



## Slavery in Orange County:

### How the Majority Lived

Slavery was present in the United States from 1619 until 1865. During these 250 years, slavery evolved and took many different forms. In Orange County there were a handful of farmers that owned a large number of slaves, but the average slave owner had six slaves and usually worked next to them in the field. The production of grain occupied more of the slave labor in Orange County as compared to other slave populations in the United States.

Due to the fact that there were so few slaves per slave-owner in Orange, some slaves lived in the same structure as their masters. Among the dozen large plantations in the county where slave-owners made slaves live in a separate structure, it was common to build a living space 10' x 12' for an entire family. Although many slaves further south and east worked in tobacco or cotton plantations, most slaves in Orange County harvested grain or corn, which is shown being husked here.



Detail from "Husking Corn, U.S. South, 1861"  
From the Harper's Weekly.

Throughout the first half of the 1800s, the population of Orange County dropped because depleted soil coupled with new opportunities out west caused many of the residents to leave Orange and look for their fortunes elsewhere. Despite this trend 60% of Orange County residents remained enslaved.

***"It was a wonderful place that's all I can say. And I love Freetown. I still love it."***

***- Annie Towles from a documentary on Freetown created by the Orange County Historical Society.***

**JAMES MADISON MUSEUM**  
**129 CAROLINE ST.**  
**ORANGE, VA**  
**22960-1532**

**540-672-1776**

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