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From Shadwell to Monticello: The Material Culture of Slavery, 1760-1774

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From Shadwell to Monticello: The Material Culture of Slavery, 1760-1774

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelors of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies from
The College of William and Mary

by

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Accepted for _____
(Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors)

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April 18, 2008

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Introduction

On a hill overlooking the Rivanna River, a community of around seventy people lived, labored, loved, and survived on the edge of settlement in western Virginia. Peter Jefferson, who lived from 1707 to 1757, was master of this domain, which was known as Shadwell. To Shadwell's west were the majestic Blue Ridge Mountains. Heading east, the land gradually sloped down as one traveled closer to the mighty Chesapeake Bay and later the Atlantic Ocean. On this land, slave owners, day laborers, and slaves of African heritage lived and died together; their relationship was defined by its utter inequalities. A single man owned sixty other human beings.

Whites and blacks coexisted on the Shadwell plantation. Children were born, marriages were celebrated, and friends or family from far away came to visit. Life happened at Shadwell. Familial relationships evolved as children grew older; children either began their schooling or started to work in the fields. Peter Jefferson's family grew as his wife, Jane Randolph Jefferson, bore him ten children over the years. Jefferson's eldest son, Thomas, later inherited much of his father's extensive property and slave holdings. Although Peter Jefferson died in 1757, his executor John Harvie managed the estate until his children reached their majority.

Having spent some years growing up at Shadwell, Thomas Jefferson, who lived from 1743 to 1826, was more than acquainted with its plantation landscape. In 1764, however, he became the official owner of other human beings, as well as thousands of acres of land in what had become Albemarle County, Virginia. Instead of focusing on Thomas Jefferson, this paper will address the everyday lives and material circumstances of the slaves that Jefferson inherited from his father. I will study how their lives changed

from 1760 to 1774, the early years of Jefferson's life as a slave owning member of Virginian gentry. Material culture research will be my primary methodology. The artifacts of the Shadwell slaves allow us to interpret their lives and most importantly, experience a part of their world. Using archaeological evidence, account books, plantation records, probate inventories, visitor accounts, correspondence, architecture, and other primary sources, I will paint a picture of what life was like for Thomas Jefferson's slaves.

As I noted above, I have chosen to focus my study on the years 1760 through 1774. Although there is little scholarship on these years, they are crucial to understanding the landscape of slavery that developed at Monticello.¹ As Jefferson's first time as a slave-owner, these years are crucial to understand his subsequent years as master of the Monticello plantation. Thomas Jefferson grew from a seventeen year old first-year student at the College of William and Mary to a married man of thirty-one. In addition, the Jefferson home quarter shifted from Shadwell to Monticello.

The lives of Thomas Jefferson's slaves changed greatly during this period. I have ended my study at 1774, the year that Jefferson inherited over one-hundred slaves from his father-in-law, John Wayles. When Jefferson inherited the Wayles slaves, plantation life drastically changed for the fifty-two slaves who lived on the mountaintop in 1772. Jefferson's early slaves found wives, husbands, friends, and lovers. The Wayles slaves (especially Sally Hemings) have been the subject of much recent scholarship. Studying this early group of slaves will provide much needed analysis of important members of the Monticello plantation community.

¹ The land that became known as Monticello was originally part of Peter Jefferson's quarter farm system. Thomas Jefferson began referring to that land, which is a small mountain, briefly as the Hermitage. Its final (and well-known) name was Monticello. I will discuss the quarter farm system later in the paper.

Method and Sources

In the late nineteenth-century, scholars started to use the term material culture to describe particular cultural objects. Anthropologist A. Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers, for example, defines material culture as the “outward signs and symbols of particular ideas in the mind” in the 1906 article “On the Evolution of Culture.”² Modern definitions of material culture include “the array of artifacts and cultural landscapes that people create according to traditional, patterned, and often tacit concepts...that have developed over time.” James Deetz also defines material culture as “that segment of a man’s physical environment which is purposely shaped by him according to culturally dictated plans.”³ While scholars have disagreed (and continue to disagree) on a precise definition of material culture, many admit to its importance in the study of past cultures and societies.

Words such as artifact, object, item, thing, and article are sometimes used as general descriptors of material culture. Modern scholars believe that the essential concept of material culture is that it is the study of the everyday interactions that take place between people and their culture. By studying objects and their surrounding landscapes, scholars not only better understand the material objects themselves, but they also gain key insights into the larger culture of the objects they study. “The underlying premise is that objects made or modified by man reflect...the beliefs of individuals who made, commissioned, purchased, or used them,” writes Jules Prown. According to Prown, these objects represent “by extension the beliefs of the larger society in which

² Thomas J. Schlereth, “Material Culture and Cultural Research,” *Material Culture: A Research Guide*, ed. Thomas J. Schlereth, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1985), 1-3.

³ James Deetz, “Material Culture and Archaeology- What’s the Difference?” *Historical Archaeology and the Importance of Material Things: Papers of the Thematic Symposium, Eighth Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Charleston, South Carolina, January 7-11, 1975*, ed. Society for Historical Archaeology and Leland G. Ferguson, (Lansing, Michigan: The Society, 1975), 10.

they belonged.”⁴ This kind of hands-on research is becoming increasingly fundamental to various academic disciplines, including anthropology, history, architectural history, and archaeology.⁵

Archaeologists, social and cultural historians, museum professionals, and architectural historians use material culture to explore objects of everyday environments of the past. The term material culture refers to both the material objects themselves and the academic discipline known as material culture. Material culture, the discipline, is “singular as a mode of cultural investigation in its use of objects as primary data,” writes Jules Prown, and “in its scholarly purposes it can be considered a branch of cultural history or cultural anthropology.”⁶ Anthropologists and historians differ in how they use artifacts to interpret past environments. Although anthropologists and historians study and write about objects differently, both benefit greatly when they fill the past with its appropriate accoutrements.

Because material culture offers new and exciting glimpses into the past, it is particularly important to historians. Only so much information is found in the historic record about many types of people, including enslaved and indentured servants of early America. Historians, therefore, look to material culture evidence to broaden historic knowledge and to tell new stories about sometimes forgotten people. There is also little in the historic record about everyday objects that were prevalent across the landscape. Material culture thus allows scholars to study common household items like food, trash, clothing, and eating implements in startling detail. These archaeological artifacts “can

⁴ Jules David Prown, “Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no.1, (Spring 1982), 1-2.

⁵ Schlereth, 1-3.

⁶ Prown, 1.

provide insights not obtainable from the documentary sources.”⁷ Artifacts are therefore crucial to the study of the past.

Archaeologists at Thomas Jefferson’s home, Monticello, pioneered the discovery and interpretation of early American slavery at the historic house and plantation site. In the late 1970s, Dr. William M. Kelso and his crew began digging in the red soil of the Monticello mountaintop, hoping to discover and redefine the historic landscape of the Monticello plantation during Jefferson’s lifetime.⁸ Instead of focusing on the great white man history to study Thomas Jefferson, Kelso wanted to study what was not in the documentary record. From the decades of archaeological investigations at Monticello, there is now a more complete picture of the landscape, including kitchen and flower gardens, fence lines, ha-has, waste and drainage areas, wells, and slave occupied housing and work areas.

As the years pass, there continues to be reinterpretation of artifacts and subsequent data that archaeologists produce. All things considered, however, it is important to remember that archaeology is not without its problems. These objects have been preserved (or not preserved) below the earth’s surface for hundreds of years. Organic artifacts, like wood, bone fragments, and cloth, are sometimes not preserved. The Piedmont’s acidic soil, like at Poplar Forest, has prevented the survival of bones in many cases; bone is only able to survive if the soil is neutral enough.⁹ The addition of wood ash or lime is used to neutralize otherwise acidic soil. While most organic

⁷ James Deetz, “American Historical Archaeology: Methods and Results,” *Science*, New Series 239, no. 4838, (January 22, 1988), 363.

⁸ Throughout my paper, I use the term Monticello mountaintop often to refer to the immediate area surrounding the main house. I use it consistently for lack of a better synonym.

⁹ Thomas Jefferson built Poplar Forest, his second home, in Bedford County, Virginia, which is around ninety miles southwest of Monticello. He used it as a retreat. Construction began at Poplar Forest in 1806.

materials, or those associated with carbon-based living organisms, are not preserved, carbonization allows materials like wood and seeds to be preserved.¹⁰

Archaeologists at Monticello have made great progress in studying the material culture of the plantation landscape. Before their groundbreaking work, little was known about the rich material culture of hundreds of Jefferson's slaves. Although Jefferson kept meticulous records about his slaves, farm, and gardens, he was often away from the Monticello mountaintop. With his long absences, correspondence with his overseers, family members, and other trusted acquaintances provide limited information about his plantation.

Accounts of visitors to Monticello also provide some information, but it is normally fragmentary at best. It is also important to keep in mind that most visitors were more focused on the house and the legendary figure that inhabited it, instead of the enslaved plantation community.¹¹ Mrs. William Thornton, for example, wrote in 1802 that "the grounds are very little improved except the level on the top of the mountain...the whole is in a state of rude nature." Acknowledging that "there is something rather grand and awful than agreeable and convenient," Mrs. Thornton thought that Monticello was "a situation you would rather look at now and then than inhabit."¹² Sometimes, Jefferson's interactions with his slaves are hidden within visitor's accounts.

¹⁰ Barbara J. Heath., *Hidden Lives: The Archaeology of Slave Life at Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999), 28.

¹¹ When I use the term community, I am not referring to the modern interpretation, but I mean that community is a group of people who exist in close proximity to each other.

¹² Martha Hill, "The Mulberry Row Project, Volume IV," unpublished Thomas Jefferson Foundation collection at the Jefferson Library, Charlottesville, Virginia, 22.

Mr. John Edward Caldwell, for example, wrote that Thomas Jefferson “generally visits his work-shops, labourers, &c.” after his early breakfast.¹³

One of the most quoted visitor accounts is that of Margaret Bayard Smith. A regular visitor and friend of Thomas Jefferson’s, Mrs. Smith was an early inhabitant of America’s new capital city of Washington. The Smith family visited Monticello after Jefferson’s retirement when he was sixty-six years old. Accompanying Jefferson on his early morning walks, Mrs. Smith observed the conditions of his slaves and recorded her thoughts. The houses of slaves and other workmen were “all much better than I have seen on any other plantation,” wrote Mrs. Smith, but she acknowledged that “to an eye unaccustomed to such sights, they appear poor and their cabins form a most unpleasant contrast with the place that rises so near them.”¹⁴

Fortunately for those who study Monticello, Thomas Jefferson (and his father before him) was a prolific record keeper. On a typical day, Jefferson made entries into his account books and kept track of happenings around the plantation, including slave births, their locations, and the progress of vegetables in his kitchen garden. Although the paper itself is merely paper (which is exciting and worth study in its own right), the words on these important documents provide a glimpse into the material world of their authors. Probate inventories, or a listing of property and goods, including slaves, horses, furniture, etc, give scholars a good idea of exactly where people lived, what each room was like and what it contained, and other facts about the material circumstances of the plantation. The probate inventory of Shadwell after Peter Jefferson’s death in 1757 is

¹³ John Edwards Caldwell, *A Tour Through Part of Virginia in the Summer of 1808; also, Some Account of the Island of the Azores*, ed. William M.E. Rachal, (Richmond, Virginia: Dietz Press, 1951), 36-37.

¹⁴ Margaret Bayard Smith, “The Haven of Domestic Life,” *Visitors to Monticello*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson, (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1989), 45-47.

fundamental to this study. In addition, Thomas Jefferson kept personal accounts of monetary exchanges, plantation life, and gardening activities, which provide striking details about Jefferson's interactions with his surrounding world. His 1774 list of slaves and their locations in familial grouping is essential to this work as well.¹⁵

Studying documents and other written sources is important in gaining key insights into the everyday lives of people of the past. This combination of documents, as well as the study of material objects, is crucial to paint a more detailed picture of past culture and society. This research paper is therefore an exercise in the practice of material culture. Using historic documents and other first hand accounts as a general outline, I plan to use a non-traditional approach to history as primary evidential support. With all this in mind, I will use material culture to illustrate the everyday lives of the slaves that Thomas Jefferson inherited from his father, Peter Jefferson. These slaves are important individuals whose lives deserve more attention and research. I will study the transformations that took place within their lives from 1760 to 1774.

From Shadwell to Monticello

Thomas Jefferson, author of the *Declaration of Independence*, third president of the United States of America, and founder of the University of Virginia, led a life rich in material objects. Each object was culturally significant. As he designed, built, and rebuilt his home, Monticello, in Charlottesville, Virginia, Jefferson filled its halls with European sculpture, the finest paintings of landscapes and historical figures, and the latest styles of furniture and china. Upon walking into the entrance hall, visitors encountered

¹⁵ *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, a two volume set edited by James A. Bear and Lucia C. Stanton, are an amazing resource of early American culture with extensive notes. University of Virginia professor Edwin Morris Betts arranged and edited Thomas Jefferson's *Garden Book* and *Farm Book*. Both books provide key insights into the plantation world of Monticello.

no less than twenty-eight Windsor chairs, sculptures of Voltaire, Turgot, Alexander Hamilton, and Jefferson himself, Native American objects, maps of Virginia and parts of the new country, pieces of European art, and artifacts of natural history. The entrance hall's seven-day clock must have impressed visitors as it kept track of hourly and daily time.¹⁶ Every material part of Jefferson's life signaled that he was one of the wealthiest landowners in Albemarle County, Virginia. From his campeachy, or siesta, chair and his camera obscura to his *Fauteuil en Cabriolet* armchair of painted beech wood and his famous dumbwaiter of walnut and pine, Monticello was among the elite homes of early America.¹⁷

Thomas Jefferson and his Chesapeake contemporaries were born into this elite way of life. While the majority of Virginia's population lived in impermanent buildings of frame or log construction, influential planters and political leaders occupied increasingly sophisticated brick houses. Brick houses, however, did not always predominate as the homes of wealthy Virginians. For a century after the English of the Virginia Company first settled at Jamestown in 1607, for example, impermanent houses dominated the landscape. Even in the 1770s, Thomas Jefferson saw the College and Hospital, important public buildings in Williamsburg, as "rude, mis-shapen piles, which, but that they have roofs, would be taken for brick kilns." Private buildings, he also noted, could not be "more ugly, uncomfortable, and happily more perishable" since they "are very rarely constructed of stone or brick."¹⁸ English settlers also began to move farther

¹⁶ See Susan Stein, *The Worlds of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello*, (New York, New York: H.N. Abrams, in association with the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, 1993) for more information.

¹⁷ Thomas Jefferson Foundation, *Monticello Explorer*, (Charlottesville, Virginia: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2005), <<http://explorer.monticello.org/>> (January 20 2008).

¹⁸ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1954 [1781, 1787], 152-153.

west throughout the seventeenth century.¹⁹ Indentured servants and later, enslaved Africans arrived to solve the tremendous need for labor that white elite colonists were unwilling to perform. A Portuguese ship of “20 and Odd Negroes” came ashore at Jamestown in 1619, the first of many ships that unloaded human cargo at America’s ports.²⁰

The lifelong enslavement of Africans gradually became the dominate labor system. Instead of having service areas, such as the kitchen, servant quarters, and the like, inside their houses, servant areas were moved outside of the masters’ houses. Outside kitchens and slave-occupied housing, therefore, began to crowd the landscape of Virginia. Great gentry houses spread further west to the Blue Ridge Mountains as the population of the Chesapeake region of Virginia increased. It was this climate in which Peter Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson’s father, grew up.

For the price of “Henry Weatherburn’s biggest bowl of Arrack punch,” Peter Jefferson bought two hundred acres of land from his friend William Randolph in Williamsburg in 1736.²¹ Having previously obtained land in the area, Peter Jefferson probably moved to what is now Albemarle County as early as 1737. He had up to that time lived at his plantation, known as Fine Creek, in Goochland County, Virginia. Peter Jefferson named his new house Shadwell in honor of the London parish in which his wife, Jane Randolph, was born.

¹⁹ Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, Dell Upton, “Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 16, no. 2/3. (Summer- Autumn, 1981), 135-196.

²⁰ John Thornton, “The African Experience of the ’20. and Odd Negroes’ Arriving in Virginia in 1619,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (1998), 421-422.

²¹ Susan A. Kern, “The Material World of the Jeffersons at Shadwell,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no.2, (April 2005), 6. See Goochland Co. Records, Deed Book 2, 202; Deed Book 3, pt. 2, 535, for information on the purchase of these acres.

Although the house was no Palladian mansion, as Fiske Kimball imagined during his 1943 archaeological excavations, Shadwell was very much a house of elite Virginia. Many past historians, including Dumas Malone, have discredited Shadwell as a pioneer house of the middling sort. Malone wrote, for example, that “Thomas Jefferson was born in a simple wooden house.”²² According to an early Jefferson biographer, Henry Randall, Shadwell was “a story and a half in height,” with “four spacious ground (floor) rooms and hall(way), with garret chambers above.”²³ Recent archaeology, performed by Monticello archaeologists supervised by Dr. Susan A. Kern, has shed much light onto previously imagined plantation landscape of Shadwell.

Within a ten acre area, Peter Jefferson regulated his surroundings. This landscape, complete with outbuildings, gardens, stables, barns, orchards, a kitchen, and slave quarters, was controlled entirely by Jefferson. The day to day activities of Jefferson’s growing family (both free and enslaved) occurred within fence lines. Shadwell also was perfectly situated into the larger surrounding landscape, especially with its proximity to the Rivanna River.²⁴ Positioned on a rise that gradually sloped down to the river, Jefferson’s property was in close proximity to the Three-Notch’d Road, an important trade route into the fertile Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.²⁵

Peter Jefferson had accumulated over fifteen-hundred acres along the Rivanna River by his death at age forty-nine in 1757. With other land holdings in the Piedmont,

²² Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time 1: Jefferson the Virginian*. (Boston: Little, Brown 1948), 3.

²³ Henry S. Randall, *The Life of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1858), 1: 2.

²⁴ The Rivanna River derives its name from Queen Anne. It is also sometimes known as Fluvanna, the South, or the North River. See Edwin Morris Betts, *Thomas Jefferson’s Garden Book*, (Charlottesville, Virginia: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, 1999), 30, for more information. I will refer to this as *GB* from now on.

²⁵ Kern, “The Material World of the Jeffersons at Shadwell,” 2-11, 19.

he owned more than seventy-two hundred acres of land in Virginia.²⁶ In addition to this extensive property, Peter Jefferson owned more than sixty slaves over his lifetime. Divided among three different locations, Peter Jefferson's slaves lived and worked at Shadwell, Snowdon, and other areas (including what became Monticello mountaintop) along the Rivanna River.²⁷ The division of slaves between several properties was prevalent throughout the Chesapeake region of Virginia. This practice, known as the quarter farm system, allowed planters to utilize their extensive properties to the fullest. "Each farm, under the direction of a particular steward or bailiff, is cultivated by four negroes, four negresses, four oxen, and four horses," wrote Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Laincourt of Thomas Jefferson's farms in 1796.²⁸ Overseers managed these outlying farms, and sometimes lived within close proximity of the slaves who also lived there.

At the time of his father's death in 1757, Thomas Jefferson was fourteen years old. He was the eldest brother of a family of ten children. Jane, Mary, Elizabeth, Martha, Peter Field, Lucy, fraternal twins Anna Scott and Randolph, and an unnamed boy were born between the years of 1740 and 1752.²⁹ Although Thomas Jefferson was part of a large family, his father's death certainly affected his development. Jefferson later wrote that "from the age of fourteen his whole care and direction were thrown on himself."³⁰ His father's close friend and estate executor, John Harvie, managed the estate until Jefferson reached the majority age of 21 in 1764.

²⁶ Susan A. Kern, "The Jeffersons at Shadwell: The Social and Material World of a Virginia Family," (PhD diss., College of William and Mary, 2005), 28-29.

²⁷ Kern, "The Jeffersons at Shadwell," 142.

²⁸ Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Laincourt, "A Frenchman Views Jefferson the Farmer," *Visitors to Monticello*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press), 25.

²⁹ An unnamed child and Peter Field were the two sons of Peter Jefferson who died during their infancy. Kern, "The Jeffersons at Shadwell," 488.

³⁰ Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, 37.

Unlike many planters of the period, Peter Jefferson attempted to be fair in the division of his estate to his wife and children. Peter Jefferson provided each child with specific slaves with the remainder of the slaves being “equally divided between my two Sons Thomas and Randolph, at such Time as my Son Thomas shall attain the Age of twenty one years.”³¹ As the eldest, Jane Jr. was the first child to reach majority age in 1761. From 1761 to 1776, the Jefferson siblings gradually divided the property amongst themselves in a precise manner. Brothers Thomas and Randolph, for example, chose slaves from all of Shadwell’s quarter farms so their slaves would have various experiences. For his daughters, Peter Jefferson provided each with a female slave to act as an attendant. Mary Jefferson’s personal servant, for example, was twelve year old Nan.

Peter Jefferson also provided for his wife Jane in his will. Her share of the estate, however, was small compared to her two sons. John Harvie noted that in January of 1760 Jane claimed her share, or one sixth, of the property. Jane Jefferson claimed ten slaves, whose ages ranged from three years to the eldest at thirty years. Squire, for example, was valued the highest at £60 while child-bearing Belinda, who was twenty-three years old, was valued at £55. In addition to her one sixth portion, several slaves were lent to Jane Jefferson so “to allow the Children were not divided,” including Myrtilla and teenagers Jupiter and Phil.³² In his management of Peter Jefferson’s estate, John Harvie also provided the divided slaves with clothing. In 1760, for example, he provided Jane

³¹ Albemarle County, Virginia, Court Records, Will Book 2, 1752-1785, Peter Jefferson Will, 1757, 32-34, transcribed by Susan A. Kern.

³² *John Harvie Account Book II, 1759-1763*, Albemarle County Court Records, Will Book II of 1761, transcribed by Susan A. Kern.

Jefferson's slaves "with 2 Cotton Suits & 3 Wos. Shifts."³³ Careful records kept by John Harvie, Thomas Jefferson, and others highlight the importance of carrying out Peter Jefferson's wishes during the divisions of his estate.

Quarter Farms: The Material Culture of Fieldwork

The Monticello mountaintop is now an entirely different place from the plantation of its past. For one thing, the house itself, now fully constructed and sanitized, was never as complete during Jefferson's time as it is now. Modern visitors now tour the first-floor, underground passageway and dependencies, the kitchen and flower gardens, and Mulberry Row. It took Jefferson forty years of "putting up and pulling down" the house until he finally stopped.³⁴ In reality, what is now called the South Pavilion was the first building on the mountaintop during the Thomas Jefferson era.

Dumas Malone and other past biographers have tried to romanticize the mountaintop. Malone wrote that for Jefferson "nothing was too small to excite his interest and homely matters concerned him along with the artistic."³⁵ Jefferson saw his home as a retreat or escape from the worries of life; he spent years constructing the house, thinking up improvements and alterations. Even after the house itself was finally completed some years later, however, Jefferson was still probably not satisfied. "From the moment that Jefferson leveled the top of Monticello mountain in 1768," writes Ann Lucas, "he set out to create...harmony between sublime views and utility."³⁶ Although

³³ *John Harvie Account Book II, 1759-1763*, Albemarle County Court Records, Will Book II of 1761, transcribed by Susan A. Kern.

³⁴ Thomas Jefferson Foundation, *Thomas Jefferson's Monticello*, (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of North Carolina Press), 2002, 34.

³⁵ Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, 151.

³⁶ Ann M. Lucas, "Sublime Views Above Utility: Monticello Offices," Unpublished ms., (February 1995).

he hid the plantation offices underneath the house and its terraces, Jefferson was still surrounded by a landscape of slavery.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines landscape as “an expanse of scenery that can be seen in a single view” and as “the aspect of the land characteristic of a particular region.”³⁷ While landscape is word that comes with specific connotations, both definitions provided here can be used to describe the Monticello environment. Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello and Peter Jefferson’s Shadwell were part of the landscape of slavery, which developed in late seventeenth-century Virginia. Whites and blacks viewed this landscape differently.

To fully understand the world of slave-owning Virginians, one must understand not only the plantation, but also its surrounding landscape. According to Dell Upton, “the space around the building was as important as the building itself.”³⁸ For planters, the surrounding landscape was one of hierarchy, full of barriers and boundaries. Planters carefully constructed their worlds to signal their power and influence within the surrounding communities. At an elevated point, the planter’s house was to rise amid this hierarchical setting. This would allow others to realize the importance of the main house (and thus the master) in the surrounding plantation village.

As oppressed people, slaves viewed their surrounding landscape on much different terms than their masters. Slaves encountered a plethora of barriers, such as doors, gates, and fences, in their daily life. These barriers were merely signals and had little meaning in slaves’ lives. Because of their daily work routine, slaves could pass in

³⁷ “Landscape,” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004, <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/landscape>> (February 11, 2008).

³⁸ Dell Upton, “White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia,” *Material Life in America, 1600-1800*, ed. Robert St. George, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 361.

and out of these formal barriers without exciting much notice.³⁹ “In this kind of landscape,” writes Dell Upton, “blacks could almost pass at will, while whites from outside had to observe formalities.”⁴⁰ Although planters’ large mansion houses signaled wealth and opulence, slaves moved in and out of the house with great freedom of movement (if they were domestic slaves).

The plantation house at Shadwell marked the center of Peter Jefferson’s material world. The slaves who lived and worked at the home quarter had a varied lot of occupations although many home quarter slaves worked in domestic occupations. The immediate home quarter was comprised of the main house and at least two service buildings, including a kitchen. The kitchen was probably also a dwelling house for the cook and family members. The house and two service buildings were surrounded by a fence. Beyond this area were at least two more slave occupied dwellings, a yard for various activities, other outbuildings, stables, barns, a graveyard, and formal and kitchen gardens.

Shadwell and its outbuildings rested on the top of a hill that sloped down to the Rivanna River (Figure 1). From the home quarter, the plantation world of Peter Jefferson, and later Thomas Jefferson, could be surveyed. Fields, forests, and a few dwellings, tobacco houses, and mills dotted the landscape. Walking down the hill toward the Rivanna, one would encounter the Jefferson’s agricultural pursuits in the form of tobacco fields, a graveyard for loved ones, wooded areas, and mills. Along the Rivanna

³⁹ Domestic slaves passed between barriers in and around the planter’s great house throughout their daily routines.

⁴⁰ Upton, 361-365.

and beyond, the Jefferson field slaves labored far from the main house. Shadwell eventually became an outlying field quarter after the main house burned in 1770.⁴¹

The lives of field slaves on outlying farms were without barriers. With only an overseer to supervise them, field slaves lived and worked on the same plot of land. There were no fenced areas or great houses with doors and secret passageways. Field slaves encountered barriers when they traveled from one plantation to the next to visit friends or into town to sell their wares. Dell Upton writes that “the slaves’ landscape was described from the point of view of someone surrounded by other people’s power, and its landmarks were plantation houses and fields differentiated by ownership.”⁴² The Jefferson field slaves thus measured their journeys in terms of the land and houses of others.

Thomas Jefferson’s occupation of Monticello starting in the 1760s was certainly not the first time the mountain had been occupied. As previously stated, Monticello was an outlying farm in Peter Jefferson’s quarter farm system.⁴³ Joseph Dawson was the overseer of this land in the 1750s and early 1760s. His name appears in Peter Jefferson’s account book during the years of 1753 to 1756. In 1753, a new building was built on the land that would soon become Monticello. According to Peter Jefferson’s accounts, John Biswell did “work on a Quarter 22 by 12 feet at Jos: Dawsons.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Kern, “The Material World of the Jeffersons at Shadwell,” 9-11.

⁴² Upton, 366.

⁴³ Susan Kern refers to the land that is currently known as Monticello as quarter IV. Monticello archeologists refer to this land as Site 7. An overseer occupied this site until around 1805. Sometime after 1805, the area was plowed. Sarah Bon-Harper, “DAACS: Archaeological Sites: Site 7 (Monticello): Background,” *Monticello Department of Archaeology*, December 2006, <<http://daacs.org/resources/sites/Site8/background.html>> (19 March 2008).

⁴⁴ *Peter Jefferson Account Book, 1732-1759*, “Jefferson Transcripts,” Alderman Library, University of Virginia, AC # 903, “Jefferson Transcripts,” Folio 19, transcribed by Susan Kern, October 20, 1997. I will refer to this as *PJAB* from this point on.

This house fits the typical example of duplex type slave housing. As the house was 22 feet wide and 12 feet deep, it was probably divided into two sections, which were 11 by 12 feet each. A door led into each part of the house, allowing each family some degree of privacy from the neighbors that they shared the duplex with. This dwelling was probably either of frame or log construction, like most slave dwellings of the period. In this house, there was only a one pair of pothooks for the entire quarter, which might have indicated that one slave cooked for the rest of the house.⁴⁵ To economize on heating, duplexes normally were set up with a central chimney that had two hearths, thus heating the entire house conveniently and efficiently.⁴⁶

In addition to the Monticello quarter, several other quarter farms, as well as the home site at Shadwell, comprised the material world that Thomas Jefferson inherited from his father. Like the Monticello quarter, each outlying farm had at least one dwelling for the slaves who lived and worked the land there. During this period, slave housing was undergoing a transformation. In the early eighteenth-century, slaves lived in barracks style housing, or gang housing.⁴⁷ Not only was there little privacy, but there was also little personal space. Gradually, however, years passed, close relationships developed, and children were born.

The focus of farming shifted from tobacco to grain. Around the same time as this shift occurred, families began to live together under one roof. Dwellings became smaller. Masters began more commonly to house slaves as familial units because of several

⁴⁵ I am indebted to Susan Kern's analysis of the Peter Jefferson probate inventory of 1757. I am relying heavily on her interpretation of which slaves lived where and where objects were in the landscape of the Shadwell plantation.

⁴⁶ Kern, "The Jeffersons at Shadwell," 219.

⁴⁷ When I use the term barracks, I am not referring to military style housing. I am rather referring to a living arrangement in which slaves lived together in a large room.

factors. Living with their families, slaves were arguably more productive workers, but they also gained power over their masters. The shift to living in familial units occurred in the same period that farming shifted from tobacco to grain, but it is not a direct result of a change in crops. Grandparents sometimes moved in to take care of the children.

Although it appears that families primarily lived together at Shadwell and Monticello, non-family members might have also lived in family houses. A number of unmarried individuals without families were also listed next to family groups in probate inventories and personal account books.

The 1757 probate inventory of Peter Jefferson's estate has a sparse list of master-owned objects found in each outlying farm.⁴⁸ At least one set of pot hooks was present at each building that had a hearth for cooking.⁴⁹ By reading the inventory with that in mind, it becomes easier to delineate different quarters from each other.⁵⁰ In between lists of slaves and animals, these objects paint a picture of the daily activities of field quarter slaves. The objects listed in this probate inventory were most likely stored in the buildings where the slaves themselves lived. As a result of the red soil of Albemarle County, crimson stained tools took up a lot of space in the slaves' small homes. Anything from clothing to shoes was discolored by the soil.

"1 Oxyoke, 2 fall:g axes, 3 grubbing hoes, 5 ft: hoes, 3 weeding hoes, a grind stone, 1 spade, 1 pot and hooks, and 1 M" made up the inventory of the first quarter. These objects totaled to two pounds, four shillings, and six pence.⁵¹ Slaves in this quarter performed back-breaking work in the fields with the specialized tools listed in the

⁴⁸ The inventory at Peter Jefferson's field quarter at Snowdon will not be discussed here because Thomas Jefferson's brother Randolph inherited it.

⁴⁹ The term quarter refers to both the outlying farm and the actual house that slaves occupied.

⁵⁰ Susan Kern used the presence of pothooks to indicate each separate quarter.

⁵¹ Kern, "The Jeffersons at Shadwell," 453

inventory. These slaves probably had to clear land before they could plant crops. Using axes, slaves worked from dawn till dusk, chopping down trees. When the axe blade became dull, they sharpened it on the grind stone. With the grubbing hoes, slaves were able to forcibly remove stones of various sizes, tough roots, and other debris; the spade could have also been used to prepare the land. After clearing the land with grubbing hoes and the spade, slaves planted crops. As these crops grew, slaves used weeding hoes to get rid of unwanted plants and pesky wild weeds. After long days of steady hoeing, their hands would be rough, splintered, and calloused.⁵²

The second field quarter inventoried had similar objects to the first, but it also had tools unique to itself. “1 Dutch plow, 2 plough hoes, 1 old, cut saw, 3 grubbing hoes, 1 grindstone, 2 tight casks, 1 pair stillyards and beef rope, 3 potts and 2 pot hooks, and 2 tin pans,” were all associated with this field quarter. Because there was more than just one pothook (“3 potts and 2 pot hooks”), there was presumably more than one hearth for cooking available. With three pots and two hooks, two to three times the amount of food could be cooked.⁵³ Because such a large amount of food was prepared, one slave would have to spend an extensive amount of time cooking. Her main job was probably to cook for the entire quarter. With casks and several pots and pans, she cooked a variety of foods.⁵⁴

The third site mentioned in the inventory of Peter Jefferson’s estate was probably the quarter farm that became known as Monticello. Based on the materials listed, this

⁵² Judith A. McGaw, *Early American Technology: Making and Doing Things from the Colonial Era to 1850*, (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 353.

⁵³ Kern, “The Jeffersons at Shadwell,” 454.

⁵⁴ The cook for this quarter might have been female. The cook also might have been male, like Jefferson’s cook, James Hemings.

quarter was full of activity; it also had a more extensive collection of cooking objects. “2 tin pans, 1 dish and plate, 1 frying pan, 2 sifters,” as well as “2 potts and 1 pot hook” were all found at quarter IV. Tools included “4 broad hoes, 6 hilling hoes, 3 narrow axes, 4 hilling hoes, 2 narrow axes, 4 broad hoes, 1 pair iron wedges, 1 cut saw, and 1 handsaw.” A gun and two old chairs were also listed in the probate inventory.⁵⁵

The Monticello quarter site had a wide variety of material objects listed in the 1757 inventory. Not only did these slaves have two old chairs to sit on after long days in the field, but they also had many specialized tools and equipment. The cook, for example, could prepare food using a dish, a frying pan, and two pots. One person was even able to enjoy his or her meal from a plate. With ten hilling hoes and eight broad hoes, slaves could hoe land and prepare it for crops in a small amount of time. Hilling hoes were especially useful for specific tasks, like breaking up dry soils and forming hills of dirt around plants; on the other hand, broad hoes were better for clearing larger areas of land. Monticello quarter slaves also trimmed and cut down trees with axes, saws, and iron wedges. Once the trees were cut down, they could use iron wedges to split the wood. This split wood then could be used in the kitchen hearth. The cook kept the hearth stocked with firewood for both warmth and sustenance. The hearth fire, in addition to blankets and clothing provided by the Jeffersons, would be the slaves’ only means of warmth. These slaves were quite far from Shadwell, and they kept a gun on hand in case of emergencies.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Kern, “The Jeffersons at Shadwell,” 454.

⁵⁶ The Monticello quarter was far from Shadwell. To get to the Monticello quarter from Shadwell, one needed to go down a large hill, cross a river, walk through fields, and go up another hill (Monticello mountain). See Figure 1 for a detailed map.

The probate inventory of Peter Jefferson's estate provides us with a list of the objects that Peter Jefferson supplied his slaves. From 1757 to at least 1764, the field quarter sites probably remained the same. Work continued, and overseers looked after the quarters, as they had under Peter Jefferson's leadership. These field quarters were an important part of the Thomas Jefferson's inheritance. These properties were the plantation that Jefferson knew; young Jefferson was accustomed to its fields, dwellings, and people. With his father's plantation at mind, he took his inheritance at 1764 when he reached the majority age of twenty-one.

Thomas Jefferson: 1760 to 1774

During the years that I will focus on in this study, it is important to note that Thomas Jefferson spent a great deal of his time in Williamsburg. Shadwell was Jefferson's main residence, but he often traveled from it. Since his mother and minor siblings lived on the property till 1776, Thomas Jefferson's home was still in Albemarle County.⁵⁷ His main reason for living in Williamsburg was to attend the College of William and Mary and later to serve in the House of Burgesses. Entering the College on March 25, 1760, Jefferson studied there until April 25, 1762. His mentor was William Small, a Scottish Enlightenment scholar. Small departed Williamsburg in 1762; Jefferson then read law with George Wythe in Williamsburg for the next five years. Jefferson's years of legal study paid off in early 1767 when he recorded his first legal case; like most of Jefferson's cases, the case dealt with the acquisition of land titles.

Thomas Jefferson's life was quite eventful in the late eighteenth-century. After he finished studying law in Williamsburg, he moved back to Shadwell and began practicing law in Albemarle County. At Shadwell, he watched his siblings mature and

⁵⁷ Kern, "The Jeffersons at Shadwell," 229, 242.

helped to manage their estates as precisely as possible. Jefferson experienced great loss, but also had much happiness. Unfortunately, his home at Shadwell burned to the ground in February of 1770. He matured during these years and took his place among the Virginian gentry. He was, for example, first elected to the House of Burgesses on December 9, 1768. From 1768 and onward, Jefferson was thus routinely called to Williamsburg to fulfill his duties at the assembly. From 1768 till 1774, for example, Jefferson was in Williamsburg in April, May, June, from October to November, and frequently in December as well.

Not only was Jefferson busy working, but he also began fashioning his own plantation home, which later became known as Monticello. On May 1768, Jefferson made an agreement with John Moore, who served as steward of Shadwell in 1759, to “level 250 f. square on the top of the mountain” on the northeast end. Jefferson expected this tremendous task (considering that the job involved taking the top off of a mountain) to be finished by Christmas of that same year. Mr. Moore’s recompense was 180 bushels of wheat and 24 bushels of corn.⁵⁸ In the spring of the following year, Jefferson had fruit trees planted “in almost an ideal spot” on the southeastern hillside.⁵⁹ During that same year, construction began on a small building (later called the South Pavilion), which was the first structure of Thomas Jefferson’s plantation home, Monticello.

After construction began on the Monticello house, many began to view the mountain as a special place out of mythology. His friends and peers began to talk. In Williamsburg, a Mrs. Drummond wrote to Jefferson that “Spirits of an higher order,

⁵⁸ Thomas Jefferson, James Adam Bear, and Lucia C. Stanton, *Jefferson's Memorandum Books: Accounts, with Legal Records and Miscellany, 1767-1826*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), xlv-xlvi, 76. I will refer to the *Memorandum Books* as *MB* from now on.

⁵⁹ Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, 145.

inhabits Yr Aery...Mountain.”⁶⁰ Instead of building his house near a body of water as most wealthy Virginians did, Thomas Jefferson chose to construct his house on the top on a small mountain.⁶¹ For Jefferson, the mountain was a sacred place.⁶² For his mountaintop, he envisioned elaborate burial grounds, fountains, and statues (Figure 2). He imagined, for example, a graveyard “among ancient and venerable oaks...encircled with an untrimmed hedge of cedar, or... stone wall with a holly hedge...in the center...erect a small Gothic temple of antique appearance.”⁶³

As Rhys Isaac writes, however, most of Jefferson’s imaginative fantasies never came into being; “the grotto with fountain and statue was never made; the graveyard was in time prepared, but without a Gothic temple, a turf altar, or a half-extinguished lamp.”⁶⁴ These early romantic sketches provide a glimpse into the dream world that Jefferson hoped Monticello to become; the reality of the situation, however, was that Jefferson, like most eighteenth-century Virginia planters, needed slaves to construct anything from his main house to dependencies, quarters, and other outbuildings. Unlike past studies on early Monticello, I am studying the actual slaves who did the construction work and labored in the fields all day.

Changes: House and Home, 1760-1774

After Thomas Jefferson inherited his father’s slaves in 1764, life for these slaves remained unchanged for several years. In the late 1760s, however, Jefferson began making major improvements on the mountain that he would later refer to as Monticello.

⁶⁰ Rhys Isaac, “The First Monticello,” ed. Peter S. Onuf, *Jeffersonian Legacies*, (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 90.

⁶¹ Shadwell, which is by the Rivanna River, and Tuckahoe, the place where Thomas Jefferson spent much of his childhood, which is by the James River, come to mind as examples of houses near bodies of water. Mount Vernon and Stratford Hall, which are both along the Potomac River, are other famous examples.

⁶² Isaac, 90.

⁶³ Betts, *GB*, 25.

⁶⁴ Betts, *GB*, 91.

Jefferson hired workers to level the mountain and build the South Pavilion, the first brick structure on the mountaintop. Thomas Jefferson gradually moved slaves to Monticello as the home quarter shifted from Shadwell to the little mountain. Nine slaves already lived on the Peter Jefferson era farm quarter, about half a mile from the mountaintop. To house additional slaves and hired workers, workers built at least three more buildings in the 1770s. Two impermanent structures, as well as a stone building, were built on the area which would later become Mulberry Row. By 1774, Jefferson owned fifty-two individuals, and the majority of his slaves lived at Monticello. Jefferson then inherited 135 slaves from his father-in-law in 1774. The lives of the nine Peter Jefferson era slaves, including Toby and Juno, were drastically changed in a short period of time.

Toby and his wife Juno lived on the outlying farm on Monticello mountain when Peter Jefferson died in 1757.⁶⁵ With their daughter Nanny and sons Toby and Orange, they lived in the 11 by 22 feet quarter built when Joseph Dawson was an overseer in 1753. Their life, however, had not always been this secure. Toby, Juno, Toby junior, and Nanny were originally owned by Edward Spencer, a gentleman of Orange County. On June 28, 1753, appraisers visited Toby and his family at their Orange County quarters. After Toby and his family were examined, appraisers decided how many pounds they were worth and wrote it on a piece of paper. Juno and her son Toby junior were valued together at £50 while Toby was valued at £30. Nan, the young daughter, was valued at £15. Being appraised was certainly not a comfortable process, but what happened next was definitely worse. Two years later in 1755, Toby, Juno, and their

⁶⁵ Peter Jefferson's outlying farm on the Monticello mountaintop is now referred to as Site 7, with its sister, Site 8, by the Monticello Archaeology Department.

children were sold at a public sale by Joseph Thomas, the sheriff of Orange County, where Peter Jefferson bought them for £84.⁶⁶

Toby and his family perhaps found stability with their new master, Peter Jefferson, and later, his son, Thomas Jefferson. In addition to Toby, Juno, and their three children, five other individuals lived on Peter Jefferson's quarter farm that eventually became Monticello. Phillis and her adult son Goliah, Gill and his wife Fany, as well as an unmarried woman named Lucy (or Lucey), shared the 11 by 12 duplex. At Peter Jefferson's death in 1757, "the lives of this group probably were little changed," writes Susan Kern, "although they passed into the ownership of Jefferson's estate and its control by executors."⁶⁷ Except on several happy occasions of childbirth, their lives continued without much alteration throughout the 1760s.

Starting in the late 1760s, however, Thomas Jefferson began to change the Monticello landscape. This small group of laborers encountered great transformation. Slaves, free laborers, and supervisors filled the mountaintop with activity and commotion during this period. Workers leveled the mountaintop in 1768 and later built the South Pavilion. After the plantation house at Shadwell burned in 1770, the lives of Toby, Juno, and others were forever changed.

Thomas Jefferson moved on to Monticello on November 26, 1770. Shadwell's burning was certainly a major disaster for young Jefferson, but his friends praised him on how he handled the situation. "You bear your misfortune so becomingly," wrote George Wythe, "that, as I am convinced you will surmount the difficulties it has plunged you

⁶⁶ In Peter Jefferson's account books, it was noted Toby and his family belonged "to the Estate of Maj. Spencer, By 4 Negroes Taken in Execution and Sold by You at Publick Sale." Kern, "The Jeffersons at Shadwell," 191; *PJAB*, Folio 17; Susan A Kern, "Slaves in Shadwell Documents," compiled by Susan Kern, updated August 24, 2004; Orange County Deed Book 2, 181-183.

⁶⁷ Kern, "The Jeffersons at Shadwell," 220, 190.

into, so I foresee you will... reap advantages from it several ways.” In fact, Jefferson had many plans about work to take place at Monticello. To do this work, Jefferson needed more laborers on his mountaintop than just the nine slaves his father had settled there.⁶⁸ Not only did he bring free workers, but these workers also sometimes brought their own slaves. Mason Stephen Willis, for example, did most of the brickwork on the South Pavilion. Jefferson paid Mr. Willis £2-10s-7d. Mr. Willis probably lived with other free laborers on the mountaintop.⁶⁹

From the beginning of his time at Monticello, Jefferson hoped to fill his landscape with many objects. George Wythe sent Jefferson “some nectarines and apricot graffs and grape vines, the best I had,” in the spring of 1770.⁷⁰ Jefferson later made a list of work that needed to be done at Monticello. Jefferson wanted raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries, currants, and cherry trees planted; he wanted roads built and grass sown. Asparagus, artichokes, and henhouses all had a place on the mountaintop. It is not known, however, if these early plans actually became realized; Jefferson was certainly ambitious about his up and coming plantation.

Among Jefferson’s notes on gardening and account books, the mulberry tree played a prominent role. Beginning in September of 1771, Jefferson planted mulberry trees on his mountaintop. This eventually led to the well-known line of mulberries, planted along the length of the present kitchen garden, which was later referred to as Mulberry Row.⁷¹ In addition to adding natural beauty, Mulberry Row became the center

⁶⁸ Betts, *GB*, 20.

⁶⁹ *MB*, 209.

⁷⁰ Betts, *GB*, 20. George Wythe also noted that in the future “Mrs. Wythe will send you some garden peas.” Peas were one of Jefferson’s favorite vegetables.

⁷¹ I am not certain about the precise date when this row of mulberry trees and outbuildings became Mulberry Row, the center of Jefferson’s plantation landscape. In 1782, Jefferson wrote about “the Farm second-round-about, taking in Mulberry-row is 4444.4. feet,” (*GB*, 94). He also wrote about “all the

of slave life on the mountaintop, complete with dwellings, outbuildings, and other areas of industry and craft. Mulberry Row began its development in the late 1770s.⁷² The .84 mile, or 4444.4 feet, of Mulberry Row is important because it became the center of African American life during Thomas Jefferson's time at Monticello.

In addition to planting trees, sowing grass and clover, and clearing land, Jefferson made extensive notes on the digging of a dry well on the mountaintop. Dug to a depth of 19 feet, the dry well's short existence is a reminder that Jefferson often changed his mind. Laborers began to dig the well in 1769, but it was slowly backfilled over the next two years. Intended to be a cold, dry storage area, this large hole disappeared as Jefferson's plan for dependencies changed over time. Filled with domestic objects, the dry well's intricately decorated decanter and preserved cherries paint a picture of Jefferson's early occupancy at Monticello.⁷³ The dry well was positioned just to the southeast of the new dwelling known as the South Pavilion.

As meticulous as ever, Jefferson wrote that the laborers "dug and drew out 8. cubical yds," on a good day. Work was difficult however because "it was yellow rotten stone with a great many hard stones as large as a man's head and some larger, or else the digger would have had time to spare." W. Beck worked digging the dry well for nearly fifty days.⁷⁴ If the dry well was so difficult to dig, slaves must have had a difficult time

houses on the Mulberry walk to be taken away, except the stone house." "Monticello: notebook of improvements," 1 of 14, 1804-1807, by Thomas Jefferson. N171; K161 and K162 [electronic edition]. *Thomas Jefferson Papers: An Electronic Archive*, (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2003), <<http://www.thomasjeffersonpapers.org/>> (February 29, 2008).

⁷² Peter Jefferson's outlying farm quarter was about half a mile from the Monticello main house. Bon-Harper, "DAACS: Archaeological Sites: Site 7 (Monticello): Background."

⁷³ "Decanter," Thomas Jefferson Foundation. *Monticello Explorer*, Charlottesville, Virginia: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2005. <<http://explorer.monticello.org/>>, (20 January 2008).

⁷⁴ Betts, *GB*, 17, 21, 23, 27, 92.

farming and producing crops on the rocky soil of the mountaintop. Broad hoes and grubbing hoes were only able to remove small stones and debris.

Gardening in all its shapes and forms was an important part of Jefferson's life at Monticello. Although Jefferson wrote in his accounts that he "sowed a bed of...peas," or "sowed...radicchio di Pistoia...wild endive" and "cipolle bianche di Tuckahoe," it is difficult to imagine that Thomas Jefferson himself actually did the sowing of hundreds of fruits and vegetables planted throughout his property.⁷⁵ His slaves probably did the actual planting of these seeds.⁷⁶ Although many vegetables (especially peas) were planted before this, Jefferson designed his vegetable garden in March of 1774.⁷⁷ "The upper side is 44 f. below the upper edge of the Round-about and parallel thereto," Jefferson noted.⁷⁸ In the burgeoning landscape of the mountaintop, the addition of this large garden (668 feet long, 80 feet wide) impacted the slaves who lived near the garden. Unable to directly descend the south slope, slaves probably had to alter well-beaten paths of old.

Through this period of great activity and construction, Toby, Juno, and their growing children probably remained on the mountaintop.⁷⁹ Twenty-one year old Toby (or Tobey) and his sister Nan (who was around 24 years old) lived with their mother Juno at Monticello in 1774. Since the family already occupied a dwelling together in 1757, it is likely that they continued living there from 1757 through 1774. The whereabouts of

⁷⁵ Betts, *GB*, 47.

⁷⁶ I was an intern under Peter Hatch at Monticello's gardens during the summer of 2006. It is a tremendous amount of work to plant and maintain the nearly 1000 foot long kitchen garden, flower gardens, the Grove, and other shrubberies on the mountaintop. I find it preposterous to think that Jefferson planted the seeds without the help of his slaves.

⁷⁷ Although Jefferson designed the garden in 1774, it was not completely laid out until 1809. Betts, *GB*, 60.

⁷⁸ Jefferson designed a series of roundabouts, or roads that circled around the mountain at different intervals. They allowed visitors to ascend or descend the mountain at a gradual slope. See Edwin Morris Betts, *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book*, (Charlottesville, Virginia: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, 1999), 78. I will refer to this as *FB* from now on.

⁷⁹ On March 12, 1771, for example, Jefferson "pd. Juno for eggs 3 3/4 d." *MB*, 251.

the elder Toby, who was living in the house in 1757, are unknown, but he probably died sometime before 1783.⁸⁰

The area around their 1753 house underwent much development during this period. This outlying farm became the main quarter of the Thomas Jefferson era field slaves. Jefferson moved the majority of his slaves here during the 1770s. “Only five of the people who lived at Shadwell in 1757 when it belonged to Peter Jefferson,” writes Kern, “still lived there in 1777 when it was Thomas Jefferson’s.”⁸¹ Field slaves like Goliah, Hercules, Suckey, Quash, and Nell were probably moved to this area in the early 1770s; buildings were constructed to house these slaves.⁸² Monticello archaeologists, for example, identified three buildings (and possibly a fourth) by the presence of sub-floor pits during excavations in 2006.⁸³

Like Toby and Juno, Gill and his wife Fany (or Fanny) also occupied the farm quarter at Monticello in 1757. Gill and Fany’s lives changed a great deal during the 1760s. Not only were the four children of Fany and Gill born, but Thomas Jefferson also began to construct his ideal plantation world on the Monticello mountaintop.⁸⁴ Unlike Toby, however, Gill does not disappear from the documentary record.⁸⁵ On August 1,

⁸⁰ In 1783, Goliah, a slave also from the inheritance of Peter Jefferson, was listed as living with Juno and Luna. Goliah might have become Juno’s second husband. Betts, *FB*, 24.

⁸¹ Kern, “The Jeffersons at Shadwell,” 284.

⁸² Betts, *FB*, 5. Although the exact location of these slaves is unknown, those listed in Jefferson’s 1774 inventory, who had worked previously in the fields, most likely lived on this land. This land is on the ridge of the Monticello mountaintop, about half a mile from the main house.

⁸³ Monticello archaeologists refer to these sites as Site 7 and Site 8. Sarah Bon-Harper, “DAACS: Archaeological Sites: Site 8 (Monticello): Background,” *Monticello Department of Archaeology*, December 2006, <<http://daacs.org/resources/sites/Site8/background.html>> (19 March 2008).

⁸⁴ The first son, named Ned, was born in 1760, daughter Suckey was born in 1765, son Frankey was born in 1767, and the youngest son Gill was born in 1769. All four children, as well as Gill and Fany, were listed together at Monticello in 1774. See Betts, *FB*, 5.

⁸⁵ There are references to old Toby in 1770 and 1771. Jefferson “Pd. Old Toby 3/6” on the day that Shadwell burned and also “Pd. Toby for chickens 10/l.” Excepting these references, Toby disappears from Jefferson’s records. *MB* 201, 259.

1768 while at Shadwell, Thomas Jefferson “gave Gill to pay for his house 6/.”⁸⁶

Although I had previously assumed that Gill had remained on the mountaintop with his family, this seemingly insignificant note of Thomas Jefferson’s brings new possibilities into light.

Gill had a busy year in 1771. His eldest son, Ned, was eleven years old; when young Ned was not laboring in the fields, he and his father probably spent a large amount of time in the small, but productive garden beside their dwelling.⁸⁷ Six year old Suckey and four year old Frankey were probably less industrious helpers than their elder brother Ned. When not working for Jefferson (in the dark of night or on Sundays), Gill and his family somehow found the time to work to supplement their diet and make a small amount of extra money. Gill was a skilled gardener; Thomas Jefferson “Pd. Gill for potatoes 1/3,” in February, “Pd. Gill for 3 pecks homony beans 1/10 1/2,” in March, and “Pd. Gill for potatoes 1/,” in December. Gill might have worked to improve his small plot of soil. He had such a green thumb that he even grew a watermelon in 1769. In addition to maintaining a garden, Gill kept chickens. The small yard surrounding his dwelling was a crowded place.⁸⁸

From the record of vegetables that he produced in his garden, Gill probably was present on the mountaintop between the years of 1769 through 1771, in addition to 1757 and 1774. Thomas Jefferson “gave Gill to pay for his house 6/,” in 1768.⁸⁹ I propose several explanations on why Jefferson did this. First of all, if Gill and his family still

⁸⁶ *MB*, 80. 6/ means 6 shillings.

⁸⁷ For more information about gardens maintained by slaves at Monticello, see Peter J. Hatch, “African American Gardens at Monticello,” *Twinleaf Journal*, The Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants, January 2001. <<http://www.twinleaf.org/articles/aagardens.html>> (April 1, 2008).

⁸⁸ *MB*, 149, 212, 251, 261, 299. See “Gill” in *MB* index for more examples of his interactions with Jefferson.

⁸⁹ *MB*, 80.

lived in the Peter Jefferson era dwelling built in 1753, this means that they would have lived there for fifteen years. That is a long time for an impermanent structure to last. Of log or frame construction, this house was not meant to be a permanent part of the landscape. Many slave dwellings were built with outside leaning chimneys to prevent fire damage; fires were common during this period. This dwelling, however, had a central chimney to provide heat to each side of the duplex. On top of that, Gill and his growing family were not the only ones occupying this building. In 1757, for example, nine individuals lived in the house.

This 1757 dwelling, therefore, might have warranted repair by 1768. Thomas Jefferson kept a close watch on his plantation and probably was aware of the building's maintenance issues. Since more workmen and supplies were being brought to the mountaintop at this time, it would be easy for Gill to acquire the items he needed for the repair.⁹⁰ Gill might have used the six shillings to buy some wood, nails, and possibly even a hinge. Although the idea of Gill making a repair with this money is mere conjecture, it is important to consider. If Gill was skilled in construction, he might have even played a role in building other structures on mountaintop; there was certainly a great deal of construction work to be done during this period.

On the other hand, Thomas Jefferson might have paid Gill to perform another sort of task for his house. If a slave did something that Jefferson thought was loathsome or unexpected, Jefferson provided monetary compensation. In 1776, for example, Thomas Jefferson gave Gill's son Ned a shilling for climbing up a chimney.⁹¹ A well-known example of a task with a monetary incentive was to clean out Jefferson's private privy in

⁹⁰ "Delivd. George Dudley 20 ells oznabrigs...1 bushel salt...25 galls. molasses..." in August of 1769 is possible evidence of the increasing presence of workmen on the mountaintop. *MB*, 147.

⁹¹ "Gave Bob & Ned for going up chimney 1/." *MB*, 425.

the main house.⁹² Gill might have performed a similarly repugnant job at his own dwelling for which Jefferson felt compensation was necessary. Gill, for example, could have cleaned out the structure's sub-floor pits, which would have been sullied after fifteen years.⁹³

Lastly, there was a tremendous amount of activity on the Monticello mountaintop in 1768. Jefferson made an agreement with John Moore to level the mountain in May of 1768. Jefferson expected the job to be complete by Christmas. Leveling an area of two-hundred and fifty square feet is a great task even today, so one can imagine the frustrations of completing the task in the late eighteenth-century; a great number of workers was necessary. Finding houses for these itinerant levelers was difficult. Gill and his family might have been moved out of their centrally located house, so others could live there temporarily. Their house was a short walk away; it was about half a mile from the top of the mountain. Moving to a different house is never an easy undertaking, especially with four young children. Thomas Jefferson, therefore, could have paid Gill for a temporary relocation of his family, as Jefferson did later with other workers in the 1790s.

With scant documentary record, it is hard to make statements that are undeniable fact. Conjecture and possibility are what historians of slavery in early America are left to deal with. I am only suggesting that Gill might have been paid for repair work, for a loathsome task, or as compensation for a short resettlement. It is possible that none of these ideas actually happened. Regardless of the circumstances surrounding this

⁹² See *MB*, 1553, Index for "Monticello: sewers cleaned" for more information.

⁹³ William Kelso writes about the unsanitary conditions of these sub-floor pits although I am not certain whether I agree with this interpretation of these pits as a place for trash and refuse. William Kelso and Douglas W. Sanford, *A Report on the Archaeological Excavations at Monticello, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1982-1983*, (Charlottesville, Virginia: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, 1983), 5.

particular monetary exchange, it illustrates that non-domestic laborers, like Gill, interacted on a regular basis with Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson, and later his wife Martha, made countless notations of buying things from slaves.⁹⁴ He knew their names, their families, and their stories. Thomas Jefferson himself was very much entrenched in the landscape of slavery that surrounded him.

The Beginning of Mulberry Row

In addition to Toby and Gill's home, there are three structures that date from the early 1770s on the mountaintop.⁹⁵ While Toby and Gill's home was located in the woods about half a mile below the main house, these next structures were built on or near Mulberry Row (Figure 3).⁹⁶ When Monticello became the home quarter, Thomas Jefferson built these dwellings (known as Negro Quarter, Building O, and Building E) to house slaves at the new center of the plantation. Built in the 1770s, the building known as Negro Quarter disappeared by 1790. Building O was still around when Jefferson drew his insurance plat in 1796. Building E survives to this day.⁹⁷ Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and his son-in-law Thomas Mann Randolph implies the existence of these older log structures. "I destined the stone house for workmen, the present inhabitants remove into the nearest of the new log-houses which were intended for them,"

⁹⁴ For Martha Jefferson's 1772 accounts, see *MB*, 299-301.

⁹⁵ Jack McLaughlin wrote that "Given the number of workers on the mountaintop during the spring and summer of 1770, one wonders where they stayed. There was a great need at Monticello for outbuildings." See Jack McLaughlin, *Jefferson and Monticello: the Biography of a Builder*. (New York: H. Holt, 1988), 153.

⁹⁶ Monticello Department of Archaeology, "A Housing Revolution," *Mulberry Row Reassessment*, (Thomas Jefferson Foundation: Charlottesville, Virginia), <<http://www.monticello.org/archaeology/research/architecture.html>> (July 7, 2007).

⁹⁷ In 1796, Jefferson drew up an insurance declaration for his plantation to prevent loss in the event of fire. Thomas Jefferson, "Monticello: building insurance, recto, 1796," N133; K136 [electronic edition]. *Thomas Jefferson Papers: An Electronic Archive*, (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2003) <<http://www.thomasjeffersonpapers.org/>> (February 25, 2008).

Thomas Jefferson wrote, with “Krittly (Crittta Hemings) taking the nearest of the whole, as oftenest wanted about the house.”⁹⁸

Little is known about the early impermanent structures of Mulberry Row. Unlike the Peter Jefferson era quarters, an inventory of these buildings does not exist. Unfortunately, the accounts kept by Jefferson also are lacking in information about these dwellings. The details that are known about Negro Quarter and Building O come from archaeological excavations during the early 1980s. Kelso and his crew uncovered countless objects, materials, and other important clues. From these fragments and details, they were able to understand the structure, construction, and other facts about these buildings.

The building called Negro Quarter dates to the 1770s and was the focus of investigation during the 1984-1985 field seasons. Evidence of four sub-floor pits, three post holes, and three shallow depressions was found during the archaeological excavations. The presence of sub-floor pits is an important indication that the structure housed slaves. The sub-floor pits were all holes present in clay subsoil with the exception of the northwest pit, which was lined in wood. The large amount of “structural debris, both stone, brick, mortar, chinking, and nails” in the northern sub-floor pits makes the presence of a wood chimney likely. Because ash, charcoal, and charred boards were also found in these pits, it is probable that the building was destroyed by fire. The northeast cellar’s hardened walls “had been heated enough...to discolor them,” which also points to the possibility of fire.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Kelso, *A Report on the Archaeological Excavations at Monticello*, 3.

⁹⁹ William Kelso, *Monticello Black History/ Craft Life Archaeological Project 1984-1985 Progress Report*, (Charlottesville, Virginia: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, April 8, 1985), 4-5.

Although Douglas Sanford referred to the Negro Quarter as an “archaeologically unanticipated structure,” there is evidence of this dwelling in an early drawing.¹⁰⁰ Jefferson drew a plan of Monticello outbuildings circa 1776 to 1778 (Figure 4). The area where archaeologists excavated the four sub-floor pits is noted as Negro Quarter on a preceding page. According to the sketch, Negro Quarter is approximately 17 by 34 feet.¹⁰¹

The only problem is that Jefferson’s sketch presents a building with a central chimney. Based on the archaeological evidence, however, the structure had an end chimney. As Rhys Isaac writes, many of Jefferson’s sketches never actually became reality. This central chimney sketch thus might be another example of the differences between Jefferson’s drawings and real life.¹⁰² Considering that there is ample evidence of a fire involving the end chimney, the building also might have been altered over the years. While this document puts the dwelling firmly in the year 1776, evidence of possible alterations support a construction date of the early 1770s. Archaeological excavations of 1982 also have validated other buildings that matched Jefferson’s plan (the smith and mason’s shop). Various sized chinking fragments were collected, indicating that smaller limbs and twigs were probably used in chimney construction.¹⁰³

Some pieces of ceramic that support an early 1770s construction date were also found. Buckley ware (ca. 1720-1775), deeper yellow creamware (ca. 1762-1780), and

¹⁰⁰ Kelso, *Monticello Black History/ Craft Life Archaeological Project 1984-1985 Progress Report*, 4-5.

¹⁰¹ Thomas Jefferson, “Monticello: outbuildings and garden (study), circa 1776-1778,” N87; K56 [electronic edition], *Thomas Jefferson Papers: An Electronic Archive*, (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2003), <<http://www.thomasjeffersonpapers.org/>> (February 25, 2008).

¹⁰² Isaac, 35.

¹⁰³ In houses of log construction, chinking was used a seal to fill in holes, thus preventing cold air from entering the structure. Chinking was normally made of mud or clay. “In log construction, such materials ranged from sticks, chips, boards, bricks, brickbats, to rags, newspapers, and moss. Carl Lounsbury, *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape*, Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 77.

debased scratch blue stoneware (ca. 1765-1795) were all discovered at the Negro Quarter site.¹⁰⁴ Discarded from the main house, slaves used broken or out of fashion ceramic pieces to supplement their small allotment of tableware. Based on the archaeological evidence and documentary resources, Negro Quarter thus probably was constructed in the early 1770s. This site might have housed slaves that were newly located to the mountaintop.

In addition to Negro Quarter, a structure known as Building O also dates from the 1770s, making it one of the earliest structures on Mulberry Row. In 1979, William Kelso and his team first came into contact with Building O (Figures 5 and 6). Although their original intention was to define Jefferson's kitchen garden archaeologically, excavations just south of the building's foundations revealed several units associated with Building O. The major archaeological work occurred from 1982 into the spring of 1983.¹⁰⁵

On the 1796 insurance plat, Jefferson described this building as a "servant's house 20.5 x 12 ft. of wood with a wooden chimney and earth floor." The insurance plat also includes a sketch of Mulberry Row, thus providing a visual depiction of Building O albeit on a small scale (Figure 7). Unlike Negro Quarter, there is evidence that Building O might have been occupied from the 1770s through 1800. "However, the presence of artifacts dating to much later in Mulberry Row's history," writes Katherine Grillo, "suggests that occupation of the site, but not the structure in the plat, may have continued well into the 1820s."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Kelso, *Monticello Black History/ Craft Life Archaeological Project 1984-1985 Progress Report*, 6.

¹⁰⁵ Katherine M. Grillo, "Building O: An Archaeological Reanalysis of a Mulberry Row Slave Quarter," Distinguished Major Program Senior Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Virginia, May 13, 2002, 7.

¹⁰⁶ Grillo, 7.

Based on the archeological evidence, Building O of the 1770s was a typical slave quarter of the period. This one room structure probably had a corner stair which led to a small loft for more space. A doorway and possibly the stair to the loft were located on the brick paved landing of the building's northwest corner. The presence of hundreds of nails in the occupation deposit might indicate that the "superstructure of the house was made of log." According to Kelso, log houses were present on Mulberry Row through at least 1809. With the construction of Buildings R, S, and T from 1792 to 1793, Jefferson wrote specific instructions about how he wanted the structures to be built. Jefferson, for example, wanted logs hewn on two sides, instead of all four, called for sleepers to be wedge-shaped, instead of rectangular, and wanted the corners to be dovetailed, instead of v-notched.¹⁰⁷ These specific instructions might indicate that log houses were indeed on Mulberry Row, and that Jefferson simply had new ideas about the manner in which they were constructed.¹⁰⁸

At each end of Building O, as well as the center of its southwestern wall, a large amount of window glass was found. Glass windows were probably located at these three locations.¹⁰⁹ If slaves were working inside the building weaving or taking care of children, they were able to utilize natural light from the windows. Instead of having an open air window, window glass also provided protection from rain, snow, ice, and other difficult weather. Monticello archeologists also uncovered a pattern of greenstones

¹⁰⁷ A sleeper is "a horizontal framing member laid on the ground or set just above it to support the lower floor of a building." Lounsbury, 336.

¹⁰⁸ Kelso, *A Report on the Archaeological Excavations at Monticello*, 2.

¹⁰⁹ As Katherine Grillo wrote, there were probably several structures on this site, so the window glass may not be from the 1770 structure although the 1983 Monticello Archaeological Report did not indicate otherwise.

which generally outlined three walls of the building's foundation.¹¹⁰ Within these three walls, a subfloor pit outlined by stones and "small rectangular brick box centered on the interior of the eastern end of the foundation" were also excavated. Building O of the 1770s also had an earthen floor.¹¹¹

The stone house, or Building E, was also built in the 1770s (Figures 8 and 9). Although it still stands today, it has changed a great deal over the years, starting in the 1790s when it became the center of textile operations on the mountaintop. Building E was the most impressive of the 1770s era structures. Constructed of stone quarried from the base of the mountaintop, it contained two large rooms; these rooms were around 17 foot square each. Building E not only had a brick floor, but it also featured a stone chimney. Although Jefferson planned elaborate columns and a classical façade to adorn this stone house, there is no evidence that these features actually were constructed (Figure 10).¹¹² The presence of classical features would have signaled wealth and prosperity, but many of Jefferson's elaborate plans never came into being.

Domestic Slavery at the South Pavilion

In addition to Monticello's field slaves, domestic slaves also played important roles in the mountaintop community. Monticello to 1774 is an interesting time to study domestic slavery because there are no Hemings present on the mountaintop during this period. After 1774, Elizabeth Hemings and her children dominated the house.¹¹³ When Thomas Jefferson moved to Monticello in 1770, he brought with him trusted personal

¹¹⁰ The "Catoctin formation, a mass of metamorphosed basalt," or greenstone, is present throughout the Monticello mountaintop. Fraser Neiman, Leslie McFaden, and Derek Wheeler "Archaeological Investigation of the Elizabeth Hemings Site (44AB438)," *Monticello Department of Archaeology Technical Report Series, Number 2*, December 2000, 2.

¹¹¹ Kelso, *A Report on the Archaeological Excavations at Monticello*, 1-3.

¹¹² Monticello Department of Archaeology, "A Housing Revolution."

¹¹³ Lucia Stanton, *Free Some Day: The African American Families of Monticello*, (Charlottesville, Virginia, Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2000), 102-103.

servants and slaves who had experience of performing domestic work at Shadwell. At plantations such as Shadwell or Monticello domestic slaves occupied a position distinct from their field counterparts. Instead of living and working some distance away from the main house, domestic slaves worked in the main house itself. Domestic slaves also labored (and many times lived) in close proximity of their masters and their master's families. At Shadwell and later at Monticello, domestic slaves were intimately acquainted with the Jeffersons and were even discussed in correspondence between members of the Jefferson family.

Although they lived in more comfortable surroundings, the lives of domestic slaves were still difficult and trying. While these slaves spent countless hours serving and assisting their masters, there was always a hidden line that they could never cross. Even as young children, house slaves had to learn "how to be near and yet remain distant from this family they would know so well."¹¹⁴ Domestic slaves held positions of power within their plantation community and the surrounding neighborhood. While Thomas Jefferson interacted on a regular basis with many of his field laborers, he actually lived with his domestic slaves. Day after day for the entirety of their lives, masters and domestic slaves became well-acquainted with each other. Thomas Jefferson could not be the man that he was without the assistance of his domestic slaves.

One of the most important of Jefferson's domestic slaves was a man named Jupiter. Jupiter became Jefferson's personal valet in 1764. Born in 1743, Jupiter shared the same birth year as Thomas Jefferson. Jupiter was born into the life of domestic slavery. His mother Sall had spent her entire life in the service of Peter Jefferson, his

¹¹⁴ Kern, "The Jeffersons at Shadwell," 239.

wife Jane, and their children.¹¹⁵ Children of domestic slaves often followed in their parents' footsteps, working as valets, butlers, and nursemaids. Since they were the same age, Thomas Jefferson and Jupiter might have played together as children. By the age of twenty-one, however, Jupiter occupied the important position of personal servant to Thomas Jefferson.¹¹⁶ Jefferson later defined a personal servant as someone to "shave, dress, and follow me on horseback," but Jupiter did much more than just those three duties.¹¹⁷

As Jefferson's personal attendant, Jupiter followed Jefferson around the countryside of Virginia. During Jefferson's time as student at the College of William and Mary, for example, Jupiter lived in Williamsburg with his master, assisting Jefferson in his daily activities.¹¹⁸ When Jefferson moved into the South Pavilion, Jupiter undoubtedly followed Jefferson. Although there was not much space in the South Pavilion, Jupiter probably slept on a mat on one of house's two levels.

The South Pavilion was the first building of Monticello as we know it today. It was also the first brick building on the mountaintop. All of the bricks used to build Monticello and its dependencies were made on the mountaintop. Work on the South Pavilion began around May 1770.¹¹⁹ As he waited for the rest of the house to be built, Jefferson (and undoubtedly, Jupiter) moved to the South Pavilion on September 26, 1770.

¹¹⁵ Jupiter's father may not have been a domestic slave, but he might have been one who had particular skills. See *PJAB*, Folio 19. An entry mentions "20 days Jupiter and Samson" who work on Peter Jefferson's mill in 1753. Since Jupiter was 9 years old at the time, this Jupiter may be his father. This elder Jupiter disappeared from account books after this entry.

¹¹⁶ I use the terms personal valet, personal servant, and personal attendant interchangeably to describe Jupiter's role as Jefferson's personal slave.

¹¹⁷ Stanton, *Free Some Day*, 20.

¹¹⁸ Stanton, *Free Some Day*, 20. See *MB*, 1527 for all references to Jupiter in Jefferson's account books.

¹¹⁹ *MB*, 28.

“I have here but one room,” wrote Jefferson, “which...serves me for parlour, for kitchen, and hall. I may add, for bed chamber and study, too.”¹²⁰

Jefferson and Jupiter certainly had little space in this two-story structure. Built into the side of mountain, the building’s basement housed Monticello’s kitchen until 1800. The kitchen originally had a doorway that provided easy access to the burgeoning plantation and garden landscape. The South Pavilion was 18 feet square with 10 feet to the water table, and it had a 12 foot high upper story (Figure 11).¹²¹ Although it was later remodeled in 1808, Jefferson brought his bride Martha Wayles Skelton to the South Pavilion after their marriage in 1772.

One can imagine the crowded conditions in this small structure, considering that it was the home of Jefferson, his new wife Martha, Jupiter, a cook, and later a nursemaid. It is likely that Martha brought her own personal slave to her marriage to Jefferson.¹²² If she did, that slave would have also lived in the South Pavilion (Figure 12). The couple’s first daughter, Martha, was born in the South Pavilion on September 27, 1772.¹²³ Their second child, Jane, was born on April 3, 1774.¹²⁴ Not only was it crowded with people, but the South Pavilion was also full of the stuff that Jefferson was accustomed to enjoying: books, furniture, and clothing. Amongst stacks of Jefferson’s growing library was the newly purchased double bed, an expensive addition to the South Pavilion.¹²⁵ Always near his master’s side, Jupiter found a place to lay his head, probably on a mat of

¹²⁰ *MB*, n212. Jefferson finished his letter of February 20, 1771 to James Ogilvie: “My friends sometimes take a temperate dinner with me and then retire to look for beds elsewhere. I have hopes however of getting more elbow room this summer.”

¹²¹ *MB*, 24, 26, 28. Jefferson referred to the South Pavilion and the North Pavilion (constructed later) as outhouses.

¹²² Eight slaves accompanied Martha Jefferson to Monticello after their marriage. Kern, “The Jeffersons at Shadwell,” 230.

¹²³ *MB*, xlvi.

¹²⁴ Betts, *GB*, 57.

¹²⁵ McLaughlin, 153, 161.

coarse fabric. It is not known whether Jupiter slept on the honeymoon floor or somewhere in the basement kitchen. An eighteenth century domestic slave's place of rest is certainly at odds with modern notions of privacy.

As Jefferson's personal servant, Jupiter's life was full of objects. From saddles and stirrups to fine china and shoe buckles, Jupiter spent countless hours ordering the material world of Thomas Jefferson. Jupiter carried his own money. Jefferson sometimes needed to borrow a few shillings from his valet. In his travels throughout Virginia, Jupiter probably accumulated many objects, such as a shaving set or a special pair of shoes. Jupiter also wore clothing that Jefferson purchased specifically for him. Although Jupiter might have worn livery, he also wore the same exact outfit as his master.¹²⁶

In addition to Jupiter, Jefferson's cook was another slave who probably lived in the South Pavilion.¹²⁷ The kitchen was furnished with both a fireplace and an oven. Although Jefferson's family was small (his wife and child), his cook had to prepare a large amount of food for the workers who were busy with the construction of Monticello. Martha Jefferson purchased large quantities of food during this period. In July of 1772, for example, she purchased a glut of 59 chickens, some milk, two ducks, some peas, and five pullets.¹²⁸ With large quantities of food, pots, pans, jugs, moulds, bowls, pails, cups, and other essential cooking items, the cook had little room for her own bed and living space. The kitchen might have also been where Martha Jefferson brewed beer. Martha, for example, brewed one twenty gallon cask and ten fifteen gallon casks of beer in 1772

¹²⁶ *MB*, 78, 84, 140, 143, 151, 253, 254, 353 (all loans from Jupiter); *MB*, 16, 20. Jefferson purchased "1 coat and breeches of fustian for self," and "1 suit do. for Jupiter."

¹²⁷ The identity of Jefferson's first cook at Monticello is unknown.

¹²⁸ *MB*, 300. A pullet is a young hen that can hatch eggs.

alone.¹²⁹ Ursula, “a favorite house woman” of Martha Jefferson’s, was purchased by Thomas Jefferson at an estate auction in Cumberland County in 1773. After she moved to Monticello with her husband George and her son George, Ursula became the cook, spending most of her time in the kitchen, smokehouse, and washhouse.

Conclusion

The lives of Peter Jefferson’s slaves underwent great transformation from 1760 to 1774. After Peter Jefferson’s death in 1757, their lives remained much the same until 1764, when their new master, Thomas Jefferson, reached the majority age of twenty-one. While Thomas Jefferson would go on to write the *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom* and found the University of Virginia, he also owned hundreds of slaves throughout his lifetime. Jefferson’s early life as a slave-owning Virginia planter has been little discussed in past histories. The lives and material culture of the slaves who Thomas Jefferson inherited from his father, Peter Jefferson, are important to study. Not only does studying this group of slaves provide key insights into the formative years of Jefferson as a slave-owner, but it also paints a picture of what life was like for the slaves themselves.

When Thomas Jefferson came into his inheritance, nine slaves already lived on the Monticello mountaintop. Toby, Gill, and their families were field-slaves of Peter Jefferson’s, and they lived and worked producing crops and tending their gardens under the supervision of an overseer. As Thomas Jefferson began to construct his home, he moved the majority of his slaves to the mountaintop and started constructing the new plantation center, known as Mulberry Row. In addition to the field slaves who worked and lived at Monticello, domestic slaves, such as Jefferson’s personal servant Jupiter, a

¹²⁹ McLaughlin, 180.

cook, and a nursemaid, served Jefferson and his family. These domestic slaves lived in close proximity to Jefferson himself, probably sleeping on a mat in the South Pavilion.

Although not as much scholarship has been done on the slaves that Jefferson inherited from his father, these slaves led meaningful lives. They worked from sun up to sun down on a little mountain in Albemarle County, Virginia. They had wives, husbands, children, and families. They had lives rich in material objects, as excavated by Monticello archaeologists. Although they lived in impermanent structures, their homes were of the same quality, if not higher, than the majority of free white Virginians. This study is by no means an exhaustive account of the material culture of these slaves. Based on the current interpretations of archaeological sites and the available documentary evidence, I attempted to construct a picture of what life was like for these slaves. This study, however, brings more questions than answers. For example, how and where did Jefferson house all of the construction workers while Monticello was being built? When did the Peter Jefferson era field quarter buildings come out of use? Why? Who was Jefferson's cook as a bachelor, and what types of food did he or she prepare? What kind of relationship did Thomas Jefferson have with Jupiter?

In 1774, life on the mountaintop fundamentally changed for these early slaves. With the death of Thomas Jefferson's father-in-law John Wayles in 1773, Jefferson inherited 135 slaves in 1774, almost tripling the current population of slaves on the mountaintop.¹³⁰ The Wayles inheritance included the light-skinned Hemings family, who would control the main house and other domestic environs. Robert Hemings, for example, took over Jupiter's important position as personal servant in 1774. Jupiter's

¹³⁰ Thomas Jefferson owned fifty-two slaves before he inherited 135 from his father-in-law in 1774. Kern, "The Jeffersons at Shadwell," 230.

new job was taking care of horses as hostler and coachman.¹³¹ After 1774, Mulberry Row truly became the plantation center of Monticello, with the addition of nail making operations, weaving and textile operations, a blacksmith shop, storehouses, and a joinery. Life for the Peter Jefferson era slaves would never be the same. The one constant about the Monticello mountaintop was that it was always changing. Gill, Toby, Jupiter, and the others would become accustomed to the evolution of their surrounding environment.

¹³¹ Stanton, *Free Some Day*, 33, 20.

Figures

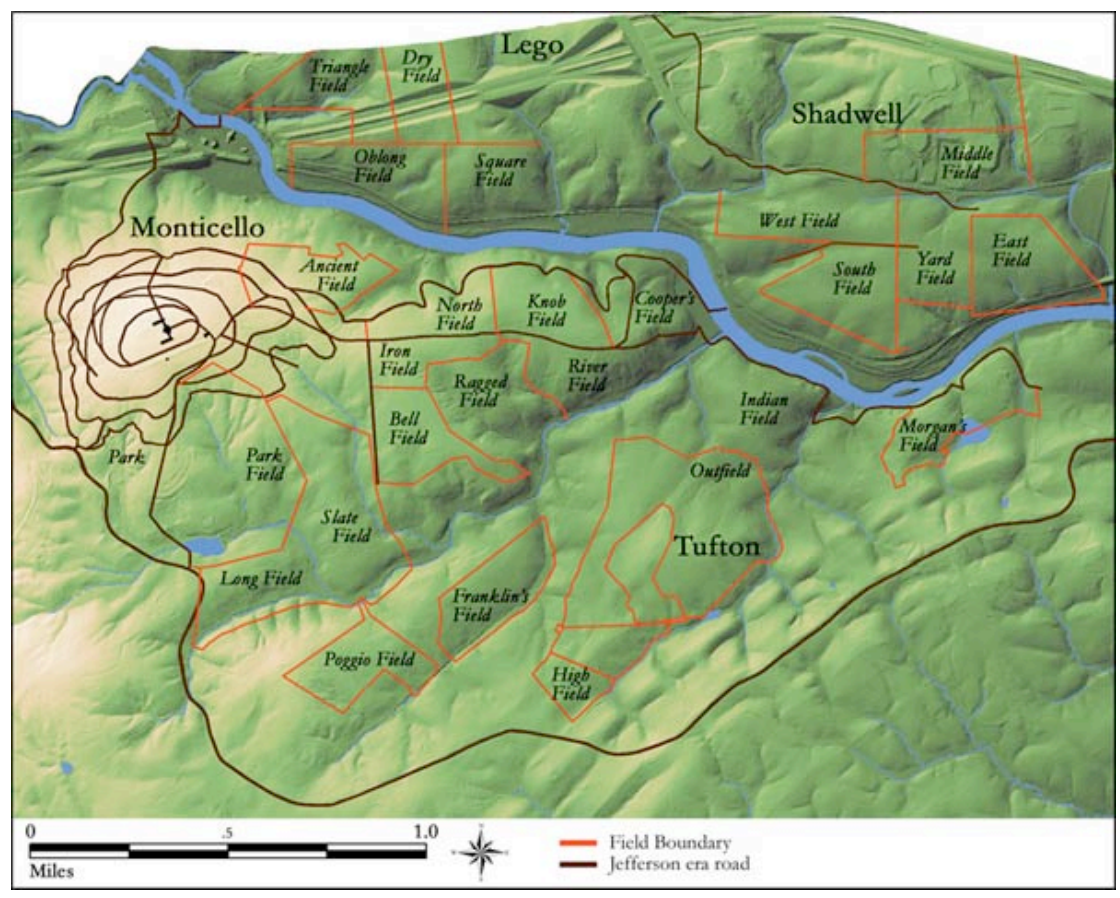


Figure 1

This map is of the land of Monticello, Shadwell, and surrounding farms and fields during the period of Thomas Jefferson's occupation. The Rivanna River separates Monticello mountain from Shadwell, which is on a hill overlooking the Rivanna. To the east of Monticello, the Peter Jefferson era field quarter where Toby, Gill, and their families lived, is labeled Ancient Field on this map.

This image is courtesy of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. "Jefferson Fields," Thomas Jefferson Foundation. *Monticello Explorer*, Charlottesville, Virginia: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2005. <<http://www.monticello.org/images/plantation/jeffersonfields.jpg>> (April 1, 2008).

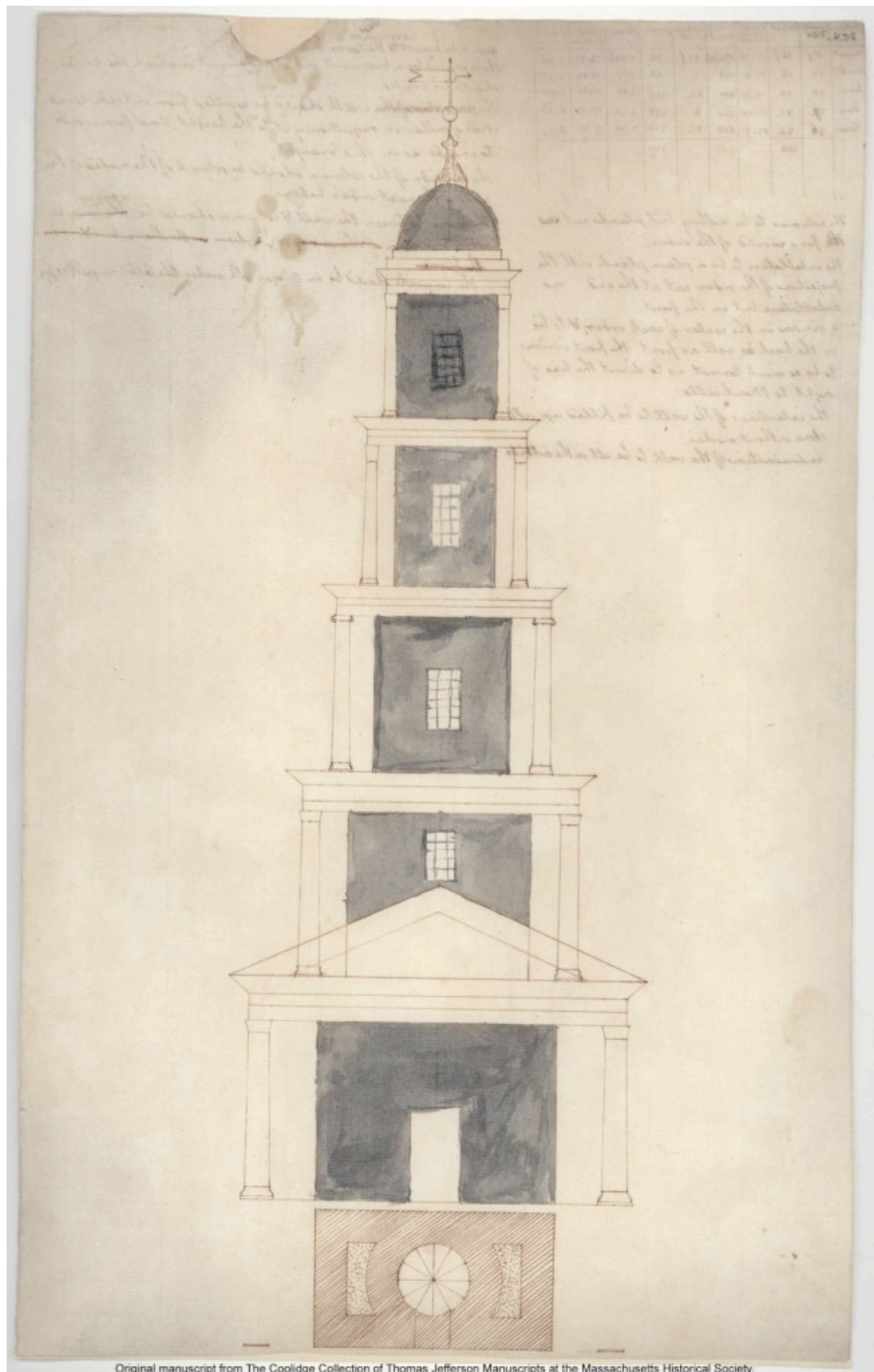


Figure 2

This is an example of the elaborate plans that Jefferson had for the Monticello mountaintop. This observation tower, like other statues and fountains, was never built.

This image is courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society. "Monticello: observation tower, recto, probably 1771, by Thomas Jefferson." N65; K38 [electronic edition]. *Thomas Jefferson Papers: An Electronic Archive*. Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2003.

<<http://www.thomasjeffersonpapers.org/>>, (March 20, 2008).

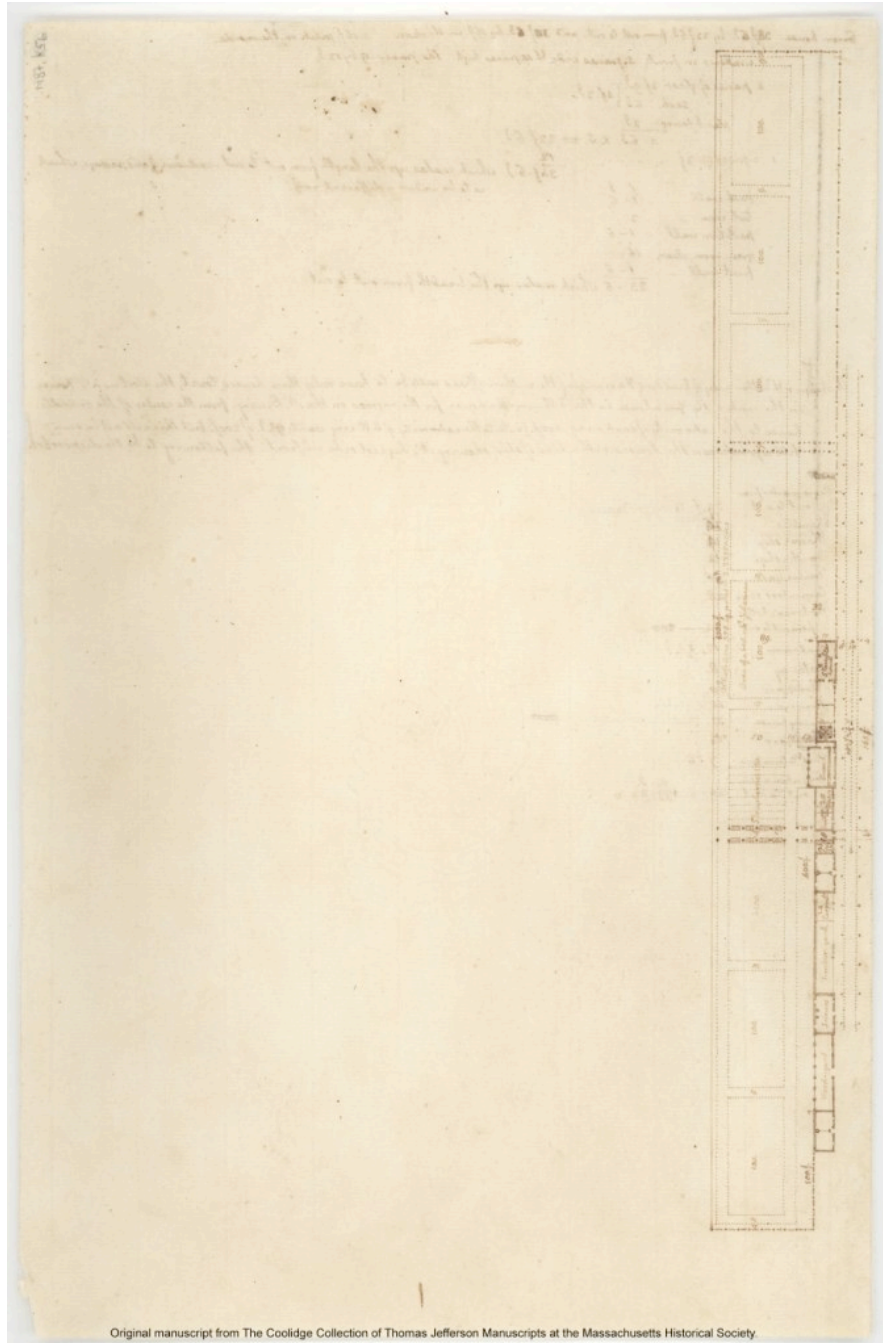


Figure 3

This is an early sketch of Mulberry Row, showing the garden and structures present circa 1776 to 1778, drawn by Thomas Jefferson.

This image is courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society. "Monticello: outbuildings and garden (study), circa 1776-1778, by Thomas Jefferson." N87; K56 [electronic edition]. *Thomas Jefferson Papers: An Electronic Archive*. Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2003. <http://www.thomasjeffersonpapers.org/>, (March 20, 2008).

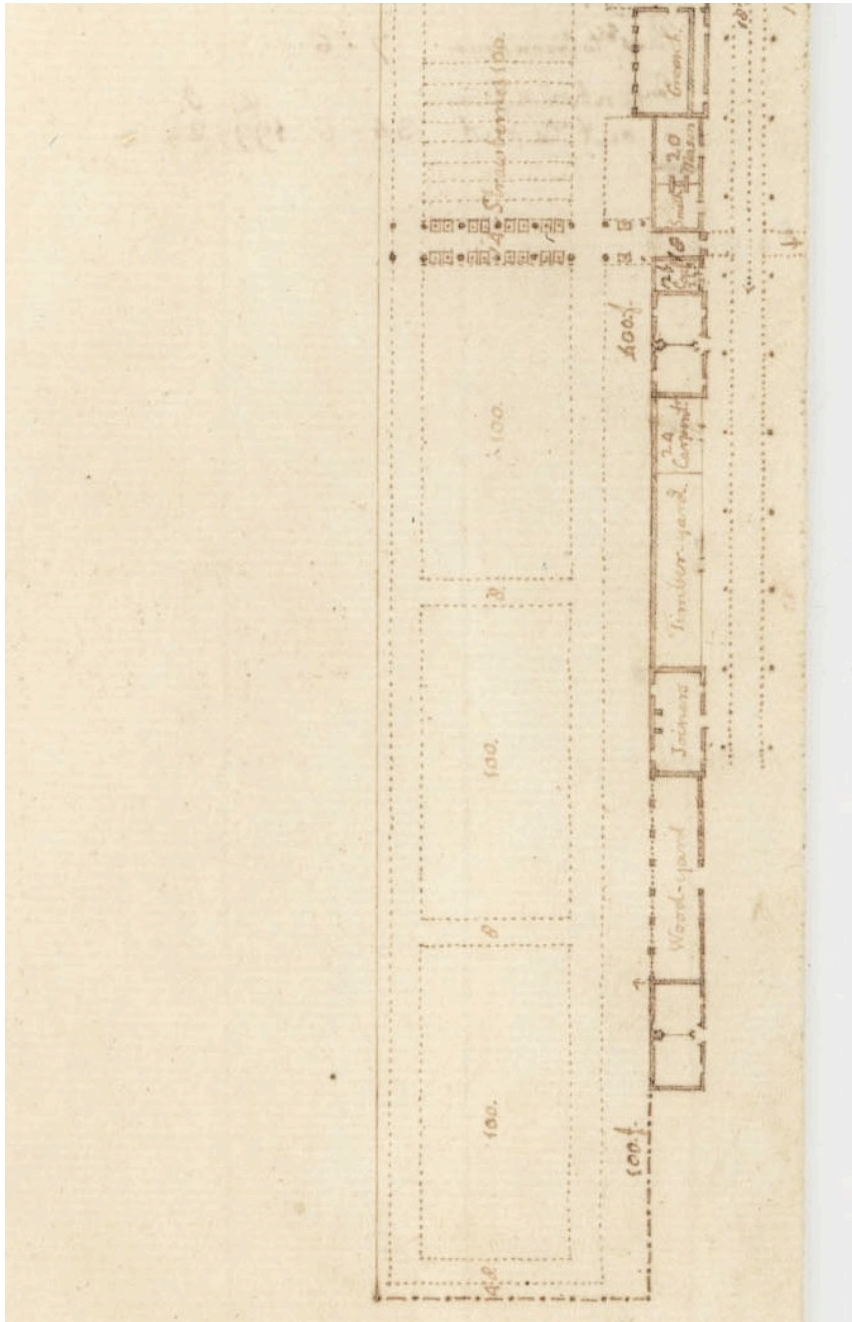


Figure 4

This is a close up of figure 3, drawn by Thomas Jefferson circa 1776 to 1778. Negro Quarter is the building directly beside the wood yard. It has central chimneys, two central doors, and is 17 by 34 feet.

This image is courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society. "Monticello: outbuildings and garden (study), circa 1776-1778, by Thomas Jefferson." N87; K56 [electronic edition]. *Thomas Jefferson Papers: An Electronic Archive*. Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2003. <http://www.thomasjeffersonpapers.org/>, (March 20, 2008).



Figure 5

This is the present site of Building O along Mulberry Row, facing Montalto. The fence is a reconstructed version of Jefferson's garden fence.

This image is courtesy of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. "Log Quarter Building O," Thomas Jefferson Foundation. *Monticello Explorer*, Charlottesville, Virginia: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2005.

<<http://explorer.monticello.org/>>, (February 30, 2008).



Figure 6

The Excavation of Building O from 1981-1982

This image is courtesy of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation "Excavation of *Building o* site in 1981-1982," Thomas Jefferson Foundation. *Monticello Explorer*, Charlottesville, Virginia: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2005.

<<http://explorer.monticello.org/>>, (February 30, 2008).

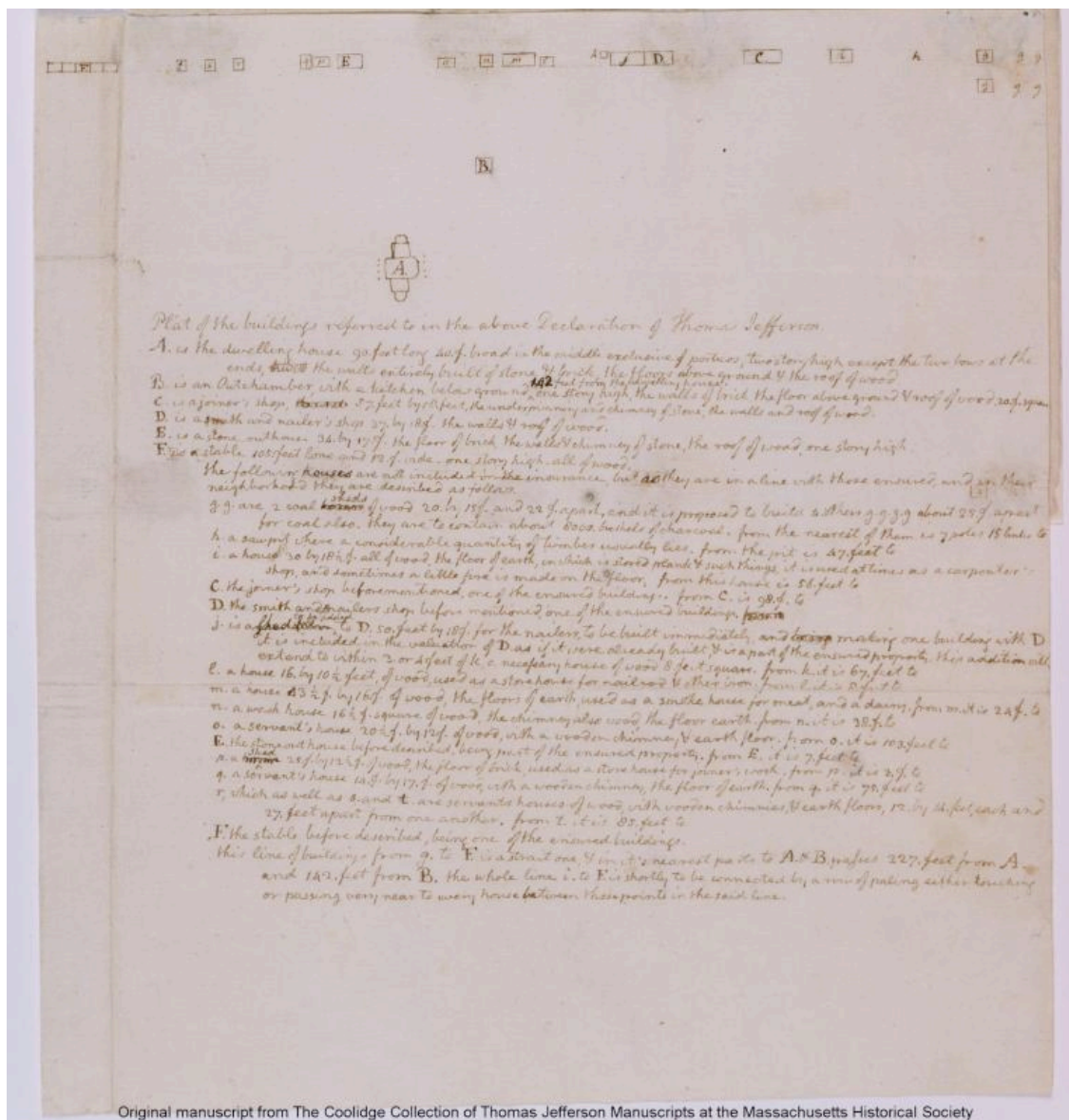


Figure 7

This is the information that Jefferson provided in the 1796 "Form of the Declaration for Assurance." Building O is described as a "servant's house 20.5 x 12 ft. of wood with a wooden chimney and earth floor."

This image is courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society. "Monticello: building insurance, recto, 1796, by Thomas Jefferson." N133; K136 [electronic edition]. *Thomas Jefferson Papers: An Electronic Archive*. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2003. <<http://www.thomasjeffersonpapers.org/>> (March 20, 2008).



Figure 8

This image is of Building E, built in the 1770s, as it appeared in the early 1900s.

This image is courtesy of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. "Building E, Stone Workman's House/Weaver's Cottage in the early 1900s," Thomas Jefferson Foundation. *Monticello Explorer*, Charlottesville, Virginia: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2005.

<<http://explorer.monticello.org/>>, (February 30 2008).



Figure 9

This is an image of Building E, as it currently appears, on the Monticello mountaintop.

This image is courtesy of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. "Stone House-Building E," Thomas Jefferson Foundation. *Monticello Explorer*, Charlottesville, Virginia: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2005. <<http://explorer.monticello.org/>>, (February 30, 2008).

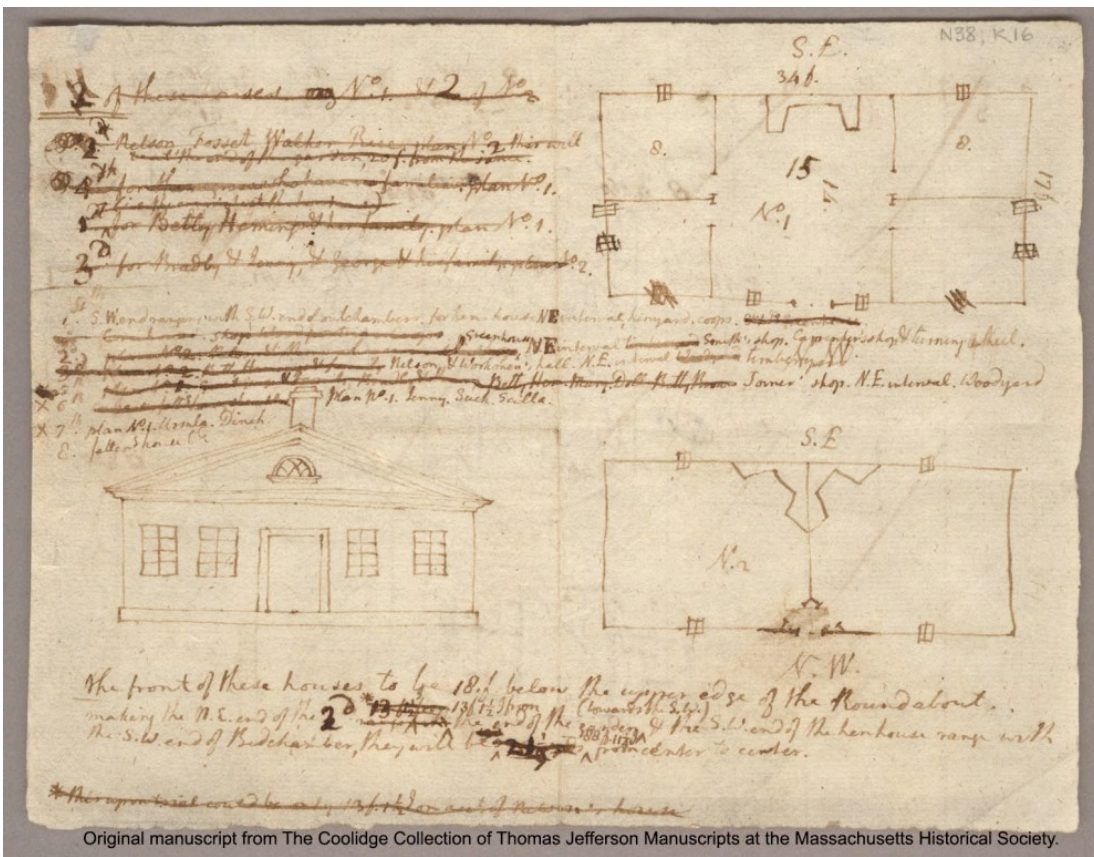
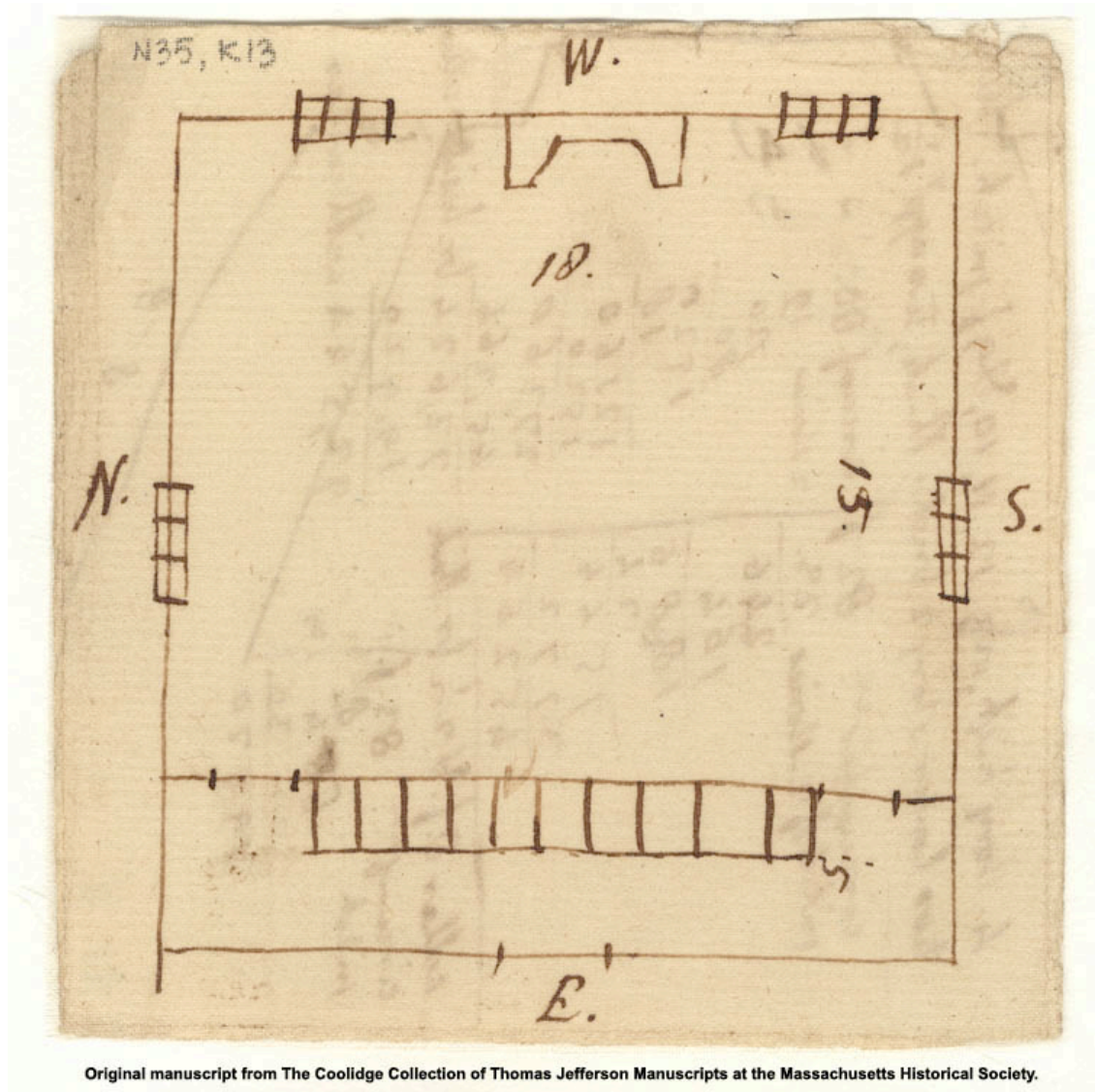


Figure 10

Although Thomas Jefferson planned to build a stone house with a classical façade and symmetrical windows, Jefferson never had this house built. Building E stands today and is stone, but is far less elaborately decorated.

This image is courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society. "Monticello: stone house (slave quarters), recto, September 1770, by Thomas Jefferson". N38; K16 [electronic edition]. Thomas Jefferson Papers: An Electronic Archive. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2003. <<http://www.thomasjeffersonpapers.org/>> (March 20, 2008).



Original manuscript from The Coolidge Collection of Thomas Jefferson Manuscripts at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Figure 11

This is a study plan for the South Pavilion that Jefferson drew circa 1768 to 1770. Construction began in May of 1770, and Jefferson moved in to the building the following September.

This image is courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society. "Monticello: pavilion (study plan), recto, 1768-1770, by Thomas Jefferson." N35; K13 [electronic edition]. Thomas Jefferson Papers: An Electronic Archive. Boston, Mass. : Massachusetts Historical Society, 2003.

<<http://www.thomasjeffersonpapers.org/>> (March 20, 2008).



Figure 12

The South Pavilion, built in the 1770s, was the first brick building completed on the Monticello mountaintop. Thomas Jefferson, his wife Martha, their infant child Martha, Jupiter, and a cook probably all lived in this small structure. (Photograph by Author, December 12, 2007).

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