

# How do we know about Mount Vernon's Enslaved Community?

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S  
**MOUNT • VERNON**

THE MOUNT VERNON LADIES' ASSOCIATION

**577** people were **enslaved** at Mount Vernon by George and Martha Washington. Historians have learned about these individuals by analyzing **evidence** such as written documents, oral histories, and **archaeological** findings. However, many stories of the **enslaved** population at Mount Vernon still remain undiscovered.

## They labored from **SUN UP** to **SUN DOWN**



**Sambo Anderson** labored as an **enslaved** carpenter, fixing structures and tools.

Tools left behind such as fishing weights, garden hoes, and nails tell us how the **enslaved** community lived and worked



Fishing Weight



Garden Hoe



Nail

**Farm Reports** like this one tell us more about the lives of the **enslaved** community by recording the tasks they were forced to do.



All hands employed on Monday in gathering & measuring of **Corn**—Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday in Carting & lifting it. Friday in sev'l kinds of Jobbs—and Saturday getting **w[oo]d** for Christmas.

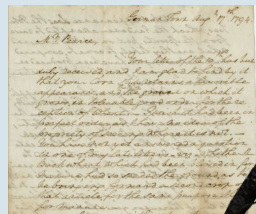


Isaac all the Week at the Mill—James repairing Barn & Stables at Muddy hole and Tom & **Sambo**—pointing 1073 Pallisado's.

## amongst individuals, there was

## COMMUNITY

Washington discussed her role in this letter. She asked for scissors, like these, to help her.



Cowrie shells were commonly woven into a netting, which is put around a bottle gourd to create an instrument. The instrument is shaken to create sounds.



Toy marbles like these were most likely played with by children in the **enslaved** community



## and many people found ways to

## RESIST

During the Revolutionary War, **17** people **enslaved** at Mount Vernon pursued freedom by fleeing to the H.M.S. Savage, a British Warship. Their names were written down by Washington's Farm Manager in the letter below.



He later sought his freedom in 1799, and Washington put out a newspaper ad looking for him.

**Caesar** was an **enslaved** field worker who could read, and volunteered to be a minister to the **enslaved** community.

## VOCABULARY

**Archaeology** - the study of buried, old, physical objects to understand and interpret human life

**Descendant** - a person who came from a specific ancestor

**Enslavement** - a condition where a person is kept in bondage by another

**Evidence** - proof of some thing, idea, or person

**Primary Source** - a document or object created by someone at the time of an event or period

# Piecing a Puzzle Together

Historians use multiple **primary sources** to better understand stories of the past. It is similar to finding and putting together pieces of a puzzle. The **evidence** in this puzzle shows some of what we know about one **enslaved** family who worked and lived in the Mansion at Mount Vernon - Doll, her daughter, Lucy, and Lucy's husband, Frank Lee.

What can you learn about these individuals? Whose perspectives are present, and whose perspectives are missing?

1759

Doll and her first four children (including Lucy) were brought to Mount Vernon when George and Martha Washington were married.



1768

Washington wrote that he purchased Frank Lee, who was a butler, for



£50

or about \$13,500 in today's currency

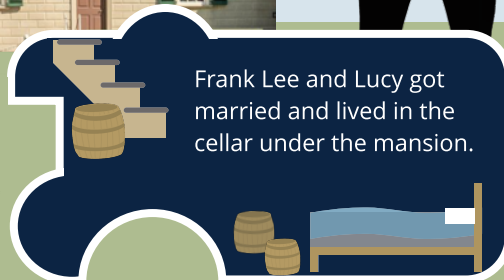


1793

George Washington writes a letter to his farm manager about things going on at Mount Vernon. From it, we learn...



Doll worked in the kitchen as a cook. Her daughter, Lucy, also worked as a cook.



Frank Lee and Lucy got married and lived in the cellar under the mansion.

Frank and Lucy's kids were the only **enslaved** children allowed to play on the mansion's front lawn. Why do you think that is?

2024

Archaeologists found bottles of cherries (like the ones Martha described) buried in the cellar at Mount Vernon.



Descendants of Mount Vernon's **enslaved** community have shared their ancestors' stories through the generations.

1795

Martha Washington writes a letter to her niece. It says:

"...should [there] be any goosberry I should wish to have some bottled and some of the morelly cherrys dried - **I think old Doll cannot have forgot how to do them.**"



This note was written while the Washingtons were in Philadelphia, away from Mount Vernon. **What do we learn from these words?**



1799

George Washington dies, and **enslaved** families are separated according to his will.

Freed

Enslaved



123

people George Washington legally owned were set free - which included Frank Lee, Doll, Lucy, and Lucy's children, however, were kept in bondage and legally owned by Martha's family.