

The Lives & Experiences of Enslaved Laborers at Monticello

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Descriptive Subtitle: Students will become more knowledgeable and empathetic of enslaved people living at Monticello under Thomas Jefferson. Students will study primary source accounts and interact with a virtual map of Mulberry Row. Students will work in small groups, independently and in whole group settings.

Grade Level: High School

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Duration: 1.5-2 hrs., can be modified to be shorter

Overview: Students will become more knowledgeable and empathetic of enslaved people living at Monticello under Thomas Jefferson. Students will study primary source accounts and interact with a virtual map of Mulberry Row. Students will work in small groups, independently and in whole group settings.

Prior Knowledge: Students should have a brief background on Jefferson's career as well as the institution of slavery and cultural, economic and political traits of the southern colonies, particularly Virginia.

Standards:

New Jersey:

6.1.4.D.9 Explain the impact of trans-Atlantic slavery on New Jersey, the nation, and individuals.

6.1.4.D.14 Trace how the American identity evolved over time.

6.1.8.A.3.a Examine the ideals found in the Declaration of Independence, and assess the extent to which they were fulfilled for women, African Americans, and Native Americans during this period

Objectives:

The learner will be able to

- Summarize the layout and function of various structures of Mulberry Row by exploring a digital map
- Explain how Mulberry Row served to economically sustain Monticello by studying individual shops along the row
- Analyze primary sources of enslaved people from Monticello
- Evaluate primary source accounts to discuss life at Monticello from the perspective of an enslaved laborer including information about family life and duties

Steps:

1. Anticipatory Set/Warm Up (10 min): Consider the following quote of Thomas Jefferson's in regards to the institution of slavery. Answer the prompts that follow:

"We have the wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other."

1. What do you think Jefferson means, in your own words?
2. What is the "self-preservation" that he is referring to?
3. Why does Jefferson use a wolf as a metaphor for the institution of slavery?
4. Direct Instruction (15 min): Teacher will provide brief overview of life at Monticello, including information about the Jefferson/Randolph family, the Hemings, Mulberry Road and more.
5. Independent Activity (25–30 min): Students will complete a "Web Quest" activity exploring the layout and functioning of Mulberry Row to gain a better understanding of it's significance in the life of enslaved people at Monticello. Students will utilize: <https://www.monticello.org/mulberry-row/places/phase-ii> and will complete a guided question worksheet for activity. Following approximately 25-30 min of independent work, students will have time to share out their findings with the class.
6. Small Groups (25–30 min): Students will work in small groups to examine one of the four primary source accounts regarding life at Monticello. Students will read documents and complete analysis guide related to their specific document
7. Whole Group (15–20 min): Students will share out their readings. Teacher will use student share outs to complete large anchor charts which will compile all student's ideas into different categories including "Family Life, Work & Duties, Descriptions of Jefferson, Life After Monticello." Teacher will use four different colored markers for each chart to show which show it is from

Materials:

Digital Tools:

- Mulberry Row Structures & Purposes: <https://www.monticello.org/mulberry-row/places/phase-ii>
- Primary Accounts: Enslaved Laborers @ Monticello

o Isaac Jefferson

[https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/ Life of Isaac Jefferson of Petersburg Virginia](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Life_of_Isaac_Jefferson_of_Petersburg_Virginia)

Blacksmith by Isaac Jefferson 1847

Madison Hemings <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jefferson/cron/1873march.html>

Israel Jefferson <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jefferson/cron/1873israel.html>

Peter Fossett <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jefferson/slaves/memoir.html>

Worksheets to Pair with Lesson:

- Mulberry Row Web Quest (see page 4)
- Primary Source Analysis Worksheet (see page 5-6)

Assessment(s):

- Web quest, Primary Source Analysis W.S., Group Discussion and Corroboration

Assessment Criteria:

- Questioning for understanding, formative assessment of group discussion, Web quest and

Primary Source Analysis W.S. as classwork grades.

Accommodations:

- Teacher could shorten/modify primary sources for lower level students
- Teacher could have students examine all four sources for higher level students

Mulberry Row Web Quest

- Locate & select the joiner's shop on the map
- What was the purpose of the joiner's shop? What types of things were produced there?
- How would the shop contribute to the develop of Monticello?

List the names of two enslaved people who worked in this shop.

Locate & select the servant's house on the map.

- Who lived in the servant's house?
- What measurements were the servant's houses?

Locate & select the nailery on the map.

- When was the nailery opened? What year was it in operation until?
- Approximately how many nails were produced each day?
- List the name of one enslaved nailer:

Locate & select the coal sheds on the map.

- Describe the physical appearance of the coal sheds.
- Approximately how many tons of coal would be needed to produce one nailrod?

Primary Sources: Accounts of Enslaved Laborers at Monticello

Directions: You will work with small groups to read and analyze one of the four accounts from Jefferson's formerly enslaved. For each of the categories, please state an overview of the person's general description as well as quotes to support your findings with paragraph numbers in parenthesis. Following our small group analysis, we will work as a whole class to corroborate the accounts, find common threads and discuss what life may have been like at Monticello for these people.

Person:

Family Life

- What does the person say about their family life? Describe their family dynamic and tree including parents and siblings. Use quotes and paragraph numbers to support your response.

Work & Duties

- What type of job(s) does your person have at Monticello? At what age do they begin that job? Are there any daily duties as discussed in the source? What types of other jobs do they mention, perhaps jobs of family members? Use quotes and paragraph numbers to support your response.

Descriptions of Jefferson

- How is Thomas Jefferson described in the source? Include information about physical appearance, health, personality, etc. Use quotes and paragraph numbers to support your response.

Life After Monticello

- Does your person move to another region? Do they marry/have children? Describe things in their life after leaving Monticello. Use quotes and paragraph numbers to support your response.