

Between Preservation and Possibility: Exploring the Past and Future of Easton's Hooper House



Lafayette College Tech
Clinic
Spring 2026 Mid-
Project Report

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Meet the Team!

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Major: Electrical and Computer Engineering
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LAFAYETTE COLLEGE



Lawrence Malinconico

Doctor Malinconico is completing his 37th year as a faculty member in the Department of Geology. His research areas involve volcanology, tectonics, and geophysics. As well as being the Director of the Technology Clinic, he has been a faculty advisor for over 30 of its projects, ranging from urban ecology and food justice to community planning and preserving historical records.



Christopher Ruebeck

Doctor Ruebeck is completing his 26th year as a professor in the Department of Economics where he teaches courses in Industrial Organization, Game Theory, Computational Simulation, as well as Econ 101. He also leads a course and internship experience on comparative health care systems in London. In addition to having served as the Faculty Director of the Dyer Center, he has been an advisor for 4 previous Tech Clinic projects.

What is the Lafayette College Technology Clinic?

- Founded in 1988, Tech Clinic is a two-semester program in which students work together on solutions to real-world problems for clients in the public and private spheres.
- Students are nominated by professors and mentored by two faculty facilitators.
- The team of students is interdisciplinary, with members selected from the different academic divisions: sciences, social sciences, engineering, and humanities.
- Past team projects have addressed issues of sustainability, improving traffic patterns, working with medical records, fixing up riverside landscapes, and many more areas important to clients from the Lehigh Valley region and beyond. Relevant to the current project, the 2003 Tech Clinic contributed ideas relevant to the restoration of the Bachmann Publick House.
- <https://techclinic.lafayette.edu/about/>

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Introduction to the Project

Overview: Our Client

In 2025, the City of Easton officially acquired the Hooper House after a lengthy process. The project extends beyond municipal interests to include many community stakeholders, including:

- Local residents
- Small businesses in Easton
- Lafayette College



Timely Context

The Hooper House project aligns with major milestones such as Lafayette College's Bicentennial and The United States' 250th anniversary. These two major events provide an opportunity to connect local history with broader local and national interests.

The aims of this project include:

- Support the repurposing and revitalization of Hooper House
- Balance modernization efforts with preservation goals
- Contribute to making the site functional and relevant for contemporary community use
- Maintaining the historical integrity of the structure.
- Situating the Hooper House within both the broader context of Revolutionary-era buildings in Easton, local historical narratives, and architectural patterns
- Ensure that redevelopment does not erase or dilute historical significance



Overview: Easton in a Revolutionary-Era Context

The City of Easton contains several historically significant buildings dating to the Revolutionary period. These structures contribute to the city's identity as a historically rich and preserved area. In terms of ownership, the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society owns and oversees multiple key historic sites in Easton, including: Sigal Museum, Bachmann Publick House, Jacob Nicholas House, and Mixsell-Illick House. These properties play a central role in preserving and interpreting local history. While some structures are used and explored by the public, others are more difficult to find a purpose for the broader community.

Five structures from Easton's Revolutionary-War Era history

Bachmann Publick House, Parsons-Taylor House, First United Church of Christ, Hooper House, and Jacob Nicholas House

Thus, The Hooper House is part of a broader network of historically significant sites where Its preservation contributes to maintaining continuity within Easton's Revolutionary-era narrative and strengthening connections between historic landmark. This network provides us with an opportunity to integrate the Hooper House into existing heritage and tourism frameworks.

Sigal Museum

Owned and operated by the Northampton County Historical & Genealogical Society, the Sigal Museum collects and preserves the history of Northampton County. They also provide walking tours of downtown Easton which are capable of giving unique insight into the history of the city and its structures



NC
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Northampton
County
Historical &
Genealogical
Society

Members Volunteers Sta

Welcome to the Society.

Since 1906, members of NCHGS have collected, preserved and showcased art, culture and American history made in Northampton County. View permanent and special exhibitions at our flagship Sigal Museum in historic downtown Easton. Research genealogy or family history at the Jane S. Moyer Library and the NCHGS Archives. Or join us at our three historic house properties for special events, or by appointment.

Choose one of our locations.

Sigal
Museum

Bachmann
Publick
House

Jacob
Nicholas
House

Mixsell
Illick
House

NC
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GS

Northampton
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Historical &
Genealogical
Society

HISTORIC DISTRICT WALKING TOURS

Every Saturday
2:00 PM
Sigal Museum

342 Northampton St. Easton

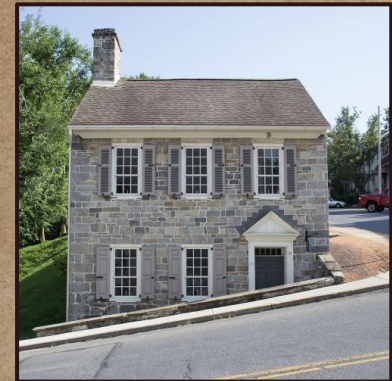


Historical Structures

The 1753 Bachmann Publick House, built by Jacob and Katrinna Bachmann, served as a tavern and lively hub for local leaders, travelers, and revolutionaries. It is currently open four days per week for guided tours through the NCHGS.



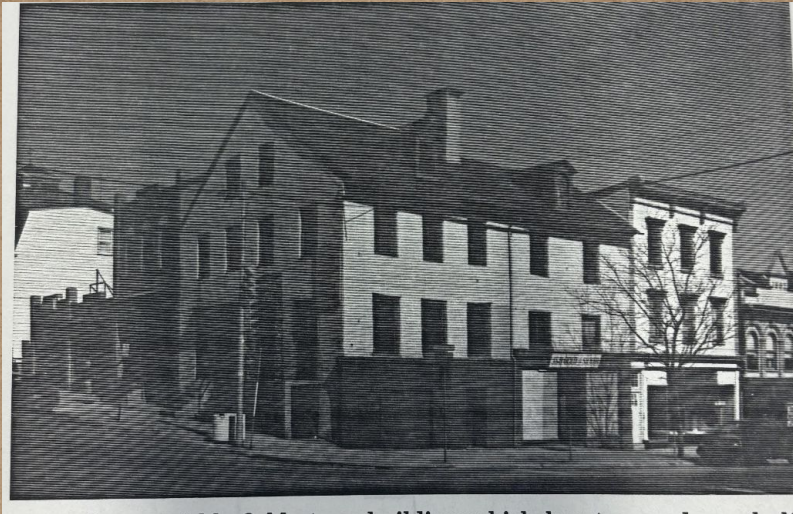
The Jacob Nicholas House is one of the few buildings in Easton remaining from the Federal Period. Although built in 1807, it still retains the original 200-year-old brick entry walk and interior woodwork. It is currently available for special event, school, or group tours.



Revolutionary Era Restorations

Bachmann Public House

Before:



Source: Marx Room, Easton Public Library

After:



Many of Eastons other Revolutionary Era buildings have gone through many phases of restoration. These projects have without a doubt been successful, ensuring the buildings are maintained today.

Revolutionary Era Restorations

Jacob Nicholas House

Before:



Source: Anthony R. Youngkin's Post on facebook, from 1930's

After:



Source: Sigal Museum

Meetings: Dave Hopkins and Trevor Pinho

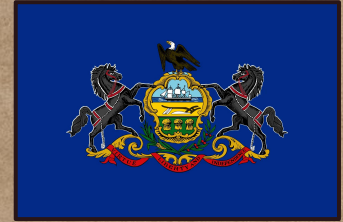
Dave and Trevor are the voice of the client, the city of Easton. They provided the team with an overview of the Hooper House, and its current state of being out of economic productivity for nearly 50 years. They want the Tech Clinic to find new purpose for Hooper in the hopes that it may cause a ripple effect similar to fixing the silk mill, where repairing the structure may motivate other improvement in the area it lies in.

In that sense, restoring Hooper would have great returns for the city of Easton beyond any direct economic gains it may generate. Furthermore, if possible, they would like to see Hooper gain a purpose that potentially connects the other Revolutionary War era structures together in some way.



Meetings: Robert Freeman

As an Easton resident his whole life, Representative Freeman was able to give the team insight into how downtown Easton has developed over the last couple of decades. The urban renewal program of the 1960s caused the demolition of old neighborhoods which housed many immigrants who worked downtown, so many businesses became vacant. The downtown has been revitalized over the last 15-20 years, but the Hooper House has stayed in rough condition. He would love to see Hooper restored in a way that honors its history and provides new life to the area surrounding it. Representative Freeman also provided the team with numerous additional contacts in order to help gather more information



Meetings: Sigal Museum

Megan van Ravenswaay, Executive Director and Andrew Glovas, Deputy Director.

They provided information on how they preserve the historical buildings owned by the Northampton County Historical & Genealogical Society as well as the nuances of operating as a nonprofit.



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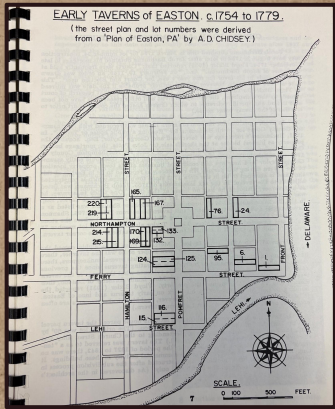


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Methodology

Methodology: Research

The Easton Public Library Marx room was critical to the team's findings as it preserves the history of Easton. It contains many historical documents and pictures, many of which detail the history of the Hooper House or the other Revolutionary War era structures. Some especially interesting photographs are shown below.



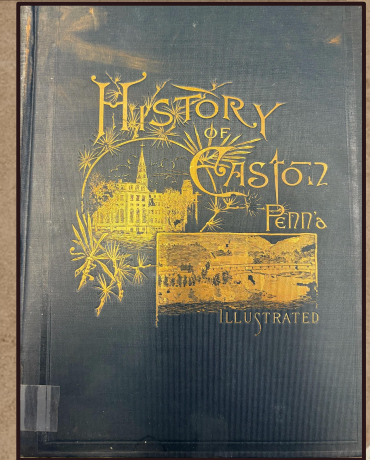
1700s map of Easton's Taverns



Bachman Tavern prior to restoration



First United Church of Christ



Penn's History of Easton

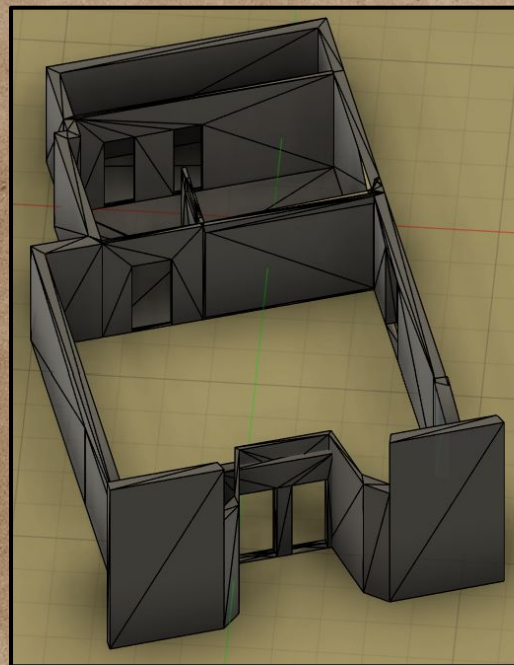
3D Model

Following the cleanup, the team visited the house and, with the help of MetaRoom's Lidar Scanner, created an interactive 3D model of the Hooper House with images of the inside overlaid to show what the interior looks like. A screenshot of the model is shown to the right.



3D Model

The MetaRoom model was then exported into Autodesk Fusion, where the exterior could be laid over the interior to create a full model of the first floor of the Hooper House. This model could also be 3D printed for a handheld version. Once again, a screenshot of the Fusion model is shown to the right.



Visiting the Space

Before cleanup ...



First Floor



Second Floor

Visiting the Space

After!



First Floor

History

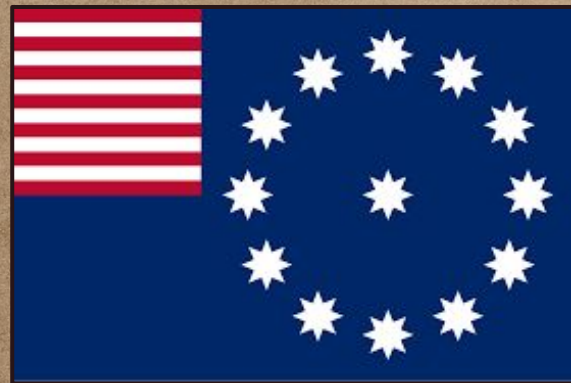
The preservation of historical structures is not only to protect its physical appearance, but also to honor the history and role they have served through time. As one of the oldest buildings in Easton, the Hooper House represents more than just architecture, but the changing identity of Easton since its establishment. In our effort to restore and look towards the future with this building, it is essential that history be embedded and honored in its purpose.

Despite the Hooper House significance, no comprehensive research has been done to create a clear picture of this building's life. Most of what is known is fragmented records and the beginnings of research under other purposes. Richard Hope, author of *A Walking Tour of Easton* was the trailblazer for creating a timeline of the Hooper House's history. As we conducted our research, we used the names and dates he had previously discovered as the foundation of our research. In conducting this research, we found ourselves following the path we imagine he took years before to include in this book.

This project builds on that foundation to examine how the building continually adapted to meet the needs of Easton and its people, serving different roles across time while maintaining its historical presence. By tracing this, we can ensure our project both includes and is grounded in a full understanding of its past.

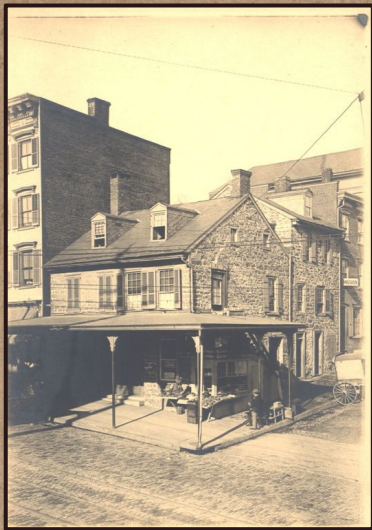
Revolutionary Era:

The origins of Hooper House are closely tied to the early development of Easton itself. It was built in the mid-18th century, likely between 1761 and 1767, by the Penn family. In some accounts it suggests this building was serving as the Kachlin Inn, though this may have been a different building on the same plot beforehand. The house took on an active role during the Revolutionary war. It served as a base of operations for Colonel Robert Lettis Hooper Junior, who had been appointed by George Washington as Deputy Quarter General. This building was both a residence and a lodging center for the revolutionary forces. Though Hooper only lived there a short time, his influence and name stuck.



Easton Flag, 1776

1800s:



1890,
source: Easton Public Library
Marx Room

In the early 1800s, the Hooper House transitioned away from its Revolutionary role and became part of Easton's economic development. In 1812, the house was purchased from the Penn family to Nicholas Kraemer, who worked in real estate, and then quickly sold it that same year to George Troxell for \$3,800. In 1818, Troxell lost the property in a sheriff's sale due to unpaid debts. It was then picked up by David Wagner. Wagner was a member of the Easton Guards, even traveling to Philadelphia to welcome our own Marquis de Lafayette.

By the 1830s, Wagner was renting the building to Samuel Siegfried, a local printer, for both residential and commercial use. This trend continued through the mid to late 19th century. In 1850, butcher John Leshner purchased the property. Later, the building was acquired by another butcher, Daniel Herster, further contributing to Easton's trade community.

Early 1900s

The early 20th century marked a period of steady commercial use. On November 27th, 1914, the property was sold from Folkenson, who had inherited the building, to Peter Moses, who then died soon after. However, the building remained in the Moses family for several decades. Under their ownership, it was leased to several commercial tenants. In 1923 it was leased to Charles Brand's Meat Market. Then between 1933 and 1956 it served as Milkin's Appliance Store, shifting towards more modern retail and consumer goods as Easton's economy evolved.

The Moses family continued to rent the property until 1969. However, an undated photograph from the Marx Room at the Easton Public Library suggests it was at some point during this period, an adult book store.



source: A Time to Remember, Wynkoop, Easton
Public Library Marx Room

Late 1900s+



2015,
Source: Virginia-Lawrence Hope

The late 20th century marks a turning point for the purpose of the Hooper House. On December 15, 1969, the property was purchased from the Moses family by Dominic Burgio, ending the Moses family's long ownership. Even under new ownership, the building continued to host small scale commercial use. In 1970, it was the Bad Penny Coin Shop. However, this commercialization ended with its purchase by the Rock Church of Easton. This purchase was finalized in 1982 and since then, has served private uses to the church.

Recently, the City of Easton acquired the Hooper House in hopes to restore and reconnect with its history.

Hooper Today



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Providing a Purpose

Idea 1: Lodging

I. Origin of the Idea

In February, early on in our project, some of our team went on the Sigal Museum **Historic Walking Tour of Easton**. The tour took us by **Hotel Easton** where the guide highlighted its history as a destination for notable guests. This included a range of figures from **John F. Kennedy to Peyton Manning and Ringo Starr**. This discussion combined with the visit of **Lin-Manuel Miranda** the same month, prompted broader reflection on Easton and Lafayette as hubs for public figures. We asked ourselves, where do these individuals stay on their visits to Easton and whether their accommodations were able to provide the level of security and privacy they need. Our team also wondered what impression these visitors leave with after visiting the city and whether it was an accurate representation of it's the city's incredibly history and community.



NC
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Northampton
County
Historical &
Genealogical
Society

**HISTORIC
DISTRICT
WALKING
TOURS**

Every Saturday
2:00 PM
Sigal Museum

342 Northampton St. Easton



Idea 1: Lodging

In April, a couple months following the tour, team members **visited the office of the Director of Public Services (Dave Hopkins) in City Hall** to review Easton's file on the Hooper House. We examined historical documents, including old plans and proposed uses of the building. In a **1986 Application for Certificate of Use and Occupancy** we found a proposal for converting the space into residential space in the form of dormitories. **Figure one and two on the next page, will show floor plans of the proposal.** While the scaling of the diagrams is not necessarily exact, figure one is of Hooper's second floor, while figure two is of the second floor. It was encouraging to see that previous individuals invested in the building had already envisioned comparable ideas for the building.

Idea 1: Lodging

Plans from the 1986 Application for Certificate of Use and Occupancy.

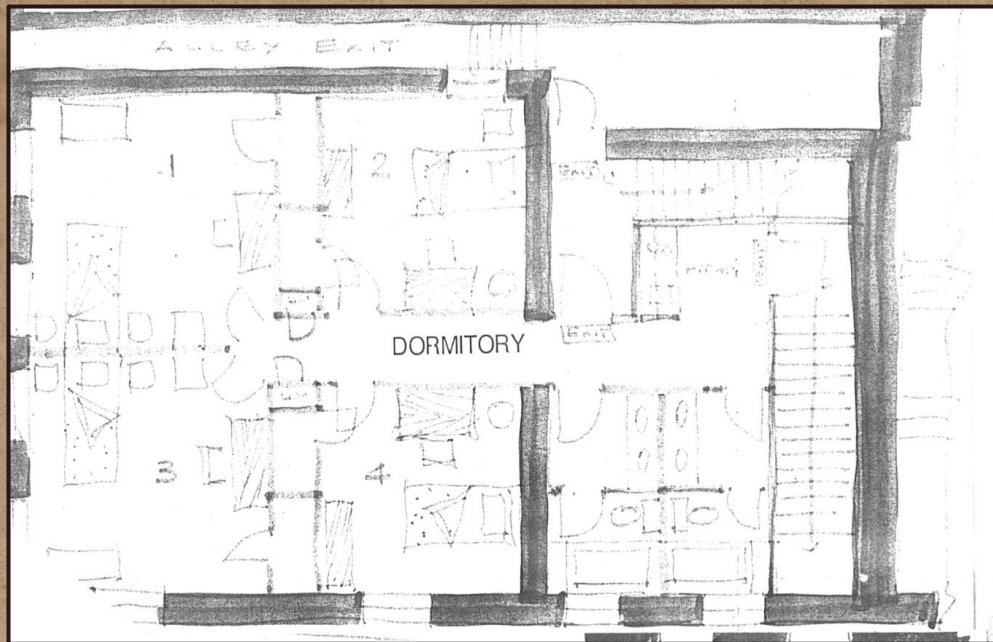


Figure 2

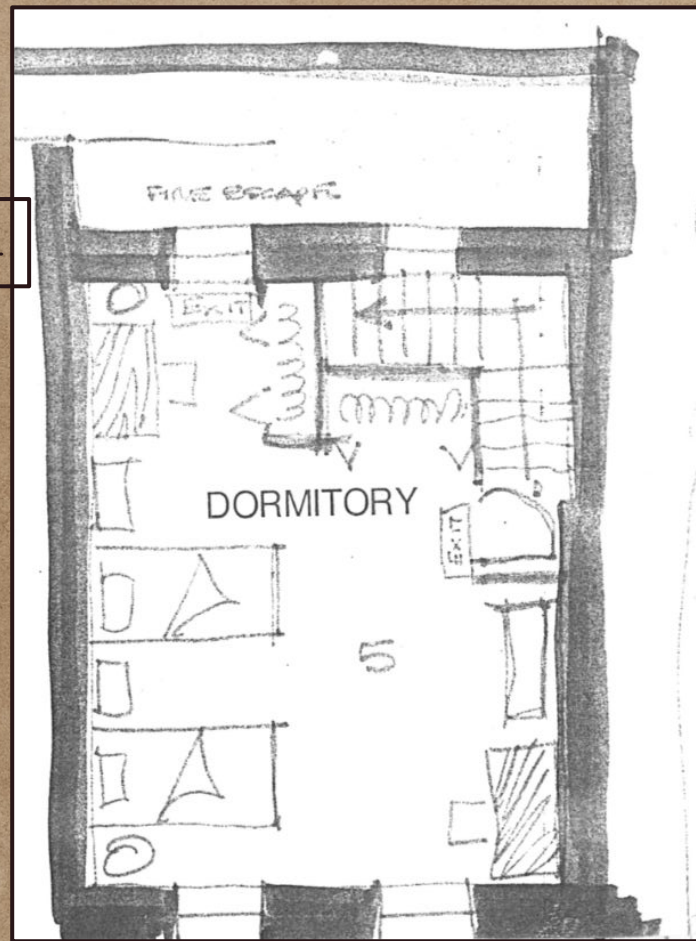


Figure 1

Idea 1: Lodging

II. What would this look like?

Our vision for this lodging experience is one that preserves the Hooper House's Revolutionary War-era history. This would include **historically accurate interior design with furniture that reflects the 1700s in Pennsylvania**. To enhance the amount of fun and general experience of the guest, we propose furnishing based on what wealthy households would use during the period, meaning **Chippendale and Queen Anne** furniture and design (The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Smithsonian Magazine).



Idea 1: Lodging

These photos were taken during our visit to the **Bachmann Publick House** and the **Jacob Nicholas House** which we can use for further inspiration. While these homes are for the “everyday man” and middle class, they show examples of bedrooms and living spaces from the period. However, unlike these buildings that include original Revolutionary War-era pieces, we would use reproductions. The space is intended for people to stay in and comfortably use, therefore we want to avoid any fragile or highly valuable artifacts.



The two images above are from Bachmann Publick House, the three below are from the Jacob Nicholas House.



Idea 1: Lodging

III. Why would this benefit Easton?

The Tech Clinic believes there are multiple ways in which a historically accurate lodging experience would benefit Easton:

- This unique option for those visiting Easton provides a **comfortable and discrete space** that can be distinguished from a more public hotel. Having a space that can be reserved for special stays gives Easton and Lafayette College a way to make their guests feel intentionally and thoughtfully accommodated.
- **Tourists** choosing to stay in the Hooper House would be left with an immersive and memorable experience that we believe the general public would be interested in.
- Especially considering its proximity to the Sigal Museum, the Hooper House could be **incorporated into a broader historic tour or field trip location.**
- When not booked, the property can be used as a **fun setting for small events and meetings.**
- This is a way to **showcase the incredibly interesting history** of this beautiful city!

Idea 1: Lodging

IV. How would this work?

Historically preserved boutique lodging experiences have proven to be a **strong economic investment** in recent years. In the past five years up to 2025, revenue grew by about 8.7% per year, reaching a total of \$36.5 billion. Additionally, in 2025 alone, increased by an additional 1.9% (World IBIS).

The Tech Clinic's ideas for bringing this lodging experience to life:

- One direction would be bringing in a **private investor**, similar to what was done with the Townley House Boutique Hotel in 2018. According to the business's website, the 1866 building was "overgrown, dilapidated and lying in near ruin" when it was taken over by these investors, similar to what we have seen with Hooper.
- Another idea is **partnering with an established local hotel**, like the Grand Eastonian. The partner business could assist the town with property management, bookings, and day to day operations.

Idea 2: Tavern



source: Revolutionary War Journal

Idea 2: Tavern

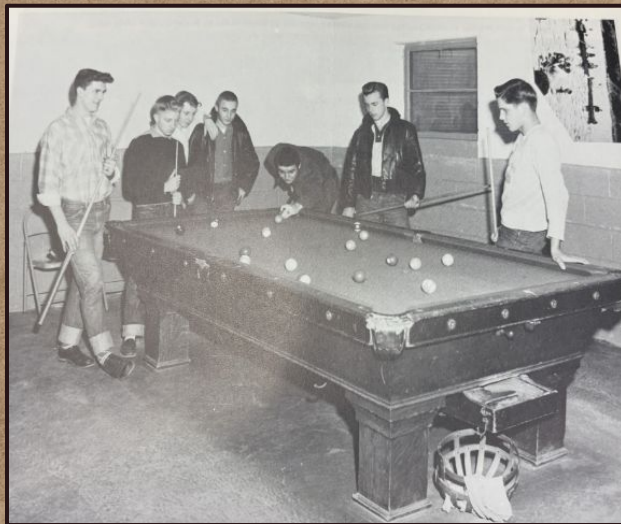
The Bachmann Tavern is a precedent, and during the 18th century taverns functioned as key social hubs that brought people of different backgrounds and social classes together. Moreover, taverns served important political and social purposes, creating a safe gathering space for the American colonists to plot against the British.

Overall, a tavern is a place where people can kick back, relax, and come together to enjoy each other's company.

Idea 2: Tavern



Revolutionary Band
Source: Revolutionary War Journal



First Youth Center, Phillipsburg 1954
Source: Marx Room



Idea 2: Tavern

This tavern would bring additionally life to downtown Easton, providing residents with a fun environment and help extend the restoration further west down Northampton Street.

The tavern would have billiards, darts, shuffleboards, along with typical tavern festivities. It can also revive card, drinking, and other fun games from the Revolutionary War era. On weekends, the tavern could host musicians performing music that replicates the tunes from that time period. Furthermore, it can host trivia nights throughout the year for whoever would be interested.

Idea 2: Tavern



Hotel Easton Bar Room, Easton 1931

Source: Marx Room

Idea 2: Tavern

Since maintaining the Hooper House's historical integrity is of utmost importance, there are many ways in which the tavern could preserve this precious history.

First, beer glasses served at the tavern could have the Constitution written on them (available on Amazon). Second, the bar-area could be replicated to model a tavern from back in the day. Third, portraits of the founding fathers, along with other important political figures from Easton, could be hung on the wall. Fourth, the lighting could be dimmed and could even be lit by fake candles that resemble an 18th century vibe.

In summary, the historical preservation of the tavern is more than achievable since taverns existed all the way back then.

Idea 2: Tavern

Not only will the tavern maintain the history, but it will also serve a great need within the Easton community.

Lafayette College students can head down the hill, bringing in extra business. They can also hold formals at the tavern. Easton residents can obviously head to the tavern as well. The tavern can be rented out for other events, and veterans of the military can receive a discount off all items.

Overall, the tavern will generate revenue for the city, while simultaneously creating a fun social atmosphere that will liven up the surrounding area.

Other Ideas in Formative Stages

The Tech Clinic has considered additional ideas that are still in the formative stages of development:

- **Pop-up programs** that would be especially valuable when the farmer's market is out of season in Easton.
 - Creating a pop-up grocery store program where Easton residents can purchase affordable produce in town during the week.
 - Pop-up business program where small businesses can come and sell their goods.
- Possible space for **Lafayette's Landis Community Outreach** program
- Bringing in a **small business** for unique addition to the city:
 - Pottery studio
 - Art gallery
 - Escape room
- Bringing in a **private investor** to use the property:
 - Small corporate office space
 - Law, Accounting, Insurance, Consulting, Creative, etc.

Next Steps

Next Steps

The scope of this report encompasses the first half of the project which will enter hiatus over summer and continue this fall. Below are the goals for this second half of our project

- Tabling in Easton for public outreach and increasing awareness of the project at events or places such as Heritage Day and the Easton Farmers' Market
- Taking our working ideas of a tavern and lodging and expanding them to have fully worked out implementation plans
- Explore our formative ideas and either add them to our working ideas or remove them from consideration
- Continuing research for the Historical Timeline of the Hooper House to close any gaps in it

Next Steps: Survey

Here are some initial ideas for survey questions

- Are you a current or former resident of Easton?
- Have you heard of the Hooper House before? If so, to what extent and how?
- Are there any resources you know of (people, places, events, etc.) that could be useful in researching information about the Hooper House?
- Is there anything in particular that you think Easton is lacking, or that Easton would benefit in having more of?
- Do you have any insights about the history of the Hooper House?
- How did you come across this survey?

The goals of this survey are to ascertain the opinion of the people who live in Easton regarding what the city could gain in utilizing the Hooper House, and potentially find extra resources or bits of information to flesh out the timeline.

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