choosing a path in freedom

### teacher’s activity plan

# background and objectives

Hampton National Historic Site is a unit of the National Park Service that preserves the core of what was once a vast commercial, industrial, and agricultural estate that encompassed nearly 25,000 acres at its height. Hampton is the collection of stories of the many people who came through the estate - the few who chose to be there, such as the Ridgelys (owners of the estate), the several who were there out of necessity (indentured servants and paid laborers), and the many enslaved people forced to be there. All played a vital role in the development of the estate and their stories help us to explore history from many different perspectives.

With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, enslaved workers at Hampton faced difficult choices. Some considered seeking freedom on their own while others chose not to take such a great risk. Even after emancipation in 1864, formerly enslaved people faced an uncertain future and needed to make difficult choices to determine what freedom would mean for their individual lives. Would it be better as a free man or woman, to leave Hampton and begin anew, or to stay at Hampton as paid workers?

Following the program, students will be able to:

* Identify challenges facing newly emancipated people in Maryland in 1864
* Explain the decisions taken by individuals after emancipation
* Describe how specific skills or opportunities influenced the lives of African Americans at Hampton after emancipation

# Curriculum & Common Core Connections​

* Maryland State Social Studies Framework
  + ELA skills: RI.4.1, RI.4.3, RI.4.7, W.4.1, W.4.9, SL.4.1, SL.4.4
  + 4th Grade US History, Unit 2—Slavery in Maryland
  + 8th Grade US History—Sectional Growth, Civil War, Reconstruction
* Common Core Skills
* Identifying Key Ideas and Details​
  + Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources​
  + Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source​
* Comprehension and Collaboration​
  + Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions​
  + Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed​
* Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas​
  + Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points ​

# GOAL—empowering connections

With the recent national discussions about race and the legacy of slavery and institutional racism in the United States, connecting with the stories of Hampton's enslaved individuals provides insight into many stories of empowerment within an institution founded on oppression. Using this activity within the park or using park resources available in the classroom can help encourage students to connect with the cultural resources at Hampton and the personal narratives of those who lived and worked there. Common themes among stories of enslaved men, women, and children at Hampton focus on:

* Freedom Seekers​
* Resistance ​
* Entrepreneurship​
* Family​
* Independence​
* Community​

# activity

## vocabulary

* Emancipation—freeing someone from the control of another.
* Enslaved—a person held against their will to perform work for others. These people were viewed as “property” by enslavers.
* Laborer—a worker who usually performs different kinds of physical work
* Manumitted—released from slavery

## divide students into teams

Assign or ask students to choose each of the following roles on their team:

* Scribe—This person will take notes for the group and write up the group replies
* Speaker—This person will speak on behalf of the group during the class presentations
* Researcher—This person will find and collect appropriate resources
* Facilitator—This person will keep the group on task and make sure discussion runs smoothly and assignment is complete on time
* Challenger—This person will raise questions during the discussion and offer alternatives to further the discussion

Assign different individual or family stories to teams and distribute worksheets to teams.

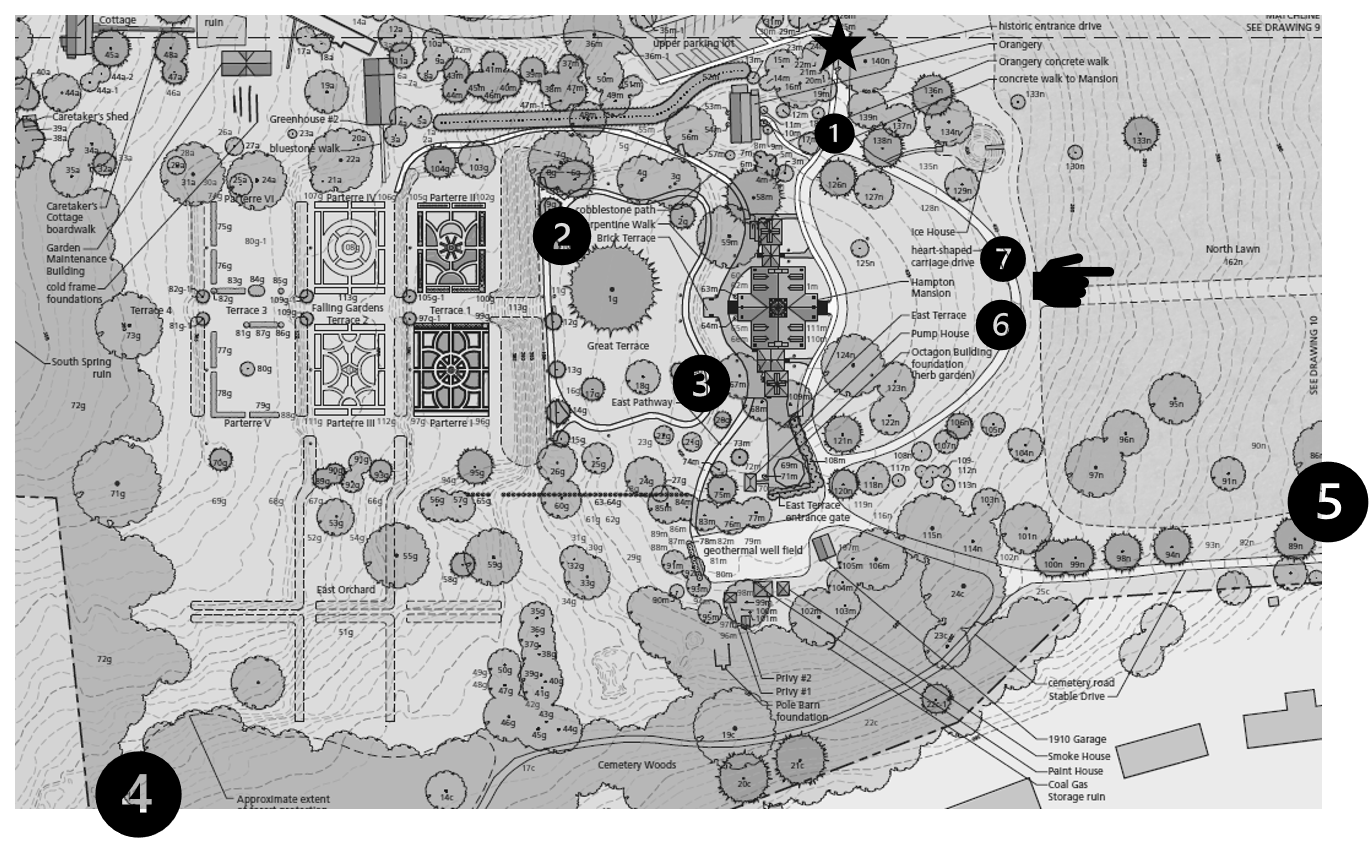
## explore the story

* Give students time to review the individual or family biography
* Encourage students to discuss with the group what options are available to the person(s) described and decide what choice one would make in their situation. Be sure to consider:
  + Resources available to the person
  + Limitations
  + Other things that might influence their decision

### locations to visit at hampton

The following locations have direct connections with the individuals your students will discuss during this activity (see map below).

1. Orangery and Ice House—Dinah Toogood (kitchen located in Mansion)
2. Terrace and Gardens—Jim Pratt
3. Mansion—Anne Davis Williams, Harriet Hawkins, Mark Posey
4. Cemetery—Nancy Davis’ grave is located here
5. Stables—Nathan Harris
6. Dairy—Ellen Harris
7. Lower House and Slave Quarters—Nick Toogood



## choose your path

Teams will come to a consensus on what course they would choose in 1864 based on the information in the story. The scribe assigned to each team will document the group’s choices on the worksheet and the team will prepare to present to the class. Students must provide answers to the following questions:

* Who is your story about? Include details to help the class understand who they were.
* What choice would you make after emancipation in 1864?
* What are your reasons for this choice?

Students will present their choices and cite what influenced their decision.

# the path they chose

Teacher will ask students to reveal the actual decision taken by individuals and facilitate a discussion about what influenced their decision​ (see story handouts below)

Sample Questions:

* Did the path chosen by this person surprise you? Why or why not?
* Why do you think he/she made this decision?
* What kinds of risks or challenges do you think this person faced in making their decision?
* What kinds of skills, characteristics, or talents do you think helped them decided what to do?

# materials & resources

* Student Worksheet (in student activity book)
* Student Biographical Sketches (in student activity book)
* The Path They Chose—biographical sketch conclusion sheets (below to be distributed to groups)
* Teacher Reference Biographical Sketches (below)

This material is drawn from an ethnographic study conducted by the National Park Service and partners. The full report is available online: <https://www.nps.gov/hamp/learn/tracing-lives-of-the-enslaved-study.htm>

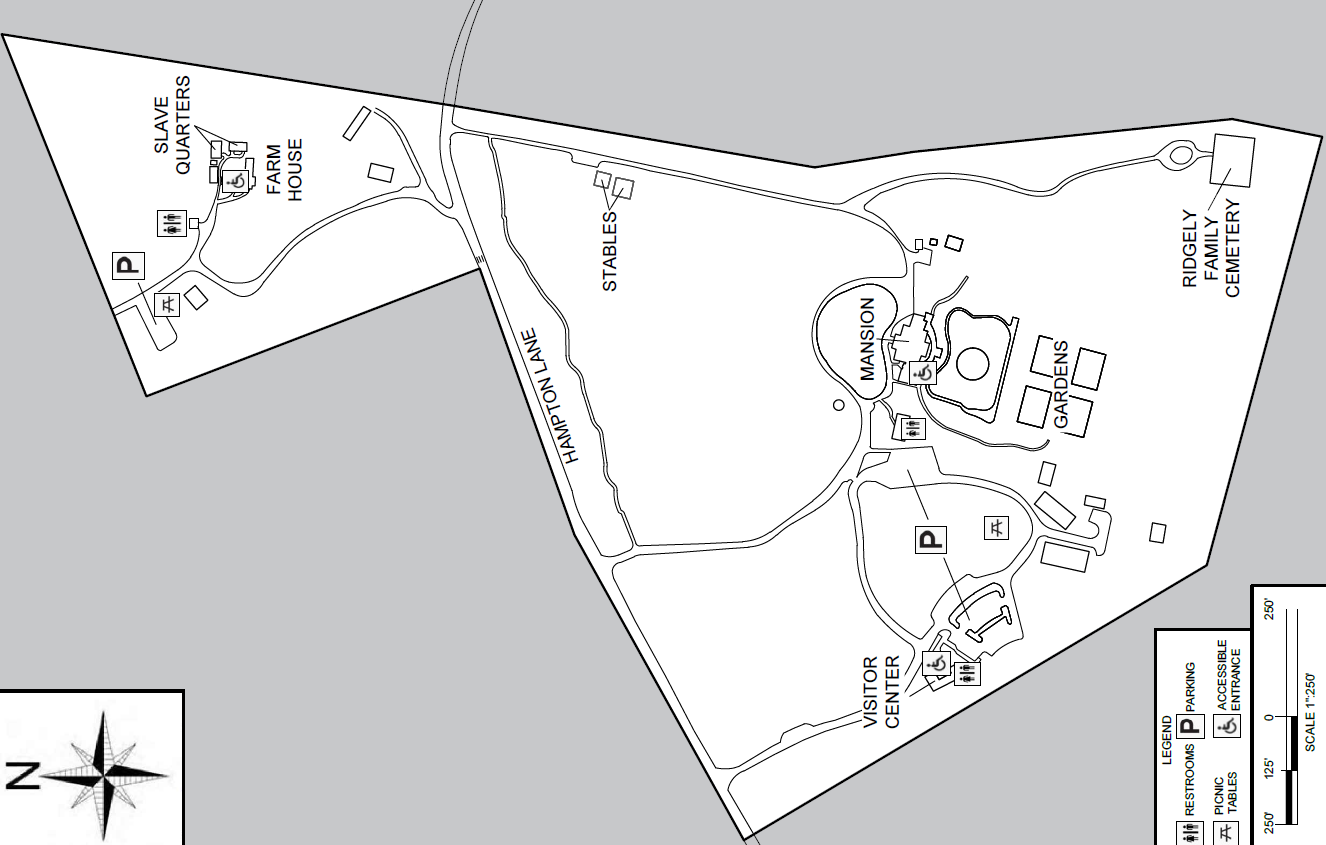
Specific information about places and people at Hampton National Historic Site is available online:

[Places - Hampton National Historic Site (U.S. National Park Service) (nps.gov)](https://www.nps.gov/hamp/learn/historyculture/places.htm)

[People of Hampton - Hampton National Historic Site (U.S. National Park Service) (nps.gov)](https://www.nps.gov/hamp/learn/historyculture/people-of-hampton.htm)

[Virtual Tours and Exhibits - Hampton National Historic Site (U.S. National Park Service) (nps.gov)](https://www.nps.gov/hamp/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualtour.htm)

### Park Map for Site Visits



# The path they chose

## Lewis & nancy Davis

Nancy stayed on at Hampton after 1864 where she served the family as a nurse and chambermaid, and also worked for the Howards while the Ridgelys were in Europe in 1870-1872. Later, Nancy traveled back and forth between Hampton and town when the family did. Sometimes she is listed in census records as living in a separate household in town with her husband, and sometimes she is recorded living with the Ridgelys. In the 1900, census, Nancy Davis was a maid and personal servant for "Margaret P." Ridgely at the family residence at 825 Park Avenue in Baltimore [near the Maryland General Hospital, today the Univ. of Md. Medical Center]. She died at Hampton on April 21, 1908, in a room on the first floor of the Octagonal Servants Quarters. After lying in state in the Great Hall, she was buried in the Ridgely Family cemetery.

Lewis continued to work for the Ridgelys as a house servant after Emancipation, as confirmed by the 1870 census records. "Uncle Jim" Howard stated:

...Lewis Davis remained with the family until their trip to Europe in 1870 & when they came back he returned to them and remained for some time. But the two years he had passed in the city, gave him a taste for town life and he was not willing to live again in the country. He is now [1894] the honest – faithful – capable coachman of Mr John A Hambleton who thinks very highly of him.

By 1880, Lewis and Nancy Davis had moved into a four-family house at 37 Orchard Street, Ward 11, Baltimore City, not far from the Ridgelys' townhouse. (Nancy is also recorded at Hampton when the census was taken there, so her life involved a good bit of traveling back and forth.) Louis is listed in a problematic 1900 census record (erroneously placed in Charles County and misspelling the name of his employer) which shows his continuing to work as a coachman for Hambleton. The last record of Lewis/Louis Davis is a newspaper description of the funeral of the brother of his former employer, John A. Hambleton (d. 1902), in September 1906 which noted that Louis the coachmen was one of the first to arrive at the church and that he was living on a pension provided in Mr. John A. Hambleton's will. Louis was then 73 years old.

# The path they chose

## Nathan & ellen harris

Nathan and Ellen Harris did not follow the pattern of several others in Ellen's family in continuing to work for the Ridgely family post-Emancipation. Ridgely records state "Famous driver of four horses--left Hampton after the Civil War. Some of children are now at Towson (E. R. 1895)." Newspaper notices from the 1870s confirm both the Harris family's life independent of Hampton after the Civil War and Nathan's continued work with horses. By the 1870s, he owned his own stable on Woodbourne Avenue, near York Rd., a location just south of Govanstown. A Thoroughbred stallion "Glamorgan" was standing for the season at Nathan's stable in 1877. In 1880, the notice of a horse for sale notes that he may be seen by inquiring of Nathan Harris at famed Pimlico Racetrack. A sadder bit of family history was recorded in 1874, when Nathan and Ellen's daughter Kate (then age 16) died in a fire at the family home on Woodbourne Avenue. The newspaper notice notes of Nathan that he had "belonged to the Ridgelys, before the abolition of slavery, and was well known."

We have been able to find no death record for Nathan Harris, but since he was likely about 60-65 years of age in 1880, he would probably not have still been alive by the time of the next census (1900). His widow Ellen, however, is recorded in the 1900 census, living in Towson with her son William (b. c. 1850) and a granddaughter Ratchel (b. 1885), just a couple doors from daughter Isabella and her family. Online searches brought to light the gravestone of family matriarch Ellen Davis Harris, located in Pleasant Rest in Towson, the cemetery close to the former African American neighborhood of Sandy Bottom (on York Road near the intersection of what is now Bosley Avenue). The stone notes her death date as 1911. She is buried near several descendants of daughter Isabella Harris Gross. There are many living descendants in the greater Baltimore area, including one who was interviewed on several occasions during the Ethnographic Study and has visited Hampton.

# The path she chose

## Annie “Bones” Davis Williams

Post-Emancipation census records confirm Anne Davis' presence in the Hampton household. She is listed as a servant in 1870 (as Anne Davis) and in 1880 (as Anne Williams). According to Uncle Jim Howard, Anne was married while enslaved to a free man named Jack Williams. The couple had three children between 1857 and 1861: Sam, Nancy, and Lydia. Sam Williams was later employed by John Ridgely as a farm worker in the late 1870s. Anne and Jack lived separate lives for the most part, and he remarried.

Unusually, the cause of Anne's death around 1890 is also noted in family records. In 1895, Eliza Ridgely III made the following annotation in one of the family's account books: "Anne Williams lived to be past middle age, died in the Gas House at Hampton & was buried in the Colored burying ground."

# The path she chose

## Harriet Hawkins

Harriet Hawkins and her younger children were not released from slavery until 1864, nearly 20 years after her eldest son’s manumission. In freedom, they all moved to Baltimore City, to Madison Avenue in the fashionable Mount Vernon area. Harriet is listed in City Directories as a dressmaker, a more highly skilled profession than seamstress. Sarah followed in her mother's footsteps, being listed as a seamstress.

# The path they chose

## Nick & Dinah Toogood

Both Dinah and Nick continued to be held in slavery until 1864 Maryland Emancipation, and they continued to work at Hampton for a couple years afterwards. However, by 1867 they were listed in the Baltimore City Directories living at 108 Orchard Street in what is now the Seton Hill neighborhood. This area was an important one in the community of freed Africans living in the city. The Toogoods attended a historic congregation, the Orchard Street African Methodist Episcopal Church. Nick died at the remarkable age of 92 in 1879.

# The path he chose

## Mark Posey

Despite his attempt to seek his freedom, Mark was still trusted enough by the family to employ him for a few years in the period post-Emancipation. After leaving Hampton in the late 1860s, Mark then worked as a hotel waiter in the rapidly growing county seat of Towson. He continues to be listed in the 1880 census as a waiter, though he is living in the household of Henry C. Turnbull (just south of what is now Sheppard Pratt Hospital.) The residence of Louisa Humphries Posey and their children in 1880 has not been discovered though an Edward Posey, likely Mark and Louisa's son, was still living in Towson twenty years later, not far from Louis Davis.

# The path he chose

## Jim Pratt

Jim Pratt was the youngest of four siblings (John, Joe, Caroline, and Jim) born to Charlotte (d. c. 1855?), a house servant. Their father was likely Henry Pratt, an enslaved farm worker purchased in 1831 who continues to appear in Hampton records up until c. 1863. Jim Pratt was one of the large group who fled slavery in 1863, but in May 1864, he is again listed at Hampton in the final clothing list.

Estate account books document Jim Pratt's continuing on the estate (along with brother Joe) as a paid laborer for many years after Emancipation. Harvesting and shucking corn were among his tasks. He and his wife Laura and three of their children (James, George, Lizzie) are recorded in the 1880 census in Towson. The birth year of a daughter indicates that they were married several years before Emancipation, perhaps about 1856. Jim is still listed as working as a day laborer twenty years later (1900), when he was in his late 60s. He and Laura were then living near Hampton, just two doors from (Caroline's) Lewis Davis. Two years, the following notice appeared in the *Baltimore Sun*:

Colored Women Was Well Known

Laura Pratt, wife of James Pratt, colored, who was buried Saturday at Towson, was well known about Towson for many years. She was about 70 years old and was formerly a slave, belonging to the late George Gill of Mantua Mills, Worthington Valley. She was the mother of 22 children and has 4 sons living. James Pratt, her husband, who was a slave and belonged to the Ridgely estate, is very sick and is cared for by members of the Ridgely family. The colored woman died at the home of her brother, Loudon Franklin, in Baltimore, where she had recently gone to reside.

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### teacher reference—BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

The Enslaved Workers of Hampton - Biographies of Key Individuals, 1830s-1860s

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# nancy davis

**Nancy Davis** (April 1833-1908) is the best known and most thoroughly documented of the enslaved individuals who worked at Hampton. Even before the recent Ethnography Project investigations, the following was known:

* she is the only African American buried in Ridgely family cemetery at Hampton, as shown by her surviving gravestone and numerous published accounts
* what she looked like as a young woman through *carte de visite* photo identified by family member who knew her
* her image in later snapshots with some of the same, then-adult family members
* the work she performed, based on information in memoirs and diaries of family members, both as an enslaved worker and later as a paid employee[[1]](#footnote-2)
* a newspaper clipping of her obituary saved by the family
* additional information on her husband and other close family members derived from a family memoir
* details of her character and temperament from the same memoir
* Nancy's beneficial influence on later generations of the Ridgely family, especially on a member who went on to perform missionary work in Liberia, founding a school for girls

But we now know even more:

Nancy Davis was born in April 1833 on Cowpens Plantation (the farm immediately east of Hampton). According to "Uncle Jim" Howard's *Memoirs of the Ridgelys of Hamp*ton (1894), her father was Ambrose Brown (c. 1805-lv. 1860), "our old marketman at Cowpens." The identity of her mother was unknown until discovered through recent Ethnography Project research. Her mother, Polly Batty (1813-lv. 1850), had been enslaved by Gov. Charles Carnan Ridgely until 1829. She and several other Batty family members are recorded as working at the Northampton Furnace. In the division of the Governor’s estate, she and several other family members were inherited by James Howard, a son-in-law who was the widower of Sophia Ridgely Howard. **Polly Batty** was freed in 1838, when Nancy was just five years old. (Some members of the Batty family eventually settled in York County, PA while another branch remained in the Towson area.) Nancy was too old to leave with her mother, but eventually received her freedom, also per the will of Gov. Charles Carnan Ridgely, in 1858. She was then enslaved at Hampton, where she had come with James' daughter Margaretta Howard after Margaretta's marriage in 1851 to her first cousin Charles Ridgely (1830-1872) of Hampton. The 1850 Census notes that Ambrose and Polly Brown were living just northeast of the Hampton home farm next to Glen Elen, the Gilmor family estate. They then had four young children, including two year old twins. This 1850 listing is the last record discovered for Polly Batty Brown, though Nancy's father Ambrose was included in the Hampton 1860 census record as a free African servant, as was Nancy. The census record also confirms that sometime during the 1850s, Nancy had married Lewis Davis (1835-c. 1910; see details below).

Nancy's principal role in first the Howard, then Ridgely households was childcare. She looked after three generations of children over her long life beginning with the four Howard boys ("she used to have charge of my brothers and myself, as she was a big girl when we were little") half siblings of Margaretta; Charles and Margaretta's seven children; and John and Helen Ridgely's children. Of all these children, the one she was most devoted to (and who was most devoted to her) was Charles and Margaretta's youngest, Margaretta "Margie" Ridgely, the future missionary to Liberia, who credited Nancy's influence on her decision to go Africa. Nancy also served the family as a nurse and chambermaid, returning to the Howards in this capacity while the Ridgelys were in Europe in 1870-1872. Later, Nancy traveled back and forth between Hampton and town when the family did. Sometimes she is listed in census records as living in a separate household in town with her husband, and sometimes she is recorded living with the Ridgelys. In the 1900, census, Nancy Davis was a maid and personal servant for "Margaret P." Ridgely at the family residence at 825 Park Avenue in Baltimore [near the Maryland General Hospital, today the Univ. of Md. Medical Center]. She died at Hampton on April 21, 1908, in a room on the first floor of the Octagonal Servants Quarters. After lying in state in the Great Hall, she was buried in the Ridgely Family cemetery.

# daniel brown

Although Nancy and Louis Davis had no children, Nancy does have living relatives that descended from one of her younger brothers, Daniel Brown (1848-lv. 1910). Dan Brown (and his brother Sam) both worked at Hampton as paid farm laborers in the 1870s and 1880s, and Dan lived with his family on or very near the estate. Dan’s daughter Fanny Brown Johnson (1877-1987) recalled living at Hampton in her childhood and later told a great grandson that “Aunt Nancy is buried in the crypt” at Hampton. Indeed, Nancy Davis is buried next to the crypt in the Ridgely family cemetery. Fanny’s great grandson has now visited Hampton and shared important family documents and information with the Ethnographic Study team. See also below, for a connection to the Humphries family.

The story of Lewis Davis is tied to the story of his large family, who were purchase in 1841, with two other families.

# **"HAWKINS PURCHASE**" by John Ridgely, Spring 1841

In spring of 1841, John Ridgely purchased 23 individuals in three nuclear families (Gully, Davis, Humphries) of enslaved workers from "Oakland," the estate of James L. Hawkins, for a total cost of $7,267.46. Hawkins was a banker who became notorious for embezzling huge sums of money (over $100,000) in 1840. Settling his debts required him to sell his enslaved workers on his plantation "Oakland" near Petersville in southwestern Frederick County. All three of these families have interesting stories and two of the three have longtime connection to Hampton post-Emancipation.

## The Davis Family

**William/Bill** (1805-c.1860) and **Susan/Sukey Davis** (1810-lv. 1864) came to Hampton with their seven young children (Lloyd, Harriet, Ellen, Lewis/Louis, Anne, Caroline, and William, Jr.). Two more children (Tilghman and Susan) were later born at Hampton, in 1844 and 1849 respectively. Some of the Davis children (Lewis/Louis, Anne, Caroline) continued to work for the Ridgelys long after emancipation, and descendants of others who left Hampton are still living in the Towson area today.

### lewis davis

**Lewis/Louis Davis** (1833-lv. 1906) was born at Oakland, Frederick County, coming to Hampton at age eight. He would have known Nancy well from the time she started working at Hampton during the early 1850s, though they certainly could have met before, as Nancy lived less than a mile away at Cowpens. They married before 1860, by which time Lewis is listed as a house servant in the clothing lists. He was receiving livery coats, a sign of a very public and high status position such as coachman. Lewis continued to work for the Ridgelys in this capacity after Emancipation, as confirmed by the 1870 census records. "Uncle Jim" Howard stated

...Lewis Davis remained with the family until their trip to Europe in 1870 & when they came back he returned to them and remained for some time. But the two years he had passed in the city, gave him a taste for town life and he was not willing to live again in the country. He is now [1894] the honest – faithful – capable coachman of Mr John A Hambleton who thinks very highly of him.

By 1880, Lewis and Nancy Davis had moved into a four-family house at 37 Orchard Street, Ward 11, Baltimore City, not far from the Ridgelys' townhouse. (Nancy is also recorded at Hampton when the census was taken there, so her life involved a good bit of traveling back and forth.) Louis is listed in a problematic 1900 census record (erroneously placed in Charles County and misspelling the name of his employer) which nevertheless shows his continuing to work as a coachman for Hambleton. The last record of Lewis/Louis Davis is a newspaper description of the funeral of the brother of his former employer, John A. Hambleton (d. 1902), in September 1906 which noted that Louis the coachmen was one of the first to arrive at the church and that he was living on a pension provided in Mr. John A. Hambleton's will. Louis was then 73 years old.

### tilghman davis

**Tilghman Davis** (1844-1905) was the first child of William and Susan Davis to be born at Hampton. Although we do not know what Tilghman’s labor would have been as a child, as a teenager and young adult, Tilghman was a house servant, possibly a driver or coachman for the Ridgely family. This high-status position involved not just driving the carriages but also caring for the carriage and racing horses, carriage repair, as well as the personal horses of the Ridgely family.

Despite this more "elevated" position with the household, the upheavals of the Civil War led the young man to take a dramatic step. In spring 1863, Tilghman sought his freedom, fleeing Hampton along with nine others, either extended family members or childhood friends. The relatively high-prestige positions they held in the Ridgely house did not compensate for their lack of freedom. Head waiter Mark Posey, his wife Louisa Humphreys Posy and their infant child; Mary Humphreys, John Humphreys, George Humphreys, and Jim Gully (all from the Hawkins purchase), and Jim Pratt. Several of the group’s members were purchased together in 1841 and brought to Hampton at the same time. We know nothing of the circumstances of escape or recapture. They were all captured and held in the Baltimore City jail. John Ridgely's Memorandum Book lists a record of payment in May 1863 to retrieve Tilghman and the others from the Baltimore City jail. A year after Tilghman was recaptured and returned, John Ridgely offered Tilghman along with his brother Lewis Davis and George Humphrey to a Union Army recruiting officer in 1864. However, there are no surviving records of Tilghman's entering military service.

We have no records of Tilghman Davis' whereabouts after Maryland Emancipation in November 1864 until 1880. By then he taken up residence in Baltimore City, where his family was to remain through at least the second decade of the 20th century. The city, renowned as the largest community of Free Blacks in the United States prior to the Civil War, offered both a large support network and better economic opportunity. After the war, African Americans established schools, churches, and political, civic, charitable, fraternal, and benevolent organizations, all of which supplied support for the recently emancipated.

Listed as "Tilman" in the 1880 census, along with wife Elizabeth (1859-c.1914) and eldest son Theodore (1879-lv. 1905), the Davises were by then living on Rose Street in southeast Baltimore (near Patterson Park). By 1883, they were located in their more long term location of the Mount Vernon neighborhood, first at 92 Tyson Street only about two blocks distance from Ridgely family residences. Though his main residence seems to be on Tyson Street, he is listed for two years (1894 and 1895) somewhat farther into west Baltimore on Hoffman Street just a few block northwest of Tyson Street. The detailed 1900 Census listing at 712 Tyson shows that Tilghman and Elizabeth had been married in 1877 and had by 1900 had had a total of eight children, six of whom were living. Five of the children (Theodore, Elizabeth, Anna, William, named for his grandfather, and Edward) were then living with their parents (all except for son Sam). After a brief residence on Dolphin Street in the newly fashionable area now called Bolton Hill (a few blocks from Helen Ridgely's townhouse), the Davises' final city residence in 1905 is at 722 Linden Avenue back in Mount Vernon.

Despite his history with the family during the war, in later years Tilghman would eventually return to paid employment with the Ridgelys. He is occasionally listed in City Directories at 864 Park Avenue, which is actually the address of Margaretta Ridgely's town residence. In census records, Tilghman's profession is listed as "coachman," an occupation confirmed in the recent remarkable rediscovery of his 1888 coachman's livery in the collection of costume material donated by the Ridgely family to the Maryland Historical Society in 1944. Tilghman’s fine livery coat and cape is replete with buttons with the Ridgely family crest. This traditional garb would have been worn by Tilghman when he was fulfilling his duties as carriage driver.

The last documentary record for Tilghman Davis is in the Baltimore City Death Record 1875 -1972 at the Baltimore City Health Department which lists his dying Feb 2nd, 1905.

### ellen davis harris & nathan harris

**Ellen Davis Harris** (1831-1911) was an older sister of Lewis Davis, 10 years old when she arrived with her parents and siblings at Hampton. Within a few years, at about age 17, she married **Nathan Harris** (c. 1815-lv. 1880), the senior coachman at Hampton who was, according to Uncle Jim Howard, "...the driver who used to handle the four in hand so skillfully as to command the admiration of the people of Baltimore was among those missing when I came home after the war was over." The marriage of Ellen and Nathan was later confirmed by Ellen's sister-in-law Nancy Davis, in a note written on the page from the early 1850s in the Clothing Account Book which recorded "Ellen's children." In c. 1894, Eliza Ridgely III annotated the page, "Nathan's wife, so says Nancy Davis."

Ellen was not a house servant per se, but her work at Hampton required aprons. Since she is often listed in the records alongside her sister Caroline Davis the dairymaid (see below), perhaps working in the dairy was her principal labor on the farm. Other labor requiring aprons would be the preparation of the dozens of hams produced on the farms each year. Her other efforts would have been directed to the care of the *nine* children that were born to Ellen and Nathan before Emancipation in 1864. (Two others were born subsequently in freedom.) The youngest of the first nine children, a daughter named **Isabella ("Belle") Harris** born in 1862, was one of the last children to be born enslaved at Hampton. During the Ethnography Project, researchers have discovered literally dozens of living descendants of Belle Harris and her future husband Dennis Gross, most living in the Towson area. Notably, in *John & Charles Ridgely, Ledger of Wages* (MdHS MS. 691) showing the payment of wages past-Emancipation, Eliza Ridgely III annotated the page titled "Negro Nathan Harris" listing payments for work in 1864. Her notes state "Famous driver of four horses--left Hampton after the Civil War. Some of children are now at Towson (E. R. 1895)"

As noted above, Nathan and Ellen Harris did not follow the pattern of several others in Ellen's family in continuing to work for the Ridgely family post-Emancipation. Newspaper notices from the 1870s confirm both the Harris family's life independent of Hampton after the Civil War and Nathan's continued involvement with horses. By the 1870s, he owned his own stable on Woodbourne Avenue, near York Rd., a location just south of Govanstown. A Thoroughbred stallion "Glamorgan" was standing for the season at Nathan's stable in 1877. In 1880, the notice of a horse for sale notes that he may be seen by inquiring of Nathan Harris at famed Pimlico Racetrack. A sadder bit of family history was recorded in 1874, when Nathan and Ellen's daughter Kate (then age 16) died in a fire at the family home on Woodbourne Avenue. The newspaper notice nevertheless notes of Nathan that he had "belonged to the Ridgelys, previous to the abolition of slavery, and was well known."

We have been able to find no death record for Nathan Harris, but since he was likely about 60-65 years of age in 1880, he would probably not have still been alive by the time of the next census (1900). His widow Ellen, however, is recorded in the 1900 census, living in Towson with her son William (b. c. 1850) and a granddaughter Ratchel (b. 1885), just a couple doors from daughter Isabella and her family. Online searches brought to light the gravestone of family matriarch Ellen Davis Harris, located in Pleasant Rest in Towson, the cemetery close to the former African American neighborhood of Sandy Bottom (on York Road near the intersection of what is now Bosley Avenue). The stone notes her death date as 1911. She is buried near several descendants of daughter Isabella Harris Gross. There are an extensive number of living descendants in the greater Baltimore area, including one who was interviewed on several occasion during the Ethnographic Study and has visited Hampton.

### anne davis williams

In contrast to her sister Ellen, **Anne Davis Williams** (1835-c.1890), born four years later, continued to work for the Ridgely family for most of her adult life post-Emancipation. Anne was a house servant and a family favorite because of her nursing skills. Uncle Jim Howard (a medical doctor by profession) went to great lengths in his *Memoirs of the Ridgelys of Hampton* (1894) to extol Anne's character and talents.

Anne was one of the best nurses I have ever seen, and to the instincts of a lady she joined the qualities of a quiet manner and soft footfall and seemed to know exactly what to do and how to do it whenever any change was necessary in the sick chamber – She was also an excellent cook and good housekeeper and had the art of preparing nice little things in such a way that even a sick person was tempted against his will to eat... When she died, which was only three or four years ago, all of the family who could well get there, attended her funeral services – which were held in the Hall at Hampton, and conducted by a preacher of her own color and faith, who made quite an able address. The singing was done be the colored people of the farm and vicinity and was quite characteristic of the race. She was buried in the South-West corner of the Negro burying ground – under shade of a forest Oak tree – may the leaves fall lightly upon her grave!

Helen West Stewart Ridgely, wife of Capt. John, also noted her nursing skill. "Anne Davis known to us all as 'Anne Bones' because of her particular skill in bandaging and nursing..." Helen makes this comment in a manuscript where she relates three ghost stories set at Hampton. She specifically mentions Anne in this context because Anne and the German housekeeper Mrs. Linderman were the two employees entrusted with looking after the mansion while the family was away in Europe in 1870-1872. Another mention of Anne a few years later in the early 1880s is from Helen's daughter, who noted that there were then four Annies working at Hampton.

Post-Emancipation census records confirm Anne Davis' presence in the Hampton household. She is listed as a servant in 1870 (as Anne Davis) and in 1880 (as Anne Williams). According to Uncle Jim Howard, Anne was married while enslaved to a free man named Jack Williams. The couple had three children between 1857 and 1861: Sam, Nancy, and Lydia. Sam Williams was later employed by Capt. John Ridgely as a farm worker in the late 1870s. Anne and Jack lived separate lives for the most part, and he remarried according to Uncle Jim.

Unusually, the cause of Anne's death around 1890 is also noted in family records. In 1895, Eliza Ridgely III made the following annotation in one of the family's account books: "Anne Williams lived to be past middle age, died in the Gas House at Hampton & was buried in the Colored burying ground."

### caroline davis brown

**Caroline Davis Brown** (1837-lv. 1894) was just four when she arrived with her family at Hampton. Like her sister Ellen, she was not a house servant, but her work at Hampton required aprons. Thanks to Uncle Jim Howard, we know her specific role was as an accomplished dairymaid.

Of the servants at the Quarters who remained with the family I shall mention the two whose names occur to me... Caroline Brown (nee Davis) the sister of Anne and Lewis also stuck to the home of her childhood, and has only recently left Hampton and taken up residence in Towsontown. For many years she had charge of the dairy and kept up the standard of the Hampton butter so well that she has been missed ever since she gave up that department.

Large herds of dairy cattle were a key part of the Hampton estate’s profit-making enterprises both before and after the Civil War, with enslaved (and later paid) workers handling the supervision, feeding, milking, and dairy production. In 1822, for example, the Hampton dairy produced 5,215 lbs of butter, with the vast majority going to sale at market. Under Governor Ridgely, Amelia “Milly” Sheredine (b. 1799-lv.1867) and Lucy Williams (b. 1798-lv.1833) labored as dairymaids, yet it is almost certain they were not the only people working in the dairy. The dairymaid was in charge of running the dairy. They would have decided what tasks needed to be done that day, and generally made sure operations were running smoothly. Other dairy workers would have milked the cows and done the copious amounts of cleaning and maintenance work that the dairy would have required. The regular maintenance of the tools of the trade (churns, crocks, pans, strainers, etc.) was extremely important to ensuring the quality of the product.

Around 1856, Caroline may have had a son named Lewis/Louis, listed in the clothing accounts as **"Caroline's Lewis."** The possible uncertainty arises in that Caroline Pratt was also having children at this time, though hers are virtually always recorded with the last name Pratt. That Lewis is the name of Caroline Davis' brother is another indication that "Caroline's Lewis" would be Lewis Davis.

Recent additional research has brought to light another **Lewis/Louis Davis** (1856-lv. 1920) of exactly the right age to be Caroline Davis' Lewis/Louis living in East Towson on Chesapeake Avenue and working as a coachman. The 1900 Census records a coachman Louis Davis, his wife Anna, and four of their numerous children. Notably, a granddaughter in 1900 is named Nancy, and an earlier census records a daughter Caroline, both Davis family names. Additional earlier documentation of a second, younger Louis Davis working as a coachmen at Hampton is seen in a passage in a journal kept by John and Helen Ridgely's daughter Helen. In October 1890, young Helen wrote:

I went out walking yesterday with my two brothers John, and Stewart and their nurse. We walked down the road to the culvert, where our wheel-house is. [Perhaps she means well house? Ed.] We had not been there more than a minute when we saw Louis our coachman driving a horse in the training cart, and it was going quite fast...

Some years later, mother Helen recorded Lewis Davis continuing presence at Hampton in her diary in January 1906, "John sent Lewis to town to-day with the old buggy which he is to have repaired for my Christmas present." Lewis Davis was photographed in 1912 standing outside the Stables with Louise and John Ridgely, Jr.

Probably not long after Emancipation occurred in Maryland late in 1864, Caroline Davis married **Thomas Brown** (c. 1841-lv. 1910), who along with his father William had been working as paid servants for Eliza "Didy" Ridgely White and her in-laws at their townhouse on Mount Vernon Place. According to Uncle Jim Howard, William Brown had been the coachman at Cowpens and was a brother of Ambrose Brown, Nancy Brown Davis' father. Caroline and Thomas had three daughters: Annie (b. 1867), Caroline (b. 1872) and Mary (b. 1874). The family is recorded living near Hampton on the edge Towson in the 1880 census. Thomas eventually became head waiter at Hampton, a post he continued until after the turn of the 20th century. Caroline may have been no longer living by the time Thomas was listed in the 1900 Census living at Hampton.

### harriet davis smith

Like several of her siblings, **Harriet Davis Smith** (1831-lv.1870), was a house servant. An older sister of nurse Anne Davis Williams and dairymaid Caroline Davis Brown, after Harriet came with her family to Hampton in 1841 she became was one of Dinah Toogood’s assistants in the kitchen (see below, p. 15). Both women were paid cooks for the Ridgelys in the mid-1860s post-Emancipation before leaving Hampton to start new lives in freedom with their husbands. Harriet’s husband was **Tom Smith** (c.1820-lv.1870), John Ridgely’s groom, which we know from a notation made in an account book by Eliza Ridgely III in 1894. He would have cared for John Ridgely’s riding horses, saddled them when required, and looked after their tack in the Stables. We know from information supplied by Nancy Davis that Tom had first been married to head washerwoman **Mary Smith** (c. 1815-c.1846). Nancy further recalled that Mary had expressed the wish that Tom should marry Harriet after she died. Uncle Jim Howard also had a recollection about Tom: "Most of the family servants and farm hands were taken away or absconded during the war. One of them (Tom Smith) when asked by his master as to why he was going & whether he had anything to complain of? said that he wanted to go and fight for his county." Nevertheless, Harriet and Tom were still at Hampton at least briefly after Emancipation, since they were paid for work on the place in late 1864 and 1865. After this, they set out on their own and were eventually living quite far from Hampton in southwestern Baltimore County. In the 1870 US Census, Tom and Harriet are listed (along with her niece Susan Harris, Ellen and Nathan’s daughter) working for wealthy commission merchant Robert Fowler at his estate “Harvest Home” off Wilkens Avenue.

## The Humphries family

Turning to another familial group of enslaved individuals purchased from the estate of James L. Hawkins in 1841, there is the **Humphries family**. This was **Edward/Ned Humphries** (age 37), his wife **Peggy** (age 35), and five children: John (20), George (4), Eliza Jane (1), Mary (4), and Eloise (2). The Humphreys were all farm workers. All the younger children appear on Didy's Christmas Gifts list, though eldest daughter **Mary** **Humphries** (b. 1837) was old enough by 1851 to get clothes rather than toys, including Didy's blue velvet bonnet in 1853. Younger daughter Eloise/Heloise was treated similarly except for 1851 when she received nothing "on account of bad behavior."

Mary was the first of the Humphreys girls to have children, Ned (named for her father) born in February 1854 when she was about 17 and John in 1857, referred to in the clothing lists as "Mary's John." As a small child at Hampton, **John Humphries** (1857-lv.1930)did not receive any special favors or treatment and his clothing is the same as the other small boys whose parents work on the farm. He continues to be listed until spring 1864. In spring of 1863, however, he and most of his family attempted to run away from Hampton. Along with his mother Mary, he sought his freedom with his Uncle George, Aunt Louisa (Eloise), Louisa's husband Mark Posey, and their infant child Ned Posey. As noted in the history of Tilghman Davis, the group was quickly captured, briefly held in jail, then returned to Hampton.

After the end of the Civil War and during his life in freedom, John Humphries showed a notable pattern of closeness to Hampton that continues throughout his adult life. He is listed in the Hampton Farm Account Book, 1878-1887 as a paid farm worker for several years. Dorothy Norris Croner (b. 1908), who lived in the tenant quarters when her father Thomas G. Norris was dairyman at Hampton around the time of World War I, recalled John Humphries and his later work at Hampton in the nineteen teens. She says that John Humphrey was the overseer and lived in the overseer's (Lower) house with his wife, her sister, and two sons. "But this John Humphrey, he took care of the like corn, like where, raise things and sold them." When Dorothy Croner was later asked about any of the people whose families descended from slaves, she replied, "...Yeah, I know, because John Humphrey, he was the overseer, the colored overseer, he was a slave."

Regarding his residence, John Humphries is recorded in virtually every census from 1870 through 1930 living very near Hampton or in Towson. In 1910, his household close by in East Towson was next door to Thomas G. Norris,' the Hampton dairyman whose daughters gave oral history accounts. Moving from Railroad Ave., by 1920 he is next door to Hampton on Dulaney Valley Road, and ten years later he is living on the property of Alice Whitham, Otho Ridgely's daughter. In his personal life, the records show that John Humphries married twice. His first wife, by whom he had a number of children, was nicknamed "Puss". She died in the 1890s, and in 1899, John married his second wife Leticia. Children of the first marriage included a daughter Anne (b. 1877), a son George (b. 1879, named for John's brother), a daughter Nettie (b. 1890), and a son Eugene (1895-1961). During World War I, Eugene was decorated for his service abroad in the 92nd Division (Buffalo Soldiers) in the US Army; he is buried in Baltimore National Cemetery. Louis Diggs' interview with Hattie Genevieve Norris Cooper (Dorothy Norris Croner's younger sister) also noted a daughter of John Humphries named "Easter Boyer," though her records have not yet been located. However, recently discovered information related to Nancy Brown Davis’ younger brother Daniel Brown (1848-lv. 1910) connects the Humphries to the Brown and Batty families of Hampton in the 20th century. Daniel Brown’s living great great grandson has preserved his grandmother Etta Young Brown’s death certificate, which documents that Anne (Annie) Humphries (1877-lv. 1930), John Humphries daughter, was her mother.

Another Humphries daughter for who we have some later history is Eloise/Heloise, who later goes by **Louisa Humphries** (1839-lv. 1870). Although she is herself a farm worker, she became the second wife of the enslaved man with one of the most senior positions in the Hampton household, head waiter **Mark Posey** (1815-lv. 1880). Louisa and Mark had two children born while still enslaved at Hampton, a son Edward/Ned (named for his Humphries grandfather) born in 1861 and girl Mary Jane born in 1863. After Emancipation, the Posey family including another daughter Nancy born in 1866 moved to Towson, where they lived with Louisa's parents Edward and Peggy "Umphreys," as the name was recorded by the census taker in 1870.

### mark posey

As noted above, Mark Posey was a key member of the Hampton household. As noted by Eliza Ridgely III in an annotation to an account book, he was "A waiter at Hampton, and a good one." In addition to serving a table, a head waiter was responsible for the care of the fine porcelain, glass, and silver on display in the Dining Room, keeping the lighting fixtures in good order, admitting guests to the house, and numerous other duties. A head waiter was often in the public eye, and was expected to dress well. In 1835, for example, Mark received numerous items related to his position (livery "roundabout" (cape), white aprons, gloves, etc., plus fine clothing such "a yellow cloth waistcoat [vest] of Mr. R.'s, very good one" or a “gold laced” livery coat.

As a young man in the late 1830s-1840s, Mark had been the father of several children by **Rachel**, a house servant who had also had two or three children probably by farm worker (who had formerly enslaved to Governor Ridgely) Charles Hazard in the early 1830s. Mark and Rachel's first child was Rebecca, born in 1837, and followed by two more daughters in the early 1840s (Mary, Alice). Alice Posey was recorded by Didy Ridgely on the Christmas Gifts list as being her "first protégé" in 1845, but she died while Didy was away in Europe for two years in 1846-1848.

### Rebecca Posey

Alice Posey's older sister **Rebecca Posey** had a very different experience than her sister the protégé. In the 1840s, as a small child, she worked in the kitchen under the supervision of Dinah Toogood. By the time she turned 14, she was considered too old for toys at Christmas, so Didy's list notes she was given an apron. The following year (1852) is the terse comment by Didy next to Becky's name on the list: "gone". It is yet unclear why Rebecca Posey sought her freedom alone. It was extremely rare for women to flee alone as Rebecca did on August 20, 1852. Historically, women left solo when they were about to be sold, to avoid an impending punishment, or to remove themselves from perpetual abuse. The newspaper advertisement records a physical description of the 15 year old:

RAN AWAY from the farm of John Ridgely, Esq. in Baltimore County...a light colored NEGRO GIRL who calls herself REBECCA POSEY, about five feet one or two inches high, and fifteen years old, with a round good looking face. She had on when she left a dark blue striped dress, a dark blue shawl, and no bonnet.

As far as can be discerned from the records, Rebecca Posey made good her escape and never returned to Hampton. Two notices in the *Baltimore Sun* indicate that she was living in Baltimore in 1863-1864, but no other records have been found. Rachel, Rebecca's mother, lived until late 1860 or early 1861.

As noted above Mark Posey took a younger wife (Eloise/Heloise/Louisa Humphries) with whom he had a child (son Edward) later in 1861. Rebecca's father, his new wife and child fled with several of her relatives in 1863, but were quickly captured and returned to Hampton. Despite this attempt at freedom, Mark was still trusted enough by the family to employ him for a few years in the period post-Emancipation. After leaving Hampton in the late 1860s, Mark then worked as a hotel waiter in the rapidly growing county seat of Towson. He continues to be listed in the 1880 census as a waiter, though he is living in the household of Henry C. Turnbull (just south of what is now Sheppard Pratt Hospital.) The residence of Louisa Humphries Posey and their children in 1880 has not been discovered though an Edward Posey, likely Mark and Louisa's son, was still living in Towson twenty years later, not far from Louis Davis.

# Other enslaved House Servants

## Lucy Jackson

During most of John Ridgely’s tenure, **Lucy Jackson** worked as the head housekeeper. As longtime scholar and researcher Dr. Kent Lancaster noted, documents "...suggest a person of unusual forcefulness for one in her status." She was purchased in by John Ridgely in July 1838 from Samuel Owings Hoffman for $400. Her age is not recorded, but Lucy was then pregnant, perhaps accounting in part for her rather high price. She gave birth to a son, Henry, in the month after her purchase, August 1838. Lucy had another child, George, apparently in November 1842. Although the father's name is not recorded, a source from 1866 states that Lucy's husband was free.

Lucy was, according to notes made in the 1890's in one early account book, the Hampton housekeeper. Her high status and being of mature age by the 1850s is confirmed by her position at the top of the list of enslaved female workers in 1854. She would have overseen the other female house workers, who performed tasks like those of a chambermaid, caring for the children, helping with the dressing and bathing of the family, and making clothing for the enslaved. Though most enslaved house servants did not sleep in the Mansion, it is possible that longtime housekeeper Lucy Jackson slept in the small room over the Butler's Pantry in the East Hyphen, designated as the housekeeper’s bed room on an 1875 floor plan.

## Henry Jackson

Lucy's son, the elder **Henry Jackson**, was included on the list of house servants during his childhood and on servant clothing lists from 1844 to 1860. Along with other enslaved children, he received Christmas gifts from Didy Ridgely from 1841 to 1854. The whole record of Lucy's younger son George from two sources having to do with his burial in February 1843. "Cathedral Burial Records," Vol 3, records: "Feb 21 1843 Lucy Jackson's (col) M. child 3 mos." Recorded the next day is a receipt for $3.50 issued to John Ridgely by J. Mullan for the Trustees of the Catholic Catheral Church of Baltimore for the interment of Lucy Jackson's child George in Cathedral grave yard. Lucy, then, was Catholic and had persuaded the Ridgelys not to bury George in the Colored Burial Ground at Hampton as was usual, but rather to underwrite expenses of his burial in the Catholic cemetery in Baltimore.

Henry Jackson took the bold step, along with three young enslaved coworkers at Hampton (Bill Mathews, Charles Buckingham, Josh Horner) to seek their freedom immediately after the commencement of hostilities at the beginning of the Civil War. In the May 1861 clothing lists, their names are recorded but crossed off. The escape of Bill and Josh is confirmed by an advertisement in the Baltimore Sun, May 10, 1861. All the young men apparently were not captured or returned to slavery. Lucy soon followed suit, leaving Hampton before 1863.

After Emancipation, it appears that Lucy was residing in Washington, DC. She is last heard from in the Ridgely records in 1866, when in April of that year John Ridgely received a letter from one William Boyd of Washington, D. C., attorney for Lucy Jackson demanding the return of Lucy 's personal property, all of which had "been bought for her by her (Lucy's) free Husband." The list includes many articles of ordinary usage, but goes on to list other things that would certainly have been considered luxuries and made Lucy very well dressed: "6 common dresses, 9 good dresses, 4 silk dresses, 2 Silk Jerzies...Furrs and Muff...6 pairs of White Lace Sleeves, 3 Inside Bosoms, 4 Pairs of White silk Shoes. . .and Other articles of Great Value." The letter threatens legal action "or Military interfereance" unless these possessions are returned to Lucy. It is not known whether Lucy recovered any of her property, though it seems doubtful due to the following information. John Ridgely replied that when Lucy fled, he didn’t track her down although he knew where she was. He also stated that other servants had absorbed whatever she had left behind.

## Harriet Hawkins

Another key member of the household was **Harriet Hawkins** (1807-lv.1886), who appears to have been head dressmaker. (Her daughter Sarah assisted her as a seamstress.) Similarly to Mark Posey and Lucy Jackson, Harriet received finer articles of clothing, accessories such as bonnets, and Ridgely family hand-me-downs. Harriet's importance to the story of enslavement at Hampton, however, goes deeper than her just her domestic role.

Harriett Hawkins was at Hampton throughout John and Eliza Ridgely's ownership. However, she is also listed in certain records, such as the "Shoe List," from the time when John's father, Governor Charles Carnan Ridgely, was still alive. However, since she is not recorded in the Governor's estate records, she cannot have been his property. Instead, it is likely that she was owned by John himself. From an account in the G. Howard White Papers in the Maryland State Archives on November 3, 1827, is found the entry "Harriet (Mr. J. Ridgely) 1 [pair of shoes]. In June of the same year, the list includes "June 19, made 1 pr fine for Harriet Hawkins."

## Charles Hale Brown

Born about 1807, Harriet was just 17 years old she became the mother of John Ridgely’s son, **Charles Hale Brown**. This was in 1824, between the time of the death of John's first wife Prudence Gough Carroll Ridgely in 1822 and his second marriage to Eliza Eichelberger Ridgely in 1828. According to her family history, Brown was sent to Boston between the ages of 14 and 17 for an education. Documents in the Chattle Records of Baltimore County record that Brown was manumitted from slavery by his father John Ridgely on August 28, 1846 at the age of 22 years old. One possible reason for the timing was the imminent departure of John and Eliza Ridgely on an extended trip abroad. Whatever the case, Charles Hale Brown was the only one of the numerous enslaved individuals John owned to have been freed before general Emancipation.

Charles Hale Brown was also a well-known figure in the Baltimore community. His family believed that he worked principally as a doorman for the Baltimore Club. His obituary in the Sun from June 1911 also states

Old Colored Servant Dead. Charles H. Brown, colored 88 years old died Saturday at 222 West Chase Street. He had lived 25 years in the family of Mrs. J. Hall Pleasants, also 25 years at the Baltimore Club, and was cared for in his late years by Mr. John Pleasants and members of the Baltimore Club. He leaves a widow and three children.

Census records confirm the address and his wife (Sarah, b. 1842) and children's names: James E. (b. 1867), Cornelius Dowling (b. 1872), and Mary Virginia (b. 1868). Mary Virginia Brown, Mrs. Samuel F. Williams, was the grandmother of Genevieve Mason, who visited with Hampton staff in 1995, showing family photos and documents, including a photo of Brown himself. It is noteworthy that James E. Brown married a white woman from Washington D.C., and that he and his son Lawrence are later listed as white in census records.

As a house servant who assisted with making, mending, and altering clothing, Harriet Hawkins would have been regularly in contact with Eliza Ridgely. The records are silent on whether Eliza knew about Harriet's son. Nevertheless, they do confirm certain aspects of what appears to be special treatment.

In the 1840s and early 1850s, Harriet Hawkins had several additional children: Sarah (b. 1841), Nelson (b. 1843), Mary (b. 1845) and Louisa (b. 1854, when Harriet was in her late 40s). All the children but Mary were clearly house servants, and Nelson's clothing indicates he served as both an apprentice waiter and cook. All these children are recorded using the surname Hawkins. The identity of the father of these children is still unknown. However, a free Black laborer named Nelson worked at Hampton for two years in 1842 and 1843. It seems possible, given the common pattern of family names, that Harriet’s son Nelson (b. 1843) might have been named for his father. Unfortunately, no more is known about “Negro Nelson,” as he is recorded in John Ridgely’s Memorandum Book, which did not note a surname. There was an also an enslaved laborer at Hampton named John Hawkins in the 1830s, but he sought freedom in 1844. He probably has no familial connection to Harriet and her family.

When the youngest child Louisa was born, Harriet's marital status became as issue for Didy Ridgely. She commented in her diary:

Harriet Hawkins had a little girl born this morning at 1 o’clock A.M. I hope God’s blessing upon my scripture lessons may prevent such misconduct & sin among our younger servant girls, & save them from the effect of bad examples.

Harriet Hawkins and her younger children were not released from slavery until 1864, nearly 20 years after her eldest son’s manumission. In freedom, they all moved to Baltimore City, to Madison Avenue in the fashionable Mount Vernon area. Harriet is listed in City Directories as a dressmaker, a more highly skilled profession than seamstress. Sarah followed in her mother's footsteps, being listed as a seamstress.

## Nelson Hawkins

**Nelson Hawkins**, Harriett’s younger son, led a remarkable life. He left Hampton before Emancipation, seeking his freedom before the clothing allotment of May 1863. By June 1864, he was in Washington, DC, where he enlisted in the Navy, serving as a “landsman.” Notably, his enlistment records that he was a Mulatto with *gray* eyes, meaning that there were white ancestors on both his unknown father’s and his mother’s side. After serving three years aboard the *USS Currituck*, he returned to Baltimore in 1867. Listed at first in City Directories (sometimes with the middle initial “H.”) as a waiter, Nelson Hawkins soon used the cooking skills he acquired working in the kitchen at Hampton to open a successful business as a caterer. A newspaper advertisement for a special Fourth of July steamboat cruise in 1880 described him as "the famous caterer".

Although Nelson married a woman named Maggie C. in December 1883, they separated 15 months later and finally divorced in 1896. Leaving Baltimore in the late 1890s, Nelson spent his final years in Philadelphia, where he continued to pursue his career as a prestigious hotel chef and caterer. He is believed to have worked at the Walton Hotel, then a top luxury hotel on Broad Street in Philadelphia. Until his death in 1916, he lived with his nephew Charles Howard Hawkins (a head bellman at the hotel) and a large family of great nieces and nephews at 1437 S. 19th Street.

A 1925 death certificate for Nelson’s nephew gives additional clues to their relationship. Charles was born in 1873 in Baltimore and was the son of Harriet Hawkins’ youngest child, Louisa. Per the census, by 1880 she had married a man named Wicks (Weeks) and had a daughter "Willie," who was born in 1878. (Mr. Wicks may have been related to the Wicks family enslaved at Hampton during Governor Ridgely’s time, but the connection has not yet been established.) Charles’ early years are still a mystery, but he moved to Philadelphia at about the same time as his uncle. Although he died at a relatively young age, his widow Julia Campbell Hawkins did not die until 1968. The mother of at least seven sons and three daughters, Julia had 72 descendants surviving her at the time of her death. She, Charles and several other family members are buried at Eden Cemetery outside of Philadelphia. Her sons were prominent in several professional endeavors including a leading funeral home that survives today. It is possible that through Charles and Julia Hawkins’ family, Harriet Hawkins of Hampton may have hundreds of descendants currently living in the Philadelphia area. Several older family members attended St. Simon Cyrenian Episcopal Church in south Philadelphia and some may still members of that historic African American congregation.

## Nick and Dinah Toogood

When Nelson Hawkins was learning to cook, it would have been under the skillful eye of **Dinah Toogood** (c. 1795-c. 1882). The kitchen was a center for activity in the house. Dinah, wife of Nick Toogood, was the head cook in the 1840s-1860s. She oversaw the kitchen, and Eliza Ridgely III noted in the 1890s that she was a good "fine cook." Eliza (Mrs. John) Ridgely’s records show Dinah receiving several coarse aprons a year, indicating the possibly messy nature of her work. Dinah had first come to Hampton in 1830, when she was purchased by John Ridgely from Hugh Birckhead for $250. Her husband **Nicholas (Nick) Toogood** (1786-1879) did not come to Hampton until several years later in the late 1830s. The Toogoods had four children, two of them (James and Marie) died as babies. A third child, Agnes, was born in 1845, died in 1847. Daniel (b. 1843) the fourth child, may well have died before 1850. After the death of Sam Brown around 1861, Nick was probably the oldest enslaved worker on the estate.

James McHenry Howard commented inn 1894 that Nick "was a sort of spiritual leader among the [enslaved at Hampton] & if anything in the way of religious ceremonial or worship was going on, Nick was sure to have a prominent place recounts this episode." Howard also recounted an episode showing an example of resistance to slavery:

One of the well-known characters among the slaves was an old man by the name of Nick Toogood – he used to work around the grounds about the house as a general utility man and was usually complaining of Rheumatism and misery in the back – but this was thought to be a plea on his part for relaxation of work.

However, he put the plea in, one Sunday morning when he was told to do something or other and was excused as an invalid. Apparently when the family saw him in the morning, he seemed all bent together and could hardly drag one foot after the other – but as the ladies were seated in Epsom Chapel, an hour or so afterwards – Miss Henrietta happening to look out of the window her attention was attracted by seeing an old negro man climbing lightly over an adjacent fence and walking with long strides towards the village of Towsontown – It was old Nick.

Both Dinah and Nick continued to be held in slavery until 1864 Maryland Emancipation, and they continued to work at Hampton for a couple years afterwards. However, by 1867 they were listed in the Baltimore City Directories living at 108 Orchard Street in what is now the Seton Hill neighborhood. This area was an important one in the community of freed Africans living in the city. The Toogoods attended a historic congregation, the Orchard Street African Methodist Episcopal Church. Nick died at the remarkable age of 92 in 1879.

# Farm Workers

## Jim Pratt

Regarding the enslaved who labored on the farm rather than in the house, we have detailed information on fewer of these individuals. One remarkable exception is **Jim Pratt (1834-1902)** and his family, for whom we have a good bit of documentation and even a photograph. Jim is one of only two formerly enslaved farm workers that James McHenry Howard mentions in his memoirs:

Of the servants at the Quarters who remained with the family I shall mention the two whose names occur to me – one of them named Jim Pratt is still upon the farm as a laborer & though getting old is one of the hardest workers that have been upon the place. When a younger man he took pride in eclipsing any hired hand in the harvest field, and in forking hay he generally succeeded in breaking down any rival.

Jim Pratt was the youngest of four siblings (John, Joe, Caroline, and Jim) born to Charlotte (d. c. 1855?), a house servant. Their father was likely Henry Pratt, an enslaved farm worker purchased in 1831 who continues to appear in Hampton records up until c. 1863. Jim Pratt was one of the large group who fled slavery in 1863, but in May 1864, he is again listed at Hampton in the final clothing list.

Estate account books document Jim Pratt's continuing on the estate (along with brother Joe) as a paid laborer for many years after Emancipation. Harvesting and shucking corn were among his tasks. He and his wife Laura and three of their children (James, George, Lizzie) are recorded in the 1880 census in Towson. The birth year of a daughter indicates that they were married several years before Emancipation, perhaps about 1856. Jim is still listed as working as a day laborer twenty years later, when he was in his late 60s. He and Laura were then living near Hampton, just two doors from (Caroline's) Lewis Davis. Two years, the following notice appeared in the *Baltimore Sun*:

Colored Women Was Well Known

Laura Pratt, wife of James Pratt, colored, who was buried Saturday at Towson, was well known about Towson for many years She was about 70 years old and was formerly a slave, belonging to the late George Gill of Mantua Mills, Worthington Valley. She was the mother of 22 children and has 4 sons living.

James Pratt, her husband, who was a slave and belonged to the Ridgely estate, is very sick and is cared for by members of the Ridgely family. The colored woman died at the home of her brother, Loudon Franklin, in Baltimore, where she had recently gone to reside.

The well-known photo (c. 1897) of an older male servant pushing a wheel barrow outside the East Hyphen is very likely Jim Pratt.

# Workers Enslaved to Governor Charles Carnan Ridgely

## Bill Bussey/Johnson and Family

We first learned about **Bill Bussey** (1786-1867) from Uncle Jim Howard’s memoir:

“General Ridgley’s body servant was named Bill Bussey – this man became free after the Generals death – He was the coachman who drove my Uncle George Howard [of Waverly; Maryland Governor] from Fountain-Rock (General Ringolds place) in Washington County to Hampton in one day. Bill Bussey became blind in his old age & upon ascertaining the fact, my brother in law Charles Ridgely hunted him up and gave him a home in his old age. He died a few years after the Civil War.”

A “body servant” was a gentleman’s personal servant, similar to a valet.

With an unusual name like Bussey, it was thought that he should be easy to trace through later records, but this was not the case: Bussey could not be found. Eventually, clues in both the Governor’s estate records and census records merged with determined research by Ethnographic Study team members to solve the mystery.

The Governor’s 1829 estate inventory does not list a William or Bill *Bussey*. Bill (b. c. 1786) and his younger wife **Catherine** (b. 1806, and nicknamed Kitty) are recorded with the last name “Johnson.” When Bill was freed by the terms of the governor’s will in 1829, he was allowed a special privilege, perhaps because of his closeness to the governor. Although in general only women with children under age two took them into freedom, Bill was allowed to take his young son Thomas with him when he was manumitted. The original Account of Sales inventory explicitly states: “Also deduct Negro boy named Tom Johnson taken by Bill Bussey his father by consent of the heirs” (Accounts of Sale, October 1829, p. 46-- #134). This both confirms that little Tom was Bill’s son and that he also used the name Johnson. Indeed, he is the “Bill Johnson, Sr.” valued at $300 who is the first enslaved person listed on the governor’s probate inventory.

Meanwhile, Catherine “Kitty” Johnson had to remain enslaved for two more years. She, her youngest child Eliza Johnson, and a four year old son Richard were listed on the governor’s probate inventory as residing temporarily with at Perry Hall. All three were inherited by James Howard of “Cowpens,” next door to Hampton to the east. When Kitty Johnson was freed in 1831, a recorded declaration testifies that Eliza could follow her into freedom.

But there is much more to the story of the Johnsons. Later documents both confirm Bill Bussey/Johnson’s return to Hampton, and the tragic story of a young man who may have been one of their children. Bill had returned to Hampton by May 1859, when his name (listed as Bill Bussey) appears on the lists of clothing provided to Hampton’s enslaved. He continues to be recorded on those lists until 1864. Another documentary source is even more interesting. In the 1860 US Census for Baltimore County, Bill Johnson (age 74) is recorded as a free person of color, no occupation, living on the Hampton estate. Notably, the column headed “death, dumb, blind, insane…” is listed “blind,” confirming part of Uncle Jim Howard’s story.

## Franklin Johnson

Another free person of color recorded in the 1860 census at Hampton is **Franklin Johnson** (1823-1864), listed as a servant. Though it is possible that Frank was Bill Bussey/Johnson’s son, this cannot be demonstrated through the records from Governor Ridgely’s estate. There is documentary evidence, however, related to Esther (Hester) Gully/Baker who married Franklin Johnson, who was working at Hampton by 1860. **Esther (Hester) Gully/Baker** (1829-lv. 1890) was the only daughter of Jim and Catherine (Kitty) Gully who were part of the 1841 Hawkins purchase. Almost immediately upon her arrival at Hampton in 1841, Esther adopted the surname Baker and is recorded with this name in Hampton records. She had a son Henry Baker born in June 1849.

The marriage of Esther and Franklin was carried out on December 24, 1856 in Hampton mansion by a white Presbyterian minister, R. C. Galbraith, who provided the religious services for the enslaved at the behest of Eliza Ridgely. Franklin and Hester had four children together. In spring 1864 during the Civil War, he enlisted as a Union soldier in the U.S. Colored Troops (39th US Colored Infantry). Tragically, Franklin Johnson died while serving the Union, during this regiment’s very active role during the Overland Campaign. During the Siege of Petersburg, he survived the horrific mine explosion and subsequent atrocities at the Battle of the Crater in late July only to die of disease on September 24 at a hospital in Philadelphia. In late 1864, Hester applied for a widow’s pension in order to help support herself and her four children (Frances, Elizabeth, Rachel, Franklin). Her successful claim was supported by both her parents and Edward Humphrey, all of whom had come to Hampton in 1841. Hester subsequently moved to Baltimore to earn a living post-Emancipation working as a laundress. She lived for about 25 years on Sarah Ann Street, a small alley street running west from Greene Street between Saratoga and Mulberry in West Baltimore.

## Daniel Harris

A number of other laborers enslaved by Governor Charles Carnan Ridgely continued to work at Hampton for his son John, especially in the 1830s and early 1840s. The most noteworthy of this group of Free Blacks was **Daniel Harris (1789-c.1867)**, who after manumission worked as a gardener of John Ridgely from 1829 into the early 1830s. Daniel labored at Hampton to make enough money to free his daughter Mary (“Ann's Mary” on the CCR estate inventories, inherited by H. D. G. Carroll at Perry Hall), which he was able to do in 1831. Although Daniel left Hampton when the Ridgelys left to travel in Europe in 1833-1834, he continued to be employed in the area, earning enough that by 1851 he became the first free person of color to purchase property in the area of Baltimore County that is now East Towson. As indicated by his estate records, Daniel probably died in 1867. Although Ann and daughter Mary seem to have predeceased him, he was survived by two sisters, one of whom was **Amelia “Milly” Sheridan**, former Hampton dairymaid. Other paid workers formerly enslaved at Hampton include Harry Hogan, Ellick Williams, Abram Horner, Rezin Sheredine/Sheridan (Milly’s husband), Henry Sherdan/Sheridan, Charles Hazard, Jake Weeks, Bob Cotes/Coates, Stephen Cromwell, and Sol/Solomon Norris. Most of these men worked as farm laborers during the time that John Ridgely was still seeking to purchase additional enslaved workers to do the extensive agricultural labor on the estate, though Henry Sherdan is also listed as being a cobbler. Some of them, including Abram Horner and Charles Hazard, had children with women then enslaved at Hampton.

## Maria/Mariah Batty

One female member of a large family of workers enslaved at the Northampton Furnace until 1829 continued to work at Hampton for many years. **Maria/Mariah Batty** (1826-lv.1880) was one of nine members of the Batty family recorded at the Furnace in that year. She and five other family members were inherited by the Governor’s son-in-law James Howard who lived next door to Hampton at Cowpens farm. Freed in 1851, Maria soon thereafter is recorded as being paid to work at Hampton, where her relative Nancy Brown Davis (whose mother was Polly Batty) was then enslaved. Although her type of labor is not recorded, she continued to work at Hampton into the mid-1860s. Her sons James (Jim) and John were farm laborers on the estate in the late 1870s-1880s. Maria and her several children lived in the Sandy Bottom neighborhood of Towson along York Road, though later generations also lived in East Towson. Living descendants ate still in the Towson area. Another branch of the Battys freed in 1829 chose to leave Maryland entirely, moving to the Peach Bottom, Pennsylvania where descendants live today.

## Henry Cummins

**Henry Cummins (c. 1827-1905) of White Marsh and his family**

In Charles Carnan Ridgely's estate inventory, the members of the Cummins family were all at White Marsh farm in 1829.[[2]](#footnote-3) Of the total group of 15 individuals named Cummins, six were male: Aaron, Henry, Isaac, John, Simon, Wesley. Their relative values indicate that all but Simon and Isaac were children. During the Hampton Ethnographic Study, the Cummins were one of the first families studied, and they were the first family for whom living descendants were discoved. Of Aaron and Henry, based on their low value ($30) and that they continued to be enslaved afterwards, they were likely two or slightly older in 1829, likely born around 1825 and 1826 respectively. Henry was still recorded at White Marsh at the time of David Ridgely's death in 1846.[[3]](#footnote-4) By terms of Gov. Ridgely's will, they would have been freed at age 28, thus around 1853 and 1854.

US Census Records provided the first clues related to these members of the Cummins family. In the US Census for 1860, an unusual listing in Baltimore City records the proprietors, staff, and guests residing at a large hotel in the fashionable 11th Ward. There, listed next to each other, are **Aaron and Henry Cummings**, recorded as ages 30 and 28. The proprietors of the hotel where the young men worked in their first years of freedom were very well known in the community for the quality of the restaurant fare. William Guy was a renowned hotelier and proprietor of Guy's Monument House on the west side of Battle Monument Square. Throughout the 1850s, descriptions of banquets catered by Guy and the remarkably sophisticate and lavish food served fill the newspapers.[[4]](#footnote-5) The hotels Guy and his successors ran, Henry's continued place of employment for years, were deemed worthy of description in John Thomas Scharf's landmark work *History of Baltimore City and County* (1881).[[5]](#footnote-6) This was the setting in which Henry Cummings was trained and learned his skills as a chef, which would help to support his family for four decades.

The *Baltimore Sun* contained a surprising amount of information for formerly enslaved Henry Cummins/Cummings, even in the early years of his residence in the city. The notices include social announcements such as his marriage to Eliza Jane Davage on November 26, 1863. The wedding ceremony was performed by Rev. Tilghman Jackson of Asbury M. E. Church. Other, more surprising aspects of Henry Cummings life were also deemed newsworthy and demonstrate an interest in politics and public life that would come to influence his son Harry. The *Baltimore Sun* records that in September 1879 Henry Cummins had been elected as a delegate to the Maryland's Republican Party nominating convention from the 12th election district of Baltimore City.[[6]](#footnote-7) Three months later, he is listed as serving on the Grand Jury for the United States District Court in Baltimore, along with 19 men, three of whom in addition to Henry are noted as "colored."[[7]](#footnote-8) These seem to be notable accomplishments for an African American just 15 years after the abolition of slavery in Maryland.

Research into Baltimore City Directories for Henry Cummings and his family traces his path through the Mount Vernon neighborhood and north eventually into Marble Hill with the passage of time. His profession is consistently recorded as "cook" beginning in 1865 when he was living with his Davige in-laws on Tyson Street. The family residence gradually moves north through Mount Vernon, recorded at six different addresses, with favored streets being Tyson, Eutaw, and Biddle before arriving at their principal longtime residence on Druid Hill Avenue by 1900. The locations are very nearby the most prosperous white neighborhoods in the city, which were following a similar northward trajectory at the time.

In the 1880 US census record, Henry Cummins/Cummings is said to be 50 years old; He had married a woman named Eliza, had several children, and established a profession (cook). The name of his eldest son (Aaron, 15) confirms the very close connection to the elder Aaron from White Marsh and at the hotel in 1860. The other children are recorded as Harry (14), Ida R. (12), Charles (10), Frances (8), and Carroll (5).[[8]](#footnote-9) Also important to the details of the Cummings family history are the presence in the household of several of Henry's in-laws, including his mother-in-law, Sydney Davige (65), sisters-in-law Sophia (30) and Charlotte Davige (28), and brother-in-law Charles Davige (26). The family was then living in the 2nd precinct of the 12th Ward, in what is today just south of Bolton Hill.

The next surviving US Census (1900) shows that many members of the Cummings family continued to live together, now at 1234 Druid Hill Avenue[[9]](#footnote-10). All the individuals noted above (excepting daughter Frances and son Carroll, both of whom had died in the mid-1890s, and Sydney and Sofia Davige) are in residence with the addition of son Harry's wife Blanche, Henry and Eliza's daughter Estelle F. Cummings (26) and youngest son William O. Cummings (18). What is truly remarkable about this record, however, are the occupations listed for Henry and Eliza's children. Aaron worked as a messenger for the Post Office, Harry S. is a lawyer (an extraordinary accomplishment for this time period), Ida is a "kindergardeness," Estelle is a school teacher, and William is still in school at age 18.

Of Henry, a later newspaper account notes that he was “…famous in his day as one of the best Maryland cooks, and for years was employed at Guy's by the Gilmore's.[sic]” In a "Family Sketch" manuscript one of Henry's grandchildren noted that his specialty as a chef was the historic Maryland favorite terrapin.[[10]](#footnote-11)After a long and successful career as a chef, Henry Cummins died in 1906, at nearly eighty years of age. His widow Eliza Davage Cummings was also remarkable[[11]](#footnote-12) In addition to raising and seeing to the education of her eight children, she ran a boarding house and took in lodgers at the family's residences so that those children could go on to higher education. She was very active both in her church (Metropolitan M. E.) and in a number of local organizations which sought to enhance the welfare and education of Baltimore's less fortunate African American citizens. Following in the family's tradition of political activism, she even delivered speeches across the eastern half of the country in support of amendments to enhance and protect the rights of black citizens.

## Harry Sythe Cummings, a Landmark Figure

The second eldest son of Henry Cummins, Harry Sythe Cummings had an amazing career and legacy that is chronicled articles in newspapers, not just from Maryland but across the county. (A search on a large national newspaper website for Harry Sythe Cummings yielded an astonishing total of over 1,100 "hits" from locations as far flung as St. Johnsbury, Vermont; Topeka, Kansas; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and Eugene, Oregon.) Harry's education was the foremost priority of his mother Eliza Jane Davage Cummings, who worked hard as a seamstress and running a boarding house to assist chef Henry in providing for the family.[[12]](#footnote-13) After attending local public schools, Harry graduated at age 19 from Lincoln University in Chester County, Pennsylvania, a very important institution of higher learning for African Americans since its founding in 1854. After that Harry "read law" in Baltimore but then took an even more significant step. Along with classmate Charles Johnson, he became the first African American to graduate from the University of Maryland Law School in 1889.[[13]](#footnote-14) He was admitted to the bar that year, as noted in an article titled "Colored Men at the Bar" published in the *Helena Weekly Herald* describing the promising young African American lawyers of Baltimore.[[14]](#footnote-15)

Harry's career and achievements grew rapidly from this auspicious beginning. Perhaps encouraged by his father's early foray into Republican Party politics, at the young age of 24 in 1890, he ran successfully for the City Council in Baltimore, thereby becoming the first African American to serve on that body. Elected to the First Branch of the City Council from the 11th District, as the *Baltimore Sun* noted on November 5, 1890, he had "the distinction of being the first colored man to hold an elective office in Maryland." He was reelected a number of times in 1891, 1897, and 1907-1917, by which time he represented the 17th ward. Often using his position to advocate for and promote education for African American students, he became very active in Republican politics for the state of Maryland as well as Baltimore city, speaking to enthusiastic crowds wherever he went. It should be noted that the articles in the newspapers noting his activities in this realm sometimes deplore the influence of a black man in the Republican Party and claim it will lead Democratic victories in elections.[[15]](#footnote-16)

Harry S. Cummings gained the pinnacle of his national political recognition when he was asked to deliver a seconding speech for President Theodore Roosevelt at the 1904 Republican Party Convention in Chicago. Harry's picture appeared in newspapers across the country, in company with other leading Republicans. This notable event again caused extensive commentary across the nation, some very positive ("Prolonged applause greeted the introduction of Harry S. Cummings, a negro from Maryland.[[16]](#footnote-17)") though southern papers had little good to say ("Cummings earned the good will of the convention by cutting his speech short.")[[17]](#footnote-18) The personal thank you note to Harry from President Roosevelt, who deemed his remarks "excellent in every way," survives at the Maryland Historical Society. The envelope for the note also contained the president's calling card, which in effect issued an open invitation to Harry to visit the White House, clearly an honor which he subsequently accepted. However, the thinly veiled racism and sarcasm of *The Morning Post,* Raleigh, North Carolina, that greeted Harry's achievement in visiting the White House the following October is noteworthy.

This was negro day at the White House. The president received by appointment Harry S. Cummings, the colored attorney from Baltimore who seconded his nomination in Chicago...The conference was one of the most extended that has taken place at the White House in a long while, and many statesmen had to cool their heels in the reception hall of the executive office while Mr. Roosevelt entertained his black visitors in the private office of the President.[[18]](#footnote-19)

Harry S. Cummings' political importance continued right up to the time of his early death in 1917, when newspaper accounts detail the long list of notable politicians and prominent citizens, both black and white, who attended his funeral.[[19]](#footnote-20) He was buried at Mount Auburn Cemetery in south Baltimore, an historic African American cemetery where family members of his and later generations can also be found.

An Extraordinary Generation of Children - Harry S. Cummings remarkable life, only briefly summarized here, is clearly worth at least a dissertation or perhaps even a book, but his very accomplished siblings deserve to receive some additional notice as well. As noted in the obituary of their mother, Eliza, the Cummings children had a record of higher education that would probably exceed that of the majority of white families in the later 19th century. All the boys except the youngest, William O., attended at least some college, with brother Charles G. (1870-1924) also graduating from Lincoln University, then Drew Theological Seminary. He went on to become a prominent minister in northern Virginia.[[20]](#footnote-21) Carroll Cummings (1875-c. 1895) unfortunately died while attending college.[[21]](#footnote-22) Henry and Eliza's eldest son, Aaron M. (c.1865-1932) began working for the US Post Office around 1890, eventually becoming the first black postal service supervisor in Baltimore.[[22]](#footnote-23) Sisters Ida and Estelle graduated from local public high schools, and Ida later graduated from what is now Morgan State University. She became that school's first female trustee, among numerous other boards of charitable organizations.[[23]](#footnote-24) Promotion of early education was paramount to her, and she is widely recognized as the first African American kindergarten teacher in Baltimore City. Estelle also taught in the local public schools for years and married Joseph S. Fennell, a leading African American pharmacist in Baltimore.

As noted previously, **Aaron M. Cummings** had been named for his uncle, Henry's brother Aaron, who had been present with him at White Marsh at the time of Gov. Charles Carnan Ridgely 's death in 1829. After his listing as a domestic servant working alongside his brother Henry at William Guy's hotel in Baltimore in the 1860 Census, Aaron drops from Maryland records. He may, however, be the Aaron Cummings who can be traced through later adult life in Philadelphia through city directory records. That Aaron is listed by the mid-1870s as a waiter, carver, and cook in the Pine Street neighborhood of south central Philadelphia. Most importantly, his death certificate in October 1898 records that he was born in Baltimore and would be returned there for burial. There is also an Aaron Cummings, possibly Henry's brother, recorded in the 1870 US Census as living in West Chester, PA. This Aaron is listed as a laborer who was born in Maryland in 1827, and by 1870 had a wife Lydia and six year old son, John S., born in 1864. Unfortunately, the Aaron listed later in the Philadelphia City Directories and who was eventually buried in Baltimore, seems to have avoided the census taker in 1880. Further detailed research in Philadelphia records might turn up additional information or family members.[[24]](#footnote-25)

Of all the eight children of Henry and Eliza Cummings, there are living descendants of only one, the youngest William O. Cummings (1882-1946). He and his wife Jane Burgess Cummings had six children. There are three grandchildren currently living and additional descendants.

1. James McHenry Howard, Memoirs of the Ridgelys of Hampton (annotated typescript copy by Helen West Stewart Ridgely, 1894, HAMP 21686, Hampton NHS; photocopy on file, HAMP VF 2385.001), \_\_ (unnumbered in original but determined by placement). The handwritten original of this manuscript remains with the Ridgely family (photocopy on file, HAMP VF 2720.019). Page references for Howard’s Memoirs in these notes will be to the typescript copy (HAMP 21686) except as noted. See also the 1908 Diary of Helen Ridgely, MdHS MS. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. G. Howard White Papers, Hampton National Historic Site, MS 1003. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. David Ridgely probate inventory, information on slaves transcribed by Dr. R. Kent Lancaster. See Dr. R. Kent Lancaster, "David," research notes, c. 1995; Curatorial Files, Hampton National Historic Site. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. *Baltimore Sun*, December 20, 1852 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. John Thomas Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County* (Baltimore: 1881), p. .516. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. *Baltimore Sun,* September 3, 1879. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. *Baltimore Sun,* December 3, 1879. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. The choice of the name Carroll seems to be a very interesting and possibly significant refernce to the last name of the owner (Harry Dorsey Gough Carroll) of Perry Hall plantation where Eliza Cummings was born. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. This house had a storied history and eventually became known as “Freedom House,” before being demolished by the Bethel A.M.E. Church in 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. MdHS MS. 2961, Harry Sythe Cummings, Sr. Papers. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. *Baltimore American*, May 29, 1913 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Eliza Jane Davage Cummings obituary*, Baltimore American*, May 29, 1913. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. History for Finding Aid, Harry Sythe Cummings Photograph Collection, PP240, MdHS Special Collections. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. *Helena Weekly Herald*, October 17, 1889. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. See for example *Baltimore Sun, March 9, 1905.* [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. *Topeka Daily Capital*, June 24, 1904. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. *The Morning Post*, Raleigh, NC, June 24, 1904 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. *The Morning Post*, Raleigh, NC, October 12, 1904. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. *Baltimore Sun*, September 11, 1917. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. For additional details on this branch of the family, see the Charlene Hodges Byrd Collection at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC. Mrs. Byrd was the granddaughter of Charles G. Cummings and his wife Grace Shimm. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. *Baltimore American*, May 29, 1913. His name, that of the owners of Perry Hall when his grandmother Sidney Hall Davage was freed, is noteworthy also. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. History for Finding Aid, Harry Sythe Cummings Photograph Collection, PP240, MdHS Special Collections [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. 1940 US Census [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Another, younger Aaron Cummings (c. 1841-lv. 1890) is recorded in census and military records (1850-1890) in Fawn Township, York County, PA. This location is immediately north of the Maryland state line and is adjacent to other locales where some Hampton enslaved workers moved after being freed. This York County Aaron Cummings was a farmer who served in the renowned 54th Massachusetts Regiment during the Civil War, fighting in several battles and being wounded before his release from service in August 1865. Further research might uncover a connection to families such as the Cummins of White Marsh or the Battys and Spencers. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)