

## Working in the Great House

Reading Level: Elementary School

### House Slaves

Jefferson called his house slaves “servants.” They were at their master’s beck and call seven days a week. They swept and polished, mended and washed, cooked and served for family and guests. Sally Hemings had to care for Jefferson’s children and “do such light work as sewing.” Israel Jefferson recalls that he “made the fire in his [Jefferson’s] bedroom and private chamber, cleaned his office, dusted his books.”



Bells like this one still attached to its spring were once part of system that Jefferson and his family could use to summon servants or call guests to dinner.

### Cooks

The cooks in Monticello’s kitchen baked breads and muffins. They fixed vegetables from the garden and fruit from the orchard. They roasted and stewed meats and poultry. They made fancy desserts. Ice cream made with an ice cream freezer was a favorite at Monticello.



Jefferson enjoyed grand meals. Cooks James Hemings, Edith Fossett and Frances Hern were trained by French chefs. At Monticello, they fixed food using a stove with ‘stew-holes’ and two bake ovens. Kitchen helpers kept the fires going. They carried water and washed dishes. They peeled and sliced fruit and vegetables.

Monticell’s kitchen, restored to its 1809 configuration