



NPS / LARRY OLSEN

*The General's lands are very well cultivated . . . his cattle, sheep, horses, etc., of a superior sort, and in much finer condition than many I saw in America. He is very famous for race horses and usually keeps three or four such horses in training, and what enables him to do this is that he owns very extensive iron works, or otherwise he could not.*

—English visitor Richard Parkinson, 1805

Most people today know Hampton as a sedate Georgian mansion, elegantly furnished and settled amid gardens and shade trees. Built as a country seat just after the Revolutionary War by a prominent Maryland family, the house and its immediate

surroundings are just a remnant of the Hampton estate of the early 1800s.

Take a moment to stand at an upstairs window and look out over the lawns, suburban houses, and woodlands. In its heyday Hampton covered all this land and more; Ridgely property equalled half the area of present-day Baltimore, land that made its owners rich through iron production, agriculture, and investments. Hampton is the story of a family business, early American industry and commerce, the cultural tastes of the times, the deprivations of war, and the economic changes that finally made this kind of estate life obsolete.

Most importantly, Hampton is the story of its people. Scenes from Hampton's past include a colonial merchant shipper amassing thousands of acres of property along Maryland's Chesapeake shore; indentured servants casting molten iron into cannon and ammunition for the Revolutionary army; slaves loading barrels of grain, iron, and timber onto Europe-bound merchant ships that would return with fine wines and luxurious furnishings.

Later scenes show a powerful businessman and politician well known as "a very gentell man . . . said to keep the best table in America;" a teenaged girl making a list of Christmas gifts to her father's slaves,

carefully noting full names, births, and deaths; descendants in the 1900s hoping to keep the estate in the family by selling off parcels of land, operating a dairy supplying milk to local schools, and pressing apples into cider.

Today as you explore Hampton, keep these people in mind. A wealth of artifacts and scenery recreates a world where, for the better part of three centuries, a community of hundreds of individuals played out the comedies and dramas of their lives against the background of America's development as a nation.

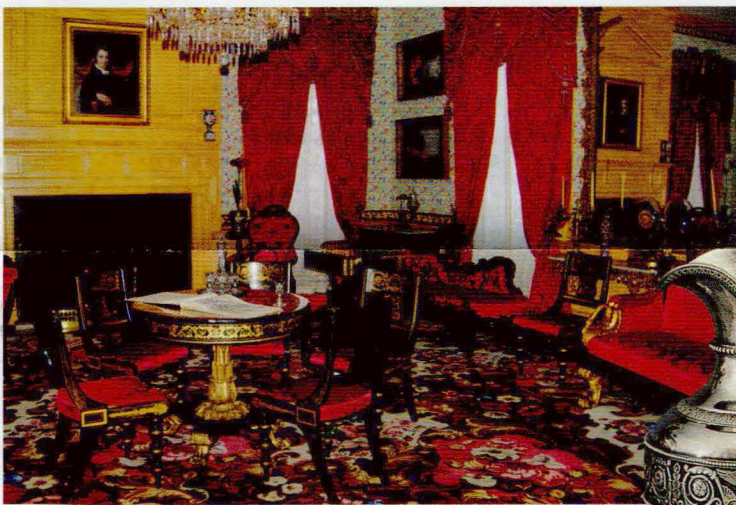
## A Palace in the Wilderness

A journalist chronicled the mansion's beginnings in 1875: "The country-people soon saw with amazement what was to them a palace rising in the wilderness . . . They called it 'Ridgely's Folly.'" Built between 1783 and 1790, Capt. Charles Ridgely's dwelling rose with the new nation, yet was modeled after the aristocratic homes of another place and time. Castle Howard in Yorkshire, England, with its large

octagonal cupola, may have inspired Ridgely's vision of his country residence; the captain claimed kinship with the owners of that English estate through his mother's family.

Hampton did not have a formal architect; the master carpenter, Jehu Howell, is credited with much of the design. Local craftsmen, slaves, and indentured servants provided the labor. Hampton

Mansion reflects classic Georgian symmetry: a large three-story structure connected to smaller wings on either side by hallways, or "hyphens." The exterior is constructed of stone quarried on Ridgely property, stuccoed over and scored to resemble blocks of limestone. The pinkish color comes from iron oxide in the stuccoing compound.



Drawing Room  
NPS



Silver Ewer  
WILLIAM JAMISON



In keeping with its role as a symbol of wealth and power, Hampton had large, lavish rooms where the Ridgelys indulged their taste—and the national obsession at the time—for the styles of ancient Greece and Rome. The set of Baltimore-made painted furniture in the drawing room, purchased in 1832 by John and Eliza Ridgely, reflects this classical influence, as do many other chairs, tables,

sofas, and decorative items. Later owners ushered in the Victorian mode; the Music Room displays furnishings accumulated by several generations of Ridgelys.

The 1800s brought the exterior to its fullest glory. Italianate gardens set on terraced earthworks (see plan above) were in place by 1802 on the south side of the mansion, while on the north side lay an English-style land-

scaped park. In the 1830s and 1840s, John and Eliza Ridgely carefully enhanced the "natural" landscape with exotic trees, including the cedar of Lebanon on the south lawn reported to have made its way from the Middle East in a shoebox. In 1859 horticulturalist Henry Winthrop Sargent mused that Hampton's "venerable appearance" and "foreign air . . . quite disturb one's ideas of republican America."

## The Six Masters of Hampton

By family custom, the Hampton estate belonged to the eldest son in each generation. Capt. Charles Ridgely (right), 1733–1790, supplied iron implements, arms and ammunition, and privaters to the Patriots during the Revolutionary War. His merchant fleet helped to establish Baltimore as a major port. Known as "the Builder," he died soon after the mansion was completed.



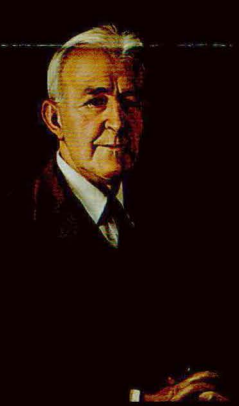
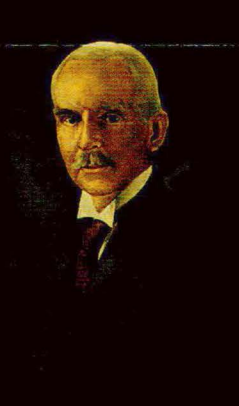
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Nephew of the childless captain, Charles Ridgely Carnan (left), 1760–1829, inherited the largest portion of Hampton's land and business concerns provided he take Ridgely as his surname. The Second Master of Hampton made the estate a showplace.

Eliza Ridgely was only 15 when Thomas Sully painted her portrait, "Lady with a Harp" (center). She and husband John (right), Third Master of Hampton, lavished money and attention on the gardens.



Elected captain of the Baltimore County Horse Guard, a local defense cavalry, at the outbreak of the Civil War, John and Eliza's son Charles Ridgely (left of Eliza's portrait) was threatened with arrest for actions against the Union Army. The guard was disbanded and Charles sat out the war despite his Southern sympathies. Though Hampton was physically untouched by war, its slave-based economy was no longer workable by the time Charles became Fourth Master.



Fifth Master John Ridgely (far left), his wife Helen, and mother Margaretta, who managed Hampton from 1872 to 1900, worked hard to preserve its aristocratic traditions.

As Sixth Master of Hampton, John Ridgely Jr. (left) formed a business to build homes on Hampton land. He finally sold the estate to a Mellon family trust, which donated it to the federal government.

## A Hampton Chronology

1695 Henry Darnall, cousin of Lord Baltimore, is granted the Northampton property.

1745 Col. Charles Ridgely buys 1,500 acres of Northampton from Darnall's daughter, Ann Hill. He

expands his holdings to 11,000 acres.

1760 Charles Ridgely Jr. receives Northampton tract from father. Colonel Ridgely, with sons Charles and John, establishes ironworks on a tributary of the Gunpowder River.

1775–83 Revolutionary War. Ridgely ironworks supplies arms and implements to patriot cause.

1783 Captain Ridgely begins construction of mansion. Ridgely holdings soon grow to 24,000 acres.

1790 Captain Ridgely's nephew Charles Carnan Ridgely (born Charles Ridgely Carnan) inherits 12,000 acres and two-thirds of the ironworks. That year his son John is the first child to be born in the mansion.

1790–1829 Ridgely's empire grows to 25,000 acres with ironworks, grain crops, beef cattle, thoroughbred horses, coal mining, marble quarries, mills, and mercantile interests. In 1815 Ridgely is elected governor of Maryland.

1828 John Carnan Ridgely marries Eliza Eichelberger Ridgely (no relation). John inherits the house and 4,500 acres in 1829; remainder of the property is split among other heirs. Governor Ridgely's will also frees most of his 300-plus slaves.

1861–65 Civil War, emancipation, and economic hardships begin Hampton's decline.

1867 John and Eliza's son Charles, who had managed the estate for almost two decades, inherits the property.

1872 House and remaining 1,000 acres go to son "Captain John" Ridgely upon the death of Charles. In the 1880s John's mother Margaretta Sophia Howard Ridgely oversees major renovations to the mansion.

1938 John Ridgely Jr. inherits core of Hampton property and resides in mansion with family.

1948 Based on outstanding architectural merit, mansion and 43 acres are designated a national historic site. John Ridgely Jr.

and wife continue to live at Hampton, residing in farm house (known as the Lower House); mansion is opened for tours.

1979 National Park Service takes over administration of the mansion and 60 acres.

## Your Tour of the House and Grounds

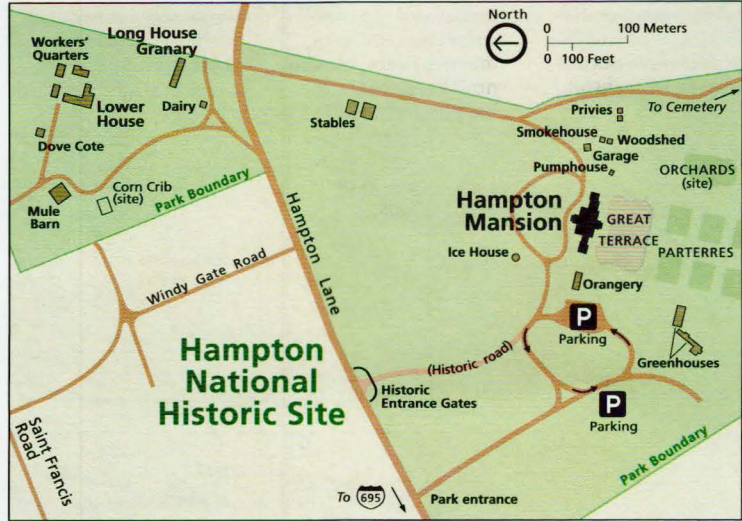
**Hours** Hours are 9 am to 5 pm daily except Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1. Guided tours are conducted regularly. Call ahead to arrange group tours. To prevent floor damage, please do not wear high heels.

**Location** Hampton is north of Baltimore. From I-695, take exit 27-B north (Dulaney Valley Road), make an immediate right onto Hampton Lane, and follow signs.

From downtown Baltimore take I-83 (Jones Falls Expressway) to I-695 east, toward Towson, to exit 27-B.

**More Information** Hampton National Historic Site 535 Hampton Lane Towson, MD 21286 410-823-1309 www.nps.gov/hamp

Hampton National Historic Site is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about parks and National Park Service programs, visit www.nps.gov.



**The Grounds and Gardens** You may tour the grounds, gardens, and outbuildings on your own. Please walk carefully. Watch your step on uneven surfaces.

The ice house was built at the same time as the mansion. The grass-covered brick dome encloses a 33-foot-deep pit. It was filled in winter with snow and ice, which were used for food preparation and refrigeration.

The orangery that stands today replaces the original Greek Revival structure, built around 1825 and destroyed by fire in 1929. Here gardeners tended citrus trees and other tropical plants and trained grapevines along the walls. A hypocaust furnace and later a stove provided heat in winter.

In the early 1800s the Great Terrace on the south side of the mansion provided a level green for bowling.

The catalpa trees are at least as old as the house. Eliza Ridgely, who was interested in horticulture, planted specimen trees, including the imposing cedar of Lebanon. From the Great Terrace is a view of the patterned gardens, called *parterres*, one of which survives in its original design.

The greenhouses sheltered colorful plants and flowers used in the planting of the gardens and for decorating the house.

The original orchards, which had over 700 mature trees by 1772, no longer survive. During their ownership, John and Eliza Ridgely planted additional apple and peach orchards in the 1830s.

The smokehouse, woodshed, privies, and pumphouse were part of the service area for the mansion.

The Ridgely family cemetery is at the end of the dirt road to the east of the mansion.

The Greek Revival vault dates from about 1815.

The stables on the east side of the north lawn were built in 1803 (upper building) and 1857 (lower building). They quartered the Ridgely family's racing thoroughbreds and trotting horses. The upper stable has a carriage exhibit.

Across Hampton Lane is the farm area, a small part of what was once thousands of acres of cropland. Here you can view the dairy, long

house granary, mule barn, and dove cote.

The lower house was occupied by the Ridgelys in the 1700s. After the mansion was opened to the public in 1948, Ridgely family members lived in the lower house until 1978. Three workers' quarters, including those used by slaves, stand next to the lower house. As you make your way back to the mansion, note the stone and iron entrance gates dating from about 1875.

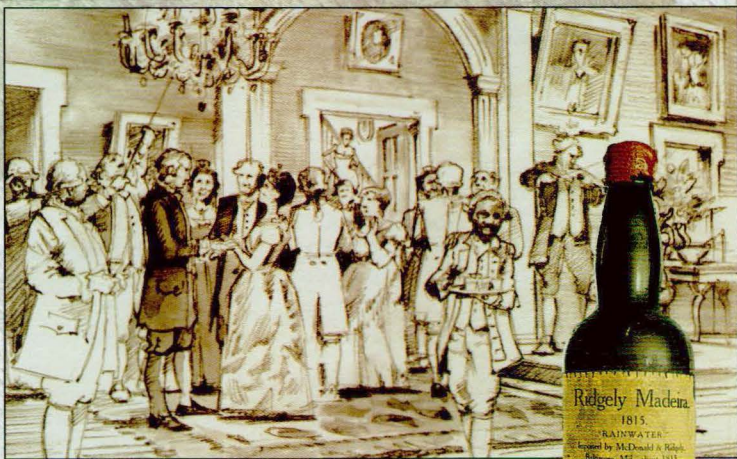
Special events highlight many aspects of this diverse, formerly self-sustaining estate. Contact the park for more information.



# Hampton Estate: 1790–1829

## Princely Pastimes

"It has been truly said of Hampton that it expresses more grandeur than any other place in America," wrote Henry Winthrop Sargent in 1859. It was the first three Masters of Hampton who were responsible for the reputation it enjoyed for decades. Capt. Charles Ridgely was known as "the Builder" of one of the largest Georgian mansions in the country. Continued success in business and politics by his nephew and heir Charles Carnan Ridgely, called "the Governor," brought attention from prominent circles. The Governor's son John Ridgely, with his wife Eliza, purchased elegant furnishings from abroad and nurtured the gardens and grounds into the serene vistas they remain today.



Revolutionary leader Charles Carroll described a party at Hampton in the early 1800s for which 300 invitations were issued. Such events were staged not only for entertainment but to cement business and political ties. Hampton

manor was ideal for such festivities: its Great Hall measures 51 by 21 feet and could seat over 50 dinner guests. An English visitor noted in 1805 that Charles Carnan Ridgely was said to "keep the best table in America."

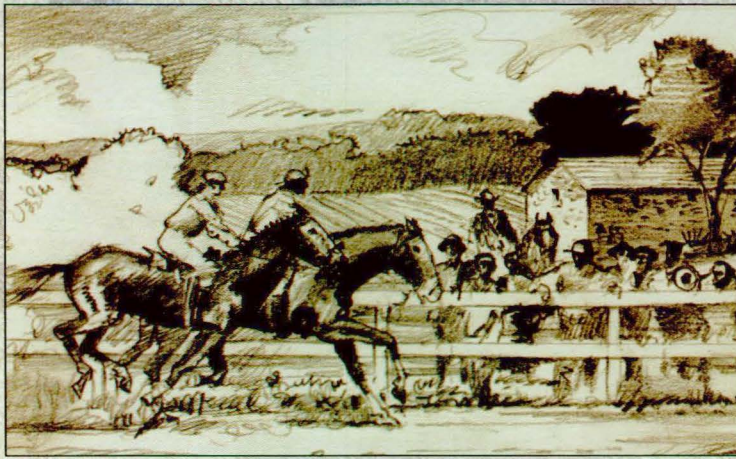
Madeira shipped in casks was bottled and recorked at Hampton, 1815.

Upon the death of his uncle, Charles Ridgely Carnan (right, astride horse), took Ridgely as his surname, inheriting most of Hampton's property and lands, and proceeded to consolidate the Ridgely fortune. Like his uncle, Ridgely had a

townhouse in Baltimore and spent only part of the year at Hampton. In 1908 he was remembered as "the typical aristocrat of his day. He had the fortune that enabled him to live like a prince, and he also had the inclination."



Governor's "Post Boy" racing trophy, 1805.



Hampton was famous for horses. Breeding and racing thoroughbreds began in the late 1700s, before the mansion was built. By 1805 Charles Carnan Ridgely had built the first stone stable and laid out a racecourse on his property.

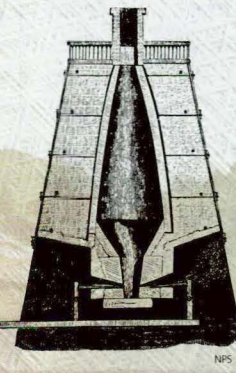
Ridgely, owner of some of the finest thoroughbreds in America, was in large part responsible for Maryland's reputation as the center of American racing in the early 1800s. A silver trophy, presented to the Governor in

1805, depicts one of his favorite thoroughbreds, Post Boy. Even while Hampton declined after the Civil War, the Ridgelys continued racing, breeding, and fox hunting well into the 1900s.

## Industries Fueling a New Nation.

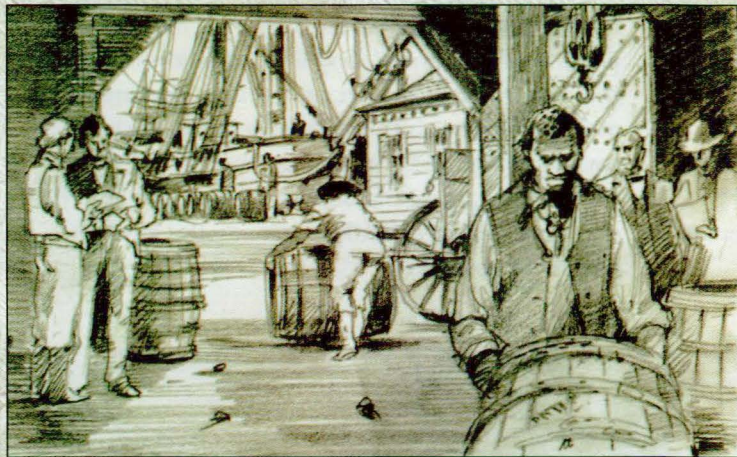


First and foremost Hampton was a family business. The 1,500-acre Northampton tract, first acquired by a Ridgely in 1745, had all the essential elements for ironmaking: iron ore, limestone used in the ironmaking process, timber providing charcoal to fuel the furnace, and waterpower from a tributary of the Gunpowder River. By 1762, when Charles Ridgely established an ironworks on the land he referred to as his "Plantation in the Forrest," iron was one of the most profitable exports of the mid-Atlantic colonies. The local government and the British crown encouraged this industry through tax incentives and other benefits. By 1776 the American colonies together were the world's largest producer of raw iron. Ridgely owned a fleet of merchant ships that transported raw iron and cash crops to Europe in exchange for finished goods. In addition, he owned mills, quarries, orchards, and a general merchandising business in downtown Baltimore. These enterprises made Ridgely a wealthy man and formed the basis of his heirs' fortunes as well.



Nearly two centuries after Hampton's ironworks were established, historian Carl Bridenbaugh described ironmaking in colonial times: "a large tract of undeveloped woodlands was needed to supply charcoal for a furnace; a farm had to be operated to furnish food and other necessities for the labor force. . . . Care of the wagons, tools, machinery, and other equip-

ment required the work of carpenters, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, cartwrights, millers, and sawyers to such an extent that an iron plantation was probably the most self-sufficient large economic unit in America." Besides Northampton, the Ridgelys owned major interests in several other ironworks. An early 1800s iron furnace is shown at left.



Seafaring was a Ridgely family occupation from the time of Maryland's settlement in the 1600s. Like other shipping concerns in the Chesapeake region, Ridgely ships such as *Baltimore Town* carried raw foodstuffs and pig iron to England. They returned with manufactured

goods and luxury items, some of which you can see in the mansion today. As the Revolutionary War approached, this trade system broke down. Disputes between British and colonial

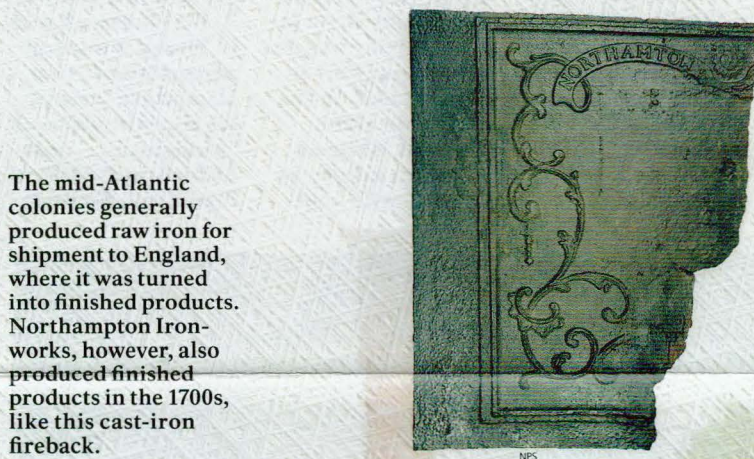
merchants were among the significant causes of the war.



Trade between America and Britain ceased between 1775 and 1783, but once the war ended, merchant shipping quickly resumed.

Cash crops, a major overseas export from Hampton, changed through the years. By Charles Carnan Ridgely's time, tobacco, which rapidly depleted the

soil, had given way to corn, wheat, and other grains. Hampton's products and the Ridgely merchant fleet helped make Baltimore a major East Coast port.



The mid-Atlantic colonies generally produced raw iron for shipment to England, where it was turned into finished products. Northampton Ironworks, however, also produced finished products in the 1700s, like this cast-iron fireback.

Northampton's main products were pig iron—molten iron cast into bars for easy shipment (right)—and household implements.

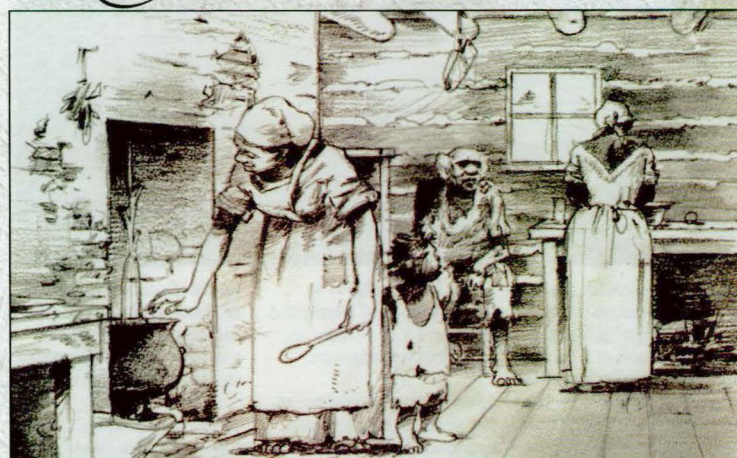
The American Revolution found the Ridgelys aligned with

the patriot cause. The ironworks turned out camp kettles, round shot ranging from 2 to 18 pounds, and cannon of various sizes. Guns from the works were judged at the time "to be equal in quality of any yet made on the

continent." War profits from the ironworks allowed Captain Ridgely to greatly expand his property holdings, in part by buying up confiscated loyalist property.



## Hampton at Work



Hampton the showplace was very much the domain of the Ridgely family and their peers. But behind the scenes was a large community of people who labored at the ironworks, in the fields, on the docks and ships, in gardens and orchards, and inside the mansion. They lived and worked in obscurity in return for shelter, rations of corn, pork, herring, flour, clothing, shoes, and perhaps, but not always, an income.

In colonial days Hampton's labor force included indentured servants, immigrants mainly from the British Isles who labored for a period of years until their passage fee to America was paid back. In addition there were free artisans and tradesmen, convict laborers, and, during the Revolution, British prisoners of war. Families, including children, worked together. Most of these people eventually had some degree of social mobility—unlike African American slaves. Charles Carnan Ridgely freed most of his slaves upon his death, but the era of forced servitude at Hampton remained until the Civil War ended the institution for good.

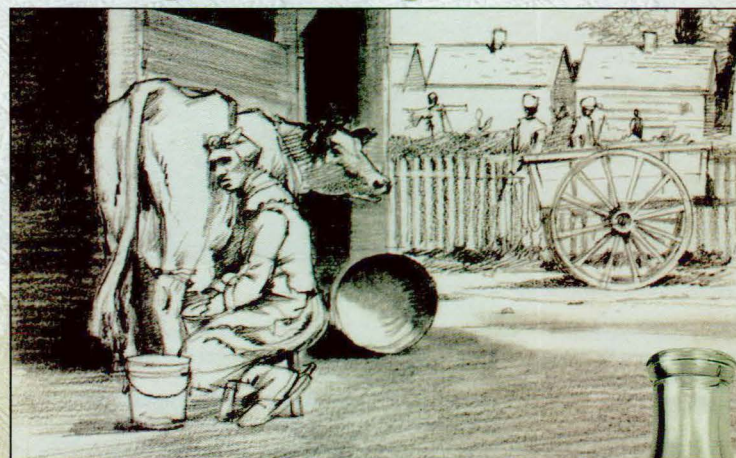


Nancy Brown Davis was born a slave in 1838. She chose to stay on as a servant after she received her freedom.



Slaves were present at Hampton from its beginnings and worked in every capacity. Hampton's slave population at its height numbered over 300, making it one of the largest slave plantations in Maryland.

African American slaves worked in both skilled and unskilled capacities: they were field hands, cobblers, woodcutters, limestone and marble quarriers, millers, ironworkers, blacksmiths, gardeners, and jockeys. Slaves



also performed household chores, including cleaning, cooking, serving food, and caring for children. The Ridgelys often paid many slaves for extra work in addition to their regular duties.

Today, due to the lack of slave-generated documentation, research continues into the lives of Hampton's slaves and servants.



Young Eliza Ridgely's list of Christmas gifts to slave children.

