



## Mount Vernon's Greenhouse Slave Quarters | BRIDGE from the Past Special, Constitution Day 2021

*In this special episode of BRIDGE from the Past, Mary visits George Washington's Mount Vernon to talk with Director of Interpretation Jeremy Ray about the complex history of slavery in Washington's world. How can we talk about founding principles of liberty and equality without accounting for slavery? How can visiting historical places like Mount Vernon help us grapple with this complex story?*

As you view the video, answer the following questions.

### *Part I: Viewing Guide*

- 1) Approximately how many enslaved men, women, and children lived in the Greenhouse Slave Quarters during Washington's time?
- 2) How did the Greenhouse serve as a boundary on Mansion House Farm?
- 3) Who provided the majority of the written evidence about the lives of the enslaved at Mt. Vernon?
- 4) How is the Greenhouse Slave Quarters atypical or unusual as a home for enslaved people?
- 5) What is "nightwalking"?

- 6) Choose one artifact from either the men or women's side of the Slave Quarters and explain how it provides a glimpse into the lives of the enslaved people who lived here.
- 7) In the video, Jeremy talks about a "culture of fear." What is the role of fear in maintaining the system of slavery? Why is this difficult to show to visitors who come to Mount Vernon?

After you view the video, discuss the following.

***Part II: Questions for Discussion***

- 1) In the video, Mary referenced principles of liberty and equality. How would you define these terms?
- 2) Imagine you are giving a tour of the Greenhouse Slave Quarters. What would you tell people about this structure?
- 3) How can visiting historical locations like Mount Vernon help us wrestle with the complex nature of history?
- 4) Why is it important to address slavery when discussing the Constitution?
- 5) What questions would you like to ask about this topic? What do you want to know more about?