lee at his home. Lafayette served within the Continental Army under George Washington during the American Revolutionary War as America fought for freedom from Britain. Along with his efforts during the Revolutionary War, he also demonstrated his excellent guidance as leader of the Garde Nationale during the French Revolution. Belmont Manor's East and West reception room fireplaces and mantels are said to be gifts to Lee from Lafayette himself in 1825.

In 1836, Margaret Mercer purchased Belmont Manor from Lee: with high intentions of transforming the house into a Women's Christian School. However, this did not occur and the deed was later purchased by Kansas Governor Frederick Staunton and the highly recognized McLean family, owners of the Hope Diamond, a 45.52 deep blue diamond which now resides at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum in Washington, D.C.

By 1932, Patrick Hurley, Secretary of War under President Hoover, purchased the home and made it his residence for several years. It was in 1964 that the IBM Corporation claimed Belmont Manor as their Management Retreat Center. By the 1980's, time had caught up to Belmont Manor, requiring vast renovations due to years of neglect and extensive damage to its interior.

In 1995, Toll Brothers Inc. purchased Belmont Manor and brought it back to its original condition. Through careful reconstruction and attention to detail, much of the artwork, wallpaper, and features first incorporated in Ludwell Lee's home still exist today. Displaying a portico with two Doric columns on either side as an entrance, elaborate landscaping and decorative detail throughout the Manor is the definition of colonial charm and historical elegance. Toll Brothers and Belmont Country Club pride themselves on preserving the original history and ornate features of this magnificent Federal style structure, which has now been listed on the United States National Registry of Historical Places thus preserving the building and land by the National Park Service.