The Hampton saga

The magnificent mansion at its core began in 1745, with Colonel Charles Ridgely's purchase of 1,500 acres in the wilderness north of Baltimore. The first master of the land, Charles Ridgely, acquired the property from business acumen and Charles constructed his "house in the forest" in late Georgian architectural style. The mansion was completed in 1790, aptly reflect the enormous wealth of its Upper South location, and commercial empire. At its zenith, utilized up to 350 slaves in addition to indentured servants and state's overseer, slaves, indentured servants, and animals that live there, are only a part of the cultural landscapes of Hampton. Historic Hampton, Inc., sponsored by the Ridgely Family in 1745. It chronicles the history of land use by one family for more than 200 years.

Cultural landscapes are dynamic and change over time. The landscape at Hampton has evolved since the land was purchased by the Ridgely Family in 1745. It chronicles the history of land use by one family for more than 200 years. Cultural landscapes are important to everyone. They are our legacy. Besides providing recreational and educational opportunities, they help us understand our history, our nation and ourselves.

For more information, go to www.nps.gov/hamp.
The Mansion and North Lawn Continued

Eliza Eielson Ridgely (1803-1887), third mistress of the mansion. Eliza was an avid horticulturist whose many improvements included importing a Cedar of Lebanon seeding that is now a mature tree, and altering the manicured, geo-
metric boxwood design of the parterres, replacing many with Victorian carpet bedding. Eliza

also imported Italian marble urns to line the serpentine walk path — a detail repeated in the arch-
itecture of the mansion.

The Ridgelys had an endur-
ing interest in horticulture, as
evidenced here in the great
Southern Catalpa, Empress
Tree, Saucer Magnolia, and
Weeping Japanese Pagoda. The

American Boxwood, Buxus sempervirens, and
English Boxwood, B. sempervirens ‘Suffruticosa’

Long cultivated in gardens and as cut flowers in legend, these two types of boxwood have been grown in Hampton for more than two centuries. Native to Southern Eu-
rope and North Africa, the wood is ex-
tremely hard and used for carving.

Red Cedar, Juniperus virginiana
Ridgely slaves were report-
edly buried in a site “beyond the family cemetery,” though their exact location is unknown. In colonial and early federal America, those on the lower rungs of the economic ladder — whether urban or rural, black or white — were often buried without caskets in unmarked or group graves. Bural in perpetuity and grave markers were the do-

cal with Egyptian motifs, popular cemetery motifs in the decades following the American and French Revolutions. Later res-
dents are interred in separate in-ground graves, featuring Classical, Egyptian, and Gothic Revival designs, as well as sim-
pler modern styles. As in many Victorian-era cemeteries, a sculpture of a lamb graces a child’s grave.

Ridgely slaves were report-
edly buried in a site “beyond the family cemetery,” though their exact location is unknown. In colonial and early federal America, those on the lower rungs of the economic ladder — whether urban or rural, black or white — were often buried without caskets in unmarked or group graves. Bural in perpetuity and grave markers were the do-

The Family Cemetery

The home of wealthier classes and above which rose the
dominating the south side
surroundings were specifically
designed to maintain the
wealth and status of its owners.

as the principal interest. The mansion and its
surroundings were specifically
designed as the physical, topog-
ographic, and administrative center of this vast property. The house was set on a ridge, and
oriented to take advantage of the views. Though the gently sloping North Lawn and tall, scattered shade trees appear natural and unplanned, that area was designed in the natu-
ralistic or pastoral style, begun in late eighteenth century Eng-
lish landscape parks and popu-
larized stateside by noted
landscape gardener, Andrew
Jackson Downing. The select
groupings of tree species here include black walnut, maple,
tulip poplar, sycamore, beech,

Japanese Pagoda Tree,
Styphnolobium japonica ‘Pendula’
The Japanese Pagoda, also called the Chinese

Hampton’s lawn is one of the largest in the State of Maryland.

and status of its owners.

Landscape gardening was
always a central Ridgley family
interest. The mansion and its

Southern Catalpa,
Catalpa bignonioides

When Hampton became a Na-
tional Historic Site in 1948,
many of the estate’s trees
were core dated, placing the
catalpa in the Great Terrace in 1774. The tree is also known as Indian Bean because of its bean-like fruit.

Empress Tree,
Paulownia tomentosa

Also called the Princess Tree, and
at the same time as the adjacent Cedar of
Lebanon, this tree is noted for its
large leaves and lavender foxglove-like spring flowers. The wood is prized for manu-
facturing specialty items in Asia.

Black Walnut,
Juglans nigra

The Ridgelys planted walnuts throughout the estate, both
for their delicious nuts and beautiful wood. A tree native
to the area, black walnut was
carved to create the handrail on the mansion staircase leading to the sec-
ond floor.

The South Lawn
Bowing Greens and Falling Gardens

The South Lawn Bowling Greens and Falling Gardens

As you look about the South Lawn, you can see that the
normal pleasures gardens
dominate the south side
of the mansion starkly contrast the naturalistic
English-styled North Lawn.

adjacent to the mansion
is the 250×150 foot Great Terrace,
or “bowling green.” Its sap-
tone walk, similar to those at
domestic servants in the

Tulip Poplar,
Liriodendron tulipifera

The southern catalpa tree — a detail repeated in the ar-
chitecture of the mansion.

The Home Farm: Farm and Function

Standing on the front
porch of the Farmhouse, look up toward the man-

The Prize Flora of
Hampton National Historic Site

Cedar of Lebanon,
Cedrus libani

Planted around 1840 in an area originally de-
signed as an open bowling green, Hampton’s
Cedar of Lebanon is now one of the largest in
Maryland. Its unusually expansive growth blocks
the southern vista and garden views from the
mansion.

Japanese Pagoda Tree,
Styphnolobium japonica ‘Pendula’
The Japanese Pagoda, also called the Chinese

Thoreau described the
prize flora of the South
Lawn as “the horticultural glory of the South —
most credited for the enduring
beauty of the land-

The Ridgelys had an endur-
ing interest in horticulture, as
evidenced here in the great
Southern Catalpa, Empress
Tree, Saucer Magnolia, and
Weeping Japanese Pagoda. The

American Boxwood, Buxus sempervirens, and
English Boxwood, B. sempervirens ‘Suffruticosa’

Long cultivated in gardens and as cut flowers in legend, these two types of boxwood have been grown in Hampton for more than two centuries. Native to Southern Eu-
rope and North Africa, the wood is ex-

Red Cedar, Juniperus virginiana
Ridgely slaves were report-
edly buried in a site “beyond the family cemetery,” though their exact location is unknown. In colonial and early federal America, those on the lower rungs of the economic ladder — whether urban or rural, black or white — were often buried without caskets in unmarked or group graves. Bural in perpetuity and grave markers were the do-

The Family Cemetery

Garden of Memory

Southeast of the mansion, walk down the gravel lane
that winds through a small
woodland filled with mixed
deciduous trees,holly, and
spruce. At the end of the
lane you’ll find an island
of greenery with a ginkgo tree
at its center. Family legend
states this was where Ridgely
and his family pets were buried —
dogs, cats, and perhaps even
a beloved snake.

The Ridgely graves are

just beyond the ornate iron
gates that guard the walled,
red brick family burying
ground. Probably built around
1815, the cemetery was man-
dated in the will of Captain
Charles Ridgely, the first master
of Hampton. The central feature
here is a gray, marble-block
mausoleum where some 36
Ridgelys are buried. Like the en-
trance, this vault is neo-Classi-

elaborately decorated with
egyptian elements.

The Family Cemetery

Garden of Memory

Red Cedar, Juniperus virginiana
"a settlement, beyond
distant noted it resembled

Ridgely’s Northampton Iron
Furnace, in agricultural labor
on the Ridgely estate, and as
domestic servants in the
mansion, gardens, or horse
stables.