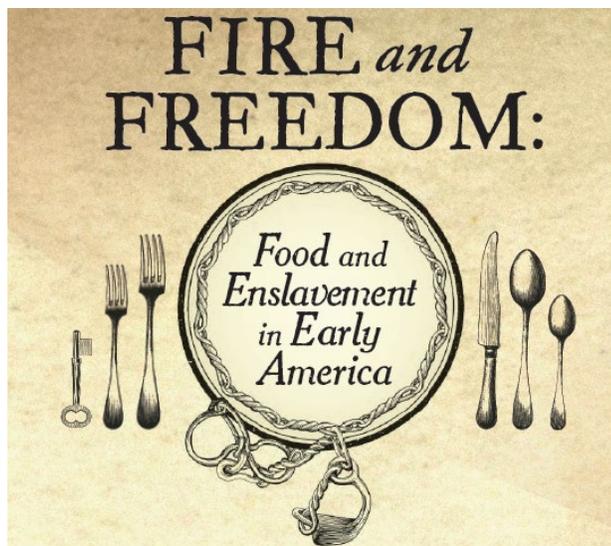


NLM Traveling Exhibitions

PR Information



www.nlm.nih.gov/fireandfreedom

The National Library of Medicine produced *Fire and Freedom: Food and Enslavement in Early America*, guest curated by historian, author, and educator Psyche Williams-Forsen, PhD (University of Maryland, College Park).

The traveling exhibition and companion website explore ways in which meals can tell us how power is exchanged between and among different peoples, races, genders, and classes. In the Chesapeake region during the colonial era, European settlers relied upon indentured servants, Native Americans, and enslaved Africans for labor, life-saving knowledge of farming and food acquisition, and to gain economic prosperity. *Fire and Freedom* looks into life at George Washington's Mount Vernon plantation and the labor of enslaved workers to learn about the ways that meals transcend taste and sustenance.

Fire and Freedom includes an [education component](#) with two K-12 lesson plans and a university module. A [digital gallery](#) features a curated selection of fully digitized items from the historical collections of the NLM, which are also available in their entirety in [NLM Digital Collections](#).

Please include this courtesy line with all public announcements about the project:

The National Library of Medicine produced this exhibition and companion website.

NLM Traveling Exhibitions

PR Information

Host venues for *Fire and Freedom: Food and Enslavement in Early America*, receive the following PR images. For your reference, there are brief captions for the images. Please include their corresponding **courtesy** noted below when using them.



Coffee can be traced back to Ethiopia. Merchants transported the plant by ship to the Caribbean. Widespread demand for the beans contributed to the rise of slavery and colonialism.

“Coffee” (*Coffea Arabica*) plate from *An Historical Account of Coffee....*, John Ellis, 1774

Courtesy National Library of Medicine



George Washington relied upon the skill, labor, and knowledge of the enslaved workers at Mount Vernon for much of his wealth. Enslaved workers used this as a negotiating tool to bargain for labor arrangements that provided some degree of autonomy.

Washington at Mount Vernon, 1797, Nathaniel Currier, 1852

Courtesy Mount Vernon Ladies' Association



In contrast to a single cooking method, Lucy Lee, one of several enslaved cooks at Mount Vernon, most likely blended African, Native American, and European styles of preparation and cooking, thereby leaving her imprint on Washington family meals.

Detail from *The Prudent Housewife, Or compleat English Cook....*, Lydia Fisher, 1800

Courtesy National Library of Medicine



In the evenings, while the Washington's enjoyed a light repast of bread and leftover meat known as “tea,” the enslaved workers' day continued. Workers could not eat until the dining room table had been cleared and cleaned, and tea brewed; wood chopped for the next day; dough kneaded, and hoecake batter prepared for breakfast the next morning.

Tea bowl and saucer, 1779-1782

Courtesy Mount Vernon Ladies' Association (owned by George Washington)