

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**Project Title:** Archaeological Survey and Testing at the Ferry Hill Plantation

**1.1 Project Budget: \$129,600.00**

### **1.2. Statement of Purpose**

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park seeks an archaeological team to conduct supplementary Phase I and comprehensive Phase II archaeological survey and testing at the Ferry Hill Plantation focused on understanding the lifeways of free and enslaved African American workers. Archaeological survey and testing will rely on the results of the 1979 archaeological project at the site as a baseline for additional work. Phase II testing would aim to identify and explore a building known as the "slave quarters" that was removed in 1912 to enlarge the house's garden. Additional research avenues potentially explored with Phase II testing include identifying privies associated with slave habitation areas, exploring the house's ornamental landscaping as it related to the use of the area for slave activities, and testing the hypothesis of Ferry Hill as a panopticon for the oversight of slave activities. Archaeological studies may also encounter historic remains associated with use of the Ferry Hill area prior to the construction of the mansion in the early 1800s. Additionally, archaeological investigations may reveal remnants associated with the use of the area by precontact period Native American populations.

The Ferry Hill Plantation is situated within the C&O Canal National Historical Park on the Maryland side of the Potomac River across from Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The Ferry Hill house and cultural landscape are significant under National Register Criterion A for their association with regional transportation history from 1755 through 1924, strategic position during the Civil War, and role as an agricultural plantation situated in an agrarian 19<sup>th</sup> century regional economy. The plantation was predominantly supported by slave laborers as well as both white and free black workers. Enslaved workers also operated the ferry for which the property derives its name. The ferry served as a critical route across the Potomac River between Maryland and West Virginia. The goal of archaeological analyses is to provide greater insight on the historical context for African American slaves who lived and worked at Ferry Hill and associated environs including Blackford House and the Bridgeport community. The archaeological survey and subsequent archaeological testing plan would identify and document features associated with African American laborers working on Ferry Hill plantation. The archaeological work will be informed by Historic Structures Reports for Ferry Hill (2005, n.d.), Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for Ferry Hill and Bridgeport (2004), and the Historic Resource Study for Ferry Hill Plantation (2007).

### **1.3. Background Information**

Maryland's Ferry Hill plantation flourished as a farm and shipping hub on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in the mid-1800s—before suffering the ravages of the Civil War. Ferry Hill's success stemmed from its location at a critical Potomac River crossroads between Maryland and Virginia. Thomas Van Swearingen began operating a ferry in 1765 between the Maryland shore and Shepherdstown. In the early 1800s John Blackford, who married Sarah Van Swearingen, built Ferry Hill plantation and managed the ferry. He shipped his produce and timber overland to

Harrisburg and Baltimore and via the C&O Canal to Georgetown. Like Williamsport, Hancock, and Cumberland, Bridgeport blossomed as farms and mills sent products up and down the canal.

After John Blackford's death in 1839, the property was divided amongst his five children. Although Blackford's daughter—Helena Blackford Douglas—was not originally willed the mansion or adjacent land, she and her husband Robert were able to purchase both from her brother Franklin around 1850. Helena and Robert subsequently moved into the mansion with their four children. Robert, a minister, conducted services at churches in the area and hired a manager to run the plantation. During the Civil War Ferry Hill frequently served as a headquarters and encampment site. Both Union and Confederate troops used the grounds before and after crossing the Potomac at Boteler's Ford during the Antietam, Gettysburg, and Monocacy campaigns. After the Battle of Antietam Confederates cared for their wounded at Ferry Hill. Federals then occupied the farm and restricted the Douglases to the mansion. After suspecting Helena of signaling Confederates across the river, the Federals imprisoned Robert at Fort McHenry. Henry Kyd Douglas, son of Robert, enlisted as a private in the Confederate Army. He served as an aide to Lt. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson and ended the war as a colonel. In his book, *I Rode With Stonewall*, he noted Ferry Hill's condition after the Battle of Antietam: ". . . the barn was a black mass of ruins . . . a beautiful farm was laid waste, its fences disappeared up to the doors of the mansion house, artillery parks filled the wheat fields . . ."

After the war Robert and Helena Douglas remained at Ferry Hill. In the mid-1900s family members, the Beckenbaughs, opened a restaurant in the mansion. They sold the property in 1948, ending an era in which six generations of the Van Swearingen, Blackford, Douglas, and Beckenbaugh families, related by blood or marriage, were associated with Ferry Hill.

#### **1.4. Scope of Work**

The project team should be prepared to conduct Phase I survey and Phase II archaeological testing on the Ferry Hill and Blackford House properties aimed at identifying the lifeways of African American slaves and free populations working at Ferry Hill and surrounding environs.

The project scope of work includes the following items:

##### **Task A: Phase I Archaeological Survey**

- A.1: Conduct a 100% systematic pedestrian survey/surface inspection of approximately five acres surrounding the Ferry Hill house for traces of prehistoric or historic archaeological resources.
- A.3: Prepare a remote sensing sampling design (e.g., magnetometry, GPR) and execute remote sensing in selected areas.
- A.2: Document any archaeological deposits and isolated finds encountered in the survey by obtaining GPS coordinates of the location and plotting the resources on a project map. This map should denote shovel test locations, and surface inspection transects.
- A.3: Provide detailed results of the survey findings and assess the significance of any archaeological deposits/sites encountered within the project area with regards to their potential for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and detailed recommendations that will inform Phase II testing of the site.

- A.4: Codify this in written report detailing the area surveyed, methods used, archaeological background, historical background, survey findings, and recommendations for future work.

#### Task B: Phase II Archaeological Testing

- B.1: Based on the findings of the Phase I archaeological survey, the team will develop and implement a testing plan to study potential and identified features. The team will justify the location and extent of the testing locations based on surface visibility, soil conditions, and geomorphic setting.
- B.2: The team will conduct Phase II archaeological testing in the location of the “slave quarters”, locate the privy, and “Area A” as indicated in the 1979 archeological survey.

#### Task C: Artifact Analysis and Curation

- C.1: Artifacts identified in archaeological testing will be gathered in the field and undergo subsequent analysis. Appropriate samples will be collected (e.g., soil sampling) to address research questions.
- C.2: Artifacts and samples will be appropriately labeled, categorized, prepared for curation, and submitted per the Interior Collections Management System (ICMS) and the NPS Regional Archeology Program standards.
- C.3: Review and analyze the 1,678 artifacts from the 1979 archaeological investigations at Ferry Hill.

#### Task E: Field Investigation Report

- E.1: The team will prepare a report of in-field archaeological investigations and evaluation of significance, producing a full technical report encompassing site findings, synthesis and evaluations with the purpose of being used as site management tool for future land-use projects. The report should contain the following sections: Introduction, Historical background/Cultural Context, Archeological Context/Previous work, Discussion of Methods, Results, Artifact Analysis, Discussion and Interpretation, Conclusions/Future Recommendations.

#### Task F: Public Products

- F.1: Generate public interpretation products that convey the findings of the archaeological testing to the public including a public presentation, website, and social media content.

### **1.5. Deliverables**

#### Archaeological Survey and Testing:

- Disk of the PDF and MS Word files of the Phase I archaeological survey and testing plan for Ferry Hill and the Blackford property and associated images and maps. All images should be at least 300 dpi.
- Disk of the PDF and MS Word files of the Phase II archaeological testing plan for the “slave quarters” and associated images and maps.
- Disk of the GIS shapefile data of the location of archaeological survey and testing locations including shovel test pits, trenches, extent of archaeological survey and remote sensing analyses, as well as notable artifacts, archaeological features, and archaeological sites.
- Disk of the scanned PDF copies of all field notes for archaeological survey and testing.
- Four (4) printed copies and a disk with the PDF and MS Word document of the Phase I Archaeological survey and testing reports that meet the Secretary of Interior’s standards.

- Four (4) printed copies and a disk with the PDF and MS Word document of the Phase II Archaeological testing report that meet the Secretary of Interior's standards.
- Packaging, processing and delivery of artifacts to NPS.

#### Public Interpretation Products

- Planning and execution of at least one (1) public presentations on the project results.
- Written material accompanied by photographs for use on park webpages and social media.

### **1.6. Requirements for Proposal Preparation**

Investigation proposals must:

- Describe the archaeological research, field, laboratory, and analysis methods that are appropriate to the applicable Standards for conducting the investigation
- Provide the PI and project team qualifications that meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualifications, 36 CFR Part 61 for Archeology. The PI must have prior experience working on archaeological sites, and preferably those associated with African American slave history.
- Include a draft schedule of dates for conducting field surveys, preparing field reports, and submitting reports to the NPS.
- Include a general approach and methodology for interpretive products and public engagement.
- Include a general approach to aligning research with the supplemental Historic Resource Study of the African American experience at Ferry Hill, Blackford House, and the Bridgeport community. The RFP for the history study will be issued at the same time as this RFP for archaeological work.

### **1.7. Points of contact for future correspondence**

Questions on the RFP scope and project should be directed to Dr. Sophia Kelly, Cultural Resources Program Manager, C&O Canal NHP at 301-714-2236 or [sophia\\_kelly@nps.gov](mailto:sophia_kelly@nps.gov).

Questions on the CESU network should be directed to Dan Filer, Chesapeake Watershed CESU Research Coordinator at 301-689-7108 or [danny\\_filer@nps.gov](mailto:danny_filer@nps.gov).