

## Kaley Phelps: Digging Up Mount Vernon's Past for Her Future

*The Cupola* recently caught up with Mount Vernon volunteer Kaley Phelps, a senior at West Virginia University, majoring in Anthropology. Kaley received a 100 Hour Sustained Service Award.

### *How long have you been a volunteer?*

I began volunteering at Mount Vernon last summer to gain experience in archaeology and to get involved at one of the greatest historical sites on the East Coast. I also volunteered at Gunston Hall which is just south of Mount Vernon.

### *Why did you become a volunteer?*

I wanted to volunteer to learn and start building a network for future employment. But also because I enjoy the experience and getting involved in my local history. I like colonial history, and I love being able to get my hands dirty as I uncover artifacts that have possibly not been seen for two hundred years.

### *In what area(s) do you volunteer?*

So far, I have only volunteered with the Mount Vernon Archaeology department, which is currently excavating in the Upper Garden. The project's goal is to eventually map out, with archaeological findings, the

true layout of the garden as it is not accurate now. As Crystal Ptacek says, "George Washington wouldn't have walked through the garden like this!"

### *Can you share a memorable volunteer experience?*

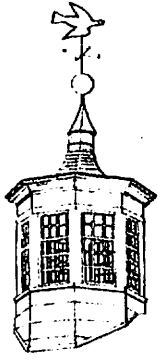
I've got a ton of great memorable experiences with the Mount Vernon Archaeology, but I think my favorite was from last summer. I was fortunate enough to be invited to go on a trip to a site named Wingos in Southern Virginia, along with all of the interns and our supervisor Curt Breckinridge. I remember all of us driving through this field in the middle

of nowhere, surrounded by cows and tall grass. It was a great weekend trip, we were there to help dig test pits which was fun. Unfortunately, the famous Virginia red clay died our shoes and socks reddish orange.

As a volunteer I have become very attached to Mount Vernon, they have included me in everything and really helped me learn many of the basic techniques I need to know for archaeology.



*Summer 2008 Interns (from top left to bottom right) : Curt Breckinridge, Ryan O'Connor, Jen, Madhumita Basu, Danielle Cathcart, Kaley Phelps, Jeanne Higbee, Jocelyn Brabyn, Adam Brinkman, Anne Hayward, Aly Sabatino, Crystal Ptacek (not in this photo: Esther White and Amelia Chisholm)*



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