

**THE MULFORD HOUSE:
A STRATEGY TO REINTERPRET A SMALL HOUSE MUSEUM**

Maria S. Dayton

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Advisor
Gail Caskey Winkler
Lecturer in Historic Preservation

Program Chair
Frank G. Matero
Professor in Architecture

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INTRODUCTION:

My ancestors arrived in East Hampton, New York, in 1650, and from my youth I was instilled with respect for the impact the town has had on my family. Since its founding in 1648, East Hampton has been pivotal to the development of its citizens. It is difficult to describe to an outsider the intense pride a deep-rooted “local” feels about their connection to East Hampton, and this pride is sometimes misconstrued as arrogance, which is rarely the case. If a visitor makes the effort, the understanding of the history beneath the glossy surface of East Hampton can be realized. It is not only the tourists who lack an appreciation for the more educational aspects of East Hampton, but it is increasingly hard to attract East Hampton’s natives to its historic sites. Unfortunately, this may be part of a national trend indicated by fewer visitations to historic sites.

My internship in the summer of 2006, with the East Hampton Historical Society, gave me the opportunity of researching an historically significant property, a 17th-century homestead still on its original site and largely intact after three centuries of use by local families. As I was focusing on historic site management in the graduate program in Historic Preservation at the University of Pennsylvania, I was given the charge of researching the history of this landmark, referred to locally as the Mulford Farm. Named for the numerous Mulford families that have occupied the house through at least two centuries, it is a locally significant yet troubled landmark. The E.H.H.S has owned the property since 1948 and though it was available to the public after the purchase, its grand opening as a house museum occurred in 1955. Even then, the house lacked any clear focus or definition and though it has subsequently undergone several renovations and

interpretations, it still struggles to capture an audience. My task was to rethink the Mulford House, and to make recommendations for a more captivating interpretation, taking into account its long history and its importance to its prominent Main Street location.

The E.H.H.S owns an enormous quantity of documentation pertaining to the Mulford House. Photographs taken throughout the past century, documents from local families, local history and maps contain primary sources for the search. After realizing that the Mulford House project was more extensive than the time allotted me in the internship, I chose to assemble the research as the basis of my Master's thesis. My goals are to re-interpret the old house more accurately and to enhance the charm and character each room of the house evokes.

The Historic Significance of the Mulford House:

The Mulford House is a rare remaining English colonial homelot and though truncated it still contains approximately 2.93 acres. Never modernized with electricity or running water, the house still retains much of its historic integrity. It is significant because it was built for the first sheriff of Suffolk County, was the home of both a colorful colonial political figure and a local Revolutionary War hero and also the subject of many works of art by renowned artists. East Hampton's development and the Mulford family history are so interwoven that they are inseparable. Changing times and outside forces affected generations of Mulfords but the house itself was barely altered with the result that twentieth-century Mulfords lived almost as their ancestors had.

The Mulford House is currently being interpreted as a 1778-1799 farmhouse owned by Major David Mulford and his wife, Rachel. In addition to the house, the property includes a barn (see Figure 5), smokehouse, privy, an outbuilding interpreting the skills of spinning and a garden designed by a local garden club, though not all of these elements date to the chosen period of significance (see Figure 25). Several are more recent additions and the privy is a complete reconstruction.¹

The interior of the house is furnished with some Mulford artifacts and other objects from the collections of the E.H.H.S. No probate inventories have been found for the house, but inventories of comparable houses and families were used to help ensure the accuracy of the installations. The 1982 Historic Structure Report recommended that key framing and insulation components be exposed to educate visitors on how the house literally was put together.² Along with the exposed framing, paint analysis was completed and stratigraphies exposed in several rooms depicting the chronology of the occupants' choice of paint. This architectural study house approach was recommended because the house retains elements from all of its construction periods, even though the years between 1778-1799 were chosen as the period of significance.

Justification for Site Re-interpretation:

Richard Barons, former director of the Southampton Historical Museum, became the new director of the East Hampton Historical Society in February, 2006. One of his

¹ 1995 Master Plan, Compiled for the East Hampton Historical Society, Unpublished. The reconstruction of an eighteenth century privy was a listed recommendation that was accomplished using period techniques and tools. It is uncertain in what year the reconstruction was completed.

² Daniel M.C. Hopping, Frank G. Matero, Zachary N. Studenroth and Anne E. Weber, "Mulford House: An Historic Structure Report," prepared for the East Hampton Historical Society, 1982.

priorities was the Mulford House, which needed repairs and re-interpretation. The house and farm have previously undergone several restorations and interpretive plans, the most recent occurring in 2002. As previously mentioned, the site fails to capture the interest of either tourists or residents. Part of the problem may have been the instability at the East Hampton Historical Society in recent years, which resulted in poorly planned and executed exhibits.

Methodology:

To frame this thesis, the Mulford House will be compared to similar house museums that have faced equivalent interpretive challenges. These will include Wyck, Stenton, and Cliveden, all in Germantown, today a part of Philadelphia. Understanding how other museums succeeded or failed in navigating these challenges will perhaps guide the Mulford House in another direction. Each of these small house museums were chosen for specific reasons and all relate to the Mulford House on some level. Wyck, built in 1690 and operated by the Wyck Association since 1974, tells the continuous story of one family within the house and their relationship to the landscape. Stenton, constructed in the 1720s and operated by the Colonial Dames of America since 1901, was the country home of William Penn's Secretary, James Logan until his death in 1751. Stenton stayed in the Logan family and like the Mulford House, was never "modernized" with electricity, heating, or plumbing. Finally, Cliveden, built in the 1760s and operated by the National Trust since 1972, was the site of Revolutionary War action and was the home of the Benjamin Chew family.

The goal is to explore several new interpretative schemes in an effort to make the Mulford House and its farm landscape relevant to a 21st-century audience. Freeman Tilden wrote in *Interpreting Our Heritage*, “the visitor is unlikely to respond unless what you have to tell, or to show, touches his personal experience, thoughts, hopes, way of life, social position, or whatever else.”³ The Mulford House must meet that challenge or it will continue to struggle to find an audience. Research will include visits to and discussions with the management of the case study house museums, and personal interviews with East Hampton residents, interpretive experts and stakeholders in an effort to find that elusive ingredient that appeals to the public and works both intellectually and educationally.

The first chapter of this study will be an overview of the settlement and development of East Hampton and the East Hampton Historical Society, while describing the history and significance of the Mulford House and the preservation efforts focused upon it. Chapter Two will concentrate on the development of the interiors and exhibits, dating from its beginnings as an amateur museum in the 1950s to its present-day push for historic accuracy. Chapter Three will center upon case studies and interpretive strategies relate to the Mulford House. In the fourth chapter, recommendations will be made to successfully reinterpret the Mulford House. The final chapter will summarize conclusions presented on the place of the Mulford Farm in a town with multiple museums and a lively resort economy.

³ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 13.

CHAPTER ONE: Background & Context

Section 1.1: The Founding and Growth of East Hampton, NY

East Hampton, located on the South Fork of Long Island, was founded in 1648 by a small band of nine men.⁴ Of English origin, they were acquainted through previous settlement in Lynn, Massachusetts, New Haven, Connecticut and Southampton, New York.⁵ Other families soon joined the developing town in the years that followed the initial settlement, and with so many coming from Maidstone, England, the settlement was briefly named “Maidstone.”⁶ The early town plan was based on the homelot system, an arrangement in which each family was assigned a plot of land commensurate with how much the family had contributed to purchase the settlement from the Connecticut investors who had acquired the land from the Montauket Indians.⁷ Each long lot had access to the Common or Village Green, which later became East Hampton’s broad Main Street.

Within three centuries, East Hampton grew from a tiny agrarian and fishing community to a town of five hamlets dependent on a tourist economy. Attracted by the area’s ocean and bay beaches, chic shopping and trendy nightlife, summer visitors today feel they have found the perfect balance between city and country. East Hampton’s year-round residential population of 20,000 explodes to an astounding 92,000 during the

⁴ Averill Geus, *From Sea to Sea: 350 Years of East Hampton History* (West Kennebunk, Maine: Phoenix Publishing, 1999), 21. There is no hard evidence that the men had their families with them upon arrival in East Hampton. If there was a family, it may have remained behind in Southampton.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.,

⁷ Ibid., 20.

summer months.⁸ Despite its rapidly changing economic demographics, East Hampton retains its small-town charm. Several local groups have been founded to preserve and protect significant historic sites, cultural institutions, farmland and open space including the Ladies' Village Improvement Society of East Hampton, Peconic Land Trust, and the Village Preservation Society. Very proud of its past, community members especially value historic preservation which was included substantially in the 2005 East Hampton Town Comprehensive Plan.

Section 1.2: The Organization of the East Hampton Historical Society

In 1921, several summer and full-time residents recognized that to safeguard local history, formal action was needed, resulting in the creation of the East Hampton Historical Society (E.H.H.S). Today, it is a member of the American Association of Museums, and has an Executive Director and an appointed Board of Trustees. With just two full-time staff members, fourteen part-time and sixty-four volunteers, the E.H.H.S is charged with the management of five locally significant landmarks, all operated as either museums or exhibition spaces. The crown jewel is the Mulford Farm complex (1680)(see Figures 1-7), along with the Clinton Academy (1784), the Town House (1731), the Osborn-Jackson House (1740), and the East Hampton Marine Museum. Each site offers the visitor a separate, yet insightful experience. The Mulford House is open predominantly during the summer season, though it can be visited by appointment in the winter. Unfortunately, visitation is not accurately counted at each site and numbers are therefore only estimates. The Mulford House, the most visited site, is estimated to serve

⁸ 2000 U.S. Census, Suffolk County Planning Department February 20, 2003.

5,000 people a year. This figure includes events held on the site as well as typical visitors such as school groups, adult bus groups, as well as local organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Association of Suffolk County Historical Societies.

Membership provides most funding, and today approximately 450 businesses, families and individuals are members of the East Hampton Historical Society. Though in the recent past little effort has been made to recruit new members, a membership drive is planned for Spring, 2007. Other funding sources include dividends, interest from stocks and bonds (which are part of the endowment), bequests, the annual appeal, grants, property rentals, admissions and fundraising benefits. Educational programs further fund the E.H.H.S with cemetery tours, poetry marathons, a winter lecture series, lantern tours, and in the past, historical reenactments of a British encampment.

Section 1.3: A Chronology of the Mulford House

In 1676, the parcel of land today occupied by the Mulford House was allotted to Captain Josiah Hobart, a relative newcomer to East Hampton. This land had previously been set aside for men who were blacksmiths by trade, but it was Hobart who in 1680 built a permanent home, of which structural remnants can be seen today (see Figure 15).⁹ Following Hobart's death in 1711, the executors of his estate conveyed the property to Samuel Mulford in 1712. This established Mulford ownership of the house and land,

⁹ Hopping, et al., 29-42.

which continued until the 1940s with only a brief break in ownership in the eighteenth century.¹⁰

The house today little resembles the 1680 structure. Hobart built a medieval-looking two-story household, with casement windows and two façade gables (see Figure 8). The eastern half of the house was modified in 1720 for unknown reasons, though a natural disaster such as a hurricane seems likely. As a result, the original eastern half was removed and replaced by a one-story room with a lean-to roof. The western portion of the house was not altered, but along the entire north side, a kitchen and bedroom were added. To ensure that there was sufficient room in the kitchen and bedroom, the pitch of the roof was adjusted from 50° to 45°. Furthermore, the remaining western façade gable was removed and all the casement windows were replaced with newly fashionable sliding sashes. In order to accommodate Capt. Matthew Mulford (1689-1774) and the family of his son David, final alterations occurred circa 1750. These renovations included extending the east end of the house to two-stories and the addition of a one-story room attachment. These renovations are attributed to Captain Matthew Mulford, the third occupant. He had received the house from his father, even though Samuel Mulford (1644-1725) would live for several more years.¹¹ Captain Mulford then passed the house to his son, Colonel David Mulford. It remained in his hands until his death in 1778 and then passed to his son, Major David Mulford.

¹⁰ Ibid., 23-25. Henry L. Mulford, the youngest son of Major David and Rachel Mulford rented the house from 1813-1831 to Rev. Ebenezer Phillips and then sold it to Zephaniah Hedges in 1831. The house was acquired in 1843 by Henry L. Mulford's first cousin, Samuel Green Mulford, thus re-establishing Mulford tenancy in the house until the 1940s.

¹¹ Hopping, et al., "Mulford House: An Historic Structure Report," 21. A more in depth description of the Mulford House's construction chronology can be found in the 1982 Historic Structure Report.

During Major David Mulford's (1754-1799) tenure as head of household, the 1790 census listed his wife Rachel, three sons, one daughter, two apprentices and five slaves.¹² However, after his death, his widow fell upon hard times and the property never regained its earlier prosperity. In 1813, the house was rented to Rev. Ebenezer Phillips (1786-1837) and the farm was leased to Jeremiah and Samuel Miller. Phillips remained as the head of household until the Mulfords sold the property to Zephaniah Hedges (1768-1847) in 1831. Hedges owned the house until his death when Samuel Green Mulford (1808-1891), a member of the original family, reacquired it. The property remained in Mulford hands until World War II. John Harrison Mulford (1910-1953), an eighth generation descendent of Samuel Mulford, was the last of the family to be born in the house, and also the last to own it.¹³

Section 1.4: Preservation Efforts

By the 1940s, the house and farm were in a severe state of disrepair. John Harrison Mulford¹⁴ no longer lived in the house and the Brooklyn Museum opened negotiations with him for the purchase of two of the rooms. Under the impression that the two rooms facing the street dated from approximately 1654, the Museum was intent on adding them to their collection. Mulford was also entertaining an offer from the Ladies' Village Improvement Society of East Hampton¹⁵ to purchase and remove the

¹² Ibid., 21.

¹³ Ibid., 23-25.

¹⁴ John Harrison Mulford was generally known as "Harrison" to all that knew him in East Hampton.

¹⁵ The Ladies' Village Improvement Society of East Hampton was founded in 1895. A women's organization, its establishment was spurred by the desire to beautify East Hampton. The organization's first two projects were to enhance the area surrounding the newly constructed Long Island Rail Road and to water the dusty and unpaved Main Street. As the organization grew, so did their number and breadth of

house to another location. John Harrison Mulford eventually hoped to build his family a new, modern home on the site.¹⁶ Eventually refusing both offers, Mulford decided to fix-up the house for his daughter; by 1946 the farm had become a riding academy.¹⁷ Ultimately, the riding academy was forced to close because it violated zoning regulation and the costs to repair the house proved to be prohibitive. The result was that in 1948 the Mulford House was once again put up for sale. The Brooklyn Museum again expressed interest in acquiring some of the interior woodwork and especially the exposed beams and this threat caused many citizens, spurred by the fervor of East Hampton's 1948 Tercentenary celebration, to petition the Village to buy the house and preserve it. However, East Hampton voters turned down the proposition to buy the house, whereupon several citizens, both summer and year-round residents raised the necessary \$30,000 themselves, which included Maidstone Club donations. After purchasing the house, it was deeded to the East Hampton Historical Society on September 2, 1948.

The house underwent extensive restoration work, overseen by architect Aymer Embury, in the early 1950s to return it to its presumed colonial appearance. Much of the restoration work was guided by the recommendations made by Singleton P. Moorehead. Moorehead was a well-respected and knowledgeable restoration architect and architectural historian associated with Colonial Williamsburg. For three days in 1949, he comprehensively surveyed the Mulford House and produced a document that would set

their projects. Today, the LVIS has over 350 members and continues to stay true to its 1895 mission of "preservation, conservation, education and beautification."

¹⁶ *East Hampton (NY) Star*, "LVIS Discusses Plan to Purchase H. Mulford House: Village Board to Be Asked to Acquire Old Sheep Pound For Park," November 8, 1945.

¹⁷ *East Hampton (NY) Star*, "300 Year Old Farm Now Riding Stable," March 28, 1946.

the course of the restoration.¹⁸ After the completion of the restoration work, the re-furnished Mulford House opened to the public in 1955.¹⁹

In 1982, a team of professionals from Columbia University completed a Historic Structure Report. This report described the periods of construction and proposed recommendations for interpretation, many of which were implemented. In the 1980s, Mulford House historic fabric was discovered in the barn, supposedly stored there after removal from the house during the 1950s restoration. The fabric salvaged included fragments of the baseboards and doorway that had been part of the wall between the kitchen and east parlor, as well as a structural stringer, portions of the back staircase and beveled and beaded wall boarding from uncertain areas of the house.²⁰ Furthermore, various boards were found to contain traces of paint, whitewash and nails. The “lost” fabric whose location was identifiable was quickly reinstalled to much fanfare and media interest.²¹ In 2001, the E.H.H.S received a grant from New York State to do exterior and interior restoration work on the house. Completed in 2004, this included wall shingle, roof and clapboard repair, as well as much needed work on the sills, windows, door, foundation and chimney. There have been no significant alterations or changes to the house since the 1950s except for instances of urgent maintenance.

¹⁸ Hopping, et al., A1.

¹⁹ *East Hampton (NY) Star*, “Mulford Farmhouse Refurnished; Opens Saturday, July 2,” June 9, 1955.

²⁰ Zachary N. Studenroth, “Mulford House: East Hampton, New York, East Parlor/Kitchen Restoration,” unpublished report, prepared for the East Hampton Historical Society, December 12, 1985, 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER TWO: Past to Present Interpretation

Section 2.1: Interior Plan

The Mulford House is a two-and-one-half story saltbox (see Figures 1-7). The front double-door in the southern façade opens into a small entryway (101), containing a winder stair to the second floor. The chimney block is behind the stairway. The southwestern room is the parlor (102)(see Figure 10) and the southeastern room is the hall (103). Directly north of the parlor, and occupying the northwestern corner of the first floor is a tiny bedroom (107). Adjacent to this bedroom and spanning the rest of the northern section of the house is the kitchen (106)(see Figure 9). The c. 1750 two-story addition on the east façade contains two rooms. Room 104 is accessed through the hall, while room 105 serves as an entryway into the kitchen (see Figure 26).

The rooms on either side of the southern passageway (201) on the second floor were bed chambers. Room 202, the parlor chamber, was the best bed chamber, and directly opposite it was the hall chamber (see Figures 11 & 13). The central chimney serves both rooms. To the north is a loft passageway (208) that skirts the rear of the chimney and connects both rooms. A steep staircase descends from this passageway into the kitchen. However, this loft passageway and staircase do not lend access to the servant's room (207)(see Figure 12). To the north of the loft passageway and over the kitchen, is the kitchen loft (206). The garret (301) is reached through the second-floor passageway (201), by a double-sided stairway. The root cellar is reached by an exterior doorway on the northern façade.

Section 2.2: Early Beginnings as a Museum, 1950s – 1970s

After several years of restoration, the Mulford House, opened in July, 1955. Launching itself as “one of the country’s oldest farmhouses,” it was available to the public for three months, three days a week.²² Before its sale to the E.H.H.S, the house had sat empty following a sale of its contents by Harrison Mulford in 1945.²³ When it opened as a museum, some Mulford heirlooms were returned but the majority of furnishings were either donated or loaned by local families. Edward Baker Strong, a descendent of William Mulford, and the curator of “Home, Sweet Home,”²⁴ was largely responsible for selecting the objects for the house. Since there were no probate inventories to use as a guide, Strong along with Richard Corwin and Frank Eldridge, used conjecture to aid them in choosing objects that could represent how the early Mulfords lived and went about their daily lives.²⁵ Women were also involved with the re-installation of the Mulford House. Maude Edwards Taylor furnished an entire room on the south side of the second floor and Mrs. Siro Strong planned the other second floor bedroom around William Mulford (1812 - 1879), a sea captain and noted whaler.²⁶

²² Eunice Telfer Juckett, “Historic Mulford Farmhouse Open for the Summer in East Hampton,” *New York Mirror*, June 24, 1955.

²³ *East Hampton (NY) Star*, “Furniture Sale At Mulford Homestead Thursday and Friday,” September 27, 1945.

²⁴ Home, Sweet Home Museum is located in East Hampton, NY and has been open to the public since December 15, 1928. A c. 1720s saltbox home, it is located directly south of the Mulford House and was constructed on former Mulford property. The house received its name because it was long thought that John Howard Payne’s 1822 song of that name was written about the house. It is now owned by East Hampton Village and celebrates the life of John Howard Payne as well as the former occupants of the house, Mr. And Mrs. Gustav Buek. The owners of Home, Sweet Home from 1907-1927, this couple helped preserve the house and furnished it with colonial revival and antique pieces and also collected John Howard Payne memorabilia. (accessed on February 16, 2007 @ www.easthampton.com/homesweethome)

²⁵ Juckett, “Historic Mulford Farmhouse Open for the Summer in East Hampton.”

²⁶ Ibid. Unfortunately, it is uncertain which south room Maude Edwards Taylor furnished and which room Mrs. Siro Strong furnished.

The 1955 interpretive approach was very loose compared to present standards. According to a June 30, 1955, article in the *East Hampton Star*, “it is not overdone, or crowded, or museum-like. The local antiques assembled are of various periods, as would be the case in any old home.”²⁷ There was no tight narrative and emphasis was placed on the earlier Mulfords, as well as East Hampton’s history. Local ladies, many of them members of the Ladies’ Village Improvement Society of East Hampton, volunteered and served as hostesses and regaled visitors with old East Hampton lore and anecdotes of colorful Mulford family members as they led tours through the house. Particularly interesting was the legendary Samuel “Fish Hook” Mulford, a noted citizen of high standing. As the story goes, he left East Hampton in 1704 to travel to London to protest the tax on whale oil. While there, he heeded warnings of thieves and sewed fishhooks into his pockets. Another well-known, and equally unsubstantiated story involved the Mulford House being a stop on the Underground Railroad. While stories like these may be apocryphal, they engaged visitors and tied East Hampton to the larger world.

Mulford descendants were also involved with the museum. On September 22, 1957, the ninth and tenth generations of the first Mulfords to settle in East Hampton convened at their historic homestead dressed in period costume to share their recollections.²⁸ Planned as the final event of the summer season, this reunion was a special occasion and was reported by the *New York Times*.²⁹

The growing interest in local history is further confirmed by the publication of Jeanette Edwards Rattray’s *East Hampton History: Including Genealogies of Early*

²⁷ *East Hampton Star*, “Mulford House Now Open to Public Three Days Weekly,” June 30, 1955.

²⁸ *New York Times*, “L.I. Clan to Stir Colonial Echoes,” September 15, 1957.

²⁹ Eunice Telfer Juckett, “Open House at Mulford Farm,” *New York Mirror*, September 22, 1957.

Families in 1953.³⁰ The American Revolution had directly touched East Hampton because it was occupied by British troops from 1776-1783 following the Battle of Long Island and the resulting patriotism spawned a desire to preserve objects associated with local Revolutionary War heroes, such as the Mulford House. The fact that many residents were descendants of the “founding fathers,” encouraged them to display their inherited possessions at the house sometimes blurring the distinction between house museum and “doll house.”

Section 2.3: Movement Towards an Academic Approach, 1980s – 1990s

As the museum became established, management began to search for ways to improve and professionalize the existing interpretation. Historic research became a top priority and the E.H.H.S commissioned reports and studies from experts. The last quarter of the twentieth century was also a time of transition for the E.H.H.S. The great participation and interest of the 1950s and 1960s began to wane with a brief spike around the Bicentennial in 1976. However, there was a “changing of the guard” as the original generation that had helped buy the house and preserve it, died or became less involved.

In 1980, Ross Fullam was commissioned to report on the practicality of turning the Mulford House and its property into a Living Historical Farm. Though focusing mainly on the grounds and outbuildings, he did write a brief description of the structural problems of the house and recognized that the interpretation of the house needed more evaluation and research. Ultimately, he found that the concept of a Living Historical

³⁰ Jeanette Edwards Rattray, *East Hampton History: Including Genealogies of Early Families* (Garden City, New York: Country Life Press, 1953).

Farm was not practical for the site, but his suggestion of thorough research was implemented.

The E.H.H.S took a step towards a professional interpretation when *Mulford House: An Historic Structure* was completed in 1982. This report, completed by a team from the Preservation program at Columbia University, researched primary sources and conducted structure analysis to develop a chronology of construction. After an extensive investigation, it was decided that the structural merits of the Mulford House warranted special attention. One of the primary recommendations of the Historic Structure Report was that the house should be preserved as an “architectural study house.”³¹ This decision affected the interpretation, which began to include exhibits that focused on colonial building construction. An important exhibit that resulted was “The Architectural Historian as Detective” that introduced the “architectural study house” concept and presented the Columbia team’s research methodology, including nail chronology, paint analysis, construction techniques and hardware.

The principal goal of an “architectural study house” is to display the “skeleton” of the house in key locations to give visitors insight into construction techniques (see Figure 14). Descriptive placards placed at wall cavities to define key framing components accompanied this house-framing exhibit. Other exhibits in the same vein included “fenestration,” “house carpentry,” and “paint analysis and paneling history.” A wall was reconstructed between the hall and kitchen to show the period construction, including framing members (posts, studs, braces) as well as lath with plaster. Other exhibits featured the fine art of furniture making and its similarities to 17th-century house

³¹ Hopping, et al., 1.

construction and an archaeology exhibit displaying the artifacts found during digs on the property.

The kitchen's theme was "home and hearth" and was interpreted as the room where most domestic activity occurred. Visitors could handle artifacts and read interpretive material about domestic life around the hearth ca. 1800. The kitchen loft was restored to an authentic "cluttered" appearance using old artifacts including trunks, lumber and a broken spinning wheel. Finally, the Historic Structure Report suggested the display of three small models of the Mulford House from each period of construction, ca. 1680, 1720 and 1750. Each of these detailed models would be displayed on stands with signage describing the architectural changes to the house during each period (see Figure 8).

These exhibits were strategically located throughout the house to educate the visitor about 17th and 18th century building techniques, the evolution of the Mulford House, and life in East Hampton during the colonial period. The goal was to engage visitors and invite them to imagine a life without advanced tools or modern building materials. East Hampton settlers faced difficulties, but they used the materials at hand and their knowledge of construction and created a sustainable society that evolved as technology improved.

In 1983, the parlor (102) was restored after the completion of a comprehensive study by Marshall Brown Weir.³² Using probate inventories from similar houses in the area, paint analysis, and decorative arts research, Weir proposed a new interpretation for the parlor. The recommendations were implemented after 1983 and its interpretation was

³² Marshall Brown Weir, "Restoration of the Parlor at the Mulford Farm, East Hampton, New York," unpublished Report, 1983.

a component of the “architectural study house” concept. The parlor was fitted with a barrier to prevent entry by visitors, and signage provided information about the room’s use, decoration, furnishings, and architectural changes from each of the three periods. Similar signage was placed in each of the rooms, describing the use and various artifacts located there.

Towards the end of the 1980s, Thomas Breen, a social historian with a specialization in early New England colonial history, was engaged by the E.H.H.S through a grant from the New York Institute for the Humanities. This grant paid Breen to be the “Resident Humanist” and to work with the Mulford Farm Planning Task Force.³³ Breen spent several summers researching old town records and other primary sources to piece together a comprehensive social history of the inhabitants of the house, primarily Samuel Mulford. His research was published in 1989 and proved insights into the social and actual history of East Hampton.³⁴

Following Breen’s residency, the E.H.H.S began to focus on eighteenth-century social history and the occupations of earlier generations of Mulfords. An exhibit, “The World of Samuel Mulford,” shed light on the risks of maritime commerce and the extensive trade links was throughout the colonies. Though the tour script focused mainly on “Merchant” Samuel Mulford, the development of East Hampton as an agricultural community was also discussed.

In the 1990s, the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (SPLIA) became involved with the “Mulford Planning Team” and made several suggestions.

³³ T.H. Breen, *Imagining the Past* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1989),

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³⁴ T. H. Breen, *Imagining the Past* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1989).

They downplayed the “architectural study house” approach and suggested that more focus should be placed on one period, mainly the lifespan of David Mulford (1725-1778) and his family. In order to reinterpret the house, the exhibits “The World of Samuel Mulford” and the “Architectural Historian as Detective” would be moved either to the Clinton Academy or to an 18th-century barn on the property. The group reasoned:

The current installation was confused, too didactic and lacking in excitement or focus. Despite the intention to provide information and experience about architecture and the development of a house over time as a result of changes in architectural style and approach the actual experience for the visitor seems to be one of mixed messages between an unfinished house and a gallery installation.³⁵

Ultimately, the Mulford Planning Team settled on an interpretation date of 1790, though the installation would represent 1700 through to 1800. This was based on the conclusion that events and changes in décor and architecture were significant enough to be the subject of exhibits dating from that time period. It was also a period of prosperity for the household. Since 1790 was chosen, Major David Mulford (1754-1799) and his wife Rachel became the focus, instead of his father Colonel David Mulford. Major David Mulford was a weaver and his occupation became a large part of the new interpretation. Flax, looms, and spinning wheels were introduced to teach visitors the skills of weaving.

The Mulford House was closed for reinstallation and reopened in June 2002. Changes included interpretation of the “servant/slave room” (207), as well as interpretation of the former “Architectural Detective Room” as the Mulford House common room. The old “Samuel Mulford room” (104) became David & Rachel’s study and the “hall chamber” (203) became the children’s bedchamber. All of these changes

³⁵ “NYSCA Final Report Draft – Mulford Planning,” East Hampton Historical Society, Internal Correspondence, Undated.

were intended to paint a more even-handed depiction of family life in the late 18th century. The E.H.H.S also consulted Welsh Color & Conservation, Inc., to research mid-to-late 18th-century paints and colors used on the exterior. The E.H.H.S consistently hired professionals to aide in the recreation of the Mulford House as a period museum.

Section 2.4: Present-day Installations and Interpretation

By 2006, the E.H.H.S had undergone two director changes within four years and the uncertainty of management had allowed properties such as the Mulford House to languish. Signage was removed, exhibits shifted, and a sense of interpretive cohesion was lost. The house was still open to the public, but visitation was declining. Though the rooms within the house are well-researched and furnished with impressive antiques and artifacts, nothing holds the attention of the visitor. The house has little to distinguish it from other house museums of its period. Visitor experience is negative because the interpretive tour is too passive to be engaging.

Remnants of the “architectural study house,” remain but without signage or explanations from docents. The “construction techniques” and “paint analysis” exhibits, looking very worn, occupy 104, formerly interpreted as “David & Rachel’s study.” Visitors move through all the rooms with no protective barriers and access to the “servant/slave room” (207) is precarious and illogical because the room’s doorway opens into the space that allows for the kitchen stairs to ascend to the loft passageway (see Figure 12). The garret is no longer part of the tour and the E.H.H.S uses it for storing items such as Christmas decorations. Tours are mainly self-guided with little docent supervision and no pamphlet literature. The meaning of the well-intentioned paint

chronologies on some of the walls lacks signage and is left to the imagination (see Figure 14).

The exterior of the house is well maintained, with well-groomed grounds and outbuildings open and inviting (see Figures 1-7). The outbuildings suggest how the property once operated but they are not currently interpreted and so their use is never fully grasped by the visitor.

The Mulford House has evolved from being a small museum and “hobby house” with great local support to a professionalized institution with waning visitation. Research and well-intentioned studies have been commissioned to help make the Mulford House the best that it can be, but it continues to lag. The house is well-maintained, the property is utilized for large events and it has a great location, easily visible from Main Street but something has gone wrong.

CHAPTER THREE: Case-Studies

Section 3.1: Case-Study Introduction: Wyck, Stenton, and Cliveden

The three case studies chosen each closely parallel the Mulford House or have similar themes. Though each is operated by a separate entity, the case-studies belong to “Philadelphia’s Historic Northwest,” an umbrella organization comprised of the communities of Germantown, Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill. Banding together has benefited them substantially and they all share the common goal of promoting the area as a desirable tourist destination.³⁶ Since authenticity is the main objective, each of these sites has a focused interpretation with specific themes. Adequately staffed, with educational programming, active boards, experienced Executive Directors and community involvement, the Germantown sites have a lot to offer a smaller house museum such as the Mulford House. Though from different socio-economic backgrounds, the former occupants of the case-studies were highly influential in Philadelphia society as were the Mulfords in East Hampton. Ranging from a small-museum to one of national significance, each Germantown museum is considered comparable to the Mulford House in issues faced.

³⁶ The Philadelphia Historic Northwest website offers an extensive calendar of events. Each historic site offers a wide-range of events and are open to the public. By promoting themselves on the website, the sites are attempting to reach a wide audience. Furthermore, all of the sites participate in the Germantown Festival, the largest event of the year.

Section 3.2: Wyck – “A Home, Not a Museum”

The Wyck Association tells the story of Wyck, the quietly elegant home, historic gardens, farm buildings, and collection of objects and papers that reflect the everyday life of one Philadelphia family over three hundred years.³⁷

Built in 1690, Wyck had been the home of nine generations of the same family, the Wistars and the Haines (see Figures 16 & 17). Originally a 50-acre working farm, Wyck gradually shifted from intense agricultural use in the late 18th century and evolved into a summer and later a year-round residence and well-known estate for this influential Quaker family. As Philadelphia grew throughout the nineteenth century, Germantown developed into a fashionable suburb and the Haines family gradually sold off small parcels to new community members attracted to the area’s proximity to Philadelphia as well as its beautiful neighborhoods.

Wyck contributed to the beauty of its neighborhood because gardening was a family passion and a tradition that was passed down with each generation. Fruit trees, herb, and vegetable gardens were all planted, but it was the roses that were especially a source of pride. The planned rose garden dates to 1820; it contained several prized varieties of roses and was the showpiece of the estate. Detailed diaries kept by several family members described the annual plantings and maintenance of the gardens. These diaries would later guide Wyck’s management, ensuring that the gardens, and especially the rose garden, would be restored as authentically as possible.

³⁷ “About Us...Mission Statement,” Wyck Association, <http://www.wyck.org/about.html>, (accessed October 26, 2006).

By the mid-twentieth-century, Wyck had ceased to be a year-round residence and was left primarily in the care of hired gardeners. Though the house and gardens gradually fell into a state of moderate neglect, the family had long before recognized the historic nature of their home and had begun to look into the preservation options for the house. After the last generation of Haines/Wistars to call Wyck home died, the house passed into a trust that had been created for its preservation. In the early 1970s, efforts were begun to reclaim the gardens from overgrowth.³⁸ Therefore, in 1974, just a year after work was undertaken on the property, Wyck was opened to the public for the first time.³⁹

Wyck, now administered by the Wyck Association, is a National Historic Landmark and was listed on the National Register in 1971 and the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 1956. With an annual operating budget of \$200,000, Wyck still has experienced numerous challenges to become successful as a small house museum. However, fundraising is very successful, with approximately \$110,000 or 55% being raised each year and the “Friends of Wyck,” which has 200 members also helps out. Facing competition from better-known Germantown neighbors with a national heritage, the management at Wyck needed to think creatively to succeed in a museum-saturated market. The solution was a stipulation by the family that the house must be interpreted as a home, and not as a museum.

Wyck represents a house that has gone through a series of changes, without a defined period of significance. All periods of the house are represented in both

³⁸ “Garden History,” Wyck Association, <http://www.wyck.org/gardens.html>, (accessed October 26, 2006).

³⁹ Ibid.

furnishings, though the exterior represents the renovation completed by William Strickland in 1824. All the objects used within the home belonged to the family, which gives the site a level of authenticity that is hard to match. To further enhance integrity, all of the family's papers and diaries have been preserved and are regularly researched to ensure that the house and grounds are accurate. Since the Wyck is interpreted as a home, there is no signage or typical museum-exhibits inside the house. Therefore the visitors must rely on the docent to guide them through the house and enhance the experience, though old photographs are placed about the rooms to make them more personal.

The landscape has also maintained a high level of historic integrity, although the barn was sold and converted into a residence. It is interpreted as an accumulation of periods, with nothing dismantled to present a false place in history. This layering of significance achieves a rich setting, rife with varied buildings such as the coach house, ice house, and garden sheds that have been restored. Though an outdoor modern bathroom and an Education Center have been built recently, they both blend with their surroundings and are sensitively located and do not compromise the integrity of the property.

One of Wyck's significant preservation strengths is its willingness to actively engage the Germantown community. Acknowledging that visitorship has been declining over recent years, Wyck has made monumental efforts to encourage the community as well as other Germantown institutions to become involved with programs. Many of Wyck sponsored lectures and workshops are held in the Educational Center and they are focused on garden topics (see Figure 18). Furthermore, during the summer, Wyck offers a concert series on the grounds, which is free to the public.

Recognizing that its landscape and gardens are the chief draw, Wyck has begun to capitalize on its major asset. Wyck will soon commence a pilot program involving the vegetable gardens in the rear of the property. Labeled “CSA” or “Community Supported Agriculture,” members of the Germantown community can pay a fee to support the vegetable gardens.⁴⁰ They are then entitled to produce throughout the summer and fall. This is just one initiative that allows the landscape to remain viable as well as contribute to the overall goal of presenting Wyck as the home of the Haines (see Figure 19).

Another plan is to allow the Education Center to be used as community space, or a “neutral site,” for meetings of groups or individuals.⁴¹ By making the public more aware of what Wyck has to offer, it is raising its visibility and hopefully visitorship. The goal is attract the public for other purposes and then to entice to visit the museum on their own time. Increasing traffic through the site can raise awareness and it is a smart strategy to follow. However, other than tours, the CSA proposal, and loaning out the Educational Center, Wyck does not offer its site for public use. Weddings and other functions, such as garden shows, are not permitted here.

Wyck does a great job at integrating the grounds with the interpretation of the house. The “CSA” or “Community Supported Agriculture” program is a wonderful idea to utilize the landscape as it had previously been used while also building community support. The Mulford House too was once farmed and still has viable land in the back of the property, providing an opportunity to initiate a program similar to the one at Wyck. The summer months would be perfect for this type of activity because the site hosts several events on the property and therefore it would be easy to engage the visitors.

⁴⁰ John M. Groff, Interview by Maria Dayton, Personal, Germantown, PA., November 28, 2006.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Farming this back lot would remain true to the prior use by adding another layer of authenticity to the property and could also prove to be an educational tool to teach traditional farming methods.

Wyck suffers from many of the same preservation issues as other small house museums. It requires significant upkeep, which generally depends on fundraising and a high volume of visitors. Wyck's lagging visitorship does not necessarily indicate that its in trouble and by involving the community and retaining qualified staff to maintain the grounds, Wyck is protecting its best asset. Though there still has been no definitive increase in visitorship, there is still a potent optimism pervading the site and visitorship success might be right around the corner.

Section 3.3: Stenton – “Changes Over Time”

Stenton will rely on a material culture approach, treating its buildings, landscape, furnishings and archaeological collections as objects that can tell us a great deal about the experiences of people, and the Logan family in particular, in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The objects are evidence of how life was lived at Stenton. Guided tours will be object focused, linking objects with the broader themes outlined in this Interpretative Plan. This interpretive methodology will be supported by the extensive documentation that exists related to Stenton and the Logans. The exceptionally well-preserved nature of the site, particularly the mansion, is key to the visitor experience. At the same time, the urban setting presents challenges in conveying the context of a 500-acre estate. Still visitors are impressed by the authenticity of the site, and this helps to develop a sense of connection with the past...⁴²

Stenton was the country estate of William Penn's secretary, James Logan (1674-1751), one of colonial Pennsylvania's leading political individuals. An integral figure, Logan built a home that befitted his great stature. Constructed between 1723 and 1730,

⁴² “Interpretive Philosophy,” Stenton, <http://www.stenton.org/research/plan.cfm>, (accessed November 2, 2006).

Stenton is of Georgian design and originally the center of a large 500-acre estate (see Figures 20 & 21). Stenton acted as a center of power within the colony of Pennsylvania and it was here that Logan played host to important visitors such as Benjamin Franklin and John Bartram during the last twenty years of his life. However, Stenton also served as a “crossroads of civilization” and he twice welcomed large groups of Native Americans to camp on the grounds while he conducted business with their leaders.

Originally a large working farm, Stenton gradually became more of a gentleman’s estate, but it still remained a diverse and complex place. Indentured servants and tenant farmers worked the land and though the Logans were Quakers, they owned slaves. It was Dinah, a freed slave that saved Stenton from certain destruction by the British during the American Revolution. Her story has become an integral aspect of the interpretation and highlights the complex web of relationships that tied the Logans and their servants to Stenton.

Three generations of the Logan family resided at Stenton and all contributed to the history and preservation of the place. By the late 18th-century, the Logan family recognized the importance of their home and made an effort to preserve its historic character. Best known is Deborah Logan, the wife of James Logan’s grandson, George. She kept detailed diaries documenting the daily activities at Stenton, transcribed James Logan’s papers, and shared her memories of Stenton with John Fanning Watson, a Philadelphia historian.⁴³

Today, the house and grounds of Stenton are owned by the City of Philadelphia, and operated by the National Society of The Colonial Dames of America. A chain-link

⁴³ John Fanning Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania*, (Philadelphia, PA: John Pennington, 1843).

fence encloses the site and warehouses overlook one part of the property. The house is barely visible from the street and requires large signage to direct visitors. It is a National Historic Landmark and was placed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 1956 and on the National Register in 1966. Despite its issue of location, one of Stenton's great strengths is that it was well-cared for and preserved with a light hand by the Logans, and later the Colonial Dames and therefore retains significant historic integrity.

Stenton employs two full-time staff members as well as numerous part-time staff and volunteers. The board is very active and though Logan descendants visit occasionally, the most direct descendants reside in England. With an annual operating budget of approximately \$180,000, Stenton is supported by the Colonial Dames, earned income, donations, an endowment, and grant funding. The endowment held by the NSCDA/PA specifically for Stenton has held fairly steady around \$400,000, but in 2006 Stenton received a major gift as part of their Capital Campaign, which increased the endowment to about \$900,000.⁴⁴ The Colonial Dames further supplement income through occasional events and membership drives for the *Friends of Stenton*. The *Friends of Stenton* has about two hundred members, with membership costing twenty-five dollars. Membership perks include free admission, invitations to Stenton events, and the twice-yearly newsletter. Stenton has joined with other Germantown historic sites to promote events such as the Germantown Festival and was very involved with the celebration of Benjamin Franklin's 300th birthday.

In 2002, Stenton modified their interpretive philosophy by completing a comprehensive study, which was funded by grants received from the Heritage Investment

⁴⁴ Stephen Hague, Interview by Maria Dayton, Personal, Germantown, PA., January 29, 2007.

Program and the Pennsylvania Humanities Council.⁴⁵ By putting together a diverse team of inter-disciplinary humanities scholars, interviewing Stenton staff and volunteers, as well as conducting visitor surveys for three years, the resulting 2002 Interpretive Plan achieved a well-rounded representation of Stenton. Four themes were teased out from the extensive history of Stenton and interpretation would revolve around them. These four themes are: 1.) The Stenton Network: A Center of Colonial Power; 2.) James Logan: The Central Figure in Stenton's History; 3.) The Logan "Plantation": A Diverse Community; and 4.) The Women of Stenton: Deborah, Dinah and the Dames.⁴⁶

This new interpretive plan focused on James Logan, but included the successive generations who lived in the house, so that approximately one-hundred years of history is covered. The plan was designed to expect and welcome change.⁴⁷ It is not meant to remain static and the 1999 plan itself was based on the 1994-revised edition of the 1986 plan. This elasticity can only benefit the site as new research is completed over the years and sentiments guiding the interpretation of house museums shifts.

This new interpretive route has proved successful and visitor reaction has been very positive and the approach has been cited as one of the main reasons for the great increase in visitorship at Stenton since 2000. According to Stephen Hague, the Executive Director, visitation has doubled since 2000, jumping from approximately 1,500 visitors to 3,500-4,000 in 2006.⁴⁸ Partly responsible for the increase in visitation is the boosted awareness of the site due to partnering with fellow Germantown historic sites, its

⁴⁵ "Introduction," Stenton: The Interpretive Plan," <http://www.stenton.org/research/plan.cfm>. (accessed November 2, 2006). The Heritage Investment Program is funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and operated by the Independence Visitor Center Corporation and the Pennsylvania Humanities Council is the state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Stephen Hague, Interview by Maria Dayton, Personal, Germantown, PA., January 29, 2007.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

inclusion in Roger Moss' *Historic Houses of Philadelphia*,⁴⁹ and greater communication with local schools coupled with educational programming.

Docents (who do not wear period dress) lead tours throughout the house and will custom the visit to the interests and age level of the visitors. The docents are encouraged to attend programs and lectures given at Stenton to refresh and add to their knowledge. The displays in the rooms are occasionally changed so as to coincide with a great event, such as Ben Franklin's 300th birthday in 2006. Other displays include archaeology artifacts unearthed at the site during digs. These objects add a further layer of authenticity to the house.

Stenton has an excellent website that is easy to peruse and is laden with pertinent information, including their interpretative plan. By posting the interpretative plan, Stenton allows visitors to experience the site before arriving and gives the visitor a richer experience while on the tour. The history of the house and the themes of the interpretation help visitors achieve a greater understanding of the importance of the Logan family and the house itself. The Mulford House could benefit from having scholarly research posted on the E.H.H.S website. If the old photographs were digitized to create an online photograph gallery, it might entice people to visit the site to learn more about it.

Stenton is on the right track and though it suffers from poor location, management has been able to partially work around that. With such an increase in visitorship, Stenton has successfully managed to tap into the community as well as neighboring schools and to maintain this accomplishment; interpretation is constantly fine-tuned with the aide of

⁴⁹ Roger W. Moss, *Historic Houses of Philadelphia: A Tour of the Region's Museum Homes* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

programming and lectures. By centering the interpretation around themes, Stenton's purpose is easy to grasp by the visitor. This well-thought out and clear approach is an example that could be followed by the Mulford House.

Section 3.4: Cliveden – “A Leader in Museum-Community Relations”

Cliveden tells the story of a stone house that stopped George Washington's army and sheltered one family for two centuries. Cliveden's day of fame – October 4, 1777, the Battle of Germantown – shaped the war that made America free and the lives of the people who called it “home.” At this rare place, original architecture, artifacts and family papers converge with a great moment in history to create a vivid picture of the past.⁵⁰

Completed in 1767, Cliveden, the country summer house of Benjamin Chew, holds a special place in American history. Not only the center of the wealthy estate of one of colonial Philadelphia's most influential men, Cliveden also served as the staging ground for the important Battle of Germantown. In that battle, British troops barricaded themselves inside the house and shot at Washington's approaching army. Evidence of that battle remain today in the form of blood on a bedroom wall and pockmarks on the exterior from musket fire; they serve as reminders of the blood spilled and damage wrought to gain independence.

Benjamin Chew, an attorney for the Penn family, also held the position of Chief Justice of the Colony of Pennsylvania, an appointment from King George.⁵¹ One of the wealthiest men in Philadelphia during the colonial period, Chew, a one-time Quaker, eventually left Meeting, rejecting its anti-slavery and pacifist stance and adopted the

⁵⁰ “Cliveden,” National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1997.

⁵¹ “About Us...Basic History,” Cliveden of the National Trust, http://www.cliveden.org/int.asp?cat=aboutus&page=historical_overview#historical_overview (accessed March 1, 2007).

opulent lifestyle that his money afforded him.⁵² He had Cliveden designed in the latest English fashion and filled it with the finest furniture that Philadelphia's master craftsmen had to offer (see Figures 22 & 23). It was here that Chew spent summers with his family in the years preceding the American Revolution. Unfortunately, Chew's British connections made him suspect by his American neighbors and he was placed under house arrest in New Jersey for a year.⁵³ Therefore, he was not in residence when his house was taken over by British troops in the fall of 1777. After a fierce battle, General George Washington lost the Battle of Germantown and was forced to retreat with his army leaving seventy-five Americans dead.

In 1779, Chew sold his magnificent yet damaged house because his wealth was greatly depleted.⁵⁴ However, in 1797 after he had resuscitated his fortune, Chew repurchased Cliveden and it remained within the family until 1972, a total of seven generations.⁵⁵ Over the years, Cliveden welcomed the Marquis de Lafayette and other dignitaries such as President William Howard Taft in 1912, the year of the 135th anniversary of the Battle of Germantown.⁵⁶ The home also witnessed its fair share of both fortune and scandal, but remained an enduring landmark in the Germantown community. The Chew family cared for the house while modernizing it to fit their needs. However, no longer able to give the historic structure the care it needed, the Chew family donated the house, its artifacts and its remaining six acres of land to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1972.

⁵² Ibid.
⁵³ Ibid.
⁵⁴ Ibid.
⁵⁵ Ibid.
⁵⁶ Ibid.

Cliveden is now a co-stewardship property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Prominently located just off busy Germantown Avenue, Cliveden benefits from this visibility as well as its association with the Battle of Germantown. It is a National Historic Landmark and was placed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 1956 and on the National Register in 1966. In 2006, David Young was hired as the new Executive Director of Cliveden. Having already worked at Historic RittenhouseTown and the Johnson House Historic Site (both in Germantown), Young brought a new energy to the house as well as the desire to build partnerships with the other Germantown sites.

Along with the Executive Director, there are three other full-time staff members, seven part-time staff members and thirteen docents. They all work under a Board of twenty-two trustees and it is required that two Chew family members always sit on the Board. These two members, along with the rest of the Board are very active and heavily involved with the operation of the site.

Being a National Trust property, Cliveden has access to resources that other historic sites do not, but the site is still responsible for most of its own funding. With an operating budget of just under \$500,000, more than double that of the other case-studies, Cliveden makes fundraising a priority. Funding comes from an endowment, renting of Upsala,⁵⁷ admissions, grants and community events. The *Friends of Cliveden* has approximately 370 members, with membership lasting three years and though there is no

⁵⁷ Upsala is across Germantown Avenue from Cliveden. Built in 1798 by John Johnson Jr., the same family that built the Johnson House, it was inhabited by the family until 1941. It was preserved with the help of Frances Anne Wistar and was opened for public tours. In 2004, Cliveden assumed administration of the site and it was closed to the public. Sections of the mansion are now available to be leased for events.

annual membership drive, there are plans for one in the future.⁵⁸ Membership is renewable and depending on how much one donates to the *Friends of Cliveden*, different benefits are entitled. The basic donation of \$35 includes a subscription to *Preservation Magazine*, free or discounted admission to Cliveden and other National Trust properties as well the Cliveden newsletter and invitations to Cliveden events.⁵⁹

Over the last few years, Cliveden has retreated a bit from its role as strictly a house museum and has broadened its function in the community. The increase in visitorship can be attributed to Cliveden raising awareness of the site by being a good neighbor and becoming increasingly community oriented. It is the community events that have become mainly responsible for the 60% increase in visitorship in 2006, with 3,000 visitors to the house and 18,000 visitors served at events including the Revolutionary Germantown Festival, public lectures, “Jazz at Cliveden,” and poetry readings.

Management has been diligent about distributing visitor surveys and feedback has been positive. The docents are paid and they are instructed to focus tours around the Battle of Germantown and Benjamin Chew, though there is still an essence of a “changes over time” concept. The more collective approach allows for a broader interpretation of the house and events that occurred there. Certain rooms have main themes that the docents relay to the visitor. Such themes include “house as hero” and the “Chew family wealth and prestige.” There are no exhibits inside the house, but a few are located in the restored barn, which serves as office space, a gift shop, a community gathering area, and exhibit space (see Figure 24). All of the tours begin in the barn with an introductory

⁵⁸ David Young, Interview by Maria Dayton, Personal, Germantown, PA., February 1, 2007.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

video and an exhibit on the slaves and servants of the Chew family. There is not a lot of signage in the house or on the grounds, but the Director would like to add more in the future. Signage outside would allow visitors to take a self-guided tour and experience the grounds at their own pace.

Cliveden prides itself on its authenticity and the Chew family owned approximately 90% of the objects in the house.⁶⁰ David Young acknowledged that the organization is so overwhelmed by the large amount of artifacts that it owns, that it is actually trying to sell artifacts that cannot be traced to the Chew family.⁶¹ This level of authenticity is something that the Mulford House could aspire to. Not all of the artifacts in the Mulford House belonged to them and the interpretation of the Mulford House limits its installation possibilities.

Cliveden's growth as a community-minded entity has greatly improved its standing in the neighborhood. Though the Mulford House does not suffer from poor neighborhood relations, Cliveden still offers a fine example of a museum stepping outside of its historically strict confines and branching out into the community while still fulfilling its mission as an educational institution.

Section 3.5: Further Recommendations for the Mulford House

Educational programming such as the "History Hunters Youth Reporter Program" tie these three sites together. Along with the Johnson House Historic Site (also in Germantown), History Hunters is designed for 4th and 5th graders and closely follows guidelines set by both the Pennsylvania and District Standards and Core Curriculum for

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

these grades. This program was first formulated by a consulting firm, which approached several Germantown sites about a possible scavenger hunt program.⁶² Though this particular firm never got this off the ground, the sites liked the idea immensely.⁶³ The four sites received grant money from the Heritage Investment Program of the Pew Charitable Trusts to formulate a curriculum to be created by a team of scholars, interpretive experts and teachers.⁶⁴

The pilot program proved to be quite successful and the 2003-2004 school year was the first year of the full program and 1000 students participated. History Hunters has grown to 1,700 students equaling approximately 7,000 total visits for the four sites.⁶⁵ The program is free and admission and transportation are provided. Literacy-based, the program includes a workbook as well as Internet materials. The schoolchildren begin their visits in October with Stenton and then proceed to Cliveden, Wyck and the Johnson House. Students are required to complete activities and a post-visit writing assignment, which is then posted on the History Hunters website. Each of these sites has something new for the students to learn and engages them with their different scenarios. Stenton focuses on life in colonial America, Cliveden on the American Revolution, Wyck on its residents' involvement with horticulture, science, business and social responsibility and the Johnson House on its role as an Underground Railroad Stop in the 1850s. However, as different as each site is, they all share common threads and therefore give children a better understanding of life in Germantown at different time periods.

⁶² Stephen Hague, Phone Interview by Maria Dayton, East Hampton, March 8, 2007.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Staff for the program is minimal and one person books the tours and organizes the training for the eight to ten guides. Therefore, it does not eat up a lot of staff time at the individual sites. If a similar program were instituted in the East Hampton area, it would give school children a greater understanding of the town they grew up in, while educating them about historic events. The Mulford House could be coupled with “Home, Sweet Home,” the other E.H.H.S properties or any other number of museums in the area, including Sag Harbor, Bridgehampton or Southampton.

It is interesting to note that at all three case-studies, the docents do not wear period clothing, nor do they portray a “character” while giving tours. This has both positive and negative components. Many visitors typically find period clothing and role-playing to be ineffective and humorous. At the three sites of the case-studies, management prefers contemporary dress to keep it simple, and so docents will be taken seriously. At the Mulford House docents wear period clothing which is not effective; period clothing would be better suited for special events such as the American Revolution reenactments and should not be used on the regular tour. Furthermore, all three sites cited the positive affect that ongoing docent training sessions or events have on tours. Training is an opportunity for docents to learn new information and improve their tours. Finally, it is apparent from all three case-studies, that to survive in such a competitive field it is crucial to partner with neighboring historic museums or sites. Not only do the museums benefit, but so do visitors. If each site has a specific audience, then all the sites may gain a wider audience. With cross-promotion and joint events, visitor experience is positive because each site has its own “hook.” Though the sites all date very roughly to the same period of construction, each has recognized that it is important not to solely

focus on just the American Revolution or colonial life. The Mulford House might find it advantageous to branch every so slightly out from its current defined period of significance in order to capture a larger audience and achieve more relevance within the East Hampton community.

CHAPTER FOUR: Towards a New Interpretation

Section 4.1: Towards a New Interpretation: British Occupation of East Hampton, 1776-1783

The current interpretation at the Mulford House focuses on the home life of Major David Mulford, his wife Rachel, their children and slaves with a target date of 1790 though the furnishings reflect the entire 18th-century. This interpretation ignores the extraordinary events that transpired in East Hampton during the war for American independence and prevents the visitor from developing a sense of how the Mulford House fit into the greater picture of East Hampton, the town's role in the American Revolution, and its post-war recovery and growth. If the interpretation is shifted to reflect the British occupation of East Hampton following the Battle of Long Island in 1776, the E.H.H.S will be able to explore the daily life of the residents of East Hampton, including the Mulford family, under British occupation. Furthermore, the broad outlines of the Revolution are known to most Americans. By placing East Hampton within the Revolution, visitors may understand the interpretation more thoroughly because they can relate it to previous knowledge of that war.

Few of today's East Hampton residents and visitors are aware the British military occupied East Hampton for seven years, 1776-1783. During these years, the residents suffered hardships and great injustices, from both the British and their fellow colonists. East Hampton's strategic location as well as its fertile soil and abundant stock made it ripe for plunder by both the British and the Patriots is a story relatively unknown today.

Because the American Revolution was so long ago, contemporary Americans do not understand how directly it affected the men, women and children of the East End. By centering the interpretation more upon daily life in East Hampton under British military rule and less on one local family, visitors can gain greater appreciation for the role East Hampton and its residents played in this critical time in American history. Moreover, as the focus should be upon Colonel David Mulford, the father, rather than Major David Mulford, the Mulford family will not be forgotten within this new interpretation.⁶⁶

Colonel Mulford's heroic war exploits and high standing in the community are important factors in the new interpretation helping tie the house and family together with the story of East Hampton. The main goal for this interpretation is to explore the trials and tribulations that the residents coped with in the face of the enemy. What were their actions before and during the war? How did the Mulford family react to the events happening around them? Their stories will be used to connect them with the rest of the town's actions in order to create parallels and formulate a streamlined interpretation.

This proposed interpretation has not been implemented at the Mulford House or anywhere else in the Town of East Hampton. Though several books have been written on the topic of the American Revolution and East Hampton, the town's stories have not been exhibited in any of the museums. This is an opportunity to offer the public a new view of East Hampton and its residents that is relatively unknown. It is difficult to locate first-hand accounts of the ordeal that many residents suffered and Town Records and the Trustee's Journal are for the most part notably silent upon matters that dealt with the

⁶⁶ David Mulford was a Captain before the American Revolution and gained the rank of Major after the war. He served in Colonel Josiah Smith's (from Moriches) Regiment.

British. However, there is solid evidence respecting Colonel David Mulford's actions throughout the war and they can serve to flesh out the interpretation.⁶⁷

East Hampton residents were patriotic and sympathetic to the New England colonists in Boston that were the first to suffer the British occupation. The East Hampton men joined the militia in order to fight if necessary to protect their innate rights.

However, after the Battle of Long Island on August 29, 1776, East Hampton was left to languish behind enemy lines for seven years with little hope of liberation. Many residents fled to Connecticut, while others remained behind to wait it out. Neither group judged the other for it was self-preservation that forced many of their actions during the war. The last of the British departed from Long Island in 1783, but when East Hampton residents returned from Connecticut, they found a desolate and wasted landscape.

Section 4.2: Events Before the War and Life Under British Occupation

Because the western end of Long Island had been under Dutch rule until 1664 and many of East Hampton's residents descended from English New England colonists, East Hampton always considered itself closer to Connecticut and New England than New York. When East Hampton learned that Parliament closed the port of Boston in March, 1774, after a series of patriotic protests, East Hampton residents felt a sense of kinship and sympathy. In response, on June 17, 1774, the able-bodied men of East Hampton gathered to meet and discuss their response to the deteriorating relations between the

⁶⁷ In 1774, Col. David Mulford joined East Hampton's Committee for Correspondence and was appointed Muster Master. In this year, he also signed along with his son Major David Mulford the Articles of Association. He marched to Brooklyn with his troops before the Battle of Long Island, but after the Continental Army retreated, his troops were dispersed and told to return home. On September 7, 1776, he is forced to swear allegiance to the King after his house is surrounded by British troops. He then flees to North Stonington, Connecticut with his cattle, household goods and slaves.

colonies and Britain. At that meeting, an important document was signed that would begin to steer them in the direction of emancipation from Britain. It read in part as follows:

1st voted, that we will to the utmost of our abilities assert and in a lawful manner defend the liberties and immunities of British America, that we will co-operate with our brethren in this colony in such measures as shall appear best adapted to save us from burdens we fear, and in a measure already fell, from the principles adopted by the British Parliament respecting the Town of Boston in particular, and the British Colonies in North America in general.⁶⁸

The men were greatly aggrieved that Boston was being treated so poorly and they were adamant that this behavior was not to be tolerated. As a result, at this meeting several of the town's men were elected to a Committee of Correspondence with New York City and to represent East Hampton at the Provincial Congress. It is important to note that one of the men elected was Colonel David Mulford.⁶⁹

In late 1774, the First Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. One of its major accomplishments was the creation of the Articles of Association, which were officially dated October 20, 1774. This petition of grievances declared "the salvation and the rights and liberties of America depends, under God, in the firm union of its inhabitants,"⁷⁰ and the representatives also agreed "never to become slaves, and do associate under all the ties of religion, honor, and love to our country, to adopt and endeavor to carry into execution, whatever measures may be recommended by

⁶⁸ Ilse O'Sullivan, *East Hampton and the American Revolution*, (Publication of the East Hampton Town Bicentennial Committee, 1976) 13.

⁶⁹ Geus, 37.

⁷⁰ "The Articles of the Association, October 20, 1774," Constitution.org http://www.constitution.org/bcp/art_assoc.htm (accessed March 15, 2007).

the Continental Congress.”⁷¹ The Articles of Association were then sent to the Colonies to be distributed within the towns. By signing the Articles, an individual was acknowledging sympathy with the Whigs/Patriots; in East Hampton, every able-bodied man signed the document.⁷²

By 1775, the residents knew that they were at great risk of being occupied by the British. Taking New York and Long Island would sever New England from the southern colonies. In addition, it was customary during the summer months that the town’s stock of 2,000 cattle, 3,000 sheep and many horses were taken to the grazing grounds in Montauk and often remained there until November.⁷³ The livestock represented a significant portion of the town’s economy and residents were dependent on them for both food and trade. In July 1775, a portion of the British fleet was spotted off of the coast of Montauk. With quick thinking and a clever ruse, a few men were able to trick the British into believing that an army was protecting the stock and therefore they sailed away to find easier pickings. The East Hampton Trustees Journal, dated August 9, contains a record of this event: “Agreed not to have any cattle go on to Meantauk till ordered as they were brought off on account of a fleet that appeared off ye point and went to Fishers Island after Cattle.”⁷⁴ This close call only increased the town’s worries. To lose the stock would be a catastrophe for many of the town’s residents who depended on them for survival. East Hampton leaders sent various pleas to the Continental Congress for aide to defend the stock as well as requests for ammunition and arms. As an attack seemed eminent, Congress acquiesced to their needs.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² O’Sullivan, 13.

⁷³ *East Hampton Town Records*, Vol. IV (Sag Harbor, N.Y.: J.H. Hunt, Printer, 1889) iv.

⁷⁴ *East Hampton Trustees Journal*, 1772-1807. Printed 1927, 90.

The Suffolk militia was organized by the end of August 1775, with Colonel David Mulford leading the eastern regiment.⁷⁵ It was he who read the Declaration of Independence to his regiment on July 27, 1776.⁷⁶ If there was a celebration after Independence was declared, it would have been short-lived. The British evacuated Boston in March, 1776, and had strengthened their position around New York City. General George Washington also began to reinforce his position, acknowledging that New York City was crucial for its port and its access to the Hudson River. On August 27, the Continental Army suffered several serious setbacks and were forced to surrender New York to the British. All of the fighting had occurred on western Long Island and did not play out near East Hampton. Colonel Josiah Smith's regiment of which Major Mulford was a part, had marched to western Long Island, but the battle was over before they could be of any use.⁷⁷ Immediately after the battle, Smith's soldiers were given permission to disband and return home to protect their families and property.⁷⁸ The Battle of Long Island left East Hampton to languish behind enemy lines for seven years with little hope of rescue or salvation.

The British required that Long Island residents sign an oath of allegiance to the King. East Hampton residents were appalled at such a requirement, but there was no other option. Judge H.P Hedges wrote in his memoirs this poignant statement, "What should they do? Take the oath and live? Refuse and die? They took the oath, but in heart were just as devoted to their country and hostile to their aggressors as before."⁷⁹

⁷⁵ O'Sullivan, 24.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 27.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 30.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 35.

Colonel Abraham Gardiner, a local man of standing and of dubious Loyalist leanings,⁸⁰ administered the oath to the people of East Hampton and it is interesting to note that he was the father of Rachel, Major David Mulford's wife. The oath to the Crown took several forms but the basic template read as follows:

I do swear upon the evangelist of Almighty God, that I hold true and faithful allegiance to his Majesty King George the Third of Great Britain, his heirs and successors; and hold an utter abhorrence of congresses rebellions etc., and do promise never to be concerned in any manner with his Majesty's rebellious subjects in America. So help me God.⁸¹

Colonel David Mulford, however at first refused to sign the allegiance. When the Mulford House was surrounded by British troops and Col. Mulford was threatened with imprisonment, Mulford finally signed.⁸²

By September 1776, the British commander Brigadier General William Erskine requested livestock.⁸³ Worried that all of Long Island's livestock would be left to the British, the New York Provincial Congress had sent a letter to Governor Trumbull⁸⁴ and several Connecticut towns, dated August 26, asking for aide to take the stock off Long Island and out of reach of the British.⁸⁵ This letter also petitioned for help to remove residents that wished to leave Long Island for safety. Both of these requests were met, but the former was taken almost too literally and Connecticut Patriots were guilty of

⁸⁰ Col. Abraham Gardiner's house on Main Street was used from time to time as the headquarters for the British. Today, it is the headquarters for the Ladies' Village Improvement Society of East Hampton. There has been debate on whether Gardiner was a Patriot or loyal to the King of England.

⁸¹ Frederic Gregory Mather, *The Refugees of 1776 from Long Island to Connecticut*, (Albany, N.Y.: J.B. Lyon Company, 1913), 116.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ O'Sullivan, 36.

⁸⁴ Governor Jonathan Trumbull was the Governor of Connecticut from 1769-1784. He was a great supporter of the American Revolution and a personal friend of General George Washington.

⁸⁵ O'Sullivan, 37.

plundering Long Island under the guise of giving aid. Their actions became so shocking that Reverend Samuel Buell⁸⁶ wrote to Governor Tryon,⁸⁷ “the people are as a torch on fire at both ends, which will speedily be consumed, for the Continental Whigs carry off their stock and produce and the British punish them for allowing it to go.”⁸⁸ He further expressed the hope that the Whigs would not “oppress the oppressed,” but the situation would not improve for years.⁸⁹

The victory of the British in the Battle of Long Island soon offered another dilemma to anyone who had pledged loyalty to the colonies by signing the “Articles of Association,” or was actively involved in the rebellion. Fearing repercussions from the British, the New York Provincial Congress recommended that the Patriots should flee to the mainland of Connecticut taking their families, valuable personal belongings, and livestock with them.⁹⁰ Jeannette Edwards Rattray, in her book *East Hampton History* wrote, “...whole families from the Hamptons with their household goods and chattels were loaded into anything that would float, and transported across Long Island Sound to Connecticut. Listed among the refugees are 171 heads of East Hampton families.”⁹¹ Among these “refugees of 1776” was Colonel David Mulford himself. With him he

⁸⁶ Reverend Buell was a source of strength and leadership for the East Hampton residents but in the recent past, his loyalties have been called into question. He became good friends with General Erskine and they often dined and hunted together. Buell is often credited with softening the General and influencing his decisions to favor the colonists.

⁸⁷ Governor William Tryon was the royal appointed Governor of New York. Extremely unpopular with the colonists, he was forced to take refuge on a British ship in New York City during the outbreak of the Revolution. He was able to return to power after General George Washington’s defeat at the Battle of Long Island in August, 1776.

⁸⁸ Geus, 42.

⁸⁹ O’Sullivan, 37.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Rattray, *East Hampton History: Including Genealogies of Early Families*, 159.

brought 25 heads of cattle, his household goods and servants and was ferried from Sag Harbor to Stonington by Captain Isaac Sheffield.⁹²

Though the E.H.H.S has conducted research on whether Col. Mulford's family fled with him to Connecticut, it has never been satisfactorily confirmed that his family did indeed accompany him. However, it is safe to assume that Col. Mulford took his family with him, so as not to leave them at the mercy of the British. Furthermore, it is uncertain if Major Mulford left for Connecticut as well, but several sources insist that he remained behind in East Hampton to oversee the house and property.⁹³ The 1776 census taken before the Battle of Long Island lists the following as living at the Mulford House Col. David, his wife Phebe Hunting Mulford, their children Matthew, Major David, Jonathan, Betsy, Esther, and Phebe, as well as four slaves over the age of sixteen and four slaves under the age of sixteen.⁹⁴

General treatment of the residents that stayed in East Hampton at the hands of the British varies according to which source one consults. Those who stayed may have fared better under the British than those who fled to Connecticut, even if "bands of soldiers [British] roaming around helped themselves to vegetables, fruit, chickens and even an occasional pig or cow."⁹⁵ The British officers did not generally condone these actions, but they could not stop the plundering. In an August 23, 1779 entry in the Journal of the Trustees, it is clear that the residents felt that a grievance needed to be addressed and "...agreed to send one man to New York to inform General Tryon that the Kings [sic]

⁹² Mather, 476.

⁹³ Sherrill Foster, "Timeline," Unpublished research completed for the East Hampton Historical Society, Undated.

⁹⁴ Mather, 477.

⁹⁵ Rattray, 160.

troops hath taken a number of cattle of the land of Montauk by way of plunder & sent one man to Montauk to watch the motion of the Kings [sic] ships.”⁹⁶ If the livestock was not plundered then an American seller often found himself receiving the short end of the deal from a British buyer.

The years dragged on and though main military action shifted more towards the south by 1778, the residents of East Hampton were still required to provide the British with livestock and other necessities while they remained within the town. The Trustees recorded these instances:

June 21, 1780: “Agreed for Jeremiah Conkling and Jeremiah Osborn to provide cattle and other necesares [sic] for the trops [sic] when in town and to see whose district in order to bring it in to a rate,”⁹⁷

December 31, 1781: “Whereas Government hath demanded forty tons of hay of the Inhabitants of the town the Trustees did assign each man the quantity that he should procure for Government.”⁹⁸

For the other colonies, the war ended on October 19, 1781, when General Cornwallis surrendered his army to Washington at Yorktown and the British fleet to the French under Admiral de Grasse. However, New York City and Long Island remained in the hands of Sir Henry Clinton and the British until the signing of the Treaty of Paris on September 3, 1783.

With the war finally over, residents slowly began to return home after years of uncertainty. Many found that their livestock gone, their fields and woodlands in shambles, and their houses rundown. Most people were never compensated for their

⁹⁶ *East Hampton Trustees Journal*, 99.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

losses. There is no mention in the Town Records of a celebration to mark the end of occupation, but only one entry, that read:

In the month of November, 1783, soon after the British troops evacuated New-York and the Americans had taken possession, we received orders to call a town meeting for the purpose of choosing Town Officers, under the Sate of New-York, which we accordingly did...⁹⁹

However, there was one more injustice that the residents of East Hampton and the rest of the Long Island had to overcome in order to put the war behind them. On May 6, 1784, the seventh session of the New York State Assembly enacted a war tax on the people of Long Island. Its purpose was to act “as compensation to other parts of the State for not having been in a condition to take an active part in the war against the enemy.”¹⁰⁰ Suffolk County (of which East Hampton is a part) was ordered to pay £10,000.¹⁰¹

Colonel Mulford, however, did not live to see the end of the War. As he died of smallpox in 1778, he did not return to East Hampton from Connecticut before his death. It was a sad end for a man that had put so much into fighting for American independence. His wife eventually returned to Long Island and remarried while the Mulford House passed to his eldest son, Major Mulford, a weaver by trade and aged 23. He then lived in the Mulford House with his family until his own untimely death in 1799.

Section 4.3: New Interpretation and Areas of Further Research

This new interpretation of the Mulford House would be inexpensive and not difficult for the E.H.H.S to undertake. The basic framework of a late eighteenth-century

⁹⁹ *East Hampton Town Records*, 244.

¹⁰⁰ O’Sullivan, 81-82.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

interpretation is already in place, although it needs to be both modified and clarified. The period of significance can retain Major David Mulford, but should be expanded to include Colonel David Mulford to enhance the Revolutionary aspects of the storyline. Docents will need to be trained thoroughly for the interpretation, but they already have some necessary information. The main adjustments will be the inclusion of Colonel David Mulford and the story of the British occupation of East Hampton.

All evidence of the architectural study house concept should be removed, including the open plaster and lath wall, the area of exposed beams, and the eelgrass insulation unless the E.H.H.S plans to incorporate the architectural case-study and knit it into the interpretation through the use of signage and discussion on the tour. Otherwise, the holes in the walls add nothing to the interpretation and are unnecessary for the new proposed tour.

Because the E.H.H.S does not have a gift or book shop, Room 104 could be the space to fill this need. While the room is not very large, there is enough space for several bookcases or tables. Since there are only a few places in East Hampton that sell local history books, it makes sense for the E.H.H.S to offer this amenity for visitors who may not necessarily visit the East Hampton Library or local bookstore. Items for purchase could include books on local history, local architectural history as well as books related to the American Revolution, both local, regional and on a national scale. A bookshop is always appreciated and hopefully it will encourage a visitor to learn more after the tour.

To implement this new interpretation, the living hall (103) could be used as an orientation space for visitors. This could be a temporary measure depending on whether the E.H.H.S converts the barn into a visitor center. The orientation space will be

invaluable to the visitor experience, for it would enable them to learn the initial historic background of the house. Here, the docent would discuss the founding and development of East Hampton as well as the construction of the Mulford House. The three models of the construction periods could be displayed and it would be helpful if there were laminated maps and pictures of the main characters on hand to illustrate other important points. The maps should include those that depict the boundaries of East Hampton from the 17th and 18th centuries as well as a map that illustrates the original homelots. Revolutionary maps should include those that depict troop movements during the Battle of Long Island. Portraits on display should include Governor Tryon, Governor Trumbull, Reverend Samuel Buell, Colonel David Mulford, Major David Mulford, as well as Colonel Abraham Gardiner.

To produce the desired interpretation, more research will be needed in several areas to clarify the facts and avoid excessive conjecture. Though it is certain that Colonel David Mulford fled to Connecticut with his family, it has never been satisfactorily proven that Major Mulford remained behind. Frederic Gregory Mather lists Major Mulford as a refugee,¹⁰² but it does not seem likely that he fled to Connecticut with his parents and left the home and farm unattended. Since he was a weaver by trade, it is possible that the British did not harass him, but this is unsubstantiated and research should be done in an effort to clear up this mystery.

Colonel Mulford fled to North Stonington, Connecticut in 1776 and yet nothing is known about the time in which he and his family lived as refugees. Future research could fill in gaps within the Mulford family timeline. It is possible that North Stonington, CT

¹⁰² Mather, 476.

has records of the refugees from Long Island and it could be that the Col. Mulford and his family are mentioned. He died there in 1778, so it is possible that there is a death certificate. Also, another topic related to Connecticut is how were these refugees treated during the years spent there? Furthermore, it would also be interesting to explore how many of East Hampton's refugees decided to remain in Connecticut after the war and what became of them in their new towns.

Furthermore, another topic that has never been fully studied in East Hampton is the common practice of slavery in the town as well as in the northern colonies. Slavery in the northern colonies (later states) is a topic that is generally unfamiliar to the public. Southern slavery is well-documented, but many do not realize that the northern colonies were just as likely to have slave-holding residents as the South, though usually not on such a vast scale. The slave trade was banned in the state of New York in 1788, but large loopholes existed that enabled slavery to continue in the state for years thereafter.¹⁰³

The census records indicate that the Mulford family owned several slaves and in the 1776 census the Mulfords are listed as owning eight slaves.¹⁰⁴ However, one question still remains. Did the Mulford family take all of their slaves with them when they fled to Connecticut? There is evidence that one of Colonel Mulford's slaves returned to Long Island alone on January 16, 1777,¹⁰⁵ presumably to check on the house and property, but there is no indication to what happened to the others. It would be intriguing to find out how slavery was perceived in East Hampton, how many families owned them and how slaves were treated during the time period surrounding the American Revolution. This

¹⁰³ Douglas Harper, "Slavery in New York," *Slavery in the North*, <http://www.slavenorth.com/newyork.htm> (accessed April 23, 2007).

¹⁰⁴ Mather, 477.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 476.

information will be significant to the interpretation at the Mulford House and would help better explain the role slaves played in the daily life of the Mulford family.

Significantly, one of the vital aspects of the new interpretation is the Mulford's role in the patriotic movement in East Hampton. However, not all of East Hampton's residents were so inclined to break away from the British and it will be important to indicate exactly how split East Hampton really was between the two opposing sides. Was there animosity between the two groups, or did they continue on with their daily routine and not let the warring factions affect them? Mather lists Col. Gardiner as a refugee, but there is still unresolved suspicion on whether he might have been a British sympathizer or not. More research should be continued on this character that had a role in forcing Col. Mulford to sign the Allegiance.

Another topic of great interest that would further the interpretation of the Mulford House is the practice of quartering British troops. It was a common requirement for colonial patriots to quarter both British and Hessian troops and it most likely occurred often in East Hampton. One question to ask is if it is possible to uncover evidence on whether the Mulford House had served as lodging for the occupying troops. The answers to these questions may never be known, but information regarding quartering would prove to be invaluable to the new interpretation because it was such a distinctive characteristic of the British after the Battle of Long Island.

Weaving should also be a topic of exploration for future interpretation at the Mulford House. Although research has been completed before, more focus should be placed on its importance during the Revolutionary War. Many heads of household in East Hampton at this time were listed as weavers, and it would be a disservice to the new

interpretation if the reasons for this were not fully investigated. Possibly it was a coincidence that many heads of households were weavers, but this does not seem likely. Therefore, did these men use their trade as leverage in dealings with the British troops?

Next, it is important to integrate the Mulford landscape with the story detailed at the house to illustrate the close relationship this family had with their land as well as its significance to the Revolutionary War. Col. David Mulford was a yeoman or farmer and during the winter months, the barns housed livestock, while the chickens were kept in their own coop. All of these animals stood at risk of either being plundered by the British troops or sold to them at a low price. Colonel Mulford took his livestock with him to Connecticut, yet many other residents of East Hampton did not. How did the residents protect their animals that stood at risk of being taken? Livestock was a valuable commodity and by further researching this topic, the interpretation would be able to show its importance to the community and the necessity of keeping it away from the British.

Section 4.4: Specific Suggestions for Interpretation

Though it is not possible to integrate live animals at the Mulford House due to zoning regulations and logistical problems, it might be possible to simulate their presence in the barns and sheds. If audio boxes were placed in the barn with a “push me” button, then sounds of cows, sheep or horses could be heard and it would greatly enhance the feeling of what the farm sounded like during the time of the Revolution.

As earlier suggested, if a “CSA” program were to be initiated at the Mulford House, it would act as both a community activity as well as a learning tool for the tour. Since Col. Mulford was a farmer, a “CSA” program would legitimize the feel of a farm,

though obviously on a much smaller scale. The orchard too is another element similar to the field behind the barns and needs to be interpreted as a vital food source.

Signage too would be an integral factor in the outdoor interpretation. There should be placards located near all of the buildings detailing its particular purpose, history, and whether or not it is historic fabric. This is important because there are several buildings on the site that do not date to the period of significance and it is necessary to differentiate them so as not to confuse the visitor. For example, one of the sheds is modern and is used for storage. Also, the privy is a reconstruction and in Spring 2007, a nineteenth-century corncrib will be moved to the property.

An exhibit that the E.H.H.S might want to consider in the future would require cooperation and assistance from the Ladies' Village Improvement Society of East Hampton. Currently, the L.V.I.S owns and uses as its headquarters the Gardiner "Brown" House, located at 95 Main Street. The L.V.I.S bought and rehabilitated this c. 1740 house in 1987. This house was once the home of Colonel Abraham Gardiner and it is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.¹⁰⁶ It is open to the public five days a week because the L.V.I.S operates Bargain Books and Bargain Box, a thrift shop in the house. The property is well-known for annually hosting the L.V.I.S July Fair, a large community event and staple of the summer season in East Hampton. Since it is extremely unlikely that the house will ever be installed and interpreted as a museum because it is successfully used for headquarters and a business, the E.H.H.S should consider approaching the L.V.I.S about creating an exhibit on Col. Abraham Gardiner. Visitors interested in Col. Gardiner's story might be intrigued to learn that his house,

¹⁰⁶ "History of the L.V.I.S," Ladies' Village Improvement Society of East Hampton, <http://www.lvis.org/history.htm> (accessed March 26, 2007).

though modified, still stands and is open to the public. If the L.V.I.S created in conjunction with the E.H.H.S a display, it could broaden the scope of the Mulford House interpretation and expand it beyond its property lines. This would help to fulfill the goal of formulating a broader story of East Hampton's involvement in the American Revolution. By partnering with another significant East Hampton organization, the proposed interpretation will reach a broader audience and maybe entice visitors to travel from the Gardiner "Brown" House to the Mulford House to gain more of the story. This proposed display could also increase visitorship to the Gardiner "Brown" House and it fits the L.V.I.S's four concerns of their original 1895 mission: "preservation, conservation, education and beautification."¹⁰⁷

These ideas are just the beginning of what can become a very interesting and informative interpretation at the Mulford House. The E.H.H.S has numerous reports and full files of research to fall back on to help with the creation of this tour and will not need to begin anew. Though more research will be needed to fill in some of the details, this thesis offers a basic framework of how it should be carried out. Also, if the E.H.H.S resuscitates its "A Day in 1776" and "Step Back into the 18th Century" reenactments, the new interpretation will be even more appropriate. Simply stated, this new interpretation offers an exciting new opportunity to put a creative spin on an old house museum.

Section 4.5: Case-Study Examples

The case-studies have provided invaluable insight for this thesis and have highlighted the inner-mechanisms of a professionally run museum. Each of these sites

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

has been designated a National Historic Landmark and has been named to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places. All have struggled with visitorship, funding and interpretation, but the management has made every effort to identify the main focus for each site and has pushed these sites to be the best in their area of emphasis. In some instances they have stumbled, but Stenton and Cliveden especially, have seen an increase in visitorship in just the last few years. An increase in educational programming, modified interpretation and collaboration in community events is partly responsible for their achievements.

Another point that indicates that these three sites have a lot to recommend is that though all of the case-studies are located within close proximity, they have endeavored to take a separate approach, yet have also joined together under the umbrella organization “Philadelphia’s Historic Northwest Coalition.” They further participate in History Hunters and have successfully collaborated on numerous events and have achieved a high level of name recognition within the Philadelphia community.

Each of these sites offers the Mulford House an excellent model to follow. By teasing out the applicable ideas, the E.H.H.S has a wonderful opportunity to turn its own interpretation around and focus on more than just the house itself. First of all, the landscape is an integral component of the site and needs to be more closely tied to the story and therefore Wyck is a great example. Secondly, Stenton’s interpretive plan was placed on the Stenton website. By including this information as part of the website, interested persons have the opportunity to experience the site before they visit. Also, Stenton’s interpretation is wrapped around easily understood themes that are discussed in each room, with related anecdotes. Thirdly, Cliveden should be commended for its

community relations and the role that the site plays in the Germantown Festival each October. This type of community involvement fosters friendly neighborhood relations and can only benefit the site in the long run. Finally, all three sites integrate their numerous stakeholders with the hope that as more people become interested in the site, they will hold a sense of attachment. This sense of attachment is what will help the Mulford House succeed and it is one of the goals of this thesis.

The staffs at these sites have completed thorough research and continue to uncover new information by investigating primary source materials, as well as secondary sources. These sites have accomplished the difficult feat of engaging their visitors while also provoking their intellect, all while providing a satisfactory tour. The same could be true for the Mulford House should the interpretation find its niche in East Hampton. The Mulford House needs to “own” its history and to provoke its visitors to connect themselves with the towns past.

CONCLUSION:

After years of growing pains, management turmoil and unsuccessful attempts at interpreting the Mulford House, the East Hampton Historical Society has finally found its stride and is becoming an increasingly strong presence in East Hampton. With a new energetic director, the Mulford House is a high priority in the Society's new methodology and in the near future the house will experience changes in focus and interpretation. Though the house has undergone several interpretations before, it should be customary for these interpretative plans to be re-evaluated approximately every ten years. New research and changing values necessitate this in order to keep the interpretation fresh and relevant. New technology also allows for more exciting elements to be introduced into the interpretation in order to enhance it as well as to appeal to younger children who are accustomed to such stimulating devices.

The purpose of this thesis was to guide future decisions made by the E.H.H.S by researching the house and making recommendations pertaining to a new interpretation. After spending time in the E.H.H.S archives, speaking with East Hampton historians and searching through local history books, it is clear that the best course of action for the E.H.H.S to take at this time is to focus on the Mulford House as one piece of East Hampton's story during the occupation by the British between the years 1776-1783. However, it is also recommended that the interpretation begin in the year 1774 and end in 1783. In the years preceding the Battle of Long Island, there were significant events that occurred in East Hampton and often Colonel David Mulford and his son Major David Mulford were heavily involved in the Patriot cause. Their Revolutionary War

experiences offer the E.H.H.S the opportunity to capitalize on a span of time that has not yet been interpreted in East Hampton.

Though initially the goal was to move away from the traditional colonial interpretation at the house because it had proved to be monotonous, the realization struck that the last quarter of the eighteenth-century is also one of the most exciting moments in East Hampton history. It would be almost impossible to create an interpretation focusing on the Mulford House pre-1750 because the house had changed so much after this date that the structure would not have a lot of integrity. Furthermore, after 1800, the house was rented out and then sold for a brief time before being repurchased by the Mulford family. Therefore, it did not make sense to interpret the house to a time period in which the occupants were not Mulfords or to when they did not own the house at all.

Another indication that the house should remain interpreted as an eighteenth-century house is that the restoration of the 1950's stripped much of the historic fabric from the house that did not date from the eighteenth-century. If the decision were made to return the house to a late-nineteenth century or twentieth-century period of significance, it would have been necessary to reconstruct portions of the house, such as the flat-roofed addition on the east façade as well as several outbuildings directly behind the house. Therefore, the best course of action is to keep the house dated to the eighteenth-century, but with a different and more enlivening interpretation.

By shifting the interpretation away from a post-American Revolution storyline to one right in the midst of Revolutionary action makes for an exciting story. Not only were the Mulfords intriguing characters at this point in time, but they were also intimately connected with some of East Hampton's most influential characters. Colonel Abraham

Gardiner's daughter, Rachel, would become the wife of Major David Mulford. The Gardiner influence even stretches into the present because his house is now the headquarters of the Ladies' Village Improvement Society of East Hampton. The L.V.I.S was a significant reason why the Mulford House was purchased by the E.H.H.S in 1948. This broader approach opens up an array of possibilities regarding interpretation and collaboration between different organizations in East Hampton.

Furthermore, the case-study examples offer clear insight into the challenges of interpreting a historic house museum. These sites also had difficulties finding their niche in the saturated house museum market within the Philadelphia area. However, instead of competing recklessly with each other, as an alternative, these sites now collaborate throughout the year within a variety of capacities. History Hunters and the Germantown Festival are now well established and are distinct learning tools that the sites utilize to promote their narratives. The E.H.H.S can learn directly from the trial and error of Wyck, Stenton, and Cliveden and pull from these sites the best possible examples to fit its particular needs. These case-studies are relevant to the Mulford House for different reasons and the E.H.H.S would be well served to follow their lead.

The Mulford House is a prime example of a small-town house museum that has fallen through the cracks. With the passing of the original generation, which had avidly helped preserve it, it became apparent that there were increasingly few to replace them. Though there are still dedicated volunteers and individuals interested in the house, to the general public, both East Hampton residents and visiting tourists, the house has lost its significance. Many do not know that the saltbox house located so prominently off of Main Street is one of the oldest surviving houses in town. Occasionally during the

summer months, antique fairs bring mass numbers of people to the property, but few find their way to the house. However, hopefully that will soon change and the Mulford House will once again become a presence, not only in the local school curriculums, but also as a must-see attraction.

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FIGURES:

Appendix A: The Mulford House

All photographs by M. Dayton



Figure 1: The Southeastern view of the Mulford House, 2006.



Figure 2: The Northeastern view of the Mulford House, 2006.



Figure 3: The Southwestern view of the Mulford House, 2006.



Figure 4: Eastern façade of Mulford House, 2006.



Figure 5: Mulford Barn, 2006.



Figure 6: View of Mulford property facing west, 2006.



Figure 7: View of the back of the Mulford property facing east, 2006.



Figure 8: Models depicting the three stages of Mulford House construction.



Figure 9: The Mulford Kitchen, 2006.



Figure 10: The Mulford Parlor, 2006.



Figure 11: The second-floor Mulford Bedchamber, 2006.



Figure 12: View into the slave bedchamber, 2006.



Figure 13: The second-floor Hall chamber, 2006.



Figure 14: Example of the Architectural case-study interpretation with paint analysis, 2006.



Figure 15: Remnant of the original 1680 structure in the Garrett, 2006.

Appendix B: Case Studies – Wyck, Stenton, and Cliveden



Figure 16: Front view of Wyck, 2006.



Figure 17: Rear view of Wyck, 2006.



Figure 18: Education Center at Wyck, 2006.



Figure 19: “CSA” plot at Wyck, 2006.



Figure 20: Front view of Stenton, 2007.



Figure 21: Rear View of Stenton, 2007.



Figure 22: Front view of Cliveden, 2007.



Figure 23: Northwestern façade of Cliveden, 2007.



Figure 24: The barn that has been converted into the Cliveden Visitors Center, 2007.

Appendix C: Mulford House Plans



Figure 25: Mulford Farm Ground Plan
 (Source: East Hampton Historical Society)

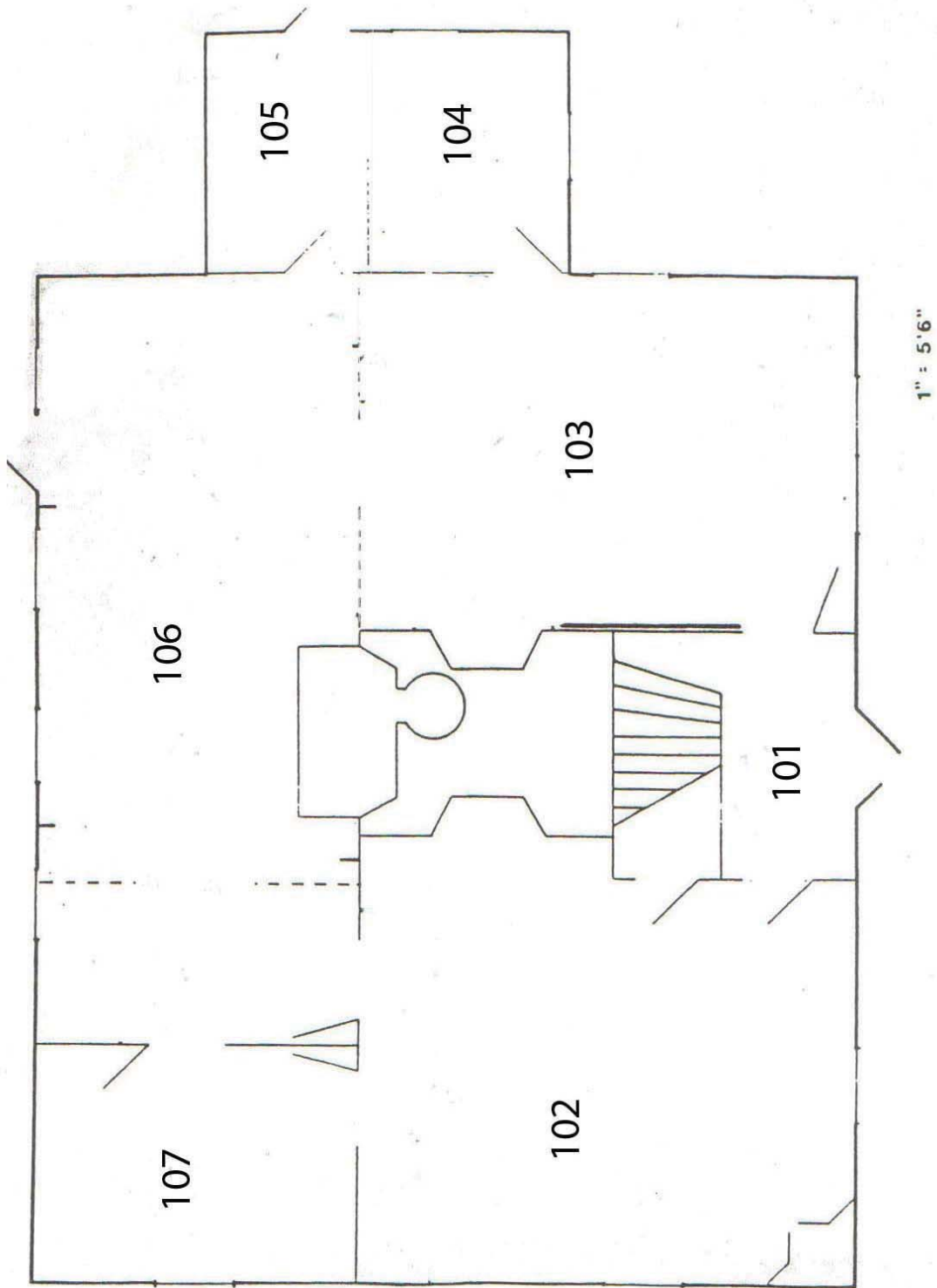


Figure 26: Mulford House First Floor Plan
(Source: East Hampton Historical Society)

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