



## *Life After Slavery:*

# Receipt for Wages to George Smith

### Students will learn...

- About the fates of some of the enslaved people who were freed through Washington's will
- To extract information from a primary source and then analyze it.

### You will need...

- the [Receipt for Wages to George Smith](#)
- Enslaved population in 1799 Infographic
- Receipt for Wages Worksheet
- Historical Context cards
- *Optional:* Sample Receipt, Receipt to Davie Gray, and Comparing Salaries

### *Opener: Washington's Will*

- Show your students the infographic of the enslaved population at Mount Vernon in 1799. Explain that it is a visual representation of a census Washington had done. Ask how have these people been divided- by location and ownership
- Ask them what the difference is between the three categories of people? Where are the most amount of people?
- Focus on the Custises:

- Who were they?
- Why did Martha's enslaved people not go to Washington?
- Reference the phrase **dower slave**.
- Who would inherit these enslaved people after Martha's death?

- Now explain that in his will, Washington freed his enslaved population.

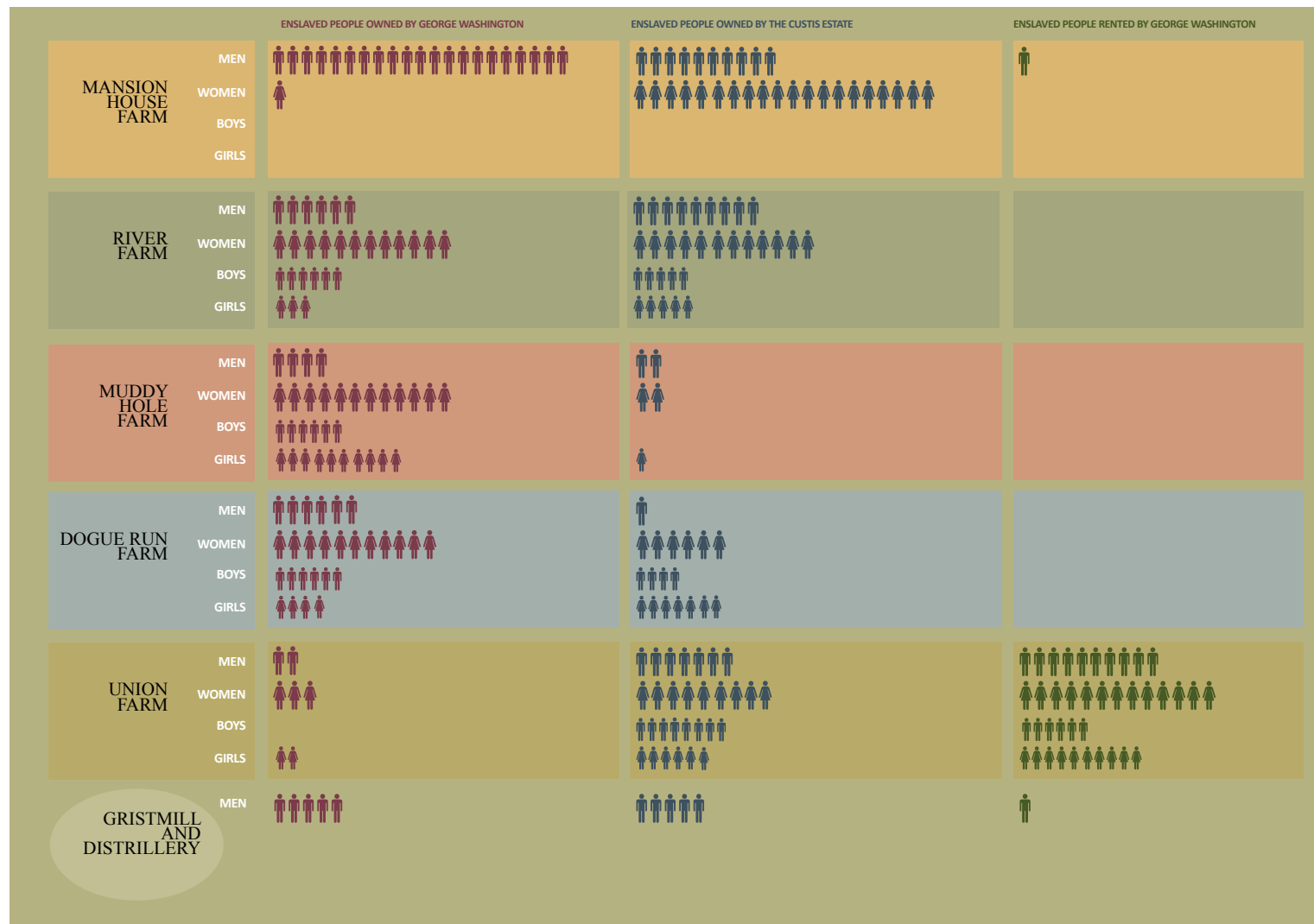
### *Task: Reading the Receipt*

- Give your students the receipt for wages to George Smith and worksheet.
- Individually or pairs, they should rewrite the receipt in a modern layout (part 1).
- When finished, go over the answers.
- Next, ask them what information they would like to know to understand the receipt- Who are the people listed? What was happening at Mount Vernon in 1802? What/where is Woodlawn?
- Give them the context cards, and then have them answer the rest of the questions.

### *Closer: Challenges of Freedom*

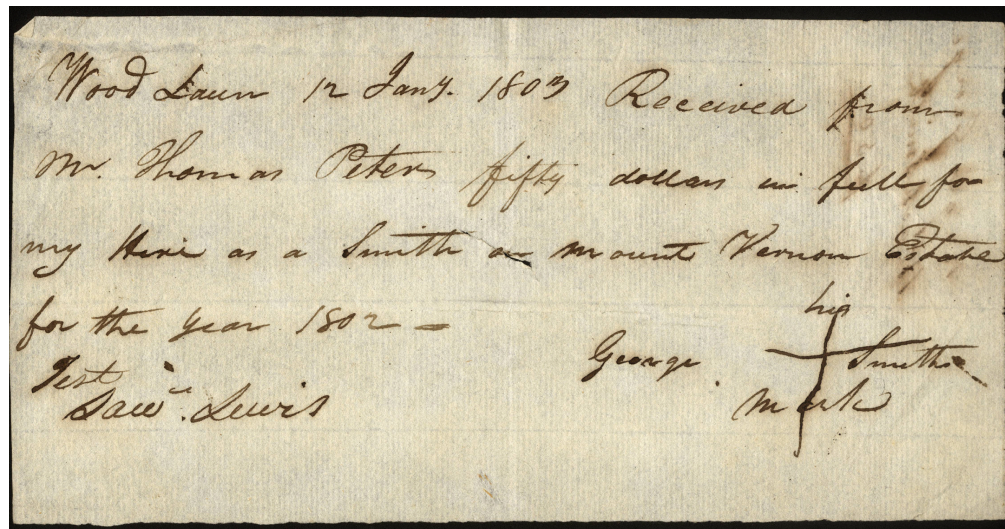
- Put this receipt and what they learned from it in a wider context, by asking them to name some of the challenges a newly freed people faced. What were some of the barriers and limitations they still faced?
  - Their families were not necessarily freed with them and could be separated from them. Neither could their friends and community.
  - They had little to no access to formal education.
  - Most had little to no money upon being freed.
- *Optional:* Compare to another [receipt](#) from Martha Washington to Davie Gray

# Enslaved Population at Mount Vernon, 1799 Infographic

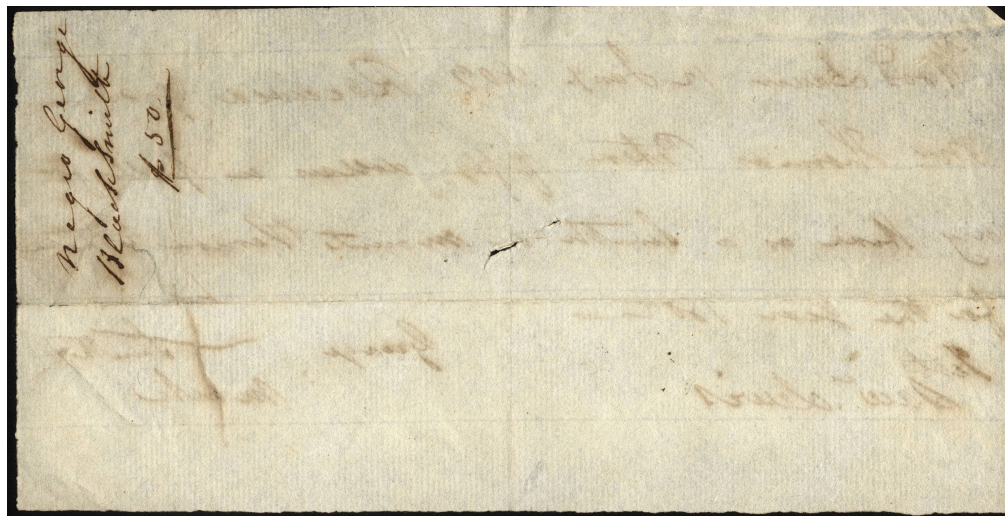


Source: Mount Vernon's Ladies Association, taken from George Washington's List of Enslaved People, 1799.

## Receipt For Wages to George Smith



Wood Lawn 12 Jan<sup>y</sup>. 1803 Received from  
Mr. Thomas Peter fifty dollars in full for  
my Hire as a Smith on Mount Vernon Estate  
for the year 1802 -  
Jest Lawe. Lewis George <sup>his</sup> Smith  
Mk



Negro George  
Blacksmith  
\$50

Transcript:

Wood Lawn 12 Jan<sup>y</sup>. 1803 Received from Mr. Thomas Peter fifty dollars in full for my Hire as a Smith on Mount Vernon Estate for the year 1802-

<illegible> Lawe. Lewis

His Mark

George Smith

Reverse:

Negro George Blacksmith \$50

# Reading the Receipt

## PART 1

Instructions: Take the information in the Receipt for wages to George Smith to make a modern-day receipt.

DATE: _____		RECEIPT NUMBER: 12345	
RECEIVED FROM _____		AMOUNT: \$	
FOR _____			
ACCT.		<input type="radio"/> CASH	RECEIVED BY _____
PAID		<input type="radio"/> CHECK	
		<input type="radio"/> MONEY ORDER	
DUE		<input type="radio"/> CREDIT CARD	

## PART 2

Instructions: After reading the historical context cards, look back at the original receipt and answer these questions.

1. Where was this check written? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why might the check be written there there and not at Mount Vernon or Tudor House?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who wrote this check and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Where can you see George Smith's writing? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Most enslaved people did not have last names, why do you think George choose Smith as his last name? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How does that reflect his new status as a free man? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Life After Slavery Historical Context Cards

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### INSTRUCTIONS:

Before printing, make sure your settings are on double-sided. Then, just cut at the solid lines.

Teaching with Documents: Washington Becomes a Commander

# George Smith



Woodlawn

# 1802

George Smith was a blacksmith who was one of the enslaved people owned by George Washington. In 1801, he was freed by the terms of Washington's will. However, his wife, Lydia, and their daughter, also named Lydia, were dower slaves and so remained enslaved as property of the Custis estate.

After being freed, George was hired by Martha Washington to work as Mount Vernon's blacksmith (although he was paid by Thomas Peter).

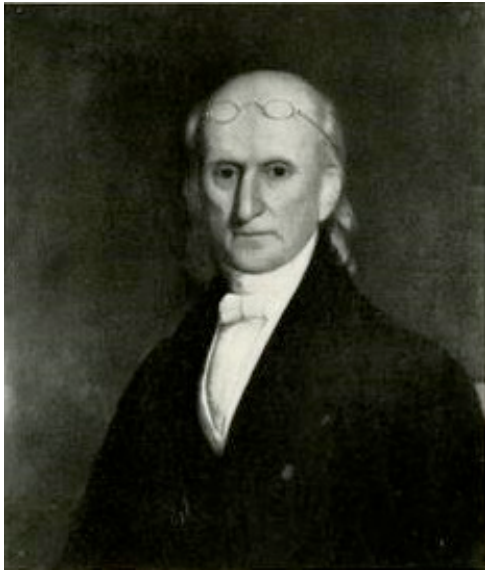
We do not know anything more about George or his family after this receipt as documents on Mount Vernon's enslaved community are often fragmentary and incomplete.

By 1802, George Washington had been dead for two years, afterwards, Martha Washington never mentally recovered. Thomas Peters, her granddaughters' husband, helped her manage the estate after his death.

On May 22, she died herself. Her property, including the enslaved people from her first marriage to Daniel Custis, was divided between her four grandchildren. George Smith's wife, Lydia, and their daughter were inherited by Eleanor (Nelly) Parke Custis Lewis and went to live on her plantation Woodland.

Woodlawn Plantation was located 4 to 5 miles away from Mount Vernon and was the home of Lawrence Lewis and his wife Eleanor (Nelly) Parke Custis Lewis, the granddaughter to Martha Washington. After Martha's death in May 1802, Nelly and Lawrence moved to Woodlawn until Lawrence's death in 1839. It was also the home to the many enslaved people that Nelly inherited from her grandmother after her death. George Smith's wife, Lydia, and their daughter were inherited by Nelly and moved here as well. It is not known whether George lived with them as well or if he continued to live at Mount Vernon.

<https://www.mountvernon.org/education/for-teachers/>



Lawrence Lewis

Thomas  
Peter

Lawrence Lewis was George Washington's nephew. He helped his uncle with the management of Mount Vernon after his retirement from the Presidency, beginning in August 1797. He also married Eleanor (Nelly) Parke Custis Lewis, the granddaughter to Martha Washington.

After Washington's death, he continued to help Martha in running the estate until 1802. He and his wife then lived in Woodlawn Plantation nearby.

Thomas Peter was the husband to Martha Washington's granddaughter, Martha Parke Custis Peter. He was also one of the executor's of Washington's will and helped Martha manage the estate after her husband's death.

Both he and his wife also received property and enslaved people after Martha's death. They then moved to Georgetown and built Tudor Place, where they then took their enslaved workers.

## Compare: Receipt from Martha Washington to Davy Gray

M<sup>rs</sup> Washington in A/c with Davy Gray  
 1801  
 Jan<sup>y</sup> 12 To the proportion of  $\frac{1}{3}$  of 32 Turkeys raised  
 by them for M<sup>rs</sup> Washington  $10\frac{2}{3}$  @ 4/ £2-2-8  
 20 Ducks the  $\frac{1}{3}$  is  $6\frac{2}{3}$  1/9 ----- 5-  
 42 Chickens  $\frac{1}{3}$  is 14 1/9 ----- £2-18-2  
 or in Dollars 9-875 Cents  
 Mount Vernon 12 January 1801 Received by the  
 hands of James Anderson Nine Dollars & 75 Cents  
 in full ----- D Gray  
 M<sup>rs</sup> Washington her mark



## Comparing Salaries

To help understand George Smith's salary of \$50 a year as a blacksmith, this chart shows the contracts that George Washington had with some of his hired white workers.

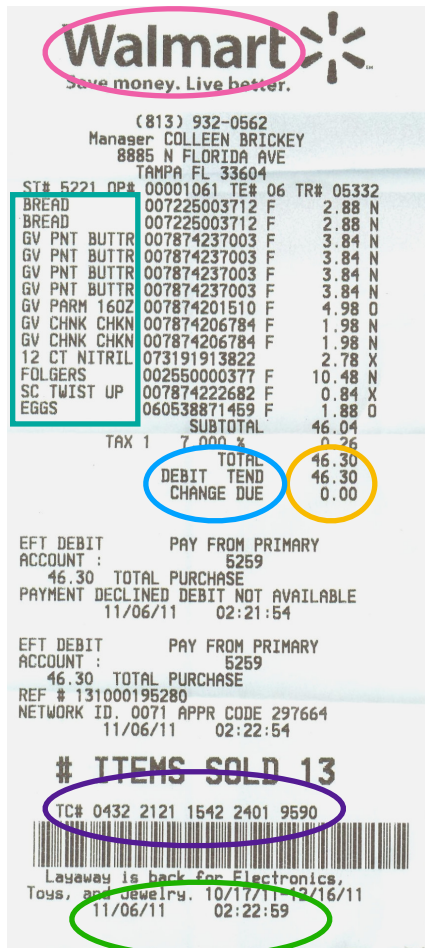
Name	Job	Date	Salary in pounds, shillings, and pence	Salary in the dollar equivalent in 1802*	Other benefits
John Askew	Joiner	9/1/1759	25.0.0/year	\$106-\$151/year	• Lodging
Walter Magowan	Tutor	Fall 1761	35.0.0/year	\$149-\$211/year	None
Burgess Mitchell	Mansion House Farm Overseer	5/1/1762	6.0.0/6 months	\$25.50-\$36.30/6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodging</li> <li>• Provisions</li> <li>• Washing</li> <li>• GW to pay levy &amp; tax on him</li> </ul>
Edward Violet	Bullskin Quarter, Frederick County Overseer	8/5/1762	2 shares of the tobacco, corn, and other grains he raises (in 1762 = 26.12.11; in 1765 = 33.5.2)	26.12.11 = \$111-158/year 33.5.2 = \$142-202	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 400 lbs. of pork</li> <li>• 1 young steer</li> <li>• 4 baby pigs</li> <li>• loan of an enslaved woman to help his wife</li> <li>• 1/4 of the butter his wife makes</li> </ul>
Edmund Palmer	Harvester	Summer 1768	0.17.0/1 day of cradling and 4 days of mowing	\$0.72-\$1.03/ 1 day of cradling and 4 days mowing (if he made this much every week for a year, he would have made \$34.70-\$49.30/year)	None
Jonathan Palmer	Head Harvester	Summer 1768	0.10.0/day (actually paid 6.0.0 for 18 days of cradling and 4 days of mowing, plus a 1.4.0 bonus for good behaviour)	\$0.42-\$0.60/day (Palmer actually made \$25.50-\$36.30 for 22 days work)	None

Jonathan Palmer	Head Carpenter/Cooper	7/30/1768	40.0.0/year	\$170-\$242/year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 400 lbs. of meat</li> <li>• 20 bushels of Indian corn</li> <li>• use of 2 milk cows (GW to get 1/2 of their offspring)</li> <li>• a garden</li> <li>• Lodging at Muddy Hole</li> <li>• GW would buy Palmer's 1 year old wagon for 17.0.0 if free from damage</li> </ul>
William Black	Cradler	Summer 1768	0.5.0/day or 72.0.0 to 81.0.0/year	\$2.13-\$3.02/day \$306- \$489/year	None
David Kinsey	Cradler	Summer 1768	0.5.0/day	\$2.13-\$3.02/day	None
Robert Langley	Cradler	Summer 1768	0.5.0/day	\$2.13-\$3.02/day	None
Mary Wilson	Housekeeper	12/1768	0.15.0/month or 9.0.0/year	\$0.64-\$0.91/month \$38.30-\$54.40/year	None
Benjamin Buckler	Carpenter	2/25/1771	25.0.0/10 months	\$106-\$151/month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodging for wife and children</li> <li>• 300 lbs of pork</li> <li>• 3 barrels of corn</li> </ul>
Three Hired Men	Carpenters	7/29/1771	7.0.0/month for the three (total of 17.6.6 on 12/24/1771)	\$29.80-\$42.30/month (total \$75.30-\$107)	None
Con McCarty	Bricklayer?	9/1771	9.2.6/36.5 days	\$39.50-\$56.20/36.5 days	None
David Cowan	Gardener	1/11/1773	25.0.0/year	\$106-\$151/year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodging</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Washing</li> </ul>
George Young	Leader of GW's Kanawha expedition	1/1774	25.0.0/year	\$106-\$151/year	None
William Skilling	Laborer	Fall 1784	30.0.0/year	\$128-\$181/year	• 2 pairs of shoes
John Fairfax	Mansion House Farm Overseer	Fall 1784	30.0.0/year 40.0.0/year (Fall 1785)	\$128-\$181/year \$170-\$242/year (Fall 1785)	None
Mathew Baldrige	Joiner/Bricklayer	1/8/1785	25.0.0/year (1785) 25.0.0/year (1786) 31.10.0/year (1787)	\$106-\$151/year (1785) \$106-\$151/year (1786) \$132-\$188/year (1787)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodging</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Tools</li> </ul>

Richard Boulton	Joiner	5/21/1785	0.5.0/day	\$2.13-\$3.02/day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodging</li> <li>• Wholesome food 2X/day</li> <li>• 1/2 gallon of rum/week</li> <li>• Washing</li> </ul>
William Shaw	Secretary/bookkeeper/clerk	July 1785	50.0.0/year (this was thought to be a very large salary for the time)	\$213-\$302/year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodging</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Washing</li> </ul>
Thomas McCarty	Housekeeper/Steward	9/1785	30.0.0/year	\$128-\$181/year	None
John Rawlins	stucco worker/contractor	2/25/1786	168.0.0/finishing the Large Dining Room	\$714-\$1020/finishing the Large Dining Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13.10.0 for traveling expenses from Maryland</li> <li>• Transportation of Rawlins' workmen and supplies from Maryland</li> </ul>
Cornelius McDermott Roe	Stonemason/bricklayer	8/1/1786	32.0.0/year	\$136-\$193	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodging</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Washing</li> </ul>
Mrs. Forbes	Housekeeper	1797	70.70.0/year	\$150/year	None

\* During the Colonial Era, each colony had its own value for its currency. For example, what was 1.0.0 pounds in Maryland would have been different than what was 1.0.0 pounds in New York. Similar to how Canadian dollars and American dollars are different today, although both are called “dollars”. Dollars were also used in the colonial era, but before 1775 they referred to Spanish dollars, which were one of the most prominent currencies circulating in the colonies. In 1775, the term “dollars” appeared on the new Continental Currency created by the Continental Congress. However, that currency fluctuated dramatically throughout and after the war and eventually became worth a minuscule fraction of its original value. It was only in 1792 when the United States Dollar became standardized by Congress. Thus, it is impossible to accurately convert pounds into their dollar equivalent at the time and is still extremely hard to calculate what Washington’s workers would have been making in United States dollars in 1802, when George Smith was paid. Therefore, this table uses the Measuring Worth formula to convert pounds into dollars by entering the salary prices as the price of pounds in 1791 (their earliest conversion date) and roughly calculating how much that would have been worth in terms of dollars in 1802.

## Example: Reading a Receipt



### Reading a Receipt:

- Received by:** The person or place that received money for their goods or services.
- For:** What was bought, either goods or a service.
- Payment Method:** How the goods or services were paid for- cash, checks, money order, or credit card (debit counts as a credit card)
- Amount:** How much was owed. This also shows if any change is owed to the payer. In the bottom receipt, this information is in a small box to the bottom left- acct. (account) = how much money is owed, paid = how much money was paid, and due = how much money does the payer still owe if they did not pay the total amount.
- Receipt Number:** Number of the transaction so that someone needs to find this document later, ex. in case of a return.
- Date:** The date and time that the payment took place.

DATE: 11/06/11

RECEIPT NUMBER: 0432 2121 1542 2401 9590

RECEIVED FROM Your Name AMOUNT: \$ 46.30

FOR Groceries

ACCT.	46	30
PAID	46	30
DUE	0	0

- ☐ CASH  
☐ CHECK  
☐ MONEY ORDER  
☒ CREDIT CARD

RECEIVED BY Walmart