

# Internship at George Washington's Mount Vernon

By: Maggie Daly

Mount Vernon Ladies Association

3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy, Mt Vernon VA, 22121

## About Mount Vernon

The Mount Vernon Ladies Association, established in 1853, aims to preserve and maintain the land and estate of George Washington. This organization continues to raise and donate money for the preservation of the mansion, artifacts, stables, and the continual search for more artifacts.

Mount Vernon, the home of George and Martha Washington, allows guests to walk on the historic farm site and mansion they lived in. It offers an interactive experience for everyone, as there are historic interpreters around the estate to discuss what would've been common practice on his farm. Not only can guests see George and Martha Washington's home and farm, guests can also see their tombs, and a memorial dedicated to the slaves they owned. There is also a learning center to learn more facts about Washington's life, from childhood through death. There are many movies, artifacts, including his teeth, and displays that show what it would be like to live in his time.



Oxen team Knox and Spud, a few months after being born, in the 12-acre field. (Left)



Mikey, Haflinger pony, cultivating the field with his farm gear led by Damara Gailliot (above)

## Internship Highlights

This summer I was able to learn things about historic heritage breed/ livestock care that I had never learned before. Some of these include:

- Oxen Driving
  - Pulling the cart, stone boat, or cultivator
- How to hook up oxen to a yoke
- Cultivating fields
  - By hand
  - With horses or ponies
  - With oxen
- How to trim sheep hooves
- How to give sheep vaccines
- How to tread wheat with equine
- How to dress equine in farm gear/ equipment
- Watching/ learning about horse acupuncture
- How to trim horns
- How to treat wounds on livestock
- Interpreting to visitors
  - Included dressing in colonial garb
- Scything grass
- Proper horse driving

Pricilla pictured in her coop where she lives with the tom Roger, and 2 other hens, Abigail and Hester. (Right)



Ossabaw Island Hogs: Bruno the boar and retired sow Paula nuzzling in their pen at the barn. (Above)

## Project Overview

This summer at Mount Vernon, my goal was to learn more about the heritage breeds that George Washington used and why he used the specific breeds. While I have already worked at Mount Vernon before this project, I was still able to learn more about these incredible breeds that the estate still has today. The breeds I focused on were Red Devon Cattle and Hog Island Sheep. While there are several other breeds, such as Ossabaw Island Hogs, Dominique Chickens, and several ponies, horses, and donkeys, the two I learned about were the most pertinent to Washington's farm.

After working with the animals, talking with my coworkers, and doing my own research, I was able to create a literature review paper on how these specific breeds impacted Washington's farm.



Hog Island ewe tending to her newborn lamb in the paddock field. (Left)

## Conclusion

This internship allowed me to learn more about livestock care and handling, and how historic museums are run. This internship has really steered me towards working with large animals in my future, whether as a veterinarian or just as a hobby. The skills I gained through this internship are ones I hope to take to veterinary school and plan to use in my future careers.

Earl, part of the oxen team, hooked on the yoke, pulling the cart full of hay from treading in the 16-sided barn. (Right)



## Contact Information

If you have any questions about my Capstone project and experience, please email me at [maggied@vt.edu](mailto:maggied@vt.edu).

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