Gov. Zebulon Vance Birthplace
Historic Site Map

Please return this map to the Visitor Center before you leave!
David and Priscilla Vance moved to this area and established an 898-acre farm here in the 1790s. Their original house reflected their wealth and status in the community. This reconstruction maintains a few elements from the 1790s home, including the fireplace and some of the wood paneling.

The Vances and the enslaved people built every structure on the property. They cut down the trees, hand-hewed the beams, constructed the frames, and made all the roof shingles. The Vances stored the expensive woodworking tools in a tool house like this one to protect them from the elements.

In the early 1800s, many people made their own cloth from flax, cotton, or wool. This reconstructed loom house contains all the tools required for carding, spinning, and weaving. A wealthy family like the Vances might own a large loom like this one, while others used smaller lap or table looms.

Before refrigeration, people preserved their meat with salt and smoke. After packing the meat with salt, it was hung over a smoky fire to continue the curing process. If you peek inside, you can see how decades of salting has damaged the wood on these benches, making it feather.

By the 1840s, the Vances owned 18 enslaved people. In addition to farming, the enslaved people cooked the meals, tended the livestock, cared for the children, did all the washing and cleaning—and more. Enslaved families of 5-7 people lived in homes like this one, which was moved to this site from Swannanoa.

A wooden pipe directs water from the spring into this reconstructed building. The Vances and the enslaved people used the water for drinking, cooking, cleaning, and washing. Crock of milk, butter, and eggs were also stored in the water to keep them cool in summer and prevent freezing in winter.

A staple crop in Appalachia, corn fed the people and livestock on a farm like this one. Farmers could also distill corn into whiskey to make a better profit. Families like the Vances used corn cribs to build up the supply for winter. The covered area on this corn crib might house a wagon or buggy.

At David Vance Sr.’s request, his family buried him above his peach orchard. David’s wife, Priscilla, two of their sons, and a grandson are also buried there. The family’s burial ground became a community cemetery and is still used today. To drive to the cemetery, turn left from our driveway and take the next right on Vance Cemetery Road.