

6. Log Cabin: The log cabin is thought to have functioned as a detached kitchen. Before the 1940s, there was no kitchen inside of Mount Bleak. The detached kitchen setup would have decreased the risk of house fires and the build-up of smoke residue inside Mount Bleak. Evidence suggests that some timbers from an 18th-century structure from nearby Clarke County were repurposed to restore the log cabin at some point in its history.

Take a peek inside the door. Do you spot the staircase? It is likely that this second floor was home to enslaved people in the years prior to their emancipation in 1863. At least 13 people were enslaved at Mount Bleak when the Settle family owned the farm. As of 1860, records for the farm show three “slave houses.” The locations of these slave quarters are unknown today, as their history was not preserved. Little is known about the lives of the people who were enslaved at Mount Bleak; a glaring omission from the historic record that we still struggle to reconcile today. The log cabin provides one imaginary portal to the past, through which to remember that difficult part of the farm’s history.

Following the years of enslaved labor, the log cabin remained in use as housing through much of the 1940s. Oral histories from Susie Penic describe the log cabin as the home of her grandmother who worked for the Hadows. Oral histories from Robert McFarland, son of the Scott Farm Manager in the 1950s, describe this structure as a “workshop.”

7. Visitor Center: Several buildings, including the park’s office, were caretaker homes. The park's current Visitor Center was constructed in the 1940s to provide a better home for either guests or caretakers. Once known as the Glass House, the building was so named for the wall of windows overlooking the Crooked Run Valley to the south. By the 1970s, it was expanded to its current size, housing a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and living room.

8. Kitchen Garden: 18th and 19th-century farms maintained herb and vegetable gardens for daily produce. Families also canned or dried produce for winter supplies.

Kitchen gardens transformed into Victory Gardens in World War II. The Hadows maintained a victory garden outside of the Log Cabin in the 1940s.

Today, the park’s garden is planted and maintained by dedicated volunteers.

Seasonal produce from the garden is used in our cooking programs and sold at the Friends of Sky Meadows’ Farm Market and in the park Visitor Center.

9. Garden Shed: This structure once housed a vital piece of farm equipment, the hammer mill, which was used for grain processing. Passing along a series of small "hammers," these mills ground a variety of grains for long-term storage, utilized through the mid-20th century. Walk around the building and imagine how loud this farm must have been. Today the shed is utilized as a garden shed.

10. Dairy Barn: Home to a small milking setup with hay and livestock, the dairy barn was constructed in 1941. Although the farm was never a large-scale dairy operation, milking cows were kept for personal use.

In the wake of the industrial boom of the 1950s, daily farm operations changed. Power equipment transformed and mechanized farming. Repurposed today, the barn houses agriculture storage and a variety of historic farm equipment from the first half of the 20th-century.

11. Blacksmith Forge: Blacksmiths conducted an essential trade in pre-industrial communities. This was especially true in the Virginia frontier, along the Blue Ridge Mountains. Blacksmiths made a living producing and repairing tools and implements for their farming neighbors. In the 18th century, John Edmonds, a local of Paris, established a blacksmith shop at his Wayside Cottage on Route 17 near the park entrance.

Today, Sky Meadows continues this tradition. Members of the Blacksmiths’ Guild of the Potomac transformed this cattle loafing shed into their forge in 2012. In 2013, the park opened the blacksmith shop as a permanent addition to the Historic Area. Guild members operate the forge on select weekends throughout the year, demonstrating blacksmith skills and crafting tools and other items for use here on the farm.

Check the park’s online programs and events listing for upcoming blacksmith demonstrations, hearth-cooking in the log cabin, and other guided programs.



Sky Meadows Mission

To provide minimal impact recreation, thus allowing people to feel a part of the site, and connect with the agricultural practices which formed this unique pastoral landscape over time.

Focusing on nature, history, agriculture, and peaceful recreation; our events and programs provide visitors opportunities to make a deeper connection to the story of Sky Meadows and its landscape.

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Become a Volunteer

Volunteers and program partners are Sky Meadows State Park’s most valuable and appreciated resource. We are able to offer special events and programs because many people give their time, energy, and passion.

We always welcome more people to lend a hand. There are numerous ways you or your group can get involved.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities, visit www.virginiastateparks.gov, email skvolunteer@dcr.virginia.gov, call 540-592-3556, or stop by the park’s Visitor Center.

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Historic Grounds Walking Tour



