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# Gov. Zebulon Vance Birthplace Historic Site Map



From 1795-1844, enslaved men, women, and children labored here for the benefit of the Vances. As you explore the site today, we hope you will consider how slavery impacted mountain life in the early 1800s and continues to impact us today. By 1813, the Vances owned almost 900 acres here in the Reems Creek Valley and enslaved 18 people to work in the fields, tend the livestock, prepare the meals, gather firewood, clean the laundry, care for the children, build & repair the outbuildings, spin and weave fibers into fabric, and much more.

**Slave Dwelling ca. 1790 (1)** - This structure was relocated to our site from Swannanoa in the 1960s. Similar buildings may have been constructed here as homes for enslaved families living on this property.

In 1795, David Vance Sr. relocated his family and 3 enslaved people to the Reems Creek Valley. Richard, Aggy, and a third, unnamed person, provided the initial labor. Richard and Aggy had at least 3 children--Hudson, Ann, and Young Richard.

David Vance died in 1813, leaving the plantation to his son, David Jr. The younger David also inherited his father's human property, including members of Richard and Aggy's family.

**Smoke House (2)** - This building was used for curing meat, particularly pork. The

Vances had a multitude of hogs, and they were very profitable. In 1860, just before the Civil War, hogs made up 13.7% of the agricultural production of the North Carolina Mountain Region.

By the late 1830s, David Vance Jr., his wife Mira Baird Vance, and their children had moved to present-day Marshall to open a drover stand on the Buncombe Turnpike. Drovers, or livestock herders, brought pigs, cows, turkeys, and other animals through Buncombe County from Tennessee, traveling to the markets of South Carolina. As more and more people and livestock traveled through this area, more wealthy people in the county began switching from farming to operating drover stands. Drovers would pay for a bed to sleep in and a meal at the inn while the stand workers fed the animals. These stands depended heavily on the work of enslaved people to take care of the animals, cook meals, clean the rooms, grow food, and build furniture.

**Tool House (3) and Loom House (4)** - In these buildings you will see woodworking tools, a blacksmith's anvil, a working floor loom from the early 1800s, and various artifacts used in textile production.

Mira Baird Vance had to sell the property here and in Marshall when her husband died suddenly in 1844. She held an estate sale to raise the funds needed to cover his

debts. This sale of property also included human beings. On August 13, 1844, 12 enslaved people ascended the auction block. Mira Vance purchased 7 people from her husband's estate: Leah, a skilled cook and housekeeper; four of Leah's children; Ann, Aggy's daughter; and Venus, the woman who cared for the Vance children. May, her 2 children; Abe; and Jim, a blacksmith, were sold to other slaveholders.

**Vance House (5)** - Inside the kitchen you will see the original 1790s hearth where Leah prepared meals. She used similar cookware to the pieces on display to make bread, stews, roasted meat, vegetables, coleslaw, baked apples, and other foods for the Vances and their guests.

Through the middle door is the sitting room. This was the center of the home, used by the Vances and the enslaved people working in the house. Venus likely spent time here, raising children that would one day grow up to own her.

To learn more about the Vances, you can explore the exhibit located in the Visitor Center. To learn more about the 27 enslaved people connected to the Vances, visit the installation on the side of the Vance house closest to the street and listen to our audio tour:

<http://youraudiotour.com/tours/709>

Thank you for visiting the Vance Birthplace.