

10 Questions for: George
Lives Bound Together Interview Activity

Interviewer: Mateo Hernandez

Background: My subject, George, was prominent in the 1780s and 90s on Mount Vernon. His work was done primarily on Mansion House Farm, as a gardener. He was originally owned by George Washington's mom and was rented by George Washington from her often until he gained ownership of him. He married Sall Twine, a field worker at Dogue Run, and they had six children together. They lived on Dogue Run with their other, while George resided on Mansion House Farm. He was able to visit once a week to say hello to his family. Once George Washington died, he freed George and his fate is further unknown.

Question 1: Hello George! Thank you so much for your time here. To start, I was curious to know who owned you, where you worked, and when you started.

Answer- Thanks, Mateo. My work at Mount Vernon began in the early 1770s. I was not owned by George Washington yet, I was owned by his mother, Mary Bell Washington. She lived in Fredricksburg, Virginia. When she owned me I was often rented by George Washington, working for him from time to time. This lasted for a decade. This whole time I was living on Mount Vernon.

Question 2: What tasks were you commonly assigned during this time?

Answer- When George Washington began renting me for labor, I was a ditcher (meaning I dug ditches) and a gardener. I then worked on Mansion House Farm, and I was among those who helped build walls, pave paths, and move and level the earth. George Washington used us to help construct his vision, and I began consistently working on Mansion House Farm.

Question 3: What was your main occupation as an enslaved person?

Answer- I was a gardener. I had many different jobs in the gardens on Mansion House Farm, and I never just had one crop I attended to. Some of the things I did as a gardener were sowing seeds for spinach and other greens in the kitchen garden, harvesting cabbage, transplanting orange trees in the ornamental upper garden, and weeding and planting strawberries in the vineyard enclosure. I worked with two other enslaved men: Harry and Joseph.

Question 4: What clothing did you wear when you worked?

Answer- I wore coarse linen shirts with linen or wool breeches. My shoes were without buckles. My clothes were mass-produced articles, so they were not very good clothing and didn't fit well. Also, we were only issued one set of clothes per year. For us field workers, this was not good as our clothes wore out very quickly.

Question 5: You said earlier that you were originally owned by George Washington's mother. Did you do any of your gardening work for her during this time, or only other jobs?

Answer- I was only a gardener for George Washington. However, I still gardened some during the time I was owned by George Washington's mother because of the many times George Washington himself rented me for his use at Mansion House Farm.

Question 6: Did you form any relationships in your early years here?

Answer- While living at Mount Vernon, I met Sall Twine, a field worker who primarily worked on Dogue Run Farm. She was owned by Martha Washington's first husband. I married her and we had three children. Since I was commonly rented, the danger of being split up with my family was strong and I always feared the worst would happen. George Washington granted my request to no longer be rented.

Question 7: Was there a specific reason for this?

Answer- George Washington had been beginning to feel for enslaved people more and more, and his conscience wouldn't let him separate another enslaved family. This made it so I could be with my family temporarily and have the peace of mind that at least for some time we could stay together.

Question 8: Did this change at all? Was there any event that put you at risk of being separated from your family again?

Answer- Yes. When my original owner, Mary Bell Washington, died in 1789, she left me in her will to her eldest son. This meant I wouldn't be separated from my family, but again, it was only temporary. But because I worked at Mansion House Farm and Sall worked at Dogue Run, I had to be away from her during the week. The children stayed at Dogue Run, and I visited them every weekend.

Question 9: How many children did you end up having, and what were their names?

Answer- I ended up having a family of eight, and had six children. Their names were Jesse, Kate, Lawrence, Barbary, Abbay, Hannah, and George. Each of them stayed with my wife on Dogue Run Farm, and George was my youngest. Jesse was my oldest.

Question 10: What happened to your family as life went on?

Answer- They lived with my wife on Dogue Run. When the time came that George Washington died, my eldest daughter, 18-year-old Kate, (nicknamed Kitty), was sold for eighty British Pounds. This is about 98.54 U.S. dollars. Today, that's worth about 2,827 dollars. My other five children remained with my wife at Dogue Run. I became a free man.

Scoring- 20 points... Please format so that this rubric follows your interview on its separate page.

Criteria	5 Points	4 Points	3 Points	2 Points
Knowledge Gained and Shared	Students accurately answer 7-10 questions about the person who was interviewed/studied and can tell how	Students accurately answer 4-6 questions about the person who was interviewed/studied and can tell how	Students accurately answer 2-3 questions about the person who was interviewed/studied.	Students invent answers to questions about the person who was interviewed/studied.

	this interview relates specifically to the topics being studied in class.	this interview relates in general to the topics being studied in class.		
Questions	Students carefully studied the biography and related sources about their subject and created an informative and interesting series of relevant questions and follow up questions for their subject.	Students studied the biography and related sources about their subject and created an informative and interesting series of relevant questions that stand alone.	Students asked questions about their topic in general but didn't make them specific to the life experiences of their subject.	Students asked random questions that didn't follow the biography or other sources related to their subject.
Presentation	The presentation is well organized, polished, and full of accurate facts that connect multiple sources that teach about slavery from the particular experiences specific to the subject.	The presentation is organized and easy to follow and has accurate facts about the particular experiences specific to the subject.	The presentation is not organized, but has accurate facts about slavery in general along with some experiences specific to the subject.	The presentation is not organized and is hard to follow. Generalizations about slavery are not supported by specific facts.
Formatting and Editing	Students edited and organized the transcript in a way that made the information clear and interesting.	Students edited and organized the transcript in a way that made the information clear.	Students edited and organized the transcript, but the information wasn't as clear as it could have been due to grammar, spelling, and capitalization errors.	Students typed a transcript, but there is no evidence of proofreading or editing.
Total Score		Comments		