

Discussion Questions for Montgomery Connections:

Yarrow Mamout:

1. Yarrow Mamout's narrative can help you create a picture of the kind of person he was. Who was that person? How was he the same or different than other enslaved people that you've learned about in school?
2. Charles Willson Peale was a famous and respected painter in the early 19th century. He painted all the famous people of the day including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. What was it about Yarrow that would make an artist of Charles Willson Peale's stature want to paint him?

John Higgins:

1. Dora Higgins said that the "Secessionists were vowing vengeance on them [Unionists]." Who were the Secessionists, and why were they vowing vengeance on her husband and the other Unionists?
2. The Higgins Family was going through a very traumatic experience and Dora naturally wanted to tell her mother about it. To do so she had to write a letter, then mail it and wait for a response. Think about how we communicate today. How is this different than the way Dora communicated?

Fred van Hoesen

1. Fred van Hoesen talks about 1918 being a difficult year in farming. He refers to the country being at war, meaning World War I, and an influenza epidemic. How would these things affect farming in Montgomery County?
2. In 1918, 90% of the county's residents worked directly or indirectly in agriculture. What kinds of jobs would be indirectly related to farming?
3. Land planning is important in any area. Planning helps determine where communities are built, how those homes will get water and electricity, where roads and schools are needed, and what types of supporting services and businesses are needed. When the Agricultural Reserve was created in 1981, Montgomery County's population was only 579,000 as compared to 952,000 in 2008. What was the value in creating an area dedicated to farming and open space before the population density created development pressure?

Blanche Corwin

1. In 1932, most American women worked in the home. For a family farm to be successful, everyone in the family had to contribute. Discuss the roles of all the members of the family in the home and on the farm. Is the home separate from or integral to the operations of the farm? What might the role of children be on the farm?
2. Why was the development of the Bethesda Farm Women's Market so unusual? How did it benefit farm families? What was the alternative for getting farm products to market?
3. Farm families, both in Montgomery County and across the country, were especially affected by the Great Depression. However, suburban Montgomery County was not. Even in today's economic recession, Montgomery County is often called "recession-proof." Can you think of some of the reasons why this is so?