During Jefferson’s time, Monticello had eight word-burning fireplaces, along with two stoves on the main floor, to help stave off the cold of winter. Records indicate that the house was heated with about 10 cords of wood per month. The limited heat generated by stoves and fireplaces made some rooms moderately comfortable by today’s standards, and the house’s shutters were often closed to contain warmth.

The house was a quieter place in the winter months, with fewer visitors braving the elements to make their way up the mountaintop. The need for warmth created a more communal lifestyle, with family members gathering around the stoves and fireplaces. The Family Sitting Room — where Jefferson had modified a Rumford fireplace that was specially designed to radiate heat by burning wood rather than coal — was one of the warmest rooms in the house.

The Dining and Tea Rooms, located on the north side of the house, were the coldest places to be in the wintertime. To conserve heat, the windows in those rooms have a double thickness of glass, an insulating technique often used by modern builders. Additionally, a double set of sliding French doors could be closed to separate the slightly warmer Dining Room from the northernmost Tea Room.

A mid-December storm in 2020 coated Monticello’s grounds with a glaze of ice.