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. <u>Visitor Center:</u> 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. <u>Kitchen Garden:</u> 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. <u>Garden Shed:</u> 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 image how loud this farm must have been. Today the shed is utilized as a garden shed.
- 10. <u>Dairy Barn:</u> 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. <u>Blacksmith Forge:</u> 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, hearthcooking 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.

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.

Sky Meadows State Park

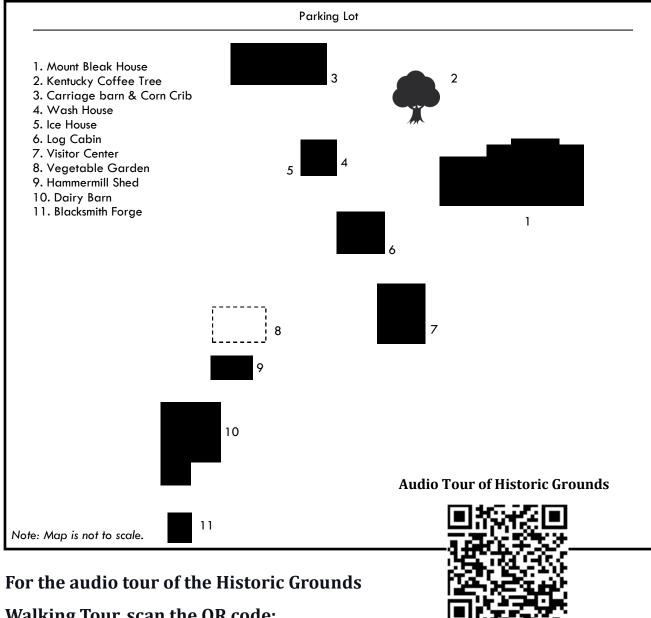
11012 Edmonds Lane Delaplane, VA 20144 Phone 540-592-3556

VIRGINIA STATE PARKS

Sky Meadows State Park

Historic Grounds Walking Tour





Walking Tour, scan the OR code:

Introduction: Begin your walking tour on the back porch of the Mount Bleak House. Take a moment to take in the view of the Crooked Run Valley. Prior to European colonization of this valley, the people who lived on and cared for this land included people of the Manahoac, Monacan, Occaneechi, Saponi and Tutelo tribes. These indigenous people established trade routes, including the thoroughfare that would become "Ashby's Gap," or modern-day routes 50 and 17.

Nestled in the Crooked Run Valley, Mount Bleak Farm represents the European influence on the Valley's agricultural heritage. It continues as an example of an historic 18th century middle class farm. The buildings you will explore shed light on the farm's evolution throughout its long history.

1. Mount Bleak House: Named after a 19th-century term for exposed, barren and windy, Mount Bleak is a Federal-style dwelling common to the Eastern region of the country. Abner Settle, the local postmaster and general store owner in the town of Paris, has been credited with having built Mount Bleak in the 1840s. However, the labor involved in both building and running the farm was done by the people he enslaved who were neither paid nor credited for their work. Abner Settle lived in the house with his second wife, Mary Ann Kyle Settle, and many of their 12 children until 1866. According to census records, there were 13 people enslaved at Mount Bleak Farm in 1860. Names of enslaved people were not recorded, only their genders, ages and races which were listed as "Black" or "Mulatto" (an outdated term considered offensive today that referred to a person of mixed African and European ancestry).

What we know about life at the Mount Bleak Farm, including the years before, during and after the Civil War, comes from a patchwork of primary sources such as the diary of Amanda Edmonds, niece to Abner and Mary and resident of the neighboring Belle Grove farm. The Diary of Amanda Edmonds is available for purchase in the park Visitor Center.

Abner Settle ran an ad in the April 22, 1858 Alexandria Gazette that read "SALE THIS DAY. NEGROES FOR SALE...several LIKELY SERVANTS, mostly boys." We can look to Amanda's diary entry for that date to learn the names of several enslaved people who were sold from her family farm to pay the debts of her late father. Their names were Ligga, Turner, Rufus, Marshall, Shirley and Mary Jane.

The Settles sold Mount Bleak Farm in 1866. The home's longest landowner, George Slater, renamed the farm Slater's Place and occupied it from 1868 to 1926. For much of the 1930s, the residence was vacant or occupied by tenant farmers, and eventually sold at auction. In 1941, Sir Robert Hadow, British Consulate member to the United States, purchased the 365-acre farm. Hadow renamed the property Skye Farm and utilized it as a safe haven for his family during World War II. During the Hadow's residency through 1946, Mount Bleak gained amenities common of the 20th century: electricity, heat and plumbing. By the 1950s, Mount Bleak Farm expanded to about 900 acres and sold to the Scott Family. It was then that the property gained the named Sky Meadows.

For more information on Mount Bleak, scan the following QR code for a YouTube video of an American Sign Language tour of the house:



2. Kentucky Coffee Tree: Common of a 19th century middle-class farmer, Abner Settle held education in high regard. Before the Civil War. Abner's oldest son. Thomas Lee, studied medicine. graduating from Castleton Medical School in Vermont in 1856 and Kentucky School of Medicine in 1858.

Following the Civil War, Thomas came home and opened a medical practice in the nearby town of Paris. It is believed he brought back this Kentucky Coffee Tree from his time in that namesake state. It remains one of the few trees standing here since the 1800s.

- 3. Carriage Barn & Corn Crib: Built in the 1840s, the corn crib aided in drying and storing crops and housing transportation vehicles, spanning from horse pulled carriages in the 1840s to gaspowered cars in the 1960s. Imagine farmers using the open bay to fill and empty the crib area of ear corn. Since demolished, the crib once extended to where you now see the gravel driveway. The remainder of the barn served as the farm 'aaraae.'
- 4. Wash House: This building's initial purpose is unknown. Today we interpret this structure as a wash house. It may have been relocated onto the pre-existing 20th-century icehouse at its current location in the 1930s. Peak into the doorway: can you imagine hand washing clothes and drying them over the open-hearth fireplace? This building was used as an equestrian tack room in the 1960s.
- 5. Icehouse: Below the wash house, under the ground, rests the ice house. Large blocks of ice were stored here and insulated with hay or sawdust. Lasting all summer, this method was paired with other food preservation aids such as salt-curing and canning. *Please watch your step when entering the icehouse*