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## Montpelier: The history of a house, 1723-1998

Matthew Gantert Hyland  
*College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences*

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MONTPELIER: THE HISTORY OF A HOUSE,

1723-1998

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the American Studies Program

The College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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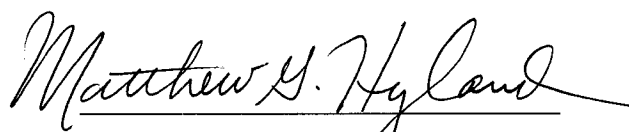
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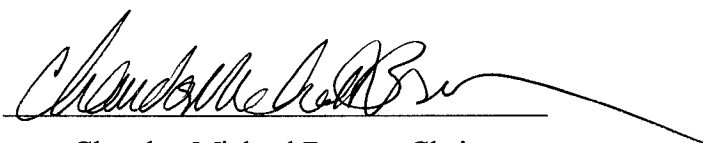
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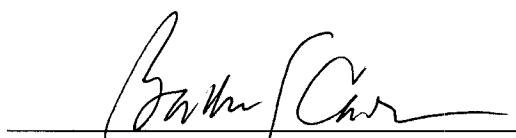
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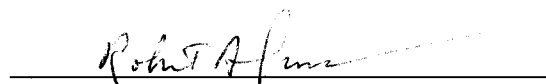
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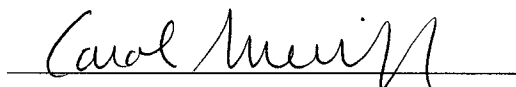
  
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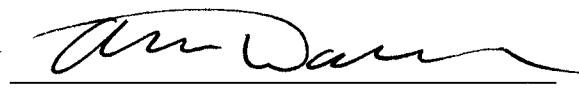
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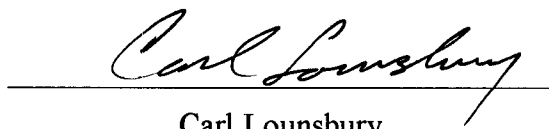
  
Chandos Michael Brown, Chair

  
Barbara G. Carson

  
Robert A. Gross

  
Carol Sheriff

  
Alan Wallach

  
Carl Lounsbury  
The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

## DEDICATION

To Christy, gracias



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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation offers a study of Montpelier and its role in lives of the people who have lived and worked there between 1723 and 1998. Its significance is not limited to the Madisons and the duPonts. Montpelier's history provides further insight into a range of moments in America's cultural history: plantation slavery in piedmont Virginia, the crisis of authority in the early American republic and the age of Jackson, ante-bellum sectionalism, Reconstruction, lifestyles of industrial magnates in the Gilded Age, and the development of historic preservation in twentieth-century America.

The goal of this study is to reveal Montpelier's evolution as a cultural landscape composed of layered historical activity—lives, values, and choices laid in courses and struck by time. On one level the present study seeks to reconstruct the form and style of the house and grounds through the archival record. More than a catalog of the events the house and grounds witnessed, the dissertation provides an analysis of various people coming to terms with the political, economic, and social changes of their times and their own personal dilemmas through the built environment. Changes to the house and grounds provide artifactual evidence that speaks to the utilitarian demands, changing ideologies, and symbolic expressions of Montpelier's past inhabitants and present curators.

**MONTPELIER: THE HISTORY OF A HOUSE, 1723-1998**



## INTRODUCTION

Montpelier has a complex architectural and social history. It has worn many architectural fabrics: colonial, classical revival, and colonial revival. As an object-centered study, this architectural history of Montpelier explores the plantation as a historical artifact and analyzes the many layers of cultural evidence there. It attempts to reconstruct through documentation the cultural landscape as it was shaped by the Madisons and subsequent owners. Also, it explores how the values of its owners, grandees, plutocrats, and others, were bound up with the house and grounds. This study undertakes an analysis of Montpelier as a multi-storied house.<sup>1</sup>

Located in Orange County, Virginia, Montpelier served many owners. (Figure 1) First, it signified colonial entrepreneurship and power as Col. Madison accrued wealth (through plantation slavery) and social standing. The second phase of its history saw a transformation of its styling into a form of civic architecture. James Madison, Jr., reworked its iconography to coincide with his interest in national government. It became his ideological expression during the presidency of John Adams, taking on a republican cast of civic architecture. Later as president, he remodeled the dwelling again to coincide with his national standing in high office. By the time of President Madison's death, the mansion house and grounds had evolved into monumental architecture.

That the house and grounds remained that way was no accident. Those who

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<sup>1</sup> Camille Wells, "The Multi-Storied House: Twentieth Century Encounters with the Domestic Architecture of Colonial Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 106 (Fall 1998): 353-418.

possessed the house after Dolley Madison were exposed to public scrutiny as they put the house and grounds to uses that served their own designs for pleasures and profit. The house played a symbolic role in the turbulent world of politics in antebellum Richmond. In the first years of the twentieth century, the house and grounds were enlarged, improved, and modernized by the duPonts as part of a wider colonial revival movement—leaving the house as an elite lifestyle museum in the hands of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (National Trust) in the late 1980s. (Figure 2)

Not only did the National Trust find it difficult to restore Madison's early nineteenth-century architectural feeling back into the house in the 1980s and 1990s, but any contemporary appreciation for an interpretation based on the agrarian virtue that Madison hoped his house and grounds would model for the nation had been replaced by the commercial and manufacturing spirit that was philosophically inconsistent with his conception of republicanism. Madison had shaped his house and plantation landscape according to an agrarian political economy and a republican outlook that privileged an idealized independent, frugal yeoman farmer in American society. However, the "stock jobbers", speculators, and plutocrats, who represented the opposite character of the yeoman, emerged as the dominant culture of the nineteenth century and took the house as a symbol of their prosperity. Their wealth emerged from markets, manufactures, and trade—not by tilling the fields of their fathers—leaving only a symbolic continuity between agriculture-based republican political economy and the wealthy men of commerce and banking who later lived in Madison's house. Montpelier's owners subsequent to Madison took possession of the plantation to signify their social status, not their devotion to farming.

Ironically, Montpelier, as a historic house museum at the end of the twentieth

century, presented a challenge to the National Trust, which sought the historical Madison in the layers of the house's past. However, the house had been modernized and expanded to suit the needs of Louis F. Detrick, William L. Bradley, and the duPonts, and the landscape had been reshaped by the imperatives of horse breeding, training, and racing. While the duPonts maintained some of the previously established fields for productive agriculture, they converted other fields into racetracks, a steeplechase course, and spaces for other forms of recreation, such as swimming, golfing, and shooting. The changes made to the house by the duPonts effectively displaced the Madisons from the building. When considered as an architectural layer, the duPonts appear as overburden to the Madisonian core of the house. As a result, the public perception of the house and grounds became associated with the activities and reputation of the duPonts to the detriment of Madison's place in his own home.

By the late twentieth century, the house and grounds had become associated with the duPonts' elite leisure so much so that some Madison historians characterize President Madison's time at Montpelier as being spent in a state of elegant retirement. For instance, Conover Hunt-Jones elides Madison's involvement with the plantation before his retirement. She characterizes Madison's personal connection with Montpelier as tenuous during his career in public service and his father's lifetime as he left the day-to-day management of slaves and crops in the hands of others. However, when she depicts the character of his life in retirement, she privileges the Madisons' collection of elegant material culture and emphasizes a Palladian influence in Madison's styling of the house's appearance. I wish to argue that the appearance of the house owes little to Palladian or to Jeffersonian classicism.

Furthermore, the differences in appearance between Montpelier and Monticello

reflect Jefferson's and Madison's differing taste in domestic architecture. The first two chapters of this dissertation, which form a biography of Madison through a material culture analysis, provide new insights into Madison's personality. Previous histories and biographies of Madison highlight his intellect, his theories of republican democracy, his contribution to shaping the U.S. Constitution, and the struggles of his presidential administration. This study focuses on his interests in building and farming and how the two supported his friendship with Monroe and Jefferson. These chapters show the development of the Madisons' taste and affluence as their political prominence grows. Also, this study seeks to show the plantation in its sectional context, as a southern plantation landscape, with the Madisons grounded in the slave community they created. Basically, this study seeks to show how the cultural landscape changed to support the outlook of its various owners.

At the end of this study, I wish to depict the plantation's role in the history of the historic preservation movement in the United States. The story of the house and grounds in the late 1980s and early 1990s illustrates a process-oriented approach to historic preservation. While some historic preservation specialists at the time advocated for a popular presentation of James and Dolley Madison, the National Trust chose to advance a variety of historic preservation that favored process over product. They wanted to reveal the methodologies of preservation. They wanted to make the decision-making process and the investigation of the structure visible to the public. To achieve that end, they provided public venues for discussions of interpretation alternatives, which resulted in heated debates, and public house tours that revealed duPont-decorated rooms and speculative Madison floor plans. Unfortunately, their efforts to present a multi-vocal interpretation that included all aspects of the plantation's story (slavery,

revolution, constitution creation, national development, statesmanship, and the elite lifestyle of the duPonts) resulted in a fractured narrative that frustrated staff members and benefactors.

Although this study ends at a point short of the present situation at Montpelier, a brief discussion of recent developments there deserves mention. Since 2001, changes to the house and interpretation policy, based on a vigorous investigation of the building, have occurred. These changes mark a shift in the National Trust's treatment of Montpelier. The National Trust transferred responsibility for operating Montpelier to The Montpelier Foundation in 2000. With the results of an intensive investigation of the building conducted in 2001, they are attempting to remove the duPont additions in order to reveal the house as the Madisons knew it in the early nineteenth century. The Montpelier Foundation has not continued the National Trust's earlier position of interpreting both the duPont and Madison historical narratives. The foundation has decided to remove the duPont architectural layers after concluding that the house and grounds, in their present duPont form, do not comprise an irreplaceable or representative example of elite Edwardian country houses in this region of Virginia. This reversal of preservation philosophy by the National Trust will be described briefly in a short epilogue.

As a narrative history, this work follows the story of Montpelier as it fulfilled the demands placed upon it. Its form and spaces were altered to accommodate and display new meanings for individuals responding to their own dilemmas. Analysis of the early building phases provides an understanding of the Madisons on a personal level, a way to know them through their buildings. The problems and inconveniences of house-building as experienced by the Madisons from 1760 to 1812 illustrate patterns of vernacular

housing, social uses of space, and local labor relations, but the architectural history of Montpelier is worth writing for reasons other than a better understanding of Madison. The house and grounds demonstrate responses to ensuing political changes and cultural crises.

While most historic homes in Virginia happily tell the story of their famous historic character, Montpelier's is a sad story. The transformations of the house introduced new spaces and personalities that threw a shadow on the remains of the house that could have represented President Madison's architectural biography. Furthermore, the National Trust's curious philosophy of historic preservation-on-display and a legal settlement with duPont heirs precluded a full Madison restoration of the house. Not until the National Trust agreed to place the management of the museum under the direction of the Montpelier Foundation in a 75-year lease did efforts to restore the house to the Madisons' period advance. The history of slavery at the plantation also detracted from efforts to mount a mythic presentation of Madison in his historic home. Furthermore, the currents of American history deprived Montpelier of the symbolism Madison intended it to carry as an emblem of the agrarian republic. The forces of the industrial revolution and capitalism swept aside virtuous agrarianism, leaving Montpelier as a rural pleasure ground for the capitalist elite.

The multi-storied history of Montpelier revealed how various owners of the plantation presented images of themselves and designed the surrounding environment to support that presentation. Each episode of building at Montpelier reflected introductions of emerging cultures of refinement, gentility, privacy, and affluence. The architectural layers signified decisions to change the house and grounds based on personal triumphs and private dilemmas.

As a plantation, Montpelier began as a domestic and agricultural complex, known as Mount Pleasant, on the early eighteenth-century Virginia frontier. Within ten years of the marriage of Col. James Madison and Nelly Conway, the new house was complete. For Col. James Madison, his two-story double-pile, brick mansion with a center passage marked his induction into the social realm of Virginia gentlemen and their pretentious houses. The interior spaces featured accommodations to his new social and service demands. Through his marriage, he gained the labor of more slaves who supported his elevated social status. The construction of a new house and the re-arrangement of roads and fields at Col. Madison's plantation characterized the improvements to this planter's prospect.

The first modification of the house occurred when James Madison, Jr., returned home with a family after his service in the Congress. The changes expressed both expedient and aesthetic values. The new additions to the house included dining and kitchen spaces as well as a pedimented portico attached to the facade. Privacy and status motivated the changes, which resulted in a larger house projecting the sensibilities of the classical revival. The building campaign also united three prominent politicians on the cusp of dominance in the federal government. As they built their separate houses, Monroe, Madison, and Jefferson shared the skills of local builders, building designs, and political ideas. Although he entertained the thoughtful suggestions of Jefferson regarding the arrangement of space, Madison chose to follow conventional forms of building in Virginia throughout his construction campaigns.

Another building cycle occurred when James Madison, Jr., entered the presidency. The changes to the house made during his presidency reflected increasing social demands placed upon the house. In addition, the new building form resulted in a

deep inscription of classical renaissance ideas on the house and grounds, in particular at the temple. The national prominence Madison achieved was translated into a further refinement of his house and grounds. The occasion of building again at Montpelier offered James Monroe and James Madison cause to rekindle their friendship and strengthen Madison's presidential administration as war with Britain drew close. Although Jefferson again offered building advice and skilled builders, Madison chose to decline the opportunity to make substantial changes according to Jefferson's design ideas. Therefore, the house and grounds reflected Madison's taste in architecture, rather than Jefferson's.

Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, the legacy of Madison gradually dissipated from the house and grounds. After his death, the house served a symbolic function for two residents of Richmond, Henry Wood Moncure and William Hamilton Macfarland, who laid claim to Madison's legacy as they participated in state politics as Whigs. Ownership of Montpelier demonstrated the loyalty of these two men to Virginia's continuation as a slave society. The plantation served in a similar fashion for a merchant and banker from Baltimore whose support for the Union was not based on abolition. For Thomas J. Carson, ownership of Montpelier and slaves signified his recently acquired affluence and his standing in the upper classes of society.

After the Civil War, Montpelier endured a period of decline that paralleled the general economic depression in the South. It did not become the seat of a gentleman farmer who controlled an array of tenant farms. Instead, the house suffered from a lack of maintenance in the hands of Frank Carson, Thomas J. Carson's brother. Yet, symbolic potency still lingered when President Rutherford B. Hayes, seeking a symbol for sectional reconciliation, visited in the early days of his presidency. He spent a day at Montpelier, with Frank Carson hosting a group of local politicians and Confederate



veterans, promoting national harmony and the Republican party.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Montpelier began its transformation into an elegant pastoral retreat for wealthy industrialists. First, two partners in the agricultural fertilizer business purchased the estate in a lottery. With little concern for promoting the memory of Madison at his home, Louis F. Detrick and William L. Bradley raised horses and spent leisure time there. They changed the interior of the mansion with a colonial revival redecoration and added a small number of buildings to the landscape. Later, the arrival of William duPont and his family resulted in extensive alterations to the house. The first of the duPonts to publicly crack the veneer of the family name with a divorce scandal, William duPont sought out Montpelier after living abroad with his second wife. The farm became one of duPont's southern country estates, with the grounds supporting his interest in horse training and breeding. After his death, his daughter continued to raise and train horses there until her death.

After nearly one hundred years as a country estate for elite capitalists, Montpelier became a museum property of the National Trust in the mid-1980s. Initially intended to commemorate President Madison, the National Trust's interpretation moved Madison out of the foreground in order to provide space for their preservation-on-display concept and duPont lifestyle exhibits. As criticism developed, consultants recommended various schemes to develop the cultural resources of the estate. Through a series of exhibits installed in the former rooms of the duPonts between 1987 and 1998, the National Trust repatriated Madison, but not without attending to the complex social history embedded in the house and grounds. Thus, the history of his own house obscured Madison from the stage of interpretation at Montpelier in the late twentieth century.

Previous studies of the house have attempted to amplify its significance by

attributing the design and construction of its second phase to the notable early American architects Benjamin Henry Latrobe and Dr. William Thornton. Some have gone so far as to credit Pierre L'Enfant with designing the landscape in President Madison's day. These efforts to attach the house and grounds to notable figures overloaded their statements of Montpelier's significance. More importantly, the design process in the first rebuilding phase, when then-Congressman Madison restyled his father's home during John Adams's presidency, emanated from political conflicts and wider collaboration with republican politicians (for instance, Thomas Jefferson, William Madison, and James Monroe)—rather than the influence of a singular genius intellect/architect.

From the beginning Montpelier has served as what J. B. Jackson identifies as a political landscape. The landscape features, as well as the house, developed purposefully according to a utilitarian ideology that valued converting wilderness into commodity. There has always been a strong political concept activating the various building phases at Montpelier. The organic landscape that emerged in the 1730s at Mount Pleasant, with its expedient cluster of outbuildings, palings, and family house, was discarded when the Madisons moved into a brick Georgian mansion. Immediately, Montpelier bore the signature of status as a local version of the Georgian idiom. Col. Madison, and then his son James, designed and redesigned the house and grounds to achieve material recognition of local authority, class dominance, and public visibility.<sup>2</sup>

The history of Montpelier as a slave plantation dates to 1723. This study of Montpelier develops the context for each building phase by analyzing the structure and the grounds. A study of the people in motion, with a focus on the character of life at Montpelier, accompanies the material description. Meanings and how those meanings

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<sup>2</sup> John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 12-54.

were proclaimed occupies the last part of the analysis for each building phase. The concern here is to understand how the cultural landscape, taken to be the house and grounds (any human shaping of the physical space within the boundaries of Montpelier), took form according to contemporary imperatives and social relations in each historical epoch. The dissertation follows a trend in architectural history that Gabrielle Lanier and Bernard Herman call the archaeological approach to reading the built environment, a method that follows layers of building activity through time in order to enliven the “architectural fabric with the human agency of those who made and experienced those spaces and places.”<sup>3</sup> This dissertation is guided by archaeological thinking in another way, in that it follows the changes in a form through time and space. Furthermore, while archaeologists and architectural historians have labored to circumscribe the layout, plans, and elevations of Montpelier, the political and ideological dimensions of the house and grounds deserve further delineation for a fuller reconstruction of their history.

The chapter organization follows changes in ownership. The first chapter accounts for Montpelier’s appearance on the landscape and provides a context for the commercial ambitions of Col. James Madison in colonial Virginia. In the second chapter, the next two phases of Montpelier’s architectural change, which corresponded to the developing political profile of James Madison, Jr., are delineated. The two following chapters describe the activities of other owners. Chapter Three describes Montpelier as an emblem of two prominent citizens’ commitment to slavery in ante-bellum Richmond. Chapter Four shows how, during the Civil War, Montpelier stood as a cultural attraction for Confederate soldiers and officers. Chapter Five describes how the changes to Montpelier by the duPonts served them as they played out the themes of conspicuous

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<sup>3</sup> Gabrielle M. Lanier and Bernard L. Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 1-7, 349-350.

consumption, elite leisure, and country life. Chapter Six discusses the efforts to turn Montpelier into a historic house museum when the National Trust for Historic Preservation became the owner at a critical time in its institutional history.

Table 1

## Montpelier Owners and Range of Dates

Col. James Madison.....	ca. 1760 to 1801
President James Madison.....	1801 to 1836
Dolley P. Madison.....	1836 to 1842-43
Henry W. Moncure.....	1842-43 to 1848
Benjamin Thornton.....	1848 to 1854
William H. Macfarland and Richard B. Haxall.....	1854 to 1855
Alfred V. Scott.....	1855 to 1857
Thomas J. Carson and Frank Carson.....	1857 to 1881
Louis F. Detrick and William L. Bradley.....	1881 to 1900
Charles K. Lennig.....	1900 to 1901
William duPont.....	1901 to 1928
Marion duPont Scott.....	1928 to 1984
National Trust for Historic Preservation.....	1984 to present

Much of the literature on historic homes in the United States bears the imprint of the antiquarian. In other writings, historic homes appear as attractions in the travelogue. Close attention to historic houses typically is couched in internal memorandums, site

reports, or papers presented at academic conferences. There are exceptions. Anne Yentsch's book about the Calvert family residence in Annapolis, Maryland, provides an exhaustive ethnographic, archaeological, architectural, and historical account of the multiple contexts of cultural activity embedded there over time.<sup>4</sup> William Seale establishes frameworks for scholarly analysis of historic homes and sites, particularly in his texts on the White House and the Virginia governor's mansion.<sup>5</sup> Seale also includes Montpelier in his survey of properties owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, treating the house's history in broad strokes.<sup>6</sup> Dell Upton exemplifies the qualitative pursuit of meaning in buildings, going beyond description in *Holy Things and Profane* to illuminate the symbolism of colonial churches. His analysis of the symbolic process evident in Virginia's Anglican church buildings informs this dissertation.<sup>7</sup> Bernard Herman predicates his study of the organization of the rural Delaware landscape on documentation relating to a house at the center of a legal dispute in *The Stolen House*.<sup>8</sup> Thanks to the work of Mark Wenger, Ed Chappell, and Camille Wells the literature on eighteenth-century Virginia domestic architecture is rich and provides considerable support for understanding Montpelier's early history.

Critical literature about museums and historic houses also bears on the recent phase of Montpelier's life as an institutionalized history museum. In *Domesticating*

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<sup>4</sup> Anne Elizabeth Yentsch, *A Chesapeake Family and their Slaves: a study in historical archaeology* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> William Seale, *The President's House: A History*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: White House Historical Association, 1986); *Virginia's Executive Mansion: A History of the Governor's House* (Richmond: Virginia State Library and Archives for the Citizens Advisory Council for Interpreting and Furnishing the Executive Mansion, 1988).

<sup>6</sup> William Seale, *Of Houses and Time: Personal Histories of America's National Trust Properties* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers in association with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press for the Architectural History Foundation, 1986).

<sup>8</sup> Bernard L. Herman, *The Stolen House* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1992).

*History*, Patricia West describes the process of turning historic homes into museums. She locates such acts in the cultural crises of the day.<sup>9</sup> In particular, her framework for understanding the moment of creation of national historic sites—and the critical literature on museum display and public history museums—guides the discussion of Montpelier passing to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the last chapter. The criticisms of current museum and public history practice by Michael Wallace, Alan Wallach, Ivan Karp, and Steven D. Levine provide insights into the operations of Montpelier as a historic house museum. Most importantly, the work of cultural historian Neil Harris offers a foundation for understanding the relation between buildings and people based on rituals of maintenance.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Dell Upton argues for a landscape approach to material culture studies. His argument for a wide and integrated approach to ideology and symbolism in artifacts informs this study in its search for relations between objects and articulated concepts and in its attempt to read Montpelier’s artifactual world “as an account of struggles for control of the material and social worlds.”<sup>11</sup> In general, scholars of material culture argue for a representation of artifacts that portrays the artifact’s influence on human behavior as equivalent, in a reciprocal manner, to the human influence on their form, production and significance.<sup>12</sup> This dissertation endeavors to do the same. As a slave plantation, it shaped James Madison’s thinking on abolition and manumission. As a productive agricultural landscape, it supported his view of an agrarian republic. As a

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<sup>9</sup> Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America’s House Museums* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> Ivan Karp and Steven D. Levine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991); Alan Wallach, *Exhibiting Contradiction: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); Neil Harris, *Building Lives: Constructing Rites and Passages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> Dell Upton, “Introduction,” *Material Culture*, 17 (1985), 85-88.

<sup>12</sup> Ian Hodder, *Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

mansion, it evoked his republican sensibilities. For later owners it naturalized their wealth.

The many biographies of James and Dolley Madison have treated the house as either the repository of the Madisons's artifacts of genteel refinement or just as their elegant home where they found *otium cum dignitate* in retirement. Most narratives dealing with Montpelier conclude after Dolley and her stepson died and people outside the family possessed it. In *Dolley and 'the great little Madison,'* Conover Hunt-Jones provides an exhaustive study of the material cultural assemblages employed by the Madisons not just at Montpelier, but also in the townhouses in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.<sup>13</sup> Her studies of Madison material culture inform this dissertation in the early chapters and in the final chapter dealing with Montpelier as a historic house museum. Mills Lane mentions Montpelier in his survey of Virginia architecture as a manifestation of Jeffersonian aesthetics only. According to Lane, Montpelier owes its form to Thomas Jefferson.<sup>14</sup> The chapter that delineates the changes President Madison made to the house shows such a conclusion to be hasty.

This dissertation stands in relation to work by the Dalzells and Jack McLaughlin, who have contributed to the emerging field of biographical architectural history. Although their narratives end with the occupancy of the prominent figure, their studies of Madison's contemporaries Thomas Jefferson and George Washington point the way for a similar study of Montpelier. They use Mount Vernon and Monticello to add depth to their founding father biographies. Both Jefferson and Washington loved their homes, devoting considerable attention to the details and the problems of house building as they

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<sup>13</sup> Conover Hunt-Jones, *Dolley and 'the great little Madison'* (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Foundation, Inc., 1977).

<sup>14</sup> Mills Lane, *Architecture of the Old South: Virginia* (Savannah, Georgia: The Beehive Press, 1987), 103.

crafted personal and political statements in architecture. As shown in Chapter Two, Madison loved his home too, but not to the extent of Washington or Jefferson. He did not lavish attention and expense on Montpelier as they did. He did not revel in the design process. He kept his building projects modest and serviceable. He did not build to get away from his mother as the Dalzells and McLaughlin suggest both Jefferson and Washington did. Rather, Madison built to stay within his family circle and to improve their living conditions. Madison's building projects were discreet and swift so as to minimize expense and inconvenience. Once he was done with building in 1812, he was satisfied with his domestic arrangements.<sup>15</sup>

Although President Madison was the only occupant of transcendent historical importance, Montpelier's story does not end with him. As a modern historic house museum, the house continues to function as expressive architecture. Numerous phases of interpretation have revealed the conflict within the house between two arcs of significance: Madison versus duPont. The disintegration of Madison's house within the duPont additions can be seen as a split in historic architectural and structural integrity caused by the duPonts' reorganization of the Montpelier built environment. As shown in Chapter Five, the duPonts completely transformed Montpelier. They developed the remaining historic resources to naturalize their own elite intentions and membership in the dominant class. The duPont building phase contained a self-serving component that sought to blend their own family wealth and industrial interests with American history.

The complexity of the duPont changes at Montpelier has stopped many scholars

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<sup>15</sup> Robert Dalzell, Jr., "Constructing Independence: Monticello, Mount Vernon and the Men Who Built Them," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 26 (Summer 1993): 543-580; Robert F. Dalzell, Jr., and Lee Baldwin Dalzell, *George Washington's Mount Vernon: At Home in Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Jack McLaughlin, *Jefferson and Monticello: The Biography of a Builder* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990).



and forced them to find their bearings. Their analyses of the house and grounds have been tied to specific cross sections of the plantation. They have been thorough and rigorous but not archaeological in the sense that they relate each context and cultural layer to the entire site. In addition, they have not been as concerned with the character of life, both slave and free, at Montpelier as this dissertation attempts to be. Thus, this dissertation derives from the work of Mark Girouard, who combines architectural and social history in his analysis of abandoned lifestyles that once existed in the English country house. Girouard moves his study away from traditional architectural history concerns for dating and stylistic development and asks how the English country house was used and what were the intentions of the occupants.<sup>16</sup>

This history of Montpelier reveals an accommodative relationship with its many owners and the memory of President James Madison. After the first round of remodeling, Montpelier projected President Madison and republicanism into the public domain. It showcased his command not just of ancient republican forms of government, but also the architectural styles of antiquity. As such, Montpelier served as a part of a set piece of republican architecture seen by travelers from the north, when clerks, cabinet members, and other distinguished visitors paused there on their way to President Jefferson at Monticello.

After his election to the presidency, Madison returned his attention to the appearance of Montpelier. With the opportunity to consult with Benjamin Henry Latrobe and Dr. William Thornton, who were eager to curry the president's favor, and the availability of skilled Philadelphia builders in the area—a rarity in Virginia, Madison refined the classical essence he sought to embed in Montpelier. James Dinsmore and John

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<sup>16</sup> Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 12.

Nielson brought a clearer neo-classical finish and a new arrangement of living spaces to Montpelier. Acting on the availability of skilled labor in the neighborhood and sound advice, Madison distilled his republican concepts into his domestic architecture.

The change in architecture at Montpelier, from colonial to republican, preceded Thomas Jefferson's self-designated revolution of 1800. Montpelier's new collection of decorative arts and lifestyle supported the republican agrarianism ideology. Inspections of fields and flocks and dinner on fine French ceramics were symbolic components of the Montpelier experience. The service of meals and the accommodation of guests bore meaning as well. It took two building phases for Montpelier to fit President Madison's republican views and produce the house and grounds he desired. The public experience of Montpelier was that of visiting a shrine. Thus, Montpelier was a cultural production where republican ideology and material culture interacted to enshrine the revolution, republicanism, and the Union.

As a republican essay written in architecture on the piedmont landscape, Montpelier expressed Jefferson's notion of virtuous national character developed through the building arts, rather than Madison's abstract conceptualization of a constitutional system of government that would secure a republican quality of life. Of course, both men shared these ideas, but this distinction, James Madison's faith in government and virtuous agrarianism, not architecture, as an activating agent of national virtue, is reflected in the attenuated classical revival styling at Montpelier. Madison invested more attention in improving agricultural techniques and structures of government than in perfecting the building stock of America. Chapter Two details how the house, the grounds, and his household goods comprised Madison's republican persuasion.

Liberty and personal autonomy, the core republican tenets, took on physical

forms at Montpelier: capitalistic independence, intellectual independence, political ambition, luxury in a bucolic setting, but they never extended to the slave population until emancipation. Montpelier was a slave community in a slave society for over a hundred and twenty-five years. The slave structures and buildings, however, were marginalized on the landscape, then obliterated. Yet, these features supported Montpelier as a pleasure ground and shaped the style of life there. Later owners of Montpelier continued to perpetuate its role in genteel society predicated on slave labor until the Civil War and then on wage labor in the Gilded Age. The workers' activities were part of Montpelier's history, and Lorena S. Walsh demonstrates the rewards of writing a history of a plantation slave community in *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*. The dissertation will position Montpelier along the themes she identifies at Carter's Grove (for instance, master-slave relations, work patterns, privileges, and punishments) and at times rely on contemporary sources she employs to corroborate or support assertions made about slave life at Montpelier. Likewise, the work of Philip D. Morgan, Ira Berlin, Lois Green Carr, Robert McColley, and Alan Kulikoff on the history of slavery in piedmont Virginia assists in developing context for the character of slave life at Montpelier after the documentary and archaeological record drops off.<sup>17</sup>

Montpelier became a fully constituted tourist attraction in the late twentieth century. The National Trust received the estate as a gift from its last private owner,

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<sup>17</sup> Lorena S. Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The History of a Virginia Slave Community* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1997); Robert McColley, *Slavery in Jeffersonian Virginia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2nd. ed., 1973); Stephen Innes, ed., *Work and Labor in Early America* (Chapel Hill: The University Press of North Carolina for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1988); Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1993); Lois Green Carr and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Colonial Chesapeake Society* (Chapel Hill: The University Press of North Carolina for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1988); Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, eds., *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1983).

Marion duPont Scott, the daughter of William duPont, and it immediately sought out ways to develop all of the property's historic resources. The commodification of Montpelier, which was initiated during Mrs. Scott's ownership, continues to characterize the latest stage in its development. As for the duPont family, they are the medium through which the National Trust interprets its favored historical characters—the Madisons. Heirs of Marion duPont Scott contested her gift of the estate to the National Trust, and the settlement stipulated that the National Trust must interpret the duPonts along with Madison. Thus, the schizophrenic memory contest between the duPonts and the Madisons dominates the museum's management.

Finally, in my attempt to follow a cultural landscape through history, I have written about a house while looking for clues to American cultures, past and present. The current scholarship on material culture, especially the study of houses and their role in social relations, intrigued me to consider Montpelier as a rich cultural artifact. This account of the house and grounds includes expanded categories of experience to enrich the narrative: women, slaves, and the landscape itself. Understanding the site and the structures with their human agents illuminates other aspects of American history, such as Jacksonian politics, the Civil War, Victorian culture, tourism, modernity, and museum practices. The evidence pertaining to Montpelier and the questions it can answer lead only to discrete avenues in American history. Therefore, the narrative focuses on the house and its limited participation in and influence on events of the past 200 years. This is an object-centered study of a house changing through time and revealing aspects of American cultural life and contests over history, identity, and memory.

## CHAPTER I

## The Madisons at Montpelier: Agricultural Colonization

Colonel James Madison, Sr., moved his family out of a coarse, wooden, earthfast structure, a common Virginia house of the early colonial period, into a brick mansion in 1760. To inaugurate their new life in a pretentious house, family members processed uphill from the old homeplace to their new home. President James Madison recalled carrying light furniture that day when he was about nine or ten years old.<sup>1</sup> The family members in this ceremonial train carried some of the furniture themselves instead of ordering slaves to bear all of the burden. They left behind a house full of memories of their patriarch's murder at the hands of slaves. Soon after the procession, they carried the body of Ambrose's widow, Frances, back to bury her in the family cemetery in 1761.<sup>2</sup>

The construction of the mansion amplified Col. Madison's personal autonomy and rising status in the ranks of local gentlemen, planters, and office holders. Soon after their marriage, he and his wife Nelly Conway Madison left behind a crude cluster of agricultural buildings proximal to slave quarters, corn houses, tobacco houses, livestock shelters, a dairy, and various work areas. No longer an obvious feature, the slave quarters and other structures that supported the household economy were now marginalized—yet remaining close enough to the main house for convenient service. The new living arrangements suggested an improvement in the man and his fortunes. They had

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<sup>1</sup> W. W. Scott, *A History of Orange County* (Richmond: Everett Waddey, Co., 1907), 208.

<sup>2</sup> Irving Brant, *James Madison: The Virginia Revolutionist* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1941), 53.

abandoned a familiar, organic farmstead, which had developed according to the quotidian and commercial needs of their plantation operation, in favor of a reordered domestic landscape.

Based on the archaeological record as it has been uncovered to date, staff archaeologists have surmised that Mount Pleasant did not deviate from conventional settlement patterns and domestic architecture of the day, with its complex of agricultural and domestic service buildings located near the main house. Rhys Isaac describes the common Virginia house as a one-story, earthfast, wood frame dwelling “with two rooms on the ground floor and a chimney on the gable at one or both of ends. It was covered with unpainted riven clapboards, made by splitting four-foot lengths of the oak timber that was so plentiful in the country.”<sup>3</sup> While archaeological investigations of the Mount Pleasant site have not concluded, staff archaeologists have identified kitchen and cellar features in the house lot and the foundation of the main house. However, conclusions regarding the dimensions and structural system of the main house have not been determined at this time. Yet, preliminary analysis indicates that the building may have been two-rooms wide and one-room deep.<sup>4</sup>

The builders may have utilized stone footings and may have laid out a two-room floor plan that included a hall and chamber configuration. However, current research indicates that most likely Mount Pleasant was either a timber frame building standing on hole-set wood blocks, a building method which emerged in the colony during the second

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<sup>3</sup> Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1982), 33.

<sup>4</sup> Designated site number 44OR219, excavations there revealed post molds, stone foundation sections, and cellar and kitchen features containing a variety of mid-eighteenth-century domestic and architectural artifacts, including: wine bottle glass, charcoal, window glass, black-glazed earthenware, tin-glazed earthenware, hand-wrought and machine-cut nails, brick, mortar, and slate. See Lynne G. Lewis, “Archaeological Survey and the History of Orange County: Another View from Montpelier,” *Quarterly Bulletin*, Archaeological Society of Virginia, 44 (September 1989): 153.

half of the seventeenth century, or a timber frame building with hole-set studs, which was predominant throughout the seventeenth century and common into the eighteenth century. Other buildings and structures associated with the plantation may have utilized both construction systems, depending on their function. The presence of stones in the foundation area may be the result of repairing or replacing rotting members of the foundation later in the life of the building. Making repairs, rather than building anew, appears to be a common practice into the eighteenth century. Archaeologists have not decided which construction system Ambrose Madison utilized for his buildings.<sup>5</sup>

In some cases, the interiors of early eighteenth-century residences included a central passage and walls that were lathed and plastered. Documentary and archaeological evidence suggests that the Madisons enjoyed refined interiors, for instance, window curtains and white limed walls.<sup>6</sup> By the time Col. Madison's father, Ambrose, built Mount Pleasant in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the house of the Virginia gentry began to feature a central passage and, behind a symmetrical facade, a two-room-deep floor plan. Whereas the common floor plan allowed the hall and the chamber to be entered directly from the outside, the central passage assumed the role of providing access to rooms within the house, allowing the planter to "directly and individually control circulation to every room of the house."<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Mark R. Wenger argues that the central passage channeled movement through the house and buffered the two principals rooms, the hall and the chamber, from unwarranted intrusions on the

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<sup>5</sup> Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," in *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 131, 137.

<sup>6</sup> Spotsylvania County Will Book, A: 182-86.

<sup>7</sup> Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17 (1982): 98, 103.

immediate family. It functioned spatially as a means of social control.<sup>8</sup> Whether Mount Pleasant reflected the common building form or the emerging floor plan of the gentry, with a central passage, has not been determined.

Col. Madison grew up here with his mother and sisters, but within months of their arrival in 1732 a group of slaves murdered Ambrose. Ambrose had obtained the Mount Pleasant tract through family connections; his wife Frances Taylor was the daughter of James Taylor, a well-placed surveyor in Governor Alexander Spotswood's colonial administration. Taylor sought to endow his daughters upon their marriages with land he had surveyed for the governor along the Rapidan River, an upcountry tributary of the Rappahannock River, in 1716 and 1721. On that trip, he picked out tracts along the Southwest Mountains where his daughters might live. Likewise, when Frances' sister Martha married Thomas Chew, Taylor provided them with land adjacent to the Madisons.<sup>9</sup>

In all, the brothers-in-law Madison and Chew patented 4,675 acres in what was then western Spotsylvania County. Soon thereafter, they sent an overseer and a gang of slaves up country to prove their claim by clearing fields, planting tobacco, and meeting other requirements.<sup>10</sup> When they petitioned the Spotsylvania County Court to examine their improvements and expenses, William Bartlett and Richard Blanton returned valuations on their "Buildings Workes & Improvements." On the south side of "the Little Mountains," they estimated the value of Thomas Chew's improvements at £375, plus a

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<sup>8</sup> Mark R. Wenger, "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Place," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II*, ed. Camille Wells (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), 142, 149.

<sup>9</sup> Nell Marion Nugent, abs. *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Patents and Grants*, Vol. III, 1695-1732 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1979), 257.

<sup>10</sup> Madison Account Book 1725-1726, Shane Collection; Nugent, abs. *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 151, 219, 299, 319, 352, 389.



mill at £70. They appraised two quarters of Ambrose Madison on the north side: Todds Folly Quarter (£40) and “Mount Pleasant [sic] Quarter” (£340). They also recorded Ambrose’s expense on sundries at £200. Officials approved the patent in November 1726.<sup>11</sup> At the same time they were developing their western lands, Robert “King” Carter, in comparison, also had dispatched a white overseer and newly purchased African slaves to a new western quarter, which was intended for his grandchildren, on Bull Run in present day Prince William County. Carter Burwell also sent newly purchased African slaves with a white overseer to a western quarter on the Shenandoah River in Frederick County in the 1740s.<sup>12</sup> Taylor’s daughters and sons-in-law were an early example of a westward migration trend. The significant difference being that they joined their pioneering slaves on the frontier earlier in the eighteenth century than the established tidewater planters—a decision with fatal consequences.

In 1728, Frances Madison and her sister Martha Chew appeared in Spotsylvania County Court to acknowledge their right of dower, a legal provision for a widow’s life-interest in one-third of her deceased husband’s estate for her support and the support of their children, in anticipation of their emigration to the frontier.<sup>13</sup> Four years later, they left their familiar neighborhood on the Mattaponi River in Caroline County where Ambrose served as a justice of the peace. Previously, he held a similar position in King and Queen County.<sup>14</sup> Changes in the tobacco market contributed to their decision to move west. Low prices in the 1720s and 1730s for sweet-scented tobacco, the predominant

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<sup>11</sup> Spotsylvania County Order Book, November 1726, p. 113; Spotsylvania County Will Book A, pp. 42-43. (I thank Lynne Lewis for providing me with this document.)

<sup>12</sup> Lorena S. Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter’s Grove: The History of a Virginia Slave Community* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1997), 205.

<sup>13</sup> Spotsylvania County Order Book, 6 August 1728, p. 239.

<sup>14</sup> Irving Brant, *James Madison: The Virginia Revolutionist* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1941), 24, 26, 47, 405-06 n. 17.

variety grown in the York River basin, prompted planters to seek fresh fields in the piedmont to increase their yields.<sup>15</sup> Court records indicate that Ambrose intended to develop the Mount Pleasant quarter immediately; he petitioned the county court for a road to be cleared from “the Dirt Bridge to Fredericksburgh Town in the most convenient way.”<sup>16</sup> He did not live to see such a road; he was murdered two months later.

At the time of the move in the spring of 1732, Ambrose’s son James was about nine years old, and his two daughters were about seven and six years old.<sup>17</sup> When they arrived, Ambrose found the affairs of this plantation in disorder. Aside from the need to improve the overland transportation connections to Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania County Court records show that he had initiated suits at the August court against other men for trespassing and damaging his property. One suit alleged damages totaling 600 pounds of tobacco. These cases, however, were dismissed.<sup>18</sup> Ambrose witnessed the early stages of cultivation for only one crop before his death on or about 28 August 1732. According to Spotsylvania County Court proceedings, three slaves, Pompey, Turk, and Dido, were arrested on suspicion of feloniously conspiring in the death of Ambrose Madison.

At their arraignment on 6 September 1732, they all pled not guilty. Two of the slaves, Turk and Dido, belonged to Ambrose. The third, Pompey, belonged to Joseph Hawkins, an officer of the Spotsylvania County Court. At the trial on that same day, “severall Witnesses against them were Sworn and Examined.” The officers of the court

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<sup>15</sup> Lorena S. Walsh, “Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820,” in *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas*, ed. Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1993), 181.

<sup>16</sup> Spotsylvania County Order Book, 16 June 1732, p. 126; Spotsylvania County Will Book A, pp. 42-43.

<sup>17</sup> Brant, *James Madison: The Virginia Revolutionist*, 26-27.

<sup>18</sup> Spotsylvania County Order Book, 3 August 1732, p. 142; 7 September 1732, pp. 159, 160. The third suit mentioned only a debt, not specific trespassing damages. The second and third suits were dismissed for the following reason: “the Plaintiff being Dead.”

found Pompey guilty, determined his value to be 30 pounds, and ordered Pompey “to be hanged by the Neck until Dead.” They compensated his master for this loss of his property. The sheriff hung Pompey the next day before noon. As for Turk and Dido, the court found that they were “concerned” in the conspiracy, but not to such a degree that warranted execution. Therefore, the court punished them with 29 lashes each across their back “at the Common whipping post.” After the whipping, the sheriff “discharged and conveyed [them] to their said Mistress.”<sup>19</sup>

The murder of Ambrose took place after a time of violent slave resistance in other parts of the Chesapeake. Planters detected slave conspiracies in 1709, 1710, 1722, and 1726 through 1729. Ira Berlin argues that the Chesapeake region, which included the piedmont, was “rife with conspiracies and insurrectionary plots against slavery” at this time. Berlin links the rise in insurrection to changes made to Virginia’s slave laws (for instance killing a slave during acts of punishment was no longer a felony) and the planters’ attempts to make slaves totally subordinated to them, allowing no negotiation of work and privileges. The unbalanced slave sex ratios (male majorities) also created a climate of instability as the master’s oppression increased.<sup>20</sup>

The murder disrupted the Madison family’s plans for a convenient and peaceful transition at their frontier plantation home and gave them cause to reconsider their assumptions about their living arrangement among slave labor. Over time, they recovered their command of slaves, but Ambrose’s death affected the Madisons’ relationship with their slaves. When he was able, Col. James Madison rearranged the plantation layout to distance his family from the slaves. Eliminating his family’s presence in the cluster of

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<sup>19</sup>Spotsylvania County Order Book, 6 September 1732, p. 151.

<sup>20</sup> Ira Berlin, *Many Thousand Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 111, 115, 120.

domestic and agricultural buildings and moving them away from the slave barracks became a priority. He also established another quarter, Black Level, and moved some of the slaves there. After the death of Ambrose, the Madisons became more circumspect about their place among slaves. They established a greater social distance between themselves and their slaves through the manipulation of space.

The power of the Madisons to rule over their slaves had been questioned with the murder of Ambrose. Killing Ambrose signified the slaves' displeasure with a variety of possible circumstances. The slaves may have just come from a harsh Caribbean plantation or directly from Africa, when they immediately rebelled and struck down the obvious symbol of their perpetual captivity. Or, they may have resented such a dislocation from what little community they may have formed at the old plantation. According to Ira Berlin, "the forced migration to the upcountry was extremely disruptive, dividing established families and sundering communities." Another motivation for murder may have been changes Ambrose made to the slaves' work pattern or established privileges when he and his family moved into the quarter. Replacing the management of the overseer with his own authority may have provoked the conspirators. Prior to his arrival, the slaves at Mount Pleasant enjoyed a measure of relative autonomy, living beyond the master's direct supervision. Ambrose, anxious to clear more land, plant more crops, and build more structures, may have intensified the pace of work. Living among the master and his family meant the end of such autonomy and the beginning of "an intimate interdependence," to use Philip Morgan's characterization of slave-master relations. The act of murder also questioned Ambrose's liberality as a master, with the slaves objecting to any brutality in his management style. Although its cause was unrecorded, the murder was a seminal event in the plantation's history and characterized

Mount Pleasant as a slave community in a slave society.<sup>21</sup>

The murder also revealed aspects of African culture present in Orange County. For instance, the names of the defendants suggested that they were labeled by their masters, not themselves, indicative of their status as “new Negroes” or Africans, not African-Virginian slaves. Furthermore, research on poisonings in the Virginia piedmont (the trial made no mention of cause of death) indicates that a link exists between newly arrived slaves and murder by poisoning. Although the location of a slave’s African nativity remained unclear, Philip Morgan argues that “the high concentrations of such cases in counties where large numbers of Africans lived, together with information such as the African names of some alleged poisoners, make the connection plausible.” Poisonings and other varieties of magic or conjuring pointed to an African cultural influence in the piedmont slave society as well as a prevailing mode of resistance to authority. The presence of newly enslaved Africans in Orange County also was evident in the case of a runaway slave whose owner described him in a 1745 advertisement as unable to speak English.<sup>22</sup>

Killing Ambrose and the imposed punishment ran counter to the prevailing piedmont cultural trends. Overseers were more likely than masters to be a slave’s murder victim in the piedmont since most tidewater masters remained at their home quarters until later in the eighteenth century. The presence of Ambrose left the slaves subject to what Morgan calls, “a more patriarchal planter style.” By eliminating Ambrose, they fatally challenged the assumptions held by the Madisons: that, without question, their slaves

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<sup>21</sup> Ira Berlin, *Many Thousand Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*, 123; Philip D. Morgan, “Slave Life in Piedmont Virginia, 1720-1800,” in *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, ed. Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1988), 443.

<sup>22</sup> Morgan, “Slave Life in Piedmont Virginia,” 440, 441, 456, f.n. 37.

would submit and produce.<sup>23</sup>

Such an act of defiance caused the Madisons to reconsider their planting strategy. They abandoned the pattern established by Ambrose of moving westward toward new tobacco fields prepared in advance by slaves and overseer. Their decision to stay defied the trend identified by Allan Kulikoff in this frontier region of the Chesapeake tobacco economy: rapid settlement followed by immediate dependence on slavery and tobacco monoculture, and finally rapid out-migration to new frontiers.<sup>24</sup> Instead of moving their operation to fresh tobacco fields, with slaves functioning as advance workers preparing the fields as Ambrose had done, his widow and son settled permanently. Col. Madison speculated in western lands later in life along Panther Creek in Kentucky, but he never moved his family from Montpelier. One of his daughters, however, followed her husband Dr. Robert Rose to northern Alabama with some family slaves in the early nineteenth century, but by the time of President Madison's death only a few of his nieces and nephews had emigrated any great distance from Orange County, Virginia.<sup>25</sup>

After determining to stay put in Orange County, the Madisons altered their pattern of farming further. Part of their recovery from the murder included switching their planting strategy from a singular dependence on tobacco to mixed agriculture. Col. Madison moved into other profitable markets: milling, distilling, iron smithing, and retail factoring. Over time the Madisons became less reliant on tobacco; eventually President Madison proclaimed this enlightened approach to farming as virtuous, without revealing the private motivations for his family's new farming practice.

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<sup>23</sup> Morgan, "Slave Life in Piedmont Virginia," 465, 468.

<sup>24</sup> Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: the Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1986), 76.

<sup>25</sup> William B. Wood to James Madison, 19 June 1811, *The Papers of James Madison—Presidential Series* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 3: 344.

Yet, their suspicions of slaves lingered. In 1734, the county court ordered Col. Thomas Chew to build a prison on his plantation near the Madisons. The jail was “a logg house, seven and a half feet pitch, sixteen long and ten wide, of loggs six by eight at least, close laid at top and bottom, with a sufficient plank door, strong hinges and a good lock.”<sup>26</sup> Years later another white master was killed by a slave in Orange County. This time the county court convicted a female slave named Eve of murdering her master in January 1745, allegedly by serving him poisoned milk. After spending a few days in the jail on Col. Chew’s plantation, officers of the court burned Eve while she was chained to a rock.<sup>27</sup> In 1747, eight slaves were charged with “conspiring against Christian White People” in Orange County. The court ordered three of them to be whipped and the remaining five released. Based on cases like these throughout the piedmont, with groups of slaves owned by different masters forming a cabal, Morgan argues that “cross plantation alliances were the norm.”<sup>28</sup> The cumulative effect of slave resistance to white authority was apparent in Col. Madison’s judgment when he served in the county court in the late 1760s. He sentenced a male slave named Tom to death for stealing 25 cents worth of goods from the storehouse of his relative Erasmus Taylor in September 1767.<sup>29</sup>

Ambrose left his family with a well-furnished dwelling and a varied herd of livestock. The Madisons had moved to the frontier with a mix of practical and pleasurable goods. The inventory of his estate taken after his death revealed a plantation worked by ten adult men, five adult women, and 14 child slaves. This unequal gender ratio (and the large number of child slaves) was typical of the piedmont’s early period of development, according to Morgan. Again, some names provided a clue to their recent

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<sup>26</sup> Scott, *A History of Orange County*, 35.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>28</sup> Morgan, “Slave Life in Piedmont Virginia,” 459.

<sup>29</sup> Scott, *A History of Orange County*, 136.

removal from Africa. Of the many names Morgan identifies as indicative of African identity, Juda was one.<sup>30</sup> One of the “Negro Women” in the inventory was named Juda, perhaps a recently enslaved woman. The ages of the slaves were not specified, but the Mount Pleasant slave community was most likely a young one. Typically, planters sent young slaves to new quarters. For instance, Peyton Randolph sent only young slaves with an overseer to his Charlotte County quarter. Broken family relationships resulted. The first generation of Africans at Mount Pleasant may have been predominantly African in origin with a few Virginia-born slaves as part of the group. According to Morgan, slaves adjusted quickly, becoming “creolized” through contact with “accomplished and assimilated slaves from the tidewater who spoke English.”<sup>31</sup>

At this early point in eighteenth-century piedmont Virginia though, the African cultural influence was strong. Tobacco planters in the Madison’s old neighborhood on the Mattaponi River, a tributary of the York River, began purchasing more slaves during the last five years of the seventeenth century than they had twenty years earlier, according to Ira Berlin. These slaves came from cultural regions within Africa’s interior. Previously, the slaves had been abducted from the Atlantic littoral regions. “Nearly eight thousand African slaves arrived in the colony between 1700 and 1710, and the Chesapeake briefly replaced Jamaica as the most profitable slave market in British America,” writes Berlin. He estimates new African slaves composed ninety percent of the slave population and changed the character of life with an infusion of African cultural forms: filed teeth, plaited hair, ritual scarification, drumming, and language. The Madisons’s development of Mount Pleasant with slave labor was part of a wider settlement pattern that eventually brought fifteen thousand Africans into the piedmont by the time of the American

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<sup>30</sup> Morgan, “Slave Life in Piedmont Virginia,” 439, 444.

<sup>31</sup> Morgan, “Slave Life in Piedmont Virginia,” 441, 443, 447, 449.



revolution, thus shifting the center of African life “and making the upcountry the most thoroughly African portion of the Chesapeake region.”<sup>32</sup>

The Mount Pleasant slaves worked to build up the farm and export tobacco. The farm’s livestock included a herd of 59 cattle, 18 hogs, 16 sows and pigs, 19 head of sheep, and ten horses. Farming utensils included sheep shears, thirteen new weeding hoes, a chopping knife, and an iron rake. With no plows or felling axes listed, the slaves were most likely working in small gangs, girdling trees, and cultivating the ground between stumps or dying trees with hoes to grow corn and tobacco. When dropping their lambs, the sheep required special care from the slaves. Tobacco plants required constant attention, from seedlings in planting beds, to growing plants in the fields, to removing worms, to harvest. Slaves built the casks and hogsheads that contained the stripped, dried, and prized tobacco leaves. The inventory listed crosscut saws, handsaws, saw files, an auger, an adz, a hand planer, a cooper’s joiner, 16,000 10d nails and 1,200 8d nails, and “1 Drawing Knife & 1 Carpenter Compass.” Slaves used these tools to build the hogsheads, barracks, and other agricultural structures—the infrastructure necessary for the farm’s operation. Trusted slaves hauled the freight to market.<sup>33</sup>

The Madisons had a large collection of furniture and books. The inventory list included: “1 large Ovill Table, 1 small Ditto, 1 square Ditto, 9 old Leather Chairs, 4 new Ditto, 1 Great Bible, 2 Common prayer books, and 12 other books”—all of it inside a typical Virginia dwelling with two ground floor rooms and a loft in the story above. Their dwelling was fully appointed with the latest consumer items of the early eighteenth

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<sup>32</sup> Berlin, *Many Thousand Gone*, 110, 111, 122.

<sup>33</sup> Spotsylvania County Will Book A, p. 172-173, pp. 183-86; Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, “Economic Diversification and Labor Organization in the Chesapeake, 1650-1820,” in *Work and Labor in Early America*, ed. Stephen Innes (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1988), 162, 163, 171; Philip D. Morgan, “Task and Gang Systems: The Organization of Labor on New World Plantations,” *ibid.*, 200, 213.

century: window curtains, medicine cabinets, books, and a “Swimming [*sic*] Looking Glass” [a mirror]. They slept off of the floor on feather beds with bedsteads. They walked on rugs and kept their clothes in storage trunks. The slave quarters most likely had dirt floors, unglazed windows, and wooden chimneys. Heaps of straw on the floor served as a bed in most cases.<sup>34</sup>

The kitchen held a full array of iron cookware. The inventory list included: large pots, pot hooks, pot racks, frying pan, grid iron, spits, tongs, shingles, boxes, vessels, and heaters. The inventoried items associated with cooking indicated a kitchen that lacked little in the way of equipment, including a pair of scales and weights, butter pots, and a brass skillet. The presence of iron spits, skillets, and an iron box with three heaters (Appendix A) suggests that the Madisons enjoyed more than plain fare (stews or boiled dishes). Although they did not have all the kitchen accoutrements suggestive of preparing sophisticated cuisine, some of the inventoried items may have been used for roasting and baking.<sup>35</sup> Frances Madison probably assigned female slaves to work in the kitchen, but that responsibility would not exclude them from being placed in the fields to work. The domestic tasks assigned to female slaves included spinning, cooking, pounding corn with mortar and pestle, washing, candle-making. However, they would also find themselves performing the least desirable chores: building fences, grubbing swamps, weeding, breaking up rough ground with hoes, cleaning stables, spreading manure, and tending livestock.<sup>36</sup>

The Madisons’ personal objects in the inventory testified to a household that

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<sup>34</sup> Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter’s Grove*, 90; Robert McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia* (2nd ed., Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), 62.

<sup>35</sup> Anne Elizabeth Yentsch, *A Chesapeake Family and Their Slaves: A Study in Historical Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 149-167.

<sup>36</sup> Carr and Walsh, “Economic Diversification and Labor Organization in the Chesapeake, 1650-1820,” 177.

favored the use of material culture specialized for the individual. The inventory documented 23 drinking vessels (six cups and saucers, five stoneware cups, eight stoneware mugs, and two wine glasses), enough for individuals to have their own. There were enough mattresses for each person to have his or her own. They ate off of pewter plates and imported stoneware for table service and used stoneware pieces for serving tea, more than likely a white salt-glazed English stoneware that had recently come on the market. There were 19 chairs (nine old leather chairs, four new leather chairs, and six flag bottom chairs), enough for visitors to rest comfortably when visiting. Nevertheless, the rooms of their home still served multiple functions: sleeping, eating, entertaining, and working. They enjoyed an elevated standard of sufficiency and comfort that was not the equivalent of luxury, but it was above the material life of the slaves who used broken or worn out items cast off from the master's household. On other plantations slaves acquired some European goods through recycling, theft, barter, purchase, and as gifts. The axis between the deprivation of the slaves and the master's comfortable household was apparent at Mount Pleasant.<sup>37</sup>

The inventory provides a momentary record of a household engaged in the consumer revolution and plantation slavery. One pair of window curtains, hat boxes, writing paper, candlesticks, new men's shoes, a razor and case, one "Barbor's cason," four horn combs, three new girtles, and two pairs of money seals and weights indicated a proclivity toward neat appearances, commerce, and home comforts for the master's family.<sup>38</sup> At the time of the murder, the Madisons appeared to be modeling the lifestyle

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<sup>37</sup> Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 181; excavations at a slave quarter site near the Montpelier mansion revealed fragments of various domestic artifacts including pearlware, and blue-underglaze Chinese porcelain. See Lewis, "Archaeological Survey and the History of Orange County: Another View from Montpelier," 156.

<sup>38</sup> Spotsylvania County Will Book A, pp. 172-173, 183-86.

changes and rising standards of consumption that scholars have recognized in the region at this time. Lois Carr and Lorena Walsh categorize twelve items indexical of colonial plantation households keen on embracing new consumer goods and their attendant qualities of a good life: coarse earthenware, bed and table linen, forks, fine earthenware, spices, books, wigs, watches, clocks, pictures, and silver plate. Of the twelve items, the Madisons of 1733 had six: bed linens, coarse and fine earthenware, forks, spices (indicated by storage canisters), and books, placing them well within the consumer revolution's expanding sphere of influence and the trend toward gentility. The Madisons' score on the amenity index in the middle percentile may be related to their location in the back country. Carr and Walsh note that inventories from rural areas typically scored lower than town and urban areas due to the higher prevalence of luxury goods in towns and more vibrant trading centers.<sup>39</sup>

The presence of these items in inventories of colonial Chesapeake estates announced new consumer behavior, a new sensibility toward the material world, and an emerging concern for individual enjoyment in everyday life. Assemblages of objects that provided convenience, improved sanitation, elegance, variety, pursuits for leisure time, and the intentional display of luxury and attractive goods marked a change of mind about the things they touched everyday. Not just an outward sign of social rank or financial wherewithal, this new mode of consumption also satisfied a new desire for refinements of the body and the home. The Madisons had joined ambitious planters, land owners, and office holders who were beneath the ranks of the colonial elite and above the common farmer and laborer. This middling class had begun to adopt amenities that allowed them to

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<sup>39</sup> Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake," in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1994), 69.

distinguish themselves apart from the ordinary colonist as well as to strike a more enjoyable attitude in life. The pattern of their accumulation of goods that served needs beyond the basics of daily subsistence revealed the Madisons to be a family intent on acquiring the amenities of the day and appreciative of the new style of life.

Frances assumed management of this plantation household with assistance from her brother-in-law Col. Thomas Chew and other relatives nearby.<sup>40</sup> She appeared in Spotsylvania County Court the February following Ambrose's murder to prove her husband's will, and she received Letters of Probate from the court at that time.<sup>41</sup> She reappeared there in June 1734 regarding a trespass case John Lathan filed against her as executrix of Ambrose's estate. The case had been decided in favor of the plaintiff earlier. She had appealed that decision, and in June she learned her appeal was successful. The court reversed itself and ordered the dismissal of the suit and payment by Lathan to Frances Madison for court costs and attorney's fees.<sup>42</sup> Her successful defense against the charge contrasted to her husband's earlier suits as a plaintiff, which were dismissed. Soon after the murder of Ambrose, her land came under the jurisdiction of a new county court as Orange County was formed in 1734. She acted as a guardian of her son's interests until he reached his majority, and she prompted Col. Thomas Chew to officially divide the joint patent and deed a moiety to the Madisons in 1737.<sup>43</sup>

Only fragments of the historical record indicate early landscape changes, but they do show that Frances Taylor Madison continued to shape this landscape in the same utilitarian manner initiated by her dead husband—for example, petitioning the Orange County Court to grant her permission to make a road in 1739. They granted her petition

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<sup>40</sup> Brant, *James Madison: The Virginia Revolutionist*, 26-27.

<sup>41</sup> Spotsylvania County Order Book, 6 February 1733, p. 182.

<sup>42</sup> Spotsylvania County Order Book, 5 June 1734, 326.

<sup>43</sup> Orange County Deed Book 2:10.

and “ordered that a road be cleared round the plantation of Mrs. Francis Maddisson according as laid off by the viewers.”<sup>44</sup> Her landscape modifications were guided by commercial ambitions and easier access to markets. She directed the farming operation, overseeing the clearing of new fields and routine tobacco and other agricultural tasks. Aside from managing the field crops, she also maintained a kitchen garden, a necessary household feature indicated by the presence of “1 pair of Gardin Shers” and “1 Tin Gardin pot” in her inventory. She brought her plantation’s tobacco to market under her own brand and managed the tobacco operation until her son James reached his majority.

Frances Taylor Madison became the mistress of a plantation with an overseer and numerous slaves producing tobacco that made its way to British markets via Fredericksburg, specifically over her brother James Taylor’s rolling road, and through his warehouses in Tidewater.<sup>45</sup> Her business practices followed the patterns Ambrose had established, exploiting the tributary rivers of the Chesapeake Bay to reach across the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>46</sup> In the ships returning from Great Britain, she received all manner of cloth and household goods, as well as books—religious tracts mainly, but also a few texts on medical treatments for sick bodies.

The activities of the Madisons were part of the larger agricultural colonization process that transformed nature into a commodity form, or from first into second nature. The first step was occupation of the territory and displacement of original inhabitants, followed by the establishment of staple production. At the same time, colonizers created

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<sup>44</sup> Orange County Order Book 2:76, 87.

<sup>45</sup> Brant, *James Madison: The Virginia Revolutionist*, 27.

<sup>46</sup> Spotsylvania County Will Book A, p. 183; Daniel Sampert to Ambrose Madison, 22 & 21 Nov. 1729, Shane Manuscript Collection, Sh18 M 265 #3 and #4 (mf.), reel no. 149, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Penn.; John Madison to Ambrose Madison, 16 March 1731/32, Sh18 M 265 #5 (mf.), reel 149; Hunt & Waterman to Mrs. Frances Madison, 23 February 1750, DS, Shane Collection, Sh18 M 265 #9 (mf.) reel 149.

transportation and communication systems to integrate the internal region into the domain of the metropole, and from there to other markets. Thus, economic pressures and imperatives of far-off European markets transformed *terra incognita* into colonized dominion, resulting in a cultural landscape of growing complexity and a colonizer's perspective and landscape aesthetic shaped by market opportunities. The Madisons modeled such an ideology and contributed to the formation of a dynamic, colonial landscape based on an altered environment.<sup>47</sup>

As the county offices of colonial administration hived out westward from the tidewater region, local elites within these new jurisdictions found opportunities to climb the administrative hierarchies, from collecting taxes to sitting in court as judges. Similarly, Frances's son James filled a variety of offices of public trust in Orange County. James Madison first appeared in the court's book of orders and minutes in 1748, when he was about 25 years old and still single.<sup>48</sup> At a county court session on 22 March 1749, the year of his marriage to Nelly Conway (daughter of Francis Conway), the justices appointed him overseer of a nearby road and mandated that he keep it in good repair through the labor of his slaves.<sup>49</sup> Beginning in 1751, he moved up the local court hierarchy, serving as the sheriff for two years.<sup>50</sup> In 1753, the county court appointed him to take a list of tithables for the county levy, and he was collecting taxes and counting heads again in 1755, 1766, 1771, and 1773.<sup>51</sup> Sworn again as a justice of the peace in 1752, he continued to serve in this position intermittently until 1769.<sup>52</sup> In addition to

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<sup>47</sup> William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1991), xix, 266-267; Kenneth E. Lewis, *The American Frontier: An Archaeological Study of Settlement Pattern and Process* (Orlando: Academic Press, 1984), *passim*.

<sup>48</sup> Orange County Order Book 5:180.

<sup>49</sup> Orange County Court, Order and Minutes, Book 5: 180, 213, 236.

<sup>50</sup> Orange County Order Books 5:312, 5:480, 6:154, 8:130, 8:266.

<sup>51</sup> Orange County Order Books 5:437, 6:106, 7:370, Minute Book 1:303, Order Book 8:266.

<sup>52</sup> Orange County Order Books 5:373, 5:423, 6:552, 7:542.

those duties, he was sworn as a coroner in 1763, and he submitted accounts of that office to the court in 1767 and 1772.<sup>53</sup> He attained the offices of a county lieutenant in the militia while he was still serving as a justice in 1767. He still held this office during the revolutionary war, although he was anxious to abandon it. His son James advised him to remain in office during the crisis: “Although I well know how inconvenient and disagreeable it is to you to continue to act as Lieutenant of the County I can not help informing you that a resignation at this juncture is here [Williamsburg] supposed to have a very unfriendly aspect on the execution of the Draught and consequently to betray at least a want of patriotism and perseverance.”<sup>54</sup> Col. Madison ultimately passed on the burden of this office later that year. Yet, he retained the title. His final act of service to the county courts came in 1796 when he was sworn as an acting magistrate, presumably due to a vacancy on the bench caused by the death of his son Ambrose Madison, who had been serving as a magistrate in 1792 but died in 1794.<sup>55</sup>

The county court acknowledged Col. Madison as a man of standing. From 1753 onward, most Orange County court records refer to Col. Madison as a “Gentleman.”<sup>56</sup> In addition to his secular offices, he held an ecclesiastical position in the local parish of the Church of England: vestry man.<sup>57</sup>

As he moved upward through county court offices, he expanded his plantation operation. Before his first county court presentment, he constructed a copper still on his plantation in 1747, adding brandy sales to his plantation’s output.<sup>58</sup> The still added value

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<sup>53</sup> Orange County Order Books 7:5, 7:462, 8:251.

<sup>54</sup> James Madison to James Madison, Sr., 23 January 1778, *The Papers of James Madison*, 1: 223-224.

<sup>55</sup> Orange County Order Books 3:360, 3:135.

<sup>56</sup> Orange County Minute Book 1:141, 23 July 1767.

<sup>57</sup> Brant, *James Madison: The Virginia Revolutionist* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1941), 51.

<sup>58</sup> Col. James Madison, Sr., Account Book, 1744-1755, University of Virginia, Alderman Library, Special Collections, Acc.#10558, account with James Barnett, p. 28; manuscript copy on file in Montpelier Archives.



to the peaches he had planted in an orchard.<sup>59</sup> In other sections of his plantation, he made more substantial alterations of the landscape. Plantation records indicate that Col. Madison had been producing corn and tobacco on his own account and rolling the harvests to warehouses in Fredericksburg from 1745 to 1757.

As a town, Fredericksburg slowly developed along with the region's agricultural trade. London merchant houses specializing in sweet-scented tobacco predominated in the region between the James and Rappahannock rivers.<sup>60</sup> The Madisons, however, traded with a Liverpool merchant. In Fredericksburg, at Royston's and Crutchfield's warehouses, some of their tobacco was sold to Virginia agents, the remainder shipped overseas to merchants in Liverpool. There, they traded with Thomas and John Backhouse, who provided the Madisons with a variety of goods. The contents of their shipments ranged from the everyday to the ecclesiastical, with some of the items intended for trade with their neighbors. A 1744 invoice describes an order of goods sent to Mount Pleasant that included:

1 pr. Mens Shoes, 4 Large Money Purfes, 2 Small D<sup>o</sup>, 1  
Groce fi/h hooks, 20 [#] Gun Powder, 5<sup>00</sup> Needles, 1 Groce  
Pockett Botl<sup>s</sup>, 80 [#] Shot of Lead, 1 [#] Sewing Silk, 12  
Knotts fidle Strings, 2 Doz<sup>n</sup>. Wash Balls.<sup>61</sup>

Four years later, Col. Madison managed the account and made payments for his mother to the Backhouses in Liverpool.<sup>62</sup> With Backhouse-supplied goods, the Madisons established a network of local exchange in the neighborhood. Col. Madison sold for cash or exchanged a variety of items in addition to the ones previously listed: potting potts,

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<sup>59</sup> Colonel James Madison, Sr., Account Book, 1744-1757, 28-58.

<sup>60</sup> Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman, "Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South," in eds. Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, *Perspectives in American History*, X (1976): 7-78.

<sup>61</sup> Colonel James Madison, Sr., Account Book, 1744-1757, 10.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

silk, quart and pint muggs, lead, box iron, shoe tacks, shoes, powder and shot, pistoles, a rifled gun, gun flints, milk pans, plates, pitchers, cards, cups, earthenware, knives, razors, awl blades, fiddle strings, a violin, an ivory comb, paper, bacon, ginger, pepper, brandy, sugar, wool, cotton, Irish linen, oznaburg, and leather. Typically, these accounts were settled by way of cash payments and exchanges of corn, tobacco, services, and slave labor.<sup>63</sup> Thus, Col. Madison gained wealth from global tobacco markets, British exports, and local exchange networks.

Changes to the landscape continued with the addition of another quarter around the time of his marriage to Nelly Conway on 13 September 1749. He contracted with Thomas Bell to construct buildings for the quarter. Bell began by sawing 288 feet of plank and building a 40-foot house in 1748. The same year, Col. Madison engaged Bell again in more carpentry while also cultivating tobacco there: making two panel doors, mending door sills, raising 94 lbs. of tobacco. Bell received brandy, wool, and cash for his labor. In 1750, carpentry work at Mount Pleasant increased dramatically. Col. Madison engaged Joseph Eve in building two 40-foot tobacco houses, two 16-foot-square quarters, four cabins, and a 16 by 12 corn house for the Black Level quarter. Eve's account with Madison for 1751 indicated more construction activity (a 16 by 12 corn house, an 8-foot-square dairy, and moving a dairy), but it did not specify the location of the work. The next year, all of Eve's work was detailed to Black Level: erecting a 40-foot house, a 16-square-foot quarter, four cabins, sawing 280 feet of black walnut plank, and mending a chimney. From 1753 to 1756, Eve's labor covered his rent of a small Madison plantation known as Eve's Lease as well as other items procured through Col. Madison: shoes, more brandy, 1,150 pounds of pork, three pounds of iron, and loans of cash.<sup>64</sup> Thus,

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<sup>63</sup> Colonel James Madison, Sr., Account Book, 1744-1757, 51.

<sup>64</sup> Colonel James Madison, Sr., Account Book, 1744-1757, 43, 50.

Madison's labor force consisted not just of slaves, but also tenants with carpentry skills.

Although he was not one of Madison's tenants, James Walker worked for Col. Madison as a cooper and a carpenter. Walker constructed numerous tobacco hogsheads at both the Black Level and the Home House quarters in 1751 and 1752. Then, in 1753, Walker made furniture for the Madisons. The items he made included a desk, a book case, and "an easy Chair." He also repaired and remodeled their furniture: making leaves for tables, repairing a dressing table, and "putting Hinges to a Large Table."<sup>65</sup> Much of this furniture lasted throughout Col. Madison's lifetime, reappearing in the inventory of his estate in 1801.

Col. Madison acquired more real estate on the eastern slope of the Southwest Mountains from Major Edward Spencer and his uncle Thomas Chew. He received the books of his mother's library. He had the Crittendens do carpentry and coopering work for him. In 1751, William Crittenden fixed up a house bell, made a cradle (presumably for the newborn James), put locks on two doors, and mended four chairs. The house bell allowed Col. Madison to call the slaves to their tasks in the fields and order the work day from his house. The following year, John Crittenden made a safe, repaired six chairs, sawed 116 feet of wooden plank, and worked on some wheels: "Getting Spokes for 2 p<sup>r</sup>. Wheels & Fellows."<sup>66</sup> The Crittendens farmed in the neighborhood while they worked for Col. Madison. For instance, John Crittenden appeared from 1759 to 1782 in the account ledger of the Reverend Henry Fry in Albemarle County. His account with Fry does not reveal more carpentry work. Rather, it shows John Crittenden paying Fry for provisions and alcohol in kind by bushels of rye, corn, and even in cash. It also includes payments of

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<sup>65</sup> Colonel James Madison, Sr., *Account Book, 1744-1757*, 54.

<sup>66</sup> Colonel James Madison, Sr., *Account Book, 1744-1757*, 55.

cash made by Fry to Crittenden's son William and two daughters.<sup>67</sup> The accounts with Walker, Bell, Eve, and the Crittendens show that Col. Madison relied on the labor not just of slaves but also other white farmers and builders in the neighborhood.

In the spring of 1752, Col. Madison expanded his plantation operation on the eastern slope of the Southwest Mountains. He purchased two tracts of 350 and 100 acres, formerly part of the Taylor land granted to his father and Thomas Chew in 1723. He rebuilt his uncle Thomas Chew's derelict mill on the eastern slope of the mountains. The mill provided another opportunity to exploit his slave labor. He petitioned the county court in November to allow him to dam Chew's Mill Run.<sup>68</sup> Once the mill began operating, he found it necessary to alter the alignment of a road that passed near the mill so that it would cross his mill run farther upstream.<sup>69</sup> In 1756, he sought to change the layout of another road that passed by his mill, requesting "the road to be turned from Slaughter's Path the most convenient way up to his mill and from thence to the plantation that was Spencers."<sup>70</sup> Spencer had owned that 350-acre plantation only since 1751, having purchased it that year from Thomas Chew. Orange County court records document his persistent manipulation of landscape features and the flow of local traffic up until the last years of his life. For instance, the court granted his petition to put up gates on the road that ran from Cave's Ford to his mill in 1790.<sup>71</sup>

Col. Madison's enthusiasm for shaping the Piedmont landscape was not confined to moving roads, damming creeks, and clearing fields. President Madison recalled a story his mother had told him about his father's passion for having Virginia cedars on his

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<sup>67</sup> Rev. Henry Fry Account Book, 1759-1795, Virginia Papers, Fry-McLemore Collection, University of Virginia, Alderman Library, Box 1, Mss 10659-a, pp. 14, 28, 134, 180.

<sup>68</sup> Orange County Order Book 5:392, 23 November 1752.

<sup>69</sup> Orange County Order Book 5:486, 23 August 1753.

<sup>70</sup> Orange County Order Book 6:301, 25 November 1756.

<sup>71</sup> Orange County Minute Book 3:55, 26 October 1790.

plantation. For a group of friends gathered at Upper Bremo, the home of John Hartwell Cocke in Fluvanna County, President Madison retold the following story in 1817. First, his father had attempted to transplant live, young trees from his wife's old neighborhood in King George County on the Rappahannock River—without success. “At length, being advised to try to succeed with the berries, he accordingly brought up a quantity and buried them in a corner of the yard where after a lapse of seven years only two were found to have vegetated,” according to Cocke.<sup>72</sup>

Apple and peach trees were also part of his landscape alterations. Taking advantage of a debt owed to him by Richard Todd, Col. Madison secured a lease of 100 acres of Todd's private woodland on favorable terms in 1754. Todd, a gentleman from King and Queen County, acknowledged a £200 debt as the first consideration for entering into a 31-year lease of land with Col. Madison. Thus, for £35 and certain conditions, the first being that Madison plant the trees, he secured the use of a large orchard containing no fewer than 200 peach and 100 apple trees. As part of the deed he pledged to prevent the trees “from being destroyed by creatures.” He was allowed to take only timbers to be used for fencing.<sup>73</sup> Approximately ten years later, Col. Madison secured another lease of land on terms favorable to him. For five shillings and paying “the yearly rent of one ear of Indian corn at the Feast of Saint Michael the Arch Angel only if the same be demanded” by Reuben Roach, he leased 150 acres of land in 1762 that his father had sold to Reuben's father David Roach.<sup>74</sup>

Col. Madison's acquisition of land and profits was not limited to small tracts. As

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<sup>72</sup> Diary of General John Hartwell Cocke, in *Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book, 1766-1824, with relevant extracts from his other writings*, ed. Edwin Morris Betts (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1944), 637.

<sup>73</sup> Orange County Deed Book 12:228, 229; 25 April 1754.

<sup>74</sup> Orange County Deed Book 13:260.

he was putting together a plantation of tobacco and grain fields, orchards, stills, and mills, he engaged in patenting large, uncultivated lands in Orange County. He secured the title to 1,000 acres in 1753 and then gave it to his brother-in-law Francis Conway, of Caroline County, an act of munificence indicative of his growing wealth.<sup>75</sup> He continued to accumulate more land, all the while adding more slaves to his stock of forced labor. He profited from the labor of his wife's slaves at the Caroline County plantation of his father-in-law Francis Conway.<sup>76</sup> As he built his new mansion, he dealt away some of his real property holdings west of Orange County.

The appearance of Col. Madison's brick mansion on the Orange County landscape coincided with a transition in colonial Virginia house-building, from impermanent to more stable architecture, that has been identified by scholars of early Virginia architectural history.<sup>77</sup> Their research on earthfast construction, cited earlier in this chapter, accounts for the lack of early colonial structures preserved on the landscape today and demonstrates the economic factors that affected the character of colonial Virginia architecture. The shift occurred when planters, those who were able to, moved away from an exclusive reliance on tobacco production to a diversification of cash crops through mixed farming. Cultivating grains (corn and wheat mainly) to exploit new market opportunities proved lucrative, and their prosperity was reflected in buildings. The shift to higher quality housing was limited to the upper classes of society.<sup>78</sup> The Madisons

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<sup>75</sup> Orange County Deed Book 12:201; 27 March 1754.

<sup>76</sup> Colonel James Madison, Sr., Account Book, 1744-1757, 53.

<sup>77</sup> Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," in *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 147-148.

<sup>78</sup> Edward A. Chappell, "Housing a Nation: The Transformation of Living Standards in Early America," in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1994), 171.

typified this transition.

Montpelier was shaped so that it could play a social role in its surroundings. The brick mansion can be characterized as a Georgian form of building that combined ideals of British style with local conditions and workmanship. It was a style of housing neither taken directly from the pages of a pattern book nor purely emerging from regional imperatives.<sup>79</sup> Service as a vestry man in the local Anglican parish that built a new church provided Col. Madison with exposure to the latest building forms. The house became his architectural statement attesting to his rank in Orange County society as well as an elegant vessel for new domestic concerns. By building an example of orderly and planned architecture, Col. Madison resolved the incongruities of his elegant, prosperous, and dutiful life among slaves in his father's dwelling, a dwelling that served as an expedient response to the world of tobacco production and slavery in the mid-eighteenth century.

The massing of Montpelier followed the typical large Georgian-plan house of tidewater Virginia gentry. Architectural historians have surmised that it was a two-story, five-bay-wide, two-room-deep, symmetrical building built of brick laid in Flemish bond. On the first floor, the house featured a central passage between front and rear doorways. The passage offered access to other first-floor rooms. The stairs were located in a rearward chamber off of the central passage, an arrangement that architectural historians believe deserves further study. Earlier architectural investigations mistakenly placed the stairway in the central hall based on supposition and convention. (Figure 3) Montpelier's passage functioned in much the same way the passage had at Mount Pleasant—circulating people through the house while buffering the family from the

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<sup>79</sup> Kevin M. Sweeney, "High-Style Vernacular: Lifestyles of the Colonial Elite," in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1994), 1-58.

household's public realm. Subsurface investigations have revealed that the Madisons finished a portion of the walls in their passage with wainscoting.<sup>80</sup> This type of wall treatment suggested that the Madisons had raised the level of finish here because the space was doing more than circulating people through the house. Mark Wenger's research shows that at this time the function of central passages was changing from an instrument of social control to a viable social space and icon of status—taking on a new social significance.<sup>81</sup>

The best rooms of the house, the dining room and the parlor (also called the hall), were invested with social functions, functions signaled by a higher level of decorative finish. The Madisons called their parlor “the hall.” For instance, long after they had moved in, William Lumsden settled his account with Col. Madison by plastering the hall, the hall closet, the back porch, and the front porch in May 1791.<sup>82</sup> Typically, planters invested their parlors with a higher level of finish and ornamentation since they functioned as the principal entertaining room.<sup>83</sup> Dell Upton argues that the parlor/hall was the heart of the planter's ordered world. At Mount Pleasant it may have been a general purpose, living and working space, but by the time of Montpelier's construction parlors had become “the focus of institutionalized conviviality that compensated for the isolation

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<sup>80</sup> Edward Chappell, Willie Graham, Carl R. Lounsbury, and Mark R. Wenger, “Architectural Analysis and Recommendations for Montpelier, Orange County, Virginia,” (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, June 1997), 5, 6. A more recent investigation of the building occurred in the 2001-2002 winter as a first step in restoring the house to President Madison's time period. Conducted by Mark R. Wenger, the investigation produced evidence relating to interior wall treatments, changes to window and doorway apertures, and the types of door hardware installed during President Madison's occupancy of the house, see Friends of James Madison's Montpelier, *Discovering Montpelier*, (Winter 2003), 9.

<sup>81</sup> Mark R. Wenger, “The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Place,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II*, ed. Camille Wells (Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 1986), 149.

<sup>82</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798, 88.

<sup>83</sup> Edward Chappell, “Williamsburg Architecture as Social Space,” *Fresh Advices* (1981): i-iv; Edward Chappell, “Looking at Buildings,” *Fresh Advices* (1984): i-vi.



of plantation life.”<sup>84</sup>

On the same side of the passage as the hall was the aforementioned closet, or back room of the parlor/hall, a narrow space whose social role was not clearly defined. Dell Upton describes this as “the troublesome fourth room.”<sup>85</sup> It may have functioned as storage space. The remains of a small fireplace, however, suggest that the room was used for more than storage. Planters often set aside such interstitial spaces as expedient sleeping areas for their slaves.<sup>86</sup>

Most planters positioned dining rooms in front of the chamber, a space expected to provide more privacy. Dining rooms offered direct communication with the chamber and the parlor, mediating traffic between the public parlor and the more intimate chamber. Offering another opportunity for the display of refined goods and behavior, dining rooms functioned as a secondary front room with the chamber as a back room. The dining room relieved the hall of its traditional role in food consumption and allowed it to flourish as an entertaining space with a public character.<sup>87</sup>

A detached kitchen stood nearby on this, the south side, of the house. The kitchen also doubled as living space for slaves on Virginia plantations. For example, a former Virginia slave recalled that his family lived in a two-story outbuilding that was a kitchen primarily. The first floor included the kitchen and a second room: “mammy en pappy en de other chillun sleep in dat other room, en in de kitchen too.” They also used the second

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<sup>84</sup> Dell Upton, “Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 17 (2/3): 102.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>86</sup> Edward Chappell, “Slave Housing,” *Fresh Advances* (1982):i-ii, iv; Camille Wells, “The Planter’s Prospect: Houses, Outbuildings, and Rural Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 28(1): 1-31.

<sup>87</sup> Mark R. Wenger, “The Dining Room in Early Virginia,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, III*, ed. Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman (Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 1989), 149-159; Chappell, et al., “Architectural Analysis and Recommendations for Montpelier,” 10.

floor for sleeping: “upstair yo could stand up in de middle en on de sides yo can’t, kaze de roof cuts de sides offen, but part er de chillun stay up dare.”<sup>88</sup>

While the downstairs combined private domestic concerns with public and social needs in the hall and opportunities for conspicuous refined display in the dining room, the upstairs were meant to be private. With 12 children born between 1751 and 1774 (only 7 lived to adulthood), however, the degree of privacy available upstairs was limited. The enclosed stair case offered access to the second floor from the central passage. The staircase rose into a central room surrounded by four chambers on the second floor. Three of the four rooms were heated by fireplaces.<sup>89</sup>

These interior spaces complemented an increased attention the Madisons paid to personal refinement. For instance, his correspondence with a British purveyor of fine clothing, including hats, demonstrated Col. Madison’s efforts toward refinement. After an older hat had worn out, he attempted to replace it with one of equal style, but the new hat did not meet his discerning tastes: “I think you was imposed on in the Price of the White Hatt you sent me. It is not so fine as one you sent me at 15/. [shillings] in the Year 1766.”<sup>90</sup> Not just a well dressed man, he was also well armed—with a fine English rifle. The Orange County militia impressed it for duty in the Revolution.<sup>91</sup> The books he and his mother acquired attested to their elevated status as well. In 1794, he prevailed upon his son James in Philadelphia to look into buying a piano-forte for his daughter.<sup>92</sup>

His goods and his house were just two of the facets in Madison’s material world.

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<sup>88</sup> Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds., *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia: 1992), 227.

<sup>89</sup> Chappell, et al., “Architectural Analysis and Recommendations for Montpelier,” 12.

<sup>90</sup> Col. James Madison, Sr., to Clay & Midgely, merchants of Liverpool, 19 June 1770, DS, Shane Collection, Sh18 M 265 #9 (mf.) reel 149.

<sup>91</sup> Scott, *A History of Orange County*, 73.

<sup>92</sup> James Madison to James Madison, Sr., 10 March, 25 April, 19 May 1794, *The Papers of James Madison*, 15: 276, 314, 335.

Camille Wells's account of the planter's prospect from descriptions in real estate advertisements provides a fuller understanding of his organization of the Montpelier landscape. Madison's changes coincided with efforts other Virginia planters made toward improvements of the countryside in eighteenth-century Virginia. While the house stood as an example of conspicuous construction, other material features of the Montpelier landscape signaled purposeful and attentive farming activity. The still in the still house, the tobacco houses, granaries, crowded slave quarters, ditched fields, irrigated meadows, dams, mill races, cleared roads, a dairy, a meat-house, and sturdy fences—all articulated Madison's goal toward order and control of people and resources.<sup>93</sup> The field crops of wheat, rye, and tobacco were supervised by men hired as overseers. A former overseer, Thomas Melton, recalled Madison's ordered world in his description of harvests of corn, "fine crops" of wheat, tobacco, and hay. As for livestock, Melton declared there were "on hand a large stock of cattle, but they were very sorry," all manner of swine, horses, and a large herd of sheep, but, due to previous sales, "they were indifferent."<sup>94</sup> In cleared fields, sheep roamed with cropped ears duly recorded in ledgers. His account with Thomas Bell showed that Madison credited him for making a loom to support the plantation's self-sufficiency during downward cycles in the tobacco market and to diversify his sources of income.<sup>95</sup>

The Montpelier plantation was not Col. Madison's only source of profit. He collected rents on Oaky Mountain plantation in Culpeper County by leasing it to

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<sup>93</sup> Camille Wells, "The Planter's Prospect: Houses, Outbuildings, and Rural Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio* 28(1): 1-31.

<sup>94</sup> *Hite v. Madison*, 1835-1836 suit in chancery, Madison County Circuit Court, microfilm on file, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>95</sup> "Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798," Misc. Reel 8, Personal Papers Collection; 28529, VASV97-A266, The Library of Virginia, Richmond; and University of Virginia, Papers of James Madison, Alderman Library, 2-a, 16, 19, 40a.

Richard Taylor in 1776 and 1777.<sup>96</sup> Nicholas Porter, Jr., rented the same plantation at Oaky Mountain, which Col. Madison described as “my Plantation in Culpeper at the German Ford,” from 1780 through 1783. Madison’s tenants also made improvements to his estate. In 1783, he credited Porter for “sundry improvements on the Plantation you rented of me.”<sup>97</sup> Madison rented out an unspecified plantation to Moses Joseph in 1779 and 1780 for wagon loads of coal in return.<sup>98</sup> Col. Madison also rented out a portion of Black Level to William Acry in 1783.<sup>99</sup>

His account books documented the transportation networks he used to bring his farm produce to market and market goods back to his farm. He brought bar iron to Montpelier from Fredericksburg by wagon, sometimes leaving the shipments at a neighboring plantation to be retrieved by Sawney, a slave.<sup>100</sup> However, he entrusted the bulk of his shipping to white men. For instance, his account with Capt. Benjamin Johnson showed that he shipped four hogsheads of tobacco to Philadelphia on Johnson’s wagon in 1776. On the return journey, Johnson hauled back “a Tun of Iron from Marlbro Forge.” Later that same year, Johnson hauled two hogsheads of tobacco to Fredericksburg for Col. Madison.<sup>101</sup> William Sobree cleared his debt to Col. Madison by “waggoning Box of Books & 400# Bar Iron from Fredericksburg.”<sup>102</sup> In 1780, Col. Madison sent his wagon, accompanied by Samuel French, to Richmond.<sup>103</sup> Butler Bradburn hauled two hogsheads of tobacco to, and 15 bushels of salt from, Richmond in 1780. The following year he hauled 404 pounds of sugar and coffee back from Philadelphia. Bradburn made

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<sup>96</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., 17.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>101</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., 2.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

more trips to Fredericksburg and Richmond tobacco warehouses for Madison in 1782 and 1783.<sup>104</sup> Madison maintained his commercial ties to Fredericksburg as late as 1799 by paying Thomas Turner to haul sundries and iron from there.<sup>105</sup>

The enslaved smiths at Madison's smith shop used German and Swedish iron for farrier work, nail production, and tool manufacture. With these imported iron resources the slaves created finished pieces and useful implements. Archaeological investigation of the area revealed numerous metal fragments, gun parts, bar iron, slag, and knife blades.<sup>106</sup> The slaves made all manner of agricultural implements. They hammered out plows and colters, axes, hatchets, knives, scythes, and hoes. They shoed horses and repaired wagons.<sup>107</sup> Slave smiths usually made the iron hoops used for binding the tobacco hogsheads.<sup>108</sup>

Slaves attended to other activities which were crucial to blacksmithing. Field hands felled trees that would be cut and carefully burned into charcoal. Heat from the burning charcoal in the forge rendered the iron malleable. At Montpelier, forging was done by slaves. The enslaved smiths hammered the iron bars to consolidate the metal and expel the slag (impurities). They heated the iron and formed it into the necessary shapes by hammering and bending it on an anvil. They finished the piece by working it with a chisel and file to produce the final marketable form. In this way, they manufactured musket

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<sup>104</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798, 94.

<sup>105</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1798-1817, 4.

<sup>106</sup> Larry Dermody, "Fire and Ice: The Col. James Madison Ironworks at Montpelier, 1762-1801," paper presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology 1992 Annual Conference, January 1992, Kingston, Jamaica. Copy on file at Montpelier Archives.

<sup>107</sup> Col. Madison's account with Henry Miller of Mossy Creek in 1777 showed payment for smith work made by "1 Tun of Bar Iron, Castings, a pot, 20# Sweedish Steel;" his account with John Alcock mentioned German steel. Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798, 49, 82.

<sup>108</sup> Robert McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, 19.

locks, nails, metal tools and hardware, among other things.<sup>109</sup> For instance, Madison's slave blacksmiths fabricated a "4 inch Spiral Augor" for Thomas Jefferson in 1777.<sup>110</sup> Madison relied on his enslaved smiths' knowledge in the management of the shop. Writing to John Cowherd, Madison stated, "I have jumpt 2 of your Axes, Moses says another only requires being [upscaled]."<sup>111</sup> Madison also hired out his blacksmith slaves. For instance, James was hired out to Col. Zachariah Burnley for a few days in 1784.<sup>112</sup>

The skill and service of the Montpelier blacksmiths earned them special recognition in Col. Madison's will. For instance, he made a special stipulation regarding his blacksmith slave Moses—setting him up for sale to the highest bidder among his heirs: "I desire my Black smith Moses may belong to such of my children as he shall chuse to serve if they are willing to take him at a reasonable price that shall be set on him by three disinterested Men."<sup>113</sup> One of Madison's former overseers described Col. Madison's blacksmith shop where he "kept two fires almost constantly going during working hours & had of course two sets of tools & a large neighborhood custom to his shop."<sup>114</sup>

Some Montpelier slaves worked the nearby fields under Madison's hired white supervisors. Others worked under Sawney, the previously mentioned Madison slave. Slaves under the supervision of James Coleman and Thomas Coleman produced tobacco crops in 1782 and 1783. James Coleman had been Madison's overseer since 1776.<sup>115</sup> A

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<sup>109</sup> Robert B. Gordon, *American Iron, 1607-1900* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 7, 125-133.

<sup>110</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798, 46.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>113</sup> Orange County Will Book, 4: 5-7.

<sup>114</sup> *Hite v. Madison*, 1835-1836 suit in chancery, Madison County Circuit Court, microfilm on file, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>115</sup> "1776, Mr. James Coleman, my Overseer, Dr." Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798, 30.

few slaves were hired out.<sup>116</sup> For instance, he sent the “Negro Woman Eve” to William Mansfield, and in return Madison received one hogshead of tobacco already stored at Rockett’s warehouse in Richmond.<sup>117</sup> Sawney was responsible for a quarter that bore his name. Madison noted in his ledger “Sawney’s Hhd No. 13. his own crop.”<sup>118</sup> In January 1835, Thomas Melton, who had worked for six years as a Montpelier overseer stated, “Colo Madison had four plantations, but one was a very small and unprofitable one, he keeping on it only a few old negroes who did not support themselves. His land was generally much worn but he made as good crops as were generally made in the neighborhood.”<sup>119</sup>

Madison’s crops arrived at European markets through a variety of local towns. For instance, the 1782 and 1783 crops were carried to Rockett’s warehouse in Richmond and sold to agents of William Anderson & Company of London.<sup>120</sup> In 1787, the Andersons, knowing that he had tobacco at Royston’s warehouse in Fredericksburg, again invited Col. Madison on 12 June to convey his tobacco to their ship waiting at West Point, Virginia.<sup>121</sup> Instead, he shipped his 2,382 pounds of tobacco via Captain John Powell’s ship *Active* to the merchants Clay & Parry in London.<sup>122</sup> Col. Madison also divided his 1782 tobacco crop, paying Thomas Coleman to haul four hogsheads to Fredericksburg and more than one hogshead to Richmond.<sup>123</sup>

Along with slaves he had inherited and slaves he had acquired through marriage,

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<sup>116</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798, 93. (JM hired Peter out for five months to James Coleman in 1791).

<sup>117</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798, 88.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>119</sup> *Hite v. Madison*, 1835-1836.

<sup>120</sup> “1776, Mr. James Coleman, my Overseer, Dr.” Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798, 30.

<sup>121</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798, 82.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>123</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798, 82.

Col. Madison added to the slave population of Montpelier through direct purchase. For instance, he credited James Coleman's account in 1791 with the value for three slaves Coleman sold him: Joe (£63.15.0), Peter (£75.0.0), and Dido (£59.0.0).<sup>124</sup> According to a list of shoe sizes of his slaves, Madison held 50 people in slavery in 1787. His 1786 personal property tax return identified 74 slaves and two overseers under his name; however, only 39 of the slaves qualified as tithables. There were 34 young negroes enumerated, along with 16 horses and 76 cattle that year.<sup>125</sup> Sick or injured slaves were treated on the plantation, by James Madison, Jr., on at least one occasion. For instance, while his father was in Fredericksburg in March 1777, he treated one slave's swollen arm by bleeding him.<sup>126</sup>

The Madisons were recent members in the league of Virginia grandees. By comparison, when Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, a member of the leading Virginia slave holding dynasty, arranged to manumit 509 slaves in Westmoreland County in 1791, Col. Madison owned roughly 100 slaves. Furthermore, John Tayloe of Mount Airy held roughly 700 slaves at about the same time.<sup>127</sup> Beginning in 1782, Orange County tax records documented the value of Madison's land, material goods, and slaves. Starting with 84 slaves in 1782, Col. Madison died in possession of 108 slaves of all ages in 1801. By the time of his death, he was responsible for taxes on 3,029 acres.<sup>128</sup>

During the revolution, many Virginia plantation slaves ran off to the British with hopes of freedom. Lord Dunmore had offered them their freedom if they fought for the

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<sup>124</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798, 92, 93.

<sup>125</sup> Orange County, Virginia, Personal Property Tax List, 1782-1880, Library of Virginia, reel 262.

<sup>126</sup> James Madison, Jr., to James Madison, Sr., 29 March 1777, *The Papers of James Madison*, 1: 190.

<sup>127</sup> Richard S. Dunn, "Black Society in the Chesapeake, 1776-1810," *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution*, Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, eds. (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1983), 74.

<sup>128</sup> Orange County Land Tax Book, microfilm reels, Library of Virginia; Orange County, Virginia, Personal Property Tax List, 1782-1880, Library of Virginia, reel 262.



Crown. As for the free blacks in Virginia during the war, James Madison, Jr., proposed that the Virginia General Assembly create a regiment of free blacks who wished to enlist. Slaves not serving either army, or seized by either army, oftentimes fled the plantation. For those slaves who stayed at their plantations, work routines changed. Masters set them to home manufactures rather than producing tobacco for export since the war destabilized the international tobacco market.<sup>129</sup>

The Madisons recorded the loss of two slaves at this time. One named Anthony ran away on two occasions. As for the other slave, named Billy, Col. Madison's son James sold him in Philadelphia, after realizing that holding him in slavery would be futile. Billy had accompanied James to Philadelphia and, inspired by ideas of liberty, had made it clear that he would no longer be suitable for the life of a plantation slave. For instance, Madison wrote to his father in 1783: "I am persuaded his mind is too thoroughly tainted to be a fit companion for fellow slaves in Virga. . . I do not expect to get near the worth of him; but cannot think of punishing him by transportation merely for coveting that liberty for which we have paid the price of so much blood, and have proclaimed so often to be the right, & worth pursuit of every human being."<sup>130</sup> He sold Billy at a time when the General Assembly of Virginia had repealed prohibitions against the private manumission of slaves in 1782. Ten years later, however, the General Assembly, fearful that free blacks in the commonwealth would undermine the slave system, reimposed restrictions on manumissions. Gabriel's Conspiracy led to further restrictions after 1800.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Ira Berlin, *Many Thousand Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 266-268; Richard S. Dunn, "Black Society in the Chesapeake, 1776-1810," in *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution*, ed. Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1983), 50.

<sup>130</sup> James Madison to James Madison, Sr., 8 September 1783, *The Papers of James Madison*, 7: 304.

<sup>131</sup> Dunn, "Black Society in the Chesapeake, 1776-1810," 52, 80.

Military engagements during the war did not affect Montpelier directly. One of Madison's sons, Ambrose, guarded British and Hessian prisoners of war in Albemarle County and served as a lieutenant and paymaster of the Third Virginia regiment in 1779.<sup>132</sup> The house did, however, provide a safe haven for some who left their homes closer to the tidewater battlefields. For instance, Edmund Pendleton fled his Caroline County home in the summer of 1781 and briefly stayed at Montpelier. He wrote to James to say he had spent "a few happy days at yr fathers, who I was glad to find enjoying fine health." Pendleton praised "the Salubrious Air of his fine Seat, not to be exceeded by any Montpelier in the Universe." He concluded by saying, "I wish you would hasten peace, that you may return to the Influence of it upon your crazy constitution."<sup>133</sup>

After the war, some Virginia slave owners found themselves holding a surplus of enslaved laborers. Some planters emigrated to Tennessee and Kentucky to establish new slave plantations there. Col. Madison had 84 slaves at his quarters in 1782, and he faced a similar dilemma. To solve it, he drew up his will and began breaking up the Montpelier slave community. An early change in the slave community came when he deeded his son Ambrose 350 acres of adjoining land in 1781.<sup>134</sup> Located on the eastern slope of the Southwest Mountains, Ambrose worked this plantation for thirteen years with slaves given to him by his father. Ambrose received title to 10 slaves in the 1787 will, but he had taken possession of them earlier. By 1787, two slaves had died, and one, a daughter of Celia, had been sold by Ambrose.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> *The Papers of James Madison*, 1: 192.

<sup>133</sup> Edmund Pendleton to James Madison, Jr., 6 July 1781, *The Papers of James Madison*, 3: 172.

<sup>134</sup> Orange County Deed Book 17: 425.

<sup>135</sup> Orange County Will Book 4: 1-5.; Ann L. Miller, *Antebellum Orange: The Pre-Civil War Homes, Public Buildings, and Historic Sites of Orange County, Virginia* (Orange County Historical Society, Inc., 1988), 28.

Another son, Francis, received legal title in 1787 to “the servitude of an Indentured Mulatto Woman named Sarah Maddin and her Children.” She and her family had been transferred to his Culpeper farm, Prospect Hill, in 1782. Before the will had been made out, however, Sarah Madden ran away from Francis’s plantation, punctuating the disruption caused by this post-revolution rearrangement of the Montpelier labor force. In 1783, she ran to Fredericksburg where she explained to Judge James Mercer that she fled because she feared Francis was about to sell her into permanent slavery to a man in York County, Pennsylvania.<sup>136</sup>

Sarah’s mother, Mary Madden, was a free, white indigent living on public charity in Spotsylvania when she bore the child of a slave in 1758. That child, Sarah, was indented as a two-year-old child to a Fredericksburg merchant who, in partnership with Col. Madison, brokered slave sales in the local market. George Fraser, the merchant, died in debt to Madison in 1765. Madison settled the £400 debt in 1767, in part by taking Sarah, who at nine-years old still had 21 years left on her indenture, to Montpelier. The Madisons trained her as a seamstress, laundress, and domestic servant. By the time she moved to Francis’s farm, she had given birth to three children. While she was away in Fredericksburg, Francis Madison sold the indentures of two of her children. Sarah remained at Prospect Hill for the remainder of her indenture and died in Culpeper County in 1824.<sup>137</sup>

Francis Madison’s brother William received three slaves. These two brothers, Francis and William, received divided parts of a large tract of land in Culpeper County that their father had purchased from Benjamin Grymes. Francis received a thousand

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<sup>136</sup> Orange County Will Book 4: 1-5.

<sup>137</sup> T. O. Madden, Jr., with Ann L. Miller, *We Were Always Free: The Maddens of Culpeper County, Virginia, A 200-Year Family History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1992), 2, 6, 11-14, 17-39.

acres, while William got an unspecified amount: “the remainder of the said land.”<sup>138</sup> Later, William enlisted the help of his brother James in building a house at his farm in Culpeper County. After the divisions of land, Francis and William still relied on their father’s management of their farms. For instance, in a letter to his son James, Col. Madison complained about an accounting error and the status of Francis’s tobacco: “The specimen you sent me from Mr. House of his method of reducing the gross Hundred, I have been acquainted with long since; before either you or he had existence; but the Acct. of Sales he sent did not agree with the rule, which I suppose was from some mistake in the calculations; I believe I gave you his Acct. to have it corrected; He also omitted to enter one of the Hhds. I should be glad of a seperate Acct. of my 30. Hhds Tobo. & of Frankey’s [Francis Madison] 2 markt FM. if he can render it: And of some money for it, if you have not made use of it all, for the prospect of my getting any for the Bonds you left with me is not very promising at present.”<sup>139</sup>

Col. Madison gave 15 slaves to his daughter Nelly when she married Isaac Hite, Jr. The slaves were relocated across the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Hite plantation in Frederick County, Virginia.<sup>140</sup> In addition, Col. Madison directed that upon his death, his son James would inherit the 1,800 acres that constituted Montpelier and an unnamed 400-acre plantation on the Rapidan River in Culpeper County. James and his brother Ambrose jointly received 219 acres of land in Louisa County.<sup>141</sup> Although some slaves were dispersed from Montpelier after the revolution, the reorganization of the labor force

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<sup>138</sup> Orange County Will Book 4: 1-5.

<sup>139</sup> James Madison, Sr., to James Madison, Jr., 30 January 1788, *The Papers of James Madison*, 10: 447.

<sup>140</sup> Orange County Deed Book 18: 404. This transfer was recorded 25 August 1785, and the following slaves moved across the Blue Ridge Mountains to Belle Grove: “Jimmy, Jerry, Eliza and her five children, to wit Joanna, Dianna, Domas, Tender, and Webster, also Treslove and her four children to wit, Peggy, Priscilla, Henry, and Katy, also Sally and Milly.”

<sup>141</sup> Orange County Will Book 4: 1-5.

was made largely within the Madison family and within the region.

Some of the Montpelier slaves were set to work on two of James Madison, Jr.'s, farms. His first farm, Black Level, was carved from the estate of his father in September 1774.<sup>142</sup> Later, he received a 560-acre plantation from his father on 26 August 1784.<sup>143</sup> Soon thereafter, he purchased 800 acres from John and Elizabeth Lee in July 1792.<sup>144</sup> The 560-acre tract was called Sawney's Quarter and the 800-acre tract was called Black Meadow in the nineteenth century.<sup>145</sup> In September 1793, he purchased from Elizabeth Chew 30 acres that were also part of the Black Level tract.<sup>146</sup> James Madison, Jr., also leased part of his land to his brother. For instance, a merchant in Fredericksburg wrote, "I have today drawn on you in favor of French L. Gray for £21.0.0 VC at 20 days Sight, it being the amount of sundries furnished Your Brother for the use of your plantation the last year, which you'll please honor and place to my debit."<sup>147</sup>

James Madison, Jr.'s, first appearance in the Orange County land tax records occurred in 1787. At that time, the county assessed him for six blacks above 16 years of age, eight under 16 years, four horses, and two cattle. In the 1790s, overseers were responsible for his farms. In 1794, his tax assessment included two white tithables, most likely his overseers Lewis and Mordecai Collins, 12 slaves over 16-years of age, and three under 16 years, and 14 horses. In 1797, he paid taxes on one white tithable, 13 slaves over 16-years of age, four under 16 years, 19 horses, and one coach.<sup>148</sup>

In his absence, James Madison, Jr., left written instructions and relied on his

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<sup>142</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 16: 378.

<sup>143</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 18: 316.

<sup>144</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 20: 127, 8 July 1792.

<sup>145</sup> Orange County Land Book, microfilm reels, Library of Virginia.

<sup>146</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 20: 229, 16 Sept. 1793.

<sup>147</sup> Fontaine Maury to James Madison, 14 June 1789, *The Papers of James Madison*, 12: 218.

<sup>148</sup> Orange County, Virginia, Personal Property Tax List, 1782-1800, reel 262, Library of Virginia.

father and brothers to see that they were executed. In the instructions he left for overseers in 1790, he ordered changes to the traditional plowing patterns. In addition, the slaves erected new outbuildings, corn houses, and stables and fenced in new fields.

Ditches were dug and dams laid up to irrigate new meadows. Madison demanded that the slaves cultivate in a new way: “plowing all round each parcel, instead of the common way by bands.” Fields of timothy oats, wheat, and rye appeared, and clover germinated in corn fields left fallow. A field of potatoes took over ground previously allotted to tobacco in Sawney’s Quarter.<sup>149</sup> He described these farms to Thomas Jefferson in 1793: “On one of two little farms I own, which I have just surveyed, the crop is not sensibly injured by either the rot or the rust, and will yield 30 or 40 perCt. more than would be a good crop in ordinary years. This farm [Sawney’s] is on the Mountain Soil. The other [Black Meadow] is on a vein of Limestone and will be less productive, having suffered a little both from the rot & the rust.”<sup>150</sup>

From Philadelphia in 1794, he planned another orchard of fruit and nut trees with his father. Since they could be transplanted easily, he asked his father to delay the decision “on the spot for the Peccan trees,” which Thomas Jefferson had given them. Madison also asked for his father’s help in starting an apple orchard. He wrote, “I would chuse a pretty large orchard if to be had and of the sort you think best.” If they could not procure an amount of trees sufficient for two orchards, “I would be glad to have them divided” and planted at both Black Meadow and Sawney’s. If there were not enough for both, he preferred to have them “planted rather at Sawney’s.” The same letter begged for information regarding the state of his farms. “What is the prospect in the Wheat fields?

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<sup>149</sup> Instructions for the Montpelier Overseer & Laborers, 8 November 1790, *The Papers of James Madison*, 13: 303-304.

<sup>150</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 19 June 1793, *The Papers of James Madison*, 15: 33-34.

What account does Collins give of my Timothy? What has Louis Collins done, and what doing?"<sup>151</sup> The report from his father, aside from the completion of planting apple trees at Sawney's quarter, disappointed him: the corn crop was deficient and the "Dams at the Ditches are all broke: they must be done with Stone; when convenient."<sup>152</sup> He sent his father instructions for sowing oats and directed that "M.C. may fence in part of the meadow as he proposes for a pasture. . . I approve the size of the Granary you have prescribed to L.C. As soon as that job is over, he can be making provision for the Stable according to directions formerly given, unless something more urgent interfere." He also wanted to know "whether Mr. C's mill pond has affected my meadow."<sup>153</sup> The assessed value per acre of his farms remained constant through 1797: £7.9. on Sawney's and £14.1. on Black Meadow first in 1793, but it leveled out at £11.1. from 1794 to 1797.<sup>154</sup>

The slaves were sowing grains and revitalizing old fields with clover. He wrote to his father in November 1794 about preparations for the fields of grain. "By a vessel which sailed yesterday for Fred.," he sent one-and-a-half bushels of red clover seed. This seed was for Sawney to sow the following February "on the old mountain field." His instructions for Sawney in this matter were specific: "he will so distribute it as to make it hold out. It is to be sown on the top of the Wheat or Rye, taking advantage of a snow if there be one particularly just before it melts. But this circumstance is by no means essential, and ought not to retard the sowing beyond the last of that Month."<sup>155</sup>

Tobacco maintained a presence in the Madisons' fields, even though events in

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<sup>151</sup> James Madison to James Madison, Sr., 21 February 1794, *The Papers of James Madison*, 15: 262-263.

<sup>152</sup> James Madison, Sr., to James Madison, 15 March 1794, *The Papers of James Madison*, 15: 285-286.

<sup>153</sup> James Madison to James Madison, Sr., 25 April 1794, *The Papers of James Madison*, 15: 314.

<sup>154</sup> Orange County Land Book, microfilm reels, Library of Virginia.

<sup>155</sup> James Madison to James Madison, Sr., 10 November 1794, *Papers of James Madison*, 15: 372.

Europe drove up the price of wheat. James Madison's merchant in Fredericksburg, Fontaine Maury,<sup>156</sup> notified him about his tobacco sales in 1789: "I have shipped the remaining three hhds of your Tobacco to my Brother [in Liverpool], and you may draw as usual on them."<sup>157</sup> Madison's interest in tobacco, as well as grains, is documented in a May 1790 letter to his father. In that letter, he suggested to his father that his brother to ship or postpone the sale of the tobacco, rather than sell at the prevailing local price. He wrote, "I am more & more convinced that this will be prudent. The price has risen considerably in Europe, and from causes that will be more likely to carry it still higher than let it fall lower." Due to the turmoil caused by the French Revolution, Madison suspected that the price of wheat also would remain favorable in America, and "particularly Virginia will divert labor from others, and from Tobo. among the rest. This alone will prevent a low price, by circumscribing the quantity raised."<sup>158</sup>

Madison used the profits from his tobacco to supply and reward Sawney's Quarter and its overseer Sawney. When Fontaine Maury notified him of shipments of their tobacco from Fredericksburg to Liverpool in July 1790, he also listed items for "Negroe Sawney." He wrote, "I have Shipped to the address of my Brother Six hhds tobacco being the amount of your Crop, should you have occasion you can draw as usual." His account with Maury documented payments for drayage, oznaburgs & rolls "as X Bill given your Bror.," 250 8d. nails; "Buttons &c to Negroe Sawney;" tobacco hhds. inspection, German Oznaburgs, "4 yds. Linnen &c to Negroe Sawney;" Jesuit

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<sup>156</sup> Fontaine Maury's nephew, Commodore Matthew Fontaine Maury, gained international acclaim for his work in oceanic cartography. See John W. Wayland, *The Pathfinder of the Seas: The Life of Matthew Fontaine Maury* (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1930), and Frances Leigh Williams, *Matthew Fontaine Maury, Scientist of the Sea* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963), 14.

<sup>157</sup> Fontaine Maury to James Madison, 14 June 1789, *The Papers of James Madison*, 12: 218.

<sup>158</sup> James Madison to James Madison, Sr., 2 May 1790, *The Papers of James Madison*, 13: 183.



Bark, and “1 Hatt &c to Sawney.”<sup>159</sup>

Other slaves were distributed among Madison family members years after Col. Madison’s death. As directed by the will, his wife Nellie Conway Madison received her share of slaves. Later, she deeded a share of the slaves in January 1828 to her daughter Sarah, who had recently married Thomas Macon and still lived in Orange County.<sup>160</sup> Nellie Conway Madison received half of the house and kitchen furniture as her dower, first choice of the slaves that Col. Madison had reserved in his own lot, and the “tradesman Harry if she chooses to take him.”<sup>161</sup> Despite the appearance of an orderly distribution of property, the prevailing suspicion of slaves reemerged in Col. Madison’s will. For instance, he directed his executors and the guardian of his daughter Frances Taylor Madison, a minor, to “dispose of such of her slaves as they shall suspect may be in danger of being lost by runing away and not recovered again.” With this statement, Col. Madison admitted a tenuous control over his slaves.<sup>162</sup>

On the margins of Madison’s plantation was the slaves’ burying ground, sited between the old Mount Pleasant quarter and the Montpelier mansion. None of the Madisons left a record of their impressions of this piece of ground on their plantation—neither did the slaves. Located some distance from the Madison family cemetery along a farm road, the slaves’ burying ground sat in the woods and, on first glance, appeared indistinguishable from the surrounding forest. Closer observation revealed depressions in the ground that follow the dimension of a human body, only some of them marked by field stones, and a low earthen berm, which marked the

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<sup>159</sup> Fontaine Maury to James Madison, 20 July 1790, *The Papers of James Madison*, 13: 280-281.

<sup>160</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 32: 227-228.

<sup>161</sup> Orange County Will Book 4: 1-5.

<sup>162</sup> Orange County Will Book, 4: 5-7.

boundary between sacred and quotidian space.<sup>163</sup>

Slaves at Carter's Grove, a plantation on the James River in the tidewater region, carved a similar space out of the woods there. For instance, archaeological investigations at the Utopia quarter revealed east to west orientations in most, but not all, grave depressions. The same pattern was identified at Montpelier's slave cemetery. The Carter's Grove slaves were buried with selections of their African material culture: glass bead necklaces and tobacco pipes.<sup>164</sup> The survey of Montpelier's slave cemetery did not include the excavation of grave shafts and human remains. Due to a variety of factors, such as, the sensitivity for slave burial sites engendered by the 1991 controversial excavation of a slave burying ground in lower Manhattan, New York City, a reluctance to excavate the grave shafts for purely academic purposes or to verify any genetic or ethnic markers that might have remained, and a lack of funding, directors of Montpelier's archaeology program did not propose a research design that included exhumation of human remains from any of the grave shafts.<sup>165</sup>

The Montpelier slaves' burying ground was one of their landscape signatures. Like the small garden plots the Madisons may have allowed them within the confines of their quarters, the burying ground was a constricted space circumscribed by their masters. Research in African-American burial practices on slave plantations has shown how African cultural forms were expressed in mortuary practices in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In these instances, African-Americans relied on traditional forms to

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<sup>163</sup> Lewis, "Archaeological Survey and the History of Orange County: Another View from Montpelier," 153; Matthew Hyland, "African-American Cemetery at Montpelier, Orange County, Virginia: Survey and Interpretations," report prepared for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, June 1998, on file at Montpelier.

<sup>164</sup> Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 95.

<sup>165</sup> For details on the New York City slave cemetery excavation see Spencer P.M. Harrington, "Bones and Bureaucrats: New York's Great Cemetery Imbroglio," *Archaeology* 46 (1993): 28-38.

constitute a proper burial. Grave goods and burial rituals on some plantations consisted of resilient African cultural forms that countered the oppressive world of plantation slavery. Grave goods included artifacts of personal importance to the deceased as well as surviving family members. Such relics served religious and decorative purposes by commemorating the deceased's passage to the world of the dead and by providing the survivors access to the potent mystery of that world. As an indication of that potency, slave burials rarely went unsupervised. Whites, out of fear of slaves assembling as a large group for any purpose, closely monitored grave-side activities.<sup>166</sup>

In her analysis of African American burials, Grey Gundaker shows how ordinary objects placed in association with burial practices comprise a signification of meaning. For instance, allusions to water and whiteness, particularly evoked in the white quartz field stones placed on some grave depressions in Montpelier's slave cemetery, "constitute many of the most durable components of African American grave plot landscaping." For African Americans, burial grounds functioned as a threshold, mediating the boundary between the living and the dead. In order to mark their significance, they often placed burying grounds within sight of passing foot traffic, as they did at Montpelier. In this manner, the burying ground and its attendant rituals sustained the identity of Montpelier's slave community.<sup>167</sup>

A former Virginia slave recalled the burial activities at a Nansemond County plantation where he was born in 1850. This testimony shows the role of the white overseer, the inclusion of relics, clothes in this instance, from the deceased person in the

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<sup>166</sup> Ross W. Jamieson, "Material Culture and Social Death: African-American Burial Practices," *Historical Archaeology*, 29 (1995): 39-58.

<sup>167</sup> Grey Gundaker, "At Home on the Other Side: African American Burials as Commemorative Landscapes," in *Places of Commemoration: Search for Identity and Landscape Design*, ed. Joachim Wolschke-Bulman (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture, XIX, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), 25-54.

burial ritual, and the potency of the clothes. According to West Turner, “the ‘ole overseer would go to de saw mill an’ git a twelve inch board, shape it wid a point head and foot, an’ dig a grave to fit it. Den he tie de body to de board. dan bring it in de hole to keep it from stinking. Slaves most de times dress de body in all his clothes ‘cause wouldn’t no one ever wear ‘em. Whoever wear a dead man’s clothes gonna die hissself real soon, dey used to say.”<sup>168</sup> Efforts to control and degrade the circumstances of a slave’s burial were part of a larger practice of maintaining dominance in the slave-master relationship, while slaves attempted to control the symbolic expressions employed in the burial ritual.

The slaves who left Montpelier for Woodley, Ambrose Madison’s farm, did not go far from the burying ground of their ancestors. Sharing a boundary line with Montpelier, Woodley developed as a microcosm of Montpelier. The death of Ambrose in 1794 prompted an inventory of his estate that reflected the estate’s development at that time. The inventory provides an indirect comparison of the Madisons’ material world after the revolution (Appendix B).

Slave labor supported a high level of refinement at Woodley. Ambrose Madison was taxed for 27 slaves (not all of them adults), six horses, and 14 head of cattle in 1782.<sup>169</sup> In addition to the original 350 acres, Ambrose Madison paid taxes on two tracts of 398 acres and 100 acres from 1787 until his death. He added 126 acres to his land holdings in 1793, a year before his death. The size of his estate peaked at 974 acres until his widow sold back to Col. Madison a 100-acre tract in 1795.<sup>170</sup>

When he died, Ambrose owned 39 slaves worth £1,220. The plantation’s livestock included 38 hogs, 51 sheep, 43 head of cattle, and two yoke of oxen. His family

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<sup>168</sup> Perdue, Jr., et al., *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves*, 289.

<sup>169</sup> Orange County, Virginia, Personal Property Tax List, 1782-1880, Library of Virginia, reel 262.

<sup>170</sup> Orange County Land Book, microfilm reels, Library of Virginia.

continued living in the wood frame house with its “Dressing Glass, Wrighting Desk, Book case,” walnut chairs, 15 tablecloths, window curtains, candle sticks, 29 towels, and “nine toilette cloths.” The dining room was equipped with a case of knives and forks, pewter dishes and plates, a tea chest, silver flatware, four tea pots, three cream pots, “10 Pickle Shells,” “14 custard cups,” and “35 Queen’s China dishes.” The bedrooms included mattresses, bed furniture, blankets, sheets, and counterpanes. The Madisons of Woodley enjoyed all the accoutrements necessary for refined behavior.<sup>171</sup>

The presence of a loom, four pairs of cards, sheep shears, and the sheep in the inventory indicated the production of cloth by slaves. The inventory also listed wheels for processing flax and cotton. Other tools field slaves would have used were described as “Plantation utensils with old Iron.” Ambrose also owned a “still kettle & worme” for distilling. Using “barr Iron,” his slave blacksmith had constructed twelve casks and five “old Hhds” at the time of Ambrose’s death. Other farm tools included a wheat fan and a cutting knife. Kitchen utensils included a coffee mill, milk pails, a churn, frying pans, flesh forks, a grindstone, a ladle and sugar tongs, a spice box, and other necessary household items such as iron cookware and earthen pans.<sup>172</sup> The presence of a spice box, frying pans, a gridiron, and two Dutch ovens in the inventory suggests the influence of continental cookery in the household.<sup>173</sup>

West of Woodley and Montpelier, Col. Madison and his sons made more changes of a commercial nature to the Piedmont landscape by erecting a grist mill along the Rapidan River after the Revolution. Col. Madison had built a custom mill on a creek close to Montpelier, but its operation was sporadic, operating only when there was adequate

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<sup>171</sup> Orange County Will Book 3: 318-320.

<sup>172</sup> Orange County Will Book 3: 320.

<sup>173</sup> Yentsch, *A Chesapeake Family and their Slaves*, 149-167.

rainfall. For instance, he told a neighbor in August 1779 he was unable to grind meal due to a lack of rain and asked him to “defer sending for any more as long as you conveniently can do without it, unless there comes Rain that I can grind it for you.”<sup>174</sup> In partnership, Col. Madison and his sons constructed a merchant mill after petitioning the county court for permission to dam the water in 1793. Later, they formalized their partnership in July 1795.

The Madisons contracted with Adam Frailey to build the mill. Frailey had built a mill for Isaac Hite, a Madison in-law in Frederick County, Virginia.<sup>175</sup> James Madison, Jr., sold his New York State land investments to contribute to their merchant mill: “As I retain the conviction I brought from home in favr. of the Mill at my brothers, I have been endeavoring to dispose of the piece of land on the Mohawk river. . . Notwithstanding these circumstances I am so much disposed to forward the plan of the Mill which I view as particularly favorable to the interest of my brothers as well as myself. . . if a pursuit of it depends essentially on my contribution, I shall not hesitate to make the sacrifice.”<sup>176</sup> He soon sold his Mohawk River valley farmland and focused on the mill. Even on his honeymoon with Dolley at Hare Wood, he devoted time to the family project. He wrote to his father telling him that he had met with millwright Adam Frailey at the Hite’s residence in Frederick County, and Frailey promised “stedfastly to be with you in about a fortnight at farthest; and to do every thing on his part requisite for a vigorous prosecution of the undertaking at Bernard’s Ford.”<sup>177</sup>

Madison kept his father apprised of developments in construction at the mill. For

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<sup>174</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1776-1798, 13.

<sup>175</sup> James Madison, Jr., to James Madison, Sr., 10 March 1794, *The Papers of James Madison*, 15: 276, 384.

<sup>176</sup> James Madison to James Madison, Sr., 4 May 1794, *The Papers of James Madison*, 15: 323.

<sup>177</sup> James Madison to James Madison, Sr., 5 October 1794, *The Papers of James Madison*, 15: 361.

instance, when Col. Madison made a trip to the Healing Springs of Bath County, Virginia, in 1796, he wrote: “I was down at the Mill yesterday & found the work going on properly. It is of importance however that the abutment should be well secured before much rain comes; as it is found that a small swell in the river will accumulate at the dam so as to overflow it; and as the dam is rather higher than the Bank of the river, the water in that case will be very troublesome to the unfinished work. Frailey had not returned, but several hands, Garten & others, had joined the force working on the Mill.” In their new mill the Madisons found an opportunity to exploit a better source of water power as well as another allocation of their enslaved labor force.<sup>178</sup> The mill project also placed the Madisons at the center of a local exchange network. Typically, only the wealthiest local families owned mills. Thus, they furthered their reputation as model farmers and leaders of rural society through improvements, according to Bernard Herman.<sup>179</sup>

When he died in 1801, Col. Madison left a landscape profoundly rearranged from the one he knew as a young man. Montpelier now included, mills, stills, an active smith shop, more slaves and quarters. He grounded his existence in his possessions—biblical tracts and Christian literature, his account books, and his brick mansion. This house bolstered his authority as a member of the vestry, particularly when he denied the request of a Baptist minister who sought his permission to preach in the Pine Stake church of St. Thomas Parish in Orange County in 1781.<sup>180</sup>

Montpelier was his gift to his descendants. He endowed his widow with the right

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<sup>178</sup> James Madison to James Madison, Sr., 10 August 1796, *The Papers of James Madison*, 1: 390.

<sup>179</sup> Bernard L. Herman, “The Model Farmer and the Organization of the Countryside,” in *Everyday Life in the Early Republic*, ed. Catherine E. Hutchins (Winterthur, Delaware: The Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum, Inc., 1994), 49, 50.

<sup>180</sup> Col. James Madison, Sr., to Rev. Mr. Leland, 23 August 1781, cited in Daniel L. Dreisbach, “George Mason’s Pursuit of Religious Liberty in Revolutionary Virginia,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 108, no. 1 (2000): 29.

to occupy, “possess, and enjoy my mansion house and all the necessary slaves, Gardens, and yards appertaining thereto, with the accustomed liberty of getting timber and Wood for the use of the said plantation and Home without waste.” He directed his executor to give his widow whatever grain she “has ground at my Mill.”<sup>181</sup> The 1801 inventory of his estate (Appendix C) documented a mansion containing amenities at the ready: a backgammon table set, tea tables, carpets, looking glasses, magnifying glasses, an eight-day clock, a large library, and three dozen walnut chairs with a variety of bottom treatments (flagged, leather, rush, and hair bottoms). Compared to the inventory of his son Ambrose’s estate, Col. Madison’s differed only in quantity. The family library included biblical tracts, ecclesiastical literature, and exegesis, but his attention had turned to medicine as indicated by the large number of medical texts. The inventory of books included only one text on agricultural improvement essays, which was listed as “Bradley’s Gent. & farmers guide.”<sup>182</sup> This was probably Richard Bradley’s *Gentleman’s and Gardener’s Calendar*, according to Sarah Pattee Stetson, who also noted that most planters usually owned only one volume on agriculture.<sup>183</sup>

The will contained the typical bequests of the day, but the mansion itself figured prominently in the instrument. In a perfunctory manner, his wife and heirs received equal divisions of the residue of his estate. However, Montpelier, as if it were a living member of the family, received gifts from Col. Madison too: a cabinet, a Turkey carpet, maps, and pictures, “which belong to my Mansion House.” By binding these things to the house, he intended “that those who have not been advanced in my life time shall have an

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<sup>181</sup> Orange County Will Book 4: 1-5.

<sup>182</sup> Orange County Will Book 4: 54-57; 5: 242-246.

<sup>183</sup> Sarah Pattee Stetson, “American Garden Books Transplanted and Native, before 1807,” *William & Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 3 (July 1946): 347, 351.



equal share with those who have.”<sup>184</sup> The house itself was part of his legacy. He sought to maintain Montpelier as the house of a gentleman and a monument to the wealth and visibility of the Madison family, prominent as revolutionaries and tobacco and grain exporters, slave owners, politicians, and genteel individuals. Of these fine decorative accessories permanently attached to the house, the Turkey carpet would have drawn special notice as a sign of luxury. For instance, a Chesapeake agent for British tobacco merchants described the significance of Turkey carpets as a marker of the tobacco planters’ conspicuous consumption habits. In 1766, John Wayles commented, “I don’t remember to have seen such a thing as a turkey Carpet in the Country except a small thing in a bed chamber. Now nothing are so common as Turkey or Wilton Carpetts, the whole Furniture of the Roomes Elegant & every Appearance of Opulence.” After having endured the uncertainty of life on a frontier slave plantation in a slave community, depressed tobacco markets, and a violent revolution, the Madisons had joined Virginia’s elite tobacco planters, with Montpelier signifying their standing among the Virginia gentry.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Orange County Will Book 4: 1-5.

<sup>185</sup> John Wayles to Farrell and Jones, 30 Aug. 1766, in John M. Hemphill II, ed., “John Wayles Rates his Neighbours,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LXVI (1958): 305.

## CHAPTER II

### Montpelier: Sign of the Republic

Of all Montpelier's occupants, President James Madison is the most widely known. His activities during the American Revolution, his role in the debates in the Constitutional Convention, his service in Congress, his service in the executive branch as Jefferson's secretary of state, and his own presidential administration have earned him a place among the founding fathers. Biographers and scholars have investigated numerous aspects in his life, paying particular attention to his intellect and statecraft. His interests in architecture and landscape improvements, however, have been overlooked. The material record pertaining to the house and grounds at Montpelier during President Madison's lifetime provides an opportunity to know his temperament through the built environment and connect him to the context of piedmont Virginia elite culture at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In general, scholars have treated Madison as an echo of Thomas Jefferson. Recently, there has been an increasing focus on him as an individual. Conover Hunt-Jones's treatment of Madison shows the effect he and his wife had on the social life of Washington, D.C., and the United States's reputation as a civilized nation. However, she places a heavy emphasis on the putative influence Palladio had on the designs Madison chose for his house. As I will argue in this chapter, Montpelier owes very little to

Palladio.<sup>1</sup>

Numerous biographies have endeavored to illuminate and animate Madison. Drew McCoy's work on Jeffersonian Republicans emphasizes intellectual antecedents for the political programs advanced by Madison and Jefferson and the subtleties of civic republicanism in contemporary political and cultural debates. McCoy's exploration of republican political economy in *The Elusive Republic* clarifies the republican political program. Current scholarship on republicanism portrays the concept as armature for maintaining virtue and morality rather than as a theory of government. The early focus of scholarship on the political and constitutional dimension of the republican ideology has been expanded to include political culture and social processes. Among their discussion of American national character, Madison and Jefferson included architecture, which they intended to carry aspects of their republican ideology. Thus, their buildings reflected their political concerns, ranging from personal status to national character. In *The Last of the Fathers*, McCoy devotes attention to Madison's efforts in his retirement to preserve the civic republican tradition against the burgeoning liberalism of the Jacksonian period. McCoy's intellectual biography examines the despair Madison experienced from the dilemma slavery presented to his notions of political economy and his republican ideology. Ralph Ketcham's biography delineates Madison's entire life, with emphasis on Madison's intellectual influences and his role in the significant events of early American history. Irving Brant's six volume analysis of Madison presents the legislative and executive aspect in Madison's life, with a particular focus on political and diplomatic intrigue. In general, the built environment does not figure prominently in these biographies. Knowing Madison through Montpelier provides a new perspective on his

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<sup>1</sup> Conover Hunt-Jones, *Dolley and the "great little Madison"* (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Foundation, 1977), 61-62.

social relations and private dilemmas.<sup>2</sup>

In the late 1790s, Madison began a transformation of Montpelier. The first changes were modest, a two-story attached addition and a rudimentary portico, but later there appeared elegant flourishes—a garden, a portico, and a temple. The 1797-99 building phase was a social act, in that it involved Madison's friends and political allies. With assistance from Monroe and Jefferson, Madison worked through a moment of political adversity and the challenges of house building. While all three of them were disengaged from national government, they engaged in architecture projects and developed a design charette that sustained their efforts in building and politics.

Madison's initial attempt at building took place off Montpelier's grounds. First, he built a house (presently The Residence at Woodberry Forest School) with his brother. To improve the design, Madison wrote to Jefferson for advice on the rules of intercolumniation in 1793.<sup>3</sup> Jefferson responded with "some general notes on the plan of a house you inclosed." With his design, Jefferson "endeavored to throw the same area, the same extent of walls, the same number of rooms, & of the same sizes, into another form so as to offer a choice to the builder. Indeed I varied my plan by shewing what it would be with alcove bedrooms, to which I am much attached."<sup>4</sup> Madison acknowledged the usefulness of the advice, but it did not address the design for the public front of the house. He wrote, "Your plan is much approved & will be adopted by my brother." As

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<sup>2</sup> Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., 29 (January 1972):49-80; Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: the Career of a Concept," *The Journal of American History*, 79 (June 1992): 11-38; Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1980); Drew R. McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Ralph Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1990); Irving Brant, *James Madison*, 6 vols. (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1941-1961).

<sup>3</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 8 May 1793, *The Papers of James Madison (PJM)*, 15: 13.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 19 May 1793, *PJM*, 15: 18.

for the façade, Madison wrote “I was misunderstood in my enquiry as to the proper width of the Portico: I did not mean the proportion it ought to bear to the side of the House to which it is attached: but the interval between the columns & the side of the House; or the distance which the Pediment ought to project. If there be any fixt rule on this subject, I will thank you to intimate it in your next.”<sup>5</sup> For the design of William’s portico, the Madison brothers sought the associative value of classical architectural order, a form unfamiliar to them.

In return, Madison received a detailed explanation. Jefferson wrote, “A Portico may be from 5. to 10. diameters of the column deep, or projected from the building. If of more than 5. diameters there must be a column in the middle of each flank, since it must never be more than 5. diameters from the center to center of column. The portico of the Maison quarée is 3 intercolonnations deep. I never saw as much to a private house.” Madison was quite familiar with Jefferson’s reference to the Maison Carrée at Nîmes from their correspondence in 1785 regarding the design of the state capitol at Richmond, but William did not intend to design such a monumentally proportioned house. Rather, the portico signified the Madison brothers’ intention to make William’s house a statement of his taste and his social standing. For instance, William Madison later represented Madison County in the Virginia legislature as a delegate in 1794 and on many occasions afterward.<sup>6</sup>

James Madison drew on Jefferson’s reserve of architectural knowledge for advice again on behalf of another sibling in 1794. His sister Nelly and her husband Isaac Hite, Jr., planned to build a new house in Frederick County. Madison informed Jefferson that Mr. Bond will be building for the Hites “a large House.” Madison suggested that Mr.

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<sup>5</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 19 June 1793, *PJM*, 15: 33-34.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 29 June 1793, *PJM*, 15: 41, 154.

Bond visit Monticello “not only to profit of examples before his eyes, but to ask the favor of your advice on the plan of the House.” The point of interest was, again, “the Bow-room & the Portico, as Mr. B. will explain to you. In general, any hints which may occur to you for improving the plan will be thankfully accepted.”<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, the Hites’ house at Belle Grove in Frederick County did not adopt alcoves or the broken façade treatment of a bow room, but it did feature a portico similar to the one on William’s house (Figures 4 and 5). The emphasis that the Hites and William Madison placed on their porticoes illustrated a growing trend among wealthy Virginia planters who had begun using their central passages as articulated living spaces and employed the portico to punctuate that use.<sup>8</sup>

In 1796, the conversation on house building included James Monroe, who was in Paris as the American ambassador. He wrote to Madison for advice on a new dwelling planned for his Highland plantation in Albemarle County. Monroe wrote, “Mr. Jefferson proposes to have a house built for me on my plantation near him, & to wh. I have agreed. . . . For this purpose I am abt. to send 2. plans to him submitting both to his judgment, & contemplate accepting the offer of a skilful mason here, who wishes to emigrate & settle with us, to execute the work.” As for Madison’s part, Monroe wished that “yrself & Mr. Jones [Monroe’s uncle, a former member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, and James Madison’s colleague in the Continental Congress and Virginia House of Delegates] to see the plans & council with Mr. Jefferson on the subject.” Monroe gave Jefferson the authority to site the house and orchards.<sup>9</sup>

The climate of national politics influenced Monroe’s decision to build a house.

<sup>7</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 5 October 1794, *PJM*, 15: 360.

<sup>8</sup> Mark R. Wenger, “The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Place,” in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II*, ed. Camille Wells (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), 149.

<sup>9</sup> James Monroe to James Madison, 20 January 1796, *PJM*, 16: 197.

Based on his interpretation of the prevailing political attitude in the Washington administration and his pro-French position, he thought he would be home soon: “Believe me there is nothing about which I am more anxious to hear than that this plan is commenc’d and rapidly advancing, for be assured, admitting my own discretion is my only guide much time will not intervene before I am planted there myself.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, President Washington recalled Ambassador Monroe late in 1796.

Before building began at Montpelier, Madison acquired furnishings and household goods from France—further distancing himself from the aesthetic forms of Georgian Britain. Through Monroe, Madison received the domestic articles necessary for his new role as husband/step-father and suitable to his republican ideology and its disdain for luxury. Monroe had offered to serve as Madison’s purchasing agent in November 1794, soon after his arrival in France: “There are many things here which I think wou. suit you. I beg you to give me a list of what you want, such as clocks carpets glass furniture table linnen &ca.—they are cheaper infinitely than with you considering I have advantage of the exchge.”<sup>11</sup> Madison soon placed an order, “As it is probable that many articles of furniture at second hand, may be had in Paris, which cannot be had here of equal quality, but at a forbidding price.”<sup>12</sup> Monroe shipped a complete bed trimmed in crimson damask “à la Polonoise,” another bedstead and mattresses, silk curtains for six windows, and two persian carpets.<sup>13</sup> The goods, wrote Madison, “lay us under very great obligations to your kindness, and are the more valuable, as we venture to consider them as bearing the

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<sup>10</sup> James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, 7 September 1794, and 18 November 1795, *The Writings of James Monroe*, ed. Stanislaus Murray Hamilton (New York: AMS Press, 1969) 2: 54, 411-12.

<sup>11</sup> James Monroe to James Madison, 30 November 1794, *PJM*, 15: 403.

<sup>12</sup> Memorandum to James Monroe, 26 March 1795, *PJM*, 15: 498.

<sup>13</sup> James Madison to James Monroe, 25 January 1796, *PJM*, 16: 202-203; Hunt-Jones, *Dolley and the “great little Madison,”* 18.

sanction of Mrs. Monroe's taste as well as yours."<sup>14</sup> Madison, anticipating retirement from Congress, placed another order with Monroe: "if you can procure a Chimney clock for me, within reasonable limits I will thank you to do so, sending it however to Fredericksburg (not this place)."<sup>15</sup> Madison's pursuit of French furnishings reflects a long standing trend of American interest in French decorative arts—dating back to the seventeenth century, according to Kenneth Ames. The exchanges between Monroe and Madison were part of a growing dissemination of French styles in the United States.<sup>16</sup>

Madison returned to Montpelier in the spring of 1797 and began organizing his household and building materials. The shipment of his and Dolley's personal property from Philadelphia included Windsor chairs, mahogany chairs, other items in numbered trunks and boxes as well as "20 Bundles Nail Rods.-1 Billet wood."<sup>17</sup> Building began in the early summer of 1797. By the end of the year, he had received a response from a Philadelphia marble merchant about the cost of an imported, Italian chimney piece.<sup>18</sup>

Madison turned to building and farm improvements out of political exasperation. He had retired from the House of Representatives in 1797, frustrated by the policies of Federalist president John Adams. Sharp partisan politics pushed Madison away from his early nationalist positions. The Adams administration's hostility to the French revolution and tolerance of the Quasi War offended his pro-French sympathies. In the nascent Hamiltonian commercial formations of a national bank, national debt, a ministerial form of government, and a standing army, Madison recognized corruption. From

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<sup>14</sup> James Madison correspondences with James Monroe, 23 October 1795, 8 November 1795, 25 January 1796, *PJM*, 16: 106, 124, 202-203.

<sup>15</sup> James Madison to James Monroe, 7 April 1796 and 14 May 1796, *PJM*, 16: 303-358.

<sup>16</sup> Kenneth Ames, "Designed in France: Notes on the Transmission of French Style to America," *Winterthur Portfolio* 12 (1977): 103-114.

<sup>17</sup> James Blair to James Madison, 25 April 1797, *PJM*, 17: 2.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Mussi to James Madison, December 1797, *PJM*, 17: 57.



Madison's point of view, according to Ketcham, "Hamilton had saddled the country with a financial system suited to speculation and intrigue, not simple republicanism."<sup>19</sup> James Monroe, relieved of his ambassadorial status, summarized the current state of affairs for Jeffersonian republican partisans in America: "I have read the speech & replies, & really begin to entertain serious doubts whether this is the country we inhabited 12. or 15. years ago: whether we have not by some accident been thrown to another region of the globe, or even some other planet, for every thing we see or hear of the political kind seems strange & quite unlike what we used to see."<sup>20</sup>

Timothy Pickering had acted in a way similar to Madison and Monroe when John Adams dismissed him as secretary of state in 1800. He returned to a Massachusetts farm to fulfill "my desire to be an improving farmer." Likewise, Fisher Ames farmed as a means of occupying his time in a socially acceptable manner while out of government after 1796. Ames kept up an exchange of agricultural advice with his allies in the Essex Junto as they kept up their criticism of Madison and Jefferson and the decline of America into democracy. For both sides of the political battles, estate improvements provided a diversion from the bitter partisan disputes and an opportunity for companionship among like-minded friends.<sup>21</sup>

Monroe, Madison, and Jefferson, however, laid a heavier emphasis on architecture than did the aforementioned Federalists as these Virginians struggled to make sense of their place in a Federalist world. For them, architecture figured more prominently than agriculture in their correspondence due to Madison's and Monroe's immediate need for larger accommodations and Jefferson's Monticello rebuilding project, which was

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<sup>19</sup> Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography*, 368.

<sup>20</sup> James Monroe to James Madison, 10 December 1797, *PJM*, 17: 60.

<sup>21</sup> Tamara Plakins Thornton, *Cultivating Gentlemen: The Meaning of Country Life among the Boston Elite, 1785-1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 44-46, 52-56.

underway.<sup>22</sup> Monroe, who was building a new house, wrote to Madison, who was adding on to an existing building, “I am projecting at my other place abt. a house, & wou. be glad of yr. aid.”<sup>23</sup> Their discussions moved from building projects to politics. Together Madison and Monroe crafted resolutions in support of the French revolution and positioned themselves for elected offices in Richmond (Madison won a seat in the House of Delegates and Monroe won the governorship in 1799). Political thoughts usually accompanied building advice, requests and invoices for supplies. For instance, Jefferson finished a 1798 letter to Madison concerning the availability of workmen with, “I inclose you a copy of the draught of the Kentuckey resolves.”<sup>24</sup>

Jefferson and Madison found themselves in conflict over workmen in 1798. For instance, Jefferson requested that Madison not call for Richardson, a mason, “because that gives us another post-day to warn you of any unexpected delays in winding up his work here for the season, which, tho’ I do not foresee, may yet happen.”<sup>25</sup> In fact, Richardson was delayed until November. Jefferson explained that he “has been in a great measure prevented from doing any thing this week by the weather, which has been too cold for laying mortar. He has still 2. or 3. days work of that kind to do, which is indispensable, and about as long a job in kilning some bricks which we must secure in an unburnt state through the winter. We must therefore beg you to put off sending for him till Saturday next.”<sup>26</sup> Madison also requested Jefferson’s forbearance in the release of L. Whitten, a carpenter, who was laying floor boards at Montpelier. In his reply Jefferson asked, “When will Whitton be done with you? Or could you by any means dispense

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<sup>22</sup> Jack McLaughlin, *Jefferson and Monticello: The Biography of a Builder* (New York: Henry Holt, 1988), 262.

<sup>23</sup> James Monroe to James Madison, 10 December 1797, *PJM*, 17: 60.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 17 November 1798, *PJM*, 17:175.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 26 October 1798, *PJM*, 17: 169.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 3 November 1798, *PJM*, 17:173.

with his services till I set out for Philadelphia? My floors can only be laid while I am at home, and I cannot get a workman here. Perhaps you have some other with you or near you who could go on with your work till his return to you.”<sup>27</sup> Madison replied, “It has been impossible to spare L. Whitten. He has been under the spur to keep the way prepared for the Plasterers, and to finish off a number of indispensable jobs always overlooked till the execution is called for.”<sup>28</sup>

Scheduling workmen was not their only problem. Acquiring materials was also a challenge. Although Jefferson promised that “All the nails you desire can be furnished from Monticello,”<sup>29</sup> Madison also relied on nails made by his father’s enslaved blacksmiths.<sup>30</sup> This was partly due to Madison’s large order: “According to the bill of nails given in by the Workman I shall want from your Nailory, 50,000 sixes, 3,000 eights, 20,000 tens, 5,000 twentys, & 12,000 flooring Brads. I shall also want 50,000 fours for lathing, 4,000 sprigs sixes, & 3,000 do. eights.”<sup>31</sup> Jefferson’s nailory produced the nails in the summer of 1799.<sup>32</sup>

Housebuilding was not just a man’s project. Dolley Madison contributed her knowledge when Jefferson asked about a workman skilled in plastering: “Mrs. Madison tells me that Lumsden, your plaisterer lives about 10. or 15. miles from you & that an opportunity may perhaps be found of conveying him a letter. I trouble you with one, open, which when read, be so good as to seal & forward by any opportunity you approve.”<sup>33</sup> She also transported nails from Monticello back home after visiting her

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<sup>27</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 17 November 1798, *PJM*, 17:175.

<sup>28</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 11 December 1798, *PJM*, 17:184.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 3 January 1798, *PJM*, 17:65.

<sup>30</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 12 August 1800, *PJM*, 17: 400-401.

<sup>31</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 25 Dec. 1797, *PJM*, 17:63.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 23 August 1799, *PJM*, 17: 257.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 23 August 1799, *PJM*, 17: 257.

relatives who lived near Monticello.<sup>34</sup>

Monroe assisted Madison by reimbursing him for any debts “in case you are press'd as you may be by the expence of building.”<sup>35</sup> Madison, in return, recommended that Monroe hire a Montpelier builder, Reuben Chewning, who “will, I am persuaded, justify all I have said in his favor.” Madison provided Monroe with a Montpelier progress report in November 1798: “I have met with some mortifying delays in finishing off the last shaft of the Chimneys, and in setting about the plaistering Jobb. The prospect is at present flattering, and I shall lose no time in letting you know that we are ready to welcome Mrs. M. & yourself to our habitation.”<sup>36</sup> In December 1798, Madison left Montpelier, but upon his return he found himself “in the vortex of Housebuilding in its most hurried stage.”<sup>37</sup>

Through his recent building projects, Madison had built up his architectural knowledge. For instance, Monroe sought out Madison’s advice in the summer of 1799. Monroe asked, “Cannot you come up & stay a day or two with us. Yr. skill in architecture & farming wod. be of great use to me at present. I am much ingaged in both & take more interest, especially in the latter, tho’ under discouraging circumstances, than at any former time.”<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately for Monroe, Madison was too busy at Montpelier. He declined Monroe’s invitation to observe the building project at Highland in the summer of 1799. He explained, “It would give me the sincerest pleasure to ride up & see you, & I had almost determined to have allotted this week for the purpose; but some particular jobbs about the finishg of my building made my presence indispensable: and there are

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<sup>34</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 12 August 1800, *PJM*, 17: 400-401.

<sup>35</sup> James Monroe to James Madison, 25 September 1798, *PJM*, 17:168.

<sup>36</sup> James Madison to James Monroe, 10 November 1798, *PJM*, 17:174-175.

<sup>37</sup> James Madison to James Monroe, 11 December 1798, *PJM*, 17:184.

<sup>38</sup> James Monroe to James Madison, 13 July 1799, *PJM*, 17:253.

others to succeed which make it uncertain when I shall be able to go from home.”<sup>39</sup>

More French household accouterments, which were available through the Monroes, accompanied the wagon with the nails. Madison wrote to Monroe that the wagon “will receive the few articles which you have been so good as to offer from the superfluities of your stock.” The provision from the Monroes included “2 table cloths for a dining room of abt. 18 feet; 2. 3 or 4. as may be convenient, for a more limited scale, 4 dozen Napkins, which will not in the least be objectionable for having been used, and 2 Matrasses.”<sup>40</sup>

When they did have an opportunity to enjoy each other’s society, politics were discussed along with the demands of building. Monroe visited Montpelier in April 1798 on his way to the court in Fredericksburg. At that time they spoke about Franco-American relations and public sentiment in Virginia, which they felt was “unquestionably opposed to every measure that may increase the danger of war.” In a letter, Madison related their conversation about “the improper views of our own Executive Party” to Jefferson, then in Philadelphia, adding that he hoped Jefferson could send building supplies, which were “so important to my present object that I break thro’ every restraint from adding to the trouble of which you have more than enough.” He wanted panes of window glass, brass locks, screws, and hinges for eight doors.<sup>41</sup> Then, in late 1799, James and Dolley Madison finally made their promised visit to the Monroes at Highland. Monroe, however, warned them, “Our house is unfinished in all respects, the yard in confusion, &ca, but you shall have a warm chamber & be made as comfortable as we can make you.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> James Madison to James Monroe, 20 July 1799, *PJM*, 17:254.

<sup>40</sup> James Madison to James Monroe, 5 February 1798, *PJM*, 17: 74.

<sup>41</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 29 April 1798, *PJM*, 17: 122-123.

<sup>42</sup> James Monroe to James Madison, 22 November 1799, *PJM*, 17: 278-279.

As the work neared completion, Madison sought more advice from Jefferson. The finish coat for the portico columns concerned him. So he asked him, “will [you] oblige me by enquiring whether there be known in Philada. any composition for encrusting Brick that will effectually stand the weather; and particularly what is thought of common plaister thickly painted with White lead overspread with sand. I wish to give some such dressing to the columns of my Portico, & to lessen as much as possible the risk of the experiment.”<sup>43</sup> The advice came a month later: “I spoke on the subject with W. Hamilton of the Woodlands who has skill & experience on the subject. From him I got only that common plaister would not do. He whitewashes his brickwork.” Furthermore, Jefferson noted, “In Ld. Burlington’s edition of Palladio he tells us that most of the columns of those fine buildings erected by Palladio are of brick covered with stucco, & stand perfectly.” This mention of Palladio in the late stages of the project was the first occurrence of his name in their correspondence concerning building. Jefferson also drew on his study of French architecture: “I know that three fourths of the houses in Paris are covered with plaister & never saw any decay in it. I never enquired into it’s composition; but as they have a mountain of plaister of Paris adjoining the town, I presume it to be of that.” He suggested that “a coat of the thickness of a knife blade would do on brick, which would cost little. I presume your plaisterer Wash could do it well.”<sup>44</sup>

In the settlement of his nail account with Jefferson, Madison described certain aspects of the previous year’s work. For instance, he wrote, “the floor of the Portico was laid with brads made in my father’s shop, and a remainder of the Stock procured the preceding year.” He recalled the help of Mrs. Madison, and “the driver of my carriage, who brought [the nails] down in Augst.” He specified that “Apart of [the nails] were

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<sup>43</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 4 April 1800, *PJM*, 17: 377.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 12 May 1800, *PJM*, 17: 387.

used in lathing the Ceiling of the Portico.”<sup>45</sup> Some additional work was done by Reuben Chewning in 1800, when he put a new roof on a porch.<sup>46</sup>

After 1799, Montpelier had a new, three-bay-wide, two-bay-deep, two-story, domestic segment grafted to the northern wall of the original mansion. Madison obscured the suture, where the new brick walls joined the older facade, with a full-height portico. Now seven-bays wide, the dwelling featured a pedimented portico advancing from the façade. While the transformation evoked classical symbolism, social and utilitarian concerns also motivated the changes. The addition to the house provided James Madison, Jr., and his family with sufficient space (a dining room, a parlor, a kitchen of their own, and bedrooms upstairs) adjacent to the existing house still occupied by his parents and younger siblings. Of course, the pedimented portico symbolized classical values, but its appearance at Montpelier was in keeping with decorative systems employed by his fellow Virginians. Mark Wenger’s research shows that the arrival of pedimented porticos on eighteenth-century Virginia houses typically followed a reallocation of interior space rather than a reading of Palladio. Porticos emerged as an architectural coda to the internal change in use of central passages, which had grown in importance as articulated, ornamented living spaces. Porticos punctuated the social use of this space in as much as they served as icons of status.<sup>47</sup>

Changes to the interior of Montpelier included the display of Madison’s art collection, comprised of busts of George Washington and Paul Jones, and his French

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<sup>45</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 12 August 1800, *PJM*, 17: 400-401.

<sup>46</sup> Account Book of Col. James Madison, Sr., of Montpelier, Orange County, 1798-1817, (microfilm on file at the office of the Papers of James Madison, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, and Library of Virginia, (VASV97-A266), Misc. Reel 8), 20.

<sup>47</sup> Mark R. Wenger, “The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Place,” in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II*, 149.

consumer goods.<sup>48</sup> A visitor described the new arrangements. Mrs. Anna Marie Thornton, wife of the architect and civil servant William Thornton who designed the U.S. Capitol and administered the Patent Office, complimented Madison on his house for “displaying a taste for the arts which is rarely to be found in such retired and remote situations.” She noted that the two Madison families “dine under the same roof, tho’ they keep separate tables.” They also dined at William Madison’s house; “He has a fine plantation,” wrote Mrs. Thornton. She described the Montpelier landscape in conventional terms as “picturesque.” She wrote, “The House is on a height commanding an extensive view of the blue ridge, which by the constant variation in the appearance of the clouds, and consequently of the mountains form a very agreeable and varied object, sometimes appearing very distant, sometimes much separated and distinct and often rolling like waves.” Although the vistas lacked a water feature, Mrs. Thornton admitted that after Madison made other improvements, “it will be a handsome place and approach very much in similarity to some of the elegant seats in England of which many beautiful views are given in Sandby’s views, etc.”<sup>49</sup>

After the Thorntons’ last visit, the British Minister Sir Augustus John Foster arrived at Montpelier the following year. Foster was forthright in his description. Foster’s comments described the results of Madison acting as his own architect. For instance, he wrote, “Mr. Madison himself superintended the Building which he had executed by the Hands of common workmen to whom he prescribed the Proportions to be observed. It is of brick which requires and is intended to be plastered. It occupies about a Third part of the Length of the House, being 47 feet wide, and together with its

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<sup>48</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 11 May 1789, *PJM*, 12: 152; Thomas Appleton to James Madison, 8 Sept. 1802, *PJM, Secretary of State Series*, 3: 559.

<sup>49</sup> *Diaries of Mrs. Anna Maria Brodeau William Thornton, 1793-1863*, Mss. 13,818, Alderman Library, Charlottesville, reel 2: 214, 222, 416.



Pediments it is as high as the house, viz. forty feet. There are four Columns to this Portico, of common bricks diminishing from a third, and having Bases as well as Plinths: and I mention it as being a Specimen of very plain, and, except that I object to Plinths, of good and massive Doric, which was executed by a Proprietor without the assistance of an Architect and of very ordinary Materials: but he had cases made for the Shape of the Pillars, of wood, and filled them up with mortar and bricks according to measure.”<sup>50</sup>

At the time of his visit the grounds were still unimproved. Foster found “some very fine woods about Mont Pelier, but no Pleasure Grounds, though Mr. Madison talks of some Day laying out Space for an English Park, which he might render very beautiful from the easy graceful descent of his Hills into the Plains below.” Foster compared the Montpelier landscape to Mount Vernon, which “did not seem to be very well kept up.” The house and grounds informed his impression of Madison: “No man had a higher Reputation among his acquaintance for Probity and a good honourable Feeling, while he was allowed on all Sides to be a Gentleman in his manners as well as a Man of Public Virtue.”<sup>51</sup> Montpelier remained in this form throughout Madison’s service as secretary of state in Jefferson’s presidential administration.

The slaves’ work routines did not change significantly after building the addition to Montpelier. They planted new specimens of plants given to Madison by foreign officers and dignitaries. They took care of Madison’s grounds and goods, including imported wine: “Brasil wine and Citron,” and Madeira, which, according to Madison’s agent in Norfolk, Virginia, was “cased as you desired & is very fine so is the brandy &

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<sup>50</sup> Dolley P. Madison to Mrs. and Dr. Thornton, 26 August 1807, Mss. Coll # 47, Madison/Payne Family Papers, Greensboro Historical Museum Archive; Margaret Bailey Tinkcom, “Caviar along the Potomac: Sir Augustus John Foster’s ‘Notes on the United States,’ 1804-1812,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., 8 (January 1951): 96-97.

<sup>51</sup> Tinkcom, “Caviar along the Potomac,” 90, 98.

Sherry having got some very old.”<sup>52</sup> Foster noted the slaves’ activity, as well the constraints on their living arrangements on three plantations, located not far from each other, which produced mainly tobacco and corn. As for the slaves working those farms, he wrote, “The Negro Habitations are separate from the Dwelling House both here and all over Virginia, and they form a kind of village as each Negro family would like, if they were allowed it, to live in a House by themselves.” He also commented on the apparent self-sufficiency of the plantation based on slave labor: “When at a distance from any Town it is necessary they [the slaves] should be able to do all kind of handiwork; and accordingly, at Mont Pellier I found a forge, a turner’s Shop, a Carpenter and wheelwright. All articles too that are wanted for Farming or the use of the House were made on the Spot, and I saw a very well constructed Waggon that had just been compleated.”<sup>53</sup>

While the slaves’ work patterns remained much the same, their opportunities for legal manumission changed considerably after Gabriel’s Rebellion in 1800. In response to the conspiracy, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation that restricted private manumissions and the movement of slaves from plantation to plantation. Although slaves could be emancipated privately through deed or will, the law demanded that they move out of Virginia within a year of their manumission or be subject to re-enslavement. The practice of hiring out slaves was prohibited in certain counties, particularly those around Richmond where Gabriel had organized most of his support. The General Assembly briefly considered measures for legalizing gradual abolition, followed immediately by transportation of the manumitted slave out of Virginia to an undesignated colony, but when a suitable colony could not be located, the debate turned in favor of tighter

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<sup>52</sup> Thomas Newton to James Madison, 11 June 1802, 22 June 1802, 19 July 1802, *PJM—Secretary of State Series*, 3: 301, 330, 404.

<sup>53</sup> Tinkcom, “Caviar along the Potomac,” 97, 98.

restrictions on slavery so as to keep it in place and under control.<sup>54</sup>

Madison's election to the presidency in 1808 brought more changes to Montpelier. This phase of building raised the level of finish in interior spaces, added more private chambers, and included another gesture toward elegant architecture. (Figure 6) The formal elements of the house reiterated its significance as a place of civic authority. Previously, Madison had demonstrated his basic agreement with Thomas Jefferson on the need for improved forms of public architecture, which served as political metaphors. In their estimation, the promotion of civic decorum and liberal education were essential to a virtuous national character in a representative democracy. Madison had followed Jefferson's aesthetic trajectory when it came to porticoes and the state capitol, but he declined to make Montpelier into a grand architectural statement on the level of Monticello.

While Jefferson demonstrated a keen interest in the aesthetic forms of antiquity and the classical revival, Madison devoted his intellectual inquiries to the politics and governmental forms of the ancients. The simplified, restrained, and incremental development of his house testified to a measured and frugal experimentation with classical revival trends in architecture. His notes on ancient and modern confederacies demonstrated his primary interest in antiquity—forms of government rather than building forms. Although Jefferson contributed to this re-design of Montpelier, the house is not one of Jefferson's other buildings.<sup>55</sup> Madison's own thinking on architecture led to changes at the mansion that were symbolic, yet modest and functional. This building

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<sup>54</sup> Douglas R. Egerton, *Gabriel's Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 and 1802* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 148-167.

<sup>55</sup> Garry Wills, "Jefferson's Other Buildings," *The Atlantic*, January 1993, 80, 83; Wills argues that Montpelier reveals aspects of Jefferson's mind.

project, like the one in the 1790s, focused on the allocation of interior space with a concern for convenience and privacy. Exterior treatments were modest. He limited his symbolic architectural statement to a single landscape feature, the temple. (Figures 7 and 8)

Madison disregarded his craftsmen's (and Jefferson's) advice for interior aesthetic enhancements on two occasions. First, Jefferson encouraged Madison early on in the project "to throw the middle room between your two passages out into a bow on the South side, taking a little from the passages to give it breadth, and with or without a portico there as you please. It will be somewhat in the manner of my parlour."<sup>56</sup> Jefferson had in mind an apse or a semi-circular projecting central salon, but Madison declined the suggestion. Secondly, James Dinsmore proposed an alteration to the ceiling height in the central hall by raising "the upper Joist a foot or eighteen inches & give that Much More height to the Ceiling of the Dineing room, it is at present too low for the finish we wish to adopt over the doors & Side lights & will appear Still lower when the room Comes to be enlarged." He assured Madison that "the rooms above will answer the Same purpose as ever the only disadvantage will be a Step or two into them—and the additional expence will not be great as we will have to take down the partition above at any rate to put in a trussed one to Support the girder; you will please to let us know whether you approve of it as Soon as Convenient."<sup>57</sup> The response was prompt and negative. Dinsmore submitted to Madison's wishes: "I received by Sundays Mail your favour of the 12th inst. and Shall accordingly accommodate our work to the present height of the Ceiling."<sup>58</sup> Madison chose not to make the hall and dining room conform to molding of academically correct

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<sup>56</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 23 Sept. 1808, *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Library of Congress.

<sup>57</sup> James Dinsmore to James Madison, 4 May 1809, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 1: 165.

<sup>58</sup> James Dinsmore to James Madison, 16 May 1809, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 1: 188.

proportions or the dimensions of Jefferson's parlor.

The temple design was Montpelier's prominent architectural flourish. It was the work of James Dinsmore and John Neilson based on ideas they may have discussed with Jefferson, who had designed other ornamental garden buildings for Monticello.<sup>59</sup> Of all the threads in Montpelier's architectural fabric, the temple marks Madison's clearest gesture to represent classical architecture. As an ornamental feature given a privileged position in the landscape, the temple projected the associative imagery of antiquity and the notion of architecture as a national asset. (Figure 8) It was immediately visible to those approaching from the public road. It also served as protective covering for an ice house. Dinsmore and Neilson raised up an open-sided temple with a door in the floor to provide access to the ice stored beneath. Tuscan order columns supported a hemispherical roof. The temple featured an entablature with 117 feet of "frieze & Architrave." Over the cornice they installed a protective layer of copper sheeting that served as a drip edge directing water off the entablature. When approaching the mansion the temple stood on its left flank, while a brick pad parterre took a similar position on the right flank closest to the southwest wing.<sup>60</sup>

Along with the skilled workmen Jefferson sent him from Monticello, he also contracted with Jefferson for the services of other Monticello laborers. In one documented instance, Madison purchased from Jefferson the indenture of John Freeman in 1809. John Freeman, who may have assisted Dinsmore and Neilson at Monticello, arrived at Montpelier in April under a six-year indenture. The correspondence between Jefferson and Madison does not describe John Freeman's specific building skills or his

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<sup>59</sup> Fiske Kimball, *Thomas Jefferson, Architect* (Boston: Riverside Press, 1916), 169; James S. Ackerman, *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses*, Bollingen Series XXXV (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 203.

<sup>60</sup> "Carpenter's Bills for Montpelier, 1810-1812," Papers of John Hartwell Cocke, Mss 5680, 640, etc., Box 9, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

ethnicity, but the sale of the indenture suggests that Madison did not rely exclusively on his own slaves to supply the necessary support labor for his building project.<sup>61</sup>

Views from the house were also considered in the remodeling of the building and the placement of the temple. For instance, the temple was envisioned as a component of the library inside the house. As they began work on the library, Dinsmore suggested they “put two windows in the end of the library room,” because “without them the wall will have a very Dead appearance, and there will be no direct View towards the temple Should you ever build one.”<sup>62</sup> Additionally, another visitor described the library and its “plain cases, not only around the room, but in the middle with just sufficient room to pass between; these cases were well filled with books, pamphlets, papers, all, every thing of interest to our country before and since the Revolution.”<sup>63</sup> A visitor in 1816 described the view of the surrounding landscape from the roof above the wings.<sup>64</sup>

Other changes included refinements and repairs to the basement kitchen, bed chambers, dining room, drawing room, alterations of the portico, and the construction of a rear colonnade. The drawing room and passage (taken from the original house’s hall and back room) comprised the new central reception rooms on axis with the entry and the rear doors. New architectural detailing on the interior wall surfaces included: “95 ft. run[ning] Cornice. . . 4 extra Miters,” “193 ft run<sup>e</sup> of Architrave & Qrounds [quarter rounds],” five sets of blocks for the door or window architrave, “Curb round [the] hearth,” “57 ft run<sup>e</sup> of Base and Surbase,” and a door head pediment carved in wood. The

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<sup>61</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 19 April 1809, item no. A91, Carter G. Woodson Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>62</sup> James Dinsmore to James Madison, 29 October 1809, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 2: 44.

<sup>63</sup> Mary Cutts, *Life at Montpelier, as Remembered by a Niece of Dolley Madison*, ca. 1855, Montpelier Monograph 01-F0323, Cutts Papers, Library of Congress, photocopy at Montpelier Archives.

<sup>64</sup> Baron de Montlezun, “A Frenchman Visits Norfolk, Fredericksburg, and Orange County, 1816,” trans., L. G. Moffatt and J. M. Carrière, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 53 (April/July 1945), 198.

base and surbase in the account suggested the presence of chair board attached to the walls of this room. Changes to the fenestration included “framed window jambs & Sof[f]its with astr[a]gals on the panels” and treble sash frames for windows of 36 lights, opening this formal reception room onto the rear colonnade facing eastward. These treble windows also received “3 Setts of beads.” They enhanced the decorative finish of the door openings of this room with an astragal profile in the molding that encased the door jambs.<sup>65</sup> Dinsmore and Neilson installed two “Venetian Doors with Side lights” for the main entrance to the house. In the drawing room, they installed three pairs of “moveable Venetian Blinds” for the windows, and they built two seats for the front portico.<sup>66</sup> Madison’s social use of these spaces influenced these refinements.

A two-stage entrance arrangement welcomed visitors to Montpelier. For instance, George Shattuck, Jr., stepped into this narrow entry in 1835 and noted the duplex character of the house. He recalled, “In front there are three yellow doors. The middle one opens into a narrow entry. . . . There are doors from this entry communicating with the entries of each side.” Once inside the “narrow entry” he found doors under both arches leading to the rooms on either side of the entry space. After moving forward from the entry into the drawing room, he saw “a large parlor in which there are three windows to the east, reaching down to the floor and opening upon a piazza and so upon the lawn.”<sup>67</sup>

Visitors commented on the new traffic pattern produced by the renovation. When Margaret Bayard Smith and her husband arrived in August 1809, President Madison greeted them and led them to his dining room, “where some gentlemen were still smoking segars and drinking wine. Mrs. M. enter’d the moment afterwards, and after embracing

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<sup>65</sup> “Carpenter’s Bills for Montpelier, 1810-1812.”

<sup>66</sup> “Carpenter’s Bills for Montpelier, 1810-1812.”

<sup>67</sup> George C. Shattuck, Jr., to Dr. George C. Shattuck, 24 January 1835, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts, copy at Montpelier Archives.

me, took my hand, saying with a smile, I will take you out of this smoke to a pleasanter room.” Mrs. Smith added, “She took me thro’ the tea room to her chamber which opens from it.” Informality and comfort prevailed in Dolley’s private chambers. She wrote, “I was going to take my seat on the sophia, but she said I must lay down by her on her bed, and rest myself, she loosened my riding habit, took off my bonnet, and we threw ourselves on her bed.” In this relaxed position, they were served “Wine, ice, punch and delightful pine-apples.”<sup>68</sup>

The creation of more privacy for Dolley was in step with the trend followed by other elite Virginians of further distancing their private spaces from the zones of public circulation, a reaction to “unsettling changes in religion, politics, and society,” according to Mark Wenger. He argues that the wings on eighteenth-century Virginia domestic buildings owed more to the local trend of divorcing public from private spaces than concerns for an academically correct Palladian silhouette. They modified rooms according to new demands on the house as a social environment. As a result, bed chambers were often pushed away from the hall, parlor, or saloon. Separate exterior doors from the chambers allowed for discreet movement in and out of the rooms. Certain interior spaces were allocated for visitors or servants whose lower rank denied them access to more private zones of the house. (Figure 6) After the renovation work, Montpelier’s new floor plan provided more privacy with chambers on the periphery of the circulation system.<sup>69</sup>

Madison’s growing political stature also made the need for privacy more acute.

Marlene Elizabeth Heck asserts that the adoption of a multipart configuration was

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<sup>68</sup> Margaret Bayard Smith, *The First Forty Years of Washington Society* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1906), 81.

<sup>69</sup> Mark R. Wenger, “Thomas Jefferson and the Vernacular Tradition,” paper presented at “Thomas Jefferson, Architect,” University of Virginia, Department of Architectural History symposium, Charlottesville, Virginia, November 1993, unpublished manuscript provided with permission by Camille Wells.



motivated by the need to entertain and to signify financial independence, material affluence, political prestige, and civic leadership. She describes wings as “architectural shorthand for wealth, political influence, and status.” The winged pavilion supported the idea of the home as an asylum from the egalitarian public realm, which begrudged deference and obeisance to the upper gentry. Virginia’s upper gentry in the early republic adopted modes of privatization and rituals of refined behavior to bolster their status and rank in an increasingly fluid society that lacked traditional modes of differentiation. Hyphens and wings accommodated the new social demands without demanding a complete rebuilding of the existing structure. The pavilion building form, according to Heck, “endured because it had become a powerful social marker and a flexible domestic model. Its distinctive appearance amplified and clarified social rank to a local culture in need of such defining emblems.” This new layer to the architectural fabric of pretentious homes expressed the decisions builders and planters made to resolve incongruities in their public and inner lives, demonstrating “the active role of architectural form in the mediation of social change.”<sup>70</sup>

Adding wings to houses gained popularity within elite piedmont culture, especially among members of Madison’s social circle. For instance, the influence of Montpelier’s floor plan and massing were apparent in Estouteville and Oak Hill, the homes of John Coles and James Monroe, respectively. These two houses offer contemporaneous comparisons to Montpelier and suggest that Montpelier served as a model for their construction. John Coles replicated Montpelier’s form and massing with the assistance of James Dinsmore in 1830. Located in Albemarle County, Estouteville had a cellar corridor for the passage of servants underneath the living spaces of the

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<sup>70</sup> Marlene Elizabeth Heck, “Building Status: Pavilioned Dwellings in Virginia,” in *Shaping Communities, Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, VI, ed. Carter L. Hudgins and Elizabeth Collins Cromley (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 50, 54, 56.

owners. The central pavilion carried the same Tuscan order, tympanum lunette window treatment, and intercolumniation in its portico as Montpelier's. (Figure 9) The rear of Estouteville also featured a colonnade identical to Montpelier's. Flanking the two-story central block stood one-story wings with three bays each. The interior followed Montpelier's floor plan in general, but it was unencumbered by the relics of earlier building phases, as was the case at Montpelier. The central hall, which the Coles called a "summer living room," constituted the central axis of the house with an intersecting transverse corridor placed to the rear of the room, opening upon the rear colonnade.<sup>71</sup>

Montpelier's form and floor plan also inspired James Monroe when he built a grand architectural statement in Loudoun County between 1822 and 1823. Replicating Montpelier's Tuscan order portico, Oak Hill featured a prominent Tuscan order portico on its southern façade, with modillion blocks articulating the pediment and a fanlight in the tympanum. The portico stood above a cryptoporticus and along the central axis of the house, which provided space for domestic service as well as support for the portico. (Figures 10 and 11) On the northern façade, an elegant frontispiece of fanlight, sidelights, engaged columns, and double-leaf door—all recessed behind a large compass arch—provided access to the formal entry of the dwelling. (Figures 12 and 13) A transverse corridor intersected the main axis created by the central hall. Beyond the corridor stood a highly fashionable double parlor. The transverse corridor allowed for a smooth flow between served and service spaces on the principal entertaining floor. In addition to similarities in plan and elevation, Dinsmore supplied Monroe with preliminary house plans before construction began at Oak Hill.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Elizabeth Langhorne, K. Edward Lay, William D. Rieley, eds. *A Virginia Family and Its Plantation Houses* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1987), 70, 74-77.

<sup>72</sup> Susan Holway Hellman, "Oak Hill, James Monroe's Loudoun Seat" (Master's Thesis, The University of Virginia, 1997), 24-35.

Just as they did for the previously described houses, Montpelier's new wings made entertaining easier for the Madisons. A visitor in 1827 noted that he was among a dozen other guests.<sup>73</sup> Mrs. Smith recorded 23 visitors during her visit. She asked Mrs. Madison how she managed to accommodate them all. According to Mrs. Smith, she responded, "'Oh we have house room in plenty.' This I could easily believe, for the house seemed immense." Her respite in Dolley's chambers was brief; Mrs. Smith rejoined the guests "after adjusting our dress." Under the portico they "walked and talked until called to tea, or rather supper, for tho' tea hour, it was supper fare. The long dining table was spread, and besides tea and coffee, we had a variety of warm cakes, bread, cold meats and pastry."<sup>74</sup>

Inside and out, the builders and workmen refined the surfaces on the building. The interior of the wings featured finishing details such as: base and surbase, architrave blocks, new door frames and jambs, windows, wainscot, window stools made of locust, molding for the door frames, two double "worked Doors with Mortise locks; 3 Single worked Do. with Common locks," and "1 Chimney Cap & Architrave." In the closets and passage they installed "47 ft run<sup>s</sup> of wash board." Exterior details also marked the Madison's elite status. The exterior wall of the wings received a decorative cornice covered by iron sheeting, the same iron sheeting that they applied to the roof. They also installed seventeen feet of sheet iron gutters. The final piece of decoration for the roof was 91 feet of "Chinese railing." Work on the upper story of the house included installing windows and finish trim, as well as Venetian blinds and a window seat.<sup>75</sup>

After 1811, the mansion differed from neighboring common dwellings through

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<sup>73</sup> Ralph D. Gray, ed., "A Tour of Virginia in 1827: Letters of Henry D. Gilpin to his Father," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 76 no. 3 (October 1968): 470.

<sup>74</sup> Margaret Bayard Smith, *The First Forty Years of Washington Society*. . . (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1906), 81-82.

<sup>75</sup> "Carpenter's Bills for Montpelier, 1810-1812."

Madison's selective appropriation of classical architecture, his display of French material culture, and the variety of visiting politicians and foreign dignitaries. The articulated entry space served as a gallery of art and political mementos.<sup>76</sup> Margaret Bayard Smith, visiting again in August 1828, noted how the central hall gave "activity to the mind, by the historic and classic ideas that it awakened." When she arrived, she wrote, "We were at first conducted into the Drawing room, which opens on the back Portico and thus commands a view through the whole house." There she found the walls "covered with pictures, some very fine, from the ancient masters, but most of them portraits of our most distinguished men, six or eight by Stewart. The mantelpiece, tables in each corner and in fact wherever one could be fixed, were filled with busts, and groups of figures in plaster; so that this apartment had more the appearance of a museum of the arts than of a drawing room."<sup>77</sup> Henry D. Gilpin, a lawyer from Philadelphia on a tour of Virginia in 1827, also recalled that visitors in the central hall could sit on sofas on either side of the room and view "some large and good historical pictures by Flemish artists," portraits of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, "a great number of busts," a bronze statuette of Napoleon, and "some good casts of antique statues." Gilpin equated Montpelier with the President's House in Washington since "Much of the furniture of the room had the appearance of Presidential splendour, such as sofas covered with crimson damask on each side, three or four large looking glasses &c—&c every thing displayed in its arrangement great order, neatness & taste—for which I fancy Mrs. Madison is remarkable."<sup>78</sup>

The 1815 Orange County personal property tax assessment, an 1836 inventory, and a memoir documented a complex assemblage of goods at Montpelier (Appendix D).

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<sup>76</sup> Hunt-Jones, *Dolley and the 'great little Madison,'* 75-89.

<sup>77</sup> Margaret Bayard Smith, *First Forty Years of Washington Society*, 233-234.

<sup>78</sup>Ralph D. Gray, ed., "A Tour of Virginia in 1827: Letters of Henry D. Gilpin to his Father," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 76 no. 4 (October 1968): 468-469.

The list included: household furniture, framed engravings, mirrors, numerous tables, French china, gilt china, carpets, chairs, damask window curtains, and numerous images in paintings and prints. Souvenirs, a model of the *U.S.S. Constitution* in a glass box, a live oak vase carved from its hull, and busts of famous individuals stood in other rooms of the mansion.<sup>79</sup> A collection of the flags from 29 vessels captured by the frigate *U.S.S. President* were sewn together and presented as a gift in 1815.<sup>80</sup> On the walls, Madison displayed engravings of the battle of Bunker Hill and other military battles, and two prints of John Vanderlyn's popular paintings of Niagara Falls.<sup>81</sup> Harriet Martineau recalled touring with Madison through the house: "The whole of this day was spent like the last [talking about politics and culture in the sitting room], except that we went over the house looking at the busts and prints, which gave an English air to the dwelling, otherwise wholly Virginian."<sup>82</sup> Madison's collection was eclectic with a celebratory, American history theme.

The grounds were reorganized and formalized at this time. Manipulations and alterations of the landscape from 1797 to 1811 reveal aspects of President Madison's character and clues to the culture of early nineteenth-century Virginia elites. Refinements to President Madison's prospect as an elite Virginia planter signified his elevated class standing, his conformity to the prevailing conventions of gentility, and a willingness to adopt the landscape design trends of Europe in order to maintain his class standing. The features of the Montpelier grounds comprised a complex ideological statement: a selective

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<sup>79</sup> Hunt-Jones, *Dolley and the "great little Madison,"* 94, 120; List of articles in dining Room at Montpelier July the 1st. '36, The Papers of Dolley P. Madison, Mss. 18,940, Library of Congress; J. D. Elliott to Dolley P. Madison, 10 October 1834, The Papers of Dolley P. Madison, Mss. 18,940.

<sup>80</sup> Brant, *James Madison: Commander in Chief*, 397-398.

<sup>81</sup> Hunt-Jones, *Dolley and the "great little Madison,"* 86; John Davis Hatch, "John Vander Lyn's Prints of Niagara Falls," *The Magazine Antiques*, December 1990, 1252-1261.

<sup>82</sup> Harriet Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travel* (1838; reprint, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942), 195.

rejection of ostentatious ornamentation and luxury along with an adoption of elite cultural forms to mark his high social status. The scholarship on American cultural landscapes, which crosses the fields of garden history, cultural geography, and historical archaeology, provides a framework for contextualizing Madison's landscape treatment at Montpelier.<sup>83</sup>

Work on Montpelier's formal garden began when Madison was in his first term as president. Through James Monroe, Madison secured the services of a French landscape gardener working in piedmont Virginia known only in the correspondence records as Bizet. Monroe knew of him through his work in Albemarle County and, with reservations, recommended him to Madison in July 1810:

“He is an honest hard working man, with much information in his branch of business, but his vision is too imperfect to allow him to embrace distant objects, which is of importance in certain kinds of improv'ment. Add to which, that altho his education was good, the employment hitherto given him has been calculated rather to contract than enlarge his knowledge, of the ornamental kind.”<sup>84</sup>

In contrast, a Madison relation described Bizet as “an experienced French gardener, who lived many years on the place,” having come to Virginia during the French Revolution. He

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<sup>83</sup> William M. Kelso and Rachel Most, eds., *Earth Patterns: Essays in Landscape Archaeology* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1990); Rebecca Yamin and Karen Beschere Metheny, eds., *Landscape Archaeology: Reading and Interpreting the American Historical Landscape* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996); Peirce Lewis, “Learning from Looking: Geographic and Other Writing about the American Cultural Landscape,” *American Quarterly* 35 (1983): 242-261; Pierce Lewis, “Common Landscapes as Historic Documents,” in *History from Things, Essays on Material Culture*, eds. Steven Lubar and W. David Kingery (Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 115-139; J. Edward Hood, “Social Relations and the Cultural Landscape,” in *Landscape Archaeology*, 123, 124; Mark Leone, “The Georgian Order as the Order of Merchant Capitalism in Annapolis, Maryland,” in *The Recovery of Meaning: Historical Archaeology in the Eastern United States*, eds. Mark P. Leone and Parker B. Potter, Jr. (Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), 255; Mark P. Leone and Paul Shackel, “Plane and Solid Geometry in Colonial Gardens in Annapolis, Maryland,” in *Earth Patterns*, 164; Mark P. Leone, Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, Julie H. Ernstein, and Paul A. Shackel, “Power Gardens of Annapolis,” *Archaeology* 42 (1989): 35-39, 74-75; Barbara Wells Sarudy, “Gardening Books in Eighteenth-Century Maryland,” “Eighteenth-Century Gardens of the Chesapeake,” “A Chesapeake Craftsman's Eighteenth Century Gardens,” *Journal of Garden History*, vol. 9, nos. 3 and 4 (July-September 1989): 103-159; Peter Martin, *The Pleasure Gardens of Virginia: From Jamestown to Jefferson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Ulysses P. Hedrick, *A History of Horticulture in America to 1860* (New York: Oxford University press, 1950), 107.

<sup>84</sup> James Monroe to James Madison, 25 July 1810, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 2, 437.

returned to France shortly before Madison's death. Mary Cutts also commented on Bizet's relation with the Montpelier slaves: "They [Bizet and his wife] were great favorites with the negroes, some of whom they taught to speak French." One slave even had "an old worn French copy of Telemachus," which Bizet gave her.<sup>85</sup> Bizet, and the slaves Madison assigned to him, created a terraced garden close to the house. The flats were wide enough for walking along side garden beds. The highest flat positioned the viewer for an artificially arranged, modest mountain vista. The stepped plan of the garden allowed for a total view of specimens when standing at the lowest vantage point.

In adopting the terrace design for his formal garden, Madison followed a prevailing elite convention. Many of the wealthy Virginia planters who commanded riparian estates had improved their grounds to enhance the available views in the eighteenth century. Some of Madison's contemporaries and fellow statesmen modified their grounds with terraces. For instance, George Mason's Gunston Hall on the Potomac River and John Robinson's Pleasant Hill on the Mattaponi River featured terraced slopes, as did John Tayloe's Mount Airy on the Rappahannock River. Also, the formal gardens of the Governor's Palace and the College of William and Mary offered Madison examples to draw from in improving his own grounds. Madison visited William Bartram's Philadelphia garden, which was noted for its display of botanicals. In addition to personal experience, Sarudy argues that Maryland terraced gardens were inspired by Italian Renaissance ideas transmitted through European gardening books. These texts appealed to gardeners who were eager "for precedent, order and restraint" and "to a people carving a pure, new nation out of a howling wilderness and toiling to establish an orderly new government." Richard Bushman argues that formal gardens were expected of gentlemen aspiring to gentility. Along with an elegant house and its rooms for entertaining, Bushman

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<sup>85</sup> Cutts, *Life at Montpelier, as Remembered by a Niece of Dolley Madison*, ca. 1855.

notes that formal gardens sustained genteel behavior and conversation.<sup>86</sup>

The terrace feature provided an opportunity not just to display a contrived vista, but also to display the planter's horticultural acumen in a theatrical manner. Bernard McMahon described some terraces in American gardens as "considerable rising ground in theatrical arrangement." Madison was aware of McMahon's landscaping knowledge, having ordered seeds from him. Peter Martin discusses the importance of garden theater in landscapes designed for outdoor entertainment and display and as a status symbol.<sup>87</sup> Along with providing garden produce for the Madison's table, the terrace served as a conversation piece and marked Madison's membership in the upper ranks of society.

The overall design for Montpelier's formal garden placed it within an emerging landscape aesthetic that scholars call the sovereign gaze, or, stated differently, the panoptic sublime, to use Alan Wallach's term. Treatment of landscapes in this manner corresponded with a crisis of cultural authority among early nineteenth-century elites. For instance, Wallach's analysis of Daniel Wadsworth's tower on Mount Talcott and its associated paintings demonstrates how a member of the squirearchy manipulated a landscape to shore up his declining social standing "by resorting to a bourgeois or modernizing vision of landscape (the panoptic sublime)." Wadsworth assembled tracts of land into his aptly named Monte Video estate and endowed it with a dominant view, experienced from a 55-foot-high tower, which he opened to the public. According to Wallach, "at Monte Video, Wadsworth fashioned an idealized version of a social order

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<sup>86</sup> Martin, *The Pleasure Gardens of Virginia*, 101, 121, 125; Hunt-Jones, *Dolley and "the great little Madison,"* 73; Sarudy, "Gardening Books in Eighteenth-Century Maryland," *Journal of Garden History*, 109; Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 127-131.

<sup>87</sup> Bernard McMahon, *The American Gardener's Calendar: Adapted to the climate and seasons of the United States, 9th Edition, greatly improved.* reprint 1839 (Philadelphia: A. M'Mahon, 1806), 76; Hunt-Jones, *Dolley and the "great little Madison,"* 73; Martin, *The Pleasure Gardens of Virginia*, 101.



that was fast slipping away.”<sup>88</sup>

While Montpelier’s formal garden lacked a 55-foot tower that provided a dramatic vista, the terraced garden and architectural features of the house demonstrated Madison’s appreciation for composing landscape views. For instance, the view from the upper level of the garden was designed as a conventional picturesque landscape with formal plantings in the foreground and a view of mountainous wilderness in the background. The garden view complemented the mountain vista to the west from the portico, which Mrs. Thornton described in 1802. The roof over the wings of the mansion also offered a vantage point. The creation of a landscape that featured vistas and horticultural display distinguished Madison from the egalitarian social order emerging in the early American republic.

Although the exterior of the house did not impress him, a French visitor in 1816 comprehended the dramatic vistas and the refined effect Madison had created. Before arriving at Montpelier, Baron de Montlezun contended that piedmont Virginia, like the rest of the United States, lacked “an advanced society of good taste and tone enriched by urbanity.” He criticized the climate, the soil, the people, their “badly formed manners, crude usages, religious fanaticism,” and their “democracy, which is unbearable.” His first impression of Montpelier did little to change his mind: “His home is not at all pretentious, nor in consonance with what the high position of the owner would lead one to expect. It can hardly be seen in the midst of the trees which surround it.” Once inside, however, he found that the interiors were “agreeably planned and decently furnished.” As for the house, it was “plain in its exterior,” but the grounds, “laid out in an English garden,” enhanced it. The massing of the house, he wrote, was “softened by pleasant

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<sup>88</sup> Alan Wallach, “Wadsworth’s Tower: An Episode in the History of American Landscape Vision,” *American Art* 10 (Fall 1996): 9-11, 14, 17.

lawns bordering on woods laid out in park-like vistas at unequal distances, which agreeably varies the perspective.” From his guest room and the roof above the new wings the baron experienced the vista provided by the house: “From my apartment, and particularly from the terrace which is attached to it, I can glimpse over the tops of the forest an immense plain whose fertile terrain, strewn here and there with hillocks, gradually lifts its successive levels, variously tinted, up to the romantic and misty masses which outline their semicircular amphitheater against the horizon.”<sup>89</sup>

During Madison’s presidency, Montpelier took on the characteristics of a *ferme ornée*, with pleasure grounds surrounded by productive agricultural fields. The landscape featured a variety of improvements that testified to Madison’s agrarian outlook. The assemblage of objects also supported his reputation as a gentleman farmer: innovative agricultural machines, new breeds of livestock, and new varieties of grains. Madison also used agriculture as a means to negotiate a cultural dilemma. With the development of an egalitarian social climate and market-oriented conditions after the revolution, traditional notions of virtue and personal sacrifice, characteristics that the Founding Fathers regarded as fundamental to the life of the republic, gave way to liberal behaviors defined by self-interest and free enterprise.<sup>90</sup> Farming for Madison took on a civic dimension. He saw it as the basis for republican ideology and the preservation of the Union. According to Drew McCoy, Madison’s “self-conscious effort to preserve an eighteenth-century legacy became the burden of his retirement, which was in effect no retirement from public life at all.”<sup>91</sup> Efforts to improve the quality of husbandry were motivated by a desire to preserve

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<sup>89</sup> Baron de Montlezun, “A Frenchman Visits Norfolk, Fredericksburg, and Orange County, 1816,” trans., L. G. Moffatt and J. M. Carrière, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 53 (April/July 1945): 75, 198.

<sup>90</sup> Robert E. Shalhope, “Republicanism and Early American Historiography,” *William & Mary Quarterly*, 3d. ser., 39 (April 1982): 347-348.

<sup>91</sup> Drew McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 75.

agrarian character and benefit the financially troubled Virginia farmer. Nevertheless, from his bucolic world at Montpelier he watched America trend toward a liberalism that bore little resemblance to the virtuous behavior of models found in classical literature. After his last term as president, Madison pondered, according to McCoy, “a new phase in the history of American republicanism, one sufficiently unstable and disruptive to unsettle this most self-controlled of men who had, after all, withstood the most spectacular revolutions of the eighteenth century.” Popular licentiousness and rapacity threatened to corrupt national character. According to McCoy, “Balance, restraint, and the discipline of personal and public passion were Madisonian—which is to say, enlightened, eighteenth century—imperatives that appeared ever more incongruous, hence all the more necessary, in the new, nineteenth-century world that a younger generation of Americans now busied itself in making.”<sup>92</sup>

The farm, then, was rich in meaning for Madison. Baron Montlezun included a description of Madison’s farm operation in the account of his visit. He wrote, “I went today [18 September 1816] to one of the farms of the President to see a wheat thrashing machine; it is composed of two parts, one of which receives the sheaves fed into it by Negroes as fast as the stripping process allows, while the other made up of large cog-wheels which turn the wooden cylinder which acts on the first machine is driven by four horses. This machine turns out two hundred bushels a day.”<sup>93</sup>

Madison had a long standing interest in improvements to farm machinery. He secured a new plow model made by George Logan, a founder of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, in Philadelphia in 1793. It was sufficient, but he sought to improve it: “By fixing the Colter, which is detached, to the point of the share, it will I

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<sup>92</sup> McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers*, 35, 65.

<sup>93</sup> Baron de Montlezun, *A Frenchman visits Norfolk, Fredericksburg, and Orange County, 1816*.

think be nearly compleat. I propose to have one so constructed. The detached form may answer best in old clean ground; but will not stand the shocks of our rough & rooty land, especially in the hands of our ploughmen.”<sup>94</sup> He described the result of his redesign to Jefferson: “I have tried the patent plow amended by fixing the Colter in the usual way. It succeeds perfectly, and I think forms the plow best suited to its object.”<sup>95</sup>

Productive fields included pasture for sheep, which had been part of Montpelier’s livestock since the 1730s, but Madison sought to improve the sheep. “On the same farm,” wrote Montlezun, “the merinos, the large-tailed rams of the Cape of Good Hope, and their cross-bred offspring with the old stock, make up numerous flocks, the wool of which is highly prized and brings a good price.”<sup>96</sup> In 1809, Madison made a public demonstration of his interest in promoting merinos when he wore a suit of merino wool to his inauguration ceremony.<sup>97</sup> He began breeding imported sheep into his flock with a merino he received from Chancellor Robert R. Livingston through George Washington Parke Custis in 1810.<sup>98</sup> Livingston had sent him information on merinos in October 1809, which, Madison wrote, “afforded me much pleasure by the information it gave of the success with which you prosecuted your plan of enlightening your countrymen on the subject of sheep & wool.” Madison hoped Livingston’s promotions would be “duly felt in all the states adapted to those objects.” In Madison’s opinion, native sheep would be “greatly strengthened by the additional value given to their fleeces by the merino blood.” By improving the quality of American sheep, Madison anticipated “a valuable

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<sup>94</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 18 July 1793, & 30 July 1793, *PJM*, 15: 45, 49.

<sup>95</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 16 Sept. 1793, *PJM*, 15: 113.

<sup>96</sup> Baron de Montlezun, *A Frenchman visits Norfolk, Fredericksburg, and Orange County, 1816*.

<sup>97</sup> William Livingston to James Madison, 13 March 1809, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 1: 38.

<sup>98</sup> George Washington Parke Custis to James Madison, 31 May 1810, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 2: 363-364.

revolution” in American agriculture.<sup>99</sup>

As he was producing his own merino cross-breeds, Madison used his presidential office to further the cause of agricultural reform and diversify sources of agricultural profit. Writing to Jefferson, Madison declared that the “general idea of disposing of the supernumerary Merino Rams for the public benefit had occurred to me.”<sup>100</sup> To achieve that goal, Madison requested that John Armstrong secure permission from the French to import merinos in 1809, arguing that “the value of this breed to our Country is now generally understood, and acquisitions of specimens are acceptable services to the public.”<sup>101</sup> William Jarvis, American consul in Lisbon, Portugal, sent the sheep to Alexandria, Virginia, in 1810. After Madison tended to infections on the sheep that had developed during shipment, his overseer brought some of them to Montpelier. He sent two to Monticello for Jefferson and Capt. Isaac Coles in May 1810.<sup>102</sup> Madison shipped some of the merinos beyond Virginia: “Two of the large tails I have disposed of here, one of them to Claiborne, for the benefit of the Orleans meat Market.” Madison augmented the shipment of rams with ewes: “I send home also, by this oppy. six Merino Ewes, which had been destined for Hooe of Alexanda. Finding that the arrangements necessary for the original pair, would provide for small flock, I have been tempted to make this addition to them; as a fund of pure Merino blood, worth attending to.”<sup>103</sup>

Madison thanked Jarvis for facilitating this agricultural improvement program in June 1810. In this letter, he reiterated his intention for “this precious breed of sheep” to

<sup>99</sup> James Madison to Robert R. Livingston, 9 December 1809, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 2: 120.

<sup>100</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 25 May 1810, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 2: 353.

<sup>101</sup> James Madison to John Armstrong, 14 March 1809, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 4: 585-586.

<sup>102</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 25 May 1810, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 2: 353; William Jarvis to Thomas Jefferson, 20 January 1810; Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 25 March 1810; *Thomas Jefferson’s Farm Book*, ed. Edwin Morris Betts (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia for The American Philosophical Society, 1953, 1976), 125, 126, 128.

<sup>103</sup> James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 19 October 1810, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 2: 586.

serve the public good. He also noted that the effects of this improvement appeared to be evident in the rising price of merinos. He wrote, "I propose in the disposition of the Ram lambs of full blood to study as the *sole* object, a propagation [of] the breed for the public good. Mr. Jefferson has the same purpose."<sup>104</sup> Purchases of more foreign sheep at auctions in Baltimore, Richmond, and Alexandria in 1810 and 1811 reflected Madison's commitment to merino interbreeding.<sup>105</sup>

Public interest in Montpelier's flock of merino sheep grew. For instance, Hay Battaile, passing Montpelier on his way to the White Sulphur Springs in 1811, "call'd on Mr Gooch. . . to get a pair or a Ram of your broad Tail sheep." Gooch denied Battaile's request, but he thought he might have a second opportunity of getting some of Madison's sheep since he knew, through Mr. Gooch, that Madison would be "geting a stock of two other breeds, that you liked much better."<sup>106</sup> In addition, Thomas Jefferson informed a correspondent in 1813 that Madison has merino sheep and sells young ram lambs.<sup>107</sup>

Madison described the state of his flock to Richard Peters in March 1811. He wrote, "I have had broad tails, 4 or 5 years on my farm, which agree in all the distinctive merits of yours, except that their wool is more coarse. I have lately recd. from Algiers several Rams of that breed, remarkable for the size of their tails; but with fleeces all coarse, tho' not equally so; but all useful for the loom." He also described to Peters his sheep diffusion program, "I have distributed them into different hands & situations, with

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<sup>104</sup> James Madison to William Jarvis, 17 June 1810, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 4: 619-620.

<sup>105</sup> Richard Forest to James Madison, 6 October 1810; James H. Hooe to James Madison, 14 October 1810, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 2: 572-573, 583; James Madison to William Madison, 11 January 1811, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 3: 116.

<sup>106</sup> Hay Battaile to James Madison, 16 August 1811, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 3: 421.

<sup>107</sup> Thomas Jefferson to William Caruthers, 12 March 1813, *Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book, 1766-1824*, ed. Edwin Morris Betts (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1944), 507.

a view to preserve the stock.”<sup>108</sup> Based on Madison’s description, Peters surmised, “Your Sheep I think must be the Barbary *Coast* Sheep. They are of the same Race, but not so good as the *Mountain* Sheep.”<sup>109</sup>

Peters’s judgment had a profound effect upon Madison. He attempted to acquire the mountain breed in October 1811. Additions to the flock were needed because the lamb was killed accidentally before it reached Montpelier, and “the 4 horned ram died soon after.” Left with only an old ram, he prevailed upon the American Consul General in north Africa, Tobias Lear, to, in his words, “procure me a pair, or if readily to be done, more than one pair of those animals.”<sup>110</sup> Based upon Peters’s information, Madison insisted on having the mountain breed and gave Lear instructions on where to find them. “Perhaps,” he wrote, “there may be broad-tailed families in Algiers, cloathed with fine fleeces; finer even than those of our ordinary sheep.” He instructed Lear to search in Tunis, “towards the Mountains at least, there are broad-tailed sheep with fleeces considerably finer than our common wool.” Madison had seen samples of Tunisian sheep, he told Lear, “from a flock of Judge Peters, who sent them to me, with a sample of Cloth made of the material, & with an Eulogium on the longevity, the mutton, & other merits of the Sheep.” He also mentioned that, “Southward of Tripoli, there is a broad-tail sheep, equally remarkable for the succulence of the meat, & a fineness of wool, almost rivalling that of the Merino.”<sup>111</sup> Madison’s request to Lear indicated his keen interest in these sheep.

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<sup>108</sup> James Madison to Richard Peters, 15 March 1811, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 3: 222.

<sup>109</sup> Richard Peters to James Madison, 6 April 1811, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 3: 247-248.

<sup>110</sup> When Madison wrote to Lear, Lear had been serving as Consul General in north Africa since his appointment to that position by President Thomas Jefferson in 1803. Prior to this appointment, Lear briefly served as an American consul in Santo Domingo during General Toussaint-L’Ouverture’s rule. Lear also served President George Washington as a private secretary and family tutor before entering public service; James Madison to Tobias Lear, 26 October 1811, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 3: 501.

<sup>111</sup> James Madison to Tobias Lear, 26 October 1811, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 3: 501.

By raising and interbreeding merinos, or Barbary sheep, Madison meant to preserve agrarian virtue in society by expanding market opportunities for farmers. Likewise, Peters recognized the social and economic dimensions and associated sheep raising with republicanism. In his letter to Madison, he told him, “Being a good Republican, I have a Coat made for my own wearing. I could not get it dyed in the Wool, without more Trouble than I chose to take, or I would have had it *black*; & would have worn it for my *Costume*. It would have then been on a Par with my Office; which is happily situated—below Envy & above Contempt. You see I am . . . neither ambitious nor vulgar.”<sup>112</sup> For Tench Coxe, raising merinos was a patriotic act. He wrote to Madison, “If such a course [war] shall be taken towards us, manufactures must support our Agriculture, and the woolen manufacture, with some aid from the cotton, must become necessary to effective war.”<sup>113</sup> Madison agreed with Livingston’s plan of improvement, Peters’s argument, and Coxe’s assertion that homespun merino garments comported with the republican aversion to luxury and advocacy of domestic manufactures. The changes to Montpelier’s flocks demonstrated his agreement.

The tasks associated with sheep, tending, shearing, and spinning of wool at home fell to the slaves on the various quarters. Montlezun noted that the Montpelier slaves “are divided among the numerous farms which constitute his holdings. Some of these farmhouses are very pretty, built of wood, clean, and comfortable.” The presence of slaves at Montpelier provided a tincture of colonial domination familiar to Montlezun. He wrote, “Sometimes I imagine that I am still in a settlement of one of our colonies. The tilling of the land and domestic service is done here by Negroes and people of color as in

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<sup>112</sup> Richard Peters to James Madison, 6 April 1811, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 3: 247-248.

<sup>113</sup> Tench Coxe to James Madison, 24 April 1812, *PJM—Presidential Series*, 4: 347.



the Antilles.”<sup>114</sup> Montlezun stated that the slaves were treated well, but Madison’s management of and attitude toward his slaves was expressed in instructions to his overseers in 1790: “To chuse out one of the Milch Cows for his own use, and let the rest be milked for the Negroes. To keep the Negroes supplied with meal to be kept in a barrell apart for themselves. . . To treat the Negroes with all the humanity & kindness consistent with their necessary subordination and work.”<sup>115</sup>

The subordination and work of the slaves provided the base for Madison’s elevated social standing and his reputation as an experimental farmer. He offered his neighbors new varieties of grains that were given to him. For instance, in 1793, he sent James Monroe “an Ear of Corn which is forwarder by three weeks than the ordinary sort; and if given to your overseer may supply a seasonable dish on your return next summer.”<sup>116</sup> From Philadelphia, Madison sent samples of “wheat from Buenos Ayres and of Barley from Old Spain” to Charles P. Howard, a neighboring farmer in Orange County. Although he could not predict any improvement in the quality of the grain, “Such experiments are at least curious, and multiply the chances of discovery.”<sup>117</sup>

Recognition of his efforts in agricultural improvement came in the early 1800s. For instance, Thomas Moore praised his farming, sought his opinion, and certified him as model farmer: “Thy character as a person of general information, & more especially as a successful practical farmer, induces me to believe that thou art very competent to judge of the merits of the work.”<sup>118</sup> Moore later sent a certificate from a Montgomery County,

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<sup>114</sup> Baron de Montlezun, *A Frenchman visits Norfolk, Fredericksburg, and Orange County, 1816*.

<sup>115</sup> James Madison to Mordecai Collins, 8 November 1790, *PJM*, 13: 302-303.

<sup>116</sup> James Madison to James Monroe, 29 October 1793, *PJM*, 15: 132.

<sup>117</sup> James Madison to Charles P. Howard, 11 September 1805, Mss. 2 M 2653 b 13, Virginia Historical Society.

<sup>118</sup> Thomas Moore, *The Great Error of American Agriculture Exposed*, Thomas Moore to James Madison, 4 April 1802, *PJM—Secretary of State Series*, 3: 94.

Maryland, farmers' society, which praised Madison for "his zeal to promote Agricultural knowledge."<sup>119</sup> Madison thanked them "for this testimony of respect." He also expressed his belief in the fundamental importance of agriculture—"The art which draws from the earth the subsistence of mankind, is not only the most important in itself, but the basis of all other arts."<sup>120</sup> James Monroe also complimented him for his agricultural (and architectural) knowledge in 1799: "Your skill in architecture and farming wo'd be of great use to me at present. I am engaged in both and take more interest, especially in the latter. tho' under discouraging circumstances, than at any former time."<sup>121</sup>

Madison's statements on agriculture as a foundation for virtue in the republic were well known. His agrarian ideology can be traced to classical sources as well as the social and economic experience of growing up on a farm. His father's library included an agricultural treatise. Moreover, having read *The Politics*, Madison learned from Aristotle the value of an agrarian population base in a republican form of government. Aristotle shrewdly noted that a republic was more likely to succeed if its citizens were perpetually busy in the fields far from cities and the centers of government. Thus, farmers would be less susceptible to the rhetoric of demagogues and less likely to support political intrigues that tempted their wage-earning counterpart in the city.<sup>122</sup> In an essay entitled "Republican Distribution of Citizens," Madison praised farm life in terms that paralleled Aristotle's, writing that the life of a farmer "is pre-eminently suited to the comfort and happiness of the individual. . . the class of citizens who provide at once their own food and their own raiment, may be viewed as the most truly independent and happy. They

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<sup>119</sup> Thomas Moore to James Madison, 16 August 1802, *PJM—Secretary of State Series*, 3: 474.

<sup>120</sup> James Madison to Isaac Briggs, post 8 October 1802, *PJM—Secretary of State Series*, 4: 1.

<sup>121</sup> Hamilton, ed., *Writings of James Monroe*, 3: 158.

<sup>122</sup> Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book VI, chap. iv, trans. T. A. Sinclair (1962; reprint New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1987).

are more; they are the best basis of public liberty and the strongest bulwark of public safety.”<sup>123</sup> Jefferson shared this agrarian outlook. In a letter to Madison, he predicted, “Our governments will remain virtuous for many centuries as long as they are chiefly agricultural.”<sup>124</sup> Madison addressed members of Congress on this subject. “In my opinion,” he said, “it would be proper also, for gentlemen to consider the means of encouraging the great staple of America, I mean agriculture, which I think may justly be styled the staple of the United States; from the spontaneous productions which nature furnished, and the manifest preference it has over every other object of emolument in this county.”<sup>125</sup>

After his second term as president, Madison continued his efforts at agricultural improvement through a local society of gentlemen farmers. The formation of local societies for improving farm productivity emerged as a trend in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Particularly after the revolution, the leading farmers from various regions of the United States organized into agricultural societies to promote improved farming as well as their own reputations. Although George Washington had proposed federal support for agricultural improvement, no appropriations from Congress were forthcoming.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, the effort was largely local in nature. In spite of the local organization of these societies, common yeomen were rarely included in the membership. In her research, Tamara Plakins Thornton recognizes a strain of self-aggrandizing paternalism in the early history of the Massachusetts Society for the Promotion of Agriculture. Its members rarely published papers on experimental agriculture practices.

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<sup>123</sup> Marvin Meyers, ed., *The Mind of the Founder* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1981), 184-185.

<sup>124</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 12: 442.

<sup>125</sup> James Madison, “*Advice to my Country*,” David B. Mattern, ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 11-12.

<sup>126</sup> A. Hunter Dupree, *Science in the Federal Government: A History of Policies and Activities* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 16.

Instead, they shared gardening tips among themselves and occasionally offered premiums at fairs. Elite Bostonians promoted agriculture as a counter measure against the growing spirit of commerce, the erosion of their social prominence, and the corruption embedded in luxury.<sup>127</sup> Similarly, the South Carolina Agricultural Society membership included elite politicians and the wealthy slave holders. Joyce Chaplin argues that advocates of agricultural improvement in South Carolina sought to maintain unequal social relations by denying lower social classes access to slaves, land, and improved agricultural knowledge. The results of their experiments with agricultural commodities were restricted to members.<sup>128</sup> Both societies demonstrated more concern with mitigating the liberalizing spirit of modernity and the decline in elite privilege than with immediate reforms to common husbandry.

The Agricultural Society of Albemarle consisted of local elites, politicians, and slave holders. Its goal, according to Ralph Ketcham, was “to sustain in the country the life of rural virtue and prosperity vital to its republican character.”<sup>129</sup> Additionally, the Society existed as armature for the display of the local gentry’s agricultural acumen and largess. It supported their identity as cultivated gentleman farmers and their standing as Piedmont grandees. Yet, Madison believed this “patriotic society” would provide “its full quota of information. . . to the general stock.”<sup>130</sup> It did fulfill this claim when it published his 1818 address in the *American Farmer*.

His address covered various aspects of the state of agriculture in Virginia. It

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<sup>127</sup> Thornton, *Cultivating Gentlemen*, 8-10.

<sup>128</sup> Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1993), 140-141.

<sup>129</sup> Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography*, 621.

<sup>130</sup> James Madison, “Address to the Agricultural Society of Albemarle,” Charlottesville, 12 May 1818, printed in *American Farmer*, I, 1819, (typescript on file at The Madison Papers, Alderman Library, Charlottesville), 17.

featured comments on soil exhaustion, livestock, pasturage, and the application of manures. He advocated deep plowing, “cultivation in horizontal drills,” and intensive fertilization as a remedy. “The neglect of manures is another error which claims particular notice,” Madison told his audience. His recommendation: “applying to the soil a sufficiency of animal and vegetable matter in a putrefied state, or a state ready for putrefaction.” He recommended plowing with oxen rather than horses. Timothy and clover hays received his recommendation as animal fodder since they would provide “stable manure for gardens and culinary crops.” He added plaster of gypsum, lime, and marl to his list of recommended fertilizer applications.<sup>131</sup>

Madison employed ancient agricultural tracts and allegories to inform his thinking and amplify his arguments for progressive farming. He cited Pliny and Varro to bolster his own prescriptive privilege, references that carried little meaning for common yeomen. He invoked Columella, an ancient Roman authority on agriculture, to convey the benefits of fertilization and to underscore the moral dimension of improved farming: “one of the Roman writers on husbandry enforces the obligation to an improving management,” he said. He then retold Columella’s story of Paridius successfully dividing his vineyard among his daughters upon their marriage without suffering any loss of productivity to his remaining portions because he fertilized. “The story, short as it is,” said Madison, “contains a volume of instruction.”<sup>132</sup> Elsewhere, Madison had described James Monroe as “a worshipper of Ceres” when he learned Monroe was growing corn.<sup>133</sup>

Madison’s classical references demonstrated his reliance on antiquity to illustrate his thoughts. It showed the continuing relevance of classical literature among elites in the

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<sup>131</sup> Madison, “Address to the Agricultural Society of Albemarle,” 18, 21, 27.

<sup>132</sup> Madison, “Address to the Agricultural Society of Albemarle,” 22-23, 28-29.

<sup>133</sup> James Madison to James Monroe, 29 October 1793, *PJM*, 15: 132.

early national period.<sup>134</sup> However, Federalists who took note of southern agricultural societies ridiculed them for presuming that they might better manage their farms by reading classical pastoral literature and advocating self-sufficient farming and home manufactures while wearing suits of imported cloth, according to Linda Kerber.<sup>135</sup>

In Madison's lifetime soil chemistry was a speculative and elitist endeavor, but he included it in his address nonetheless. Based on their understanding of elements, Madison claimed, "The chemist, though as yet a fellow student as much as a preceptor of the agriculturalist, justly claims attention to the result of his processes."<sup>136</sup> Margaret Rossiter's history of agricultural science in the United States discusses a group of upstate New York gentlemen farmers, similar to the social standing of the Agricultural Society of Albemarle members, who organized a New York State agricultural society in 1832 to pursue solutions to soil exhaustion problems. Their early attempts to understand soil chemistry generated competing theories of fertilizers as atmospheric or soil-based. Furthermore, their recommendations were met with skepticism by local farmers. Only after Americans began studying in Germany with the chemist Justus von Liebig did soil analysis gain respect in the United States in the last half of the nineteenth century. Prior to that, according to Dupree, European travelers studied North American natural resources "more authoritatively" than United States citizens. Madison's reference to soil chemistry reflects an elite interest in the formative stages of this field of inquiry.<sup>137</sup>

The effectiveness of Virginia farming reforms has been analyzed by scholars. For

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<sup>134</sup> Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 8.

<sup>135</sup> Linda Kerber, *Federalists in Dissent: Imagery and Ideology in Jeffersonian America* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970), 112, 187.

<sup>136</sup> Madison, "Address to the Agricultural Society of Albemarle," 18.

<sup>137</sup> Margaret W. Rossiter, *The Emergence of Agricultural Science: Justus von Liebig and the Americans 1840-1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 91, 102, 109, 132; Dupree, *Science in the Federal Government*, 7.

instance, Avery O. Craven, Richard B. Davis, and Charles W. Turner credit Virginia agricultural reformers, particularly Madison, Jefferson, Edmund Ruffin, and John Taylor of Caroline, for diversifying agricultural practices. However, L.C. Gray argues that the improvements were limited to large plantations with numerous slaves. In his analysis of social and economic change in Orange and Greene counties, John Schlotterbeck argues that agricultural reform and crop diversification were underway before the agricultural societies organized. Furthermore, the intent of reform was geared toward large slave plantations, and the “limited membership and emphasis on social activities limited [the] societies as vehicles of agricultural improvement.”<sup>138</sup>

All of the features of Montpelier, including the house and grounds, were set in order by Madison to meet the standard to govern, a standard he had put forth in *The Federalist* essays. As the product of republican political economy, Montpelier, and the agrarian life it supported, was a material reproach to stock jobbers and avaricious marketplace interests. Montpelier set Madison apart from commercial men, which he described as “Men of factious tempters, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, [who] may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests of the people.” Montpelier enabled Madison to count himself among the governing class, men “whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations.” These were the “requisite endowments” that Madison defined in *The Federalist* essays as necessary to represent constituents and hold

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<sup>138</sup> Avery O. Craven, *Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606-1860*, University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, vol. 13, no. 1 (Urbana: 1925; reprint, Gloucester, Mass., 1965), Richard B. Davis, *Intellectual Life in Jefferson's Virginia* (Chapel Hill: 1964), 150; Charles W. Turner, “Virginia State Agricultural Societies, 1811-1860,” *Agricultural History*, 38 (1964): 167-177; John T. Schlotterbeck, *Plantation and Farm: Social and Economic Change in Orange and Greene Counties, Virginia, 1716 to 1860*, Ph.D. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1980 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1980), 283.

civil authority. His mode of living and building at Montpelier placed him in the class “whose enlightened views and virtuous sentiments render them superior to local prejudices, and to schemes of injustice.”<sup>139</sup> His activities at Montpelier supported his standing among the class of men who, in his words, “possess most wisdom to discern, and most virtue to pursue, the common good of society.”<sup>140</sup>

Madison’s role in the agricultural society and the appearance of his farmland was a manifestation of faith in the regenerative capacity of the North American landscape. The same faith in the North American landscape as a foundation for the new republic’s beginning supported the revolutionary generation. Leo Marx argues that in the late eighteenth century the landscape had revolutionary force and symbolic significance, capable of serving as “an explanation of the formation of the national character.” With its timelessness, continental expansiveness, and fecundity, the landscape seemed capable of supporting prosperity and the individual’s pursuit of happiness. Madison’s activities at Montpelier exemplified the republican concept of political economy. His interest in farm reform was an attempt to arrest the fugitive spirit of virtuous agrarianism in a republic that was embracing liberalism and trending toward corruption through rapacity. Improved farming could secure a middle ground and keep the United States in a youthful state, as opposed to the overdeveloped condition of Europe. Leo Marx defines such a conception of the middle landscape as that symbolic space “created by the mediation between art and nature.” In a nation with an undefined landscape tradition and a vast domain of underdeveloped territory, it seemed possible from the vantage point of Montpelier to hold a course between the savage state and the urban, industrial debauchery of Europe.

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<sup>139</sup> No. 10, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Clinton Rossiter (New York: New American Library, Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1996), 50, 52.

<sup>140</sup> No. 57, *The Federalist Papers*, Clinton Rossiter, ed. (New York: New American Library, Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1996), 318.



The promise they perceived in the landscape, however, excluded Native Americans and African Americans and was, according to Leo Marx, illusory.<sup>141</sup>

The agrarian legacy that Madison had instilled into the house and grounds at Montpelier could not endure. Montpelier's acreage began to decrease in Madison's retirement. He sold and mortgaged portions of his plantation to cover various indebtedness of his own and others. For instance, Madison mortgaged 361 acres to Charles Scott and Francis Cowherd on 12 October 1825 in order to secure a \$1,000 debt of his own and a \$1,000 on account of his ward Lucy W. Daniel. Later, he sold 120 acres to Reuben Newman for \$1,370. He mortgaged the 800-acre Black Meadow farm to secure a \$3,000 debt owed to Francis Cowherd.<sup>142</sup> Sales of slaves attended his sales of land in the 1830s.<sup>143</sup> Some of the transactions protected his son-in-law, John Payne Todd, from creditors who briefly had imprisoned him in Baltimore. The size of Montpelier's slave community, which had peaked in 1801 at 108, diminished to 63 in 1828. Madison paid taxes on 61 slaves in 1830, 1831, and 1832. In the 1835 assessment, though, Madison's taxable slave population dramatically dropped to 40 members as a result of his sales to a neighbor in 1834.<sup>144</sup> It fell again to 38 in 1836.<sup>145</sup> Madison explained the circumstances of his sale of slaves to Harriet Martineau at this time. She writes, "He accounted for his selling his slaves by mentioning their horror of going to Liberia, a horror which he admitted to be prevalent among the blacks."<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Leo Marx, *The American Revolution and the American Landscape* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1974), 4, 9, 10, 11-14, 18-19; Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 71.

<sup>142</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 32: 222, 256, 375.

<sup>143</sup> Brant, *James Madison: Commander in Chief, 1812-1836*, 510.

<sup>144</sup> James Madison to Edward Coles, 3 Oct. 1834, Papers of James Madison (acc. no. 2988), Manuscripts Department, University of Virginia Library.

<sup>145</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, microfilm reels, Library of Virginia.

<sup>146</sup> Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travel*, 1: 192.

Madison's confinement of his slave community in perpetual bondage contrasted sharply to that of his neighbor and friend Edward Coles of Albemarle County. Coles, who had served for a time as President Madison's private secretary in Washington, chided Madison about the condition of slaves in the United States when they passed a slave auction in progress in Washington, D.C. Later, Coles toured Europe after completing a diplomatic mission to Russia, but instead of returning to farm his ancestral slave plantation in Albemarle County, he emancipated all of his slaves in Illinois in 1819. He wrote to Madison to tell him of the slaves' emancipation. Madison replied with guarded congratulations and notified him of the sale of his own slaves: "Finding that I have, in order to avoid the sale of Negroes sold land until the residue will not support them, concentered and increasing as they are, I have yielded to the necessity of parting with some of them to a friend and kinsman [W. Taylor], who I am persuaded will do better by them than I can, and to whom they gladly consent to be transferred. By this transaction I am enabled to replace the sum you kindly loaned me."<sup>147</sup>

The decline of Montpelier was apparent to Charles J. Ingersoll, who visited Montpelier one month before Madison died on 26 June 1836. He described the house as "decayed and in need of inconsiderable repairs which, at a trifling expense, would make a great difference in favor of the first impression of his residence." Ingersoll identified slavery as the cause of Montpelier's misfortune. Ingersoll surmised that the cost of supporting the slave community prohibited maintenance of the estate. He found that nearly two thirds of "his slaves are too young or too old to work too much, while the support of so many is very expensive. It takes nearly all he makes to feed, clothe, and preserve them; and when a handsome column or other ornamental part of his mansion

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<sup>147</sup> Elizabeth Langhorne, K. Edward Lay, William D. Rieley, eds. *A Virginia Family and Its Plantation Houses* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1987), 132-141; James Madison to Edward Coles, 3 Oct. 1834, Papers of James Madison (acc. no. 2988), University of Virginia.

falls into decay, he wants the means of conveniently repairing it, without encroaching on necessary expenditures—besides the difficulty of getting adequate artists at such a distance from their common resorts.” He wrote that Madison “spoke often and anxiously of slave property as the worst possible for profit.” He added that Madison admitted the deficiencies of slave labor in agriculture: “when I mentioned Mr. Rush’s productive farm of ten acres, near Philadelphia, he said he had no doubt it was more profitable than his with two thousand.”<sup>148</sup>

The condition of Montpelier in 1836 indicated the consequences of Madison’s entrenched attitude toward slavery and the failure of colonization as a path to emancipation. Nevertheless, Madison’s faith in emancipation through colonization was unshaken. His will included his mill as a bequest to the American Colonization Society after the death of his wife Dolley in hopes of furthering their cause. Although she tried for eight years to manage the plantation, Montpelier, as his legacy, became her unbearable burden.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Peter Force, “Scrapbook about James Madison,” Mss. 9911, McGregor Room, M-2275, Slipcase #51, Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, 15.

<sup>149</sup> Orange County Will Book, 8: 217-219.

## CHAPTER III

### The Reluctant Stewards

President James Madison's death on 28 June 1836 left Montpelier without its animating spirit. The social life that Mrs. Smith and others had enjoyed there ended. Madison's widow and stepson attempted to manage the plantation, but they sold it to a wealthy merchant from Richmond seven years later. Before the Civil War, the plantation changed hands four more times. In that time, a family of English farmers attempted to practice improved farming methods, and a group of citizens erected monuments over the graves of James and Dolley Madison. The plantation also served as a status symbol for two wealthy Richmond businessmen. The story of Montpelier in the 1840s and 1850s reflects the emerging sectional tension and depressed economy in antebellum Virginia.

A month after her husband's death, Dolley Madison's grief had not abated. She wrote to her sister, "Indeed I have been as one in a troubled dream since my irreparable loss of him."<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Septima Anne Cary Randolph Meikleham recalled a visit to Montpelier after 1836. She wrote, "The change was most sad. The house seemed utterly deserted. The great Statesman, loving husband, kind Master, and attentive friend was gone. And we three seemed lost in the great desolate house." Even with the company of her niece Anna Payne, Dolley appeared "broken hearted" to Mrs. Meikleham.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dolley Payne Madison (DPM) to Mrs. Richard B. Lee, 26 July 1836, The Papers of Dolley Payne Madison, Mss. 18,940, Library of Congress (PDPM-LC).

<sup>2</sup> Septima Anne Cary Randolph Meikleham, "Montpelier, Quiet Home Life of Mr. and Mrs. Madison," Randolph-Meikleham Family Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Mss 4726-a.

Visitors continued to come to Montpelier. Most were family members. For instance, Dolley spent the winter of 1839-40 at home entertaining family. She wrote to her sister, “Our winter set in a month earlier than usual and before two marriages in our family, of great nieces and nephews could be consummated I was literally weather bound—they would not allow me to leave home before I had given them frolicke and partaken of others.”<sup>3</sup> There was only one documented instance of a visitor, who thought of Montpelier as a shrine, coming to pay respects. Anthony Morris wrote to her in 1837: “Among the reviving powers of spring which I pray may shed its choicest blessing on Mont Pelier, its influence here is to renew the hope to my dear Mary and myself of making our so long intended visit to its Shrine which without even waiting for your concurrence as to time, we propose to do on the first fair day Thursday.”<sup>4</sup> Another visitor in 1839 noted twenty guests at Montpelier prior to his arrival.<sup>5</sup> Although the social round at Montpelier continued, honoring Madison’s memory was not a pronounced component of the visits. Those who did visit were either relatives coming to see Mrs. Madison or close acquaintances stopping by on their travels through the area.

Under Dolley P. Madison the number of slaves at Montpelier increased. Starting with 44 taxable slaves in 1837, she commanded 52 by 1841. The 1840 census enumerated 103 slaves and seven free whites at Montpelier. By contrast, the 1830 census enumerated 97 slaves and three free white people. In 1840, 33 slaves were employed in agriculture. Three slaves worked in manufactures and trades. The 1842 tax assessment showed one white male (presumably the overseer), seven slaves over 12 years old, and 36 over sixteen

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<sup>3</sup> DPM to Mrs. Elizabeth Lee, 19 February 1840, PDPM-LC.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Morris to Dolley Payne Madison, 10 May 1837, PDPM-LC.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, *The First Forty Years*, 381.

years.<sup>6</sup>

Typically, historians associate Dolley Madison with hospitality, but her writings during this time reveal her management of Montpelier's slaves and agricultural production. In her memoir, Margaret Bayard Smith recorded an 1838 letter from Dolley that characterized the daily round at Montpelier after the death of President Madison. Dolley wrote that she was "involved in a variety of business—reading, writing, and flying about the house, garden, and grove—straining my eyes to the height of my spirits, until they became inflamed, and frightened into idleness and to quietly sitting in drawing-room with my kind connexions and neighbours—sometimes talking like the *farmeress*, and often acting the Character from my rocking chair."<sup>7</sup> Dolley also supervised tobacco shipments. She wrote to her agent in 1840, "We now send you the last hogshead of Tobacco from the last crop with thanks for all your kind attention." From this same agent she requested, "500 wgt of Bacon of good character for black people (by return car) to be paid for by the proceeds."<sup>8</sup> She received tobacco seeds from a friend in New York in 1842.<sup>9</sup>

Fragments of letters from unidentified correspondents among her papers described the slaves' situation under new overseers. An unidentified writer, presumably Dolley, stated, "As to overseers, I'm glad you refused the 2 first Burnley and Shackleford—no whipper of negroes should ever have our people or any others." However, she admitted that an overseer "must be employed because they will not work without, but let it be a good & feeling honest one without much or any family. . . then they want less

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<sup>6</sup> U. S. Census, 1830, Orange County, 321; U. S. Census, 1840, Orange County, 629; Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, *The First Forty Years*, 379.

<sup>8</sup> DPM to General B. Peyton, 13 July 1840, PDPM-LC.

<sup>9</sup> DPM to A. H. Palmer, 12 May 1842, PDPM-LC.

provision.” The writer also stated, “I am out of all provisions.” She also commented on “the exertion of servants in the orchard—lazy women.”<sup>10</sup>

Changes to the slave community included the transfer of labor to another quarter and to a quarry. Dolley’s son, John Payne Todd, expanded the extraction of natural resources at Montpelier by opening a marble quarry, named the Montpelier Marble Quarry, located on Madison Run.<sup>11</sup> Earlier, Dolley noted her son’s attention to the quarry and its product. In 1833, she wrote, “Payne is at home and improving his knowledge of geology.”<sup>12</sup> Later, she told her doctor in 1841, “My son is now on a visit to his marble quarry.”<sup>13</sup> She also described a trip Todd made to Richmond to sell “some specimens of fine marble.”<sup>14</sup> Among the papers of Dolley was a note that bore on Todd’s marble business: “A lady came to me the other day to buy the marble steps. . . she would give what the market of the public [would] decide they were worth. I told her have them valued and let me know.”<sup>15</sup> Some of Montpelier’s slaves were shifted from field work to the quarry. The 1840 census identified nine Montpelier slaves employed in mining, presumably at Todd’s quarry.<sup>16</sup>

In 1837, Todd established a farm, which was called Toddsberth, separate from Montpelier but worked by slaves from there. The house stood on nine and a half acres in Orange County. In 1839, the building was valued at \$84.22. After improvements, the assessment increased to \$786 in 1840.<sup>17</sup> According to an 1846 deed, numerous slaves, one

<sup>10</sup> No name, 1837, Container 1-2, Reel 1, 367-369, PDPM-LC.

<sup>11</sup> Scott, *A History of Orange County*, 116.

<sup>12</sup> Lucia Beverly Cutts, ed., *Memoirs and Letters of Dolly Madison, wife of James Madison, President of the United States* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1886), 189.

<sup>13</sup> DPM to Dr. Sewall, 17 June 1841, PDPM-LC.

<sup>14</sup> DPM to Mrs. Elizabeth Lee, 19 February 1840, PDPM-LC.

<sup>15</sup> No name, 1837, Container 1-2, Reel 1, 367-369, PDPM-LC.

<sup>16</sup> U. S. Census, 1840, Orange County, 629.

<sup>17</sup> William Smith to John P. Todd, 11 October 1837, Orange County Deed Book, 37: 206; Orange County Land Tax Book, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

of them skilled, lived and worked there: “a Negro Man named John (Blacksmith), a Negro Man named Matthew, about forty five years old, a Negro Woman named Winny (wife of the Said Man Matthew,) a Negro man named Willoughby, about Sixty years old, A Negro man named Gabriel about fifty years old, a Negro Man named Beny five years old, a negro boy named Abraham about Eighteen years old, a Negro girl named Violet.”<sup>18</sup> This group of slaves was part of larger selection of slaves Dolley had deeded to her son in 1844.<sup>19</sup>

Todd planned to move his mother to Toddsberth. According to Lucia Beverly Cutts (a descendant of Dolley’s sister Anna Payne Cutts), Todd spent “much money in carrying out his eccentric ideas for her comfort.” He built a cluster of small cottages “around a tower-like building, containing the ball-room and dining-room.” One of these cottages was intended “for his mother, which, in order to obviate the fatigue of a staircase, she was to enter from the dining-room by a window,” according to Cutts. Most of Montpelier’s “precious souvenirs were removed” to Toddsberth.<sup>20</sup> Household furniture, derived from Montpelier, included “two feather beds, Steads & furniture, two large mirrors, half dozen chairs, one dining table.”<sup>21</sup> A selection of decorative items listed in the inventory of Todd’s estate after his death in 1852 included: “Sketch by Rubens of Maxn.; Misstress of Titian; Bacchus, Dicul des Laisons; a Bas relief; vue de campo Vaccino; a looking glass with the ornaments a round of little Room at Montpelier; two large tumblers; two decanters Pittsburg & 3 Stoppers; 1. Cut glass Presem or Sugar

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<sup>18</sup> John P. Todd to Philip S. Fry and Starke W. Morris, 26 January 1846, Orange County Deed Book, 40: 129-131.

<sup>19</sup> DPM to John Payne Todd, 16 June 1844, 17 July 1844, Papers of the Madison Family, 1768-1866, Mss. 2988, Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>20</sup> Cutts, ed., *Memoirs and Letters of Dolly Madison*, 206.

<sup>21</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 40: 129-131.



dish.”<sup>22</sup>

By the time of the Civil War, Toddsberth had gained a reputation as a folly. A detachment of soldiers camping in the Madison Run Station area noticed it in a state of ruin. One of them, J. H. Chamberlayne, recorded his observations for his relatives back home: “Our camp here is in a pleasant place, where Payne Todd lived of whom Mother knows, he spent all the property Mr. Madison owned & most that Mrs. Madison got from the Government. The marks of the poor spendthrift are still to be seen, walks that he began, never to finish, an attempted ice house turned into a stately pleasure dome, like Kubla Kahn’s; quarries opened for marble which was not there.”<sup>23</sup>

Even with the changes initiated by her son’s projects, Dolley’s stewardship of Montpelier was noted by one visitor as a success. In 1839, J. Bayard H. Smith contrasted his experience at Montpelier to the dilapidated state he witnessed at Monticello. At Monticello, “I beheld nothing but ruin and change, rotting terraces, broken cabins, the lawn ploughed up and cattle wandering among Italian mouldering vases,” he wrote. “It was with difficulty I could restrain my tears, and I could not but exclaim, what is human greatness. At Montpelier and Mount Vernon no such feelings obtruded themselves. All wore the appearance of plenty and no change or misfortune had overwhelmed them.”<sup>24</sup> For Smith, the legacy of the founding fathers was visible in the preservation of their buildings, and he credited Dolley for preserving President Madison’s memory at Montpelier. Additionally, Dolley had also preserved more personal relics of her husband. For instance, the day after he died, she cut a lock of hair from his corpse and mailed it off. A brief note accompanied the long, large cutting of hair:

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<sup>22</sup> Orange County Will Book, 12: 18.

<sup>23</sup> C. G. Chamberlayne, *Ham Chamberlayne: Virginian, Letters, and Papers of an Artillery Officer in the War for Southern Independence* (Richmond: Deitz Press, 1932), 188.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, *The First Forty Years*, 382-383.

“For Eliza Lee, from D.P.M. James Madison’s hair. June 28<sup>th</sup>. 1836.”<sup>25</sup> Her stewardship of Madison’s legacy also included the publication of his notes from the Constitutional Convention, which were published by Congress through her efforts.<sup>26</sup>

Dolley’s dedication to Montpelier, however, was a burden she could not bear for long. “In truth,” she wrote to Margaret Bayard Smith in 1838, “I am dissatisfied with the location of Montpelier, from which I can never separate myself entirely, when I think how happy I should be if it joined Washington, where I could see you always, and my valued acquaintance also of that city.”<sup>27</sup> From 1837 to 1839, she spent her winters at her Washington townhouse, which was built by her brother-in-law Richard Cutts at President’s [Lafayette’s] Square on a town lot that President Madison had purchased.<sup>28</sup> During the first three years after her husband’s death, she returned to Montpelier for the summers. However, she did not travel to Washington for the winter of 1839-40. Instead, she remained at Montpelier to supervise the farm first-hand for two years, returning to Washington for the winter of 1841-42. After attempting to make the farm turn a profit again, she returned to Washington in order to sell her husband’s other writings. Dolley never lived at Todd’s birth. Instead, she moved back to her D.C. townhouse with her own selection of Montpelier’s furnishings and slaves.<sup>29</sup>

Dolley’s decision to leave Montpelier was motivated by the diminishing returns from the plantation and her advancing age. The personal problems of her son John Payne Todd also contributed to the decline of the farm. According to Lucia Cutts, Dolley’s

<sup>25</sup> DPM to Eliza Lee, 28 June 1836, Gilder Lehrman Coll. # 07525 ANS, PML, NYC.

<sup>26</sup> Katharine Anthony, *Dolly Madison: Her Life and Times* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1949), 332-334.

<sup>27</sup> Smith, *The First Forty Years*, 380.

<sup>28</sup> DPM to Richard D. Cutts, 28 September 1846, Papers of the Madison Family, 1768-1866, Mss. 2988, Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>29</sup> Anthony, *Dolly Madison, Her Life and Times*, 365, 369.

“extravagant, idle son” managed the farms in such a manner that “for some time [he] brought in no returns.” Cutts declared that John Payne Todd’s profligacy “obliged her to sell the dearly-loved Montpelier, together with the slaves, to Mr. Moncure, of Richmond.”<sup>30</sup> In the concurring opinion of Mrs. Meikleham, Todd “had run through the fortune her [Mrs. Madison] husband left her, \$100,000 and Montpelier.”<sup>31</sup> Katharine Anthony also places much of the blame on Todd for Dolley’s financial problems. Anthony argues that Dolley resolved to sell Montpelier when she realized Todd was unfit to manage it.<sup>32</sup>

Dolley’s release of the plantation, however, went in stages. She sold separate tracts to Henry Wood Moncure beginning in late 1842. The first land purchase was Sawney’s Quarter.<sup>33</sup> Through a second deed Moncure secured 750 acres more, leaving him in possession of the mountain land around the head waters of two streams south-east of the mansion house: Mill Run and Poplar Run.<sup>34</sup> Moncure’s first appearance in the 1843 Orange County personal property tax list and land tax book showed an assessment for three slaves over 12 years of age and eight slaves over 16 years old, plus four horses.<sup>35</sup> Although she no longer owned these tracts of land, Dolley was still involved in managing them.

From Richmond, Moncure relied on her to convey to his overseer his instructions contained in correspondence to Dolley and her niece Anna Payne, a daughter of Dolley’s

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<sup>30</sup> Lucia Beverly Cutts, ed., *Memoirs and Letters of Dolly Madison, wife of James Madison, President of the United States* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1886), 206.

<sup>31</sup> Septima Anne Cary Randolph Meikleham, “Montpelier, Quiet Home Life of Mr. and Mrs. Madison,” Randolph-Meikleham Family Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Mss 4726-a.

<sup>32</sup> Anthony, *Dolly Madison, Her Life and Times*, 378-379.

<sup>33</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 38: 459-461.

<sup>34</sup> DPM and John P. Todd to Henry W. Moncure, 29 December 1842, Orange County Deed Book, 39: 124-126.

<sup>35</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, and Orange County Land Book, Library of Virginia.

brother John. He prevailed upon them to relay his instructions to Mr. Chewning, the overseer. He wrote, "May I trespass on your attentions so far as to say to Mr. Chewning to employ the ditchers as quickly as he can, and on the best terms he can, for I have not time to look up workmen in this quarter." He also told Ms. Payne to tell Chewning to inspect two slave boys offered for sale by Todd, "and ask him if he can make use of them as plough boys or otherwise of service to him in his farming operations." Oddly, although Madisons still lived there, Montpelier was in the hands of an absentee plantation master. For instance, Moncure sent, via railroad from Richmond, servant shoes, plaster, clover seed, iron, steel, Irish potatoes for seed, bacon, "and a variety of other matters for the convenience of himself [Chewning] & servants."<sup>36</sup>

Even though he placed demands on them, Moncure claimed his only wish was to accommodate Dolley and her niece. In his December 1842 negotiations for the first 750-acre tract of land, he declared he would "enter into no engagement which does not meet with your [Dolley's] entire approbation." In addition, he promised "to deport myself as satisfactorily and understandingly to close this negotiation which I fear has heretofore been distasteful to you."<sup>37</sup> He imagined the Moncure and Madison families as "neighbors full near to see each other often, which would always give me pleasure to reciprocate the politeness of my sweet little daughter & her good aunt."<sup>38</sup>

After the purchase of the land, he announced that he was determined and happy to do anything "that will ensure the pleasure, welfare, or happiness of Mrs. Madison." However, he was quick to distinguish his property from theirs, particularly regarding the storage and division of corn, which he insisted Chewning should weigh. "You learn from

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<sup>36</sup> Henry W. Moncure to Anna Payne, 7 March 1843, PDPM-LC.

<sup>37</sup> Henry W. Moncure to DPM, 17 December 1842, Papers of the Madison Family, 1768-1866, Mss. 2988, Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>38</sup> Henry W. Moncure to Anna Payne, 13 May 1843, PDPM-LC.

this my kind Miss Anna, the difference between *mine & yours* accustomed as I am to the dispositions in a city to plunder, I cannot but feel, tis or will, to keep temptation out of the way.”<sup>39</sup>

Later, Moncure realized he may have overstepped the bounds of propriety with his reliance on them to provide his directions to the overseer. When he discovered that Mrs. Madison had been ill, he apologized for submitting the list of tasks. “I write Miss Anna to beg you to give yourself no trouble about the subject matter of my last communication which I would not have requested you to observe had I known of the delicate engagements in which you have been situated,” he wrote. Yet, he was not so contrite as to refrain from submitting another request to Ms. Payne. He added, “May I trouble you to [convey] word to Mr. Chewning that I shall be glad to have a long letter from him giving a full account of himself the Servants and his progress. I feel anxious to learn how the oats & corn [promise] & whether he has completed his planting and about what part of the field he finished.” Moncure’s absentee landlord situation created other annoyances for the Madisons. For instance, Moncure had to apologize for the negligence of his overseer. “I was deeply concerned to hear he [Chewning] had let his Horses trespass on Mrs. Madison’s Lawn. I hope he will early be underway erecting suitable House for himself, & all his appurtenances, on his own Place and be no more offensive to his indulgent neighbour.”<sup>40</sup>

To compensate for the intrusions, Moncure performed small favors for them. For instance, he shipped bacon to them: “I have to day purchased about 800 lbs. and sent it to the depot in a Box directed to Mrs. Madison and by the Time this reaches you, the Bacon will be found at the Depot.” In February 1843, he purchased a lot in a Richmond

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<sup>39</sup> Henry W. Moncure to Anna Payne, 7 March 1843, PDPM-LC.

<sup>40</sup> Henry W. Moncure to Anna Payne, 13 May 1843, PDPM-LC.

school fund lottery in the Madison name. He presented them the certificate and enclosed sheer silks for Ms. Payne.<sup>41</sup> His constant emphasis on his desire to do anything and everything to please Mrs. Madison led him to fantasizing about traveling to “China, what pretties I could bring back for my Prodigious favourites and thereby become a favourite myself.”<sup>42</sup> Moncure’s presumed familiarity led him to call Ms. Payne his daughter. He wrote, “Ask Mrs. Madison to Laugh & make merry at what you term your impudence to me in your Letter as such as she can enjoy, for I do assure you & her good self, tis all very pleasant to me and I take pleasure to be of service to either my modest Daughter or my Friend Mrs. Madison.”<sup>43</sup>

Moncure’s charitable behavior with the women continued until he owned the entire plantation. After the initial land transfer, he admitted, “I wish indeed to win the pleasure of Mrs. Madison and her Son to make some arrangement to give me possession of the improvements for I feel satisfied I could render the change very acceptable to her and am very sure would secure her permanent interest thereby.”<sup>44</sup> In June 1843, he shipped plantation supplies and favors, and, as before, he prevailed upon Ms. Payne to relay the message to Chewning: “The freight train leaves for Gordonsville on Monday morning the 19th and will arrive there by 4 or 5 o’clock. Mr. Chewning will have to run his Waggon there for Sundries sent him.” As usual, Moncure included presents: “I have taken the liberty to forward a box containing a few remembrances intended for your good aunt and interesting self, which I pray you both to accept. The box is marked Mrs. Madison, instruct Mr. Chewning to enquire for it when he [goes] for his own things.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Henry W. Moncure to Ms. Anna Payne, 4 February 1843, PDPM-LC.

<sup>42</sup> Henry W. Moncure to Anna Payne, 17 June 1843, PDPM-LC.

<sup>43</sup> Henry W. Moncure to Anna Payne, 17 June 1843, PDPM-LC.

<sup>44</sup> Henry W. Moncure to Anna Payne, 14 March 1843, PDPM-LC.

<sup>45</sup> Henry W. Moncure to Anna Payne, 17 June 1843, PDPM-LC.

His relation with Todd was not as friendly. He wrote that “the Colo gave me so little opportunity to converse with him, for we might in a few minutes conversation understand each other perfectly as to our views and at once put to not all further reference to the subjects.”<sup>46</sup> In March 1843, Moncure wrote to Ms. Payne to inform her that Todd made a “momentary call” at his Richmond office, but he gave him “no opportunity to converse with him of learning anything in relation to your good Aunt’s wishes, he declined to give me the pleasure of his company to dinner.” Todd’s irregular conduct included a suspicious offer of Montpelier slaves for sale to Moncure: “he asked if I would purchase two boys 15 or 16 years of age named Paul & George and requested if I would do so, to plais [sic] the amount to Mrs. Madison’s credit and receive of her a bill of sale, I made no reply farther than to ask if they were large enough to plough and were healthy.”<sup>47</sup> In January 1844, Todd promised his mother, “I will tell you of Moncure’s conduct when I come.”<sup>48</sup> When he appeared at Montpelier in April 1844 to continue negotiations with Todd for the sale of the residue of Montpelier, his persistence was noted. Todd wrote to his mother in Washington that “Mr. Moncure has been coming every day for some time.”<sup>49</sup> By the end of April, Moncure traveled to Baltimore, and Todd, who was suspicious of Moncure, warned her that he “is passing to Baltimore now and be cautious how you let on, I wished the advantage of spreading out the terms for your private [disposal] to me before final compromitment and your anxiety may give him an advantage in knowledge of necessities to tamper with.”<sup>50</sup>

Dolley Madison relinquished the remaining parts of Montpelier to Moncure in

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<sup>46</sup> Henry W. Moncure to Anna Payne, 13 May 1843, PDPM-LC.

<sup>47</sup> Henry W. Moncure to Anna Payne, 7 March 1843, PDPM-LC.

<sup>48</sup> John P. Todd to DPM, 4 January 1844, PDPM-LC.

<sup>49</sup> John P. Todd to DPM, 6 April 1844, PDPM-LC.

<sup>50</sup> John P. Todd to DPM, 30 April 1844, PDPM-LC.

August 1844.<sup>51</sup> By then, she was living in her Washington townhouse again and trying to sell the remainder of her husband's papers to Congress. The demands of creditors and a suit against her by her brother-in-law William Madison, who claimed an unpaid debt related to the settlement of Col. James Madison's estate in 1801, also influenced her decision to sell Montpelier, according to Anthony.<sup>52</sup> Moncure now owned "the Montpelier dwelling house, overseers house and a Mill and pond — containing one thousand and seventeen acres."<sup>53</sup>

Most likely the mansion house was not suitable for living at the time the Moncures purchased it. Todd had removed whatever was left after his mother freighted her goods to Washington. Dolley had given Todd all the books and pamphlets in the library as well as all of the household furniture.<sup>54</sup> Todd wrote to her in January 1844, "I am collecting for Toddsberth."<sup>55</sup> He notified her that his trip to Washington was delayed because his wagon "is still employed in bringing away all things from Montpellier."<sup>56</sup>

Moncure's ownership marked a change in the character and orientation of Montpelier. James Ackerman's identification of distinct categories of villa activity offers a point of analysis for the change in ownership. Montpelier's rural character can be seen as shifting to reflect its owner's urban connections. Before Moncure, Montpelier had been a self-sustaining agricultural estate. Its surplus was sold in regional and national markets. Now with Moncure, it functioned primarily as a country retreat, which depended on his commercial wealth derived in Richmond for its maintenance. Despite the

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<sup>51</sup> DPM and John P. Todd to Henry W. Moncure, 1 August 1844, Orange County Deed Book, 39: 416-421.

<sup>52</sup> Anthony, *Dolly Madison, Her Life and Times*, 373-375.

<sup>53</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 39: 418.

<sup>54</sup> DPM to John P. Todd, 16-17 July 1844, Papers of the Madison Family, 1768-1866, Mss. 2988, Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>55</sup> John P. Todd to DPM, 4 January 1844, PDPM-LC.

<sup>56</sup> John P. Todd to DPM, 31 January 1844, PDPM-LC.



changes to its character, Montpelier still embodied the pastoral ideal and naturalized Moncure's claims to class dominance, which were prominent features of villa culture, according to Ackerman.<sup>57</sup>

Along with its promise of the pleasures of country life, Moncure's decision to purchase Montpelier was motivated also by concerns for class standing. In their study of antebellum society in Boston, Massachusetts, and Charleston, South Carolina, Pease and Pease show that merchants of Charleston sought ownership of a plantation as an emblem of upper class status. Plantations in the social world of Charleston, according to Pease and Pease, "linked high status to landed wealth." Owning a plantation and vacationing at resort springs demonstrated a continuity with the English country gentry and naturalized self-made aristocratic status for the Charleston merchant.<sup>58</sup> The examples of Moncure and William H. Macfarland, a Montpelier owner after Moncure, point to similar behavior in the world of Richmond's commercial elite.

The sources of Moncure's wealth were varied. As a commercial merchant, Moncure's business interests were focused on linking New Orleans produce to New York City markets.<sup>59</sup> He also invested in Richmond real estate, purchasing four half-acre lots in the Richmond subdivision known as Duval's Addition a month before he first invested in Montpelier.<sup>60</sup> Numerous deeds recorded in the Richmond City Hustings Court

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<sup>57</sup> James S. Ackerman, *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses*, Bollingen Series XXXV (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 10-15.

<sup>58</sup> William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, *The Web of Progress: Private Values and Public Styles in Boston and Charleston, 1828-1843* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 122.

<sup>59</sup> Henry Wood Moncure to Anna Payne, 14 March 1843, PDPM-LC; Michael Douglas Naragon, *Ballots, Bullets, and Blood: The Political Transformation of Richmond, Virginia, 1850-1874*, Ph.D. Diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1996, (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1996), 13.

<sup>60</sup> Deed, 1 October 1842, Gottschalk to Henry Wood Moncure & Charles Prosser Moncure; Deed, 15 April 1847, Henry Wood Moncure to J. B. Martin, J. B. Martin Papers, Mss. 1 M 3644 a 18 §4, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

document Moncure's real estate investments in Richmond.<sup>61</sup> Other documents point to his business connections in Europe.<sup>62</sup> His importing business office in Richmond was another source of wealth. Dunlop, Moncure, & Company profited as importers, auctioneers, and commission merchants from their office and warehouse at Cary and Eleventh streets.<sup>63</sup>

Moncure had inherited a number of slaves through his marriage into the wealthy Ambler family of Richmond. With Catharine Cary Ambler came Ambler family slaves from farms west of Richmond. Philip St. George Ambler delivered to Moncure six slaves from farms in Louisa County in January 1837.<sup>64</sup> His commercial partnership also owned four male slaves.<sup>65</sup> Only a large plantation, however, would be sufficient to bolster his identity as a Virginia gentleman in antebellum Richmond society.

The Montpelier slave community under Moncure's ownership was smaller than it had been in recent years. According to personal property tax lists, Moncure owned 20 taxable slaves over 16 years old and two between 12 and 16 in 1846. Twenty-three taxable slaves worked Montpelier's house and grounds in 1847, 18 in 1848. In 1846, the slave community included two old and infirm negroes named Smith and Rachel, which partially accounts for the reduction.<sup>66</sup> In her last year of ownership, Dolley had 36 taxable slaves.<sup>67</sup>

Moncure's dedication to Montpelier was never great enough to compel him to live

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<sup>61</sup> Richmond City Deed Books, 41: 108; 46: 624; 56: 364; 31: 537; 39: 201.

<sup>62</sup> Henry Wood Moncure to Lewis Rogers, 2 August 1839, Ambler Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

<sup>63</sup> James Nathaniel Dunlop Papers, Mss 1 D 9214, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>64</sup> List of Slaves, 11 January 1837, Ambler Family Papers, §7 c 109-114, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>65</sup> 1850 U. S. Census, Slave Schedule, Henrico County, 381; Henrico County Personal Property Tax Books; City of Richmond Personal Property Tax Books, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>66</sup> Orange County Minute Book, 1843-1848, 23 March 1846.

<sup>67</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax Lists, Library of Virginia.

there permanently. After owning the plantation for four years, he sold off a large segment of it. Based on his filing activity at the Richmond court house, Moncure spent most of his time in the city on matters of business between 1843 and 1848.<sup>68</sup> Occasionally, however, his wife acknowledged his transactions at the Orange County court house, such as in 1846, 1847, and 1848.<sup>69</sup> Even when finalizing the sale of a 713-acre tract of Montpelier to Col. John Willis, both Mr. and Mrs. Moncure appeared at the Richmond City court, rather than in Orange, to acknowledge the deed in October 1847.<sup>70</sup> Willis was a grand-nephew of Madison, and he built a home called Rockwood in 1848 on the 713-acre tract.<sup>71</sup> The evidence from these deeds suggests that Moncure's interest in the life of a gentleman farmer at Montpelier, which he managed from Richmond, was only symbolic.

Although he never held an elected office, Moncure moved in Richmond's Whig political circles. For instance, he assisted the widow of John Hampden Pleasants, founder of the *Richmond Whig*, after he died in a duel. Thomas Ritchie, editor of *Richmond Enquirer* and a Democratic party leader of the Richmond Junto, had killed him after the two men traded public accusations and insults through their papers in 1846. Pleasants was no stranger to the violence of Richmond's political culture. For instance, he and another man had assaulted Peter V. Daniel after he had disparaged Pleasants in the

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<sup>68</sup> City of Richmond Deed Book, 46: 13, 15, 502, 639; Deed Book, 47: 297, 523, Deed Book, 48:129; Deed Book, 49:156; Deed Book, 50: 322; Deed Book, 51: 542; Deed Book, 52:517; Deed Book, 54: 269, 305, 469, Deed Book, 56: 58.

<sup>69</sup> Henry W. and Catharine C. Moncure to Mosby Woodson, 22 July 1846, City of Richmond Deed Book, 50: 322; Henry W. and Catharine C. Moncure to Calvin Green, 15 June 1847, City of Richmond Deed Book, 52: 517; Henry W. and Catharine C. Moncure to Elvira A. Bruce, 6 June 1848, City of Richmond Deed Book, 54: 305.

<sup>70</sup> Henry W. and Catharine C. Moncure to John Willis, 27 October 1847, Orange County Deed Book, 40: 447-448.

<sup>71</sup> Ann L. Miller, *Antebellum Orange: The Pre-Civil War Homes, Public Buildings, and Historic Sites of Orange County, Virginia* (Orange, Virginia: The Orange County Historical Society, Inc., 1988), 97.

*Richmond Enquirer* in 1833. After Pleasants's death in 1846, Moncure and Joshua Jefferson Fry established a fund for "the relief of this destitute family." In their call for assistance, Fry and Moncure praised Pleasants's newspaper as "the gallant champion of our political principles."<sup>72</sup>

Moncure's association with Macfarland and Pleasants placed him among the city's Whigs who typified the emerging entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. As a warden in a prominent Episcopalian parish in Richmond, Moncure established an acquaintance with William H. Macfarland, a notable local Whig politician.<sup>73</sup> Also, Moncure and Macfarland served together as trustees for two separate estates in Richmond, according to court records.<sup>74</sup> Democrats of the Richmond Junto attacked the cosmopolitan Whigs as abolitionists and financialists. In the 1830s, the Richmond Whigs assailed President Andrew Jackson through Pleasants' paper. They criticized Jackson for abuse of his executive power during the nullification crisis and his battles against the Bank of the U.S. They also directed accusations of demagoguery and corruption against the Richmond Junto. In the late 1830s and early 1840s, after the Richmond Whigs had reaped political gains from the defections of conservatives from the Democratic ranks, they briefly won control of the General Assembly. To counter their growing prominence, Richmond Democrats portrayed the Whigs as aristocratic, corrupt, and rapacious merchants who

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<sup>72</sup> Henry Wood Moncure & Joshua Jefferson Fry, 4 March 1846, Spotswood Family Papers, Mss. 1 Sp 687 b 47, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond; Wade Lee Shaffer, *The Richmond Junto and Politics in Jacksonian Virginia*, Ph.D. Diss., College of William and Mary, 1993 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1993), 169-171, 195.

<sup>73</sup> William Hamilton Macfarland & Henry W. Moncure to Rev. William Norwood, [1841], Norwood Papers, Mss. N 8395 b, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>74</sup> Henry W. Moncure, William H. Macfarland, et al, to Higginson Hancock, 17 March 1850, City of Richmond Deed Book, 57: 551; Henry W. Moncure, William H. Macfarland, et al, to John W. Foster, 27 August 1850, City of Richmond Deed Book, 59: 162.

avored abolition and a strong federal government.<sup>75</sup>

In such a political climate, Moncure's ownership of Montpelier reveals his search for political and social legitimacy, rather than either benevolence on behalf of a poor widow, or an interest in farming. With an established reputation as a merchant, Moncure sought to create the persona of a gentleman farmer with his acquisition of Montpelier. The plantation's connection to Madison allowed him to counter any suspicions of his allegiance to slavery in Virginia's hostile political culture. Owning Montpelier also provided continuity between Madison and the Virginia Whigs, who claimed to act as his political heirs. In this context, Moncure's ownership of Montpelier turned the plantation's symbolic significance toward the state level by using it to serve his local social and political interests.

A year after his sale of land to Willis, Moncure completely divested himself of Montpelier. The plantation went to a British farmer, Benjamin Thornton, on 14 October 1848.<sup>76</sup> After he had relinquished his ownership of Montpelier, Moncure traveled in the United States and Europe. His name disappeared from the personal property tax book for the City of Richmond in 1847. Correspondence places him in Europe. He briefly lived in Paris, France, in 1855. Later, he traveled to Louisiana, Texas, and returned to France on at least one occasion. Moncure died in 1866, and his will shows that he speculated in plantations in Texas and Louisiana, as well as coal land in Goochland County, Virginia.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> William G. Shade, *Democratizing the Old Dominion: Virginia and the Second Party System, 1824-1861* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1996), 178, 190, 222; Shaffer, *The Richmond Junto and Politics in Jacksonian Virginia*, 201, 229, 234.

<sup>76</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 41: 337-388.

<sup>77</sup> Court records showed Moncure to be in Texas and Louisiana and using the courts there to acknowledge transactions. See Richmond City Court of Hustings, Deed Book, 55: 489, Deed Book, 57: 71, Deed Book, 58: 207-209. His correspondence indicated travel to France. See John Young Mason to Henry Wood Moncure, 5 August and 18 August 1855, and 20 August 1856, Mason Family Papers, Mss. 1 M 3816 c 414-416, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

Montpelier received an energetic farmer in Benjamin Thornton. Yet, the Thornton family treaded briefly at Montpelier. The Thornton family included eight people. Not one was born in Virginia, according to the 1850 U.S. Census. Benjamin Thornton was described as a white male farmer with \$20,000 worth of real estate, 34 years old and born in England. The other male Thorntons, four of them, were also farmers born in England, except for fourteen-year-old Harrison who, though born in England, was too young to be listed with an occupation. The Thornton females, however, were identified as being born in Scotland. Ann Ross Thornton was 27 years old, presumably the mother of the other two females: Mary D. Thornton, age three, and Catharine P. Thornton, age four. Benjamin Thornton managed Montpelier with his brothers.<sup>78</sup>

An array of free laborers and goods revealed renewed productivity and landscape changes at Montpelier. The Thorntons adapted the house to their purposes and restocked Montpelier with refined goods. In 1850, a piano valued at \$180 stood in the house along with \$1,000 worth of plate and a metal clock. By 1852, the Thorntons had revitalized the house with luxury goods: a gold watch (\$200), more plate (now valued at \$1,500), a piano (up in value to \$200), and \$4,000 worth of household and kitchen furniture. In comparison to the rest of Orange County households, the Thornton family's new outfit for Montpelier constituted 13.38% of the aggregate value of all household and kitchen furniture. No other household in Orange County had such a high assessment. The closest any one household came to approaching Montpelier's assemblage of household and kitchen furniture was \$250 below their assessment. The aggregate value of Montpelier, in total for 1852, was estimated at \$9,300—2.26% of the county's total assessment. The 1852 assessment also categorized livestock at Montpelier: \$3,000 worth

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<sup>78</sup> 1850 U. S. Census, Orange County, Dwelling # 628, Family # 631, 257.

of cattle, sheep, and hogs, plus \$300 worth of horses and/or mules. In addition, the Thorntons owned a carriage valued at \$200. The following year, the Thorntons added another \$200 carriage to their stable of \$800 worth of horses. The household and kitchen furniture was still valued at \$4,000. The piano, the plate, and the clock values remained the same; however, there were now two watches jointly valued at \$250 in the house. The livestock herd suffered a loss in numbers and value—down to \$600. The 1854 personal property tax assessment documented a \$500 decrease in the value of the household and kitchen furniture and a \$50 decrease in the value of the “pleasure carriages,” but the watches, clocks, piano, and plate values remained the same. On the grounds, the Thorntons kept up a herd of eight horses (worth \$800) and 1,160 head of cattle, sheep, and hogs, which was valued all together at \$1,160.<sup>79</sup>

The number of slaves at Montpelier under the Thorntons continued to decline. The 1850 U.S. Census enumerated a diminished slave population, documenting 47 slaves of various ages, ranging from one month old to 40 years old. Ten years earlier there were 103. This census also distinguished skin complexion. Two slaves, a one-year-old male and a 19-year-old female, were recorded as mulatto. There were only 11 female slaves listed among the total of 47—23.4 % of the Montpelier population.<sup>80</sup> In 1852, eight slaves over 16 years old and four over 12 years old appeared as part of Thornton’s tax burden in the record. The county assessed Thornton for taxes on 17 slaves over 16 years old in 1853. The following year there were only five taxable slaves over 16 years old and seven over 12 years old. Likely, Thornton was disposing of slaves in undocumented and unrecorded sales.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>80</sup> 1850 U.S. Census, Schedule Two, Slave Inhabitants, enumerated on 15 December 1850, Orange County, Virginia, 796.

<sup>81</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

Montpelier was not worked exclusively by slaves. The 1850 census revealed a mixed cohort of workers. All eight of the workers lived as tenants of the Thorntons. The crew included white and black workers. Some of the workers had emigrated from Ireland, and some had moved to Montpelier from Maryland. The two free blacks were born in Virginia. The group included two, married white couples. John and Priscilla Cosgrove were husband and wife. He was a 50-year-old, white, male born in Ireland and identified as a gardener. Priscilla was a 52-year-old white female born in Maryland. William Kinney and Mary Kinney were husband and wife also. William was a 54-year-old, white, male laborer born in Maryland. Mary, also born in Maryland, was a 36-year-old white female. The single male workers were ditchers: Thomas Ryan, a 30-year-old, white, male born in Ireland; John Bonner, a 40-year-old, black, male born in Virginia; and William Johnson, a 35-year-old mulatto, male born in Virginia. Bonner and Johnson were free, based on their appearance here and not in the slave schedule. Lastly, Catharine C. Higgins, a 27-year-old white, female born in Maryland was listed as a house servant.<sup>82</sup>

The changes initiated by the Thorntons and their laborers attracted the attention of agricultural journalists. A contributor to *The Southern Planter* visited Montpelier in 1849 and described the Thornton's farm for its readers. After hiring horses at the Gordonsville railroad depot, the reporters, "found the halls open and the proprietor's welcome extended." They described the ownership arrangement as a partnership operation of the adult, male Thorntons, "several gentlemen from Great Britain." One of the Thorntons was on the premises and toured the visitors around the grounds for an agricultural inspection. The visitors were impressed: "If we mistake not the views of the gentlemen, they will soon have in successful operation the system of husbandry pursued

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<sup>82</sup> 1850 U. S. Census, Orange County, Dwelling # 629, Family # 632, 257.



in that part of the island where husbandry is *the* best. We mean the north of England and southern borders of Scotland, on the banks of the Tweed. That the system will be successful here in Virginia, it is rather bold to predict. Yet we do so because of the adaptability of the lands to it, the reputed experience of the proprietor as well as his expressed views, and the use mainly of slave labor.” The writer qualified his praise: “The results of a future and more extended visit, with authentic information will be given, so soon as the proper time arrives.” Other than the field crops, they observed the garden, which “is already in nearly the best of tilth. It is in the charge of an obliging Irishman, who has long been in America, and knows his business—The most rare and difficult vegetables (fall) were growing and in a forward state.”<sup>83</sup>

There was no indication that respect for the memory of James Madison motivated the Thorntons. In fact, the Thorntons did not play a significant role in the discussion among those who sought to install a monument over the Madisons’s grave. For instance, Dolley’s brother John C. Payne and James H. Causten considered the possibility of installing such a monument in early 1852. Causten wrote to Payne to suggest that he purchase the graveyard, with the intention of conveying it to the state at a later date. He hoped to get “influential Virginians” to enlist support and funding of the General Assembly. Without the support of the state, “I will plan a plain slab over each; for it would be ridiculous for me to pretend to erect a monument.”<sup>84</sup>

Payne identified various problems that they faced. First, other Madison family members may object to the state owning the graveyard where their other relations were interred. Secondly, Thornton would object to an interruption of his farm. Furthermore,

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<sup>83</sup> “Montpelier,” *The Southern Planter* (1849), 9: 259.

<sup>84</sup> James H. Causten to \_\_, 16 February 1852, Causten Family Papers, Mss. 47, Greensboro Historical Museum Archives

Payne regretted leaving the matter in the hands of Thornton, “the stranger.” Also, raising funds for a monument to Madison would be slow to progress, they thought, like the public effort to erect the Washington monument. Payne admitted his own lack of financial resources to complete the project. Also, Payne believed they would not have much support because the American public at large was not “a monumental people. . . Jefferson, Patrick Henry and a host of Worthies besides Washington & Madison have not found a mark placed over their place of rest by their native State.”<sup>85</sup> In another letter to Causten, Payne again sought his help in carrying out the last wishes of Dolley Madison, but he was not optimistic that they would raise a monument. They were “powerless,” he wrote. Therefore, placed his hope in following generations of Americans: “My faith is firm that posterity will do his character more justice than it now receives and that increasing veneration for it will secure a quiet repose to the remains which surround his own.”<sup>86</sup> Payne and Causten placed a greater faith in the state of Virginia to preserve the memory of Madison than in the Madison family, the Thorntons, or the federal government. Their suggestion that memorializing Madison in his grave was a burden best placed upon the Commonwealth of Virginia pointed to the continued sectional interest in the ex-president’s legacy.

Payne suspected that the Thorntons’ possession of Montpelier would be short. He was right. They sold the estate to William Hamilton Macfarland in 1854. Macfarland became a creditor of the Thorntons through his Richmond banking business. Thornton approached Macfarland, John Adam Smith, and the Farmer’s Bank of Virginia in Richmond for a \$10,275 loan in June 1853. This loan was endorsed by Joseph Thornton

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<sup>85</sup> John C. Payne to J. H. Causten, Jr., 12 March 1852, Causten Family Papers, Mss. 47, Greensboro Historical Museum Archives.

<sup>86</sup> John C. Payne to J. H. Causten, Jr., 15 August 1852, Causten Family Papers, Mss. 47, Greensboro Historical Museum Archives.

and was “payable four months after date and heretofore negotiated his acceptance payable in London in August next for £2,000.” He conveyed Montpelier to Macfarland and Smith in trust.<sup>87</sup> A second deed made in November 1853 documented more debt, “three sterling bills drawn by Joseph Thornton,” totaling £2,500. Again, Montpelier was security for the payment.<sup>88</sup>

Less than two months later, the Thorntons lost their legal title to Montpelier. Macfarland acquired Montpelier on 4 January 1854 for \$31,590—on the condition that Thornton “lift whatever encumbrances may now be on the said Land,” excluding an outstanding debt of \$8,000 to David Graham of Orange County, which Macfarland undertook “to lift the same out of the purchase money aforementioned.”<sup>89</sup> A separate deed between Benjamin Thornton and John Howard, a Richmond lawyer, created on 4 March 1854 documented the presence of the household furnishings precious to Thornton, even as Montpelier “was now the property of William H. Macfarland.” The deed included “all the household and Kitchen furniture, the silver plate of every description, and the library, paintings and engravings in the dwelling house on the farm,” and “all of the stock of horses, sheep, cows; and the machinery utensels and farming tools of every description now on the farm.”<sup>90</sup> Thornton satisfied the debt, and John Howard, with the assent of Macfarland, released the mortgaged property back to Thornton on 23 October 1854.<sup>91</sup> The goods listed in this deed show how the Thorntons briefly had inhabited and revived Montpelier.

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<sup>87</sup> Benjamin Thornton to William H. Macfarland, et al, 27 June 1853, Orange County Deed Book, 43: 21.

<sup>88</sup> Benjamin Thornton to William H. Macfarland, et al, 17 November 1853, Orange County Deed Book, 43: 77.

<sup>89</sup> Benjamin Thornton to William H. Macfarland, 4 January 1854, Orange County Deed Book, 43: 102.

<sup>90</sup> Benjamin Thornton to John Howard, 4 March 1854, Orange County Deed Book, 43: 130.

<sup>91</sup> John Howard to Benjamin Thornton and William H. Macfarland, 23 October 1854, Orange County Deed Book, 43: 250.

Macfarland's tenure at Montpelier was brief also, but he used his ownership of it to enhance his reputation in Richmond's social circles. Firstly, the local press announced his recent actions. Two papers reprinted a news item from a Richmond paper: "W. H. Macfarland has purchased Montpelier, the former residence of James Madison, Esq., the fourth president of the U.S.A. We are glad that this estate has fallen into the hands of a Virginian, and it is to be hoped that a suitable monument may now be erected over the remains of Virginia's eminent statesman and patriot."<sup>92</sup> Macfarland also contracted with Richard Barton Haxall to form a partnership, to "have a Joint Interest," in Montpelier.<sup>93</sup> Like Macfarland, Haxall was a member of Richmond's business elite. He owned the Gallego Mills, which held a significant position in the international flour trade.<sup>94</sup> Haxall had other interests in Orange County. He purchased a nearby plantation, Rocklands, where he raised horses and later gained a reputation as a progressive farmer.<sup>95</sup> Before Haxall joined Macfarland in the partnership, Macfarland expanded Montpelier by purchasing 108 acres "on the Plank Road adjoining the Montpelier estate."<sup>96</sup>

As did Moncure, Macfarland also embodied the entrepreneurial spirit and economic nationalism of the Whigs. However, Macfarland was a more active politician than Moncure. Macfarland, born in 1799, was the son of an emigrant from Glasgow, Scotland, who became a wealthy merchant and landowner. After attending law lectures at the College of William & Mary and the Litchfield Law School in Connecticut between 1816 and 1818 (he had been graduated from Hampden-Sydney College), Macfarland

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<sup>92</sup> *Charlottesville Jeffersonian* and *Fredericksburg News* 6 March 1854, No. 69, p. 2, microfilm, N-US-Va-8, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>93</sup> William H. Macfarland, et ux, and Richard B. Haxall, et ux, to Alfred V. Scott, 21 March 1855, Orange County Deed Book, 43: 326.

<sup>94</sup> Naragon, *Ballots, Bullets, and Blood*, 13.

<sup>95</sup> Scott, *A History of Orange County*, 178, 210.

<sup>96</sup> Valentine A. Houseworth to William H. Macfarland, 4 May 1854, Orange County Deed Book, 43: 328.

represented Lunenburg County, his birthplace, in the Virginia legislature from 1822 to 1824. He left Lunenburg County to live in Petersburg, which he represented in the House of Delegates in 1830. During the 1851 reform of the Virginia Constitution, Macfarland, who lost in his bid to serve as a delegate to the convention, sided with those who opposed universal, white male suffrage and supported appointment of executive and judicial officials to counter the threat of democracy to upper class privilege and power. By the time he came into possession of Montpelier, Macfarland was established in Richmond as president of the Richmond & Petersburg Railroad and the Farmer's Bank of Virginia. Macfarland also held stock in a company that moved public mail.<sup>97</sup>

At this time, Montpelier played a role in Richmond society. In his study of the democratization of Richmond city politics, Michael Naragon identifies Macfarland and Haxall as two men who typified the commercial and industrial elites of the city. Owning Montpelier strengthened their class-based social and business relations. According to Naragon, "Held together by bonds of kinship and friendship, these men held organizational memberships that enabled them to link personally Richmond's financial, commercial, and industrial institutions." Therefore, Montpelier, like a well-placed church pew, served as marker of status and class dominance in antebellum Richmond. Ownership of Montpelier also allowed Macfarland to shore up his pro-slavery credentials, which was necessary after he supported a clemency petition for a tobacco factory slave who killed his overseer in 1852. As a result of pressure from prominent Richmonders, including Macfarland, the governor exiled Jordan Hatcher beyond the

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<sup>97</sup> A. J. Morrison, *College of Hampden Sidney, Dictionary of Biography, 1776-1825* (Hampden Sidney, Virginia: Hampden Sidney College, 1920), 193-194; Richmond Library Company, Proxy, 3 May 1858, Mss. 4 R 4154 a 4, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond; William Harris Gaines, *Biographical Register of Members, Virginia State Convention of 1861, First Session* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1969), 53-54; Shade, *Democratizing the Old Dominion*, 190; Naragon, *Ballots, Bullets, and Blood*, 159-160; William H. Macfarland to John Y. Mason, 17 January 1848, Mason Family Papers, Mss. 1 M 3816 a 1524-1525, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

United States's borders, rather than executing him. Factory owners argued that granting clemency undermined their managerial authority.<sup>98</sup>

Before owning Montpelier, Macfarland owned only a few slaves who supported his Richmond household. City personal property tax records showed that he owned five slaves over 16 years old from 1836 to 1838. In 1838, Macfarland added one slave, two horses and two four-wheel carriages to his collection of property. By 1841, however, he was taxed for only four slaves. From that time until 1850 the number of taxable slaves in his possession in the city varied between and five and six.<sup>99</sup> Ownership of a slave plantation enhanced his standing in the urban slave society of Richmond.

Macfarland had established a presence in the elite ranks of Richmond society, which he sought to maintain. He was a member of the vestry at St. Paul's Episcopal Church.<sup>100</sup> He bought a pew there for \$350 in 1845, and he signed a deed as a trustee of the church transferring another pew to another member in 1845.<sup>101</sup> He supported the commemoration of the founding fathers. For instance, he paid \$10 to the Marshall Monument Fund in November 1835.<sup>102</sup> More importantly, he eulogized President Madison in Richmond in June 1836. In his speech, which was presented at Capitol Square and later printed in the Richmond *Daily Courier*, he stated that "Madison was conspicuous for grace, propriety and dignity, no less than for clear and thorough comprehension of the complicated and arduous subject of civil policy, and the ability and

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<sup>98</sup> Naragon, *Ballots, Bullets, and Blood*, 19-20, 36-39.

<sup>99</sup> Henrico County Personal Property Tax Books; City of Richmond Personal Property Tax Books, microfilm Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>100</sup> William H. Macfarland to Rev. William Norwood, 14 August 1849, Norwood Papers, Mss. 2 N 8395 b, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>101</sup> Robert Williams Daniels Papers, Mss. 1 D 2266 a 12; Joynes Family Papers, Mss. 1 J 8586 a 20, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>102</sup> Conway Robinson Papers, Mss. 2 R 5613 b 2-5, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

energy of his labors.”<sup>103</sup> Later, he served as a vice-president of the Virginia Historical Society. After attending an address there, to which he “listened with the greatest delight,” he informed the speaker of his intention “to possess a volume for each of my children,” hoping to instill in them his appreciation of history.<sup>104</sup> Macfarland had addressed the historical society before, to eulogize Henry Clay.<sup>105</sup> He also supported the Richmond Library Company.<sup>106</sup> Later, he served on the board of visitors at the Richmond Medical College of Virginia in 1865.<sup>107</sup>

Macfarland was well-known, but he was not universally well-liked in Richmond. A 1969 biography stated that “Although most of his fellow citizens held him in high esteem, others found him pompous and overbearing.” For instance, George L. Christian recalled his impressions of Macfarland for a meeting of the Richmond Bar Association in 1908. He described him as “a man of fine abilities and attainments as a lawyer,” but he also noted that the *Richmond Examiner* described him in 1861 as, “the curly-headed poodle from Richmond, nearly overcome with dignity and fat.” Christian also recalled hearing his opening remarks in the Virginia Court of Appeals: “He said, ‘If your honors please, my client is from one of those beautiful isles where charming Sappho lived and sang.’ Judge Moncure, President of the Court, was a little deaf, could never see a joke, and with his hand behind his ear said: ‘Please repeat that Mr. Macfarland; I didn’t catch the point.’” Christian also recalled that “Mr. Macfarland lived in the house now occupied

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<sup>103</sup> Peter Force Scrapbook, #9911, Special Collections, Alderman library, University of Virginia.

<sup>104</sup> William H. Macfarland to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 9 February 1854, Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers, Mss. 1 G 8782 b 2099-2100, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>105</sup> W. H. Macfarland, “Discourse on the life of Honorable Henry Clay,” Delivered at the request of the committee of the city of Richmond, 1852. Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>106</sup> Richmond Library Company, Proxy, 3 May 1858, Mss. 4 R 4154 a 4, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>107</sup> John Letcher to William H. Macfarland, 17 May 1865, Hunter McGuire Papers, Mss. 1 M 1793 a 27, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

by the Westmoreland Club for a time and dispensed there a hospitality which made Richmond famous in that day.”<sup>108</sup>

For a man who honored Madison’s memory with a public eulogy, owning Montpelier was not a lifetime proposition to Macfarland. Only one growing season passed at Montpelier under Macfarland and Haxall ownership. On 21 March 1855, they sold the estate to Alfred V. Scott.<sup>109</sup> Macfarland quickly returned to his life in business and politics after selling Montpelier. He attended the Whig convention in Baltimore in 1856.<sup>110</sup> He participated in the liquidation of the United States Hotel Company, which he owned in partnership, as it auctioned off its stock of furniture in Richmond on 12 May 1856. Nine days later the *Richmond Whig* advertised the United States Hotel for rent.<sup>111</sup> In addition, Macfarland invested in land in Greenbrier County that contained coal deposits.<sup>112</sup> Before his acquisition of Montpelier, he bought vast tracts of land in Texas. He purchased four 640-acre tracts in Leon County, Texas, in 1851.<sup>113</sup> Macfarland also owned \$300 worth of James River & Kanawah Corporation bonds in 1843.<sup>114</sup>

Both Moncure and Macfarland invested in resort properties after their ownership of Montpelier. For instance, Dunlop, Moncure, & Co., briefly owned the Healing Springs

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<sup>108</sup> Gaines, *Biographical Register of Members, Virginia State Convention of 1861*, 53; Judge George L. Christian, “Reminiscences of some of the Dead of the Bench and Bar of Richmond,” an address delivered before the Richmond Bar Association on 9 December 1908, *The Virginia Law Register*, XIV, 9: 658-662.

<sup>109</sup> Macfarland and Haxall to Alfred V. Scott, 21 March 1855, Orange County Deed Book, 43: 326.

<sup>110</sup> William H. Macfarland to Col. Tompkins, 28 May 1856, Tompkins Family Papers, Mss. 1 T 5996 a 1870-1876, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>111</sup> “Account of Sales, United States Hotel Company,” Cabell Family Papers, Mss. 1 C 1118 a 816-825 § 33, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>112</sup> William H. Macfarland to Col. Tompkins, 10 March 1855, and William H. Macfarland to Col. Tompkins, 13 April 1858, Tompkins Family Papers, Mss. 1 T 5996 a 1870-1876, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>113</sup> General Land Office, Texas Republic, Mss. 11: 1 M 1646: 1-4, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>114</sup> Henrico County Personal Property Tax Books, Library of Virginia, Richmond.



Resort in Bath County, Virginia, after the Civil War.<sup>115</sup> Additionally, Macfarland held an interest in the White Sulphur Springs resort in Greenbrier County. In August 1855, Macfarland met with other businessmen interested in buying the resort. They formed the White Sulphur Springs Company, a joint-stock company.<sup>116</sup> At that time, however, Macfarland suspected “there is no money here for such an investment, certainly not now.” Nonetheless, he was receptive to “any suggestions from you, as to putting forward our scheme.”<sup>117</sup> The company soon purchased the 7,000-acre resort, which included a spring, buildings, furniture, and chattels used in the accommodation of the public, in 1856 through Macfarland’s Farmer’s Bank of Virginia in Richmond.<sup>118</sup> After the Civil War, the investors leased the resort and eventually sold it to other investors, including the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Company. The participation of Moncure and Macfarland in the business of mid-nineteenth-century spa life in Virginia places them among the wealthy investors who led the commercialization of travel and leisure. While some members of the upper class who visited American spas sought to form a distinctive group based on gentility and leisure during a time of rising democratization, class anxiety, and social change, travel to spas increased in popularity as more people found the means

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<sup>115</sup> James Nathaniel Dunlop Papers, Mss 1 D 9214, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>116</sup> William B. Calwell to Alexander Hugh Holmes Stuart, 19 August 1855, Stuart Family Papers, Mss. 1 St 9102 c 368-374, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>117</sup> William H. Macfarland to Alexander Hugh Holmes Stuart, n.d., Stuart Family Papers, Mss. 1 St 9102 b 181, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>118</sup> “Plan of Sale, White Sulphur,” Stuart Family Papers, Mss. 1 St 9102 c 378, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

and opportunity for travel and leisure.<sup>119</sup>

Traces of Madison's influence on Macfarland appeared after he sold the plantation in 1855. For instance, he helped organize Richmond's old Whigs into the Constitutionalist Union Party for the 1860 election. The party sought to preserve the Union and the 1850 Compromise, to preserve slavery, and to maintain upper class dominance of government. He gave the keynote address at the convention, which nominated John Bell and Edward Everett as their candidates. When he attended Virginia's convention on secession in 1861, his Whig political inclinations and interest in Madison moved him to the side of conditional Unionists and to membership on the federal relations committee. He supported state's rights and argued against northern radicalism, abolition, and Lincoln's use of military force. As a delegate from Richmond, he voted against secession at the first ballot, but he changed his position in subsequent rounds of voting due to public pressure against the Union. After the convention, he served a term in the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States. He lost his seat to John B. Young in the February 1862 election due to his pro-Union position during the secession debates, which his opponent claimed led to the fall of Fort Monroe due to Virginia's late entry into the war.<sup>120</sup>

After the Civil War, Macfarland maintained his presence in Virginia politics,

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<sup>119</sup> Barbara G. Carson, "Early American Tourists and the Commercialization of Leisure," in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1994), 393-405; John J. Moorman, *Mineral Springs of North America* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1873), 67; Perceval Reniers, *The Springs of Virginia: Life, Love, and Death at the Waters, 1775-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 11; Thomas A. Chambers, *Fashionable Dis-ease: Promoting Health and Leisure at Saratoga Springs, New York, and the Virginia Springs, 1790-1860*, Ph.D. Diss., College of William and Mary, 1999 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1999), *passim*.

<sup>120</sup> Naragon, *Ballots, Bullets, and Blood*, 223-233, 255, 268-270, 336; *Henrico County Poll Book*, Mss. 4 H 3942 a 1, Virginia Historical Society; William Harris Gaines, *Biographical Register of Members, Virginia State Convention of 1861* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1969), 53-54.

working to organize the Conservative Party of Virginia.<sup>121</sup> In 1866, he was elected to Richmond City Council as a conservative who stood against the enfranchisement of African-Americans. Oddly, he found himself at a large assembly of African-Americans, asking for their vote in 1866. He argued that the integrity of his character and class standing, along with the perpetuation of their former patriarchal relation, would best serve their interests. The crowd heckled him and derided him as an old rebel. As a member of council, he rejected demands from the Freedman's Bureau for public schools for freed slaves. He supported the measure only when the ordinance mandated racially segregated facilities in 1869. Macfarland died in 1872 and was buried in President's Circle at Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond near the graves of two former presidents, James Monroe and John Tyler.<sup>122</sup>

Alfred Vernon Scott was among the most inscrutable of all the Montpelier owners. He owned it longer than Macfarland, but shorter than Moncure. Unlike them, he left little documentary evidence. No census taker enumerated his family at Montpelier. Moreover, he made few changes. What was evident, however, was that he acquired debt along with land. According to the mortgage, Scott consented to pay the \$25,000 purchase price set by Macfarland and Haxall, which still included an outstanding bond held by David Graham.<sup>123</sup>

The personal property tax records, however, provided a brief illustration of the house and grounds on three occasions in Scott's life there. Starting in 1855 and running through 1857, the personal property tax records documented the changing aggregate value of Montpelier. The entirety of Scott's taxes in 1855 was based on only three draft

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<sup>121</sup> William H. Macfarland to R. M. T. Hunter, 13 February 1868, Papers of R. M. T. Hunter, Mss. 10: no. 142, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>122</sup> Naragon, *Ballots, Bullets, and Blood*, 379, 412, 448, 453-455.

<sup>123</sup> William H. Macfarland to Alfred V. Scott, Orange County Deed Book, 43: 330.

animals, five head of livestock, and \$14 worth of household and kitchen furniture. Obviously, he had not moved in yet. The house stood barren, and its aggregate value was \$422. By the following year, however, the Scotts had replenished the house and grounds. They installed \$2,000 worth of household and kitchen furniture, \$300 worth of plate, a \$200 piano, two clocks valued together at \$100, and two watches valued at \$150. The barn contained two pleasure carriages valued at \$400. The livestock increased dramatically: 574 cattle, sheep, and hogs (\$1,426), and 13 horses and mules (\$1,075). The 1856 aggregate value was \$5,551. The aggregate value increased to \$6,175 in 1857, due mainly to a larger herd of livestock, which was estimated at \$2,000.<sup>124</sup>

Scott, who was from Alabama, also brought more slaves to Montpelier. He had married Rebecca Nixon on an Alabama plantation named *Prairiewood* in 1841. They moved to Montpelier with all of their slaves. The personal property tax book recorded the resulting increase in slaves. In 1855, there were 14 taxable slaves at Montpelier. The 1856 tax identified two white males and 35 taxable slaves. In Scott's last year, the taxable slave population stood at 33.<sup>125</sup>

Scott had purchased Montpelier during a period of rising tobacco prices and optimism in the Virginia farm market. The optimism was evident in the increasing number of land transactions at the Orange County Courthouse. According to T. Lloyd Benson, "The draw of the land was due not only to improved tobacco prices but also to the development of railroad links to the county." By 1854, two railroads, the Virginia Central and the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, met at Gordonsville near Montpelier, offering access to markets in Richmond and Alexandria. Orange County enjoyed a strong local

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<sup>124</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>125</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond; Scott vertical file, Montpelier Research Center, Archaeology Office, Montpelier.

economy in the 1850s, which may have attracted Scott.<sup>126</sup> Thus, Montpelier in the mid-1850s derived its value from profits in tobacco and access to markets provided by improved railroad infrastructure, rather than reverence for Madison.

Soon after their arrival, however, the Scotts began casting about for prospective buyers. For instance, Mr. Scott abruptly stopped a journey to Baltimore in 1857 when he received word that the family of an interested buyer would be arriving at Montpelier. His wife Rebecca Scott recorded the uncertainties of the house sale as well as the necessary hospitality in a letter. Her husband, she wrote, “had started for the North West and had got as far as Baltimore when he heard that Mr. and Mrs. B[arro] had come to Virginia and he came back home.” The Barro]s stayed at Montpelier “for several days, to look at Montpelier, and how they like it, and how they are talking about buying it, but have not decided &c &c.”<sup>127</sup> Although the Barro]s did not make the purchase, another family from Baltimore soon did—the Carsons. The Scotts moved to Washington, D.C., after they sold Montpelier. Alfred Scott died there in 1860.<sup>128</sup>

A visit to Montpelier by a Madison family relation recorded the condition of Montpelier in 1856. Changes to the landscape were apparent. Mary E. P. Allen received a description of the plantation and passed the information to her son John Allen in Texas on 8 August 1856. She wrote, “I got a long letter from Mr. Cutts he wrote he had been to Montpelier (Uncle Madison’s old home) and visited his grave & that the appearance of the house had been changed, the trees cut down & the forest cut out to look like an English Park, that the lawn had undergone some changes, and although some might think

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<sup>126</sup> T. Lloyd Benson, “The Plain Folk of Orange: Land, Work, and Society on the Eve of the Civil War,” in *The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth-Century Virginia*, ed. Edward L. Ayers and John C. Willis (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1991), 59-61.

<sup>127</sup> Rebecca Scott to — Nixon, 12 April 1857. Original in possession of D. W. Owen, Birmingham, Alabama; copy in Montpelier Research Archives.

<sup>128</sup> Scott vertical file, Montpelier Research Center, Archaeology Office, Montpelier Station.

the place improved he did not[.] he liked it best the old style[.] he staid a day with Miss Betsey Coales in Charlottesville his letter was interesting and I sent it to your Papa to read.”<sup>129</sup> Mr. Cutts’s comment on Montpelier’s new, English-landscape-park design aesthetic indicated that the slaves had been cutting timber close to the house and creating more open ground. His preference for Madison’s landscape betrayed a hint of nostalgia and indicated that the Montpelier of the early 1800s was well timbered. Visitors commented on passing through thick woods between Montpelier and Orange courthouse. Madison did not care to lay out intriguing and varying vistas of his house for the approaching visitor. He was happy to have them simply pop out from underneath the forest canopy onto Montpelier’s lawn and enjoy the view from the portico or from the roof above the wings. Furthermore, Madison’s maintenance of stands of timber that encroached upon the mansion grounds developed out of his progressive farmer ideology. For instance, in his 1818 address to the Agricultural Society of Albemarle, Madison advocated the preservation of wood-lots to support farms: “Of all the errors in our rural economy, none is perhaps so much to be regretted, because none is so difficult to be repaired, as the injudicious and excessive destruction of timber and fire wood.” He proposed that farmers set aside wood land “as a permanent fund of timber for building and repairing houses; for fences, where live or stone ones may not have been introduced; for wheel carriages, and the other apparatus on farms,” as well as for the fire place.<sup>130</sup> As for Montpelier as a place of commemoration, Cutts sensed the fading memory of Madison.

The Orange County land tax assessment documented a gradual rise in the

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<sup>129</sup> Mary E. P. Allen to John Allen, 8 August 1856, Papers of the Allen Family, Ms. 9780, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>130</sup> “Address Delivered before the Agricultural Society of Albemarle,” Mr. Madison, President of the Society, Charlottesville, 12 May 1818.

plantation's value after 1844. In the last years of President Madison's life, Montpelier was a plantation composed of four separate tracts totaling 2,205.5 acres. The main house quarter of 1,557 acres included the mansion valued at \$9,000, and the principal building on Sawney's Quarter was assessed at \$168.75. Dolley's reorganization of the land and labor resources affected the value of the estate. In particular, the value of the buildings at the mansion quarter declined to \$8,655, due to the removal of household furnishings or the loss of ancillary farm buildings. Both her changes and the declining value of Virginia farm land were evident in the decreasing value of the land in 1839, when all of the tracts were valued as a whole at \$17 per acre. When her husband was alive, the average value per acre of land was \$18.83. By 1841, Todd had assumed the tax burden for all of the estate, except for the home quarter where Dolley resided. After Moncure sold Montpelier in 1848, the mansion was still valued at \$8,655 and the land at \$18.73 per acre. The transfer from Moncure to the Thorntons saw the Montpelier tract lose \$655 in value to its building stock. Separately, Macfarland and Scott held an estate whose main building was valued at \$8,000, but the land was valued at \$20 per acre. By 1857, when Scott sold out, the value per acre had risen to \$28.<sup>131</sup> Montpelier's proximity to the railroads (the Virginia Central Railroad and the Orange & Alexandria Railroad converged at Gordonsville, which is about five miles from Montpelier) and the favorable tobacco market account for the increase.

In spite of the apparent potential for prosperity, Scott sold the plantation, after Macfarland and Haxall released him from his debt to them, to Thomas J. Carson on 1 August 1857.<sup>132</sup> The transfer of property to Carson included two outstanding debts,

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<sup>131</sup> Orange County Land Tax Book, microfilm, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>132</sup> Macfarland and Haxall to Scott, 1 August 1857, Orange County Deed Book, 44: 323; Scott to Thomas J. Carson, 1 August 1857, Orange County Deed Book, 44: 333.

\$8,000 that Dolley Madison owed to David Graham, and \$10,000 that Scott owed to Graham, a burden the Carsons carried to the end of their stay there.<sup>133</sup> The sale placed Montpelier once again in the hands of an urban merchant. Also, Carson arrived at Montpelier when the effort to erect a monument over the graves of James and Dolley Madison reached its fulfillment.

Mr. Cutts's 1856 visit to Montpelier may have been made to assess the grave monument project discussed earlier between Payne and Causten. Beginning in 1856, a group civic-minded citizens, including some Madison family members, started planning for the installation of a monolith above President Madison's grave, according to an Orange County historian.<sup>134</sup> Dolley Madison had included a clause in her 1841 will that instructed her executors to erect "a plain monument of white marble over the remains of my dear Husband."<sup>135</sup> Her son never fulfilled this wish before his own death.

Newspaper accounts from the fall of 1857 and early 1858 recorded the activity at the Madison family cemetery. First, President Madison's grave received an obelisk monument, and then Dolley Madison's remains arrived from a Washington, D. C., cemetery. On 15 September 1857, the granite obelisk, which had arrived at Montpelier by rail from Richmond, was set in place above Madison's grave. Within three months, Dolley was reinterred beside him.

Documentation that names the subscribers to the memorial project has not come to light. Frederick Schmidt, a Montpelier historian, surmises that the most likely contributors were members of Madison's social circle: William Cable Rives, a political acolyte and early Madison biographer, Edward Coles, a family relation in Albemarle

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<sup>133</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 44: 333-334.

<sup>134</sup> Scott, *A History of Orange County*, 206.

<sup>135</sup> The Will of Dolley P. Madison, 1 February 1841, Madison Papers, #2988, McGregor Collection of Notable Virginia Families, Series IV, Box 4, wills, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.



County, and John C. Payne, Dolley's only surviving brother.<sup>136</sup> This group of men were concerned not just with his memory, but they were also curious about the state of his body. While laying up the monument's foundation, they found a reason to investigate the body's state of decomposition. His corpse, not his house, captured their attention; the article did not mention the condition of the mansion.<sup>137</sup>

By choosing an obelisk as a monument, the benefactors displayed an appreciation of Egyptian Revival forms, in particular their funereal symbolic associations and connotations of timelessness. At this time, Egyptian Revival forms were common in designs for memorials and tombs. The obelisk at Montpelier appeared toward the end of the Egyptian Revival movement, after many obelisk designs had been executed. The most obvious source for the design of Madison's memorial was Robert Mills's 1833 design for the Washington National Monument, which was under construction in 1848, but the obelisks designed by William Strickland in 1833 for the Washington family tomb at Mount Vernon may have inspired the Madison memorial planners as well. In the revival mode, obelisks marked focal points in the landscape, rather than flanking axial paths as in Egypt.<sup>138</sup>

The *Richmond Enquirer* published a detailed account of the exhumation and monument installation. The article noted that since Madison's death "no mural record with high sounding eulogy disclosed the place of his final rest, only neighborhood tradition and historic record serving to point the way to it. The neglect in attesting his worth by some suitable monument attracted attention, and some few years since a

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<sup>136</sup> Frederick H. Schmidt, "The Madison Cemetery at Montpelier, A Research Report," January 2000, on file at Montpelier Archives.

<sup>137</sup> Scott, *A History of Orange County*, 206.

<sup>138</sup> Richard G. Carrott, *The Egyptian Revival: Its Sources, Monuments, and Meaning, 1808-1858* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 7, 11, 82, 133, 139-140.

number of gentlemen of Orange County set about the task of procuring one. Having been procured, it was conveyed to Montpelier on the 15th Sept., and placed in position.”<sup>139</sup>

That the impetus for the erection of the monument was local in nature indicated the lack of national sympathy Madison’s memory commanded. Moreover, the house failed to serve as a suitable public memorial. The gentlemen dedicated to preserving Madison’s memory focused their act of commemoration on his grave site rather than his home.

The Richmond newspaper provided its readers with a detailed description of the monument, which was quarried by John W. Davies in Richmond. Composed of seven pieces, the monument weighed close to 32,000 pounds. It rose twenty two and a half feet and bore the inscription: “MADISON, Born March 16, 1751, Died June 28, 1836.”<sup>140</sup>

The excavation of ground for construction of the monument’s base offered an opportunity for a glimpse of Madison’s decomposed body. After removing the lid, the men found that “the interior was nearly filled with a species of moss, which adhered pertinaciously to the wood. Beneath this and partially hidden by it, were a few of the larger and harder bones.” Madison’s lower jaw “had fallen away, the bones of the breast and the ribs were gone, and the only parts of the skeleton which remained were the skull and portions of the cheek bones, the vertebrae of the neck, the spine and the large bones of the arms.”<sup>141</sup>

The load of the obelisk above the grave required the construction of a barrel vault over the casket. They constructed two walls on either side and a brick arch over the coffin. A similar structure supported Dolley’s obelisk. A few months later, Dolley’s remains were hauled from Washington down to Montpelier and laid to rest beside her

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<sup>139</sup> “Monument to Ex-President Madison,” *The Richmond Enquirer*, 20 October 1857, vol. LIV, no. 51, microfilm, N-US-Va-8, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>140</sup> “Monument to Ex-President Madison,” *Richmond Enquirer*, 20 October 1857.

<sup>141</sup> “Monument to Ex-President Madison,” *Richmond Enquirer*, 20 October 1857.

husband. The *Richmond Enquirer* reported that her nephew, Mr. Cutts, brought her remains from Washington. Her re-burial would “have been consummated when the Madison monument was erected in September last, if her relatives in Washington had known at the time that this was about being done.”<sup>142</sup> Later, Dolley Madison’s grave received an obelisk smaller than the president’s, but the exact date of its installation has eluded historians. Some time between her interment at Montpelier in early 1858 and the arrival of Confederate troops in the area during the Civil War, it appeared in the family cemetery.<sup>143</sup>

It would be unreasonable to assume that any of the recent Montpelier owners after the Madisons had a role in this project. Carson had just arrived. The Scotts had just left. Macfarland, however, may have had a hand in it. Soon after he purchased the property from the Thorntons, a Richmond newspaper expressed the hope that Macfarland would erect a suitable monument to Madison at Montpelier, but his business ventures may have diverted his attention and financial resources from the project.<sup>144</sup> Yet, Macfarland’s penchant for personal recognition through public commemoration of American statesmen may have motivated him to join the project. In fact, a Macfarland family biography published in the twentieth century claimed that he allegedly served as a pall bearer at the funeral of President James Monroe.<sup>145</sup> The author does not specify if he served either at the first burial of Monroe in New York City in 1831 or later in Richmond, Virginia, at the interment ceremony at Hollywood Cemetery, where

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<sup>142</sup> “The Remains of Mrs. Madison,” *Richmond Enquirer*, 26 January 1815, vol. LIV, no. 79, microfilm, N-US-Va-8, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>143</sup> Frederick H. Schmidt, “The Madison Cemetery at Montpelier, A Research Report,” January 2000, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>144</sup> *Charlottesville Jeffersonian and Fredericksburg News* 6 March 1854, No. 69, p. 2, Rappahannock Regional Library, Fredericksburg, Va; microfilm, N-US-Va-8, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>145</sup> Eleanor Brown Merrill, *A Virginia Heritage* (Baltimore: self-published, 1968), 94, photocopy in Macfarland vertical file, Montpelier Research Center.

Macfarland owned a nearby plot, in 1858. Moreover, Montpelier for Macfarland meant an opportunity to form a partnership with a fellow wealthy Richmond businessman, Haxall.

The installation of the monuments over the graves of James and Dolley Madison briefly reasserted Montpelier, specifically its cemetery, in the ante-bellum, American public sphere. The project to monumentalize him received notice in the Richmond press, as well as in national journals. For instance, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* carried an article on President Madison's obelisk at the time of Dolley Madison's re-interment at Montpelier. This article too focused on the exposure and condition of Madison's remains.<sup>146</sup> The movement of Confederate troops through the area during the Civil War, however, brought a renewal of interest in Madison, his grave, and his house. The frequent transfers of ownership ceased, bringing a measure of stability to the plantation until the end of the rebellion.

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<sup>146</sup> *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, vol. 5, no. 113 (30 January 1858): 140.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Civil War and Post-Bellum Stewards

After the Scott family left Montpelier for Washington, D.C., and the monument was in place, the farm became the interest of men from outside the South. First, the Carsons of Baltimore, Maryland, from 1857 to 1881, and then, from 1881 to 1900, the partnership of Detrick and Bradley (representing Frederick, Maryland, and Boston, Massachusetts, respectively), treated it as a country retreat. Though preserving Madison's memory carried little meaning with these owners, he was the central feature of the house to the soldiers in the Confederate army who visited the plantation and described it in their journals. Some of their comments contained disrespect for both Madison and the present owners. Others appreciated Montpelier as a venue for social events during the war.

Before the war brought a renewal of interest in Montpelier, Thomas J. Carson began improvements to the estate. The Carsons arrived in ante-bellum Baltimore from Ireland. The 1840 census first identified Thomas J. Carson as a merchant. Then, ten years later in the the 1850 census, he had reinvented himself as a banker. At that time, Carson's Baltimore household included numerous members, both family and non-family. The enumerator listed Thomas J. Carson as a 37-year-old merchant and native of Ireland who owned \$60,000 worth of real estate. In his neighborhood, the twentieth ward in the City of Baltimore, he lived among merchants, a clergyman, a butcher, laborers, a carpenter, and

a gardener. Those living in his household and sharing his surname were: Ellen, a 27-year-old woman born in Maryland, Eley, a four-year-old girl born in Maryland, and Maney, a 26-year-old clerk who was born in Ireland. Supporting the household were four domestic servants. Two were from Ireland: Daniel Elam, a 30-year-old waiter, and 25-year-old Mary Cackday whose occupation was not listed. Mary Tide, a 20-year-old from Germany, was their governess. Benjamin Tiney, a 21-year-old black male born in Maryland, worked as their waiter.<sup>1</sup>

Montpelier transformed the Carsons into members of the slave-owning elite of piedmont Virginia. First, immediate improvements marked their early ownership. A Confederate soldier visiting the mansion in 1863 described the new owner and the nature of the changes to the house. Benjamin Wesley Justice wrote, “It appears that he was a wealthy banker of Baltimore, a native of Ireland, who purchased this place for a summer residence, & fitted it up in an almost princely style.” Based on Justice’s comment that “The portico, we were told, has been built by the present owner,” the steps of the front portico may have been repaired and altered at this time.”<sup>2</sup> Carson added \$1,000 worth of household and kitchen furniture in 1858, according to tax records. Where the Scotts had a \$200 piano, the Carsons had a \$300 one. The Carsons also had a more expensive pleasure carriage: \$400 compared to the Scotts’ \$350 one. The Carsons also added to the stables. Their horses and mules were valued at \$1,800 while the Scotts’ were \$1,075. Carson’s labor force was larger slightly—33 taxable slaves of the Scotts’ compared to 40 of Carson. In the Orange County tax assessments on the Carson family at Montpelier, the

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<sup>1</sup> 1850 U. S. Census, Maryland, City of Baltimore, 20th Ward, 314.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Wesley Justice to Mrs. Justice, 7 September 1863, Benjamin Wesley Justice Papers, 1836-1893, Special Collections Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, copy on file in Montpelier Archives.

aggregate value rose—from \$6,175 in 1857 to \$7,675 in 1858.<sup>3</sup>

The 1860 census enumeration found the Carsons at home in Baltimore, not Montpelier. Since the 1850 census and his purchase of Montpelier, Thomas J. Carson continued to identify himself as a banker. He revealed his wealth to the enumerator: \$250,000 in real estate and \$100,000 in personal property. Ellen Carson, who was not listed among his family, may have died sometime since 1850. Along with his fourteen-year-old daughter Elizabeth E. Carson, formerly called “Eley,” a nine-year-old male named John Carson had joined the family. Mary E. Vonte, a 50-year-old from Amsterdam, worked as a governess for them. Ann Temperance, a 70-year-old black born in Maryland worked as their servant. Carson’s neighborhood had changed too. Now, he lived among a lawyer, a stock broker, a civil engineer, and a captain in the United States Navy, as well as clerks and merchants.<sup>4</sup>

In Baltimore, Thomas J. Carson acted out the role of a respectable citizen, but he did not move among the class of gentlemen. Rather, he was categorized with the merchants in a post-bellum local history. For instance, when troops from the northern states passed through Baltimore, they were attacked by a mob of Confederate sympathizers in April 1861. The Baltimore police force was unprepared to control such a level of civil unrest. As a result of the riot, “a few gentlemen” of Baltimore obtained “subscriptions among the merchants in their immediate neighborhood to be devoted to the purchase of arms to be placed in the hands of the police commissioners for distribution.” According to this local historian, Thomas J. Carson was among the

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<sup>3</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>4</sup> 1860 U. S. Census, Maryland, City of Baltimore, 11th Ward, 693.

contributing merchants, not the organizing gentlemen.<sup>5</sup>

When in Orange County, Virginia, Carson could play the role of a slave-owning planter and act in accord with his slave-owning neighbors in matters concerning slave management. For instance, he dutifully registered the birth of an unnamed male slave born to an unnamed mother at his plantation on 7 February 1859.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, he complied with the officers of the Orange County court in 1859 when they ordered “that the hands of Carson be assigned” to work on the “road from the plank road at Thomas Newman’s gate to the road between Garrett Scott and Woodley.”<sup>7</sup> In addition, he purchased more slaves, solidifying his position among the ranks of slave holders.

Carson reorganized the Montpelier plantation and its diminished slave labor force. The number of slaves at Montpelier rose after Carson arrived. The Carsons paid taxes on 40 slaves and four free white males in 1858. In 1859, the number of taxable slaves rose to 44. Rather than rely on natural increase of Montpelier slaves, an outright purchase of enslaved labor from outside the county soon followed Carson’s purchase of the plantation.<sup>8</sup> In 1859, he exchanged land with a neighbor and bought numerous slaves in Albemarle County to work at Montpelier. First, on 21 July 1859 Carson and John Willis of Rockwood exchanged relatively equal tracts of land. Willis conveyed 16.58 acres “of his land adjoining Montpellier” and \$101 to Carson. In return, Carson conveyed 14.42 acres “of his Montpelier tract” to Willis.<sup>9</sup> Then, Carson purchased “eleven negroes, viz. a man William about 27 or 28. a man Edward about 41 or 2 and Eloise his wife about 39. a

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<sup>5</sup> John Thomas Scharf, *The Chronicles of Baltimore: Being a Complete History of “Baltimore Town” and Baltimore City from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Baltimore: Turnbull Brothers, 1874), 598.

<sup>6</sup> Bureau of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, Commonwealth of Virginia, Roll #52, “Orange County Births, 1853-1896.”

<sup>7</sup> Orange County Minute Book, 1856-1867, 26 September 1859, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>8</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>9</sup> Orange County Deed Book 45: 89-90.



man Jimmy about 40. or 41. and his wife Hannah about 38. (the latter not being stint [sic]) Robert about 25. Charles about 17. Edward, Jr., other wise called Edmund 13. Joe, 13. Keziah, a girl about 11 and Harriet about 8 years old for the sum of \$8050. which said sum is secured by a bond.” He purchased these slaves from V. H. Massie, guardian of Mary S. Stevenson, who had received the slaves from her deceased father, Andrew Stevenson, as part of the bequest in his will.<sup>10</sup> In order to secure the bond and “to give a proper margin for casualties,” Carson entered into a deed of trust with John Willis. Thereby, Carson conveyed the newly purchased slaves, plus existing Montpelier slaves, in trust to Willis. These slaves were identified by first name only, “Stephen about 36. Jim about 25. Martha about 20, Eliza 3, and Baltimore 2, Pitt about 35, Laura 24. and Isbella 20 years.” According to the terms of the deal, Carson had to make semi-annual payments to Massie until 1 July 1864, and he could not take the slaves out of Virginia without permission from Massie. If Carson defaulted, then Willis would sell the mortgaged slaves.<sup>11</sup>

This new arrangement of enslaved negroes at Montpelier was short-lived. Emancipation arrived before the maturation of the bond, and Thomas J. Carson died in Baltimore in 1861. His obituary in the *Baltimore Weekly Sun* described him as a banker.<sup>12</sup> Frank Carson, his brother, assumed management of the plantation, with a dubious claim to ownership of the estate asserted in 1862.<sup>13</sup> An earlier deed of trust, however, placed legal title to the plantation in the hands of Thomas J. Carson’s creditors.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, Frank Carson, who emigrated from Ireland in 1849, joined his neighbors when they were

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<sup>10</sup> Orange County Deed Book 45: 90.

<sup>11</sup> Orange County Deed Book 45: 91-92.

<sup>12</sup> *Baltimore Weekly Sun*, Baltimore, Md., [A.S. Abell & Co.] 1838-1904, Alderman Library, Rarebook Collection, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

<sup>13</sup> Orange County Deed Book 46: 169.

<sup>14</sup> Orange County Deed Book 44: 333; 44: 335; 47: 528.

appointed as patrollers.<sup>15</sup> For instance, the county court ordered that they “patrol and visit within the neighborhood of Poplar Run all negro quarters and other places suspected of having an unlawful assembly and all slaves strolling from one plantation to another.”<sup>16</sup> When the governor of Virginia demanded that all able-bodied male slaves between 18 and 45 years of age be contributed to public defense projects, the officers of the Orange County court recorded that the estate of Thomas J. Carson surrendered one slave in January 1863.<sup>17</sup> Nine months later, the county court passed a resolution to petition the governor to seek the suspension of this requisition of slaves. They feared the slaves would defect to the Union lines for their freedom. They also claimed that their slaves were treated poorly. Moreover, they protested that their slaves were needed for an evacuation of Orange County. In February 1864, they resubmitted their petition.<sup>18</sup>

The community of Orange County may have seen evacuation as a strong possibility when the violence of the war came close to their homes after the Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania. For instance, Union troops pressed toward Gordonsville, located approximately five miles south of Montpelier, in an attempt to capture the railroad depot and junction there. A Confederate cavalryman recorded the incident at Gordonsville on 24 September 1863: “The Yanks came very nigh getting to Gordonsville.”<sup>19</sup> For most of the winter, the Rapidan River, located approximately four miles north of Montpelier, marked the boundary between Union and Confederate troops during the 1863-64 winter campaign. Incursions by Union troops occurred along its

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<sup>15</sup> Famine Irish Passenger Record Data Files, Center for Immigration Research Collection, National Archives and Record Administration, Washington, D.C.

<sup>16</sup> Orange County Minute Book, 1856-1867, 26 December 1862, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>17</sup> Orange County Minute Book, 1856-1867, 5 January 1863, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>18</sup> Orange County Minute Book, 1856-1867, 28 September 1863; 5 February 1864, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>19</sup> Elijah S. Johnson, Diary, Mss 2 J 6314 b, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

course. For instance, a Confederate artillery soldier camped at Pisgah Church wrote to his grandmother that in the northeastern section of Orange County “The Yankees have been giving us a good deal of trouble lately, by making feints at different points along the river which kept us nearly all the time on the trot night and day.” Later, the Wilderness Campaign took place approximately 25 miles east of Orange Court House in the spring of 1864.<sup>20</sup>

With such military activity in the neighborhood, Montpelier became a curiosity and visitor attraction to Confederate soldiers with free time. Tax records for the war years partially illustrate the contents of the house at the time some soldiers may have seen it. For instance, the dwelling still contained genteel commodities and servants. In 1861, Montpelier contained the following taxable, household goods: one \$10 clock, one \$300 piano, no plate, and \$1,000 worth of household and kitchen furniture. The plate may have been removed for safe keeping. The 1862 assessment documented a modest decline in the value of the goods: one \$30 watch, one \$5 clock, one \$150 piano, no plate, and \$1,000 worth of household and kitchen furniture. In 1863, the clock was gone, there was still no plate in the house, but the watch and piano were still there, and the value of household and kitchen furniture had risen to \$1,500. The tax data for 1864 was missing, and the 1865 personal property tax return only assessed a levy on Carson himself and one horse—total tax equaled \$2.<sup>21</sup>

The agricultural operation also indicated a modest decline during the war, but the decrease in livestock was only temporary. In 1861, Carson worked with 21 horses, 44 cattle, 50 sheep, and 61 hogs. In 1862, his livestock herd included fewer horses and

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<sup>20</sup> Wesley Palmore to his grandmother, 4 December 1863, Mss. 2 P 1857 a 1, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>21</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

sheep, but more cattle and hogs: 16 horses, 50 cattle, 41 sheep, and 70 hogs. In 1863, however, he was down to 24 head of cattle, 37 sheep, and 60 hogs. The herd of horses remained the same. After the war, Carson paid taxes on 28 horses, one \$50 carriage (there had been two on the farm since 1860 valued \$200), 52 head of cattle, 96 sheep, 25 hogs. As for personal property, he had no watches, one \$5 clock, no piano, \$80 worth of plate, and \$350 worth of household and kitchen furniture. By the end of the war, his personal property tax values had returned to, or exceeded, their prewar levels.<sup>22</sup>

The land tax records remained steady during the war. From 1860 to 1865, the value of land per acre including buildings at Montpelier (whose total acreage was recorded as 1,149) remained at \$28.09. The portion of the total value (\$32,275) which came from structures on the property was \$8,000. The 16.58-acre tract of land Carson acquired from Willis also displayed consistent valuation: \$18.62. This tract did not have any buildings that contributed value to the total value of \$309. Valuations of Montpelier in the land tax book remained the same not just through the Civil War but also through the 1860s. Not until 1873 did the valuation change to reflect a decrease. In fact, for 1871 and 1872, the value of the land per acre increased to \$30.<sup>23</sup> Throughout the war and for some time afterward, the house and grounds presented no symptoms of abject dereliction to the Confederate soldiers who visited.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>23</sup> Orange County Land Tax Book, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>24</sup> A previous study of the mansion argues that the Carsons remodeled the steps of the front portico before or during 1863. Based on a vague comment in Benjamin Wesley Justice's account that the "portico, we were told, has been built by the present owner, a Mr. Carson of Baltimore," Ann Miller argues that the Carsons altered the portico "to its present configuration." There are no other comments from visitors regarding such an alteration. In light of better documented changes to the house made by subsequent owners years later, attributing an alteration of the portico to the Carsons is unwarranted. See Ann Miller, "Historic Structures Report: Montpelier, Orange County, Virginia," 1990, unpublished manuscript on file at Montpelier Archives, 110, and Benjamin Wesley Justice to Mrs. Justice, 7 September 1863, Benjamin Wesley Justice Papers, 1836-1893, Special Collections Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, facsimile copy on file at Montpelier Archives.

On the whole, Montpelier made a favorable impression, but there were some who formed negative opinions after visiting. For instance, Mrs. Somerville Williams reported to a friend in 1862 that she had visited the plantation. She wrote, “the pleasure afforded by our trip was great; the architecture. . . is very much like the President’s house in Washington.” She, like others before her, was enchanted by the western vista from the portico. She collected botanical relics from the garden, “I gathered figs and Siberian crabs, an apple about the size of a marble.” She expressed displeasure that a foreigner owned the plantation: “This beautiful place now no longer belongs to the Madisons but to an Irishman because he possessed enough of the filthy lucre he must become owner of that delightful place. His name is Karson [sic], a banker of some note in Baltimore, he is in Baltimore now. A brother of his lives at Montpelier now, and it is said they are all true to the South.”<sup>25</sup>

Mrs. Williams did not limit her reconnaissance to the grounds. The inside of the house, she wrote, “is most handsomely furnished, full length mirror, portraits and paintings and a most excellent library.”<sup>26</sup> Some Confederate officers, however, disparaged the condition of the house and the hospitality of its owner. The son of General Robert E. Lee arrived at the house when it was being used as headquarters for two cavalry divisions in November 1863. Robert E. Lee, Jr., described their headquarters “at Mr. Madison’s old house; planned by four Presidents, Rumor says, but from looking at the old thing, I should never judge that any sensible man had anything to do with it.” Lee’s taste in architecture had been shaped by living at Arlington, the northern Virginia plantation of George Washington Park Custis, who bequeathed it to Lee’s mother Mary Ann

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<sup>25</sup> Ms. Somerville Williams to Mary Lipscomb, 28 November 1862, facsimile copy on file at Montpelier Archives.

<sup>26</sup> Williams to Lipscomb, 28 November 1862.

Randolph Custis Lee. George Hadfield, an English architect, designed the building, which was built in phases from 1802 to 1817. Before the Lees evacuated Arlington in 1861, the mansion featured numerous items of George Washington memorabilia in honor of George Washington Park Custis's adopted grandfather, President George Washington.<sup>27</sup>

Another prominent Confederate, General Jubal A. Early, visited Montpelier in November 1862 and also found the accommodations there less than satisfactory. According to one of his officers, the general and his staff officers made a horseback excursion from their nearby camp to the mansion, but returned to camp because Mr. Carson was not at home. When Carson realized they had visited, he sent a note to the general's camp inviting him to return "to honor him with his company while he remains in the neighborhood." The general and his staff returned on foot. George Greer recorded their visit in his journal. He wrote, "Mr. Carson received us but soon left the room and didn't make his appearance during the evening." Apparently, Carson did not want to enjoy their company and left them in a receiving room. "The room which we were shown into was the reading room of the President," wrote Greer, who mistakenly thought he was in the historic home of President James Monroe. For instance, he wrote, "We camp tonight in sight of and about half a mile from Montpelier, the late residence of President Monroe." In the "reading room," Greer and the others found "plenty of nice books, periodicals, etc. and I could have enjoyed myself for a month in that room."<sup>28</sup>

Carson left them waiting. "We had been there for about two hours when we all began to show signs of hunger, but there were not indications of supper," wrote Greer. As their hunger grew, so did their anticipation of a feast. "Dr. Whitehead talks with great

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<sup>27</sup> Robert E. Lee, Jr., to Agness, 17 November 1863, Lee Family Papers, Mss 1 L 51 c 489, folio 861, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>28</sup> George H. Greer, "Riding with Early: An Aides's Diary," *Civil War Times Illustrated*, December 1978, 33.

volubility about the rich furniture &c and predicted a regular sumptuous [sic] supper, supposing that the old fellow would have plenty of Burgandy [sic], Champagne &c,” wrote Greer, but they were disappointed. A servant announced that supper was ready. “The table was an elegant one,” he wrote, but it “was not as well furnished as it might have been.” They sat down, and “there was a visible falling of faces. There were biscuit, egg, bread, and butter on the table. Five eggs were there to soothe the craving of seven hungry stomachs. There was no meat, but there was buttermilk.” The men said nothing until the servant left the room. Then, they exclaimed “‘D--- such a supper,’ ‘What horrid coffee,’ ‘These biscuits have too much lard in them’ &c. For myself I was not in such a good humor as I happened to be one of the unfortunate ones who got no egg.” Greer specifically recorded the reactions of the general, who “ate in silence for a few moments when giving a sudden grunt he rose from the table using the very vulgar [sic] expression, ‘I’ll be damned if I ain’t going home and get something to eat.’”<sup>29</sup>

They quickly left the house without speaking to Mr. Carson. “We were soon on our way home with no good idea of the proprietor of Montpelier,” wrote Greer. On their way back to camp, they continued to disparage Carson: “Some called him a ‘d--- Irishman’ and Dr. Whitehead who before supper had said that he knew the fellow as a ‘snob’ and that we would have a grand supper, protested that he knew the fellow was a ‘wild uncouth Irishman’ as soon as he saw him.” They even considered vandalizing the estate. “The General had previously given orders that no trees should be cut down, but now as he walked home he said he had ‘a great mind to make Callahill [Lieutenant William G. Callaway] cut down three or four trees tonight.” They returned to camp “and ate bountifully of our own poor fare which was a great deal better than that at Montpelier,”

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<sup>29</sup> Greer, “Riding with Early: An Aides’s Diary,” 33.

according to Greer.<sup>30</sup>

Although he did not record a visit to the house, J.E.B. Stuart found the pastoral landscape near Montpelier a welcome distraction from the war. In fact, the land he described in a letter had been part of Col. Madison's former estate. He wrote to his wife in September 1863, "I have found here on the Rapidan, a nice quiet little home and farm for sale. Such as you and I have often pictured in our imaginations. I have written to Alech to buy it—as he invests where ever he can. I would like to have you located here. It was the residence of Dr. Madison's grandfather, is in a charming neighborhood, not far from the railroad. beautiful woods—flowers—hills and picturesque view of the Blue Ridge."<sup>31</sup> Other soldiers found the Montpelier area equally pleasing. "We have gotten, I think, into a very nice neighborhood," wrote William J. Pegram to his sister when his artillery battery arrived at camp near Gordonsville in 1863.<sup>32</sup> Gilbert Jefferson Wright, a member of a cavalry group from Georgia, wrote home in August of 1862 to say that the Montpelier area reminded him of Cherokee, Georgia.<sup>33</sup> "The country through Orange County today has been beautiful. Fine farms—a diversified surface and far in the background the solemn outline of the Blue Ridge. How the army did cheer this morning when it came in sight of the mountain," wrote Watkins Kearns on 7 June 1863.<sup>34</sup>

Watkins Kearns was a member of G Company of the 27th Virginia Infantry Regiment in the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, which arrived at Montpelier in August 1863. While they camped there, Carson hosted a social event. According to

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<sup>30</sup> Greer, "Riding with Early: An Aides's Diary," 33.

<sup>31</sup> J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 17 September 1863, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers, Mss 2 St 922 c 4, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>32</sup> William J. Pegram to Mary Evans (Pegram) Anderson, 16 December 1863, Pegram-Johnson-MacIntosh Family Papers, Mss 1 P 3496 a 1-14, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>33</sup> Gilbert Jefferson Wright to Dorothy Chandler Wright, 1 August 1862, Mss 2 W 9323 b, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>34</sup> Watkins Kearns Diary, 7 June 1863, Mss 5: 1 K 2143:3, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.



Kearns, there was a “general party to night at Madison’s old residence. All the ladies in the country round about here invited. All the staff officers of the corps also.” During the day before the party, Kearns visited the Madison graveyard “to see the grounds & cemetery of Madison. Madison’s tomb a plain granite shaft. The Lee’s, Mary’s, Macon’s, and other members of the family interred here.” Kearns was so impressed with the monument that he drew it in his diary. He also recorded in his diary the appearance of the house and grounds: “The mansion a fine stuccoed building in good repair. The grounds around are beautiful. A walnut grove around the house and a little Roman temple over the ice house.”<sup>35</sup> Captain Robert Emory Park of the 12th Alabama regiment visited in August 1863 and made a similar comment in this diary: “I rode to Montpelier, once the residence of James Madison. A young lady showed us the parlor, library, and dining-room. They had some costly paintings and busts. The grounds around the mansion and the view of the Blue Ridge Mountain were beautiful.”<sup>36</sup>

Benjamin Wesley Justice, a member of a North Carolina regiment, also toured Montpelier and left a detailed description of the house and grounds. His description emphasized aspects of the plantation in decline. Writing to his wife in September 1863, he recalled his “excursion to Montpelier.” He and a group of friends traveled about four miles from their camp on a route that led them past an old mill, “whose dam was broken and whose wheel was silent, dry and tumbling to pieces from decay.” The theme of decrepitude continued as they entered Montpelier through an elegant gate with “an urn surmounting each post, in which are growing, not tasteful flowers, but some common weeds.” The mansion, he wrote, presented “a handsome appearance of light cream color,

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> “War Diary of Captain Robert Emory Park, 12th Alabama Regiment,” in *Southern Historical Society Papers*, XXVI (January-December 1898), 16.

brown roof, broad front, wings on each side lower than the main body, chimneys tall and slender, huge box bushes in front, lawn in front bare of trees but covered with a luxuriant crop of Bermuda Grass.” Between the house and the temple, he noticed “a double row of beautiful white pines, on both sides and in the rear a noble grove of ancient chestnut, walnut, oak, locust, poplar and other trees, and gently undulating grounds covered with rank green grass.”<sup>37</sup>

When Justice’s group arrived at the house, they were, he wrote, “politely shown through the mansion, which is fitted up in an elegant style within.” At the front door they found the passage to be “well furnished with elegant paintings.” He noted a mahogany hat-rack and an five-foot-wide, elk horn hat-rack flanking the central door. They found plaster busts on display and “a beautiful and select collection of books” in the library. He noted the images he had on display. For instance, Justice wrote that one of the images, a steel engraving, was “of the U.S. Senate in 1850, listening to the eloquence of Henry Clay, on the Compromise Bill.” In the parlor, he found “two contrasted pictures, ‘Rowing against the Stream,’ ‘Rowing with the Stream.’ In the former there are two parties in a boat on a rapid stream, one party a man, the other a young pretty woman, the latter seated at the stern of the boat, while the stalwart youth strains every muscle to urge the boat forward. In the latter the boat glides smoothly down the current while the man holds the motionless oar in one hand the other thrown lovingly around the waist of the woman, their heads in close proximity.” Compared to Madison’s arrangement of images in this space, Carson continued the political theme, the display of fine art, and other visual conversation pieces. Carson’s display also indicated the

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<sup>37</sup> Benjamin Wesley Justice to Mrs. Justice, 7 September 1863, Benjamin Wesley Justice Papers, 1836-1893, Special Collections Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, facsimile copy on file at Montpelier Archives.

continued public use of this central space in the house.<sup>38</sup>

Justice also saw signs of neglect in the Madison family cemetery, some of it from visitors. He described the setting of the cemetery in an open field and surrounded by “a few stunted black locust trees” and “an old crumbling brick wall.” After passing through “a small iron gate,” he found the monument to Madison and “a smaller marble shaft bearing the plain name of Dolley Payne, wife of Jas. Madison,” he wrote. The traces of visitors in the cemetery were evident to Justice. He wrote, “The neatest devices have all been soiled by the dirty hands of the visitors and are stained by the peculiar red clay which composes the soil of this country.” Justice took a botanical souvenir from the graveyard, “some seed of the blue daisy near the tomb of the illustrious dead,” and asked his wife to plant them at home.<sup>39</sup>

While most soldiers visited for a short time, one found himself there on extended duty. Sergeant Major Marion Hill Fitzpatrick recorded the activity in the house from December 1863 to January 1864, while he served as a guard.<sup>40</sup> Carson treated him in a friendly manner, in contrast to his curt interactions with General Jubal Early and his staff. Compared to Early’s presumptuous arrival at the house with a large party of men expecting a feast, Carson’s treatment of Fitzpatrick was warm and generous. Unlike the hostility that grew between Carson and Early, Fitzpatrick developed a cordial relationship with Carson, who appeared to judge men on the basis of character rather than reputation. Perhaps a shared Irish ancestry facilitated the friendship of Carson and Fitzpatrick. Carson’s accommodation of Fitzpatrick on numerous occasions revealed

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<sup>38</sup> Benjamin Wesley Justice to Mrs. Justice, 7 September 1863.

<sup>39</sup> Benjamin Wesley Justice to Mrs. Justice, 7 September 1863.

<sup>40</sup> Jeffrey C. Lowe and Sam Hodges, eds., *Letters to Amanda: The Civil War Letters of Marion Hill Fitzpatrick, Army of Northern Virginia* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1998), 101-110.

various uses of the house and grounds during the army's occupation of the area.<sup>41</sup>

Fitzpatrick arrived at Montpelier on 10 December 1863 and found Carson in a congenial mood. "The old fellow here says he wants us to stay as long as the Army stays here and we may spend the winter here," wrote Fitzpatrick. Unlike the staff officer of General Early, Sergeant Major Fitzpatrick expressed a keen awareness of the mansion's historical significance, and his assessment of its present character agreed with Justice's. In his description of the plantation, he indicated that it conveyed a sense of its former appearance despite noticeable decay. He wrote to his wife that it was once "a grand and noble place and many traits of its grandeur can be seen yet, but since the war it has been taken but little care of and the beauty of the place, such as the fancy garden, yards &c is almost entirely neglected." He also commented on the cemetery. His reference to state ownership of it indicated Virginia's appropriation of Madison as a figure of state-level significance: "The grave yard is quite interesting to look at. Madison, with many of the family, is buried there. It is enclosed and belongs to the State of Va. The monument over the grave of Madison is about 20 feet high and is of plain granite, nothing showy about it." Inside the mansion, Fitzpatrick enjoyed the library, "to which I have free access and which is a source of great improvement and pleasure to me." He kept books with him and read while on guard duty. He wrote to his wife, "I have a fine time reading. I am now reading Colton's Life of Henry Clay. It is a large work in two volumes. I take it with me while on guard nearly every day."<sup>42</sup>

When Fitzpatrick's brigade left camp in January 1864, Carson sent him off with a generous helping of provisions. Before he left, he wrote to his wife: "It is about dark now and I am writing by candle light in our room where we have had such a pleasant time. I

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<sup>41</sup> Lowe and Hodges, eds., *Letters to Amanda*, xii.

<sup>42</sup> Marion Hill Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 16 December 1863, in *Letters to Amanda*, 101-105.

have rolled up my blanket, fixed up everything, and we will start pretty soon and go to Camp tonight. Mr. Carson is having some rations cooked for us to carry with us. I learn the Brigade is near Winchester.”<sup>43</sup> When Fitzpatrick returned to the area in March 1864, he was not assigned to guard Montpelier. Nevertheless, he paid a call “on my old Irish friend Mr. Carson” and “got a warm dinner with him and rested about two hours and then came on here to the Camp.”<sup>44</sup>

Fitzpatrick’s visit to Carson demonstrated that they had formed a significant relationship, which may have been based on their membership in the Freemasons. Fitzpatrick came to appreciate certain privileges at Montpelier. He used a room for a special purpose on occasion, and Carson allowed him to have his washing done by the slaves there. Fitzpatrick wrote in March 1864 that “I go over to Montpelior [*sic*] occasionally and get a good dinner which is a great help to me. I also get my clothes washed there. They wash them nice and iron them, which is a great help. I make money enough sewing to pay for the washing and more too, and sewing is easier than washing.”<sup>45</sup> Fitzpatrick also brought over a group of fellow Masons. He wrote, “We had another Masonic meeting night before last, the first we have had since we came back from the valley, in consequence of having no room. I got a room over at Montpelior [*sic*], upstairs in the house we stayed in while guarding there. It answers the purpose finely and if it would quit raining so much, we would meet regular.”<sup>46</sup>

Fitzpatrick’s activities at Montpelier documented various public functions of the house and grounds during the war. It served as tavern, laundry, and public meeting house as well as tourist attraction and staff headquarters. In addition, according to Fitzpatrick,

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<sup>43</sup> Marion Hill Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 6 January 1864, in *Letters to Amanda*, 109-110.

<sup>44</sup> Marion Hill Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 6 March 1864, in *Letters to Amanda*, 123-125.

<sup>45</sup> Marion Hill Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 21 March 1864, in *Letters to Amanda*, 130.

<sup>46</sup> Marion Hill Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 10 April 1864, in *Letters to Amanda*, 133.

while he was away on guard duty, his quarters in the mansion served as a court room. He wrote, "They are holding Court Martial in our room every day now but we occupy it at night. We are on guard all day and have but little use for it."<sup>47</sup> The Montpelier court martial oversaw the execution of a group of ten officers, who had been court martialled in Richmond for desertion. John O. Casler had retreated back into Virginia after the battle at Gettysburg as part of the Pioneer Corps in July 1863. In his memoir, he recalled that in July 1863, "Our division was camped at Montpelier, President Madison's old homestead, a few miles from Orange Court House. As the weather was hot and dry, and we did not have any work to do, but lay idle in camp and took a good rest, and recruited up after our severe campaigns."<sup>48</sup> At that time, the ten of the thirty soldiers of the 1st and 3d North Carolina Regiments in his division, who had deserted as a group, were executed. According to Casler, the men attempted to reach North Carolina, but at the James River, soldiers had every ford and ferry guarded. They forced their way at a ford, "with the result that some were killed and wounded on both sides, some escaped, and ten were captured." At a court-martial in Richmond, they were sentenced to death. The condemned men were then returned to their regiments for execution in the presence of their division, "as a warning to the balance of us," wrote Casler, who also dug the graves, made the coffins, erected grave markers, and buried the ten at Montpelier. "We planted ten posts in the ground, about three feet high and about fifty feet apart, all in line, boring a hole in each post near the top, and putting in a cross-piece. We dug one large grave in the edge of the woods, large enough to hold the ten coffins."<sup>49</sup> Field testing has failed to locate the archaeological remains of this site to date.

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<sup>47</sup> Marion Hill Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 10 December 1863, in *Letters to Amanda*, 101-103.

<sup>48</sup> John O. Casler, *Four Years in the Stonewall Brigade*, 4th ed., ed. Maj. Jed Hotchkiss (Dayton, Ohio: Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1982), 188-90.

<sup>49</sup> Casler, *Four Years in the Stonewall Brigade*, 188-90.

Toward the end of the war, Col. Samuel Hoey Walkup of 4th North Carolina Regiment, C.S.A., recorded the details of his visit to Montpelier in his diary. On 18 April 1864, Walkup wrote, “visited Montpelier and Pres. Madison Country Seat and Burial ground, scenery enchanting, mountains covered with snow in point west. violet green lawns slope and graceful undulations on all sides and curves steep or gradually.” As had visitors before him, he commented on the “magnificent” groves of black walnut trees, “refreshing walks” among pine trees, “huge chestnut oaks, sunny sides and well laid off with gardens.” He noted the temple and the house, which was “covered with red painted tin.” With its two wings, the house reminded him of the “White House in Washington City.” He described the burial ground as containing “an unpretending granite monument inscribed MADISON born March 1751, died 1836, and near it a neat marble monument Dolly Payne wife of Madison born 1768, died 1849.” From the cemetery, he took a souvenir: “I plucked some boxwood from the yard and some ivy from the graveyard and sent home by letters.”<sup>50</sup>

Montpelier fared well during the war due to its location away from major battlefields, although some soldiers noted signs of decline in the mansion’s physical appearance. The plantation provided a pastoral diversion to some military visitors, while others used the house and grounds for official duties, including executions. After enjoying the views and bucolic scenery, visitors also toured the house. However, the cemetery, rather than the house, inspired public appreciation of President Madison. Carson had arranged the house to illustrate his political sensibilities. He chose to feature Henry Clay, rather than Madison. The record of those who visited Montpelier during the war indicated that the house did not offer them a potent symbol of Confederate nationalism.

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<sup>50</sup> 18 April 1864, Diary of Samuel Hoey Walkup, Manuscript Department, William Perkins Library, Duke University; facsimile copy in Montpelier Research Archives.

Rather, it stood as a relic of the past in a pastoral landscape. Moreover, visitors frequently compared it to the White House, an icon of the Union. For the Carsons, who had emigrated from Ireland, Montpelier marked the fulfillment of their ambition in business and accumulation of wealth by placing them in the upper ranks of southern plantation society.

The Carsons' privileged place in slave society ended with the demise of the Confederate rebellion. When Montpelier emerged from the Civil War, so did numerous male negroes with the Madison surname, revealing the remnants of the Montpelier slave community in transition from slavery to freedom. The appearance of African-American Madisons in 1866 revealed for the first time the formerly enslaved individuals who had a connection to the Madison family and Montpelier. It also marked their location in the area, since the Orange County personal property records also listed place of occupation. All of the emancipated African-American Madisons who appeared in the tax roll in 1866 (Henry Madison, Madison McDaniel, Benjamin Madison, Frank Madison, Tinsley Madison, and Walker Madison) did not own taxable personal property. More importantly, none of them worked at Montpelier. They worked at other farms in the county, and two of them, Cooper Madison and Lewis Madison, worked at the courthouse. Only Frank Madison worked for a Madison family member, John C. Willis at Rockwood plantation in 1867, but he left after a year to work at R. B. Jones's farm. The tax records also showed that they owned only modest collections of household furniture and a small number of livestock, typically pigs.<sup>51</sup>

The 1867 personal property tax list revealed the diminished labor force at Montpelier. Eight men, John Allen, Jack Brook, Walker Brook, Wilson Banister, George

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<sup>51</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.



Gilmore, Major Height, Benjamin Jones, and James K. Polk, were listed as employed there in 1867. The following year Height, along with Sam Carter Hite, left Montpelier to work at John Scott's plantation. In 1868, George Anderson, Jack Brook, and George Gilmore were the only workers listed as employed by Frank Carson. After 1869, the personal property tax return no longer identified the place of employment for those listed on the rolls.<sup>52</sup>

The 1870 census data provided a glimpse of the economic disparity between the owner and tenant households located at Montpelier. The presence of foreign domestic servants indicated that the remnants of Carson's wealth allowed him to live with a level of domestic service unlike most of his neighbors. The Montpelier tenants, however, continued to live at a subsistence level. First, Frank Carson was listed as a 49-year-old bachelor farmer from Ireland who owned \$100,000 in real estate and \$5,420 worth of personal property. Living in the mansion with Carson were two female natives of Ireland: Judith Fitzpatrick, a 40-year-old house servant, and Abby Fitzpatrick, a 17-year-old house servant. Next, the dwelling adjacent to Montpelier was the home of the Gilmores. George Gilmore was identified by the census enumerator as a 55-year-old male mulatto farm hand. His wife, Polly Gilmore, was a 48-year-old black female, and their children were Philip (age 19), Jeremiah (age nine), William (age five), Mildred (age three). George Gilmore did not own any real estate at this early point in his transition from slavery to tenancy.<sup>53</sup>

The household headed by George Anderson, who was identified as a Montpelier laborer in 1869, revealed a similar situation of tenants at another dwelling near the

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<sup>52</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>53</sup> 1870 Population Schedules of the Ninth Census of the United States, roll 1669, Virginia, 21 (1-340 A): 173.

mansion. Anderson was identified as a 56-year-old black male farm hand, who was born in Virginia. Sharing his surname was a 20-year-old black female named Cinderella. She was born in Virginia and kept house. Within the same dwelling lived Jack Buck (perhaps Jack Brock) who was identified as a 40-year-old, black male, farm hand. Martha Buck was identified as a 27-year-old housekeeper. The other members of their household were Alfred (age nine), Thomas (age six), Quintus (age two), and Eliza (age 15).<sup>54</sup>

The Gilmore and Anderson households did not own their dwelling house. Neither of them appeared in the land tax lists as owners of real estate during the Carson period. By comparison, Walker and Tinsley Madison, who owned no taxable personal property in 1866, appeared as real estate owners in 1874. Walker owned 31 acres adjacent Harry Mosby about six miles southeast of the courthouse. Tinsley owned ten acres adjacent the Yates & Houseworth's property, five miles southeast of the courthouse.<sup>55</sup> By the 1870s, Gilmore and Anderson also had modest collections of taxable personal property. George Gilmore had taxable personal property for the first time in 1872: five hogs valued at \$10 and \$10 worth of household and kitchen furniture. Former slaves of the Madison family found opportunities for land ownership outside of Montpelier soon after emancipation. Those who stayed at Montpelier lived as tenants.

George Gilmore's household offered an example of the disparity of living conditions at Montpelier between tenant and owner. When George Gilmore appeared in the 1867 Orange County personal property tax records, his tax burden was light: ø60 on his self only. His assemblage of taxable household goods and agricultural accouterments was dwarfed by Frank Carson's. During Carson's lifetime, the Gilmores never owned

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<sup>54</sup> 1870 Population Schedules of the Ninth Census of the United States, roll 1669, Virginia, 21 (1-340 A): 173.

<sup>55</sup> Orange County Land Tax Book, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

more than \$12 worth of household and kitchen furniture. Carson lived with \$400 worth of household and kitchen furniture. The Gilmore's herd of livestock was never large—usually one or two hogs, a cow, and occasionally a horse. Carson had a stable of eight to ten horses, 15 head of cattle, and occasionally a large flock of sheep. Between 1866 and 1875, the size of the Montpelier sheep flock fluctuated from a high of 96 in 1866 to zero in 1872. Carson owned clocks, watches, and musical instruments. Only in 1893 did the Gilmores own a clock, according to the tax record. George Gilmore paid taxes on five hogs and \$10 worth of household and kitchen furniture in 1872. Over the years, he acquired \$4 worth of plate, a \$5 carriage, and a \$1 weapon to the household. In 1877, one cow appeared. In 1882, he owned a \$15 horse, but the cow was no longer part of his assessment—neither was the weapon.<sup>56</sup>

As their agricultural tenancy continued at Montpelier, the Gilmores experienced hard times in the 1890s. Their ownership of livestock fluctuated. First, in 1890, horses returned to the list of goods owned by the Gilmores, when George's youngest child William paid tax on two horses worth \$60. The horses were gone from the record in 1891, but George Gilmore owned one \$10 horse in 1892. No Gilmore man paid tax on any livestock in 1894, just household and kitchen furniture. William paid tax on a \$5 sewing machine and a \$2 weapon that year. In 1895, Philip Gilmore was assessed for taxes on a \$25 horse, an \$8 vehicle, and \$1 worth of farm implements. In 1896, both Jerry and William Gilmore were marked as "insolvent." George and Philip were not, paying taxes on a horse, a vehicle, farm implements, and household and kitchen furniture. Jerry and William were assessed tax on a weapon and household and kitchen furniture. By 1898, they were no longer insolvent, but Jerry was gone. He never reappeared in the

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<sup>56</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

tax records in the nineteenth century. In 1898, George paid tax only on himself. Philip and William paid tax on the household and kitchen furniture, as well as on hogs and weapons from 1898 to 1900.

Frank Carson's financial condition suffered a similar decline, but before the Gilmores did. The value of his household and kitchen furniture (\$800 from 1867 to 1869) dropped, from \$700 in 1870 to \$450 in 1871 and then down to \$400 in 1873, where it remained until 1881. From 1872 until 1881, there were still time pieces in the house along with a piano, books, and pictures. His carriage and farm implements fell in value from \$600 in 1873 to \$400 in 1874. In 1880, the value of farm implements fell again, down to \$40.<sup>57</sup>

During Carson's ownership, the livestock roaming Montpelier included sheep, cattle, horses, and hogs. Sheep maintained a presence on the landscape from 1866 until 1875, ranging in number from 96 in 1866 to 33 in 1875, but Carson did not have sheep as part of his tax assessment in 1871 and 1872. Horses, of course, were continuously documented by the tax assessment, ranging in number from 28 in 1866 down to ten in 1876, where the number remained until 1881. Hogs fluctuated in number from a high of 50 in 1867 to a low of 11 in 1876. Typically the number of hogs stood around 25, but in 1875 none appeared in the tax assessment—the only time in the Reconstruction period. Cattle followed a pattern similar to hogs, peaking at 60 in 1867 and then dropping to lows of 11, 16, and seven at various times. There were seven cattle in the 1881 assessment.<sup>58</sup>

The local land tax list documented the decline of buildings and land values at Montpelier. Buildings held at \$8,000 in value until 1872. After 1872, the value dropped

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<sup>57</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

to \$5,000, where it remained until 1880. In 1881, it fell again to \$3,500. The value of the land per acre was \$30 in 1871, but it dropped in 1873. Carson's sale of portions of the plantation, reducing the plantation to 1063.5 acres, accounts for the decline. With the approval of his creditors, Frank Carson sold 99.63 acres to Col. John C. Willis for \$3,579.30 on 14 September 1871, "to apply the purchase money of said land to extinguish pro tanto of said lien, by making it a credit upon said bond, and to that extent substitute the said Willis to the rights of said David Graham, deceased." With this transaction Willis reclaimed more ancestral Madison land.<sup>59</sup> From 1873 to 1875, the land value of Montpelier stood at \$25 per acre. By 1880, it had fallen to \$23. In 1881, it was valued at \$20 per acre.<sup>60</sup>

Although they started out as heavily capitalized plantation owners, the Carsons could not maintain their position in the local class system after the Civil War. Instead of aggrandizing the estate, they reduced it, with the permission of their creditors. There was no evidence to indicate that the Carsons adopted innovative farming practices at Montpelier to establish a reputation as scientific farmers. There were no documented efforts on their part to increase yields, clear more land for cultivation, exploit the commercial potential of the mill, or industrialize farm operations. Furthermore, there was no evidence to indicate that Frank Carson organized extensive contractual relations with numerous local tenants or former slaves to provide them with smaller tenant farm units. Rather, Montpelier was a prewar, speculative investment that briefly afforded the Carsons security as a real estate investment, as well as the allure of owning the home of a famous American president. The produce of the farm, however, failed to lift them out of debt.

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<sup>59</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 48:5.

<sup>60</sup> Orange County Land Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

Such was Montpelier's declining situation when it received the President of the United States. President Rutherford B. Hayes arrived in Orange Court House on 10 October 1878 with his wife Lucy, and other members of his party, including ex-Confederate General John S. Mosby. Reynolds Chapman and Col. John C. Willis were part of the assembly as they proceeded in carriages to Montpelier. The visit to Montpelier was part of his national goodwill tour in the first years of his administration.

After his election, Hayes established his position on postwar reconciliation between the North and South by removing federal troops from Louisiana and South Carolina. His broader social policies called for civil and political equality for African Americans and protection of the rights granted by the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments. Therefore, Hayes appropriated Montpelier for its associations with Madison and the Union and its location in the South to promote sectional harmony and gain popular support for the Republican Party among southerners. Inclusion of a former rebel commander in the party also served as a gesture of reconciliation, especially in light of the fact that Hayes had commanded Union troops in General Philip Sheridan's 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign. President Hayes's visit was part of a strategy he had adopted the previous year, immediately after his contested election to the presidency. For instance, in May 1877, he visited Tennessee and laid wreaths on the graves of both Union and Confederate dead soldiers. On his September 1877 tour of the South, he enjoyed the cheers of the welcoming crowds. He attended the 1878 Memorial Day services at Gettysburg. His trip to Montpelier occurred during the 1878 congressional elections, but any hopes he had of Republican party success at the polls were unfulfilled. The election gave the Democratic Party control of both houses of Congress for the first time since the Civil War, sparked riots in South Carolina, revealed intimidation of black

voters by southern whites, and signaled the collapse of the Republican Party in the South.<sup>61</sup>

Before the election though, Montpelier appeared as a likely symbol for Hayes's message. The day's events included speeches by Hayes and members of the tour group. After greeting Carson "with hearty handshaking," he turned his attention to the "admirable" house, noting, "The House large, with piazza and tall large pillars like somewhat Arlington—on an elevation with perhaps fifty acres of lawn in front, and a noble view of the Blue Ridge." According to Hayes, "The place is not well kept up and is for sale cheap." The trees, though, "were very interesting to me," he wrote. He made a detailed list of the various tree species and their dimensions. His impression of Montpelier did not contradict his general impression of the region. In Hayes's opinion, "A great lack of enterprise thrift and comfort in that region, but the people were universally friendly and well disposed to new comers." Although Montpelier was in a state of decline, Hayes described the visit as an "interesting and enjoyable day."<sup>62</sup> In addition, a newspaper article written at an unknown date during Carson's ownership corroborated Hayes's assessment of the mansion, describing it as "somewhat dilapidated on account of the negligence of its late owners."<sup>63</sup>

By 1881, Montpelier had reached its nadir. Its total value was \$21,275. An inventory and assessment of the personal property belonging to the estate of Frank Carson, who died in February 1881 and was buried in the Madison family cemetery,

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<sup>61</sup> Brooks D. Simpson, *The Reconstruction Presidents* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 199, 208, 212, 213, 216-218; Ari A. Hoogenboom, *Rutherford B. Hayes: Warrior and President* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 366, 372, 375-376.

<sup>62</sup> T. Harry Williams, ed., *Hayes: The Diary of a President, 1875-1881* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1964), 165-166.

<sup>63</sup> Newspaper clipping, no date, Haverford College Scrapbook, Haverford, Pennsylvania, copy on file at The Papers of James Madison, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

revealed a modest collection of farm tools. Although he owned one tobacco screw, there were no tobacco seeds or harvested tobacco on hand. Various grains, oats, corn, timothy seed, clover seed, were present, as well as “1 bag Orchard Grass Seed,” which indicated an orchard of limited extent. The inventory also listed “Stock straw” and “Wheat Crop.” There were three harrows, four old plows, one “McC Plow,” one old drill, rakes, forks, and hoes, of course, but also one corn sheller, one wheat fan, a “thrashing machine,” and a grind stone, among other items.<sup>64</sup> The economic depression and Carson himself were responsible for the decline. During the Civil War, one of the soldiers assessed Carson’s management of the farm. According to Fitzpatrick, “The old Irish bachelor who lives here is quite a strange character. He has been from Ireland only about two years. He has a polished education and knows much of the world, but knows nothing about the managing of negroes and they torment him and fool him badly. He is very industrious but has no regular habits except to be going here and there all the time mostly on horseback. He has no regular time to eat and very seldom eats when we do.”<sup>65</sup>

Despite the downward turn in value of the farm, the house still contained a few accouterments of elite life. Inside Montpelier, the appraisers found beds, mirrors, chairs, tables, desks, and wash stands, tables with marble tops, and fire place equipment belonging to Carson. One room, presumably the library, contained “1 Walnut Book Case,” “1 Fancy Press,” and “3 Bust,” “1 Lounge,” “4 Chairs,” “1 Clock & 2 Brass Stands.” They identified “5 Pictures in Parlor @5.00.” The inventory also listed the bells, which Carson used to summon servants. The changes in Montpelier’s fortune related to Carson’s declining economic position and the region’s economic condition against the backdrop of modernization underway in the rest of the United States. The

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<sup>64</sup> Orange County Will Book, 13: 532-534.

<sup>65</sup> Marion Hill Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 10 December 1863, in *Letters to Amanda*, 101-103.



Carsons briefly stood among the southern planter class before the war. During the war, Frank Carson was portrayed as an idiosyncratic foreigner struggling to manage a slave plantation. After the war, Carson was beset by creditors and unfavorable agricultural markets.<sup>66</sup>

The 1881 death of Frank Carson, and his brother's unsatisfied deed of trust from 1857, contributed to the sale Montpelier at auction. Since Thomas J. Carson "failed to perform the requirements contained in said deed," Montpelier was sold by executors to the highest bidder after being advertised in the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* for ninety days. Louis F. Detrick and William L. Bradley's bid of \$19,000 secured them the 1,063.75-acre estate on 10 December 1881.<sup>67</sup> Although they maintained the Madison family cemetery, neither Detrick nor Bradley left any indication that their ownership would be dedicated to honoring the memory of President Madison. Instead, the house and grounds supported their interests in the emerging colonial revival movement and raising horses.

As a term, the colonial revival stands for a period of time, an architectural style, a decorative style, and the wider interest in America's colonial past and European heritage, particularly the British antecedents in American culture. The term "colonial" has been used to describe examples of American material culture dating from the nation's origin as a colony to the Victorian period of the 1870s. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the colonial revival appealed to Americans in search of a native style identifiable with the original European immigrants. During this phase of the movement,

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<sup>66</sup> Orange County Will Book, 13: 532-534.

<sup>67</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 51:13. To date, the business records of Detrick, Bradley, and the Carsons have not been collected in a public archive. Without these records, any link between them through fertilizer sales accounts remains unclear. A connection between Detrick and Bradley and Richmond's agricultural market may have prompted their bid on Montpelier. Either contacts with farmers through sales or a subscription to that city's newspapers may have made them aware of the opportunity for purchasing the farm. Further analysis of the speculative real estate market in the late nineteenth century may provide clearer insight into the motivations and opportunities for wealthy businessmen such as Detrick and Bradley in real estate.

the detailing and massing of colonial period buildings were applied loosely to newly constructed buildings, which resulted in buildings that differed greatly from the original examples. A later phase of the colonial revival movement occurred between 1920 and 1940. During this period, those who worked in the colonial revival style paid more attention to original details in order to produce more architecturally correct examples. As a cultural movement, the colonial revival formed out of concerns for social order, a search for a usable past to bolster national identity, and nostalgia. Patriotic sentiment formed the basis for its enduring popular appeal. Scholars interested in the ideological dimensions of the colonial revival have treated it as a symbolic expression of shared values and as an affirmation of American exceptionalism. Detrick and Bradley's treatment of Montpelier corresponded to the growing popularity of colonial revival forms, without the later concerns for close adherence to the details of original examples, in the decorative arts following the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.<sup>68</sup>

Detrick and Bradley brought an infusion of capital to Montpelier. Along with an interior redecoration that changed the house, they also inscribed their business interests into the landscape. For instance, they built a warehouse for fertilizer storage near the railroad tracks. Both men had made their fortunes in the fertilizing business as commissioned merchants and manufacturers in Baltimore and Boston.

An obituary, which appeared in the *Hingham* [Massachusetts] *Journal* on 21 December 1894, characterized Bradley as an aggressive capitalist. His ambition could have been mistaken for rapacity, based on the character description in the obituary. For

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<sup>68</sup> William B. Rhoads, *The Colonial Revival*, vol. 1 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), xxxvii-xxxii, 474-477; Kenneth L. Ames, "Introduction," *The Colonial Revival in America*, ed. Alan Axelrod (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. for the Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum, 1985), 1-14; Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 321-341.

instance, he “fought his way up to a successful businessman through great energy and perseverance.” He was a demanding man, “only exacting in the way which had made him successful. He demanded punctuality and faithful service, and when it was his to give he gave it.”<sup>69</sup> He started his chemical fertilizer manufacturing business in 1861, and it “won a high reputation among farmers whose lands had been impoverished by long-continued cropping.” The stresses of the modern life and nervous exhaustion induced by the demands of industrial capitalism, however, “impaired his health, and the latter years of his life were passed in retirement much of his attention being devoted to farming and landscape gardening.”<sup>70</sup> He died on 15 December 1894. His will, dated 30 December 1892, was filed in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, on 25 February 1896. He bequeathed each of his sons \$450,000 plus his estates. He gave his daughter Abby A. Bradley his house at 179 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts.<sup>71</sup> Detrick served as an executor of Bradley’s interest in Montpelier, which was not the only estate he owned. The *Hingham Journal* obituary noted that he had purchased the Glover estate in Hingham, “a residence of unusual prominence on the hill.” In Hingham, he was credited for doing “much to beautify and adorn the town. His outlays were always extensive, and he acquired by purchase a vast tract of land which he was always improving and making attractive.”<sup>72</sup>

As for Louis Frederick Detrick, he too displayed similar entrepreneurial traits. He began his career in the fertilizer business with Bradley, working as an agent selling South American sea fowl guano for Bradley’s firm. In 1895, the Frederick City directory

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<sup>69</sup> *Hingham Journal*, 21 December 1894, photocopy on file in Montpelier Research Center.

<sup>70</sup> William L. Bradley entry, *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography*, XXIV (New York: T. White & Co., 1935), 236, photocopy on file in Montpelier Research Center.

<sup>71</sup> Benzinger and Calwell to Charles K. Lennig, 22 November 1900, Madison Gallery Box, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>72</sup> *Hingham Journal*, 21 December 1894, photocopy on file in Montpelier Research Center.

identified him as the owner of the Detrick Fertilizer and Chemical Company.<sup>73</sup> With the end of his commission business through Bradley, Detrick had turned to manufacture. He manufactured fertilizer at a Baltimore factory until the company was purchased by American Agricultural Chemical Company of New York City in 1903.<sup>74</sup>

The strength of Detrick and Bradley's financial resources, which were derived from success in modern commerce and manufacture, was evident in the house and on the grounds immediately, based on evidence from the tax assessments. They increased the numbers in every taxable category, from livestock and acreage to household and kitchen furniture. For instance, the number of horses increased from 13 in 1882 to 35 in 1894. The cattle herd grew from 60 head in 1882 to 100 in 1900. A herd of 130 sheep returned to the farm between 1884 and 1886.<sup>75</sup> The value of household and kitchen furniture rose immediately: from \$25 in 1882, to \$90 in 1883, to \$1,200 in 1884. From 1885 to 1893, that value remained at \$1,200, but it dropped to \$600 in 1894, the year of William L. Bradley's death. The value of farm implements followed a similar pattern, increasing immediately, leveling off, and then dropping after the death of Bradley. After 1895, it was unclear from the tax records whether Detrick's \$350-worth of farm implements were used solely at Montpelier, or at his other 446-acre farm purchased in 1885, or at both farms as needed. Nevertheless, the death of William Bradley marked the departure of some value from Montpelier.<sup>76</sup>

Two insurance policies written in 1894 provided a glimpse of the arrangement of the farm buildings at Montpelier. Three hundred yards from the mansion stood the

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<sup>73</sup> Herbert Bailey, *Frederick City and County Directory* (Wilmington, Delaware: Press of Mercantile Printing Company, 1895), 45.

<sup>74</sup> Jenny S. Hayden to Mrs. Harman, 2 June 1945, Detrick vertical file, The Historical Society of Frederick County, Frederick, Maryland.

<sup>75</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>76</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

manager's house, a frame dwelling insured for \$1,000. It was part of a domestic complex of structures that included a kitchen and a small smoke house. Another frame dwelling stood 200 yards away from the manager's smoke house. The policy identified other frame farm buildings nearby, a stable, wagon house, granary, hog pen, corn crib, cow barn, a frame stable and carriage house, a small smokehouse, a chicken house, mill house, and a mill barn. A warehouse stood near the railroad line, as did another complex of farm buildings, a corn house, a frame granary, a stable, and a cow barn.<sup>77</sup>

Profits from the fertilizer business allowed Detrick the opportunity to purchase more land around Montpelier. He acquired a 446-acre tract in September 1885.<sup>78</sup> This tract contained buildings first valued at \$850. In 1896, however, the estimated value of the buildings increased to \$1,000.<sup>79</sup> Orange County personal property tax records indicated in 1887 that Detrick paid taxes on this property apart from his Montpelier taxes. He had there eight horses, one cow, one hog, and \$350 worth of farm implements.<sup>80</sup>

Together, Detrick and Bradley increased the size of Montpelier by acquiring tracts of land adjacent to it in 1886. They acquired four tracts of land totaling 182.81 acres, making Montpelier into a 1,063.75-acre estate.<sup>81</sup> Only one tract, 59.97 acres purchased from William Brockman, contained a building of value.<sup>82</sup> The value of farm implements owned by the partnership remained at \$800 after the several purchases. From a Madison descendant, Dr. James A. Madison, Detrick and Bradley purchased two tracts totaling 44 acres. Just a few months before they sold all of their holdings to

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<sup>77</sup> Policy # 6089477 of the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Co., expires 17 February 1903; Policy # 726 of the Hartford Insurance Co., expires 17 February 1903, Montpelier Archives, Document Box 5, Dupont Family Collection, legal documents.

<sup>78</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 52: 185.

<sup>79</sup> Orange County Land Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>80</sup> Orange County Personal Property Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>81</sup> Orange County Deed Book, 52: 440, 442, 445.

<sup>82</sup> Orange County Land Tax List, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

duPont's purchasing agent, the Detrick and Bradley partnership purchased 3.09 acres from Lucy M. Brockman, their last addition to Montpelier.

Neither Detrick nor Bradley occupied the mansion house full-time as their primary residence. In fact, the presence of either one of them at Montpelier was remarkable enough to earn a mention in the society page of the *Orange Observer*. For instance, on 23 April 1899 the paper reported, "Mr. L. F. Detrick spent several days at Montpelier last week."<sup>83</sup>

One member of the Detrick family, however, was living there when the 1900 census was taken. John U. Detrick moved his family to Orange County and first appeared in the 1894 personal property tax records. According to the 1900 census, John U. Detrick was one of two sons of Louis F. Detrick. John U. Detrick was described as a 38-year-old white male, born in Pennsylvania. Living with him were his wife, Eliza D. Detrick (32 years old and born in Maryland), and their children Frederick L. and Margaret J. Detrick.<sup>84</sup> His son Frederick was 11 years old and born in Maryland, but Margaret was six years old and born in Virginia in January 1894. Their census entry also noted that John was renting the house and farm.<sup>85</sup> John Detrick never appeared in the Orange County land tax records as an owner of real estate.

When Montpelier was sold in 1900, Louis F. Detrick served as the representative of the Detrick and Bradley partnership. The sale to Charles King Lennig of Andalusia, Pennsylvania, began in November 1900 and continued to 1 January 1901. Some of the deeds were acknowledged and recorded in the Orange County courthouse, while others

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<sup>83</sup> Extracts from *Orange Observer*, Montpelier Archives, acc. #1997.50.

<sup>84</sup> Frederick Louis Detrick became an Army doctor, and Fort Detrick in Maryland was named in his honor. Norman M. Covert, *Cutting Edge: A History of Fort Detrick, Maryland*, 3rd. ed. (Frederick, Maryland: The Historical Society of Frederick County, Inc., 1997), 9, 11.

<sup>85</sup> 1900 U. S. Census, Orange County, Virginia, Dwelling 428, Family 431, vol. 40, ed. 69, sheet 26.

were acknowledged from quite a distance away, indicating that the Bradley heirs had no direct involvement in the estate after their father died. For instance, Detrick acknowledged the deeds in Baltimore. Peter B. Bradley and his wife acknowledged them from their hometown of Boston. Robert S. Bradley and his wife acknowledged the deeds at the office of the United States consul general in Rome, Italy.<sup>86</sup>

Lennig's ownership of Montpelier was the briefest of all previous owners since he was acting as William duPont's purchasing agent. He held all of the deeds until 9 January 1901. Then, for \$5, he transferred all of the estate to William duPont.<sup>87</sup> Although Lennig held no personal stake in the property, he did catch the attention of an unidentified newspaper, which announced the transfer of ownership and declared that Madison's home "is being converted into a shooting box by a rich Philadelphian." Lennig was described as "a prominent society and club man in this city." According to the paper, he intended to transform "the old mansion into a hunting base." As for Detrick and Bradley, the article stated that through their efforts the mansion "has not been allowed to sink into dilapidation." Another article praised just Detrick for maintaining the family cemetery and the Madison monuments, claiming "Mr. Ditrick [sic] himself expended the necessary money."<sup>88</sup> As an indication of the popularity of the colonial style and the use of "colonial" as an umbrella term for most pre-Victorian architecture in

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<sup>86</sup> Deed, 17 November 1900, Dupont Family Collection, Doc. Box 4, legal documents, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>87</sup> Deed, 9 January 1901, Dupont Family Collection, Doc. Box 4, legal documents, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>88</sup> "Old Ailsey Payne at Montpelier," unknown source, n.d., Dupont Scrapbook, p. 9, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

America, the article described Montpelier as a “stately Colonial mansion.” Although Lennig had plans for interior changes, Montpelier’s “Colonial style will be preserved, for he will not alter its exterior,” according to the article.<sup>89</sup> Though Lennig did not alter the edifice, the duPonts did remodel it thoroughly.

Before the sale to duPont’s agent, Detrick and Bradley renovated Montpelier. They made changes that adhered to the prevailing colonial style theme. At an unspecified time in the Detrick and Bradley period of ownership, a correspondent from *The Baltimore Sun* visited Montpelier and proclaimed the mansion to be “in an exceptional state of preservation for such an old building. During the past four months a large force of Baltimore artisans and mechanics have been engaged in its restoration.” The writer noted Detrick and Bradley’s sensitivity to the colonial revival in that their “prime object was to retain every line of the old colonial style originally used in its construction.”<sup>90</sup>

Furthermore, a Washington, D.C., newspaper article provided a detailed description of Detrick and Bradley’s changes to the interior, which “shows the culture and refinement of its present occupant. Everything is modern. The old gold paper, the paintings, piano, decorations, and bric-a-brac are not of the last century. Dainty embroideries tell how the seal of modern fashion is stamped upon the place.” Changes to the landscape were not guided by the colonial style that prevailed indoors. For instance, the article noted that the

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<sup>89</sup> “Madison Home a Shooting Box,” unknown source, n.d., Dupont Scrapbook, p. 5, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>90</sup> Newspaper clipping, no date, Haverford College Scrapbook, Haverford, Pennsylvania, copy on file at The Papers of James Madison, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.



rear of the mansion “opens out upon an exquisite lawn, modernized by a lawn-tennis court.”<sup>91</sup> Changes in the formal garden made by Detrick and Bradley were evident to the visiting journalist, who wrote that “the upper end, which was formerly circular, has been squared, and the boundaries of the garden are now straight lines. . . It is perhaps indicative of the times that the terraces are now covered with practical tomato plants and other vegetables.”<sup>92</sup> The effect of the colonial style inside the mansion was measured in a notice in the *Architectural Record* of 1896-1897. It summed up these changes: “The interior of Montpelier has been remodelled out of all semblance to its original self.”<sup>93</sup> The efforts made by Detrick and Bradley to renew the mansion in the popular colonial style mark an early instance in the loss of Montpelier’s historic and architectural integrity. As time moved forward in the twentieth century, the loss of integrity becomes more pronounced.

By the close of the nineteenth century, Montpelier began playing a role in the first phase of the colonial revival movement. Since the Civil War, Madison’s historic plantation home ceased to function as an icon representing any cultural meaning larger than itself. It briefly provided the armature for a presidential visit to promote sectional reconciliation. Rather than developing into a large tenant farm operation, the plantation

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<sup>91</sup> Newspaper clipping, no date, Haverford College Scrapbook, Haverford, Pennsylvania, copy on file at The Papers of James Madison, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

<sup>92</sup> Newspaper clipping, no date, Haverford College Scrapbook, Haverford, Pennsylvania, copy on file at The Papers of James Madison, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

<sup>93</sup> *Architectural Record* vol. VI (July 1896-1897), 63; copy on file at Montpelier Archives.

became a recreational landscape for wealthy businessmen interested in raising livestock and redecorating in the popular colonial style. The virtuous, and profitable, agrarianism that Madison had hoped for eluded him, as well as the subsequent owners of this plantation. The personal and political relics he had embedded in the house had been dispersed soon after his death. Emptied of its symbolic Madisonian content, the house figured marginally in select Confederate soldier diaries. For the Carsons, though, owning a plantation such as Montpelier was the high point in the story of their economic success as immigrants to America. As it entered the twentieth century, Montpelier was about to change its form again and lose the silhouette Madison had given it. (Figure 14)

## CHAPTER V

### Repatriation

For all of its owners, Montpelier served as a personal statement. Owning it brought various degrees of prestige, but on a personal level none of them needed Montpelier more than William duPont. Purchasing the estate was his gambit in returning to good standing in American public life after living as an expatriate in England. His brother had driven him out of the family circle and the family business in Delaware, and he needed Montpelier in order to write himself back into American life. William duPont did not loom large in duPont family history. Later biographers of the duPont family have given William scant attention, leaving the architectural record and landscape at Montpelier as his biography. By embedding himself and his immediate family into Madison's house and grounds, duPont sought to repair the damage of a social scandal. For duPont, then, repatriating himself meant repatriating Madison at Montpelier also.

Within the first two years of the twentieth century, Montpelier experienced a dramatic round of structural changes. Although it was still owned by a wealthy East Coast capitalist, the duPonts made it their home. No longer a country retreat infrequently visited by its owners, Montpelier was transformed into a dwelling that met the needs of an elite household. Workmen installed new utility systems in the house, now enlarged by massive new wings that expanded the service and served spaces. Likewise, the grounds changed appearance according to the taste and leisure activities of the duPonts. The

improvements to Montpelier were part of a larger effort to repair their public persona and stabilize their family life after a contentious divorce and eviction from daily management of the family business. His new estate naturalized his immense wealth and allowed William duPont to model the life of a respectable gentleman.

William had competed with his older brother, Col. Henry Algernon duPont, for the presidency of the family company after the death of their father in 1889. Both boys had been made partners in the company in 1872, but William's decision to join a cousin in the dynamite business strained family relations and heightened the sibling rivalry. Lamot duPont started a dynamite manufacturing business in New Jersey after the Civil War when his uncle Henry duPont refused to allow him to pursue dynamite manufacture within the duPont gunpowder mills. Lamot, with William as treasurer, ran the Repauno Mineral Company until a factory explosion killed Lamot in 1884. Thereafter, William ran the company as its president. William favored this mode of entrepreneurial capitalism over the family-dominated corporate capitalism developing at the Dupont Company under his brother's leadership, which refused to deviate from the established path of profit through gunpowder only. According to a historian of the duPont family, William's brother Henry resented William and was "determined to squeeze him out of the company affiliate in New Jersey, then out of Dupont entirely, and, finally, out of the family life [by] digging into his brother's private affairs for the scandalous material that would help ruin him."<sup>1</sup> He succeeded in November 1890.

Henry's pursuit of William's secret life led to the discovery that William, who had married a cousin, May duPont, in 1871, had been committing adultery with a woman

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<sup>1</sup> Leonard Mosley, *Blood Relations: The Rise and Fall of the duPonts of Delaware* (New York: Antheneum, 1980), 77, 104, 115; Gerard Colby, *DuPont Dynasty: Behind the Nylon Curtain* (Seacaucus, New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1984), 104.

not yet divorced from her husband, Mrs. Annie Rogers Zinn. Soon thereafter, both William and Mrs. Zinn divorced their spouses. William left his wife by establishing residency in South Dakota and suing for legal divorce in the courts there. Back in Delaware, William initiated marriage proceedings with his paramour, but his brother obstructed the licensing process in the local courts. Realizing that his brother would use any means at his disposal to interfere with his intention to marry Mrs. Zinn, William and Annie left the country for Europe. They married in London in 1892 and lived there until moving to Montpelier.<sup>2</sup>

William was the first family member to bring social shame on the duPonts as members of the respectable bourgeoisie. The social cost of William's public divorce scandal was paid by enduring ostracism from the family compound on the Brandywine River near Wilmington, Delaware. He resigned as partner from Dupont as well as from the presidency of Repauno Mineral Company, and transferred his shares to two of his cousins. Lastly, his brother Henry completely divested himself of William, saying, "I never wish to hear my brother's name mentioned again."<sup>3</sup> After his personal frustration and professional disappointment of the 1890s, William shared the dilemmas of other American elites also experiencing dissatisfaction with the commercial world and personal ennui. DuPont was now on a personal quest for a suitable frame of reference for self-realization.

When he sought to return to the United States, William chose Montpelier for its access to the railroads and its established use as a horse farm. In her memoir, Marion duPont Scott, William's daughter, states that Detrick and Bradley were the first to use the estate as a country place of leisure after the Civil War, raising ponies. Likewise, her

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<sup>2</sup> Mosley, *Blood Relations*, 125-127; Colby, *DuPont Dynasty*, 118-119.

<sup>3</sup> Mosley, *Blood Relations*, 125-127; Colby, *DuPont Dynasty*, 119.

father William was drawn to the property for its potential for horses. He had developed an interest in training hackney horses in England—especially four in hand.<sup>4</sup> For instance, a notice stated that William duPont “is breeding fine harness horses at Montpelier.” Furthermore, he “has imported some high class hackney mares from England, and has at the head of his stud the fine imported stallion Active Forest King, a son of the famous high-stepper that won the Waldorf-Astoria Cup for gig horses.”<sup>5</sup> The choice to live at Montpelier also resulted from personal concerns of William, who sought to withdraw to a pastoral realm.

In her memoir, Marion duPont Scott recalls how her family came to live at Montpelier. “My mother, Willie and I were living in Binfield Park in Berkshire, England, when my father would write to us that he had a man driving him around the Virginia area looking for a home for us.”<sup>6</sup> Marion attributes her father’s decision to live at Montpelier to the family’s personal and health needs:

Willie and I were supposed to be delicate. The doctor in London had said we ought to be in some higher place. The climate upon the Delaware River would have been too damp for us, so my father looked for a site that had elevation. He looked around Orange and Lapidan [sic], all around, and one day the man driving him said, ‘We can cut through the back of Montpelier,’ while taking him from one place to another. They cut through. A Mr. Dietrich of Baltimore had the place at the time. He was raising polo ponies. There was talk the place was soon to be made into a hunt club. My father liked it, right off. When he went back to Delaware, he sent a representative from Wilmington to negotiate with Mr. Dietrich, and he got the place.<sup>7</sup>

The ghostwriter of Marion’s memoir did not mention of the scandal that brought

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<sup>4</sup> Gerald Strine, *Montpelier: The Recollections of Marion duPont Scott* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1976), 35.

<sup>5</sup> No headline, n.d., duPont Family Scrapbook, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Strine, *Montpelier*, 35.

<sup>7</sup> Strine, *Montpelier*, 35.

the duPonts to Montpelier. Rather, he wrote, “E. I. duPont de Nemours and Company, Incorporated, was the ‘family’ business, but William duPont devoted most of his time to building the Delaware Trust Company, as president and chairman of the board.”<sup>8</sup> In the memoir, Marion recalls her father’s life as a commuter between Wilmington and Montpelier without commenting on the circumstances that provoked his dilemma: “My father was here at Montpelier pretty solidly the first two or three years after we got the place. Then he went back to business in Wilmington. He would come down on the train to Montpelier Station Friday night and go back Monday morning. The train would make a special stop for him. My mother stayed here most of the time, although she liked to go to England in the summers. She had an apartment in Hyde Park, where I went a few times.”<sup>9</sup> Her father’s commuting routine, while longer than most, coincided with an established trend of suburbanization among the elite class. Before the Civil War, railway companies started building passenger stations in rural areas that supported railroad commuting to urban areas. Philadelphia and Boston typified the trend with rail networks that linked suburbs to the central city. In the last half of the nineteenth century, railroad commuting provided elites with access to urban areas for conducting business and bucolic settings for creating polite society apart from the ills of city life.<sup>10</sup>

After two or three years of full-time living at Montpelier, William duPont had regained his health and returned to the rigors of industrial capitalism. In Wilmington, he continued to pursue his previous career in explosives manufacture. He served as president, director, and then chairman of the board of the Delaware Trust Company,

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<sup>8</sup> Strine, *Montpelier*, 35.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 35-37; Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1987), 138.

control of which he gained through his cousin Alfred I. duPont. William also returned to the Dupont Company as a member of the board of directors from 1911 to 1915.<sup>11</sup>

In the early years of the twentieth century, William duPont focused less on the day-to-day management of his business interests. He turned his attention to elite breeds of livestock. According to a biographer, at Montpelier he “restored” the mansion, and “rejuvenated the whole estate,” making it “the center of the exclusive sporting and hunting life in Orange County, Virginia.” Modernizing Montpelier was not his only interest. He also devoted time and money to foreign travel and yachting, becoming “known from one end to the other of clubdom in America.”<sup>12</sup>

DuPont’s personal problems and his manner of resolving them were analogous to expressions of antimodernism that Jackson Lears describes in *No Place of Grace*. For instance, William duPont exhibited the restless behaviors and symptoms of a cultural malaise and the nervous exhaustion that Lears identifies in other members of the late-nineteenth-century, elite, leisure class. He was a displaced, formerly-respectable, businessman seeking self-fulfillment outside of the enervating world of industrial capitalism. According to Lears, “The internalized morality of self-control and autonomous achievement, the basis of modern culture, seemed at the end of its tether; the chief source of that morality, the bourgeois family, seemed a hothouse of suffocating repression and insoluble personal conflict.”<sup>13</sup> Although the duPonts appeared to engage in some aspects of this culture of antimodernism, their acquisitions and activities bear a closer affinity to the behavior of Great Britain’s Edwardian industrial class. In the end,

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<sup>11</sup> J. Barton Cheyney, “William duPont,” Jeanette Eckman Papers, duPont Family, folder #19, Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington, Delaware; Colby, *DuPont Dynasty*, 170, 178

<sup>12</sup> Cheyney, “William duPont.”

<sup>13</sup> T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 6.



Montpelier provided duPont with a respectable ending to the last chapter in his life.

Montpelier's bucolic setting and long agrarian history, combined with its former elite character, promised a satisfying life and favorable public recognition compared to the turbulent life he knew in Wilmington, Delaware. Surrounded there by a crumbling Protestant culture and deprived of the opportunity to exercise his business acumen, duPont salvaged meaning by reshaping a historic landscape and a historic house, and embracing horse training. Furthermore, the historic house, as a cultural emblem, was significant among other elites. While many elites decorated their mansions with simulacra or their collection of the relics of European medieval culture, the duPonts collected Montpelier. Ownership of such an icon demonstrated the duPonts' appreciation of an elite class aesthetic that, according to Michael Wallace, differentiated them "from both immigrants and vulgar *nouveaux riches*." Montpelier positioned the duPonts as custodians of an American cultural inheritance.<sup>14</sup>

They could have built anew anywhere they chose. Instead, they inhabited a historic house and installed their own eclectic ornaments and modern appliances. Lears interprets the American revival of architectural styles (for example, Gothic, Tuscan, Egyptian, and Greek) as symptomatic of antimodernism in that the eclecticism "embodied the cultural confusion of men who no longer possessed a coherent vocabulary of symbols." As for the duPonts, they decided to inhabit a symbol in order to reorient their troubled life. He had modeled the behaviors of the irresponsible leisure class with his sexual indiscretion. So, turning to Montpelier was a gesture toward the remnants of eighteenth-century republicanism and its association with virtue. At Montpelier, he could

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Wallace, "Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States," in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, eds. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 139-141.

evade the social disorder, the class conflicts, labor disputes, the protests of social injustice, and social reform movements of his day. Fox hunting on horseback, hosting cricket matches, and driving horse-drawn carriages for pleasure provided the distractions. Montpelier offered a counterpoint to the external disorder of American society.<sup>15</sup>

The duPonts' life at Montpelier was never directed as a challenge to industrial or corporate capitalism, which provided the base for their comfortable existence. The constraints on their life were minor and tolerable, being limited to Wilmington's corporate and social life. Although they lived in the Virginia countryside, they did not disengage from the benefits of their great wealth. In fact, William still kept an office in Wilmington. They still traveled extensively in Europe, and they installed every modern convenience available at Montpelier. Their embrace of antimodernism was decidedly refined and selective. Nevertheless, their private dilemma engendered public consequences.

The duPont family battle and William's repatriation turned him and his wife into historic preservationists of sorts, reinforcing the elite class' early claim to the field of preserving American heritage and antiquities. Much of the duPonts' life at Montpelier dovetails with Lears's theme of psychic crisis and personal change yielding social change. The duPonts can be considered a bellwether family, who represent the late Gilded Age's dominant culture in their careful acquisition of tasteful British goods and select Madison relics, their recreation activities, and their collection of newspaper articles about their activities. The self-referential newspaper articles in particular indicate how the duPonts, by rebuilding Montpelier, sought to rebuild their public persona and earn popular support.

When William duPont purchased Montpelier, numerous newspapers turned their

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<sup>15</sup> Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 33.

attention to the estate. The fulsome tone of the reporting suggests duPont may have had a company publicist influencing the coverage. Nevertheless, publishers believed that readers would be interested to know about one of America's wealthiest citizens taking over the home of a founding father. The selection of human interest articles that Mr. or Mrs. duPont clipped about themselves from the papers and pasted into their scrapbook left the impression that the press had only favorable comments to make about their arrival and doings at Montpelier. Not one article connected their divorces to their arrival at Montpelier, or even mentioned the divorces. Instead, the news items emphasize the wealth and taste of the duPonts as well as their sensitivity to preservation of the historic structure. Without fear of contradicting themselves, most reporters lauded duPont's efforts to modernize the house while at same time he sought to preserve it. The common theme of all the articles was harmonized modernization and preservation of "colonial" elements. The duPonts never hesitated in their plans for changing the house and grounds, only pausing briefly to consider the possibility that the federal government might exercise eminent domain and seize the house for the public good, a possibility that seemed likely based on what they saw developing at Monticello.<sup>16</sup>

By the time the duPonts arrived at Montpelier, the residue of public attention paid to Madison's memory was focused on the family cemetery. For instance, President Hayes kept detailed notes on the trees instead of the house. The graveyard had become the sacred ground of Montpelier—not the house and the temple. The house had become a private residence. The temple had become a garden folly. This trend began with the

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<sup>16</sup> The duPont family scrapbook presents a problem as a source for scholars. The dates and masthead have been removed from the clippings. The author and publisher cannot be identified. (Figures 15 and 16) Although no evidence of a subscription to a clipping service appears in the Montpelier archives, an item in a duPont account book (Estates Industrial, 1917, folder 1, Montpelier Estate Records, Document Box 2 1917A) indicates that the duPonts briefly subscribed to *The Press*, a Philadelphia weekly published from 1885 to 1920. Further research in the morgues of Wilmington and Philadelphia newspapers might date and confirm the source of the documents.

departure of Dolley Madison. Moncure and Macfarland were interested in associating themselves with the Madison legacy, but the intentions of Thornton and Scott regarding Madison were unclear. The Carsons farmed and endured the decline of the southern economy around them. Detrick and Bradley devoted a modicum of attention to the cemetery, but the house and the rest of the grounds were shaped according to their taste. The duPonts continued the pattern of alteration and re-use set by Detrick and Bradley. This time, however, duPont interior decoration obliterated the remnants of the Madison floor plan. (Figure 17)

From the beginning of their occupancy, a benevolent interest in Madison attended the changes they made. One of the first clippings in the duPont family scrapbook announces the news of their purchase with romantic imagery of a mythologized Old South:

The famous old colonial mansion, Montpelier, once the home of President Madison, has changed hands once more, this time being purchased by Mr. William Dupont of Wilmington, Del., from Mr. Louis Detrick, of Baltimore. The whole place is to be entirely renovated and extensive improvements made, with due care, however, to the preservation of all that is historic and quaint about the style and architecture. What new additions will be built will be fashioned after the pattern in vogue 'in the good old colony days under the king,' and all of the improvements will be strictly in harmony with the old-fashioned architecture, which has made the manor houses of the South far famed these 200 years for elegance, comfort, picturesqueness, and beauty.<sup>17</sup>

The same article categorized Montpelier with other historic homes located in Virginia.

"Montpelier has become equally identified in the public mind with Mount Vernon and Monticello, the beautiful home of Thomas Jefferson. It is one of the typical old Virginia planter houses still extant, and is one of the most interesting relics in the whole State."

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<sup>17</sup> "The Madison's Home, Famous Colonial Mansion Again Changes Hands, Dupont, of Delaware, Owner," p. 2, n.d., duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

The acreage and heritage of the estate inspired thoughts of national park creation. “Montpelier is situated [in Orange County]. . . and has a depot on the Southern Railway. It has ground enough about it to make several ‘national parks,’ there being 1,300 acres in all.” As for the house, it “is unusually dignified, massive-looking, and imposing.” The house also inspired a nostalgic longing for Anglo-Saxon heritage, since it displayed the look “of old Canterbury houses.” This Anglo-centric interpretation extended to the building materials, going so far as to suggest that the house was “built of brick from England.” The writer acknowledged the public memory of “the gracious” Dolley P. Madison, who “presided as hostess” for well-known visitors, specifically Lafayette, Jefferson, “and all of the distinguished Virginians and statesmen of the period.” Above all, “it was the well-loved home of the old-time President, the place where he spent his most peaceful and happiest days, and where Dolly Madison, ‘housewifely as the Lady Washington,’ had her quietest days.” As for the duPonts, the article concludes with a defense of their sensitivity to the history of the house. For instance, the graveyard “will be inclosed with a new railing, but the monuments will not be disturbed, nor a tree cut down. . . The last twenty years have not dealt so kindly with Montpelier, so its restoration and ‘revival into its youth’ is looked forward to with no small degree of public interest.”<sup>18</sup>

Other articles provide descriptions of the estate and note the progress of the remodeling work. “The historic features will remain, but the building will be equipped with modern conveniences, new and handsome brick barns and stables are being erected, and the roads changed and put in first-class order.”<sup>19</sup> William duPont trusted his own

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<sup>18</sup> “The Madison’s Home, Famous Colonial Mansion Again Changes Hands, Dupont, of Delaware, Owner,” p. 2, n.d., Dupont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>19</sup> duPont Family Scrapbook, 2.

architectural instincts for the additions to Montpelier. He relied on his management experience and command of labor from Delaware, only drawing from local labor sources at the end of the project. One article states that duPont had contracted with “Perkins Brothers of Hollyoak [Delaware] for extensive repairs to the property. A number of Wilmington men have been hired to go to Montpelier to make the repairs.”<sup>20</sup> An article with the headline “Improving Madison Estate” reiterates that the Perkins Brothers received the contract, “which includes, beside the building, work on the mansion, the installation of an electric plant, and the erection of a stable, a barn and several tenant houses on the grounds. It will require about a year longer to complete the improvements upon which work was begun in January.”<sup>21</sup> As work progressed, another article informed readers that “Everything is hustling at Montpelier. The walls of the new addition are rapidly approaching completion.”<sup>22</sup> (Figure 15)

Various details pertaining to the house received public notice during the duPont rebuilding campaign. For instance, “The historic features of the old mansion will remain, but the building will be equipped with the modern conveniences and will be a fine rural home.”<sup>23</sup> Another article announces, “The work at Montpelier is progressing finely. The eastern wing, with its addition, will be ready for the roof in a few days. . . . The old walnut stumps and other unsightly objects are being removed from the back lawn and preparations being made to build a green-house.”<sup>24</sup> The clippings describe the movement of workmen: “Twelve or fourteen colored employees left Montpelier last week and want

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<sup>20</sup> “Workmen Sent to Virginia,” p. 2, n.d., duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>21</sup> “Improving Madison Estate,” p. 2, n.d., duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>22</sup> “Everything is Hustling at Montpelier,” p. 2, n.d., duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>23</sup> duPont Family Scrapbook, 2.

<sup>24</sup> duPont Family Scrapbook, 2.

work.”<sup>25</sup> The additions to the dwelling were extensive, providing more space for services and elegant living. Bathrooms and bedrooms for the servants, enlarged dining rooms, sitting rooms, and a morning room were incorporated into the new structure. Bedrooms for the duPonts were added on behind and above the old Madison rooms. Laundry, kitchen, wine cellar, and pantry spaces dominated the expanded basement and massive new service wing. (Figures 18 and 19)

The press noticed landscape changes as well. For instance, the Southern Railroad built “a cattle pen at Montpelier.”<sup>26</sup> In 1910, the Southern Railroad also “erected at Montpelier a very handsome passenger shed. Mr. George Bellamy, of Charlottesville, is in charge of the work.”<sup>27</sup> This depot was built according to stock plans of the Southern Railroad engineering department. It stood two-stories high on a cement slab and a brick foundation. (Figures 20 and 21) In exchange for the right of way to the railroad, duPont received passenger service, which continued for only one year after his death in 1928. Social relations were embedded in the building, perpetuating the separation of the black and white races. The building included separate waiting rooms: one for “whites,” the other for “coloreds.” Also, Montpelier Station accommodated duPont guests who arrived in their own private rail cars. Later, after the discontinuation of passenger service, Marion duPont Scott used it to transport her horses to equestrian events.<sup>28</sup> Nearby stood the Montpelier Supply Company building, a duPont-owned business that retailed goods to tenants and locals. Other new features on the landscape were a well house, a pony stable for the children’s horses, a brick powerhouse, a brick carriage house, a greenhouse, tenant

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<sup>25</sup> duPont Family Scrapbook, 3.

<sup>26</sup> duPont Family Scrapbook, 4.

<sup>27</sup> duPont Family Scrapbook, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Deborah Shull, Montpelier Station Depot nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 8 December 1982, Montpelier File, 68-30, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

houses, a spring house, a chicken house, a farm barn, a long barn, a granary, a stud barn, numerous horse stables, a blacksmith shop, a cook house for the workers.<sup>29</sup> Small streams were dammed to create farm ponds.

Another reporter visited duPont's new historic farm after the bulk of the changes had been completed, approximately two years after duPont's 1901 purchase. Charmed by what had transpired there, and by duPont's wealth, this reporter wrote, "Montpelier, the stately house of President James Madison, has passed into the hands of an able and appreciative owner, who has brought out its palatial and distinctive points by a magic use of taste and money." The duPonts' consumption and display of goods could leave nothing to chance if they were to consider themselves members of the cultural leadership class and then naturalize that membership. As Lears notes, "The concern of aesthetes for the promotion of 'good taste,' as well as for the acquisition and enjoyment of premodern objets d'art, prefigured more general patterns of consumption."<sup>30</sup>

The same reporter described the grounds. The pastoral genius of the place influenced his portrayal: "It is not alone because of its seemingly never-ending historical interest that Montpelier is noted, but its charming surroundings and pastoral scenes are delightful and attractive." The reporter wrote, "It was finished in artistic style, and altogether the best of taste was exercised in the decorations throughout." As for the garden, it "has been newly enclosed, with a large brick arch gateway in front and has a broad walk through the center." (Figure 22) The pastoral ideal generated by Montpelier beautified, in the reporter's eyes, even the modest worker housing: "Five or six tenement houses have been erected about over the place for employees, which alone make beautiful

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<sup>29</sup> Montpelier, Survey of Structures, June 1987, Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

<sup>30</sup> Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 301.



homes.” Near the carriage house, the reporter noted “a large artificial lake with pure spring water running through it.” DuPont’s changes to the landscape included altering roadway alignments: “The main outlet to the turnpike has been changed and much improved. The front gate is now on the northeast corner of the farm instead of the center.”<sup>31</sup>

The architectural changes degraded the essential proportions of the house, in particular the relation of the wings to central block. DuPont greatly enlarged the house, but his wealth and putative taste ameliorated the damage done by the massive remodeling. Another scrapbook item describes the changes: widening the east wing approximately 32 feet and extending its length 21 feet; widening the west wing 32 feet but not extending it beyond its western wall; raising the height of the wings to that of the central block. Although full-height additions now crowded the rear colonnade, the clipping claimed that “the rear portico will not be changed.” As for the fenestration, “The same sized windows as are now in the wings will be used in the addition.” Workers installed a telephone line to Orange Court House. The report concludes with the reporter stating, “I find Mr. Wm. Dupont an exceedingly affable and pleasant gentleman.”<sup>32</sup> DuPont intended his magical use of money and taste to counter the aspersions cast against him by family in Delaware, who did not hold him in the same high esteem after the 1890 divorce scandal.

The duPonts’ transformation of Montpelier from a neglected southern plantation and horse farm into a country resort was part of a wider elite building trend. Other wealthy Americans sought elegant rustic settings. For instance, Newport, Rhode Island, and the Adirondacks, among other resort landscapes, had been accommodating elite

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<sup>31</sup> “Montpelier, the Home of President James Madison, Now One of the Most Attractive Homes in Virginia,” pp. 6-7, duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>32</sup> duPont Family Scrapbook, 3.

leisure needs since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Montpelier provided an ideal country house, with its history, seclusion, recreation opportunities. Montpelier's transformation was typical of other country houses, according to architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson, who notes, "What had been real country houses were either destroyed, allowed to molder away as shabby hulks filled with ghosts, or in a few cases altered until they became luxurious imitations of their past."<sup>33</sup> Elites adapted other architectural relics in Virginia during this same time period. For instance, at the same time Montpelier was being renovated, so was Westover. As for the changes there, Wilson argues that "the additions made Westover a turn-of-the-century Edwardian country house." The same held true for Montpelier. In addition, Carter's Grove, farther down the James River, was renovated twice for different owners in the early twentieth century to conform to the colonial revival aesthetic. Some wealthy Richmonders went so far as to buy English country houses and then ship them in pieces to a planned community in the western suburbs of Richmond approximately 20 years later: Agecroft Hall and Virginia House in Windsor Farms.<sup>34</sup>

At Montpelier, the duPonts' alteration decisions were guided by leisure, and the changes were extensive. According to Marion duPont Scott, "My father added on several rooms and made the wings two stories high." She correctly surmised that "the Madisons probably would recognize the Montpelier gardens today, but I don't know if they'd know the house."<sup>35</sup> The duPonts transformed Montpelier in their version of an English

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<sup>33</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, "Picturesque Ambiguities: The Country House Tradition in America," *The Long Island Country House, 1870-1930* (Los Angeles: Perpetua Press for the Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, New York, 1988), 19.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, "Building on the Foundations: The Historic Present in Virginia Architecture, 1870-1990," *The Making of Virginia Architecture*, ed. Charles E. Brownell, Calder Loth, William M. S. Rasmussen, Richard Guy Wilson (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, 1992), 113, 119, 121.

<sup>35</sup> Strine, *Montpelier*, 34.

country estate. Contrary to the claims of preservation made in the family scrapbook articles, the duPonts remodeled the house to imitate their past life in England.

In his effort to modernize Montpelier, duPont also electrified the estate, a feat which dazzled one newspaper writer, and installed plumbing in the mansion. “The entire building and grounds are illuminated by electric lights, which add to its brilliancy and beautifies the surroundings and makes it altogether lovely,” wrote the reporter. “This improvement contributes largely to the grandeur of this magnificent building.”<sup>36</sup> With only eight percent of residences in the United States wired for electricity before 1907, bringing electricity to the mansion was remarkable.<sup>37</sup> The duPonts used electricity to activate a system of bells that called their servants into service in specific rooms. Another clipping announced more modernizations, “Sewerage drains are being dug, telephone poles are being put up, thousands of feet of lumber and vast quantities of other material is being unloaded at Montpelier Station and hauled in place by the magnificent Percheron teams belonging to Mr. Dupont.”<sup>38</sup> With these changes, the duPonts brought familiar household technology with them from Wilmington, Delaware, to a rural setting. Indoor water supply and indoor toilet systems first appeared in urban areas, and running water was a standard convenience in urban households by 1900. Although he supplied the mansion with indoor plumbing, duPont did not extend the plumbing system to his tenant houses, which remained typical rural residences without indoor plumbing. Central heating, which only the rich could afford before World War I, was another innovative amenity they brought with them from Wilmington, but only for the mansion.<sup>39</sup> The duPonts also

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<sup>36</sup> “Montpelier, the Home of President James Madison, Now One of the Most Attractive Homes in Virginia,” p. 6-7, n.d., duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>37</sup> Ruth Schwartz Cohen, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 93.

<sup>38</sup> “Everything is hustling at Montpelier,” duPont Scrapbook, O-2, I., Montpelier Archives.

<sup>39</sup> Cohen, *More Work for Mother*, 86-87, 94, 9-97, 195-196.

installed an electric Whirlpool washing machine, an appliance that did not become common in households until after World War II, in the laundry. Once their house was wired, the duPonts and their staff utilized various electrified appliances: an electric vacuum, four electric irons, an electric fan, two sewing machines, and numerous table lamps. The refrigerators (there were three) were McCray upright oak refrigerators. The inventory did not specify if the refrigerators cooled with blocks of ice or an electric compressor. Based on the duPonts' access to electricity, they most likely were cooled by electric compressor motors.<sup>40</sup> The duPonts added other outdoor features later: tennis courts, a swimming pool, and later a short golf course. A swimming pool, according to the architectural historian Mark Girouard, was a rarity in the English country house.<sup>41</sup> They also refurbished a bowling alley. An architectural historian noted in 1905 that "The bowling alley back of the house has the original bowling floor of yellow pine. The bowling house . . . has replaced the original one."<sup>42</sup>

The duPonts made major changes to the garden, claiming to rescue it from dereliction. A newspaper announced, "preparations are being made to build a large greenhouse."<sup>43</sup> In 1922, Mrs. duPont drafted two descriptions of her effort to rehabilitate what she called "Madison's vegetable garden." Her brief essay left no doubt that the garden expressed her taste in plantings and outdoor sculpture. When they first arrived, the garden was bounded by "a Virginia worm fence across the foot of garden and a paling fence on the other three sides, and a paling gate." An earthen path sloped from the

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<sup>40</sup> Inventory of William duPont, Sr., 18 May 1929, Orange County Will Book 18: 106, 107, 109, 118, 120-123, 125-130, 137.

<sup>41</sup> Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 316.

<sup>42</sup> Oliver Bronson Capen, *Country Homes of Famous Americans* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1905), 34.

<sup>43</sup> Dupont Family Scrapbook, 2.

entrance to the foot of garden. The boxwood hedge “was broken and bare at bottom and overgrown on top when we got it.” Madison’s “small terraces had been ploughed down.” By the time of their arrival, there was “no walk, no path, no tile edging, no grass, no vases, no flowers—just a wilderness of weeds.” She noted that all of the landscape features were “my designs and “nothing of which Madison ever saw.”<sup>44</sup> Her daughter Marion recalled the work done on the terraces of the garden. In a 1974 interview, she stated, “we put in the garden . . . the formal garden was revamped.” Furthermore, she added that “an architect cousin of ours, in Philadelphia, Ogglesby Paul. . . found somewhere that the garden was supposed to be laid out by Lafayette after the old House of Representatives in Washington. . . And from that design he went slowly over the garden and got all the terraces in perfect shape.” Paul used “an old Percheron mare that was very pitiful and a scoop just to pull dirt along. And then, he would build up the banks to fit his design perfectly. It took three or four, maybe six months, to get it into perfect shape.”<sup>45</sup> With these changes the duPonts thoroughly inscribed themselves on the landscape.

W. W. Scott, a local historian, evaluated the changes in his survey of the county’s history and praised their efforts. “The present owner, William du Pont, Esq.,” he writes, “has added another story to the wings, but the addition was so artistically made that it is impossible to tell where the old work ended and the new began.” Equally impressed with their wealth and taste in gardening, Scott writes that in the formal garden the duPonts have “not only restored, but [have] also converted [it] into a flower garden exclusively, which for richness and variety of color and foliage is not surpassed, if equaled, by the

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<sup>44</sup> “2 drafts of description of rehabilitating gardens by Anna R. duPont, 1922,” duPont Family Collection, Box 2, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>45</sup> Marion duPont Scott Recollections, tape recording transcription, 01-10-1974, NTP-008.74, side 1, Montpelier Research Center.

horticultural gardens at Washington; and [they have] also decorated it with pleasing statuary.”<sup>46</sup> Along with a new personal life, their remodeling also brought them an introduction into Orange County society and history.

The changes were meant to re-Anglicize the house and grounds at a time when immigration threatened to dilute the cultural hegemony of the dominant white, Anglo-Saxon culture, the founding class. Since the Civil War, significant cultural changes, specifically immigration and industrialization, altered the fabric of American life. Political, economic, and social transformations gave some Americans cause to reconsider their definitions of self and country. The colonial revival was an “urgent response to social stress and crisis,” according to Alan Axelrod. Industrial capitalism, the basis of duPont’s fortune, generated many of the sweeping changes in the United States, and Kenneth L. Ames notes that people like the duPonts typically became enthusiastic about preservation of past life-ways in the face of a polyglot society. The duPonts’ manipulation of the built environment correlated with the expectations of their social standing. However, due to the extensive, unsympathetic changes they made, Montpelier, as the home of a founder, was slow to become as architecturally significant as Mount Vernon, Gunston Hall, or Monticello. Furthermore, Montpelier never enjoyed the public exposure that Carter’s Grove, after W. Duncan Lee’s renovation, did through his “James River Colonial” designs in *House & Garden*.<sup>47</sup>

The duPonts modeled their changes to Montpelier on the British country houses they had seen and inhabited during their exile. According to Mark Girouard, respectable gentry in the nineteenth century lived in a “house made up of a complicated series of

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<sup>46</sup> Scott, *A History of Orange County*, 208.

<sup>47</sup> Alan Axelrod, “Preface,” and Kenneth L. Ames, “Introduction,” in *The Colonial Revival in America*, ed. Alan Axelrod (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. for the Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum, 1985), ix-x, 11.

morning room, dining room, billiard room, smoking room, and conservatory, designed for weekend parties.” The country house, Girouard argues, “represented to them peace, tradition, beauty, and dignity.” They shaped their houses to accommodate an increasingly complex social life with little regard for historical integrity. Victorians, according to Girouard, “tended to be insensitive in the way in which they tacked service wings, bachelor wings, vestibules, portes-cocheres and conservatories onto older houses.”<sup>48</sup>

Charles Hosmer describes similar changes to historic American homes, a trend evident at Montpelier. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Hosmer claims, “a number of wealthy individuals bought old mansions for country homes and ‘restored’ them with the intention of entertaining on a lavish scale. Dormer windows suddenly appeared where roof tops had been plain; servants’ quarters grew out of the sides of buildings; partitions fell to make larger rooms.”<sup>49</sup> In fact, Hosmer’s description adequately characterizes the changes made by the duPonts to Montpelier.

Their emphasis on British forms was in step with the colonial revival’s fashionable tastes. The duPonts created new principal rooms on the main floor of the mansion: a dining room, a breakfast room adjoining it, a formal Adamesque morning room with decorative plaster work in the ceiling, and an “Empire” drawing room. The Empire room contained an opulent mantel piece, which Mrs. duPont described as “white marble beautifully carved and [with a] beautifully carved center piece. We saw this in London at Litchfields and bought it and had it sent over. It was made about 1775.”<sup>50</sup> Women used morning rooms as a withdrawing room for afternoon tea and to receive calls, according to

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<sup>48</sup> Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, 10, 302, 304.

<sup>49</sup> Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1965), 279.

<sup>50</sup> Annie Rogers duPont inventory ledgers of furnishings in England and Montpelier, copies in Montpelier Archives.

Girouard.<sup>51</sup> Mrs. duPont's Adamesque morning room contained ornamental plaster work in the ceiling inspired by rooms at Binfield Park, Berkshire, England, where they lived for five years. Binfield Park, according to Mrs. duPont, was "designed & decorated by the Adam Bro. in 1775." It served as the touchstone for her redecoration of Montpelier. She described the mantel piece in her "English Drawing room" as "very handsome & is genuine. An Adam Mantel-piece—beautifully carved with wedgewood plaques set in, made about 1775. I saw it at Duveens Shop on Bond St. in London, he sent it to New York & we bought it from Duveen in New York in the fall of 1901."<sup>52</sup> The Empire room obliterated the space that had been President Madison's mother's wing. President Madison's dining room became a billiard room. Thus, the duPonts made Montpelier conform to the needs of an elite family living out the artifice of Edwardian gentility. Special purpose rooms and service and served spaces were inserted into, and tacked on to, the original structure without serious regard for architectural integrity.

Mrs. duPont emphasized the British provenience and pre-1776 authenticity of Montpelier's new interior, and, like her husband, she projected an awareness of her own capacity to handle the public memory of the Madisons. While her husband concentrated on reacquiring the vast acreage once held by the Madisons (for instance, from 1901 to 1920 purchased about 1,100 acres to bring his total holdings to 2,302 acres), Mrs. duPont collected a few Madison artifacts as they came to her unsolicited: Dolley's engagement ring,<sup>53</sup> and Dolley's unfinished biography of her husband.<sup>54</sup>

The repatriation of Madison memorabilia to Montpelier slowly developed during

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<sup>51</sup> Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, 293.

<sup>52</sup> Annie Rogers duPont inventory ledgers of furnishings in England and Montpelier, copies in Montpelier Archives.

<sup>53</sup> Annie R. duPont manuscript, 15 February 1920, Montpelier, duPont Family Collection, Box 2.

<sup>54</sup> Oswald Tilghman, to Mrs. Annie R. duPont, 24 March 1903, duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, 20.



the duPonts' ownership as other relics from the Madisons returned to the house. One of Dolley Madison's grand nieces took an interest in selling some personal items to the duPonts after visiting Montpelier. In 1918, Mary C. Kunkel, the daughter of James Causten who had corresponded with John Payne regarding the Madison grave monuments in 1852, wrote to Mrs. duPont, asking if she would be interested in buying relics of Madison:

I have in my possession an antique (Grandfather's clock) the date on the back corresponding with the date of the first administration as President of the U.S. James Madison. I have had it myself for a life time, it is plain in design with the phases of the moon, and brass works. I would like exceedingly to have you purchase it and give you the refusal of same. I hope you will care to be interested enough to let me hear. Also among my few treasures left is an odd little finger ring—cluster diamond of odd design the engagement token given Dolley P. Todd by her future and second husband James Madison—this ring Mrs. Madison wore always and died with it upon her hand—removed and always worn by her adopted daughter/niece my late mother—and since then by myself. I had it on on my memorable visit to Montpelier—and I am offering this to you and why? dear Mrs. Du Pont—I am getting on in years and money is so necessary that I prefer to dispose of this and know where it goes—it would be a joy to me to know it is yours and at Montpelier—try to think favorably of its purchase.<sup>55</sup>

Mrs. duPont expressed an interest in the items. She offered \$400 for the clock. She did not mention a price for the ring, but she wrote, "If you accept the offer please write to my husband Mr. William duPont. 3036 DuPont Building, Wilmington, Delaware. I go to Montpelier myself to-morrow so Mr. duPont will attend to it for me and bring me the ring later."<sup>56</sup> The relics left for Montpelier within two months. After Mrs. Kunkel returned home to Philadelphia from her vacation in Atlantic City, she wrote to Mr.

<sup>55</sup> Mary C. Kunkel to Mrs. duPont, 20 October 1918, duPont Family Collection, Box 2, NTARC.MP.3, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>56</sup> Mrs. William duPont to Mary C. Kunkel, 26 November 1918, Madison/Causten/Kunkel Estate Papers, Mss. Coll. # 47, Greensboro Historical Museum.

duPont that she was “now prepared to receive your messenger and deliver to him the ring purchased by Mrs. duPont.”<sup>57</sup> Mrs. Kunkel was pleased to have sold off a piece of her patrimony to the duPonts. She wrote to Annie duPont, “I shall make very good usage of the sum received for the beloved trinket—and think of you and ‘Dolley’ when I am enjoying some privilege which the liberal check has enabled me to secure.”<sup>58</sup> A few years later, Mrs. duPont summarized her acquisition of the relics to establish their provenience: “The enclosed ring was Dolly Madison’s engagement ring, given her by President Madison & I bought it from Mrs. Mary C. Kunkel. . . I first met Mrs. Kunkel when she wrote & asked me if she might come to Montpelier & see it. . . Mrs. Kunkel came & stayed for lunch then asked all about the garden & house. . . Mrs. Kunkel visited Montpelier she had the ring on her little finger & I admired it & she told me it was Dolly’s engagement ring.”<sup>59</sup>

Years later, Mrs. duPont’s daughter Marion received more Kunkel relics. She accepted an incomplete set of tea cups and saucers that had belonged to Dolley Madison. They arrived at Montpelier as an unsolicited gift from E. J. Rousuck. He wrote, “I have just gotten, from Mr. Percy Pyne, a set of China cups and saucers, which were owned and used by Dolley P. Madison. They had been in Mr. Pyne’s family for about three generations.” As Mrs. Kunkel had, Mr. Rousuck believed the relics belonged back at Montpelier; he wrote, “I am sending the china to you, with my compliments, as I feel they ought to be back at Montpelier.” The package included an affidavit, dated 24 May 1899, from Mrs. Kunkel: “I hereby certify that these Eight Antique French China,

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<sup>57</sup> Mary C. Kunkel to Mr. William duPont, 9 December 1918, Kunkel Family Papers, Mss. Coll. # 47, Greensboro Historical Museum.

<sup>58</sup> Mary C. Kunkel, to Mrs. A duPont, 29 January 1919, duPont Family Collection, Box 2, NTARC.MP.3, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>59</sup> Memorandum, 15 February 1920, Montpelier, signed Annie R du Pont, duPont Family Collection, Box 2, Montpelier Archives.

Quaint old colonial shaped Tea cups and Saucers Described in Catalogue of Final Settlement of the Estate of Dolley Payne Madison, wife of James Madison, as lots #86 to #92 belonged to Dolley Payne Madison and was used by her while mistress of the White House.”<sup>60</sup> Though they did not seek them, the duPonts played the role of curator for Madison artifacts.

The colonial revival idiom infected the public perception of the dwelling. For example, a 1905 architectural text described President Madison’s construction phases as an effort to build “an ideal Colonial mansion.”<sup>61</sup> As a colonial relic, Montpelier appeared in the display of Virginia’s historic resources celebrating the state’s colonial foundations at the 1907 Jamestown Tricentennial Exposition. The dwelling was portrayed, however, in its pre-duPont form. Its gardens also brought it within the pantheon of colonial Virginia homes. For instance, a treatise on colonial architecture stated, “Many of the larger gardens are truly monumental in scale such as Lower Brandon on the James, Mt. Airy on the Rappahannock and Montpelier in Orange County.”<sup>62</sup>

While some Madison relics were returning to their original context, some features of the Montpelier landscape were leaving. The city of Cleveland received arboreal mementos from Montpelier. Contrary to his promise to not damage a single tree at Montpelier during the construction work, William duPont shipped numerous trees to the city in 1917. Harry C. Hyatt, city forester, wrote, “Your letter of April 2d advising that you are sending us a tree from the home of President James Madison prepaid is at hand. We are delighted with your co-operation in this matter. On the eve of such stirring events

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<sup>60</sup> E. J. Rousuck to Marion duPont Scott, 10 February 1945, duPont Family Collection, Doc. Box 3, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>61</sup> Capen, *Country Homes of Famous Americans*, 131.

<sup>62</sup> Lewis A. Coffin, Jr., & Arthur C. Holden, *Brick Architecture of the Colonial Period in Maryland & Virginia* (New York: Paul Wenzel and Maurice Krakow, Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1919), 7.

the planting of these trees will be a very great inspiration to our citizens, for it brings before us in a living way the services rendered by these men to their country.”<sup>63</sup> William duPont thought his gift of one tree was insufficient. Thus, another letter from the city forester documented a larger shipment of Montpelier relics: eight more trees. He wrote, “Your letter of April 9<sup>th</sup> advising us that you were sending us: Two White Oak Trees, Two Poplar Trees, Four Hickory Trees, from the home of James Madison is received, also the trees arrived in time for our Arbor Day celebration. They were planted in the presence of a large number of our citizens and school children and are now a most valued possession of our city. We thank you for your very generous response to our request.”<sup>64</sup>

As the historic preservation movement advanced, the issue of public ownership of Monticello arose and bore on the duPonts’ position at Montpelier. Clippings in their scrapbooks revealed an awareness of possible vulnerability in their ownership of Montpelier. For instance, when the owners of Monticello found themselves threatened with the loss of their estate, the duPonts followed the story through the press, as well as other historic preservation news items. Their scrapbook included an article announcing that “Historic Harewood is to be Preserved,” and “Famous Washington Manor in Valley of the Shenandoah is Replete with Delightful Association of Gen. Washington, James and Dolly Madison.”<sup>65</sup> They also kept an article in their scrapbook on efforts to preserve the Octagon house in Washington, D.C., without degrading the integrity of the original structure. For a brief moment, the duPonts considered their own alterations of

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<sup>63</sup> Harry C. Hyatt to Mr. Wm. duPont, 4 April 1917, DuPont Family Collection, Box 2, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>64</sup> Harry C. Hyatt to Mr. William du Pont, 17 April 1917, duPont Family Collection, Box 2, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>65</sup> DuPont Family Scrapbook, 14, Montpelier Archives; Harewood is the estate of Steptoe and Lucy Payne Washington, located in present Jefferson County, West Virginia, in the Charlestown vicinity, where James Madison married Dolley Payne Todd in 1794.

Montpelier in contrast to the careful work at the Octagon.<sup>66</sup>

More germane to their public activities at Montpelier, the duPonts paid careful attention to events concerning Monticello, which had become contested ground in the nascent historic preservation movement. For instance, their scrapbook contained an article entitled “NO BAR TO BUYING JEFFERSON’S HOME” which stated, “James M. Beck Says Monticello Can Be Taken from Mr. Levy Under Eminent Domain” in 1912:

When the favorable report of the Rules Committee on the proposal for a commission to investigate the advisability of the purchase of Monticello by the government is called up in the House a lively row is expected. Representative Levy, of New York, owner of the home of Thomas Jefferson in Virginia, does not want to sell it and will not do so without a struggle, even though the government undertakes to force him to do so.

Mr. Levy’s attorneys have maintained that the government cannot take Monticello by the right of eminent domain. The Senate has already passed the resolution, which was suggested by Mrs. Martin W. Littleton, wife of the New York Representative.

Mrs. Littleton has incurred the resentment of Mr. Levy by continually telling committees and individual members of Congress, as well as newspaper men, that Mr. Levy is not properly caring for Monticello. He denies this most emphatically and proposes to fight the resolution on the floor of the House.<sup>67</sup>

The accusations of the historic house activists also bore the tincture of anti-Semitism.<sup>68</sup>

The primary activist, Mrs. Martin W. Littleton, had gained the support of President Woodrow Wilson and the Senate. She organized the Jefferson-Monticello Memorial Association, dedicated to making the house a public shrine, in 1912. She advocated for

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<sup>66</sup> DuPont Family Scrapbook, 7, Montpelier Archives; the Octagon is a residence designed by William Thornton located at New York Avenue and 18th Street, N.W., where the Madisons lived after the British burned the White House.

<sup>67</sup> “NO BAR TO BUYING JEFFERSON’S HOME,” 10 August 1912, DuPont Family Scrapbook, 17, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>68</sup> Marc Leepson, *Saving Monticello: The Levy Family’s Epic Quest to Rescue the House that Jefferson Built* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 33-35, 188-189.

the federal government's exercise of eminent domain, forcibly taking the property away from the Levys through condemnation proceedings. Although a resolution to direct Congress to purchase Monticello died on the floor of the House of Representatives, the issues of federal purchase persisted until 1917. Eventually, Jefferson Levy acquiesced to the memorial association and sold Monticello to them in 1923. As he watched events unfold from a distance, William duPont's concern may have been whether or not it was appropriate for someone outside the Madison family to live in the house and change it as drastically as he had. Furthermore, a public campaign to wrest Montpelier away from its owners never materialized.<sup>69</sup>

Aside from an interest in Madison memorabilia, William duPont oversaw the training of his horses for work and show at Montpelier. This activity also drew the attention of unidentified newspapers. For instance, one newspaper announced his purchase of "a Percheron horse, two years old and weighing 1,900 pounds." The article added that Mr. duPont, who "is breeding harness horses at Montpelier. . . bought four prize winning hackney mares last week at George Watson's Florham Hackney Stud, Madison, N.J."<sup>70</sup> A visiting journalist declared in 1903, "Mr. Dupont takes a great deal of interest in horses and keeps only the best on his farm."<sup>71</sup> Another clipping they preserved stated, "William duPont's Horses Win Several Prizes," at a Madison Square Garden, National Horse Show. He had named his hackney horses with a significant prefix: "Montpelier Fortitude, Montpelier Gertrude, Montpelier Treasure."<sup>72</sup> Horse-breeding

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<sup>69</sup> Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), 160-183.

<sup>70</sup> DuPont Family Scrapbook, 3, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>71</sup> "Montpelier, the Home of President James Madison, Now One of the Most Attractive Homes in Virginia," pp. 6-7, DuPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>72</sup> "William duPont's Horses Win Several Prizes," n.d., p. 23, duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

symbolized his life as a gentleman.

Horses came to embody the prevailing spirit of Montpelier. Marion duPont Scott estimated that her father's first horse show occurred in 1921, predated only by informal shows of horses at Montpelier. A reporter at one of the early home horse shows recorded the event, resulting in another article preserved in a duPont scrapbook. Once again, the house and grounds were interpreted through the colonial revival frame of reference. First, the duPonts served a luncheon "in the great hall of the stately old Colonial mansion." Various myths about the landscape were repeated by the author. For instance, the visitors toured the grounds, "admiring the noble trees and the splendid old formal garden, designed by the celebrated French landscape architect L'Enfant." The grounds tour included "the ancient bowling alley where Madison and Jefferson rolled at ten pins." The temple was described as a "beautiful old summer house, which is a reproduction of the Temple of Love at Versailles." Lastly, Montpelier "is one of the most imposing and interesting of all the historic homes of the early Presidents in Northern Virginia, and to see it on such an occasion as the annual horse show is to see it at its best."<sup>73</sup>

Horse culture predominated at Montpelier, but it was closely followed in importance by other sporting activities. Fox hunting and lawn sports took place at Montpelier and highlighted the duPont Anglicization and colonial revival style performances. The duPonts enjoyed press coverage of some of their activities. One report stated, "after a splendid hunt breakfast," they unleashed the hounds, and thirty-five hunters "wearing pink coats, started on one of the best hunts of the season."<sup>74</sup> The

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<sup>73</sup> "Horse Show at President Madison's Home," p. 8, duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>74</sup> "Fox Hunt at Montpelier," Dec. 1, *Baltimore Sun*, p. 3, duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

duPonts also brought cricket to Montpelier, and a newspaper announced the event in 1909: “Jameson’s Cricketers Royally Entertained,” “Picked Philadelphia Team Wins Two Special Matches at Montpelier,” “DuPonts Act as Host—Local Eleven Lauds Hospitality of Southerners.”<sup>75</sup> This was the second visit of the Philadelphia team to Montpelier. On this occasion George Zinn, William duPont’s step-son, batted for the Montpelier team and scored 22 of 40 runs in the first match. J.P. Dornan, duPont’s estate manager, batted for the Montpelier side also. The Philadelphia team members thanked Mr. duPont for his hospitality: “The undersigned members of the cricket team visiting ‘Montpelier’ for the game on Saturday last, desire to express to their kind host & hostess, Mr. & Mrs. William duPont, the great pleasure they experienced in meeting the good sportsmen found there, but mainly in partaking of the royal hospitality of that delightful, historic home.”<sup>76</sup>

His pursuit of sporting leisure led William duPont to purchase a larger estate in Georgia for hunting. The duPonts did have a skeet trap set up for shooting clay pigeons at Montpelier, but this Georgia property provided expanded hunting opportunities. Again, the duPonts clipped the newspaper announcement of another purchase of a historic southern plantation:

#### **WILLIAM DUPONT BUYS BIG PRESERVE**

Purchases 6,529 Acres in Georgia for Purpose of Establishing Game Domain

He has bought four plantations in Glynn County, thirteen miles from Brunswick, Ga. They are known as Altamaha, Hopeton, Elizabethfield and Carr’s Island. They are on the Altamaha river, which is navigable for small boats. A large dwelling built of oyster shells and cement by James H. Cooper in 1858, is on the property. It stands on the highest elevation and is surrounded by live oaks and magnolias.

<sup>75</sup> “Jameson’s Cricketers Royally Entertained,” p. 10, duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>76</sup> Cricketers to duPonts, 13 October 1909, p. 11, duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.



Unlike the earlier Montpelier press releases, the historic presence of slaves was recognized on this duPont new estate: "In ante bellum days the plantations which have been acquired were considered models of their kind. They were used at different times in producing cotton, sugar and rice, much of the land being dyked for raising rice. At one time six hundred slaves were used in the cultivation of the lands." DuPont's wealth also allowed him to make any changes to the estate that he deemed necessary, especially those that facilitated the hunting experience there: "It is the intention of Mr. duPont to make some improvements to the residence on the plantations and to cultivate some of the ground in order to furnish food for quail and other game. The plantations furnish diversified shooting as there are deer, wild turkeys, duck, snipe and quail in abundance in addition to good fishing in the Altamaha River." This announcement also documented his improved social standing: "The owner is well known in horse circles. At Montpelier he is now conducting one of the largest hackney studs in the country. His horses are shown at the National Horse Show, New York, and at the shows at Orange, Va., and Montpelier, Va."<sup>77</sup> His daughter Marion remembered the plantation as "a shooting place in Georgia. Nine thousand acres, named Altama, against the Altamaha River. It had an island on it. Quail. Snipe. Turkey. Deer. Ducks. The ducks would go out early in the morning and come back in early evening. You had to go shooting accordingly." William duPont died at this winter estate in 1928.<sup>78</sup>

The character of life at Montpelier under the duPonts matched the contours of elite American life that Thorstein Veblen described as conspicuous consumption. The duPonts relied on public recognition of their activities to improve their reputation as they

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<sup>77</sup> "WILLIAM DUPONT BUYS BIG PRESERVE," p. 18, duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>78</sup> Strine, *Montpelier*, 55-56; Cheyney, "William duPont."

emerged as stewards of Montpelier and Madison. Yet, the large amount of money they spent on acquiring and changing Montpelier demonstrated their personal wealth and taste over the significance of Madison's memory or the architectural integrity of his historic plantation. His activities and acquisitions at Montpelier were intended to show that he was a gentleman who could consume appropriately "the right kind of goods." Ownership of Montpelier guided the duPonts through, what Veblen terms, "the business of learning how to live a life of ostensible leisure in a becoming way."<sup>79</sup> While the changes they made to the house were grand; they were not audacious. Mr. and Mrs. duPont had experienced enough audacity during their divorces. Life at Montpelier offered them respite and recovery. The refining effect of Montpelier on the duPonts' character was evident even in Scott's judgment of them in his Orange County history. Describing the development of hunt clubs in the county, he wrote, "There are two hunt clubs, which go to the field in costume and oftener [sic] pursue a bag of anise seed than reynard; the 'Tomahawk,' . . . and the 'Blue Run,' Mr. William duPont, president, and Dr. James Andrews, master of the hounds." These clubs, he wrote, "in addition to their picturesqueness and the sport they afford their members, teach the 'art of Thrace-centaur like to ride,' and promote the breeding and training of hunters which command great prices."<sup>80</sup> Scott also had duPont in mind when he wrote about Orange County and the colonial revival in general:

In more recent years gentlemen of great means, attracted by the salubrity of the climate, the ever pleasing landscape, the historic associations and the many other features which render the country so dear to its people, have acquired homes in Orange, whose combined fortunes aggregate to millions. In most cases they have adapted themselves to their new environment, and have enlarged and adorned homes that were long cherished even in their former and simpler settings. They have introduced the newest methods in farming, have brought in many varieties of

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<sup>79</sup> Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 74.

<sup>80</sup> Scott, *A History of Orange County*, 168.

improved stock, and thus have stimulated agricultural activities in their respective neighborhoods; better than all, they have shown themselves, with rarest exception, to be liberal minded and public spirited, and wholly without the offensive arrogance and display of the newly rich.<sup>81</sup>

Scott recognized that portions of Orange County had become pleasure grounds for the wealthy, and the duPonts were part of that trend.

Estate records in the Montpelier archives do not include an exact listing of the numbers of workers and their tasks or their ethnicity, but the records do provide enough information to outline the organization of the work force. Early entries in estate ledgers indicate the payment of cash wages to laborers, carpenters, and mechanics. In addition, payroll records show how duPont organized his work force by the place where they worked. The payroll categories included the dairy, the farm, the garden, miscellaneous, the studs stable, and supplementary. In 1918, the studs stable payroll was re-categorized as the hackney stable payroll. In 1920, a laundry payroll was added to the ledger. Compared to the other categories, the farm payroll was the largest expenditure. Household staff were not included in this ledger. Moreover, the work force was racially segregated. For instance, the inventory of duPont's estate taken in 1929 noted and described the sparse contents of the "colored servants' quarters."<sup>82</sup> A photograph in a duPont scrapbook shows an African-American farm hand at work. (Figure 23)

The duPonts' conspicuous consumption contrasted against the daily struggles of others who lived at Montpelier. Those workers who took housing at Montpelier maintained not just the estate, but also the elevated status of duPont himself. For instance, they had to receive his permission when altering their accommodations. Often

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<sup>81</sup> Scott, *A History of Orange County*, 170.

<sup>82</sup> Cash Book No. 1, Montpelier Estate Ledger # 2, Montpelier Archives; Inventory of William duPont, Sr., 18 May 1929, Orange County Will Book 18: 131.

they directed their appeals to Mrs. duPont. Their requests for employment and housing reinforced the duPonts' elite status and their control of the estate. Relations between the tenants, workers, managers, and owner were documented in correspondence, revealing the extent of William duPont's involvement in management of the estate and the expectations of those who lived at Montpelier in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Social welfare became part of Montpelier's function with the wealthy duPonts in residence. They read over requests for work, housing in the new structures, and domestic improvements. Yet, receiving housing at Montpelier was no easy matter. For instance, Kurt Corbin wrote, "Mr. Dupont—Dear Sir. my time is out at Mr. Krezles now. and he askes now too much house rent. I am not able to pay it and my store Bills. Would you please let me have a house. am obliged. I dont mean to wery you." In pencil on the letter duPont wrote down his response: "No—WduP."<sup>83</sup> Gertie Corbin also wrote to Mr. duPont, "i would like to have a house my time will soon be out where i am and i can not get another close enough to work on the place." Written on the letter was duPont's negative response to be conveyed by Dornan: "Receive your note but have not got a house for you."<sup>84</sup>

Workers pleaded with duPont for employment, and he appeared to be a shrewd judge of a worker's character. In April 1914, Robert Wilson wrote to evaluate the tasks he had been assigned at Montpelier: "I take the liberty of writing to inform you that I like the work I have been put to do and can only say Sir that I can make vast improvements on your Estate with a little assistance and am not desirous of leaving. . . and I will endeavour to do my utmost to give you every satisfaction. I consider \$15 per

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<sup>83</sup> Kurt Corbin to William duPont, n.d., Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>84</sup> Gertie Corbin to Mr. duPont, n.d., Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

month is ample for board in the Country \$16 at the outside and probably you could make arrangements with some of your employees to accommodate me. I will do my best for you, having had previous experience on Estates and am willing to devote my whole time working hours.”<sup>85</sup> Two days later duPont wrote from Wilmington, Delaware, to his estate manager J. P. Dornan, “If you can get Wilson board @ \$16.00 I have no objection to keeping him on for a while, but I think he will only be a nuisance, as he never seems to be satisfied. He told me distinctly that he would not stay. now he seems to like the work and wants to stay.” In spite of his character flaws, duPont noted that Wilson “could be very useful on the upper lawn and shrubbery this summer, as there is a great deal of work that should be done there.” While he was in Delaware though, he left most decisions to Dornan: “I leave the matter in your hands, and if Grey does not want to keep him, you can let him go at the first of the month.”<sup>86</sup> Disciplining workers took other forms. For instance, Mrs. duPont forbade Johnny Southerd, Jr., entry into the main house for six months due to an unexplained infraction in 1918.<sup>87</sup>

Not all workers came from the local area. Some estate employees came from outside Virginia. For instance, duPont dismissed a Montpelier employee who was from Philadelphia. From his Wilmington office, duPont wrote to Dornan that “I have just wired you to let Greenwood go tomorrow. Please pay him off. If you haven’t money enough to do this wire, me the amount and his address in Philadelphia and I will send him a check.”<sup>88</sup> Although he was absent frequently, duPont paid careful attention to the

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<sup>85</sup> Robert Wilson to William duPont, 22 April 1914, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>86</sup> William duPont to J. P. Dornan, 24 April 1917, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>87</sup> 14 February 1918 and 14 August 1918 entries, Secretary’s Journal, 1918, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 1.

<sup>88</sup> William duPont to J. P. Dornan 28 August 1917, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

management of Montpelier.

Some Orange County citizens appealed directly to Dornan for work and housing, bypassing the duPonts. For instance, Mrs. E. M. Clore wrote to Dornan in April 1918, “I herd that Mr. Seabloon was needing a helper in the laundry, so if I could get a house down there I would be glad to have the job, until my husband gets able to work he is back from the Hospital his truble is arrested. but he is not able to work yet. don’t think it will be long before he can work . . . So I would be glad for you to speak to Mr. Dupont about it and let me hear from you as soon as possible as I have got to do something untell my Husband gets strong enough to work.”<sup>89</sup> Clore’s request illustrated the hierarchy of authority at Montpelier.

The duPonts’ control of housing had a direct impact on the lives of their tenants. For instance, the situation of one family revealed how they treated tenants living on land that they had recently purchased. Earnest Smith wrote to Mrs. duPont, hoping for her sympathy, in October 1917: “I am writing a note to ask you If we can stay where we are or not. It Is getting very cold now. If we have to move away. please let us know. as I have four small Children. and want to move before It get so cold for them If we caint stay. for the place we are living are very cold. the House leakes ofel bad and not many windows in the house. and that makes it very cold and Isnt any out buildings at all. Mrs. Dupont We would be very glad to hear from you to know what we will have to do. For It makes It very uncomfort for us to not know. what we are going to do. Please let us know at once as we will have to see father If we caint stay. I am hoping to hear from you at once As this botheres us very much.”<sup>90</sup> Dornan gave them notice of their eviction: “Mrs.

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<sup>89</sup> Mrs. E. M. Clore to J. P. Dornan, 13 April 1918, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>90</sup> Ernest Smith to Mrs. A. R. duPont, 8 October 1917, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

William duPont has received your letter relative to your continuing to occupy the house you are living in, which is now the property of Mr. William duPont. I have taken the matter up with Mr. duPont, and he has instructed me to advise you that he will require and want this house, and that you therefore will have to make arrangements to remove from the same at once. This is also in confirmation of verbal instructions to you on Montpelier Farm this morning.”<sup>91</sup>

The duPonts also dealt with more mundane concerns relating to tenant life at Montpelier. One tenant thought he and his mother ought to enjoy the same plumbing conveniences as the duPonts. Asa Skinner wrote to Mr. duPont in May 1917, “The water is so awfull for to carry my mother is not able to carry water that distance. the spring is the side of the run you can judge how far it is would you kindley put water to the house for washing and cleaning.”<sup>92</sup> Three days later duPont responded through Dornan: “I enclose letter received from Asa Skinner. I think Asa Skinner has plenty of time to carry water for his mother. At any rate, I do not care to go to the expense of complying with his request, and therefore please decline it.”<sup>93</sup> Others appealed to duPont’s interest in horses, hoping he would join in a purchase of a horse. Philip Porter wrote to Mr. duPont and asked if he would loan him enough money to buy a “young horse.” If not, Porter wanted to know if he would buy it and let Porter pay for the horse in installments. DuPont’s reply was no.<sup>94</sup> The mother of one employee prevailed upon Dornan to stabilize their family situation: “My son told me a few days ago that he

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<sup>91</sup> J. P. Dornan to Ernest Smith, 15 October 1917, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>92</sup> Asa Skinner to William duPont, 19 May 1917, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>93</sup> William duPont to J. P. Dornan, 21 May 1917, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>94</sup> Philip Porter to William duPont, n.d., Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

expected to leave the first of the month. And if you all like him alright wont you please try and get him to stay. As I dont want him to leave. He is so much help to us and we have a big family and I dont know what we would do with-out him. And he may go off somewhere and I dont want him to go. Dont say anything to David and Willie about me writing this to you please.”<sup>95</sup> These letters characterized the distant relationship duPont maintained with his employees and tenants, which was based on class difference and his own authority.

DuPont also dealt with complaints about the condition of some of his housing. Mrs. Creadon wrote to Mr. duPont in March 1917 to claim that the painter “barely had time before leaving to give the kitchen one coat.” Furthermore, “The floors, hall and stairs are badly in need of stain, and if you will kindly give me an order on the stain for stain and brushes Mr. Creadon will see that the work is done himself.” She also described part of her contribution to the farm operation, “Last summer I raised chicken-feed for all the chickens on the farm and had very little use of material raised in the garden and would like very much to have chicken wire around the garden fence before planting my garden this summer.”

Mrs. Creadon’s plans for improving the house were extensive. For instance, she requested permission “to convert the small shed into a kitchen,” because, in her words, “Mr. Creadon has decided to make this a permanent location as long as you are satisfied with his work and I want to get the place fixed as comfortable as possible.” A notation on the reverse side of the letter indicated duPont’s quick, affirmative response: “ordered of Montpelier Supply Co. 3.24.1917—paint, stain, brushes, chicken wire, linoleum . . . advised—will look into matters of wood stove. outside shed.” She also requested a new

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<sup>95</sup> Mrs. Daniel Miller to Mr. Dornan, 13 July 1917, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.



cook stove, “If not asking too much I would appreciate a stove furnished,” and linoleum. “I notice all of my neighbors houses are furnished with Linoleum on the kitchen floor and the Linoleum I brought with me was not near enough to cover the floor and is worn out.”<sup>96</sup>

In this case, the tenant was satisfied. One month later, Mrs. Creadon wrote, “I wish to thank you for your kindness in granting my requisition.” The work was finished, thus, “improving the appearance of the interior one hundred per cent,” she wrote. She had received the linoleum and was waiting to lay it—waiting, she wrote, for “your opinion on my out kitchen.” She explained, “My reason for desiring this out kitchen is to enable me to utilize my combined kitchen and dining room for a dining room only.” As for the cook stove, she had to wait. There were none in stock at the Montpelier Supply Company, a store operated by duPont near the depot.<sup>97</sup>

There is no evidence pointing to control of the workers through debt. The records of the Montpelier Supply Company indicate that most transactions occurred in cash, and William duPont was the store’s most frequent customer. He used it to supply the needs of the estate, including its tenant houses. He settled the accounts monthly. Montpelier workers were paid monthly in cash, and the records were kept in a separate farm ledger. Records reveal no extensive use of credit between duPont and his Montpelier employees.<sup>98</sup>

Relations with his tenants and workers reaffirmed the duPonts’ patrician life at

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<sup>96</sup> Mrs. Creadon to William duPont, 22 March 1917, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>97</sup> Mrs. Creadon to William duPont, 7 April 1917, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 11, Correspondence of Workers to William duPont, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>98</sup> Ledger Book Farm No. 1, Cash Book No. 1, Montpelier Estate Records, Box 2, Box 3, Montpelier Supply Company, 1916A-1917, Document Box 1, Montpelier Supply Company, Ledgers 1908-1909, Record Box 33, Montpelier Supply Company, Ledgers 1909-1911, Record Box 34, Montpelier Archives.

Montpelier. Their concern for their employees was based on their concerns for estate operations. Living at Montpelier meant pleasing and appealing to the duPonts in all matters. DuPont favored some employees, for instance the Creadons, over others, the Skinners, based on their usefulness and, possibly, their level of education. The living conditions for Montpelier workers was based on the variety of duPont's housing stock and his labor needs. Most workers tended lawns and shrubbery or the dairy and stables, some maintained the buildings, while others served the house in the laundry or the kitchen.

### Conclusion

Montpelier became the duPonts' set piece, the stage for their performance of conspicuous consumption and elite leisure, couched in terms of bucolic pleasure and historic preservation. William duPont achieved favorable public recognition of his name with his purchase of it and other estates. Rather than being known for social scandal and as a prodigal, profligate duPont, he reinvented himself as a dignified, country gentleman. His return to respectability was confirmed by a presidential visit to Montpelier. President Theodore Roosevelt made a day trip there to shoot turkeys at Thanksgiving time. While there, he visited the Madison family cemetery and toured the mansion.<sup>99</sup> With a ready supply of wealth at his disposal, William duPont found dignified leisure at Montpelier. In return, the duPonts advanced the trend of Montpelier's architectural and decorative enhancement, begun by Detrick and Bradley, after the Civil War and during Reconstruction, while increasing their social standing as civic-minded preservationists rather than indolent industrialists. The changes made to it were the result of the duPonts' personal dilemmas and the renewed interest in American heritage motivated by the

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<sup>99</sup> "President Roosevelt at Madison's Home" p. 6, "PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT SPENDS DAY AT OLD HOME OF JAMES MADISON," p. 17, duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

colonial revival.

Other people also appropriated Montpelier and the Madison name for their own standing and profit at this time. For instance, two of Benjamin Thornton's daughters resurfaced in northern Virginia and claimed to own Madison furniture, which they offered for sale in 1938. They provided a sworn statement attesting to the authenticity of the furniture to the buyer, Dr. E.C. Shull of Herndon, Virginia, to wit: "My sister, Miss Ann Thornton, age 83 years; and I, Miss Ellen Thornton, age 88 years, were born at Montpelier, the home of President James Madison. Along with the house, my father purchased much of the furniture that belonged to President Madison, among which was his banquet table and six dining-room chairs."<sup>100</sup> Ann Thornton was born in 1855, a year after her father sold Montpelier in 1854. Ellen Thornton was not listed in the 1850 census, the year of her birth, but she may have lived there after the census enumeration. The 1850 census only identified two female, Thornton children: Mary D. Thornton, age three, and Catharine P. Thornton, age four. Although their claim was dubious, it signified an interest in linking themselves to Montpelier to facilitate their sale of furniture.

As they moved Montpelier and the Madisons through the early phase of the colonial revival, the duPonts revealed the contours of that cultural formation itself. Responding to the dominance of the English strain in the movement, they elided their own French heritage and emphasized their affinity to Great Britain through references to Binfield Park, the Adam Brothers, and British horse culture. Mrs. duPont redecorated the interiors of Montpelier according to her memory of Binfield Park and curated a small collection of Madison relics. They acted out gendered roles: Mrs. duPont in charge of the formal garden and the jewelry; Mr. duPont in command of land, trees, and building.

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<sup>100</sup> Thornton Sisters Affidavit, 18 May 1938, copy in Montpelier Research Archives.

Starting with 1,063.75 acres purchased by his agent Lennig in 1901, duPont had increased Montpelier's size to 2,302 acres by 1924.<sup>101</sup> They elided the historical presence of slaves as an insignificant aspect of the estate's history. Possessing Montpelier naturalized their wealth and prominence while ameliorating the disgrace they left behind in Delaware.

The duPont family at Montpelier documented their own re-invented public persona as respectable people in the press. They carefully collected the evidence of their self-inscriptions there. One newspaper clipping, possibly the work of a company publicist, in their scrapbook confirmed their ownership and transformation of it: "Since there are no descendants of President Madison to claim the place as theirs it is a happy circumstance that such historic acres are owned by members of the old and distinguished American family sprung from Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours, who have the appreciation and taste to improve while preserving the original spirit of the grounds and to develop sport there on a scale and with an atmosphere that is consistent with the best traditions of the Old Dominion."<sup>102</sup> As for the Madison family, the duPonts also kept in their scrapbook a disparaging anecdote about a Madison descendant. A former Montpelier slave who had recalled Lafayette's visit also recalled seeing a Madison descendant at Orange Court House. She claimed, "I herd de yuther day dat one of de younger Madisons was in town, an' I put on my nice specs what 'Colonel' Madison gimme, and my fine piece of black lace what 'Miss' Dolly gimme, 'long wid my bonnet, an' went to do hotel to see him. When I know'd him long time ago he was a reg'lar 'losopher, an' now, bless gracious, he done bin rejuced to a common, ordinary shoe drummer! Dat sho'ly is a comedown for a Madison!"<sup>103</sup> This clipping, along with all the

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<sup>101</sup> DuPont Family Collection, Doc. Box 4, Legal Documents.

<sup>102</sup> "With Sportsmen Afield and Afloat," 30 September 1927, p. 22, duPont Family Scrapbook, O-2, I, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>103</sup> "Old Ailsey Payne at Montpelier," 9, duPont Family Scrapbook, Montpelier Archives.

others, reinforced the duPonts' own understanding of their better life at Montpelier in the early twentieth century.

As an icon, images of Montpelier traveled widely. It made an appearance at the 1907 Jamestown Tricentennial Exposition in a postcard<sup>104</sup> and in the Virginia Room Exhibit at the 1939 New York World's Fair as a photograph.<sup>105</sup> It also appeared in a 1933 travel guide published by the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development.<sup>106</sup> Montpelier re-inhabited the public mind in the early twentieth century, just as the duPont family had.

Finally, Montpelier entered the stream of the colonial revival as a pleasure ground for a small group of wealthy East Coast families. They developed its historic resources into a country place resort of leisure for themselves with service and support provided by their tenants and laborers. The duPonts amplified Montpelier's pastoral aspect against the growing industrialism of the United States in the early twentieth century (a trend they perpetuated and exploited) with horse breeding, racing, and fox hunting—thereby maintaining cultural hegemony for their social class. By acquiring various forms of Madison material culture, the duPonts cloaked themselves as preservationists and negotiated various moments of social and personal disorder.

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<sup>104</sup> 1607 Jamestown Exposition, 1907: Official souvenir post card, The Jamestown Amusement & Vending Co., Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia; postcard also on file in Montpelier Archives.

<sup>105</sup> Library of Virginia, 1939 World's Fair Photograph Collection.

<sup>106</sup> William E. Carson, *Historic Shrines of Virginia* (Richmond, Virginia: State Commission on Conservation and Development, 1933).

## CHAPTER VI

### Repatriation and the National Trust

This chapter analyzes the second, and last, generation of duPonts to live at Montpelier and the arrival of historic preservation and museum specialists. What started out as a small gesture by the duPonts to Madison's memory became a larger act of beneficence when Marion duPont Scott bequeathed the estate to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. After Mrs. Scott's death in 1983, the transformation of it into a museum began with the National Trust for Historic Preservation (the National Trust) managing and commodifying the plantation as a public museum venue. However, Madison did not enjoy center stage in the new exhibition schemes. Rather, the new social history, the duPonts, and the National Trust itself, combined to place Madison in the chorus. Furthermore, the National Trust used Montpelier to propel their national advocacy campaign for historic preservation. The conservative climate of opinion in Washington politics also played a role in shaping the interpretation plans at Montpelier by constraining available funds and forcing the National Trust into a conservative stance. Through their decisions made for Montpelier, the National Trust withstood the attacks against historic preservation that portrayed them as an obstacle to capitalism based on their advocacy of federal regulations that constrained federally funded undertakings and their criticisms of excessive modern development that demolished the historic fabric of existing communities. As a site supposedly dedicated to Madison, Montpelier (Figure

24) took on a de-centered character with its commemoration of the duPonts, the complexity of its architectural layers, and its commodification by the National Trust. Repatriating Madison into his plantation home proceeded slowly and with deliberation.

Some historians of historic preservation have argued that sites of historic significance receive institutional support and national recognition during times of cultural crisis. For instance, in *Domesticating History*, Patricia West describes the creation histories of four national historic sites and links their origins to contemporary cultural dilemmas. She argues that “house museums are products as well as purveyors of history,” stressing that scholars must analyze historic structures “in terms of the various entanglements from which they were deduced.” The National Trust was chartered in 1949 as post-World War II economic prosperity and subsequent urban renewal projects threatened sites and structures of significance in American history and heritage. However, the bequest of Montpelier to the National Trust marked another duPont personal dilemma, rather than a manifestation of contemporary problems during the years of President Ronald Reagan’s administration. Since she had no heirs, and family hostility lingered, Mrs. Scott decided to transfer the farm out of her family. Mrs. Scott’s gift of Montpelier to the National Trust followed a growing trend among elites in lending support to historic preservation, which, according to Michael Wallace, “afforded a way of carving out a distinctive cultural position within the larger capitalist class.” Thus, Mrs. Scott added philanthropy to her reputation, which was based on training horses in the sporting life of elite social circles. Moreover, the gift also established the house as a monument to her parents.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America’s House Museums* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), xii; Michael Wallace, “Reflections on the History of Historic Preservation,” in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, eds. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 170.

After the arrival of the National Trust at Montpelier, wider cultural tension was reflected in the activities at Montpelier. The historic preservation community debated how they could best use Montpelier to further the cause of historic preservation. Academic historians introduced slavery into the interpretation narratives to be designed by the staff. Prevailing social and political trends constrained the management and development of the plantation. A lawsuit settlement inscribed the memory of the duPonts into the house and halted any effort to use the house to portray only Madison's history there. This chapter describes the shaping of interpretation at Montpelier in the twentieth century and analyzes the National Trust's vision and its struggle to manage this historic property.

Upon the death of William duPont, Montpelier passed to his daughter Marion. Like Frank Carson, who never enjoyed full ownership, Marion duPont Scott did not hold a free and clear title to Montpelier. Her father encumbered her possession of it with a life interest. It would pass to her brother or his heirs if she died without issue of her own. Mrs. duPont died in London in 1927, and William duPont died the following year.<sup>2</sup> While it was hers, Marion duPont Scott removed elements of the colonial revival mode set in place by her parents and made changes of her own, changes that moved Montpelier farther away from Madison's memory.

She started with one of her mother's rooms reminiscent of Binfield Park. She redecorated the Empire Room thoroughly into a state of modernity. What had been an Edwardian parlor (before that it had served as President Madison's mother's section of the house) became a streamlined, mirrored glass, moderne showcase. For instance, Milton L. Grigg, a Charlottesville architect, designed a mirrored fireplace surround with special-

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<sup>2</sup> Gerald Strine, *Montpelier: The Recollections of Marion duPont Scott* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), 39.



order Corning glass to replace her mother's fireplace ornamentation in 1936.<sup>3</sup> Next, a dropped ceiling covered up the decorative plaster work in the old ceiling. The ceiling was painted silver and illuminated with upward lights mounted in the cornice molding. For the convenience of her wealthy guests, and for the novelty of it, a compass installed in the ceiling indicated wind direction to assist the fox hunters. She imported Belgian plywood for shelving and trimmed it with chrome. This room, augmented with numerous pictures of horses, became her personal statement. A visitor to Montpelier in the late 1950s noted that Mrs. Scott had only one portrait of James Madison hanging on the wall of her parlor, along with numerous images of horses: "Other than this [Madison portrait] the home occupies a modern setting."<sup>4</sup>

The changes to this room were linked to Mrs. Scott's role in the steeplechase social set. Through her interest in horses, she became an active participant in East Coast steeplechase competition. By the 1930s, Mrs. Scott and her brother William were known for building race tracks and steeple chase courses at Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, Bellevue Hall, Delaware, Fairhill, Maryland, and Camden, South Carolina. Based on these accomplishments, one report claimed "the descendants of William duPont will lead the world in the ownership of tracks and thoroughbred racing plants."<sup>5</sup> According to Mrs. Scott's biographer, the 1930s were "a delightful period for the Hunt and Chase Set." The seasonal circuit began in the South late in February at Camden, South Carolina, then moved up to North Carolina, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Long Island, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts by June, then turned south again to Maryland, Long

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<sup>3</sup> Ann Miller, *Historic Structures Report*, 140.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Lee Eckleberry, "Montpelier," typescript, December 1958, Mss. 6006, Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>5</sup> J. Barton Cheyney, "William duPont," Jeanette Eckman Papers, duPont Family, folder #19, Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington, Delaware.

Island; Huntington Valley, Ligonier, Pennsylvania, and Red Bank and Far Hills, New Jersey, “before winding up the season in November at Middleburg and Montpelier Station, Virginia.”<sup>6</sup> Her inherited wealth also allowed her to travel to Europe during the Depression, which attracted the attention of the society page editors at the local newspaper in 1933: “Those cultured, lovely people Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Somerville [the surname from her first marriage] of Montpelier, this county, the former’s sister and brother, Miss Jamie Somerville and Mr. Wilson Somerville, of Rapidan, Virginia, have returned from a most delightful and extended visit to England.”<sup>7</sup>

Mrs. Scott established her reputation in breeding horses and hunting dogs. In her own scrapbook, Mrs. Scott collected articles about her horses, herself, and other mementos. She earned special notice at a Madison Square Garden horse show (circa 1913) for riding her horse in an unconventional manner and winning first place in her class. A newspaper headline announced, “Woman Astride Seen First Time at Horse Show” and “Miss Marion duPont Takes Horse Show Prize First Time in New Style.” The article stated, “It was the first time that a woman had ever won an event in the garden riding astride.” She rode Twenty-four Karat, “a big chestnut with docked tail” and “a favorite with the spectators.” When the judges awarded Marion the blue ribbon, “the decision was greeted with a round of applause.” Fifteen men and women competed against her in this class, and “Miss duPont rode her horse with ease and grace, and showed him to fine advantage.”<sup>8</sup>

While the estate continued to support a life of leisure for her, Mrs. Scott’s management of it featured an emphasis on production and revenue generation. For

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<sup>6</sup> Strine, *Montpelier*, 73.

<sup>7</sup> 14 April 1933, extract from the *Orange Observer*, typescript, Montpelier Archives, acc. no. 1997.50.

<sup>8</sup> Scott Album, 5, uncatalogued, “1913,” Montpelier Archives.

instance, the greenhouse workers produced botanicals for the cut flower market. The Montpelier Supply Company shifted from its previous role of supplying the main house to general merchandise retailing. Though her shares in Dupont Company stock relieved her from concerns for showing quarterly profits from her greenhouse and store, she chose to develop potential resources at Montpelier. The construction of prefabricated houses, stables, and barns marked her pursuit of breeding champion horses rather than erecting distinctive architecture. She selected from the choices offered by machine-age, industrial capitalism rather than the hand-made items of craftsmen and traditional artisans in favor with the intellectual elite.

After the death of her parents, she introduced more changes to the house and grounds that merit further description. In the mansion's basement, she had workmen excavate the floor down about two feet to provide an exercise studio for her second husband, Hollywood's Randolph Scott. This marriage ended in divorce, as had her first to Thomas H. Somerville, her husband at the time of her father's death. Mrs. Scott abandoned the colonial revival idiom elsewhere on her estate. The landscape architect Charles Gillette designed changes to garden spaces adjacent to the mansion and a guest house. Although Charles Gillette made a reputation in colonial revival garden design with his work at Kenmore in Fredericksburg, among other places, at Montpelier he did not change Mrs. duPont's garden. Rather he offered only planting plans in the formal garden and lawn area in front of the house. Mrs. Scott also changed the greenhouse operation. When her father was alive, the greenhouse, as any elite gentleman would have it, produced out of season fruits for the duPont table in the mansion. With the arrival of grocery stores in the area, Mrs. Scott directed her manager Tommy Southard to produce

flowers for the cut-flower market.<sup>9</sup>

She made a highly visible imprint on the landscape with race courses for horses. She laid out a steeplechase course and a flat track. Various structures for horse breeding appeared soon after her father's death. She ordered three prefabricated stables from Sears & Roebuck in the 1930s; she built a garage for the horse transportation van; she built a stable called the race barn.<sup>10</sup> All of these buildings lacked architectural distinction. The barns housed her brood mares and yearlings. The large horse pastures were hilly, "much more so than those on the fashionable Blue Grass farms near Lexington, Kentucky," wrote Strine. The benefit being, according to Mrs. Scott, "They make for sturdiness in a horse."<sup>11</sup>

Mrs. Scott initiated Montpelier's transition from Edwardian pleasure ground to a landscape that featured the structures and buildings of industrial capitalism. The Montpelier Supply Company became a source of revenue when it began retailing commodities. For instance, store accounts show sales of durable goods and perishables, such as bread from Nolde Brother's Bakery in Richmond.<sup>12</sup> Another instance of early commodification at Montpelier during Mrs. Scott's management occurred at the Madison family cemetery, when she briefly charged visitors a small admission fee. When her father's dairy burned down in 1948, however, she did not rebuild it.<sup>13</sup>

Mrs. Scott maintained other pursuits typical of leisure life in the country. She

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<sup>9</sup> Michelle May, "The Gardens," in *Montpelier: The Estate of James Madison and the duPonts*, Ray Cary Brasted, ed. (Greene Publishers, Inc., 1985), 6, on file at Montpelier Archives.

<sup>10</sup> Montpelier, Survey of Structures, June 1987, Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

<sup>11</sup> Strine, *Montpelier*, 43.

<sup>12</sup> Montpelier Supply Company, Cash Book Journals, 1929-1956, Record Boxes 31 and 32, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>13</sup> Lynne G. Lewis, "Archaeological Survey and the History of Orange County: Another View from Montpelier," *Quarterly Bulletin* Archaeological Society of Virginia 44 (September 1989): 152.

raised dogs and fighting cocks. She hosted numerous cock fights in her father's brick carriage house and stable below the mansion by the power house and farm pond. According to her memoir, "Occasionally there would be a cockfight in the coach house." Kennels, which were located near the mansion and farther away on Chicken Mountain, housed numerous breeds of dogs: foxhounds, border terriers, Scotch deer hounds and gray hounds.<sup>14</sup>

Mrs. Scott added to the stock of tenant housing at Montpelier. The dilapidated condition of the older tenant houses led to this phase of building activity on the estate. Based on information provided by long-time farm workers, numerous tenant houses were demolished in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>15</sup> A local newspaper announced the construction of one new house: "Mrs. T. H. Somerville is having a handsome bungalow erected on 'Montpelier Farm,' her magnificent estate in this county, which will be occupied by one of her faithful employees and family."<sup>16</sup> She ordered two Montgomery Ward prefabricated houses and a modular house from E. F. Hodgson Company of Boston in 1936, which she called the Bassett Cottage or the "Little House."<sup>17</sup> Charles Gillette contributed designs for a Japanese theme garden and paved patio there in 1950. Previous to this design work, Gillette provided Mrs. Scott with a garden layout plan for the formal garden in 1934 (revised in 1950) and plans for plantings near the temple in 1941.<sup>18</sup>

The Madison family cemetery at Montpelier remained sacred ground, especially to the Richmond-based William Byrd chapter of the Daughters of the American

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<sup>14</sup> Strine, *Montpelier*, 55, 57, 62, 67; Lewis, "Archaeological Survey and the History of Orange County: Another View from Montpelier," 159.

<sup>15</sup> Lewis, "Archaeological Survey and the History of Orange County: Another View from Montpelier," 158-159.

<sup>16</sup> 5 April 1929, extract from the *Orange Observer*, typescript, Montpelier Archives, acc. no. 1997.50.

<sup>17</sup> Ann Miller, Historic Structures Report, 140.

<sup>18</sup> Papers of Charles F. Gillette, Acc. no. 34472, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

Revolution, which held various Madison commemoration ceremonies there. Around the time of her father's death, this D.A.R. chapter took an interest in the condition of the cemetery. Some visitors complained of its neglected condition. The chapter and Mrs. Scott (then Mrs. Somerville) made an arrangement for public access and maintenance in 1929, which continued throughout her life. She had a road built to connect the cemetery to a nearby public road, which was part of a larger project of paving roads and landscaping at Montpelier. For instance, a local paper reported in April 1929 that she had "five miles of hard surface tar road built on Montpelier Farm" by a Pennsylvania contractor. The article also noted that "a large number of colored men are employed thereon and a good deal of machinery is being used." In addition, Doyle "brought down a truck load of white pine, box bushes and other evergreens to be transplanted on the farm."<sup>19</sup> The D.A.R. chapter provided an attendant to protect the cemetery against vandalism. Mrs. Scott provided labor for routine maintenance and repairs. The cemetery was open for visitors on Thursdays only. The attendant, William Adams, collected 25¢ per visitor. Adams claimed to be a former Montpelier slave, and he kept the admission fee as payment for his custodial work as part of the arrangement. Mrs. Scott had workers construct a small house for Adams adjacent to the graveyard. After his death in August 1935, no admission fee was charged and Adams's house was demolished.<sup>20</sup> Virginius R. Shackelford, an Orange County attorney and Mrs. Scott's lawyer, described her work on the cemetery and defended her against criticisms that it was in a derelict condition. He wrote, "She has a space around it for the parking of cars and a small house where a caretaker is located on occasions although this is probably infrequent. The graves, the

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<sup>19</sup> 5 April 1929, extract from the *Orange Observer*, typescript, Montpelier Archives, acc. 1997.50.

<sup>20</sup> Frederick H. Schmidt, "The Madison Cemetery at Montpelier, A Research Report," January 2000, on file at Montpelier Archives.

tombstones, and the trees are well preserved. There is the usual growth of periwinkle as found in old grave yards. It is not kept up in the formal sense that the grass is perfect and always cut, but it is certainly not neglected.”<sup>21</sup>

Starting in the mid 1930s, the chapter held an annual ceremony to maintain their presence at Madison’s cemetery. They marked Constitution Day at the cemetery with speeches and visiting dignitaries until the 1970s. The same Orange County attorney, writing in 1936, recalled a Madison birthday event at the cemetery: “About two years ago a group of Constitutionals headed by some newspaper men from Washington had a meeting at the grave yard in celebration of Madison’s birthday. Mr. Bainbridge Colby was the principal speaker on the occasion. I recall very distinctly that the speeches were long and uninteresting and that the day was very hot.”<sup>22</sup> Later in the 1960s, the nature of the ceremony changed. Mrs. Scott recalled, “Every year on Madison’s birthday (March 16), the government sends an honor guard to Montpelier to perform a small ceremony in Madison’s honor. School children often attend.” She credited President Lyndon B. Johnson for starting this ritual.<sup>23</sup> Throughout the years, the chapter and Mrs. Scott repaired damage done by vandals to headstones and the Madisons’ monuments and occasionally installed commemorative plaques on the cemetery’s brick walls.<sup>24</sup>

The formal garden also attracted the interest of other civic-minded Virginians. Like the efforts of Richmond D.A.R. chapter to draw wider attention to Montpelier, members of the James River Garden Club described the landscape for a small section in Edith

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<sup>21</sup> Virginius R. Shackelford to Robert B. Tunstall, 11 June 1936, Robert Baylor Tunstall Papers, Mss 2 T 8365 b, Virginia Historical Society.

<sup>22</sup> Virginius R. Shackelford to Robert B. Tunstall, 11 June 1936, Robert Baylor Tunstall Papers, Mss 2 T 8365 b, Virginia Historical Society.

<sup>23</sup> Strine, *Montpelier*, 34.

<sup>24</sup> The intent of the cemetery vandals is unclear. The National Trust attributes the vandalism, which involves knocking over the headstones and obelisks on occasion, to random acts of mischief by local youths.

Tunis Sale's 1930 edition of *Historic Gardens of Virginia*. The author of the Montpelier garden description argued that "certainly one feels the French influence" in "one of the most formal gardens in Virginia." She credited the duPonts for their "years of patience and toil to bring the garden back to its present state of perfection."<sup>25</sup> After Charles Gillette drew up planting layout plans and brick details for the formal garden in 1934,<sup>26</sup> images of Montpelier's formal garden were part of a Virginia exhibit at the 1939 New York World's Fair.<sup>27</sup> Maintenance of the cemetery and occasional garden tours demonstrated the extent of Mrs. Scott's interest in Madison's memory.

Horses remained her primary concern and her basis for public recognition. Two of the most notable race horses she owned and bred were Battleship and Mongo. Battleship brought her fame by winning the British Grand National Steeple chase in 1938, the first American bred and trained horse to do so. Mongo won more than \$800,000 in race purses in his lifetime. By the end of her life, she had built her reputation on horse breeding and training.<sup>28</sup>

The demands upon Montpelier workers changed little after the death of William duPont. Landscape maintenance, farming, horse breeding and training, and domestic service continued to dominate their daily rounds. Horse racing provided an egalitarian moment at Montpelier with the fall steeple chase. Traditionally held on the first Saturday of November, there were no class restrictions on admission. Edna Lewis, an author of popular cookbooks, recalls that the hunt races were "one of the few occasions during the year when farmers, tradespeople, estate owners, and workers mingle together." She

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<sup>25</sup> Hildreth Dunn Scott, "Montpelier," Edith Tunis Sale, ed. *Historic Gardens of Virginia* (Richmond: The William Byrd Press, Inc., for the James River Garden Club, 1930), 212, 213.

<sup>26</sup> Drawing, Charles Gillette, Papers of Charles F. Gillette, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>27</sup> Images C1:1/03/04/024 and Images C1:1/03/04/008, 1939 World's Fair Photograph Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>28</sup> Strine, *Montpelier*, 5.



describes “the men urging and cheering on the horses, placing bets among themselves, and enjoying occasional sips of bourbon.” As for the women, they were, “busy selling raffle tickets and home-baked foods to raise money for local charities, and enjoying the chance to visit and exchange views and family news.” Ms. Lewis also describes the preferred food for race day breakfasts and picnics, offering recipes for both.<sup>29</sup>

Mrs. Scott used the house and grounds to support her life of sporting leisure. She characterized her daily routines as challenging in their own right and admitted her marginal concern for the history of the plantation. “To me, it’s just home. It’s a job running the place,” she once stated.<sup>30</sup> Mrs. Scott never developed an interest in preserving Madison’s memory that surmounted her father’s level of interest. She continued her father’s policy of marginal preservation and promotion of Madison at Montpelier until her death in 1983. Her will and her bequest of the mansion and estate to a national preservation organization, however, astonished duPont family members and recast her as a prominent Madison benefactor.

Mrs. Scott hinted at such an act of beneficence before her death in her memoir. She recognized that “Montpelier is entailed into the duPont family.” Therefore, she anticipated a dispute among the family, since “every member of the family would have to agree to it, if anything were to be done with it.” Drawing on her knowledge of duPont family history and their treatment of her father, she sensed difficulty in giving away Montpelier: “A good many of the duPonts fuss over nothing, unfortunately, so I can’t see sixty or seventy of them agreeing on anything.” Nevertheless, there was a chance, at least in her mind, that she would leave the estate in the family. “If a member of the family will live here, fine. If not, if they want to live in Delaware or somewhere else and just

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<sup>29</sup> Edna Lewis, *The Taste of Country Cooking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 146-155.

<sup>30</sup> Strine, *Montpelier*, 34.

keep horses here, I think it would be nicer if Montpelier were turned over to a Historic Preservation group,” according to Mrs. Scott.<sup>31</sup>

The transfer of Montpelier to a nationally recognized historic preservation group occurred in 1984, but not without the legal battle that Mrs. Scott foresaw. Mrs. Scott intended the house to be owned and operated by a preservation organization that would make restorations necessary to portray the house as it was in Madison’s time. She envisioned the house’s history and Madison’s memory dramatized through period rooms and period furnishings, including any Madison originals if they could be obtained. She hoped the house would be operated as a historic shrine and public education center dedicated to Madison. The terms of her will indicated her intention to further diminish the architectural presence of her parents.<sup>32</sup>

Achieving that goal proved difficult. Two of her nephews initiated lawsuits to challenge the legality of the bequest. They reached a settlement with the National Trust in October 1984 that preserved the memory of William duPont in the house along with Madison. According to the terms of the settlement the National Trust purchased the entire estate, 2,677 acres, from five duPont heirs for \$7.5 million. The cost of the litigation, \$500,000, left Montpelier with a \$2 million endowment from Mrs. Scott that originally was \$10 million. The settlement also imposed constraints on public interpretation within the house, requiring that the drawing room and morning room be furnished as they would have been in William duPont’s lifetime and made open to public tours. The duPont heirs demanded that these spaces serve as a memorial to their ancestor.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Strine, *Montpelier*, 43.

<sup>32</sup> Christopher Scott, “Montpelier—The Next Twelve Years,” a Study by Christopher Scott, Memorandum, June 1988, Montpelier Archives, p. 4, 1997.44.

<sup>33</sup> “Working Group on Montpelier,” Draft Report, 6 September 1996, p. 4, 1997.12.

The settlement included other stipulations regarding management of the mansion as a museum. It directed the National Trust to present Montpelier as a Madison shrine, but it relieved the National Trust of the obligation set forth by Mrs. Scott to restore the interior of the mansion to the architectural and structural form that existed during Madison's lifetime. According to the settlement, "Appropriate recognition will be given by the National Trust to William duPont, Senior. . . the National Trust shall, on a continuous basis and as a monument to William duPont, Senior, appropriately furnish the Drawing Room and the Morning Room. . . Also in its publicity and literature the National Trust will recognize that William duPont, Senior, created the mansion as it exists today." Furthermore, to insure their interest in the public interpretation and presentation of William duPont, the duPont legatees demanded that the National Trust agree to consider the opinions of Mr. and Mrs. Henry E. I. duPont concerning the management of the property.<sup>34</sup>

From the beginning of the National Trust's ownership, public interpretation was contested. Throughout the litigation, the duPonts fought to secure the prominence of their elite American capitalist ancestor in the interpretation of the house. The National Trust sought a release from the obligation of presenting a complete James Madison restoration. The lawsuit attempted to set the framework for historical presentations at Montpelier, but the politics of presentations and display in public museums also shaped the early interpretation strategies. For instance, concerns for presenting the history of slavery at Montpelier arose a few years into the National Trust's management. Another force that influenced public interpretation was the National Trust's small endowment, significantly eroded by the lawsuit. In the beginning, they scrambled to find grant money

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<sup>34</sup>Christopher Scott, "Montpelier—The Next Twelve Years," a Study by Christopher Scott, Memorandum, June 1988, Montpelier Archives, p. 5, 1997.44.

in order to fund the necessary management and restoration of the house and grounds. Competing interests fought for space within the house, rendering the house part elite lifestyle museum, part American history museum, and part social history site.

The transformation of Montpelier into a museum related to earlier developments in interpretation conflicts at Colonial Williamsburg. For instance, both Montpelier and Colonial Williamsburg shared aspects of a common history, but there were significant contrasts between the two. Both enjoyed restoration campaigns that began before the Depression. Both building campaigns started with the introduction of massive wealth from an elite individual. Aesthetic decisions for the structures and grounds at both sites were influenced by the colonial revival movement, but restoration at Colonial Williamsburg was guided by a more rigorous attention to authenticity and architectural integrity than the early interpretive efforts at Montpelier. As a public museum Colonial Williamsburg's interpretation at the outset was dominated by moral didacticism, promoting elite American heritage and patriotism, and the colonial style as an aesthetic fit for wider cultural consumption. One critique of it argues that at Colonial Williamsburg "the American story had been a story celebrating the success of the colonial upper crust, and, by extension, of wealthy individuals like the Rockefellers who used philanthropy to link their genealogies to the American founding fathers."<sup>35</sup> Likewise, the duPonts used Montpelier to link their private wealth to public recognition of their status. They were concerned with restoring their public image and rebuilding their social status. They made no significant effort toward advocating a wider public understanding of James Madison through public access to their Montpelier.

Montpelier and Colonial Williamsburg shared similar interpretation issues when

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<sup>35</sup> Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 5.

Montpelier became a public museum in the late 1980s. Handler and Gable's analysis of public presentation and reception of the new social history at Colonial Williamsburg relates to the National Trust's challenges at Montpelier. Paradigms of public interpretation that had taken time to develop at Colonial Williamsburg were compressed into an immediate conflict at Montpelier. Celebratory themes of prosperity and American exceptionalism were checked by advocates pressing for inclusion of oppressed and marginalized social groups at Montpelier within ten years of the National Trust's arrival. Advocates of the new social history entered the public interpretation debate in time for the first major exhibit at Montpelier, but their impact on the National Trust's dominant narrative was minimal. Traditional historic interests and positions held the upper hand, and the initial curatorial acts presented Montpelier as an uncontested national historical treasure focusing primarily on the Constitution. Complexities entered the discourse later, but the search for Madison as the primary *dramatis personae* prevailed over any presentation of Madisons as masters of slaves.

The origins of the historic preservation movement in the United States date to the 1850s. For instance, the purchase of the Hasbrouck House, which George Washington used a headquarters during the revolution, by the State of New York, Tennessee's purchase of Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, and Ann Pamela Cunningham's campaign to purchase Mount Vernon from Washington's heirs marked the first years of the movement. The purchase of historic buildings, significant due to their associative value, continued to characterize the movement for the remainder of the nineteenth century. The preservation and restoration of buildings and battlefields that represented great men and great events in American history prevailed as the movement's primary focus, and themes of didactic moralism, reform, and patriotic education attended historic preservation

activities. Historic preservation advocates argued that saving historic houses could ameliorate sectionalism and Americanize immigrant children. After World War II, the development of professional standards for preservationists, the centralization of preservation organizations, and the growth of outdoor museums characterized the historic preservation movement. This period also featured a shift from historic house museums as the primary focus of the movement to designating historic districts and advocating for historic preservation as a priority in urban planning. The character of the historical narrative presented at these museum sites also shifted from a conflict-free, sentimental, and optimistic consensus history in the years immediately following World War II to exhibitions that sought to present cultural diversity and to respond to the concerns of the new social history that emerged in the 1970s. The National Trust arrived at Montpelier during a period of “existential scrutiny,” to use Neil Harris’s characterization, in the historic preservation and history museum community.<sup>36</sup>

The first day that the house and grounds were open to the public gave cause for a celebration. The opening coincided with Madison’s birthday. The speeches of politicians expressed optimism for the future of Montpelier and the United States. Not one of them touched on the history of slavery at Montpelier. J. Jackson Walter, president of the National Trust, defined Montpelier’s influence on Madison in pastoral terms, calling it a “busy plantation [that] provided a retreat to which he returned throughout his public

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<sup>36</sup> Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1965), 8, 9, 37, 65, 183, 201, 299-300; Michael Wallace, “Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States,” *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, ed. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 140-141, 149; Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, 2 Vols. (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1981), 1, 2, 6-8, 1066-1069; Ivan Karp, “Introduction: Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture,” *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, ed. Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven D. Levine (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 10.

life.” He boasted how the National Trust had opened the site to the public “after decades as a private hunt country residence.” He argued that Montpelier represented “the place where the great ideas that underlie American society first came to life.” He expressed an early theme that dominated the National Trust’s interpretation at Montpelier, presenting didactic lessons about Madison’s intellect and the Constitution. Intellectual history surmounted the new social history for the moment. For instance, Governor Gerald L. Baliles declared, “This celebration should be for the mind.” Preserving Montpelier as a shrine to American history and democracy, according to Walter, “is our simple duty to future generations of Americans.” Even Lieutenant Governor L. Douglas Wilder, soon to be the first African-American governor of a state, passed over the tensions inherent in publicly remembering slavery at Montpelier, saying, “The legacy of James Madison and the Constitution he crafted serve as beacons not only for Americans, but for freedom-loving people everywhere. We will continue to live out its creed.”<sup>37</sup>

Interpretation at Montpelier in the late 1980s focused on the historic preservation process and modes of historical investigation. The National Trust did not have clear goals for the story they wanted to tell with Montpelier. Rather than following a method of mimetic realism as practiced at Colonial Williamsburg and Monticello, they offered Montpelier as a demonstration of cultural resource management for the visitor and an opportunity of intensive development for preservation professionals. Administrators at Monticello and Colonial Williamsburg had decided to present their subjects in a time and place reconstructed as historically accurate as possible. They had determined that their management and interpretation decisions should be based on empirical historicism. The National Trust, however, decided to embrace the history of the house as an on-going

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<sup>37</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation, *James Madison’s Montpelier: Launching of a Landmark* (Washington, D. C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1988), 3, 6, 12.

process. Instead of working to carry the visitor back to the early-nineteenth-century house that President James Madison knew, they attempted to present multiple histories and their current philosophy of historic preservation. Their choice did not go unchallenged.

Christopher Scott, hired as Montpelier's first executive director in October 1987, believed "Montpelier provides the most exciting land-management opportunity in the United States."<sup>38</sup> He prepared a memo outlining his vision for Montpelier in November 1988, which emphasized the creation of revenue streams. He described the budget constraints of the moment. He hoped to demonstrate leadership with a "well-run and successful museum property" that would "become financially secure." He estimated \$1 million per year in operation costs. These costs exceeded existing sources of revenue: rentals, admissions, donations, shop sales, special events, and investments (totaling \$625,000). Not all of Montpelier's tenant housing stock provided income. Of the 15 houses, two were uninhabitable, and nine were occupied by employees who were not required to pay rent. Budget shortfalls had been made up "by the cutting and selling of timber."<sup>39</sup> Scott acknowledged that the National Trust "is not in the risk business" and demanded that speculative ventures, such as a festival, or a railroad station restaurant, a "three-day eventing course," a country club, or a constitutional law center, must secure external funding. Even education projects had to seek grant funding since the property council refused to take on the duties of fund raising and development. Scott declared, "Montpelier must pay its way."<sup>40</sup>

Scott favored two development concepts, the constitution study center and the

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<sup>38</sup> Christopher Scott, "Montpelier—The Next Twelve Years," Memorandum, 5, Montpelier Archives, acc. 1997.44.

<sup>39</sup> Scott, "Montpelier—The Next Twelve Years," 8, 9, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Scott, "Montpelier—The Next Twelve Years," 2-3.



historic farm. These projects relied on research to spark public interest. In keeping with the National Trust's emphasis on the display of preservation, Scott sought to schedule debates on restoration and historic preservation as feature attractions for the visiting public. Nevertheless, "It is clear that whatever else is to be developed at Montpelier, James Madison's role in the creation of the U. S. Constitution must have prominence," he wrote. Therefore, he supported plans for the Constitutional Law Study Center at Montpelier and queried the law school at the University of Virginia for their interest in such a project.<sup>41</sup>

The historic farm appeared to be his favorite project. He argued, "Farming has always been the principal industry at Montpelier." Therefore, he advocated an education center for secondary school children called the James Madison Farm Center. He outlined his vision for "Mr. Madison's Farm." It would be "the recreation of a small farm operated exactly as James Madison would have done it; growing the same crops, using the same type of implements, the same agricultural techniques, the same type and quantity of labor, harvesting, and storage techniques, fertilizer and weed-control methods, fences and so on." A counterpart to Mr. Madison's Farm would be "The Natural Farm," a demonstration site of sustainable agriculture and organic farming operated with cooperation from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He estimated the cost at \$1 million, and the funding sources would be the United States Department of Agriculture and, in his words, "major commercial agricultural supply interests in particular perhaps the farm chemical industrial giants, such as the Dupont Co." Oddly, Scott believed that this project would provide a company that profits from the manufacture of chemicals "a means of demonstrating their concern to alleviate chemical

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<sup>41</sup> Scott, "Montpelier—The Next Twelve Years," 22, 32.

pollution of soil and water supplies.” Visitors would take in all of this information by shopping at the “Farmer’s Market,” a site dedicated to consumption of his historic farm vision. He imagined successful merchandising operations at the Market and at Dolley’s Tea Room in the basement of the mansion.<sup>42</sup>

The themes of research-in-progress and preservation-practice-on-display dominated over Scott’s commercial dreams for Montpelier and academic concerns for the new social history at a two-day conference, which focused on how to manage the property, in June 1989. The preservation advocates carried the day and directed debate toward the question of how to reconcile Madison and duPont in the same house. Susan Schreiber, a consultant for the National Trust, argued that “despite the overlying layer there is a great deal of the property that would make the search for James Madison, both for the Trust and the visitor, very rewarding.” She identified education themes for Montpelier: landscape study, archaeology, frontiers, and the American West, but not slavery. She clearly articulated the preservation-practice-on-display philosophy: “The over-all effect should be work-in-progress—an approach that invites the visitor into the laboratory where, rather than being presented a set piece, they are encouraged to join with historians, archaeologists, and the Trust in the process of understanding, reaching back, and trying to recreate another world.” William Seale, who supported this position, envisioned a recovery of Madison architecture. He recalled a site visit to Montpelier where, in his words, he found that “the renovation of the turn of the century did not obliterate all that James and Dolley Madison left, and through this house we can see the historic couple in greater depth than we’ve ever known before.” He described the house as “long and lanky” and “intriguing more than august.” He was “delighted to find that

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<sup>42</sup> Scott, “Montpelier—The Next Twelve Years,” 40-44.

Montpelier is a biographical house” like Mount Vernon and Monticello, “a building put up not for someone by someone else but a house that grew part by part with the man, and the woman.” Montpelier, he believed, “is not lost to the age of Madison as we once supposed it was.” Conover Hunt-Jones checked Seale’s optimism. She reiterated the spatial confusion within Montpelier. It is, she said, “a house within a house within a house within a house, at least. . . . It is not an outstanding architectural monument to mankind.” As for the duPonts, she argued, “The majority of the rooms should belong to James and Dolley Madison.”<sup>43</sup>

Other conference participants held differing opinions as to how to restore the mansion. Some advocated radical architectural surgery, finding solid ground for such a position in Mrs. Scott’s will. Disregarding the settlement conditions, Helen Marie Taylor, a preservationist and Orange County community activist, declared that Mrs. Scott’s will mandated restoration to the Madison period. She read from the will, which also sought the continuation of the annual Hunt Races and horse training. Most importantly, she argued for removal of the duPont additions, “The wings are a motel addition on the back. That mess should go—you’ll never miss it, believe me.” W. Brown Morton, III, a member of the faculty at the Mary Washington College in the Historic Preservation Program and a member of Montpelier’s advisory panel, opposed Mrs. Taylor’s position and made the case for preservation on display. He sought to make the house a preservation project—not a restoration project—saying, “Americans have been much too ready to remove 19th- or 20th-century additions to 18th- or 19th-century American buildings, whereas they would be horrified if someone suggested removing the 14th-century transepts from a 13th-century Gothic Church in Normandy.” He stated,

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<sup>43</sup> Nora Richter Greer, “A Lively Dialogue Focuses on Montpelier’s Future,” *FORUM*, Fall 1989, pp. 7, 9, acc. no. 1997.48, Montpelier Archives.

“Historic buildings and landscapes have been looked upon all too often as props on the stage of history, to be manipulated into the process of restoration, to match the story wanting to be told at that moment.” He proclaimed, “I have a grand vision for Montpelier. . . It should be the most innovative and the most responsible preservation education project in the nation.”<sup>44</sup>

Just a few months before this conference, a museum professional and president of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Michigan criticized the preservation/research on display position advocated by Morton. Harold Skramstad visited Montpelier in the early spring 1989 and returned an assessment in a memorandum to the executive director. During his visit, Skramstad found a confused on-site message resulting from the Madison-duPont axis of significance. The current interpretation, he wrote, “is a mixture of a lecture on constitutional history and a visit to the set of ‘Life Styles of the Rich and Famous’ after time and neglect have taken their inevitable toll.” The narrative confusion was compounded by the text panels that attempted to explain the location of old walls and traffic patterns before the duPont’s renovation. “Most of the interpretive effort is spent exposing the visitors to the arcane process of what is what. My question is, who cares? Certainly the answer is that history and archaeology must continue to sort out the site. I agree, but I question if this should be the interpretive focus or purpose of the site.” He objected to the emphasis on constructing an imaginative architectural history in the minds of the visitors, laying the blame not just on Montpelier staff, but also on the National Trust. “Montpelier has suffered from a bias of the Trust that looks at properties almost exclusively from an architectural and archaeological point of view. This mind set can create a constraint in thinking that precludes many future

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<sup>44</sup> Greer, “A lively Dialogue Focuses on Montpelier’s Future,” 8.

options,” he wrote.<sup>45</sup>

Skramstad visited Montpelier during a time of internal flux when the National Trust was struggling to sort out the site. Numerous concerns were pressing on the staff. The necessity of immediate structural repairs to stabilize portions of the building competed with the development of interpretive strategies for the staff’s attention. Thus, the National Trust’s vision was muddled, as Scott’s expansive memo suggested. These problems were evident before the mansion opened its doors to the public on President Madison’s birthday in 1987. In fact, the first exhibition dedicated to James Madison since the National Trust took over the property was off-site.

The University of Virginia, home of the Papers of James Madison, trumped the National Trust when it organized a Madison exhibit, in honor of Robert A. Rutland, called “The Madisons of Montpelier” in 1986.<sup>46</sup> George Smith, acting director of Montpelier at the time, admitted the preservation issues at hand were “numerous and perplexing. The exterior of the main house and the appearance of the property as a whole speaks of the twentieth century duPont occupancy rather than the Madison years; yet the public will be drawn to the property through the Madison name, not the duPont.” Nevertheless, the public opening was planned to coincide with Madison’s birthday celebration: “Rather than keep it closed until the analysis and research that must be accomplished are complete, the property will be opened to the general public on Madison’s birthday, March 16, 1987. Following that, for as many years as it will take, the visitor will witness the process of the Trust’s analysis of the property.” Smith asked

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<sup>45</sup> Skramstad, “Assessment of Montpelier,” 1-2, 21 April 1989, Prepared for the Museum Assessment Program, American Association of Museums, misc. files, “Interpretation, 1987-1996,” Montpelier Archives.

<sup>46</sup> *The Madisons of Montpelier: the Keepsake of an Exhibition in Honor of Robert A. Rutland* (Charlottesville: the University of Virginia Library, 1986).

Merrill D. Peterson, University of Virginia faculty and prospective member of the advisory panel, “How should the interior of the building be treated? . . . How shall we organize our approach?”<sup>47</sup> A survey conducted in 1988-1989 reported that “the management personnel described their suggestions in terms of visions for the future. Their first ‘vision of what Montpelier ought to be’ included the immediate improvement of the cosmetic appearance of the house (removing the peeling wallpaper).” Basic preservation tasks proceeded slowly and became a source of embarrassment later.<sup>48</sup>

Moving the backstage work of architectural historians forward as a visitor’s attraction frustrated Skramstad, a sophisticated museum professional. Yet, the house as a conglomeration of twentieth-, nineteenth-, and eighteenth-century history did not seem to bother the majority of visitors, according to a survey conducted by University of Virginia students. The study was “undertaken to seek constructive information from management, staff, and visitors, and to determine the nature and quality of tour experiences.” It concluded that “while staff felt like the lack of restoration was a major detraction in the presentation of the estate, visitors generally denied the condition of the house detracted from their overall positive impression.” They were, however, frustrated by the slow preservation process.<sup>49</sup> Agreeing with Morton’s insistence on preserving all of Montpelier’s history, Skramstad objected to what he perceived as the “natural tendency of the architectural - archaeological bias,” which seeks to remove “intrusions” in order to isolate “the core of the Madison presence and then interpret that.” His vision, however, went farther than Morton’s into the commodification of Montpelier’s history and

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<sup>47</sup> George Smith to Merrill D. Peterson, 5 November 1986, Papers of Merrill D. Peterson, Box 19, R G-21/105.931, Special Collections Archive, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>48</sup> “Results of Fall and Spring Visitor Surveys,” prepared by graduate students of the University of Virginia under the supervision of Robert Craven, 1988-1989, misc. files, “Interpretation, 1987-1996,” Montpelier Archives.

<sup>49</sup> “Results of Fall and Spring Visitor Surveys.”

landscape—toward a transformation of the National Trust itself. He suggested that Montpelier’s value “is in its ability to thrust the National Trust into the next stage in its evolution as a preservation organization. This next step is to look at preservation in its broadest terms of cultural stewardship.”<sup>50</sup>

The predecessor of the National Trust emerged during the Depression upon passage of the 1935 Historic Sites Act. With a mandate to protect and inventory historic buildings, the National Park Service recognized the need for centralization in the historic preservation movement. In 1947, the park service organized the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings to develop favorable public opinions of historic preservation, support specific historic preservation projects, and conduct research and site surveys. The council served as a clearing house for historic preservation information, endeavored to raise funds for preservation projects, and advocated zoning protections— as it attempted to unify the national historic preservation movement through its publications.<sup>51</sup>

During the effort to preserve Woodlawn Plantation in northern Virginia in 1948, the National Council realized the necessity of creating an organization that could purchase historic properties. The National Council could only accept donated houses, which limited their ability to save threatened properties. Therefore, the National Council drafted a charter for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and President Harry S. Truman signed it into law in October 1949. According to a historian of historic preservation, the National Trust “stood firmly against the heavy concentration on defense spending and physical expansion that characterized the first years of the cold

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<sup>50</sup> Skramstad, “Assessment of Montpelier,” 2.

<sup>51</sup> Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, 2 vols. (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia for the Preservation Press, 1981), 2: 809-814, 821, 842.

war.”<sup>52</sup> The National Trust enjoyed early financial support from Paul Mellon, the duPonts, and the Lilly Foundation. Initially, the National Trust had only a “narrow base in a thin sliver of the upper class,” according to Michael Wallace. In the 1950s, the National Trust struggled against modern development with little success. Its most noteworthy achievement in the 1950s was “establishing itself as the organizational voice—albeit a weak one—of historic preservation,” according to Wallace.<sup>53</sup>

In the 1960s, however, the effect of urban renewal on historic resources created popular support for the goals of the National Trust. After the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, “which wrote virtually every one of the Trust’s recommendations into law,” the National Trust found more authority in the federal bureaucracy in the 1969 Environmental Protection Act, the Historic Structures Tax Act, and the National Historic Preservation Fund Act. The effect for the National Trust was “a massive expansion of preservationist power in the federal government,” according to Wallace. Private individual and corporate membership rose, and the National Trust shifted its emphasis from rescuing historic structures to involvement in development planning during the 1970s.<sup>54</sup>

When the National Trust entered into negotiations to acquire Montpelier, its fortunes had changed. Congress had repealed the historic preservation tax incentives in 1976, and a controversy with Proctor and Gamble, Inc., over an involuntary eligibility determination for the National Register of Historic Places, had shaken their advocacy of historic preservation. Furthermore, the climate of opinion during the Ronald Reagan

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<sup>52</sup> Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, 1: 2; 2: 852, 853, 861.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Wallace, “Reflections on the History of Historic Preservation,” in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, eds. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 174.

<sup>54</sup> Wallace, “Reflections on the History of Historic Preservation,” 177, 185-187, 191.



administration turned hostile to historic preservation, which was portrayed as an obstacle to capitalism and economic development. As an indication of that hostility, Secretary of the Interior James Watt threatened to cut off their federal funding. The National Trust reacted by distancing itself from controversial political positions and reaching out to conservative real estate developers in order to portray itself as supportive of entrepreneurs. Publicly, the National Trust emphasized the potential for profits in historic preservation to the detriment of the “traditional preservationist concern for authentic symbolic meaning,” according to Wallace. Based on its advocacy of adaptive reuse for old buildings, critics of the National Trust accused it of “facadism” and a lack of concern for the principles of historic preservation.<sup>55</sup>

In light of these developments in the administration of the National Trust, plans for interpretation at Montpelier focused on commodity development and celebrating Madison, rather than revisionist history supported by federal funds. For instance, Skramstad’s vision for Montpelier and the National Trust drew on a Disney theme park model and predated the Disney Corporation’s plans for a history theme park in northern Virginia. “What I am proposing is that Montpelier become the National Trust’s EPCOT. I am serious in this. We should not forget that the word means Experimental, Prototype, Community of Tomorrow. If our rhetoric as historians and preservationists has any validity we must show that the past holds concepts and values that can continue to shape the future,” he wrote. In spite of his enthusiasm for Madison, he did not recommend a restoration of Montpelier to Madison’s time period. Rather, he emphasized the potential for commercial development and public intellectual stimulation. “Since visiting Montpelier,” he wrote, “I have re-read *The Federalist* and am amazed at that

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<sup>55</sup> Wallace, “Reflections on the History of Historic Preservation,” 191-197.

remarkable document and its timeliness today. In Madison's concepts of what makes for a successful society there is much to guide Montpelier." He sensed a new day dawning for Montpelier and the National Trust. "After a one-day look at Montpelier this visitor left with a sense that this Trust property has the potential for exposing a broad public audience to historic preservation in its broadest sense. The view from the front of the main house resonated with the excitement about a new nation and its structure that Madison must have felt."<sup>56</sup>

Skramstad's lofty vision was accompanied by suggestions for developing the commercial potential of Montpelier's historic resources. He imagined that Montpelier would become a "National Historic Park, and outdoor museum, recreational area, and perhaps a center for study that would be organized around American concepts of broad stewardship of land, community, and individual." He suggested the development of "appropriate physical memorials to Madison (grave and temple), informal exhibits on Madison and other topics in part of the main house, period rooms in the main house devoted to the duPonts (the horse room and gym are wonderfully evocative), lectures on a wide variety of subjects from the Constitution to birds seen on the grounds, gardens of native Virginia wild flowers. The list is endless." Although his recommendations and enthusiasm seemed wishful and impractical, he was not that far off the mark. Later, consultants recommended similar plans for developing comparable attractions.<sup>57</sup>

While architectural historians conducted their analysis of the mansion, work on restoring the garden commenced. Garden restoration provided a prelude and early indication of the thematic conflicts in public interpretation at Montpelier. Attempting to persuade the Garden Club of Virginia's restoration committee to approve the project, a

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<sup>56</sup> Harold Skramstad, "Assessment of Montpelier," 3, 21.

<sup>57</sup> Harold Skramstad, "Assessment of Montpelier," 3.

club member stated, “It is an absolute ‘natural’! Montpelier is the embodiment of two things—time and space, both unfettered. Only an organization with the experience and sensitivity of the Garden Club of Virginia can understand fully the importance of guarding and emphasizing these two assets.”<sup>58</sup> The garden club contracted with landscape architect Rudy J. Favretti, who decided to locate the garden not in Madison’s time period but in that of the duPonts. He explained to the chair of the garden restoration committee, “While it may seem strange to honor Madison by his successor’s gardens, it is the best that can be done and it does conform to the house treatment.”<sup>59</sup> This garden renovation demonstrated the attenuated presence of Madison due to the earlier duPont changes. Favretti made this decision with full knowledge of the documentation pertaining to the Madison era garden; one of his landscape architecture students at the University of Connecticut completed a master’s thesis on the Montpelier garden under his direction in 1986. The Favretti garden restoration followed the cautionary strategy employed in the architectural interpretation at the mansion.<sup>60</sup>

Problems with the interpretation in the house soon appeared. Complaints came not from advocates of the new social history or African-Americans, but rather from Montpelier’s elite benefactors and preservation advocates. Christopher Scott detected dissatisfaction among those loyal to Montpelier and members of the National Trust. Scott drafted another memo to address the situation in the summer of 1991. He reported that Sen. John Warner, after a site visit for the first time since “more than \$2 million in

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<sup>58</sup> Dottie (Mrs. Wyatt Aiken Williams) to Lula (Mrs. R. L. Hopkins, Jr., chair of garden restoration committee), 27 April 1989, Garden Club of Virginia, Restoration Committee Papers, 1924-1997, Mss. 3 G 1673 a §2, Virginia Historical Society.

<sup>59</sup> Rudy J. Favretti to Mrs. Robert L. Hopkins, Jr., 10 June 1989, Garden Club of Virginia, Restoration Committee Papers, 1924-1997, Mss. 3 G 1673 a §2, Virginia Historical Society.

<sup>60</sup> Julienne Ruth Berckman, “Development of the Mansion Grounds of Montpelier, Home of James Madison,” (Master’s thesis, the University of Connecticut, 1986).

federal and state grant monies had been spent was, ‘Where has all the money gone?’” Furthermore, Elizabeth Schneider, “staunch local supporter, will no longer permit the restricted funds she gave us to be used for research; she wants to see the balance used for tangible and visible results.” Also, Walter Dunnington, a member of the property council, after touring the house for the first time in several years, expressed “stunned disbelief at its poor condition after seven years in Trust ownership.” Bus companies and tour groups were not booking tours as they had three years earlier. “When asked why, they indicate client dissatisfaction and say they will return when there is something more to see than an empty house.”<sup>61</sup>

Scott argued that the source of the problem resided beyond Montpelier. The National Trust bore responsibility, and its own public image had been damaged by the slow pace of restoration at Montpelier. Citing a marketing study of the National Trust, Scott claimed that it “underscores almost everything that has been said in the paper about Montpelier. The ‘dull,’ ‘inactive’ image of the Trust that emerged from that study is typified by its flagship property.” Scott responded to the problem by hiring a director of marketing at Montpelier who would be held accountable for boosting the numbers of visitors through the gate. He also took aim at the current interpretation within the house: “The present policy of allowing research to be almost the sole driving force of Montpelier’s interpretation is, the writer believes, no longer defensible.” Oddly, the new theme he proposed for Montpelier, “The Search for James Madison,” implied a continuation of the present model: preservation research on display. He did not claim sole credit for this new theme; it, he wrote, “was firmly established by the distinguished panel of scholars and historians that met in connection with the Self-Study funded in

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<sup>61</sup> Christopher Scott, “Interpretation of the Mansion at Montpelier, an action paper,” n.p., July 1991, acc. 1997.48, Montpelier Archives.

1989 by the NEH, and has been adopted in all interpretation planning since that time.”<sup>62</sup>

Having set themselves up as advocates of preservation, with Montpelier as their model, the National Trust appeared to be incapable of demonstrating successful preservation and operating a popular and profitable museum.

Quickly, the National Trust gathered together a group of museum educators and scholars to consult on their stewardship or scholarship dilemma. This conference laid the foundations for the first major exhibit in the house. The discussion emphasized the Madisons and the Constitution over slavery. In order to set the agenda, the National Trust declared, “We want to be able to tell Madison’s story here.” To start the discussion, John Schlotterbeck defined the roles of presidential houses. They do two things, he said, “one is to be a monument to the accomplishments of the person. The other is that they humanize them. We learn how that person lived, their personal taste, their day to day life; so they come alive. Visitors go away feeling not only that they know about that individual’s public accomplishments but also his private life.” Conover Hunt-Jones supported portrayals of “the human element,” but only as they focused on James Madison’s character, arguing that “to know Madison you have to know him at Montpelier where he was most relaxed, where he spent most of his life, where a great many of his decisions were made.” Yet, she admitted that the house did not lend itself “to discussions of intellectual constitutional consequence.” Contrary to Hunt-Jones’s assertion, Schlotterbeck argued, “very few of Madison’s public accomplishments took place here, and they are intellectual, constitutional things which are very hard to address. On top of that, the site visually is largely duPont.” Because of the duPont additions and changes to the interior, as well as the National Trust’s efforts to explain them, “I think

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<sup>62</sup> Christopher Scott, “Interpretation of the Mansion at Montpelier, an action paper,” n.p.

there's still too much confusion," Hunt-Jones said, "There are too many disparate elements being presented to the public, it needs to be stream-lined." Barbara Charles seconded this position, "You keep getting into the duPont story. I almost wonder if you can do a tour that doesn't include the duPonts. Don't even open those rooms and have a Madison tour that is a central tour."<sup>63</sup>

Slavery was mentioned for the first time by the director of African American interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg. Robert Watson stated, "I think there is a wonderful opportunity here to tell the whole story, not only of Madison the man, but also his relationship with everyone who lived on the property." Such a narrative would provide the human element mentioned earlier in the discussion, he argued, without the embarrassment of an inter-racial sex scandal. Watson added, "It does not appear to me that you would be tarnished with the same problems of your neighbors [Monticello] with the Sally Hemings story. Here you can start fresh and not have to worry about that." Drew McCoy, a Madison scholar, agreed with Watson. Montpelier, McCoy said, "teaches a lot about the complexity and tragedy of American history between the Revolution and the Civil War." He advised the staff "to look at this site in its totality, its human totality, and that means confronting slavery. Not as a moral issue, but as an integral part of this site, and how it operated in Madison's lifetime." He also addressed the theme of Constitutional education: "We tend to think of the Constitution today in terms of abstract rights, the Bill of Rights, the separation of church and state, all that is quite right and to the good, but Madison's commitment, what he was trying to make work, was commitment to union, the union of states." McCoy stressed that Montpelier's story was the sad story of an ideal's tragic failure. Strengthening

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<sup>63</sup> "Developing an interim Interpretation for Montpelier," 10 July 1992, pp. 3, 4, 6, 9, misc. files, "Interpretation, 1987-1996," Montpelier Archives.

commitment to the Union, “that’s what the Constitution was designed to do,” he said, “and it failed miserably. Not in his lifetime, but within decades of his death in a catastrophic civil war that took place all around this site.” Again scholars suggested that slavery would be the touchstone for presenting Madison’s human element and connecting him to other events in American history. “Dealing with Montpelier in Madison’s lifetime in its totality as a human community would be developing the private side of what becomes a much larger public dilemma,” said McCoy.<sup>64</sup>

The conversation turned to other interpretive plans, but the topic of slavery remained salient. They discussed briefly plans for a working farm and a conference center, marketing topics dear and familiar to the executive director. Christopher Scott sought to tie Montpelier’s development to the emerging democracies in post-Communist eastern Europe: “One of the major long-term goals we have is to create a place where those people [from all over the world] can come and spend a week or a year to discuss creating new freedoms. There is no better place and no better time.” This suggestion provided Watson another opportunity to emphasize the importance of publicly presenting slavery at Montpelier. He said, “In addition to trying to attract people from Eastern Europe, what about Africa? The U.S.I.A. is always running people through Colonial Williamsburg who are from one-party systems in Africa and who are coming here to look for ways to develop political systems that are certainly the brainchild of someone like Madison. Montpelier, I think, would be a more ideal place for them to come to learn about the Constitution.” Scott’s comments prompted Hunt-Jones to say, “I keep worrying that you all are trying to do everything under the roof of this house. It is confusing and will continue to confuse the public.” Another consultant clearly stated the

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<sup>64</sup> “Developing an interim Interpretation for Montpelier,” pp. 6, 8.

deficiencies of Montpelier's historical presentation. Louise Potter argued, "other than the Constitution, there is nothing for a black visitor here. We don't have buildings, but we do have sites. So it is possible to show that we have two races who lived here."<sup>65</sup>

The discussion now included Montpelier's history as a slave plantation, but the topic only added to the difficulty experienced by the National Trust staff in sorting out interpretive issues. Susan Schreiber, at this time director of interpretation for the National Trust, argued that the site existed to teach history: "We can build more overt connections to black audiences in this area, but what we've got to do is figure out what is the most important story." Her proposal privileged Madison and the grand narratives of American history. In an effort to move the discussion away from slavery, she proposed a theme "broad enough on which to hang some interpretation." The first was "Madison had a vision of American society based on the idea that free men were beholden to none." Despite the consultants' suggestions regarding slavery at Montpelier, the National Trust still considered correcting Madison's obscurity in public memory as the major interpretive goal. For instance, Frank Sanchis, a National Trust vice president, argued, "One thing that I am sensing from your discussion is that you are all so way ahead of where the public is. I think we have to remember that the American public still does not really know who James Madison is." Sanchis's comments revealed the National Trust's bias toward popularizing James Madison and their effort to navigate the prevailing conservative political climate in Washington, D.C.<sup>66</sup>

By positioning Madison's biography in the forefront of the interpretation, the National Trust avoided controversial and unpopular stances such as preservation on display and revisionist history. Recognizing their function as an instrument of the state

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<sup>65</sup> "Developing an interim Interpretation for Montpelier," pp. 11, 12.

<sup>66</sup> "Developing an interim Interpretation for Montpelier," pp. 12, 24, 26.



and sensitive to its federal funding sources, the National Trust determined which topics were central and which were peripheral through their power of representing the past. Their interpretive shift at Montpelier signaled a move away from their earlier positions on preservation and scholarship, which were becoming unpopular with the public and politicians.

Scholars of the museum field emphasize the importance of museums and historic house museums as structures and mediums of cultural hegemony. For instance, Ivan Karp argues that museums can set social agendas through the production of cultural systems that legitimate existing social orders. A collection of essays on public history in the 1980s characterized the situation in the early years of National Trust ownership: “Despite the successes of the 1960s and 1970s, the prospects for a more inclusive vision of history are growing dimmer in the 1980s. The more conservative political climate has legitimated simplistic patriotic celebrations of the past and encouraged elitism, racism, sexism, homophobia in history as elsewhere.” The concepts chosen for interpretation at Montpelier by the National Trust reflected their response to the prevailing public history controversy and political currents in Washington.<sup>67</sup>

As late as July 1993, the National Trust was still trying, as Hunt-Jones noted earlier, to put everything under the roof of Montpelier. Most planning concepts were driven by the need for money. Revenue generating proposals under consideration included plans for a comprehensive development of Montpelier’s historic and commercial resources. For instance, a duPont horse stable would become an Orange County cultural

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<sup>67</sup> Ivan Karp, “Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture,” in *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, eds. Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven D. Levine (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 4; Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), xxii.

center to support local theater, musical concerts, art exhibits, conferences, lectures, receptions, civic organization annual banquets and functions, galas and proms, trade shows, fund raisers, workshops, and regional meetings. With this feature, they sought to attain relevance as a cultural institution in local community life by demonstrating what Skramstad had called broad cultural stewardship. In soliciting requests for other proposals, Schreiber de-emphasized slavery as an interpretive theme. Instead, she stated the first exhibit's purpose was "to evoke James Madison's life at Montpelier, illuminating his experience growing up as it contributed to his development as a political leader, statesman, and framer of the U. S. Constitution. Secondly, they sought proposals that would "interpret James and Dolley Madison's life at Montpelier during President Madison's retirement years." Reluctant to abandon their position on historic preservation as a valid and appealing theme for interpretation, preservation on display remained a central topic. Speaking for the National Trust, she called for the proposal to "demonstrate the ongoing process of research and investigation that characterizes historic preservation at Montpelier." The National Trust remained process-oriented and created a triptych—putting themselves on display with Madison and the duPonts.<sup>68</sup>

All aspects of these plans were formalized for the National Trust by a museum consulting firm in New York City. Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc., (RAA) produced the "James Madison's Montpelier, Long Range Interpretive Plan," in April 1996, a year after they started working for the National Trust on this project. It was an exhaustive plan that sought to render Montpelier into a cultural institution with broad impact and popular appeal, and they estimated the cost of implementing their own recommendations to be \$43,000,000. They conceptualized Montpelier as a land of many uses and users,

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<sup>68</sup> Susan Schreiber to Russ Garman, 19 December 1994, misc. files, "Interpretation, 1987-1996," Montpelier Archives.

much like the National Forest Service manages its public lands. The report declared that the National Trust must market and exploit both Madison and Montpelier, “The timing is right for an awareness campaign—to be set in motion and orchestrated by Montpelier—to associate Madison in the public mind with the living, ongoing importance of all such discussions and the need for effective debate forums and educational media.” If the National Trust thought they had their hands full with preserving Montpelier, RAA found more work for them to do: “It will be an on-going process to identify all sorts of new user groups for this expansive and under utilized site, from forestry students to fans of house museums.” The production of this report marked the further commodification in the planning for Montpelier’s future as a museum.<sup>69</sup>

Montpelier stepped further into the culture of advanced consumer capitalism. This process began in the 1930s with Marion duPont Scott, but through the work of the National Trust, Montpelier was incorporated officially as a tourist site. The management devoted funds and time to reproducing representations of Montpelier as a commodified form and inscribing themselves on the landscape. For instance, the Montpelier Supply Company became the museum gift shop. RAA implored the National Trust “to encourage entrepreneurial models among its properties—in other words, to increase the use of their historical resources as bases for income-producing programs.” Prompted by its consultants, the National Trust engaged in institutional self-inscription, as well as commodification. The gift shop sold not just Madison souvenirs but also National Trust memberships. Montpelier’s narrative fracture among Madison, duPont, and the National Trust, and its historical and architectural complexity contributed to its decentered character. Yet, the National Trust staff struggled against the grain of post-modernity. By

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<sup>69</sup> Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc., “James Madison’s Montpelier, Long-Range Interpretive Plan,” April 1996, p. 3, misc. files, “Interpretation, 1987-1996,” Montpelier Archives.

keeping to a program of interpretation based on what critics called “the essentialist language of modern empiricism” and presenting the past as “historically verifiable and objective,” they checked the self-reflexivity of their preservation process on display theme.<sup>70</sup>

The National Trust broke Montpelier down into its constituent parts in order to commodify it. RAA identified the “Museum Zone,” house and adjacent grounds zone, and archaeological sites. The plan announced a National Madison Study Center, which Ralph Ketcham, a Madison scholar, supported by saying, “One can easily imagine James Madison himself encouraging and establishing such a center.” Ketcham based his support on the evidence provided by visitors to Montpelier during Madison’s lifetime. Like RAA, Ketcham envisioned a place of “visual enjoyment and informal tourism . . . a place where scholarship, civic education (perhaps especially at the high school level, following the emphasis in the Madison Fellowships), public service, and practical citizenship are nourished—all in line with Madison’s central interest in good, democratic government.” Montpelier, however, had become a plantation of many centers. The point of introduction was the Visitor Center. RAA recommended that the National Trust make the center “a distinctive, yet appropriate and beautiful architectural statement that becomes an attraction in itself.” RAA argued for designing the visitor center according to Jefferson’s unbuilt designs for garden pavilions, “one could expand on Madison’s admiration for Jefferson’s architecture, and his borrowing of Monticello builders to create the portico and ice temple at Montpelier.” Also, they urged Montpelier to become a

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<sup>70</sup> Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc., “James Madison’s Montpelier, Long-Range Interpretive Plan,” p. 4; John Dorst lays out the decentered character of contemporary museums in his ethnography of Chadds Ford, *The Written Suburb: An American Site, an Ethnographic Dilemma* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 3; James Nolan, Jr., and Ty F. Buckman, “Preserving the Postmodern, Restoring the Past: The Cases of Monticello and Montpelier,” *The Sociology Quarterly* 39 (Spring 1998): 265.

media center, converting the School Barn into an auditorium and broadcast forum space, “serving the Orange County community as a theater and media-production facility” for “debates symposia, round-tables of scholars and commentators, audience-participation forums produced for cable television, and the presentation of film and video are among many potential uses.” In other words, Montpelier would become the nexus for Orange County’s local access and “a national media site for civic-affairs programming.”<sup>71</sup>

The pastoral character of the estate inspired plans for a retreat center for private and government groups. RAA called the feature of this conference zone “The Lodge,” which would be developed along the lines of the conference facilities at Colonial Williamsburg. “Indeed, a lodge may well be one of the missing links between the under-visited Montpelier of today and the vision of a thriving, diversely utilized park/museum/education and conference center,” according to RAA’s plan. Along with generating operating revenue for Montpelier, the planners intended many of these concepts to boost membership in the National Trust and raise its national visibility as a historic preservation organization.<sup>72</sup>

In anticipation of RAA’s comprehensive plans, the National Trust established a committee in February 1996 to pursue the goals soon to be laid out for them by RAA. This committee took as its mission the development of “the implementation strategy for Montpelier to become a fully realized presidential and museum site, financially independent, and with the appropriate governance and management structure.” They claimed they would “honor James Madison, fourth president of the United States, and architect of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and . . . perpetuate his ideals and

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<sup>71</sup> Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc., “James Madison’s Montpelier, Long-Range Interpretive Plan,” pp. 5, 13, 25, 45.

<sup>72</sup> Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc., “James Madison’s Montpelier, Long-Range Interpretive Plan,” p. 28.

principles.” Their didactic intention to enrich public understanding of James Madison also included honoring themselves as historic preservationists—in their words, “to apply his principles to the challenges and needs of contemporary society, both in the United States and throughout the world; and to demonstrate the highest standards of historic preservation and interpretation at his lifelong home and property Montpelier.” Although it decided not to restore Madison portions of the house, the National Trust restored Mrs. Scott’s “Red Room,” its horse trophies and chrome finish trim, “because of its integrity and importance of Mrs. Scott’s contributions to Montpelier.”<sup>73</sup>

The themes of the first exhibit in the house remained faithful to the effort to monumentalize and humanize James Madison without restoring the house to his period of occupancy. Montpelier staff and its hired consultants met to organize storylines and themes to guide the interpretive program in July 1997. They strove to present a material biography of Madison, culminating in the “Making of a Nation.” “Montpelier is a lens through which the visitor can come to know and understand the Virginia planter’s son who played such a central role in shaping the ideology and framework of America, as a society and as a nation,” stated Kathleen S. Mullins, Montpelier’s third executive director. In this exhibit, intellectual and constitutional history shared the stage with plantation economy, landscape, architecture, furnishings, and society. The story line, seeking to elucidate family, farm, and statecraft, proceeded chronologically through his early family life, his college education, his political career, and the development of a republican society. Barbara Carson, a scholar and consultant, succinctly outlined the storyline and themes and advised placing architectural preservation issues in the background. The “continuing investigation of the house and Madison research,” Carson

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<sup>73</sup> Working Group on Montpelier, Draft Report, 6 September 1996, acc. no. 1997.12, Montpelier Archives.

argued, should only be mentioned as part of the exhibition's epilogue. David Mattern, a Madison scholar, dovetailed slavery into the majority of the exhibit's thematic categories: family, social relations, the skilled labor force, entertainment, farming, and housing. Furthermore, he recommended public interpretation of the slave quarter to illustrate slave culture and James Madison as a slave master.<sup>74</sup>

RAA's conception of the interpretive elements differed slightly. RAA introduced their recommendations as "the right set of moves to invigorate the visitor experience by Spring 1998 for a budget of \$700,000." The components of the new interpretation included a new orientation video, outdoor signage, an audio tour, "and a set of elements to enliven the house interior." The intention of the 15-20 minute video was "to invite people into a leisurely exploration of the site, portraying Montpelier as place of cultural evolution and historical investigation—a place to take an open-ended journey into the lives of some remarkable people whose stories live at the heart of the American identity." The video sought to explain how Madison conceptualized "our political structures" and expressed them "in language that a diverse citizenry could work with." His relations with Dolley and Thomas Jefferson would be joined by a discussion of the culture of Virginia plantation slavery to describe other familiar figures of the revolutionary era and his own "conflicts and inconsistencies regarding the practice of slavery." They also echoed Drew McCoy's suggestion to link Madison to westward expansion and, as an afterword, "the political storm of the Civil War as the unfinished business of the revolutionaries' careers."<sup>75</sup>

RAA recommended using other media to interpret Madison. The audio program

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<sup>74</sup> Kathleen Stiso Mullins, "Story Line and Themes for Interpretation of the Madison Story at Montpelier," 24 July 1997, Montpelier Archives.

<sup>75</sup> RAA, "Montpelier: Interpretive Elements for Spring 1998," 30 July 1997, Montpelier Archives.

was presented as “an ‘Upstairs/Downstairs’ set at a Presidential plantation,” providing visitors with audio vignettes of life on the plantation—in particular “the varied working lives of Montpelier’s slaves, their artisanry and culture.” These short “radio plays” would capture “slices of life around the house and grounds,” and were to be based “as closely as possible” on historical characters and events. The exhibition spaces within the house were imagined as tableaux, with artifacts, facsimiles, and reproduced images in five settings to evoke the “abundance and liveliness that characterized the house in the Madisons’ time.” The tableaux were categorized thematically: hospitality, the “Family black and White,” civic culture, the artisan, and visitors. RAA proposed that the “themes be broad and simple, so that they become natural containers for the many sub-topics Montpelier desires to interpret.”<sup>76</sup>

Montpelier staff also expected the new exhibition entitled “Discovering Madison” to repair their unfavorable public image. For ten years, Montpelier had struggled through a period of interpretive caution and delay. Now, they hoped for more visitors and respectability. “The most effective way to increase visitorship, to increase revenue, to recruit members for the Montpelier Board of trustees, to solicit campaign support, and to be able to effectively market Montpelier,” according to Mullins, “is to open in the Spring of 1998 with very visible changes to the visitor experience. With these changes in place, Montpelier will have resources to show potential donors and board members, and will begin to put to rest the continual comments that ‘nothing is happening’ at Montpelier.”<sup>77</sup>

The exhibit featured many reproductions of material culture from Madison’s era and few original items that he and Dolley had owned. The large entertaining rooms toward the front of the house and the passage ways served as exhibit spaces. The

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<sup>76</sup> RAA, “Montpelier: Interpretive Elements for Spring 1998.”

<sup>77</sup> Kathleen Stiso Mullins, “The 2001 Project at Montpelier,” 24 July 1997, Montpelier Archives.



grounds featured new text panels at significant sites such as the Madison family cemetery, the temple, the slave cemetery, and at archaeological resources such as the brick foundations for slave quarters and a kitchen near the mansion. The elements of the interior exhibits included hospitality, civic culture, master and slave, and visitors to Montpelier. The orientation video portrayed Montpelier “as a place of cultural evolution and historical investigation.” RAA intended the orientation video to introduce “an open-ended journey into the lives of some remarkable people whose stories live at the heart of the American identity.”<sup>78</sup> The salient elements of the exhibit remained James Madison’s persona as a philosopher-statesman and Dolley’s hospitality.

“Discovering Madison” received favorable reviews in the press. A reporter from *The Washington Post* visited Montpelier the weekend after First Lady Hilary Rodham Clinton attended a gala at the mansion in honor of Dolley Madison. The reporter described the biographical search and rescue of Madison underway at Montpelier and briefly critiqued the exhibits in the house: “Eventually the staff hopes to use holographic displays or computer modeling to show the evolution of the house. But at this stage, it seems more exhibit hall than historic home. There is very little furniture, and one of the major problems faced by the staff is that sharp investors in the antiques world are starting to buy up and hoard Madisonia in expectation of Montpelier’s renovation. . . . Outdoors, the impression is much grander.”<sup>79</sup> The reporter from a Richmond newspaper, however, directly addressed the National Trust’s past problems at Montpelier with a recollection of previous attempts at interpretation: “Modern-day visitors left disappointed if they came to President James Madison’s lifelong home in hopes of seeing a polished historic gem. Inside the Montpelier mansion, the public walked through

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<sup>78</sup> RAA, “Montpelier, Interpretive Elements for Spring 1998.”

<sup>79</sup> Eve Zibart, “Madison’s Avenues,” *The Washington Post* (D.C.), 17 July 1998, Weekend, p. 9.

several sparsely furnished rooms. Architectural research had left openings in walls. There was no Madison exhibit.” The reporter wrote, “‘Discovering Madison’ isn’t exactly a house tour. It’s more an attempt to explain a shy, small, yet major historical figure and the place that shaped his vision for more than 80 years.” Kathleen Mullins admitted, “We need a lot of money. The problems are great.” Another staff member was quoted: “It’s taken us 10 years to crawl. Now we’re starting to walk.”<sup>80</sup>

The 1998 exhibit marked a turning point in Montpelier’s public interpretation program. By appearing at the home, the First Lady brought national recognition to the National Trust’s interpretive efforts there. The staff announced that Montpelier would be part of a White House Millennium Council and National Trust campaign called “Save America’s Treasures.” The National Trust pledged \$8 million toward maintaining the mansion, with the Montpelier Trustees obliged to match that pledge. Thus, the president of the National Trust claimed that Montpelier’s troubled times were in the past. “Today represents a new day for Montpelier. With this kind of jointly sustained effort, we’re convinced that we can at last do justice to the legacy of James and Dolley Madison,” said Richard Moe.<sup>81</sup> Since 1998, the Montpelier staff have enhanced the interior exhibit space with a display of period and reproduction furnishings and food in the dining room to simulate the 1824 visit of General Lafayette. This exhibit enjoyed favorable publicity as its opening was tied to James Madison’s 250th birthday celebration on 16 March 2001.<sup>82</sup> Future plans called for more exhibits in the portion of the house that served as Dolley’s private chamber. However, these exhibitions avoided the risks of revisionist history, a

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<sup>80</sup> Christine Neuberger, “‘Discovering Madison’,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (Virginia), 19 July 1988, § C, pp. 1, 6.

<sup>81</sup> Christine Neuberger, “Save treasures of historic past, first lady says,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (Virginia), 10 July 1998, §B, pp. 1, 4.

<sup>82</sup> Linda Wheeler, “A Living Tribute to Madison,” *The Washington Post* (D.C.), 17 March 2001, § B, pp. 1, 5.

similar strategy that art museums have adopted recently, according to Alan Wallach. Wallach's criticism, that art museum exhibits have trended toward "spectacular display of cultural property," applies to public presentation at Montpelier, in particular the feast for Lafayette installation. The conspicuous consumption theme continued in the duPont rooms.<sup>83</sup>

The interpretation of the slave cemetery site, however, brought controversy to Montpelier in 1998. A member of the local community expressed dissatisfaction with the nomenclature chosen by the Montpelier staff for the slave cemetery. They had labeled the space an African-American cemetery. Sensing an attempt to elide the significance of slavery at Montpelier, Carolyn French wrote a letter to the editor of the *Orange Review* expressing her opinion on the matter. She contended that the National Trust intended "to gloss over their bondage." She wrote, "My beef is that the cemetery is the burial place of enslaved Africans who were not Americans." Ignoring African slavery at Montpelier, she wrote, "perpetuates the southern mentality of 'the happy slave.'" Her activism in this matter led to the establishment of the Orange County African-American Historical Society.<sup>84</sup>

Finally, by the end of the twentieth century, Montpelier had become a landscape that typified advanced consumer capitalism, beginning with Mrs. Scott. With the National Trust charging admission and selling images of Madison and Montpelier, it was now a thoroughly commodified cultural form. Montpelier had entered the museum market and the competition for visitors. Its iconography and marketability were extended by United States postage dedicated to James Madison. The postal service created a

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<sup>83</sup> Alan Wallach, *Exhibiting Contradiction: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 4, 5.

<sup>84</sup> *The Orange Review*, 4 March 1999, p. 12; Carolyn French, letter to author, 3 March 1999.

James Madison stamp, with an engraving of Montpelier as he knew it in the background, to coincide with the 250th anniversary of his birth.

Montpelier reappeared in the book world of fiction as a setting again. Connie Briscoe fictionalized the lives of Madison slaves after the death of President Madison to dramatize her own family history. She started her narrative during the uncertain times at Montpelier after Madison's death in 1836. The ensuing sales of slaves and changes in ownership broke up her ancestor's family and relocated some of them to Richmond. Most interesting, the narrative portrayed John Payne Todd and the owners from Richmond as sexual predators preying upon the females of Montpelier's slave community. This portrayal of Montpelier contrasted sharply with the pastoral Christian ambience given to it in *Dora Lee*. Oddly, Montpelier also provided the stage for an animal detective story by Rita Mae Brown, *Murder, She Meowed*.<sup>85</sup> Investigations into the historical architecture at Montpelier continued with research and restoration at the Gilmore cabin. Exhibitions and research attempted to reify Madison in the mansion, but Montpelier irrevocably had become what architectural historian Camille Wells describes as a "multistoried house."<sup>86</sup> Thus, the repatriation of Madison to Montpelier had been attempted, although Madison's memory had been attenuated by time, cultural change, and the duPont presence. Lost in the admixture of time and space at Montpelier, the public memory of Dolley and James Madison struggled for relevance and recognition with the duPonts and the National Trust.

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<sup>85</sup> Connie Briscoe, *A Long Way from Home* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 1999); Lucy B. P. Saunders, *Dora Lee; or, the Visit to Montpelier* (Baltimore: Charles Harvey & Co., 1872); Rita Mae Brown and Sneaky Pie Brown, *Murder, She Meowed* (New York: Bantam Books, 1996).

<sup>86</sup> Camille Wells, "The Multi-storied House: Twentieth Century Encounters with the Domestic Architecture of Colonial Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, (Fall 1998) 106: 353-418.

## EPILOGUE

As of 2003, the National Trust has initiated substantial changes to their interpretation and management of Montpelier. The National Trust no longer oversees the day-to-day operation of the museum property, having transferred those responsibilities to the non-profit Montpelier Foundation, which was incorporated in 1998, through a long-term lease in September 2000. The Montpelier Foundation has begun to solicit funding for the construction of a new visitor center and the establishment of a Constitutional Studies Center on the property. Most importantly, the foundation has embarked on a restoration of the house to its appearance and internal structure after President Madison's final remodeling in 1811.

The curatorial staff has continued to develop exhibitions for public display. They have begun acquiring authentic pieces of Madison furniture and decorative arts for display. In March 2001, a re-creation of the Madison dining room as it might have appeared for a banquet in honor of the Marquis de Lafayette in 1824 opened to the public. An exhibit, "The Madisons' Style and Taste," featuring recent acquisitions of Madison furniture and artwork also opened in 2001. The "Discovering Madison" exhibit remains on display. To raise the visibility of Madison's contribution to the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark expedition, the curators developed an exhibit entitled "James Madison: Secretary of State in an Age of Expansion & Exploration," which opened in January 2003.

Of all these developments, the effort to remove the duPont additions to the house are the most dramatic. In the fall of 2001, an exhaustive investigation of the house began. Supported by a Paul Mellon grant, the investigation utilized the latest tools of

architectural analysis, including paint analysis, measured drawings, subsurface data recovery, and Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) data coordination. Based on the results of the survey, which indicate that enough of the house remains in place to guide a restoration, the new goal is to reproduce with historical accuracy the mansion as it stood in the early nineteenth century.

These developments mark an important shift in historic preservation philosophy and practice at Montpelier. The National Trust has retreated from its preservationist stance, which argued for displaying the house in its existing (duPont) form, and adopted a restorationist position on the treatment of the house. Presently, the National Trust appears to be following the lead of Monticello and Colonial Williamsburg in their empirical historicism. The National Trust has decided to simplify the interpretive challenges at Montpelier by reducing the architectural complexity of the building. As the National Trust pursues this restoration policy, the public presentation of Montpelier's full historical narrative, as well as its complete architectural history, after President Madison lifetime runs the risk of being discarded in the future.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Walls don't talk. They don't tell us what to think, but their very presence provokes questions that lead to history. Who put them there, when and why? Obviously, Montpelier has many walls, some older than others, some intact, some altered. How did those walls function in a historical sequence of events? Why were walls added, removed, or punctured for windows and doors. They created space for servants, service, the planter's family, and their social needs. They provided private realms and public settings. Walls can't talk, but they can be built into stories.

The lessons we can learn from Montpelier emerge from a trans-disciplinary perspective on its history. The lost objects that once resided in the house, the material culture associated with the dwelling and its owners, reappear as noted in deeds, tax records, and various estate inventories from 1732 to 1928. They show how the Madisons organized their household and how they divided it among the younger generations. They show how a plantation endured through the prosperity or the misfortune that its owners found in variable agricultural markets and in the effects of a civil war. Historical accounts from visitors and sub-surface investigations of the grounds and the structure of the house itself reveal changing spatial arrangements of interest to the architectural historian. They show how the house was arranged to suit the tastes and intentions of its many owners. For instance, the house as it appeared during President Madison's later years, with its relics of the republic and elegant decorative arts, differed from that of his father and that of the duPonts, of course. Also, President Madison's creation of a prospect from the roof above the wings can be seen as a manifestation of his sense of style in landscapes. For the social historian, the character of life for slaves, workers, and owners at

Montpelier can be found in documents and the archaeological record.

Unpacking Montpelier's history reveals a lengthy and complex story. From slave unrest, runaways, and sales to agricultural and architectural history, the story follows multiple voices. Marshaled into a context, the history of Montpelier provides the intellectual historian with President Madison's milieu as he engaged in drafting the United States Constitution. It includes Madison family slaves from bondage to their emancipation. It also shows an aspect in the behavior of American oligarchs at the turn of the twentieth century. By linking material culture studies, architectural history, and social history in this dissertation, the lessons of Montpelier include broader themes.

While Montpelier held local significance during Col. Madison's lifetime as an expression of his place in the social hierarchy, it rose to national prominence during President Madison's presidency. At this point, it was a distinctive component of national history. However, after President Madison's death, it became incidental to national history. The cemetery became a more prominent marker of Madison than his house. In the years leading up to the Civil War, we can see Montpelier as part of an emerging American historical consciousness of the founding fathers, particularly James Madison. The efforts to erect a monument over the graves of President and Mrs. Madison show early stirrings of his legacy in the public memory.

I began this study with the hopes of showing that national devotion to Montpelier began soon after the death of President Madison. Its symbolic importance, however, was slow to develop. The early efforts to advance the standing of Madison in the public memory resulted only in marking his grave and Dolley Madison's grave with obelisks. Whereas the historic buildings that conveyed an association with, for example, George Washington or Thomas Jefferson, received commemorative attention, Montpelier



remained on the margins of the historic house commemoration and preservation movement until well into the twentieth century.

I have been emphasizing Montpelier as a symbolic representation of Madison, but as a historic house museum it became subject to a variety of interpretations. Initially, the National Trust sought to preserve and present all of Montpelier's history in its place, with duPont rooms and history adjacent to Madison rooms and history. Once an example of preservation philosophies in the 1980s, it is now a restoration project.

This study of Montpelier comes at a time when the historic preservation movement has shifted its focus away from the historic homes of great Americans. Historic preservation organizations, specifically the National Trust, have turned their attention away from saving single buildings. Instead, preserving the downtown streetscape of declining cities and influencing the urban policy planning process have become the goals of preservation organizations. The later period of Montpelier's history, now that it is in the hands of a foundation, shows how the National Trust has turned from properties to policies in the first decade of the twenty-first century. It shows us shifting preservation priorities.

This dissertation embraces the complex history of the house while its present curators and benefactors endeavor to reduce that complexity by removing the duPont additions and all traces of duPont building activity to return to the Madison essence. The course presently being followed at Montpelier, to create a restored plantation house, invites the questions what will be excluded and who will be venerated? As a history museum, Montpelier will be where most people get their information about Madison and the Constitution. They'll be teaching about the building when it was Madison's, rather than periods of later ownership that show the plantation as background for elite leisure.

By taking pieces out of the whole, they are appealing to a variety of historicism that privileges one period, supposedly the more popular period, over another as opposed to a historicism that looks to the past for guidance in the present.

## APPENDIX A

An inventory of Ambrose Madison's estate.

At a court, 2 May 1733 Spotsylvania County Will Book A: 182-186

Negro Men--Tom, Turk, Bristoll, Joe, Harry, George, Isaac, Petter, Spark, & Dick. (10)

Negro Women--Nanney, Kate, Daffney, Claris[ea], Dido. (5)

Negro Children--Leucy, Betty, Catterenea, Sarrah, Cusbina, Lett, Juda, Violet, Nancy, Hannah, Jack, Billy, Sam, Anthony. (14)

59 head of cattle, young & old

18 head of hoggs

16 Sows, & piggs

19 head of sheep

10 horses & Mares

2 fether beds & ferneture

4 D<sup>o</sup> without fernetures

4 Ruggs & 1 Quilt

4 Blankets

5 Bedstids

5 Bed cords

1<sup>pr</sup> of Truβells

1 Small Oak Desk

1 Trunk & 1 small Ditto

1 large Ovill Table

1 Small Ditto

1 Square Ditto

9 old Leather Chairs

4 New Ditto

6 flag Ditto

1 Great Bible

2 common prayerbooks

3 other prayer books

12 other books

2 Small Casks

1 30 gallon Dt

1 2 Gallon runlet

4 large Iron Potts

2 small Ditto  
 6<sup>pr</sup> of pott hooks  
 5 Iron pot raks  
 1 frying pan  
 1 grid Iron  
 1<sup>pr</sup> of Iron Spit rakes  
 1 Iron fender  
 3 Iron Spits  
 1 Iron Ladle & 1 Iron Skimer  
 1 Iron flesh fork  
 1 Iron peal  
 3<sup>pr</sup> of Tongs & 2 Shuffalls [?]  
 1 Box Iron & 3 heaters  
 1<sup>pr</sup> of Large Stilliards  
 1<sup>pr</sup> of Small ditto  
 1 Iron Husey  
 2 Iron Tribits  
 1<sup>pr</sup> of Scales & weights  
 3 Iron Veßalls  
 1 Small Ditto  
 1 Braß Ditto  
 1 Braß Skillet & frame  
 2 Braß Candle Sticks  
 1<sup>pr</sup> of Snuffers  
 1 new warming Pan  
 6 Earthen Pans  
 6 Stone Butter potts  
 2 Small D° & 2 Earthen D°  
 1 Cream Pott  
 1 Stone Mustard pot  
 1 Stone Chamber pot  
 6 cups & Saucers  
 1 Teapot  
 1 milk pot  
 1 Stone Shugar Pot  
 5 Stone Cupps  
 8 Earthen plates  
 1 Earthen Dish  
 2 Small Earthen platts  
 2 Small Cups Ditto  
 1 Barbors Cason  
 5 Earthen Bottles

8 Stone Muggs  
 8 Stone Bottles  
 2 Glaß Cans  
 2 Wine Glaßes  
 1 Glaß Salt  
 1 Swiming Looking Glaß  
 1 Small Pocket Ditto  
 1 Gallon Glaß bottle  
 5 paint Bottles  
 2 Doz & 9 Quart bottles  
 1 Case & 15 bottles  
 10 Vials  
 2 Gallipots  
 1 Razor & Case  
 4<sup>pr</sup> of Horse flannel  
 1 Small pen Knife  
 4 Knives & forks  
 5 Case Knives & forks  
 1<sup>pr</sup> of Gardin Shers  
 1<sup>pr</sup> of Taylors Ditto  
 1<sup>pr</sup> of Large Sißors  
 1<sup>pr</sup> of Sheep Shers  
 1 Choping Knife  
 1 Iron Rake  
 13 New Weeding hoes  
 16,000 10d Nails  
 1,200 8d Ditto  
 18 bushels of salt  
 1 [illegible]  
 4 [illegible]  
 72<sup>1/2</sup> pound of Shoue thred  
 10<sup>pr</sup> of Sheets  
 1 Sheet  
 4 Dyaper Table Cloaths  
 6 Lining Towells  
 8 Ells of Dowlas  
 13 yards of Duroys  
 19 yards of Kersay  
 1<sup>pr</sup> of small Hankerchiefs  
 10<sup>pr</sup> of Woman Yarn hose  
 6<sup>pr</sup> of Boys Ditto  
 5<sup>pr</sup> of Mens Ditto

9 sm pins  
 4 horn Combs  
 2 Ivory Ditto  
 1 lb of White brown Thread  
 5 <sup>1/2</sup> lb of Brown & Cullard Ditto  
 2 meal Sifters  
 6 Small Trays  
 1 large Ditto  
 5 pails  
 4 washing Tubs  
 1 <sup>pr</sup> of window curtains  
 5 Chests  
 2 hat boxes  
 4 Quire of Writing Paper  
 1 <sup>pr</sup> of hand bellows  
 3 Brushes  
 2 <sup>pr</sup> of New Shoes mens  
 3 new Girtles  
 2 <sup>pr</sup> of money Scales & weights  
 4 Silver Tea Spoons  
 1 coper Tea Kitle  
 4 <sup>Duzn</sup> of Putter plate  
<sup>1/2</sup> <sup>Duzn</sup> of Ditto Dishes  
 10 old putter Dishes  
 2 <sup>Duzn</sup> & 3 putter Plates old  
 4 old putter BaBins  
 1 putter pornger  
 2 <sup>Duzn</sup> of Putter Spoons  
 1 Large Ditto  
 1 Quart pott  
 Tin pans  
 in Candle box  
 llander[?] & 1 peper box  
 1 Tin Shugar box  
 2 Tin Cannesters  
 2 Tin funells  
 1 Tin Greater  
 1 Tin Gardin Pot  
 1 <sup>pr</sup> of naile Cutters  
 4 Beafe's hides  
 2 Setts of trap harneß for horsis  
 1 Ditto for filts

1 old Mill pad  
 3 old guns  
 1 Cart & Wheals  
 2 Crosscut saws & 1 ten cut saw  
 1 old hand saw & 1 Broad chiswaller  
 1 Great auger & 1 foot adz  
 1 hand plan[er] & 1 Cooperers joynter  
 1 Drawing Knife & 1 Carpenter Compasß  
 1 Case of small screwed Pistolls & holsters  
 2 Braß cocks & 1 <sup>Duzn</sup> Half tin patty pans  
 1 House bell & 2 horse Ditto  
 2 hand Saw files  
 April 2d, 1733 P Frances Madison, Excutr.

## APPENDIX B

Inventory of the Estate of Ambrose Madison, Deceased, 1794  
Orange County Will Book 3:318-320

47 Slaves  
51 Sheep  
43 Cattle  
2 Yoke of Oxen  
6 Horses  
1 Colt  
2 Mares  
38 Hogs  
8 Barshear Plows  
1 Old Chair with Harness  
1 Stage Wagon with Harness  
1 Ox Wagon  
5 Flax Wheels  
4 Small Trunks  
4 Large Trunks  
Dressing Glass  
Candle Stand  
Writing Desk  
Bookcase  
1 Doz. Winsor Chairs  
8 Walnut Chairs  
15 Table Cloths  
29 Towells  
9 Toilett Cloths  
9 Window Curtains  
5 Carpets  
1 Chest of Drawers  
Case of Knives and Forks  
Tea Chest  
Bellows  
5 Table Covers  
4 Sugar Pots



13 Large Silver Spoons  
 12 Small Silver Spoons  
 Ladle & Sugar tongs, silver  
     1 Set of China  
     4 Tea Potts  
     5 Cream Pots  
     10 bowles  
     2 turreens  
 13 Coffee cups and saucers  
     10 Pickle Shells  
     14 Custard Cups  
 35 Queens China Dishes  
     3 wash bowls  
     4 basins  
     2 butter turreens  
     7 bottles  
     6 Butter plates  
     27 knives and 21 forks  
 5 candle sticks with snuffers  
     1 mustard pot  
     1 vinegar cruett  
     Salver  
     5 glass tumblers  
     8 goblets  
     2 casters  
     10 wine glasses  
     1 knife box  
     2 tea boards  
 3 sets of plate warmers  
     2 tin funnels  
     10 dish covers  
 3 lamps and lanterns  
     7 tin cups  
     1 sugar box  
     1 spice box  
     coffee mill  
     7 pewter dishes  
     11 pewter plates  
     earthen pots  
     old tea kettle  
     3 old boxes  
     41 bottles

15 snuff bottles  
     8 tubs  
     2 pails  
     churn  
 6 earthen pans  
 2 Dutch ovens  
     Iron kettle  
     6 pots  
     3 skillets  
     Iron tea kettle  
     grindstone  
     spice mill  
     flat irons  
 2 frying pans and grid iron  
     flesh forks  
     ladle  
 still kettle and worm  
     3 shovels  
     2 pair tongs  
     4 andirons  
     9 pine tables  
     6 walnut tables  
     4 chests  
 5 pair pot hooks  
     2 saddle bags  
     Sheep shears  
     4 pair cards  
     Gun  
     Warping box  
     22 earthen pots  
     Woman's saddle  
     Man's saddle  
     4 Stays  
     Money scales  
 18 Stands and 12 Casks  
     5 old hogs heads  
     wheat fan  
     Cutting knife  
 1 bedstead cord suit of Curtains 2 pillows in cases  
 boulder pair of blankets pair of sheets Mattress and Counter pain  
 1 Ditto same furniture Except Curtains  
 1 bedstead Mattress and Covers

1 long bed bedstead cord pair of blankets pair of sheets pillows in case  
 boulder Mattrass and Cover

1 bed bedstead cord three blankets sheets quilt 2 pillows in cases  
 boulder and Mattrass  
 1 with same furniture

1 single bed bedstead cord curtains 3 blankets pair of sheets  
 boulder pillow in case Cover  
 1 ditto without curtains  
 12 counterpains  
 4 bed quilts  
 13 pair of sheets  
 22 Pillow cases  
 1 set of curtains

At a Court held for Orange County on Monday the 28th day of December 1794

## APPENDIX C

Inventory of the Estate of James Madison, Deceased, Sept 1st, 1801  
Orange County Will Book 4:54-57

108 Slaves  
 77 Sheep  
 70 Cattle  
 34 Calves  
 20 Oxen  
 26 Horses  
 2 Colts  
 222 Hogs  
 35 Pigs  
 9 Ox yokes  
 199 Wool  
 1 Mans Saddle  
 3 Wheat Fans  
 4 Cutting boxes & knives  
 1 Harrow  
 1 New horse Waggon  
 3 Stills and Pewter Worms  
 3 Grind Stones  
 4 Cross Cut Saws  
 2 hand saws  
 1 Set Coopers Tools  
 4 Planes  
 1 Bung Borer & Currying Knife  
 1 hay Cutter & pruning hook  
 2 spades  
 14 half share plows & Colters  
 27 Weeding hoes  
 18 Hilling hoes  
 19 Grubbing hoes  
 17 Narrow hoes  
 2 Broad Axes  
 7 pr Wedges

10 pr. Harness  
 8 pr. Traces  
 7 Collars  
 1 Adz  
 2 Augers  
 1 Old Ditto  
 1 Chissell  
 1 Gouge  
 1 Bell  
 2 Bar Shares  
 1 Pitch fork  
 6 Swingle Trees  
 7 Clevises  
 12 Scythes  
 9 Cradles  
 1 Horse Waggon (old)  
 1 Ox Ditto  
 1 Horse cart  
 2 Ox Carts & Cleves & Chair  
 1 pr. Cart Wheels (old)  
 1 Tack screw  
 2 Black Smiths Bellows  
 1 Ditto of little value  
 2 Vices  
 1 Hand Ditto  
 6 Screw plates  
 10 pr. tongs  
 3 Shovels  
 4 Sledge Hammers  
 10 Hand Ditto  
 2 pr. pincers  
 2 Bulleries  
 2 Rasps 4 Files and 7 old Ditto  
 1 Drill  
 1 Bisk Iron  
 2 pr. steelyards  
 1 Smith ditto  
 1 Razor Case with hornes compt.  
 1 old with 2 Razers  
 1 Sett Back Gammon Tables  
 3 Walnut Dining Tables  
 5 Ditto Dressing Ditto

1 Tea Table  
 2 small pine Ditto painted  
 2 Irong. Tables  
 5 Candle Stands  
 1 Small round table  
 1 Doz. Walnut chairs hair bottoms  
 1 Ditto Rush Bottomed Ditto  
 3 Leather Bottomed Do  
 1 doz and 4 Flag Bottomed Ditto  
 1 Desk and Book Case  
 5 Pine presses  
 1 Chest of Drawers  
 1 Cabinet  
 1 Eight Day Clock  
 1 Spy Glass  
 1 Looking Glass  
 1 Magnifying ditto  
 3 Carpets  
 6 Matrasses  
 8 large Beds 12 Bolsters  
 2 Small Ditto 10 pillows  
 5 white Virginia Counterpanes  
 1 Tufted Ditto  
 1 Calico Coverlaid  
 6 Virginia Wool & Cotton ditto  
 6 Bed Quilts  
 5 Silk Rugs  
 27 Bed Blankets  
 2 Dutch Ditto  
 18 Pair Virga. Sheets  
 11 Linnen Ditto  
 1 odd Ditto Ditto  
 3 Damask Table Cloths  
 3 Huckabuck Ditto  
 1 Bird eye Ditto  
 6 Virga Do.  
 2 Dowlas Do.  
 27 Towels  
 18 Dowlas Pillow Cases  
 6 Cotton Do.  
 10 Linnen Do.  
 5 White Toilets

3 Coloured do.  
 2 Tea boards  
 4 Waiters  
 2 Bread Baskets (Japaned)  
 1 Set blue & White Tea China  
 1 Do. green & White Do.  
 2 Doz. Silver Table Spoons  
 1 doz & 10 Tea Do.  
 1 Broken sett  
 1 Silver Ladle  
 1 Do. teas spoon  
 1 pair Sugar Tongs  
 7 pr. Fire Dogs  
 6 pr. Tongs  
 5 Shovels  
 1 pr. Bellows  
 10 Bed Steads  
 5 large trunks  
 1 small Do.  
 1 plate warmer  
 3 Cases with Bottles  
 1 Leather Bottomed Chair with arms  
 7 brass Candlesticks  
 1 Tin Do.  
 5 pair snuffers  
 2 Callico Window curtains  
 1 Demety do.  
 1 Stuff Do.  
 1 Doz. Callico Chair Covers  
 2 Bed Curtains  
 1 Patent Lamp  
 6 Candle Moulds  
 7 large Decanters  
 5 small Do.  
 2 Water Do.  
 15 Wine Glasses  
 3 Beer Do.  
 15 Glass Tumblers  
 3 Goblets  
 2 Glass Cans  
 3 Vinegar Cruets  
 2 Rims and Castors

4 salt Cellars and Shovels  
 2 tin knife Boxes  
 1 Wooden do.  
 2 Hair Brooms  
 2 Cloaths Brushes  
 1 Flesh Brush  
 Bottles and 2 Cases in Widow seat  
 5 Chimney Screens  
 1 Coffee mill  
 1 Passage Carpett  
 14 Pewter Basons  
 6 Tin Milk Do. and pans  
 4 Do. Bucketts  
 3 Frying Pans  
 2 Iron Tea Kettles  
 5 Tin do.  
 1 Large Wine Chest  
 1 Clothes Chest  
 2 Chair Boxes  
 3 doz. 7/12 Pewter Plates  
 9 Pewter Dishes  
 101 Black Bottles  
 18 large Stone Pots  
 12 small Do.  
 5 Earthen Do.  
 34 Stone Jugs  
 1 Pair hand Steelyards  
 94 Earthen Plates  
 28 Do. Dishes  
 2 China Bowles  
 1 Sauce Boat  
 1 Pickle Rack  
 1 Tea Caddy  
 1 Warming pan  
 1 Fire pan  
 2 Brass Chafing Dishes  
 1 Iron Do.  
 1 Pewter Inkstand  
 1 Wedgewood ditto  
 1 Doz. Green handle knives & forks  
 1 Doz small Green handle knives and forks  
 2 Gridirons 5 Trevets



1 large copper Kettle  
     1 small Do.  
 2 Bell metal skillets  
     2 Iron Kettles  
 1 Roasting Spit and Hook  
     5 large Iron Pots  
     2 small Do.  
 3 Iron Bakers & Griddles  
     8 tin Covers for Dishes  
 1 Tin safe and Wood Do.  
     1 Brass Wash Bason  
     1 spice mortar  
 8 Mugs and 11 Bowles  
 half Doz. green China cups & saucers  
     4 Funnels  
     6 Tin Cannisters  
     1 Pocket Bottle  
     1 Honey Tub  
     1 Walnut Sugar Box  
 half. Doz Tin Tart Moulds  
     4 Tin Plates  
     1 Tin Crane  
     4 Pothooks  
     4 Pot racks  
     1 Knife  
     8 Chamber Pots  
     1 Bed Pan  
     3 Wine Glasses  
     Stacks of Hay  
     books  
     1 Large Bible  
     1 Do. old Do.  
     1 small do. do.  
     1 Do. gilt do  
     Crudens Concordance  
     Doddridge Family Exposetor, 6 Vols.  
     Do. Rise and progress  
     Duty of Man  
     Christian Panoply  
     Warning to a careless world  
     Christian Pattern  
     Gospel Mastery of Sanctification

Life of Doddridge  
 3 Common Prayer Books  
 4 Discourses by Green  
 Compleat Housewife  
 Wesleys Primetive Phisic  
 Moses Unveiled  
 Jacob Wrisling with God  
 Burke on the New Testament  
 2 Instructions for the Indians  
 Life and Man in the soul of God  
 Practical discourses on Regeneration  
 1 Testament much worn  
 Watts Psalms  
 Dykes Dictionary  
 Stackhouse history of Bible, 2 Vols.  
 Patrick and South on the historical Books of the Old Testament, 2 Vols.  
 Sherlocks Sermons, 4 Vols.  
 Pyles Paraphrase, 2 Vols.  
 Hopkins on the 2d Covenant  
 4 volumes Universal Magazine  
 Quiney's Dispensitary  
 Starks Virga Justice  
 Webb Do.  
 Morven's Abridgement Virga. Laws  
 Allen's Synopses 2 vols.  
 Medicae Essays, 2 Vols.  
 Barrows Polygraphic dictionary 2 vols.  
 Short's History Mineral Waters  
 Beadley's Gent. & Farmers Guide  
 Discourse on quicksilver  
 Clarks Paraphrase, 2 vols.  
 Dillons Arithmetic  
 Anatomical Lectures (3 vols. not bound)  
 Goodman's Discourse on the Nature of Sin  
 Life of David, 2 Vols,  
 Athenian Sports  
 Bates Dispensitary  
 Le Drans Operations in surgery  
 Mason on the Fever  
 Beall on Fevers  
 English Physician  
 Sharp on Surgery

Quiney's Sanitorius  
 Theobalds Dispensitory  
 History of the Golden Fleece  
 Religion of Nature  
 Art of Midwifry (not bound)  
 History of United States (not bound)  
 The Saints Indexed  
 The Country Housewife  
 The hospital Dispensartory  
 Godfrey's Phisical Tracts  
 London Practia of Phisics  
 Motion of Fluids  
 A Companion of Festivals and Fasts  
 Employment of the Microscope  
 Hoyer on Cold Bathing  
 Ostervalds Arguments of the New Testament  
 Wisemans Chirugery  
 Clark's Farriery  
 Wallis Ditto  
 Diseases of Children  
 The Power of the Mother's imagination over the  
 Royal Kalender  
 Hudebrass  
 Russells 7 Sermmans  
 Bruents Christian Sacrement  
 Six Days Preperation  
 Harris Crude Mercury  
 Companion to the Alter  
 Pyle on the revelation of St. John  
 Payne's age of Reason pamphlet  
 Chambers Dictionary of arts and sciences, 2 vols.  
Johnson's Dictionary 2 vols.  
 1 three percent certificate for \$89.71  
 1 Do. \$116.89  
 1 six percent Do. \$309.22  
 1 Do. \$147.86  
 1 Before Ditto \$154.62  
 \$812.30

Tobacco, 4445 inspect at Rocketts Richmond, 28251 inspected at Roystons  
 Fredericksburg. Cash on hand £253.15.9 William Madison, Executor

## APPENDIX D

## Orange County Personal Property Tax List 1815, James Madison:

1 white male tithable; 48 slaves over 16 years old; 8 slaves between 12 and 16 years old; 10 slaves between 9 and 12 years old; 30 horses; 96 head of cattle; 1 mill (\$100); 2 gold watches (\$10,000); 1 ice house; 2 carpets (\$90 and \$50 each); 1 settee; 5 silk curtains; 3 dining tables; sideboard; 4 card tables; 2 bedsteads; 2 mirrors; 14 framed engravings; 3 mirrors; silver candlestick; silver tea pot; silver coffee pot. Total tax \$99.33

“List of articles in Dining Room at Montpelier,” 1 July 1836. Papers of Dolley P. Madison, Library of Congress, Mss 18,940

## Engravings in dining room:

“Genl. Jackson; Jno. Adams; Jas. Monroe; Geo. Washington; Thos. Jefferson; Louis XVIII; Mrs. Madison; Napoleon le Grand; David Rittenhouse; Benjn. Franklin; Ed. Coles; Jno. Vaughan; Martin Van Buren; Queen Denmark; Queen Holland; Jas. Madison; Judge Duval; 2 separate Views of the Falls of Niagara; the sortie made by the Garrison of Gibraltar the 27th Nov. 81.; Death of Genl. Montgomery; Likeness of a Negroes head; the lord’s Supper; Mrs. Washington’s Monument; Battle near Bunkers Hill; Mr. Jefferson taken by Koscuisko: Albert Gallatin; William Bartram; a view in Switzerland; View of New Orleans; The seat of Hon. Jas. Madison; Vue de Stockholm prise a lè entree du Pare.; Vue de la Cathedrale de Upsal avec une partie de la Ville; 2 framed engraving of Honorary membership of ----; a memorial & Remonstrance written by Mr. Madison; Confucius—the Philosopher of China.”

Paintings listed, n.d., Papers of Dolley P. Madison, Library of Congress, Mss 18,940

“The bloody garment of Joseph thrown to Jacob; Proserpine carried off by Pluto; card players; Flemish paintings, subjects unknown; a landscape; the Roman daughter; Landscape with the figure of an Anchorite; monastery of St. Bernard & Monks; a fish piece; a descent from the cross; Siege of Gibraltar; a figure of the Saviour, half length; Landscape, with figures; Expulsion of Adam & Eve from Paradise; Annunciation of the Virgin; Crucifixion; A descent from the cross; a fruit piece; the flight into Egypt, landscape; the persecution of the Saviour; a poultry yard; portrait of Charles the 12th in

armour; Interior of a kitchen; Arrival of Ulysses in the Island of Calypso; representation of Game; blacksmiths in a forge; persons drinking; landscape with a hunting party; a storm at sea; a magic lantern; portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Madison; portrait of Jefferson by Peele; a magdalen; pan-youth & Nymphs; a fruit piece; interior of a Dutch church; Chinese painting of the Emperor & family; View of Ghent; Mr. and Mrs. Madison by Wood;

In Washington City, Mrs. Madison's residence on President's Square [Lafayette's Square]:

"Jesus appearing to his disciples Peter & Cleophas, Ferdinand Cortez, Magellan, C. Columbus, Americus Vesputius, Raleigh, Bard & Saint, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Monroe."

Mary Cutts, *Life at Montpelier, as Remembered by a Niece of Dolley Madison*, ca. 1855, Montpelier Monograph 01-F0323, Cutts Papers, Library of Congress, photocopy at Montpelier Archives.

Montpelier Interior: "The drawing room was covered with persian carpet, the walls entirely concealed with mirrors and pictures, among the latter were many by Stuart, Washington, Jefferson, Adams, himself and Mrs. Madison, by that renowned artist, the Declaration of Independence, and some of the signers, were conspicuous. Statuary, beautifully chiseled, occupied the mantel. Mr. Madison's favorite seat was in a campeachy chair; the sofas were covered with crimson damask—three glass doors, opening in the centre on the back portico, displayed the entertwined pillars and lovely lawn. The halls and passages waxed and highly polished; one, connecting the 'old lady's' apartments with the elegant ones of her son, was hung entirely with oil paintings, generally from the ancient masters; choice engravings everywhere else—the walls of the large dining room were also covered with pictures, all of interest, having some history attached to each; a large Napoleon in his ermine robes, Louis the fourteenth, Confucious, the Chinese Philosopher, an African king, an occasional portrait of some favorite servant by a good artist—a painting in watercolor of Mr. Jefferson by his enthusiastic admirer and *lover* Kosiousco, views of Constantinople and St. Petersburg, framed medalions, testimonials of respect and admiration from crowned heads and simple citizens. A large, long and wide well polished mahogany table, and sideboard borne down with silver, the accumulation of three families, are well remembered."

"Adjoining the dining room was Mr. Madison's sitting room, furnished with chairs and bedstead of iron, high posts and heavy canopy of crimson damask bought by Mr. Monroe, when special agent from the dismantled palace of the Tuleries—also many pieces of china which belonged to the ill-fated Maria Antoinette; here were hung the trophies from the George Town ball [a gala send-off in DC where, according to Cutts,

“the walls were covered with transparencies. Paintings and verses executed on white velvet and most richly framed were sent to Montpelier and ever afterward hung in a favorite room of Mr. Madison’s”] besides mirrors and pictures; an armchair and desk completed the furniture of the room. The last few years of his life, his fingers were so affected by rheumatism that he dined at his small table, in his room (having his dinner cut for him) placed sufficiently near the door of the dining room for him to converse with his guests.”

“The statuary filled a room which went by the name of ‘clock room out of respect for an old fashioned English Clock which for years had regulated the establishment and still actively performs its duty in his nephew’s house, relieved by its removal from the task of ticking, year in and year out, to the marble ears of Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Paul Jones, the Emperor Alexander and his Empress, La Fayette, Baldwin, Barlow, Gallatin, Clay & besides Guido’s Hours, Cupids, Psyche, and what Mrs. Madison valued most, a profile of Mr. Madison in marble, one of the most successful efforts of Carracci, who lost his life in prison because he designed the Infernal machine.”

## APPENDIX E

## FIGURES

FIGURE 1  
Location Map  
Chesapeake Bay Region, 1994

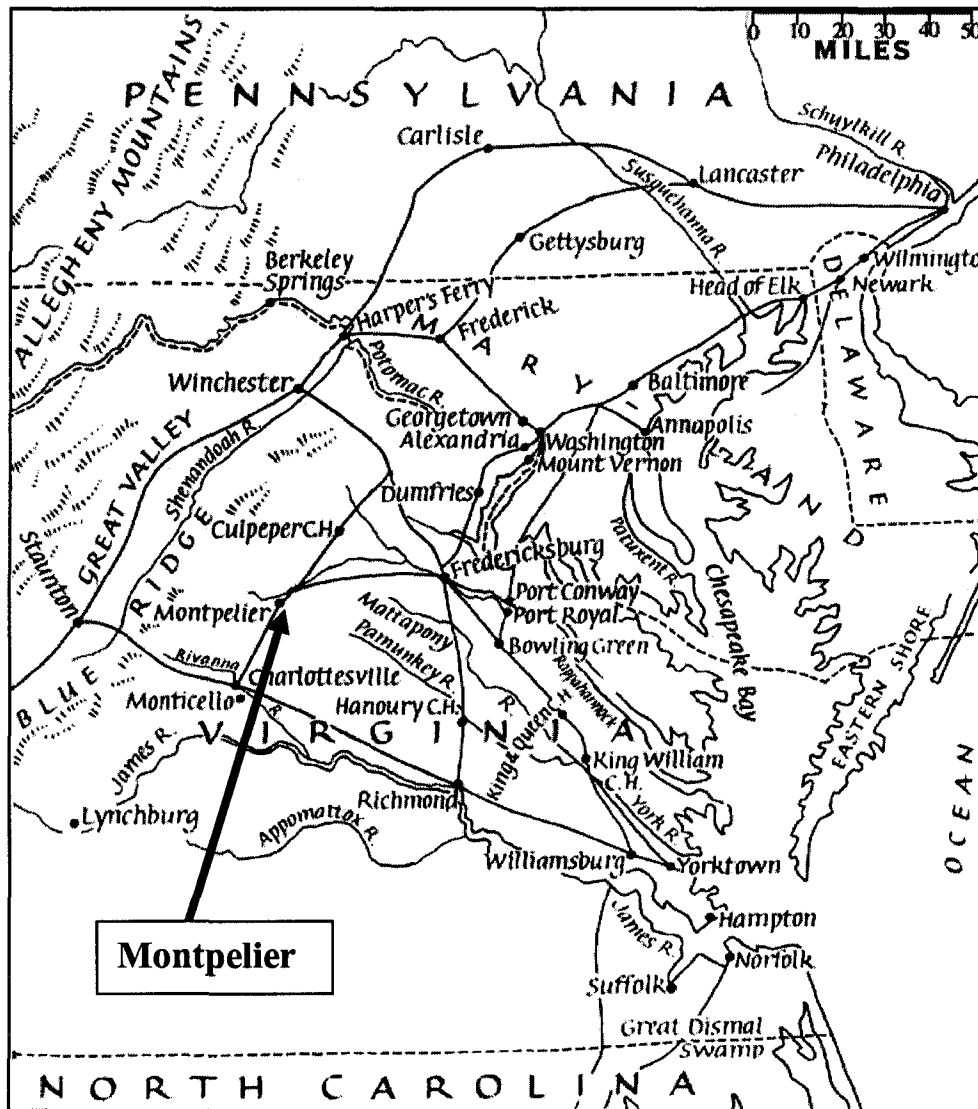


Image Source: National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Not to Scale



FIGURE 2  
Montpelier Site Map

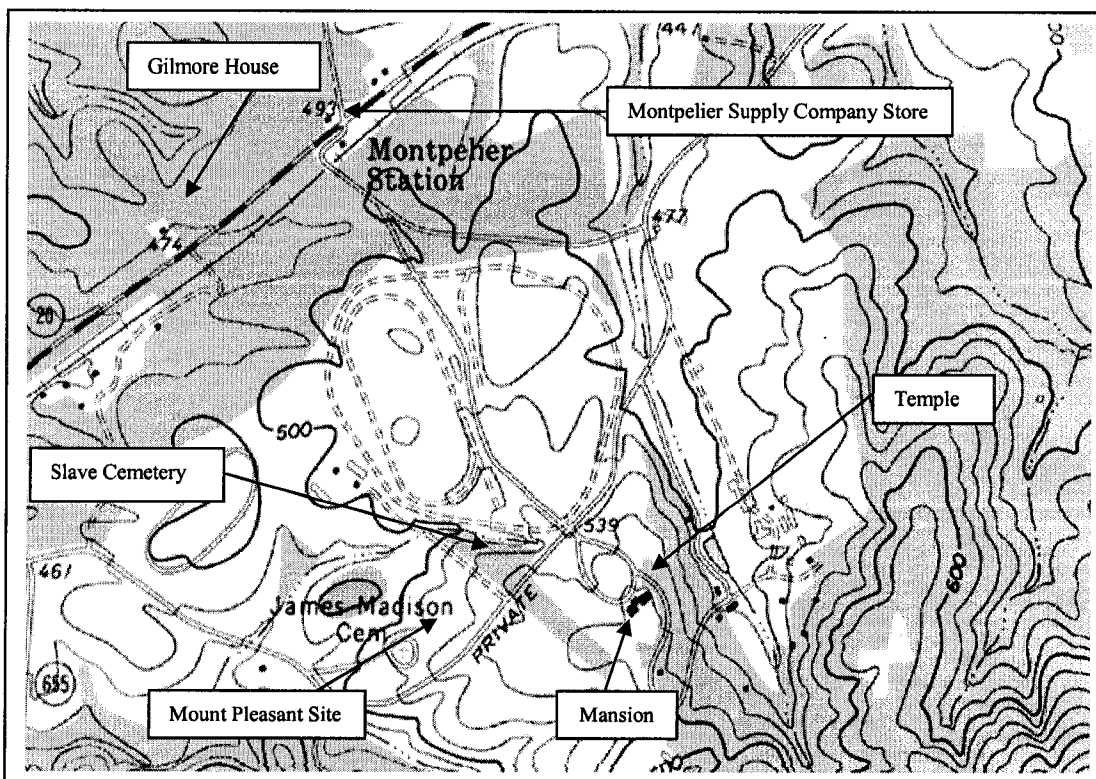


Image Source: Gordonsville, Virginia. USGS, 1978, 7.5 Minute Topographic Map

FIGURE 3  
Montpelier  
Speculative Floor Plan, ca. 1760

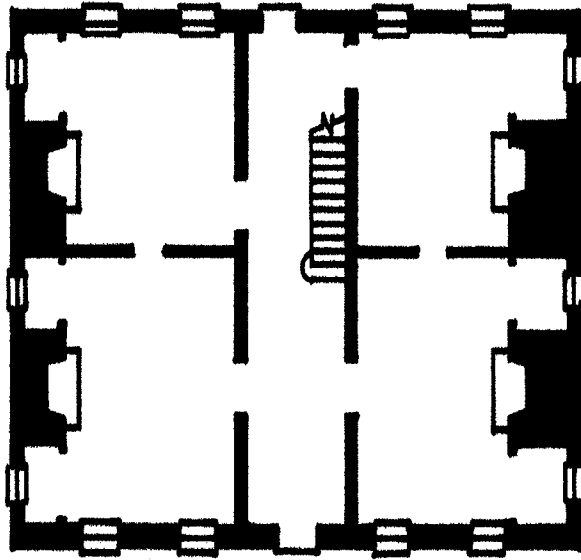
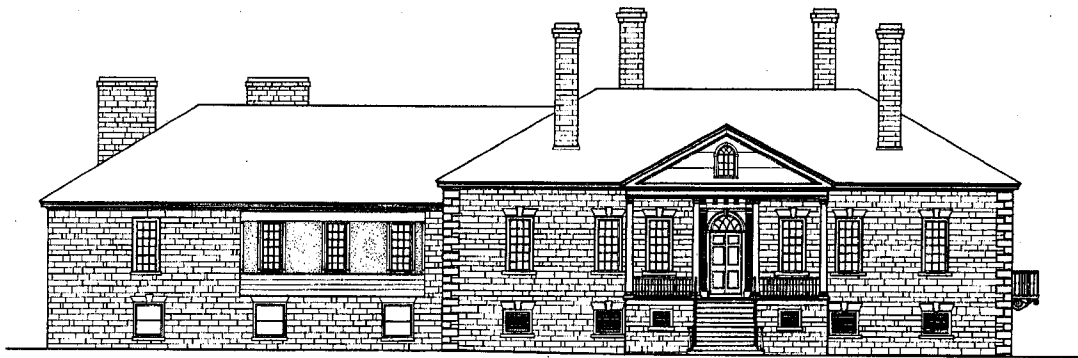


Image Source: Historic American Buildings Survey, Robert McGinnis, 1985  
Not to Scale

FIGURE 4

Belle Grove, 1795  
South Façade



SOUTH FRONT ELEVATION

Image Source: Historic American Buildings Survey, Steve Roberts, 1972  
Not to Scale

FIGURE 5  
 Belle Grove, 1795  
 Main Floor Plan

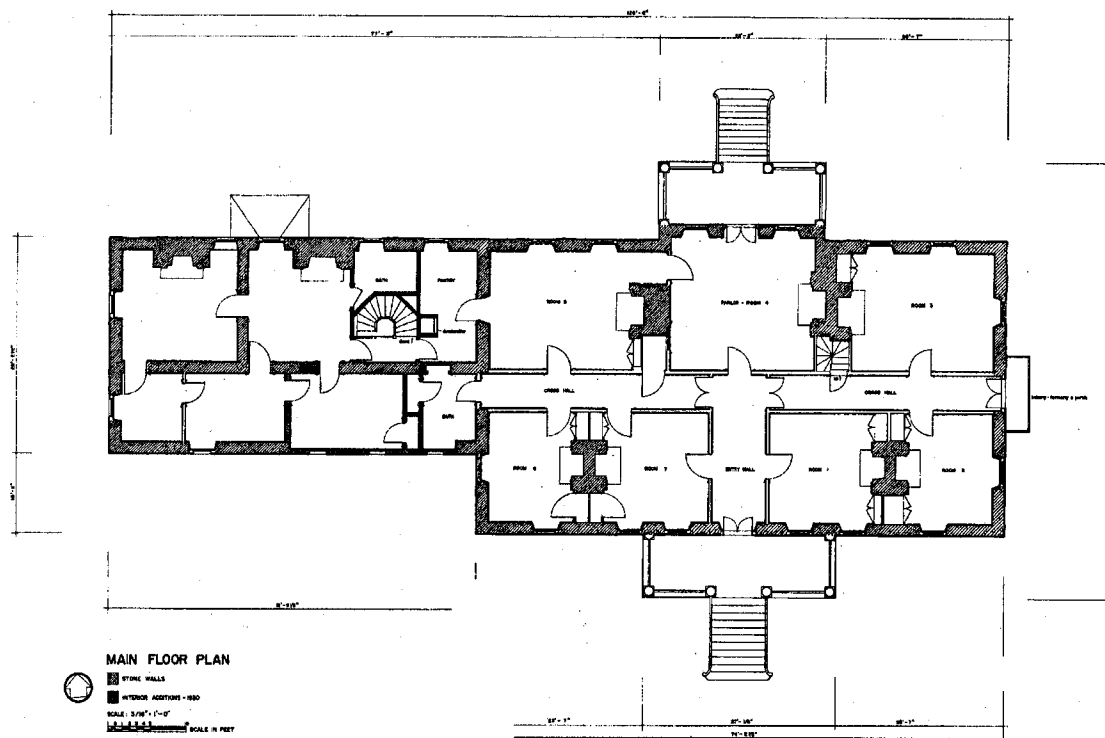


Image Source: Historic American Buildings Survey, Steve Roberts, 1972  
 Not to Scale

FIGURE 6

Montpelier  
Speculative Floor Plan, ca. 1812

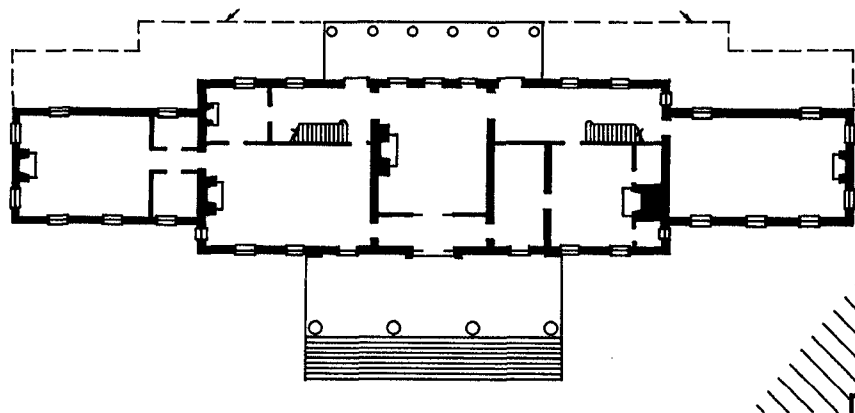


Image Source: Historic American Buildings Survey, Robert McGinnis, 1985  
Not to Scale

FIGURE 7

Montpelier, 1836  
J.F.E Prud'homme after John G. Chapman.

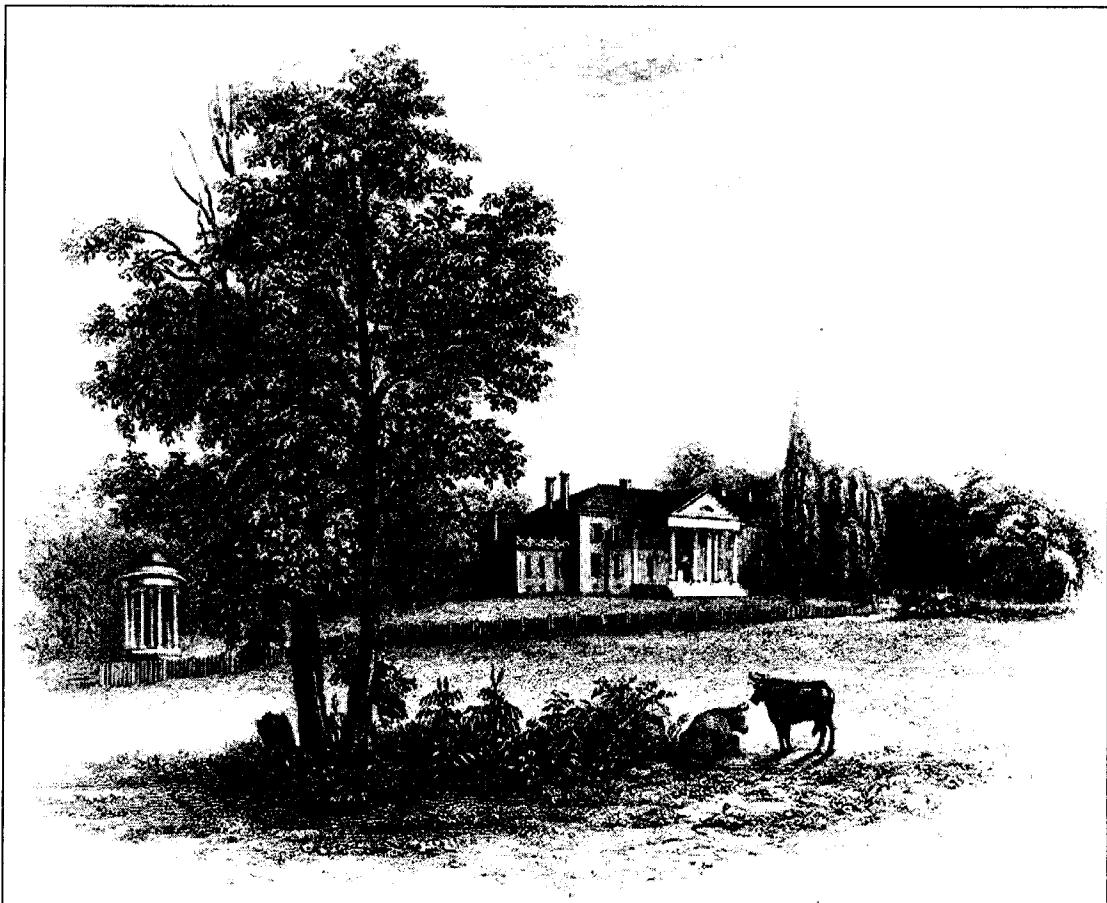


Image Source: Library of Virginia

FIGURE 8

Montpelier Temple, 1930



Image Source: Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Gardens

FIGURE 9

Estouteville, 1830  
Façade ca. 1930



Image Source: Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Gardens



FIGURE 10  
Oak Hill, 1823  
South Façade, ca. 1880

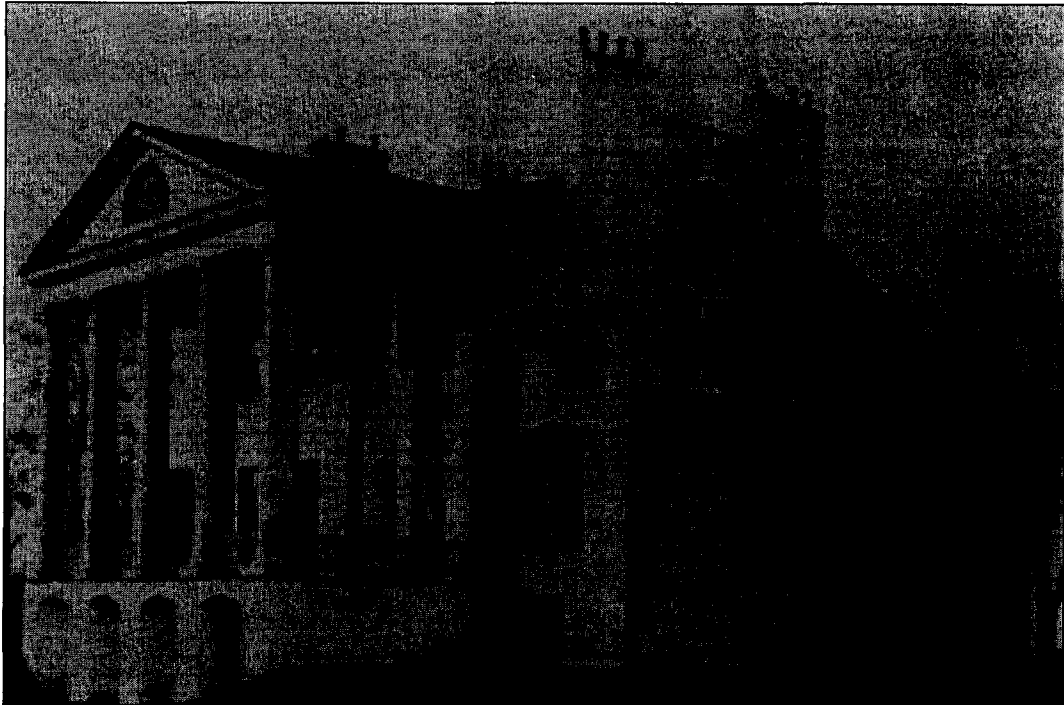


Image Source: Fiske Kimball Fine Arts Library, University of Virginia

FIGURE 11

Oak Hill, 1823  
South Façade ca. 1853



Image Source: Fiske Kimball Fine Arts Library, University of Virginia

## FIGURE 12

Oak Hill, 1823  
North Façade ca. 1880



Image Source: Fiske Kimball Fine Arts Library, University of Virginia

FIGURE 13

Oak Hill, 1823  
North Façade, ca. 1930

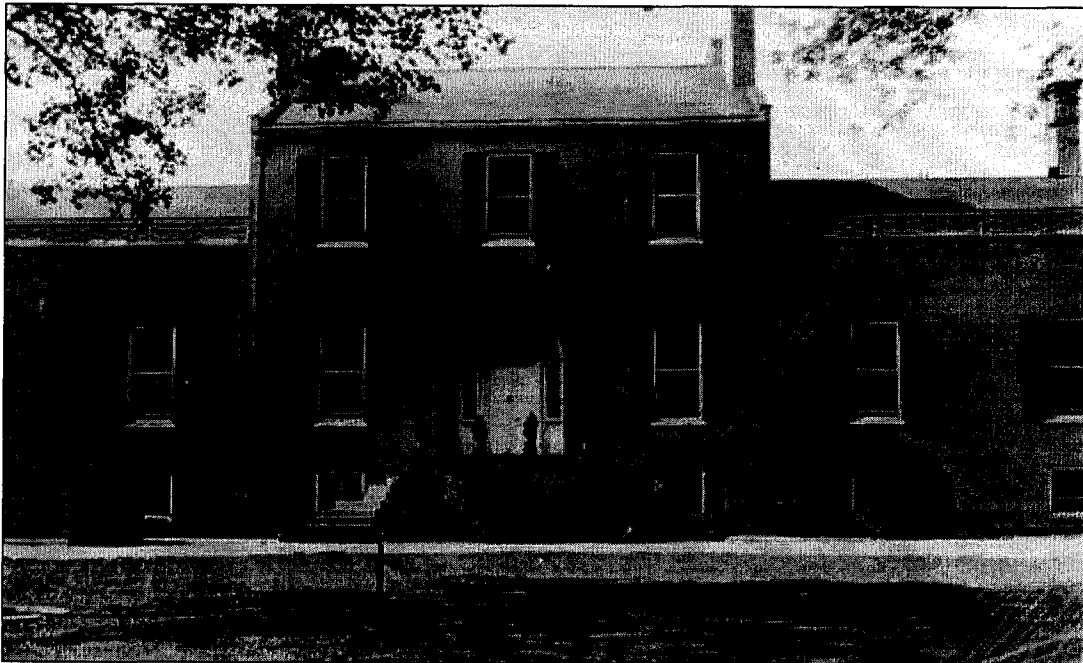


Image Source: Library of Virginia, Virginia Historical Inventory Project

FIGURE 14  
Montpelier  
Façade, pre-1901

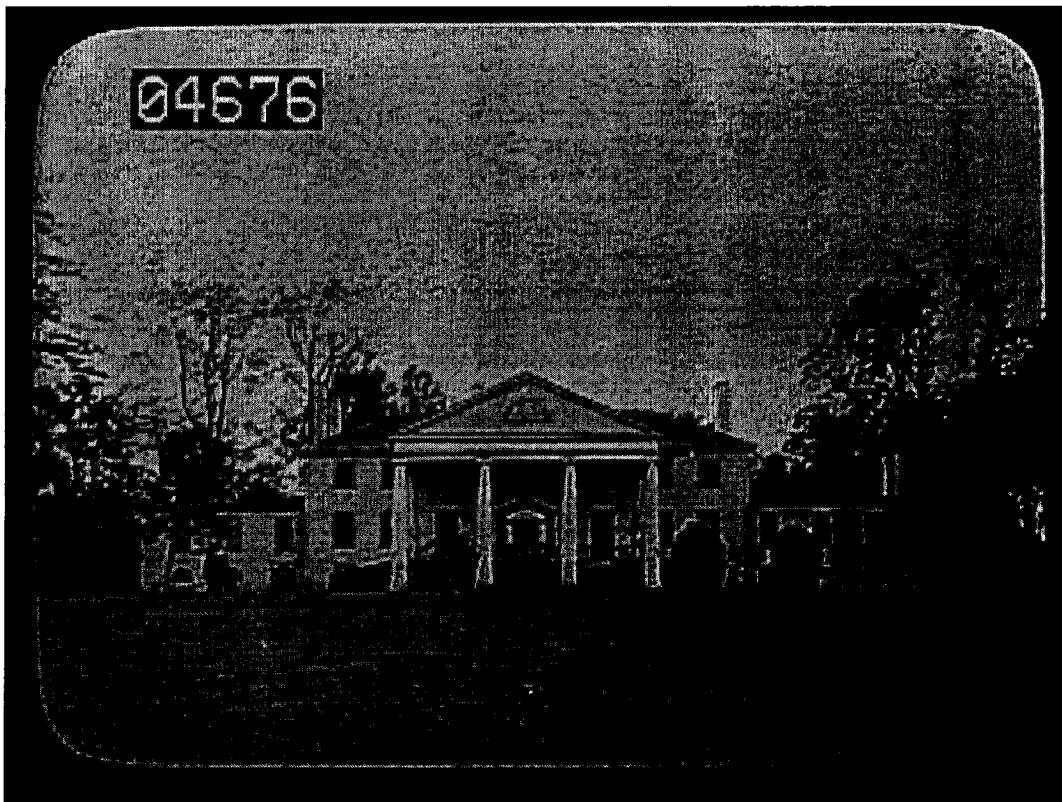


Image Source: Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Gardens

FIGURE 15

## duPont Scrapbook Selection

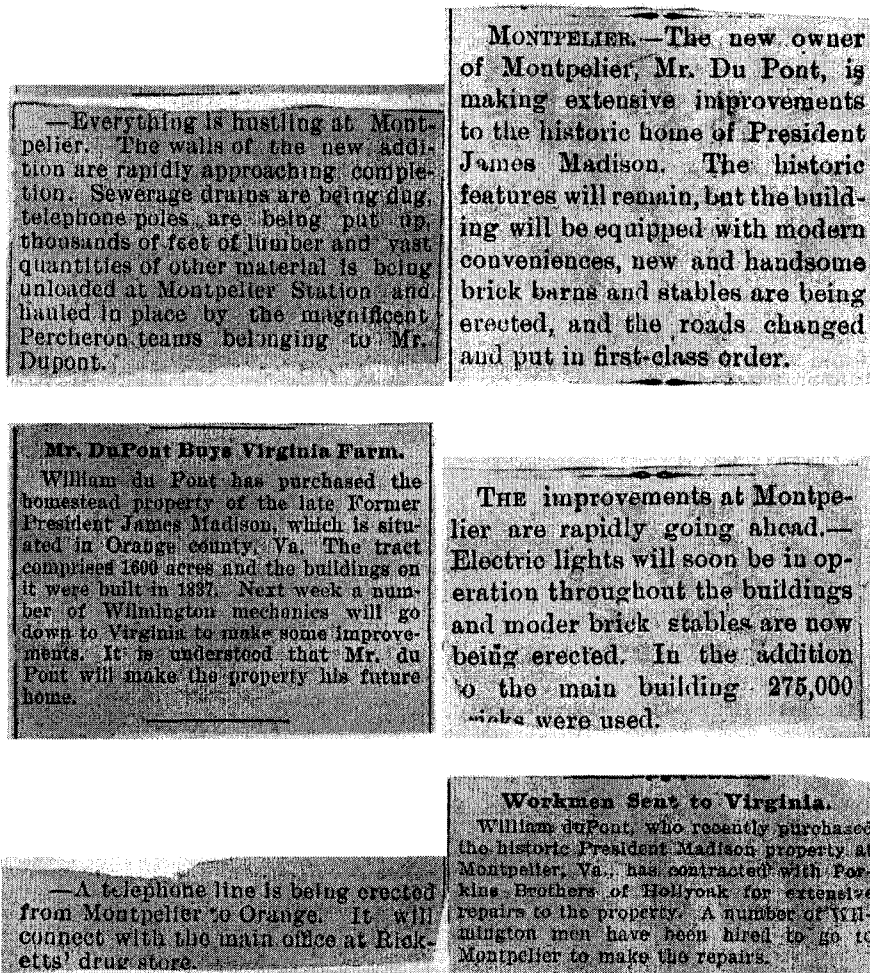


Image Source: Courtesy of Montpelier Archives  
Used with Permission

## FIGURE 16

## duPont Scrapbook Selection

—The east wing of the Montpelier mansion is being widened thirty-two feet. The addition will be seventy-six feet, extending east beyond the wing twenty-one feet, the whole addition being 76x32 feet. The west wing will be widened 22 feet, the addition being 45 feet long, but not extending beyond the wing as in the case on the east wing, so that the addition to that wing will be 45x32 feet. The rear portico will not be changed. The same sized windows as are now in the wings will be used in the addition. The whole addition will be raised to the height of the main building. There is no contracting, the work being done entirely by day labor. A large force of hands are at work on the building. All of the work is being done on the south side of the historic mansion. Poles are being gotten for a telephone line to Orange. I find Mr. Wm. Dupont an exceedingly affable and pleasant gentleman.

The Montpelier mansion is being wired for electric lights and the foundation of a large brick stable has been laid.

Image Source: Courtesy of Montpelier Archives  
Used with Permission

FIGURE 17

Montpelier  
DuPont, First Floor Plan, 1902

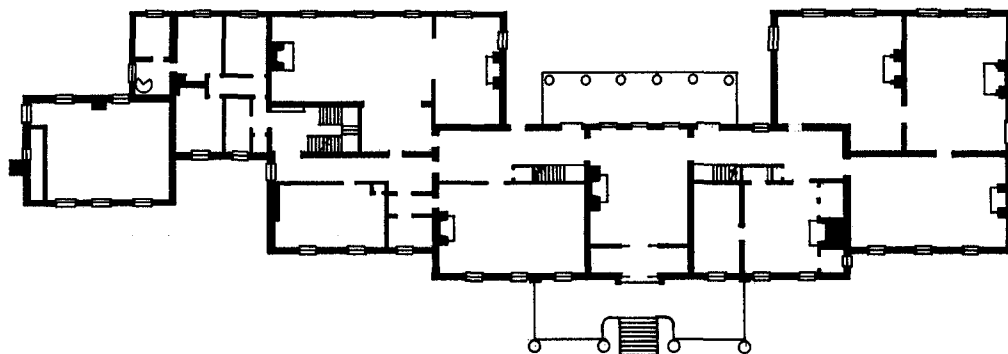
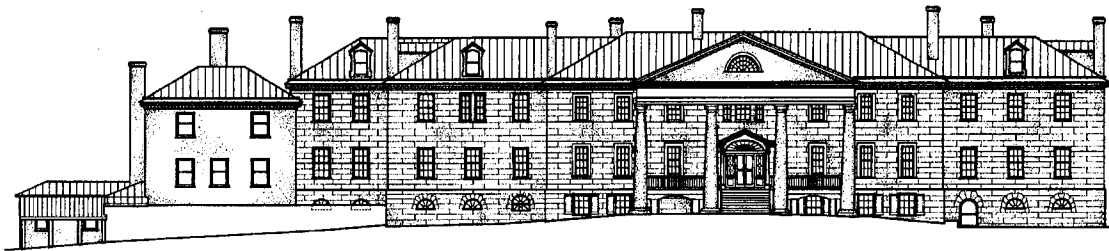


Image Source: Historic American Buildings Survey, Robert McGinnis, 1985  
Not to Scale



FIGURE 18  
Montpelier  
Façade and Rear Elevations, 1902



NORTHWEST ELEVATION

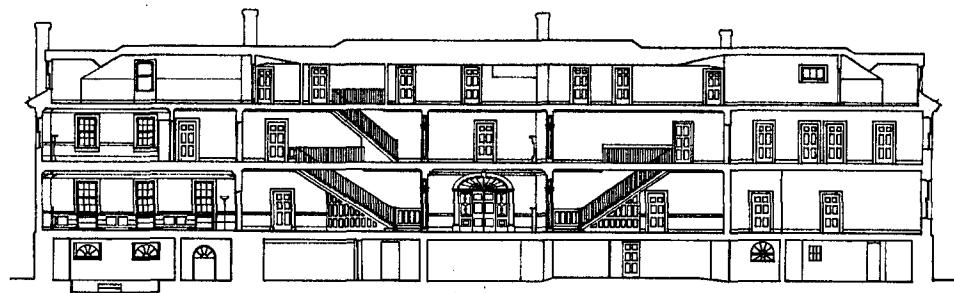


SOUTHEAST ELEVATION

Image Source: Historic American Buildings Survey, Robert McGinnis, 1985  
Not to Scale

FIGURE 19

Montpelier  
Building Section, 1902



BUILDING SECTION

Image Source: Historic American Buildings Survey, Robert McGinnis, 1985  
Not to Scale

FIGURE 20  
Montpelier Depot



NORTH FACADE

SCALE - 1/4"=1'-0" (1"=40)  
FEET 0 1 2 3 4 5  
METERS 0 1 2 3 4



SOUTH FACADE

SCALE - 1/4"=1'-0" (1"=40)  
FEET 0 1 2 3 4 5  
METERS 0 1 2 3 4

Image Source: Historic American Buildings Survey, Gray Bryan, 1977  
Not to Scale

FIGURE 21  
Montpelier Depot  
First Floor Plan

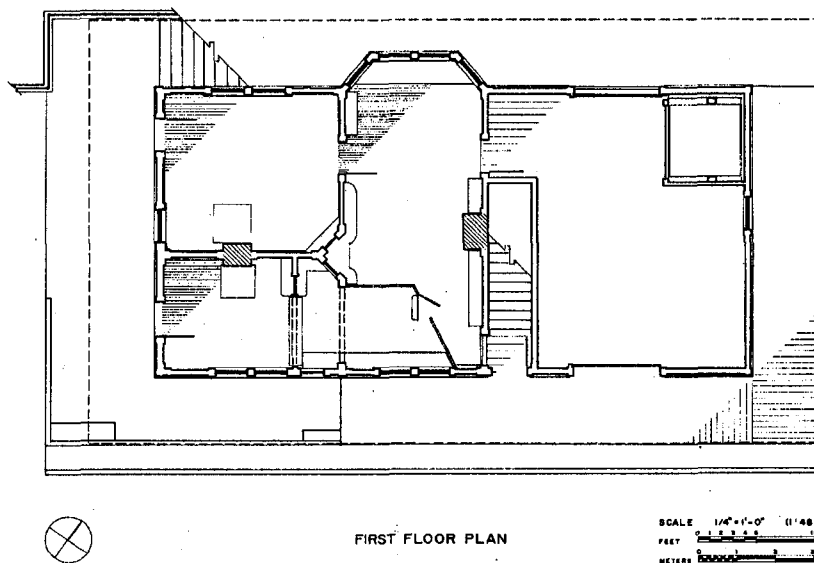


Image Source: Historic American Buildings Survey, Margaret Hilliard, 1977  
Not to Scale

FIGURE 22

Montpelier  
Formal Garden, duPont Period, ca. 1930

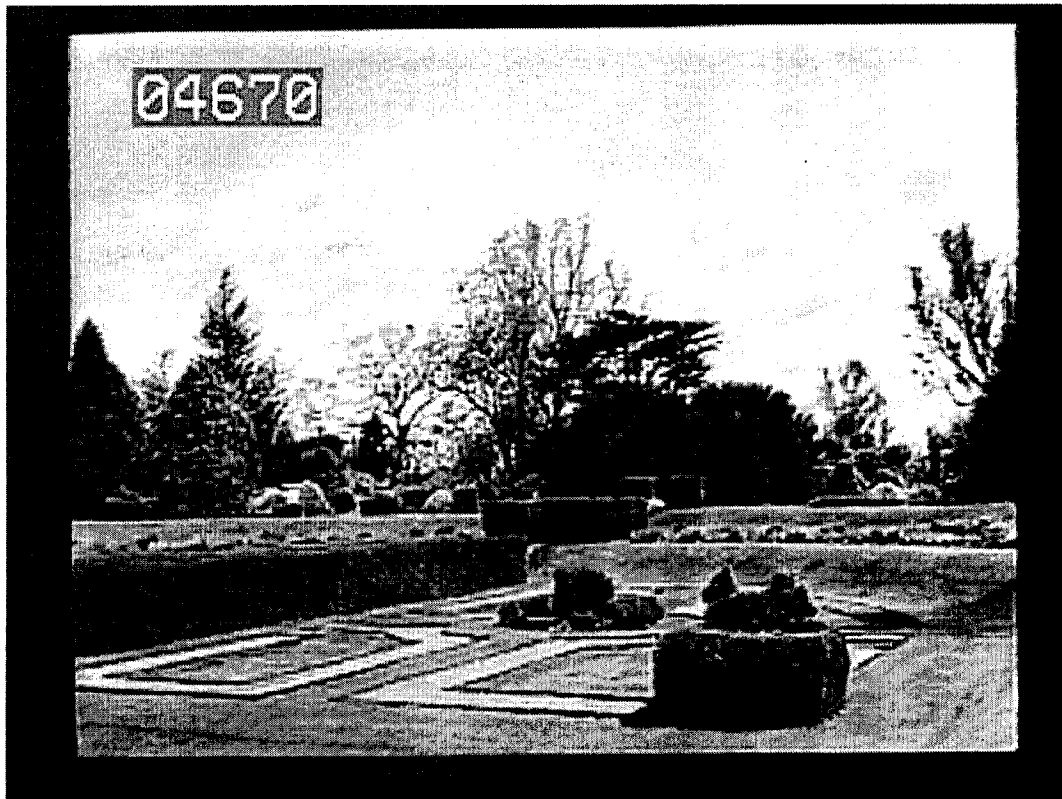


Image Source: Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Gardens

FIGURE 23

Montpelier Farm Hand  
duPont Scrapbook



Image Source: Courtesy of Montpelier Archives  
Used with Permission

FIGURE 24  
Montpelier, Façade  
1994



Image Source: Philip Beaurline, National Trust for Historic Preservation

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## VITA

## MATTHEW GANTERT HYLAND

Matthew Gantert Hyland was born in Richmond, Virginia, on 13 August 1967. He graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in that city in June 1985, during the racial desegregation of the city's schools. Matthew Hyland received his B.A. at The University of Notre Dame du Lac with a degree in American Studies in 1989. He received his M.A. at The University of Wyoming in American Studies in 1995.

In that year, the author entered the doctoral program in American Studies at the College of William and Mary. He defended his dissertation in the Blue Room of the Wren Building in March 2004. Currently, he works for a cultural resource management consulting firm as an architectural historian in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.