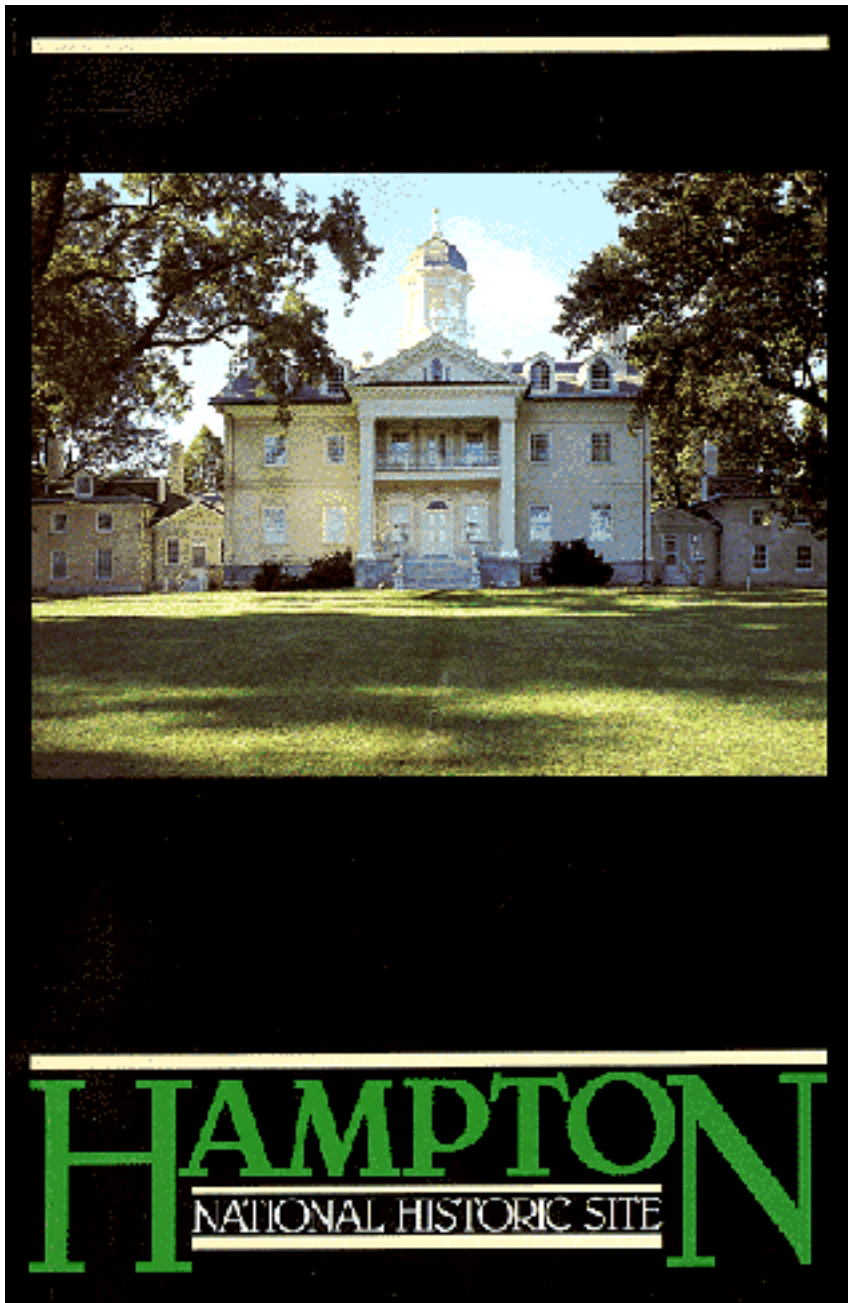


A Proposal for Research & Interpretation Strategies for *Hampton*, National Historic Site, Baltimore County, Maryland

Prepared for *Preservation Maryland, Inc.*



Since Charles E. Peterson, FAIA, completed his ['Preliminary Report'](#) on Hampton in 1970 which he

had begun in 1949, considerable research has been undertaken on the history of Hampton. A number of carefully documented structural and archaeological studies have been conducted, including an excellent [Historic Structure Report by Charles W. Snell](#) in 1980, and an archaeological study by Paul Y. Inashima in 1990. Under the direction of Lynne Hastings and other dedicated Park Service personnel, a considerable body of information has been collected and reports prepared on a wide variety of topics relating to Hampton from the 1780s, when the main house was built, to the near present. Indeed the strength of the research program at Hampton lies in the enthusiasm and in the careful work of the professional staff and such volunteers as [Gil Hennegar](#) and [Kent Lancaster](#). Gil Hennegar has recently completed an exhaustive "[Research File Finding Aid](#)", the starting point for anyone interested in the work that has been done on Hampton to date. Dr. Lancaster has focused his attention on the [slaves and slavery](#) at Hampton, but has also contributed notes towards biographical files on the [Ridgely family and their relations](#).

The accomplishments of the staff (both full-time and contractual) are clear from Gil Hennegar's overview of the work done to date as reflected in the research files. Indicative of their high quality is Lynne Hasting's [Hampton](#) (1985), and her more recent detailed study of the [Music Room](#). If anything symbolizes the initial rationale for the preservation of Hampton as a National Historic Site, it is [Eliza with her harp, by Thomas Sully](#). In many ways the painting is a metaphor for the history of Hampton and those who lived and worked there. It was the quest for this portrait that led to what remained of the Hampton estate becoming a public trust. It was Eliza's fortune, derived from her father's mercantile business in the city, that gave her husband, the third master of Hampton, John Ridgely, the means to live well and to re-build the slave-based economy of the plantation in the years prior to the Civil War. Her fortune may well have sustained the life-style of the Ridgelys after the war.

More importantly Eliza and the other mistresses of Hampton, along with the slaves, the servants, and the tenants they helped manage, now should be the focus of the next phase of interpreting Hampton. From its earliest days, Hampton did not sit in splendid isolation overlooking the countryside. It was inextricably linked to the industrial development of Maryland through its ironworks and to the growth and development of the city of Baltimore. The first studies of Hampton missed the role of the city to such a degree that the otherwise excellent report by [Charles Peterson](#) confused the inventory of the Gay Street townhouse with that of Hampton mansion. As [Bess Paterson Shipe](#) has pointed out, life in the city was as important to the Ridgelys as was life in the country. Any interpretive program for Hampton should explain the link to the city and the inter-relationship between the two. From Sherry Olson's work on the history of Baltimore we know that Thomas Buckler was an early advocate of the Gunpowder watershed as a pure water supply for the city. Not until I began looking at the work done on Hampton did I realize that his ascerbic comments about Baltimore's unwillingness to listen to his good advice (written from his study in Paris) may have been firmly rooted in a vested interest in the project derived from his marital ties (as second husband of little Eliza) to the Ridgelys who owned a large segment of the watershed.

But it is not the interaction of the masters and mistresses of Hampton with the world of the City alone that should be emphasized in the next phase of interpretation of Hampton. It is essential to understand the lives of the people who made such a life-style possible, the slaves, the servants (both free black and white), the laborers, and the tenants, and to reconstruct their world for the Hampton visitor.

Hampton offers a unique opportunity to study the totality of what Simon Schama recently has called *Landscape and Memory*, the interaction of people with their environment from the earliest days of

settlement to the present. Some exercises will necessarily be more speculative than others. Recovering and conveying the presence, extent, and impact of native Americans on Hampton will be restricted by the available archaeological sites, and dependent upon an interpretive framework derived from sites elsewhere. There is, however, an extraordinary wealth of information available about slaves, servants, laborers and tenants that can be pulled into a matrix of interpretation that will broaden the base of public interest in the history of Hampton. It will also increase public attendance at the site, especially IF the stories to be learned are told well, and are placed in a context that entices people to want to know more about the full spectrum of the varied worlds that Hampton represents.

There are two parts to this proposal:

- a focused set of [I. research & interpretation related priorities](#) (some of which are already under way) that will make the over-all expansion of the interpretive framework for Hampton possible, and
- [II. methodological strategies](#) that encompasses investment in, and planning with a computerized research facility at Hampton, linked to the World Wide Web of the Internet

Estimated Cost of Implementing this Proposal:

- computer resources and software: \$45,000
- consulting services to oversee implementation and to train existing personnel: \$40,000

I. Research & Interpretation Related Priorities

In order for there to be an effective interpretation program for *Hampton* and the ironmasters house begun by Captain Charles Ridgley between 1783 & 1785, it is crucial to have an integrated research program that focuses on the historical geography of the site, the occupants (slave, free blacks, indentured servants, and the families of the owners), and the relationship, over time, of Hampton to the larger world.

Hampton has a unique opportunity to combine archaeological investigation, the history of decorative arts, and research into the lives of those who lived and worked at Hampton, into a story of life in America from the late 18th century to the near present. It is a story that would put Hampton on the map, a place where any American would want to visit, either in person, or via the virtual reality of the Internet. In developing such an historically accurate story, attention must be paid to new major themes of interpretation with the understanding that while those themes may be altered over time, the research that goes into their definition and public presentation will remain both accessible and cumulative. By that I mean that how we see and interpret the past is very much shaped by our present cultural filters from which it is impossible to escape altogether and which are themselves necessary for communication with the public. Only a short time ago the [photograph of Nancy Brown Davis](#) probably would have been captioned with the name of the child and the woman simply identified as a nanny or servant. Today our focus, for good reasons, is on the nanny and not the child. When at some point the interpretive interest returns to the child and the better understanding of his (or her) world, the research that went into establishing who the nanny was

should be linked easily to the new interpretive slant for which the photograph provides evidence.

At present there is lacking from the overall interpretive framework for Hampton any overall sense or understanding of :

- the interrelationship between the House and the fortune that built it. Research will uncover subtleties to the argument, but it is clear that it was built in a place contrary to almost all, if not all of the great houses of Maryland. It was built in the wilderness on a high hill in close proximity to its main source of sustenance, the ironworks. No interpretation of the house can be adequately sustained without understanding the link between the principal source of income and the labor which makes Hampton so different from other 'plantation' houses situated near water and central to an agricultural enterprise. Hampton's agricultural history follows and probably is sustained by the industrial development of the nearby iron works. The House exists as a monument to the success of Maryland's Iron Industry, the element in the economy of late Colonial Maryland that not only provided capital for Marylanders' branching out in successful competition with Scottish and English merchants (e.g. Wallace Davidson & Johnson), but also provided the impetus and location for seating the town, soon to be city, of Baltimore. There is a great story here. More needs to be done on the interrelationship at all levels of the Furnace to building, maintaining, and supplying of the house and grounds with labor and capital. For example, a review of the Galloway Cheston Papers at the Maryland Historical Society would uncover [a list of convicts, 1775](#), purchased by Captain Charles Ridgely for the ironworks. What happened to these eleven men and two women? Did they survive? Did they stay in the area and contribute in any other ways to the history of Hampton? Work has already been done on some convict servants who were indented (bound labor) to the Ridgelys [Hoyt, "The White Servants at 'Northampton,' 1772-74," Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2 (June, 1938)], but a simple text search through the existing research files would uncover that the John Willis whose time Captain Charles Ridgely purchased in 1775 may be the same John Willis who [Charles Peterson](#) refers to as an important gardener.
- the extraordinary importance of the role of the women at Hampton House, perhaps beginning with the mistresses, but by no means ignoring the role of women generally. The story of the Ridgely women alone is a powerful one that helps us better understand the degree to which women exercised control and influenced the course of what normally is perceived of as a male-dominated world. The story that could be told through the lives of Rebecca, Priscilla, Eliza, little Eliza, Margareta, and Helen, emphasizing how they coped with what clearly were uneven and ultimately declining resources, is one of great drama. It ranges from the Methodist influence of Priscilla who even in death wielded enough power over her husband to help shape his decision to free his slaves, to the ways in which Helen grappled with the dramatic changes wrought by the Civil War.
- the interrelationship between the natural world and the world reshaped by the human presence. Such an interpretive exercise must encompass the interrelationship between city and countryside, which at first meant only Baltimore and Hampton but in time included the beginnings of the edge city we know today as Towson. The Ridgelys and those who worked with and for them were not self-contained at Hampton. As Baltimore City grew, [time was spent and life lived in both places](#). Within the context of life in the city, associations were formed of major importance to the history of Hampton, the most obvious of which infused new capital through favorable marriages with wealthy merchants of limited status but

generous means. But such an interpretive framework must also extend to how Hampton and the ironworks impacted the environment and altered it significantly, first in an exploitive way, and then, following in-law Buckler's model and urgings, in a restorative way. The Gunpowder today is as healthy as it is because the watershed was converted into a source of drinking water for Baltimore City, flooding Hampton's mines and halting the ravaging of the watershed forests.

- the African American presence. Any analysis must involve their role at the iron works and on the plantation and the dramatic cycles through which their experiences at Hampton passed. For example, the astounding facts that at one point all the slaves that the law would permit were freed by a conscience stricken father- Charles Carnan Ridgely, that the slave population was then reconstituted by an uncomprehending son (John), only to be 'lost' again through civil war, and then finally possibly 'reconstituted' to a degree for a third time through tenancy, share cropping, and other forms of indenture that persisted well into the twentieth century. On this point a great deal of good work has been undertaken by volunteers and staff working with Dr. Kent Lancaster, but the only formal interpretation for the public seems to be dependent on staff tours (begun well by Winona Peterson) and a xeroxed handout entitled [Other Voices](#). These are a good beginning but far from a fully engaging interpretative overview derived from solid research.
 - [Dr. Kent Lancaster's research on the African American population at Hampton](#)

Finally, how the story of Hampton is presented to the public is of crucial importance to the success of the site (both in terms of a sustaining income and establishing it in the front ranks of educational sites in the United States). I would strongly recommend the creation of a living history program that draws heavily from Goucher, Morgan, Hopkins, and other colleges nearby for budding actresses and actors who would engage the visitor in a persuasive interpretive program similar to that at St. Mary's City in scope. Carefully staged, such productions should be incorporated over time into an inter-active video/virtual reality series of programs on the WEB and the WEB-like network, by carefully recording the best of the acting in an electronic video archives (something, sadly, that has not been done at Plymouth Plantation or St. Mary's City). But initially the goal should be to bring to Hampton a lively and engaging set of actresses and actors who would help recreate the worlds that once were Hampton's.

II. Methodological Strategies

I do not wish to duplicate [Elizabeth Schaaf's thorough analysis of archival and research needs](#). I concur in her conclusions and recommend that:

- any and all original records at Hampton be carefully described in series analyses and transferred as a gift or a deposit to a responsible archival repository. All research resources at Hampton should be either secondary sources duplicated elsewhere, electronic files duplicated elsewhere, or copies of microfilm with the archival copies elsewhere. Artifacts need to be inventoried and stored in a proper environment as well, but an argument could be made for a facility for these on site.
- an investment in a computerized research facility be made the highest priority along with

the retention of

- qualified staff to manage and maintain the computerized facility as well as oversee the research undertaken on behalf of interpretation

If there is to be an effective long range interpretation program for Hampton, a PC based research and report writing system needs to be installed at Hampton without delay. The system would emulate the internet and be connected to it. It would consist of a server, as many clients as could be afforded in the range of 3-6 (all linked by a local area network), a color scanner, a minimum of two printers (one reasonably fast and the other a relatively inexpensive color printer), CD Recorder, several integrated software packages managed by windows, including EMOSAIC (the only browser that prints margins, headers & footers), and a relational database program such as DBASE.

Such a system would be *Windows for Workgroups 3.11* or *Windows 95* compatible working through a server which operates over a *Novell* network utilizing an HTTP daemon to access and simulate the WEB. All files would be backed up through a recordable CD player/recorder which also would produce CD's for accessing files too large to transfer easily over the WEB (such as .avi or MPEG2 files for video and .au or .wav files for sound).

Visitors to Hampton and researchers working on aspects of Hampton's history should be able to access Hampton through the WEB to find out what resources are available and what work has already been undertaken. Research would also be managed under the umbrella of web-like environment. Not everything available locally would be accessible through the internet, but all would be managed the way files are seen and managed on the WEB. This report is an example of what I am suggesting. To implement such a program will require careful installation and management training, but it can be maintained by a minimum of qualified personnel and continually enhanced with additional work done by volunteers.

The WEB environment not only provides an excellent means of keeping track of and reviewing the research and writing done to date, but also is an excellent vehicle for publications and interactive interpretive programs in kiosk-like environments where patrons learn as much as they like about what they see at Hampton.

It is important to understand that anyone can create a homepage and get themselves on to the WEB, but managing the information, adding to it, and assuring quality over the long run takes effort and skills that must be cultivated carefully in a permanent core staff whose mission in part is to ensure that those skills are not lost regardless of how frequently the staff turns over.

Such a proposition, of course, is true of any historical interpretation program whether or not the research and interpretation files are maintained electronically. Fortunately the task is easier in a computerized world and can be accomplished with a better mix of 'regular' employees and volunteers.

The type of system recommended here is in place at the Maryland State Archives and will shortly be installed at a private school in Baltimore. Hampton could have its own WEB server or could have its home page maintained at the State Archives or similar remote site. For an example of a home page see <http://www.mdarchives.state.md.us>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- create a WEB-like environment for the management of all research files, library resources, and publications (seek a cost proposal for doing so from the State Archives or similar not-for-profit service agency)
- manage all files (including paper files and library materials) through a database program that links to, and is capable of producing, HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) files
- conduct all biographical and topical research within a database framework, linking files in a relational way (examples comprise the electronic aspect of this report but require DBASE to access)
- convert all existing reports, datafiles, and selected secondary sources by OCR to searchable text files
- use an inexpensive text indexing program to access electronic information (Eclipse *Find* is used with this report, but is limited to character strings of three or more characters)
- place all publications and interpretative packages into HTML format and use the WEB browsers to view and print them
- access all files through a simulated WEB environment on a local network from which internet accessible files can be derived (see model at the State Archives and soon to be installed at *Boys' Latin School*)
- compile electronically an indexed and [comprehensive list of all known Ridgely related sources](#) at the three principal repositories and through a systematic search through the growing number of on-line guides (e.g. OCLC) and printed catalogs (NUCMC)
- scan all photographs and other images (including drawings and plans) and access them on line via the database or a imaging cataloguing program which is used here to browse the images in [Snell's 1980 Archaeological report](#)
- print all publications and prepare all interpretive packages for distribution through offprints from the WEB either as electronically viewable files (Adobe ACROBAT is highly recommended) or as nicely printed output done in large print runs through conventional printing from WEB printer composed files or on demand through inexpensive printers on site
- create a home page for Hampton and make as much as is deemed useful and wise of the simulated WEB files available on the internet taking care to observe any copyright restrictions. What is fair use in a research environment may constitute copyright infringement on the Internet

Appendices

- **Charles Peterson**
Notes on Hampton Mansion, A Preliminary Report

May 1, 1970

For the uncorrected OCR text of Charles Peterson's study, [click here](#)

- Peterson mistakenly thought that the list of sales items of Charles Carnan Ridgely's estate were of Hampton when they were of the Gay Street Townhouse. See [page 68 of Peterson's Report](#)
- Peterson raises the question of whether or not one of the early gardeners, [John Willis](#) was an indentured servant. He probably was according to a [manifest of convict servants](#) purchased by Captain Charles Ridgely in 1775.

- **Charles W. Snell**
Historic Structure Report, Hampton Mansion
August 1980

For the uncorrected OCR text of Charles W. Snell's report [click here](#)

- Snell follows Peterson closely in his historical introduction
- [for Snell's illustrations click here](#)

- **Bess Paterson Shipe**

"Eliza Eichelberger Ridgely, the "Lady with a Harp"
Maryland Historical Magazine
Fall 1982, 77, no. 3, pp. 230-237.



Lady With a Harp: Eliza Ridgely, (1818)
By Thomas Sully (1783-1872). Oil on canvas, 2.145 x 1.425 m (84-3/8" by 56-1/8").
Collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington [No. 8311. Gift of Maude Monell
Vetlesen.]

For the uncorrected OCR text file [click here](#)

Of particular interest are the quotations from little Eliza's diary about life at the Baltimore townhouse including election night 1841 when "Father didn't want mother to go out with us" (p.233)

- **Dr. Kent Lancaster's research on African Americans at *Hampton***

- [a listing of Kent Lancaster's research files at Hampton as of 5/95](#)
- [analysis of slave quarters](#)
- [analysis of slaves at Hampton, 11/1993](#)
- [alphabetical list of slaves](#)

• Dr. Kent Lancaster's Research Files

[all of these and other extant text file should be incorporated into HTML files in the manner of nos. 12, 16, & 17 below]

RKL RESEARCH NOTES: CONTENTS

1.	File Name	Text Contents
	Peden176	Ridgely Assessments, 1760-70s, Peden
2.	1782-87	Hampton Negro Clothing, 1782-87
3.	1782svt	"Servants" in 1780s Clothing List
4.	1783tax	1783 Assessment of Captain Charles Ridgely
5.	Relats17	Relationships, Slaves in 1792
6.	Sersho	Servants' Shoes in 1780s (?)
7.	1810Svts	Ridgely Servants. Early XIX Century
9.	1827shoe	Surnames, 1827-28 Shoe List
10.	Govwill	Notes re: Rebecca Hanson and Governor's Will
11.	Heirs	Governor Ridgely's Children
12.	Sl1829 & Slavel	Slaves, from Administration of Governor's will and working papers
13.	Kin1829	Relationships from 1829 Slave List
14.	John'ssl	John Ridgely's purchases of slaves, and payments to Free Blacks
15.	Didy2	Eliza Ridgely's Christmas Gifts to Slaves
16.	Quarters	Thoughts on Hampton Slave Quarters
17.	Slvrpt	Interim Report on Ridgely Slaves
18.	1870hand	Payments to Hampton Workers, 1870-1871

19. Various Working Papers, including:
VAULT The Vault and Burial Ground at Hampton
HAMPCEM Order of Death of Those Supposed to be
Buried in Ridgely Cemetery
20. Prices What a Dollar Would Buy - Hampton 1771-1870
21. Charles Carnan Ridgely's Will
22. Various Notes on HAMP Photograph Collection, includ.:
MANSION Black of Boston and Newport Photos
PHOTOS Oil Portraits from Solar Enlargements
Misc. on Photograph Collection
23. Prices¹ What a Dollar Would Buy - Hampton 1771-1861
24. Ridgely Burial Ground and Vault
The Vault and Burial Ground at Hampton
25. Karen Taylorson Research: Free Negroes
Listed in Census of 1850 (Balt. Co.)
Price List of Building Materials and Work

• Toward a Comprehensive List of Sources to Consult:

- [Elizabeth Schaaf's thorough analysis of archival and research needs](#) should be the starting point for an overview of sources to consult. She points out an overlooked Ridgely account book at the LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
- MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY:
 - [Cynthia Requardt's preliminary guide to the Ridgely Papers](#)
 - [uncorrected OCR of present finding aid to the Ridgely collections at the MdHS](#)
- MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES:
 - [Chris Haley's suggestions for research on Hampton at the State Archives, part I](#)
 - [Chris Haley's suggestions for research on Hampton at the State Archives, part II](#)
 - [Special Collections Microfilm available of a portion of the Ridgely Papers](#)
 - [a guide to the collections at the State Archives containing Hampton related materials \(MSA SC 1898 item inventory\)](#)

[Return to Projects](#)

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NOTE: This report was generated off of the WEB and retains links to the underlined sections that if used in a WEB environment could be activated by the reader. I have not included the contents of most the appendices (hyperlinks) because it would make the report too bulky.