

Education Recourse Packet for Teachers

Dear Educators,

Thank you for your interest in Somerset Place State Historic Site's educational guided tours! We hope this packet will be helpful as you decide whether to bring your class to our historic site. This packet is designed to provide information about visiting our site, as well as ideas for activities to implement in your classroom before and after your field trip. Hopefully these activities will prepare the students for their trip, as well as reinforce what they learned during their experience at Somerset Place.

Sincerely,

The Staff of Somerset Place State Historic Site

Phone: 252-797-4560

Email: somerset@ncdcr.gov

Website: <https://historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/somerset-place>

Today, Somerset Place State Historic Site is situated on 31 acres in Washington County, North Carolina. Most of the tour consists of walking outdoors and through seven buildings. We ask that visitors remember to wear comfortable walking shoes. In the spring and summer, an afternoon rain shower is not uncommon, and we do give guided tours in the rain. Please be prepared for this possibility.

If you have scheduled a guided tour, we ask that your group arrives no later than 15 minutes before your scheduled start time. This will give you the opportunity to walk from the parking lot to our visitor center and for the group leader to fill out a brief group tour form. Since our restroom facilities are limited, allow students time to use the restrooms prior to the tour. We recommend allowing 15-30 minutes for this if you have a large group.

Prior to your arrival, Somerset Place staff will determine how to divide your students depending on the group size and availability of site staff. Please divide the students accordingly upon arrival to ensure that your group begins the tour promptly and smoothly. Teachers and chaperones should remain with their group throughout the tour. All adults accompanying school groups are expected to help maintain a positive atmosphere for learning on the tour by encouraging attentiveness, participation, and appropriate behavior.

At the teacher's discretion, after the guided tour, the students are welcome to browse through our gift shop and purchase souvenirs. Our gift shop has nineteenth-century toys and trinkets, as well as books for multiple grade levels.

If your group will be bringing packed lunches, you may consider using the sheltered picnic tables at Pettigrew State Park, located next to Somerset Place on the corner of Lake Shore Road and Thirty-Foot Canal Road. To reserve a picnic area, please call Pettigrew at **252-797-4475**. Staff can also direct you to the benches in our outdoor learning center.

Directions to Somerset Place are located on our website.

<https://historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/somerset-place/plan-your-visit>. Parking for buses and other oversized vehicles is marked and located near the main parking lot.

Somerset Place offers three different program packages for your students to learn about Somerset Place.

1. **Regular Guided Tour:** Our guided tour provides a comprehensive social history, covering the enslaved people, hired hands, and owners of Somerset Place. This guided tour takes 1 ½ hours to complete.
2. **Regular Guided Tour, Plus Hands-On Activity:** The comprehensive guided tour, plus one hands-on activity. This package includes the possible activities listed here: candle making, rope making, cotton ginning & making pin cushions, making sedge brooms, basket weaving, and hearth cooking. Note: our ability to implement some of these activities will depend upon weather conditions and availability of materials. There is a small fee of \$2.15 per participant to cover the cost of materials used. Please allow 2 ½ hours for this program.
3. **STEAM Tour and Activities:** Our STEAM guided tour is very similar to the regular guided tour. However, throughout the tour we will point out various artifacts that are related to learning via STEAM. **Science:** We will talk about the science of illumination as well as butter-making and the emulsion process. **Technology:** The mills at Somerset Place used water to power the saws and grind stones. **Engineering:** The construction of the canals and drainage ditches was a feat of innovation. Enslaved men and women used hand tools to dig the 20 miles of canals and 80 miles of drainage ditches at Somerset Place. **Arts:** Our *Made from Off the Land* display in Suckey's house allows students to see and touch the kinds of items enslaved people and poor whites would have made for their own use. **Math:** We will explore the use of mathematics as was necessary for calculating the heights of trees. Lumber was a major cash crop at Somerset Place. Possible activities include candle making, butter churning, measuring trees, and weather forecasting. There is a small fee of \$2.15 per participant to cover the cost of materials used. Please allow 2 ½ hours for this program.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will gain insight into the lives of all people groups who lived at Somerset Place during the antebellum period, specifically the 1840s.
2. Students gain a better understanding of the institution of slavery and the power structure that governed plantation life in the antebellum south.
3. Students will gain insight into the interaction of people from different communities, including enslaved Africans and African Americans, free blacks, working class whites, and elite white planters at Somerset.
4. Students will understand the differences and similarities in the roles of men and women, enslaved and free at Somerset.
5. Students will gain insight into the economics and legal foundations of slavery.

Pre-Visit Activities for the Classroom:

Vocabulary Words:

Below is a list of words and phrases that you and your students will hear while at our site.

Plantation: An agricultural estate usually worked by resident labor.¹ At Somerset Place the vast majority of resident laborers were enslaved men and women.

Antebellum Period: Antebellum means “existing before a war”.² Typically in the United States, the Antebellum Period refers to the period between the War of 1812 and the start of the Civil War in 1861.

Enslaved: A condition in which a human being is treated as property and is forced to work for his/her owner. Enslaved people did not have freedom of choice or movement. Here at Somerset Place we use this term almost exclusively. This is purposeful, in order to convey the humanity of those who were enslaved. We avoid the term “slave” because it names enslaved persons only in terms of a status imposed upon them.³

¹ "Plantation," Merriam-Webster.com, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plantation> (accessed June 25, 2019).

² "Antebellum," Merriam-Webster.com, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/antebellum> (accessed June 25, 2019).

³ An excellent resource for more information about this terminology is: Jennifer L. Eichstedt and Stephen Small, *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002).

Enslaved Domestic Worker: Enslaved people whose work within the house and surrounding buildings attended to the daily needs of the plantation owners. These enslaved individuals performed domestic chores such as cooking, doing laundry, preserving meat, and housekeeping, rather than producing crops for market.

Slaveholder: Someone who owns one or more enslaved people. An owner of slaves.⁴

Overseer: Typically a white man hired by the slaveholder to serve as general manager of daily operations. He enforced the plantation's rules by administering physical punishments to enslaved people.⁵

Ration: A fixed amount of a commodity supplied to a person on a regular basis. On plantations the enslaved people were typically given rations of food and clothing.⁶

Cash Crop: The principle crop that was grown for profit. At Somerset Place, cash crops included, rice, corn, wheat, sweet potatoes, and lumber.

Artisan: Someone who specializes in a skilled trade, especially one that involves making items by hand.

Cooper: A person who builds wooden barrels (casks) which were used to store and transport goods and supplies.⁷

Cobbler: A person who makes shoes, which were typically made out of animal hide and other materials.

Blacksmith: A person who forges tools and other supplies out of iron or steel. A blacksmith works with iron and steel by heating the metals and hammering them into useful shapes like nails, door latches, locks, axes, ploughs, and rakes.⁸

Carpenter: A person who works with wood, typically carving/repairing wooden objects or constructing buildings.

Millwright: A person who specializes in maintaining the machinery used in saw and gristmills.

Field Hand: A person who works in the fields, either planting, weeding, harvesting, tilling, or clearing ditches.

Owner's Compound: An area of the plantation set aside for the plantation owner and his family. The Owner's Compound was an exclusive space, where only specific people were allowed to gain entrance.

⁴ "Slaveholder," Merriam-Webster.com, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/slaveholder>, accessed June 25, 2019.

⁵ "Overseer," Merriam-Webster.com, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/overseer>, accessed June 25, 2019.

⁶ "Ration," Merriam-Webster.com, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ration>, accessed June 25, 2019.

⁷ Jonathan A. Hallman, "Cooperage," in *World of a Slave: Encyclopedia of the Material Life of Slaves in the United States*, Vol 1., eds. Martha B. Katz-Hyman and Kym S. Rice (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 151-153.

⁸ Kenneth Schwartz, "Blacksmith Shops," in *World of a Slave*, 68-70.

Matriarch: A woman who is the head of her family, holding power and influence over the younger generations. In the enslaved community, older women like Suckey Davis were matriarchs in their families and in the community as well. Suckey Davis's value to her community would have increased as she aged, but on the slave market her monetary value decreased to \$0 by the time she was listed as 67 years old.

Stocks: A structure built to restrain a person. A device for publicly punishing individuals consisting of a wooden frame with holes in which the feet or feet and hands can be locked.⁹ The person who was locked in the stocks was typically left there for hours.

Reconstructed Building: A building that has been rebuilt in the same way as the original building. A reconstructed building will have the same appearance of the non-surviving structure.

Cistern: A large waterproof receptacle that collects and stores rainwater for household and personal use.

⁹ "Stocks," Merriam-Webster.com, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stocks>, accessed June 25, 2019.

Word Search

GBANTEBELLUMLJITWQJV
CVIFMGTTZNOGDUNKDMLR
ODKCFSDYQENSLAVEDOZH
BBDVEOLIROLDMMMSFOYYW
BDLCFNJAWKOEUOPOVR
LBLAOYYOVECISTERNMVT
EBKQCODDZEMATRICHF
RCHYJKPJRNHETCFVDOSQ
LSAOVQSEPWZOLSGTAVAVW
DTQRPHYMRAGHLWNAOEVD
LOBMPYSUIARHDDCTWRGR
NCEWIEZIBTEPMAEHDSFQ
OKICRLNSBVHQHQRXEXX
ESMDHKLTKPVSUZYTJEEK
OTYZRECWEE LNZVUCIRYG
MEIGSCKCRRLOFRSRISOC
EXPLANTATIONGBMOGPAS
SVHGXNAKSHGGNNWDDMKN
ORATIONSMZHGAZQCWME
PDJKIOODYLNRTPSYDSUN

Slaveholder

Plantation

Millwright

Blacksmith

Antebellum

Matriarch

Carpenter

Enslaved

Artisan

Cistern

Rations

Stocks

Cooper

Overseer

Cobbler

Word Search

G B A N T E B E L L U M L J I T W Q J V
C V I F M G T T Z N O G D U N K D M L R
O D K C F S D Y Q E N S L A V E D O Z H
B B D V E O L I R O L D M M S F O Y Y W
B D L C F N J A W K O K E U O O P O V R
L B L A O Y Y O V E C I S T E R N M V T
E B K Q C O D D Z E M A T R I A R C H F
R C H Y J K P J R N H E T C F V D O S Q
L S A O V Q S E P W Z O L S G T A V A W
D T O R P H Y M R A G H L W N A O E V D
L O B M P Y S U I A R H D D C T W R G R
N C E W I E Z I B T E P M A E H D S F Q
O K I C R L N S B V H Q H O R R X E Y X
E S M D H K L T K P V S U Z Y T J E E K
O T Y Z R E C W E E L N Z V U C I R Y G
M E I G S C K C R R L O F R S R I S O C
E X P L A N T A T I O N G B M O G P A S
S V H G X N A K S H G G N N W D D M K N
O R A T I O N S M Z H H G A Z Q C W M E
P D J K I O O D Y L N R T P S Y D S U N

Slaveholder

Plantation

Millwright

Blacksmith

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Matriarch

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Read Uriah Bennett's Interview

The following is a transcript of answers from an interview held in May 1937 with former enslaved man Uriah Bennett, then living in Creswell, North Carolina. Bennett was born at Somerset Place and had been enslaved there during his childhood.

My mother's name was Annie, and my father's was Ellie King Bennett. Mother was a field hand, and father was also a field hand for Josiah Collins. In the time of the war, the Yankees pressed the slaves so that several went up the country. My mother died, and was buried at a place called Hurry-Scurry in Hillsboro. I was about 15 years old during the Civil War. When we were free we were not paid at all for our work. We came back to the same old place they carried us from.

Arthur Collins, youngest son of Josiah Collins, went to war and came back. Mary and Arthur Collins kept the place until slaves were freed and then they lost it. Josiah Collins died at Hillsboro. His widow, Mary Collins, came back. They had children, one named, Arthur Collins, who was the baby boy, another named, Georgia, and another, Josiah. Two sons named Hooey and Eddie, that got drowned in the lake, were buried at the home cemetery at Edenton. He also had a boy named Kent Collins, who one afternoon while riding a gay and frisky horse, was thrown off, and killed.

Servants working in the house were called house servants, and those working in the fields were called laborers or hands. The field hands were separate from those in the house. No other slaves were allowed to go to the house. If you wanted to see the master, you had to see the servant, and the servant told the master. For months and months, at a time, we were never allowed off the farm, sometimes we would get as far as the gate and peep over. We were told that if we got outside the Padirollers would get us. Collins treated slaves pretty good, but the overseers were pretty cruel sometimes. Joel Newberry was an overseer, also George Spruill, and the last one I remember was Lloyd Bateman.

The house back of the kitchen was a house for the Collins boys. There was a house they called the hog house where they packed the meat. They would kill 100 to 200 hogs each year to run the farm. There was a house, they called the old mill house, that had a grist mill. They carried the gathered corn there, and after shelling was run in the flat on the canal, the captain or one in charge measured it, and carried it off where they had sales for it. A team carried the flat to the mouth of the canal, then it was pulled in the canal and carried off on the vessel. The grist mill was to furnish farm only. Africans cut canals before I remember. Wind breaks were left 'cause Collins wanted them. There was no wharf on the lake. There was no road around the lake. Elm and cypress trees were set out. Collins kept his roads good for the riding roads between the canal and the elms. You were not allowed to drive carts and wagons on them. Only between ditch and elms were for carts.

They had a hospital and a school house. The hospital was a great big two story house. Dr. Hardison, who practised medicine in this section, lived on Belgrade farm. His wife was named Maria. They had a daughter named after her. At the hospital at Xmas, they would celebrate. The colored people had ginger cakes. White folks would go there and dance, and have a good time on Xmas morning. Collins would have a barrel of whiskey. He would bust it and give all the slaves a drink, and every one would have a grand time. If any one got more whiskey than he needed or got drunk, he was taken care of. Collins was nice to the colored people. They did not make whiskey on his place.

The house was built by Josiah Collins. His daddy, Capt. Collins, started it, but did not complete it. Josiah Collins finished it. They had grand furniture, and had carpets. Luke Davis, house servant, kept the carpets clean. The carpets came from England. The house was lit by candles, and kept warm by a big open fire place. They kept two men in the woodhouse to keep the wood cut during the winter, and to keep it rolled up to the house. They kept it plenty warm, and they had fire fenders. The hearth was painted red, with brass fenders. They had a cistern under the house that held pure water that dripped from the house. The water went in from outside, and had to go through gate, cistern and gate that was laticed in. Nothing could get in it. There were steps to go down and get the water which was brought back up to the house and put in a cooler. The cisterns had to be cleaned out once a year.

The white folks – Collins - had entertainments at home. They had good company and good cooking. The cook's name was Grace. They cooked over open fire. They raised all kinds of vegetables. They had two or three acres of garden which ran from canal to front of house. There was a flower house built by the kitchen. Flax was grown and manufactured on the place. Corn, wheat, and vegetables of all kinds were raised. They had a fruit garden, and hazel nuts, pear trees (sugar pears), apples of almost all kinds, and some crab apples. Ships that came to get grain came in the Fall and Spring. They would bring in anything that Collins ordered such as flour, clothes, and molasses. There were no stores except the one the Collins kept. The poor white people, who did not have land enough to support them, would come and work for Collins, and take earnings in trade, like flour and other things they needed. They sold chickens and eggs to pay the difference that their labor did not pay for.

There were about 400 or 500 slaves. They had their quarters near the lake. Two families lived in a house. They fed slaves on meat, bread, and vegetables. We lived pretty good. Plenty of molasses, plenty of clothes, and also working clothes. Slaves hated compelling power. They wanted to be free. The master was alright, but when put in the hands of the overseer, he does anyway he sees fit. There was work for all. They had about 25 servants around the house. They had three gardners --- Peter King, Fred Littlejohn, and Hampton Littlejohn, head gardner. Slave's children played about in the yard. Collins had a big lawn between the house and the Pettigrew's, and they had overseers to show them how to play, and after playing, they had biscuits, sometimes a peck or more for refreshment. They picked dandelions, and then if they did anything wrong, they were told to go home and tell their mama to correct them. Charlotte looked after the children and gave them quinine. The same Episcopal preacher that preached here for the white people preached for us folks at night sometimes. The preacher boarded with the Collins'.

Negro children had to go to school every day, and Sunday, too. Both men and women on Sunday. The preacher, Mr. Collins, or some of the white folks taught Sunday School. George Patterson was the last preacher, and Mr. Murphy, the first, I remember. They preached at St David's Church. White people came in carriages to the church. The carriages were run by two horses, and were kept nice and clean. They were covered over top. They had sides, and a glass in front. They were ordered from somewhere. The driver sat on front, and the footman on back. There was a seat in front for two people. And a seat in back for two people. They sat face to face. The roads were kept good by laborers. All roots were kept off the road.

Read Uriah Bennett's interview in the classroom. Uriah used to be enslaved at Somerset Place. This interview gives us a first hand account about what it was like to be enslaved here. Some questions to ask your students:

- When did this interview take place?
- Where did Uriah work at Somerset Place?
- What are some of the jobs enslaved people had?
- What does Uriah say about how enslaved workers were treated by the master (slaveholder) and by the overseer?
- Uriah says, "Slaves hated compelling power." What do you suppose he means?

Post-Visit Activities for the Classroom:

Create a Timeline

Have students create a timeline of Somerset Place, using pictures taken during their time at the site. The timeline could be about the progression of the land development. Start with the construction of the transportation canal, then follow with the various crops that were grown, and then the buildings that were constructed. Also, add the names of those who lived and worked on the plantation, enslaved and free.

Post Visit Quiz

1. Why was the kitchen a separate building?
 - a. Because the kitchen was extremely hot.
 - b. Because the plantation looked bigger with more buildings.
 - c. Because the Collinses did not want to see their food being cooked.
2. What were the main cash crops at Somerset Place?
 - a. Cotton and soy beans

- b. Grapes and tobacco
 - c. Corn and lumber
3. Who did the most labor at Somerset Place?
 - a. The Collinses' children
 - b. The enslaved people
 - c. Josiah Collins III
 4. Where did the enslaved families live?
 - a. In the big three-story house
 - b. Wherever they wanted to live
 - c. In assigned housing
 5. How did enslaved men and women dig the canals?
 - a. With hand shovels
 - b. With a big bulldozer
 - c. They did not dig the canals
 6. Who went to the boarding school?
 - a. Enslaved children
 - b. The Collins boys
 - c. The overseer's children
 7. What animals were on the plantation?
 - a. Mules, chickens, and monkeys
 - b. Buffalo, peacocks, deer
 - c. Fish, bear, Clydesdale horses
 8. Were enslaved men and women given a choice in which jobs they had?
 - a. Yes, they could decide which jobs they wanted
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No, they were assigned their jobs
 9. Which Josiah Collins owned AND lived at Somerset Place?
 - a. Josiah Collins I
 - b. Josiah Collins II
 - c. Josiah Collins III
 10. How did people preserve meat in the 1840s?
 - a. They put meat in the refrigerator
 - b. They used salt and smoke
 - c. They buried meat in wood chips

Causes of Day, Night, Seasons, and Phases of the Moon: STEAM

An agricultural site provides many opportunities to teach about the effects of changing seasons, daylight hours, and moon phases. For instance, longer days or fuller moons meant increased working hours. Length of daylight hours also impact most crops that flower. There are many historical superstitions tied to planting during different moon cycles that could be investigated and discussed in relation to the possible science and merits behind them (or could possibly help destroy some myths). Other possibilities on this subject is to explore the harvest moon, hunters moon, etc. and the science behind that particular moon's phase. Another suggestion is to find historic almanacs for Somerset's time period (1840s) to discover more talking points. Also, consider discussing African stories or myths tied to these subjects.

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