Slavery at Mount Vernon
Activity Suggestion Sheets

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S
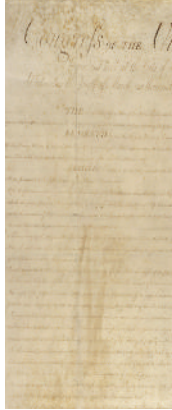**MOUNT ★ VERNON**
ES
THE MOUNT VERNON LADIES' ASSOCIATION

FARMING **ARCHAEOLOGY ONLINE** **BIOGRAPHIES**

People at Mount Vernon

- In this **infographic**, you learned about Frank Lee, Doll, and Lucy. Use evidence from these biographies of **Frank Lee** and **Doll** to compare and contrast what we know about their experiences. This **notetaker** will help you record your observations (and also contains simplified biographies).

- Listen to the stories of **Caroline** and **Doll**. Then, make a t-chart that compares their lives and stories. Make sure you include what they did at the Mount Vernon plantation, and who their families were.

- Using this **infographic**, discuss and write down the types of primary sources that were used to learn about Doll and her family.

  ◦ Who authored the primary sources? Whose perspective is missing? Why do you think the artist did not fill in all the puzzle pieces?

Archaeology and Evidence

Archaeologists are always on the hunt for clues about the past. They get to search and dig for these clues.

- Look at this image of **persimmon seeds** (or, find a different **archaeology artifact** that you might be interested in), and use an **artifact guide** to help you research. Use the following talking stems to discuss your observations:

  ◦ I notice _____.

  ◦ I wonder _____.

  ◦ I think this was used for _____.

- Look at **this marble.** A marble like this was use to play games, and this marble was found where enslaved people once lived.

  ◦ Can you think of games that you've played today that use something like this marble?

  ◦ After you think of some games that already exist, can you you create a game of your own that uses this marble?

- Look at **this fishing weight** that was found from the 18th century. Then, watch the **Mount Vernon 18th Century Fishing Technique Video** to see what fishing was like on the Estate.

  ◦ After that, use the **Parts, People, and Interaction**s thinking routine to analyze the system of fishing at Mount Vernon.

Taking Care of Animals

The livestock, or animals, at Mount Vernon were able to live and grow because of the enslaved people who took care of them.

- **Explore the farm** at Mount Vernon, or **watch a video** about the farm. Use these **Animal Matching cards** to practice naming the animals at Mount Vernon that live at the farm.

- Choose an animal from the **Animal Matching cards**, and draw a picture of it. Make sure to include what kind of things it needs in your picture (such as food, shelter, and water).

- Find a book at the library to learn more about your chosen animal **seen at Mount Vernon**. Then, use this **recording sheet** to share what you have learned about the animals.

Fishing and Farming

- Watch **Fishing at George Washington's Farm** and **18th Century Fishing Techniques** to visualize fishing on the Estate. Then, look for mentions of fishing or fish boats in these **1786 Farm Reports transcriptions**. If the 1786 Farm Report is too hard to read, use **this abbreviated farm report.** Complete a **+1 thinking routine** with two to three people around you.

- Use the P**arts, People, and Interactions** thinking routine to analyze the tasks connected to fishing.

> *Mount Vernon is located on the Potomac River, and one of the main sources of income for the Washington's was fish the enslaved community caught. The fish were also the primary source of nutrition for the enslaved community. .*
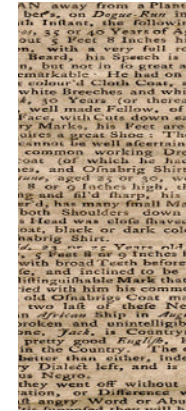
People at Mount Vernon

- Look at this **infographic** and use an **unveiling stories thinking routine** to think about the stories being told. Then, consider - how can missing sources/evidence impact a story that is told about the past? (Note that teaching enslaved people to read and write in eighteenth-century Virginia was not illegal.) Make a t-chart comparing the type of evidence the infographic has and the evidence that the infographic does not have.

- Write a summary of Doll's story and explain what evidence was left out. Are there any pieces of evidence you wish you had? Why?

Seeking Freedom

- Choose an individual person or group who sought their freedom from Mount Vernon:

  ◦ **Ona Judge**
  ◦ **Hercules Posey**
  ◦ **Christopher Sheels**
  ◦ **Caesar**
  ◦ **Tom**
  ◦ The **17 who left on a British Warship**.

- Then, using this **Seeking Freedom Notetaking Guide,** take notes about your chosen individual. After, choose one more individual from the list above to complete the guide, and compare and contrast experiences in a venn diagram.

BIOGRAPHIES **SEEKING FREEDOM** **THE FIVE FARMS MAP**

The Five Farms

- Use a large copy of **Washington's five farms** Mount Vernon map (published 1801). With a partner or on your own, **read** or **watch videos** about a few different enslaved individuals at Mount Vernon.

  ◦ Mark on the map important locations connected to the enslaved person you have learned about. Research the individual and fill out a **Biography Investigation Guide** to document your findings.

- Using **this map's scale** and the information at the bottom of the map, measure about how far it was between farms on Mount Vernon. To understand the distances, find landmarks in your local area that are approximately those distances away from your home or school.

Culture and Community

There were over 500 enslaved individuals at Mount Vernon throughout George Washington's lifetime. They lived and labored on five different farms, and created communities, families, and traditions, despite circumstances.

- People who were enslaved had a lot of different areas of culture. Choose one area of culture (**Family**, **Religion, Food,** or **Music)** and create a mind map on a piece of 8.5 x 11 paper to illustrates your chosen field.

  ◦ Find other people that have researched a different field of culture than you, and put your mind maps together to create one collection that demonstrates the culture and community of the people who were enslaved at Mount Vernon.

- Find an **archaeological artifact at Mount Vernon** that relates to culture and community, like a **marble**, **seed**, c**owrie shell**, or **jaw harp**. Use the **Artifact Description Guide** to record your findings.


Image courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

People at Mount Vernon

- Examine **Washington's five farms Mount Vernon map**. By yourself or in a group, focus on learning about two people from the list of **nineteen specific enslaved individuals**. Fill out a **Biography Investigation Guide** as you research more about your chosen people.

- Use the **Database of Mount Vernon's Enslaved Community** to find primary sources of a person that doesn't have a biography yet (such as "Boatswain B," "Grace B," or "Jack C".). There are multiple people with the same name, so be careful and make sure you write down the name and identifying initial to remember who you selected.

  ◦ Write down the facts you learn from the primary sources. (Click on each source on the right-hand side to reveal what was said about the person. Sometimes, nothing will appear - and that's okay.). Consider:

    ▪ What kind of work did your selected person do?

    ▪ Are there any ages, dates, or events that you can pinpoint specifically to that person?

    ▪ When does the written record of that person begin? When does it end? What does this tell us?

  ◦ Then, draw a silhouette that might represent them. If you don't want to draw, then write down one or two features you would include in a silhouette of that person, and the reason behind choosing those features.

BIOGRAPHIES
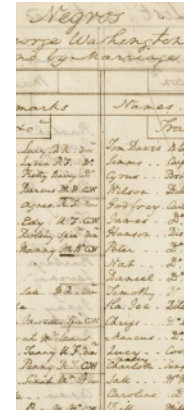
DATABASE OF ENSLAVED

THE FIVE FARMS MAP

The Five Farms

Use these **Farm Reports** to learn about different tasks that the enslaved were forced to complete at Mount Vernon as they worked from sunrise to sunset. Come up with a system of your own, whether that be a list, mind-map, or chart, that helps you understand who was working at what farm (Muddy Hole, Dogue Run, River, and Ferry [also called Union] plantation. Discuss:

  ◦ What tasks are familiar to you?

  ◦ What tasks are unfamiliar?

  ◦ What may have been some of the difficulties encountered in this work?

From your list, highlight what tasks sound confusing or unfamiliar to you, and annotate with your predictions of what each confusing word means.