

## Space in Your Life

---

These logs cabins were coated with mud to keep out draughts and rain and often had outside wooden chimneys that were made of sticks plastered with mud. Washington said that the houses were “chiefly... of their own building,” meaning the enslaved people most likely had to make their own homes. This is a replica of an abandoned building at Mount Vernon that was identified as an enslaved worker’s house.

Cabins often contained one or two rooms, which housed one family per room. Parents would sleep on a “mean pallet” (a makeshift bed, such as fabric on wooden beams) and the children would sleep on the floor. One room was for everything, sleeping, and cooking. So they used creative ways to make more space: hooks, shelves, and holes lined with wood hidden by wooden doors, which they used as a cellar for their food.

Although this cabin is isolated, in the 18th century, the enslaved people at Mount Vernon would have lived in mini-villages on the outlying farms. The largest village was at the Mansion House Farm, where around ninety enslaved workers lived. The others ranged in size from Dogue Run Farm, with forty-five enslaved residents on 650 acres of land, to fifty-seven at River Farm, containing 1,207 acres of arable land, forty-one enslaved workers at Muddy Hole Farm which had 476 acres, and seventy-six at the 928-acre Union Farm.

---

Instructions: Think about how the space of their homes and their closeness to others affected the enslaved workers’ lives and the community at Mount Vernon. Now, think about your own life and answer these questions.

1. How does the physical space of your house affect the activities you do?
2. What things can you do and when depending on the space of your house?
3. Does the amount of space you have enhance or limit your daily activities?