

REALITIES OF SLAVERY AT MONTICELLO

Emily Rourke, Monticello Teacher Institute 2014

*All photos and information courtesy of classroom.monticello.org and
www.monticello.org*

Jefferson and His Slaves

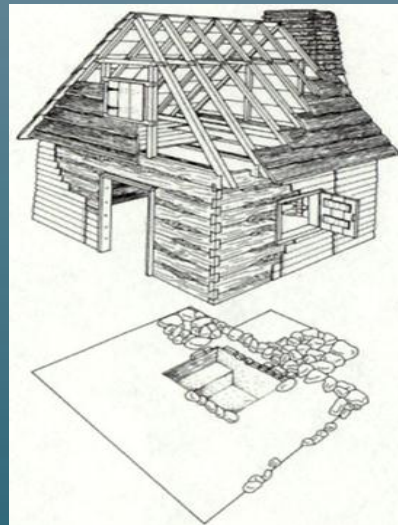
- In his lifetime, Jefferson owned as many as 600 slaves.
- He purchased fewer than 20 slaves, usually to unite families or for labor needs.
- Jefferson was known to “gift” as many as 85 of his slaves to other family members.
- He sold as many as 120 slaves in his lifetime for his own financial needs.
- Jefferson freed two men in his lifetime, freed five men in his will and unofficially freed three more slaves who he allowed to run away without pursuit.

Mulberry Row: location of workshops & slave cabins



Mulberry Row : The center of activity on the plantation.

- It included more than 20 workshops, dwellings, and storage buildings where enslaved people, indentured servants, and free black and white workmen lived.
- They worked as weavers, spinners, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, nail-makers, carpenters, sawyers, charcoal-burners, stablemen, joiners, or domestic servants.



Artist's rendition of slave cabin

Structures of Mulberry Row



foundation of Stone
House

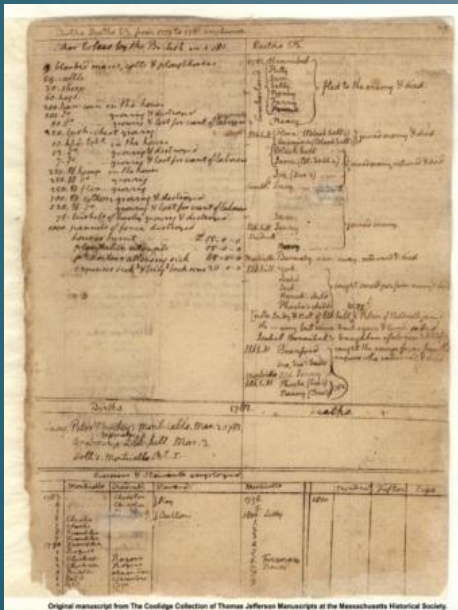


site of the nailery &
blacksmith shop



Weaver's Cottage where
weaving & cloth-making
took place

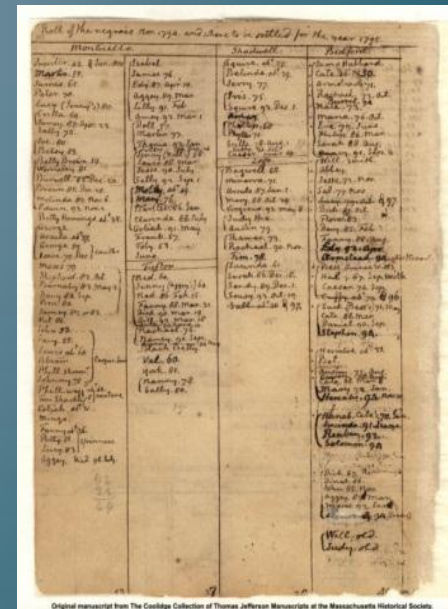
Thomas Jefferson kept meticulous records regarding his slaves and tending to them in his “Farm Book”.



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



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Birth and death records,
1779-1781

names & ages

Roll & where he was settled,
1794

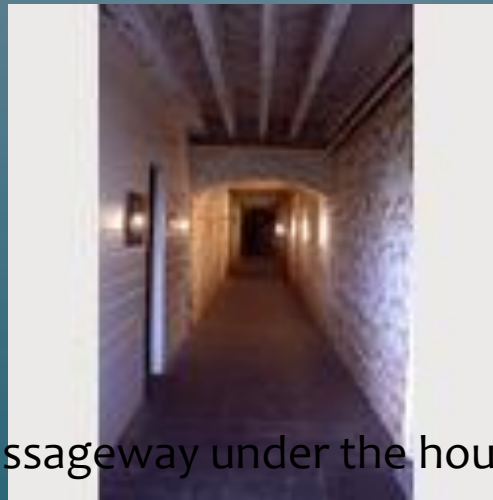
Under Monticello



kitchen



cook's room



Passageway under the house

Crafts and labor of Monticello's slaves

Table from the joinery



Nails from the nailery



Coopering: making barrels and buckets

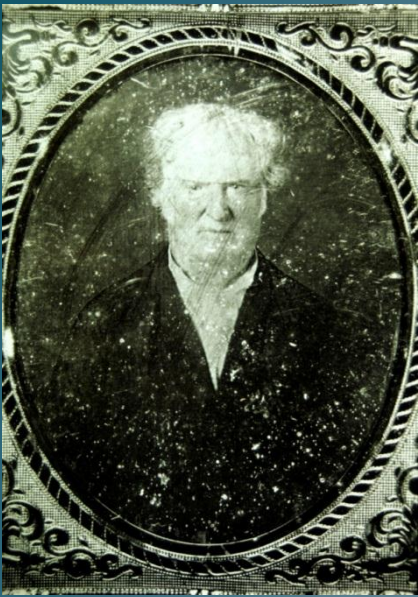


Blacksmith, Isaac Jefferson,
born at Monticello in 1775

Rivanna River was used for transporting what from the plantation to Richmond.



What may be hardest for us to imagine today is that there were not *this many* trees at Monticello. Try to visualize the hills around the house with fields of wheat growing, and cabins for the overseer & slave families .



Overseer, Edmund Bacon

Distribution of Blankets

1771 & 1772	1773 & 1774	1775 & 1776	Distributions of Coats made
Johnston	Johnston	Johnston	1782 &
Collis	Collis	Collis	1783 &
...

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

Distribution of blankets

Distribution of clothes for Decr 1774

Rule for the quantity of clothes, according to the latter 3. D. rule

The quantity of clothes given, in answer to the former rule, is as follows

Name	1774	1775	1776	1777	1778	1779	1780	1781	1782
George
...

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

Distribution of clothes



Sample of weekly food rations
for adult slaves: cornmeal, fish & pork

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Even Thomas Jefferson
had slaves run away:



“RUN away from the subscriber
in *Albemarle*, a Mulatto slave called *Sandy*,
about 35 years of age, his stature is rather low,
inclining to corpulence, and his complexion light;
he is a shoemaker by trade, in which he uses his
left hand principally, can do coarse carpenters
work, and is something of a horse jockey; he is
greatly addicted to drink, and when drunk is inso-
lent and disorderly, in his conversation he swears
much, and in his behaviour is artful and knavish.
He took with him a white horse, much scarred
with *traces*, of which it is ex-pected he will
endeavour to dispose; he also carried his shoe-
makers tools, and will probably endeavor to get
employment that

way. Whoever conveys the said slave to me, in
Albemarle, shall have 40 s. (shillings) reward, if
taken up within the county, 4 l. (pounds) if
elsewhere

within the colony, and 10 l. if in any other colony,
from

THOMAS JEFFERSON.”

At his death in 1826, Thomas Jefferson's debt amounted to \$107,000.

This is about 4.2 million dollars in today's terms.

- Some debt he inherited from his father-in-law.
- Farming proved to be an unreliable and inadequate source of income; payments owed to him were unreliable and inadequate as well.
- Jefferson had expensive tastes, spending large amounts of money on building projects, furnishings, wine, etc.
- The financial panic that occurred in 1819 added a substantial burden onto his already-substantial debt.
- In 1818, Jefferson endorsed a \$20,000 note for a friend who died in 1820, and Jefferson was forced to take on his unpaid debt.

Despite Jefferson's wish for his family to keep Monticello, after his death they were forced to sell many items from the home, including the slaves who were not freed in his will. The house and property were sold four years later.

Advertisement for Thomas Jefferson's Estate Sale

EXECUTOR'S SALE.

WILL be sold on the premises, on the first day of January, 1827, that well known and valuable estate called Poplar Forest, lying in the counties of Bedford and Campbell, the property of Thomas Jefferson, dec. within eight miles of Lynchburg and three of New London; also about 70 likely and valuable negroes, with stock, crops, &c. The terms of sale will be accommodating and made known previous to the day.

On the fifteenth of January, at Monticello, in the county of Albemarle; the whole of the residue of the personal property of Thomas Jefferson, dec., consisting of 130 valuable negroes, stock, crop, &c. household and kitchen furniture. The attention of the public is earnestly invited to this property. The negroes are believed to be the most valuable for their number ever offered at one time in the State of Virginia. The household furniture, many valuable historical and portrait paintings, busts of marble and plaister of distinguished individuals; one of marble of Thomas Jefferson, by Caracci, with the pedestal and truncated column on which it stands; a polygraph or copying instrument used by Thomas Jefferson, for the last twenty-five years; with various other articles curious and useful to men of business and private families. The terms of sale will be accommodating and made known previous to the day. The sales will be continued from day to day until completed. These sales being unavoidable, it is a sufficient guarantee to the public, that they will take place at the times and places appointed.

THOMAS J. RANDOLPH,
Executor of Th. Jefferson, dec.

Nov. 3. 51—tds