

Thomas Jefferson MONTICELLO

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NEH awards grant for Mulberry Row project

THE Thomas Jefferson Foundation has been awarded a grant of \$304,971 by the National Endowment for the Humanities to support the digitization, cataloging, and analysis of archaeological artifacts from Mulberry Row, the center of African-American activity on Thomas Jefferson's Monticello plantation, and to make the data freely available on the Internet.

The NEH funding will allow Monticello to complete its ongoing reassessment of artifacts collected from 16 Mulberry Row sites during major archaeological excavations in the 1980s.

Those excavations, initiated to shed light on the daily lives of the enslaved African Americans who lived and worked on the 1,000-foot-long dirt path located between the Monticello house and the terraced Vegetable Garden, uncovered more than 600,000 artifacts. The archaeological interpretation of these artifacts at the time relied largely on documents from the period, especially a 1796 plat of the area.

In 2000, staff archaeologists began the process of re-evaluating the Mulberry Row material by systematically cataloging the artifacts according to the protocols set by the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS), a research consortium based at Monticello. To date, work has been finished on the artifact collections from seven of the 16 Mulberry Row sites and is in progress on the

findings from three others.

The Mulberry Row Reassessment project is supervised by Karen Y. Smith, Monticello's curator of archaeological collections.

Data from the project will be made available in different forms on the DAACS Web site (www.daacs.org), a resource intended primarily for researchers, and on the Monticello Explorer (<http://explorer.monticello.org>), an interactive, multimedia feature designed for the general public.

"The NEH grant will let us complete the project and get analytical control over all the artifacts and their contexts from the slave houses and workshops that lined Mulberry Row in Jefferson's day," said Fraser D. Neiman, Monticello's director of archaeology. "When we finish, Monticello will be the only historic site in the country with complete, detailed data from all its archaeological projects on the Web."

NEH is an independent grant-making agency of the federal government dedicated to supporting research, education, preservation, and public programs in the humanities.

In awarding the grant to Monticello, NEH designated the Mulberry Row archaeology project a *We the People*



The NEH grant will help Monticello archaeologists complete the analysis of artifacts excavated from Mulberry Row sites in the 1980s.

project. *We the People* is an NEH initiative designed to encourage and strengthen the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture.

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