



The Hampton Gazette

The National Parks: America's Best Idea Ken Burns' Documentary and the Vision of the National Park Future

From the giant sequoia trees in Yosemite National Park to the 18th century Georgian mansion on Hampton National Historic Site, the National Parks cover eighty-four million acres of land. This property belongs not to the federal government but to the American people, an idea fundamental to the National Park Service and a central theme in the new Ken Burns documentary on the National Parks.

Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan spent over six years collecting footage and information for their upcoming documentary mini-series, *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*. It will be aired on PBS beginning at eight o'clock in the evening on September 27, 2009 for six consecutive nights. The title of the series was taken from American novelist Wallace Stegner's statement, "National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst."

Following Stegner's lead, Burns focused on the diverse history of America and the individuals who fought to create the National Parks. Native Americans and immigrants, biologists and artists, the figures behind the National Parks displayed an evolving understanding of preservation and of what is truly American.

The filmmakers also made a number of "mini-docs" covering an array of topics from the efforts to bring inner city kids into the parks to the new focus at Mount Rushmore on native cultures. These films, focused on more recent National Park programs, complete the story of the National Parks, and are available through the PBS website.

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Ken Burns filming one of the National Parks, Photo by Craig Mellish, courtesy of Florentine Films.

Hampton NHS Joins the Fight Against the Invasive Emerald Ash Borer

A beautiful iridescent green, the emerald ash borer beetle is nonetheless a deadly invasive force. These beetles' attack on green and white ash trees is so devastating that the original treatment was the removal of all ash trees within a quarter mile of the infected tree. Currently, that radical treatment has been modified to remove only the infected tree.

The non-native emerald ash borer was first discovered in the midwest of the United States. Spread from there through nursery stock, the beetles have even been found in Prince George's County, Maryland.

The potential destruction to Hampton NHS by emerald ash borers is great. White ash trees are the most dominant species of trees at Hampton. Therefore, the Maryland Department of Agriculture



An emerald ash borer. Image by David Capaert, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org.

is using Hampton as a monitoring site to determine if the beetles have reached the Towson area.

Purple boxes now swing from several white ash trees at Hampton NHS. These emit pheromones to lure male emerald ash borers. These are checked for the beetles periodically, but have so far remained clean. The natural resources team at Hampton is grateful for that fact but will remain vigilant!

The Hampton Gazette.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1876.

Superintendent's Welcome

Fall has come to Hampton National Historic Site. It's finally a bit cooler and schools are back in session. It's an exciting time for us at the park. This fall we will unveil the newly restored Parlour and our partner, Historic Hampton, Inc. will celebrate its annual meeting.

With the new Ken Burns series, a new Director of the National Park Service, and the publishing of the report from the National Parks Second Century Commission, a great deal of public attention will highlight the amazing places considered the most important to our nation's natural and cultural heritage. Hampton is a part of this incredible family of national parks - a family that includes the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, the Statue of Liberty, and Gettysburg. Our goal is to preserve this treasure and share it with the public, and the news in this issue of the Gazette illustrates just that.

Thank you for your continued interest in Hampton NHS - see you at the park!

Gay Vietzke
Superintendent

The Hampton Gazette is inspired by the small family newspaper written and published by the Ridgely children of Hampton in the 19th century. The original "Hampton Gazette" included family stories and satire, prose and poetry, and everything the Ridgelys' creativity could invent.

Above is the banner from a September 1876 issue, and **below right** are two clippings from that paper.

Two New Volunteers Offer their Time at Hampton NHS

Hampton NHS is pleased to introduce our newest volunteers: Bob Bonhage and Michael Ellis. Fittingly for our back-to-school issue, both of these gentlemen are teachers.

Since Bob retired from his job at a telephone company, he has spent four years substitute teaching in Baltimore County. Bob is also part of the Jarrettsville Volunteer Fire Co.

Michael is a history teacher at Seton Keough where he was named 2009 Teacher of the Year. When not in the classroom, Michael is on the field coaching soccer and softball.

Bob and Michael's teaching skills will come in handy when giving tours. As always, we are indebted to all who offer their time to make Hampton NHS a better place and we are sure Bob and Michael will do just that!



The new volunteers Bob (left) and Michael (right).

(The following is from the pen of a young and gifted lady of this town. The peculiar brilliancy of the style claims its own merit.—Ed.)

Eating was sweet Finette,
Sat a fond youth close by ;
More than one brown croquette,
Lay on a plate piled high.
"Finette, Finette, I ever will be true!
Finette, Finette, oh! take a croquette, do!"

Smiled then the young Finette,
Soft on his words she hung ;
But ah! the hot croquette
Burned the bright, red tongue.
"Finette, Finette, I'm mad as I can tell!
Finette, Finette, pray hurry and get well!"

To the Editor of to-day's Paper.

CAN you, or any of your literary contributors tell me where to find the following lines :

The path of duty is the way to glory?

From the Sofa up-stairs.

FOUND.—Mr. Tennyson sends his compliments to the "Sofa Up-stairs," and says the highly honored line of poetry: "The path of duty was the way to glory," is from his, "Ode to the Duke of Wellington."

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America's Best Idea (continued from page 1)
As Jonathan B. Jarvis, the new Director of the National Park Service, explained, "These are parks where we learn not only of the people who left their marks on our future, but through this intimate contact, we learn how to take the next generation to a higher and better place." The new programs ensure that in the future the National Park System will continue to represent America's past, present, and future.

While Ken Burns traveled the National Parks searching for the deeper meaning behind their creation and their continuing importance, the National Parks Second Century Commission has also been thinking about parks in the 21st century. This commission of private, prominent Americans explored the ways in which specific parks and the entire park system must change for the future. They realized that, as former NPS Director Roger Kennedy once said, "Resource protection has to walk out of the park in the heart of the visitor." Only through dialogue with the community can the National Park Service inspire love of the parks and support for their continuation.

Seeking out youths is one of the most important ways of reaching the community, so Hampton NHS and Fort McHenry NM & HS have done just that. Five new seasonal Rangers were hired under the Youth Intake Program. The program introduces high school seniors to the NPS through entry-level jobs for the summer. During the course of the summer, these youth have provided crowd control on busy tours at Hampton NHS and performed light maintenance duties such as painting and clearing brush.

For the National Park Service to move forward in the future, it must embrace the community. After all, the National Park Service is only protecting and preserving the land owned by every American.

For more on local parks, view **Outdoor Maryland: Love Our Parks** on MPT September 27 at 7:00 p.m.
Watch **The National Parks: America's Best Idea** on PBS at 8:00 p.m. from September 27 to October 1.
Add your input to the NPS future at www.visionfortheparks.org.

From a Volunteer's Perspective: Jay Oullette On His Internship at Hampton NHS

Usually, this spot is used to honor a volunteer for their service to the park. This month, we have let the volunteer speak for himself. **Jay Oullette** volunteered at Hampton NHS as part of an internship and wanted to share his experiences:



The smiling intern, Jay Oullette.

The path from re-enactor to historical interpreter is a very long one, and is littered with those who have failed to find an outlet for their desire to interpret history. However, perhaps I am an exception. Within the re-enacting hobby, I have found a passion that has brought me to many wonderful state and national parks where I have had the joy of sharing my love of history with visitors from all over America and the world. Nowhere has this been truer than at Hampton National Historic Site, for it was at Hampton that I also learned the art of interpretation. I have always had a gift for retaining facts about history. However, besides the facts, I have enjoyed putting them together and fitting them into a bigger picture to share with the visitors to Hampton.

The first part of my internship was spent pouring over the vast amount of information available about the Ridgely family and the events that took place at Hampton. Once my head was swimming with bits of information about the family, I began to connect them to the history of America and even Europe. Since the Ridgely family had been on the Hampton property for over 270 years and in Maryland for 370 years, this was not difficult. What became a challenge was the boiling down of this history so that I could give the guests the incredible story of Hampton and do it within the recommended 45 minute tour. At first my tours of Hampton were too in-depth, leaving my guests a bit overwhelmed. However, soon I began to trim down my tours until the guests were leaving Hampton, at least I hope, with a better understanding of why Hampton is important. It is not just because a wealthy family by the name of Ridgely lived there, but because for better or worse they had taken part in the development of an American society.

I am very thankful for my time at Hampton. This opportunity has helped me to become a better historian and most of all a better interpreter of the incredible story that is our American history.

This article was contributed by **Jay Oullette**.

My Favorite Things

The museum collection at Hampton NHS includes a variety of furnishings, tools, and toys which add to the ambiance of the Mansion. Naturally, members of the staff and volunteers view the mansion collection frequently and become particularly fond of certain items.

Seasonal Ranger Laura Marshallsay prefers the chandelier in the Dining Room. This ornate Argand lamp was fueled with oil and its gleaming metal surface is stunning. However, Laura's favorite thing about the light occurred after the National Park Service acquired Hampton.



From family records, the curatorial staff knew that such a lamp should have existed but they could not find it in the Ridgely family collection. After searching the mansion from top to bottom, the curator was ready to abandon the search and buy a new lamp for the room. Just in time, the Argand lamp was located...in the eaves of one of the stables! Replaced by the Ridgely family with an electric light, the lamp was apparently placed out of the way and forgotten.

Although it is the history of the estate that caused it to become a National Historic Site, the history continues through the National Park Service. It is these stories and experiences that attract staff, volunteers, and visitors alike to Hampton National Historic Site!



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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The Hampton Gazette is the official news bulletin of Hampton National Historic Site. It is produced quarterly and distributed to park friends, supporters, and visitors.

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Upcoming Events at Hampton NHS



As summer comes to a close, the leaves on the trees begin to change their color. Just like

the leaves, Hampton NHS also transforms into its winter decor. Come by to see the transformation inside and out!

Second Sunday Events

Please Note: In September and October the events have been moved to the third Sunday of each month.

Manly Arts Day

September 20, 2009; 1:00-4:00pm

See how young men learned “good sportsmanship.” Demonstrations of historically accurate fencing, boxing, cudgeling, wrestling, and more will show how men defended their honor in the time of Thomas Jefferson. Visitors will be able to view an array of fencing swords and practice their own technique using a variety of wooden cutlasses, sticks, and swords.

Harvest Day and Hampton Hallows

October 18, 2009

1:00-5:00pm & 5:30-7:30pm

Join in the harvest on the Home Farm at Hampton. Help the park staff bring in the harvest and watch the blacksmith make tools that would have been used on the farm. Then stick around for Hampton Hallows, a candlelight retelling of seasonally inspired stories from locals like Edgar Allan Poe.

Wade in the Water!

**Slaves and Spiritual Songs at Hampton
November 8; 1:00-4:00pm**

Listen as spiritual singer Jim Thomas transports you back to the time when slaves worked in the fields and the mansion at Hampton. Mr. Thomas uses his songs to narrate the slave experience from working songs to songs describing how to find the Underground Railroad. Be sure to mark this on your calendar to enjoy the beauty and the history of slave songs that could once have been heard at Hampton.

Please call the park for further information. All events are subject to change.