





Thomas Jefferson by Thomas Sully, 1856

**THE HOUSE**

If you had visited Monticello in Jefferson's time, you would have been greeted in this grand two-story room by Burwell Colbert, Jefferson's enslaved butler, or by one of the enslaved houseboys. The Great Clock above the doorway displays the time as well as the day of the week.



**HALL**

Jefferson displayed Native American objects given as diplomatic gifts to Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on their expedition. The Native American objects were displayed amid his wide-ranging collection of European art, maps of Virginia and the known continents, bones, fossils, horns, and skins of extinct and living North American animals.

**SOUTH SQUARE ROOM**

This small room is the only one on the main floor dedicated solely to Jefferson's family members. Jefferson's eldest daughter, Martha Jefferson Randolph, used it as her sitting room and office, and as a classroom for her children. From this room, she oversaw the household and domestic activities of the plantation.



**PARLOR**

Jefferson's family and their guests gathered to converse, read, and play games and musical instruments in the parlor with its elegant parquet floor. The room contained furniture that Jefferson acquired in France as well as pieces made in the joinery at Monticello. The walls featured portraits of notable philosophers, statesmen, navigators and explorers of the New World. Jefferson also hung paintings of biblical subjects with strong visual impact.



**DINING ROOM AND TEA ROOM**

The Jefferson family and their guests ate two main meals a day: breakfast was served around 8 in the morning and dinner at about 4 in the afternoon. The food served at Monticello blended French cuisine with Anglo-Colonial and African influences. The tea room was a seating area for wine and evening refreshments after dinner. During Jefferson's retirement Edith Fossett and Frances Hern, enslaved cooks, prepared food in the kitchen and the cellar of the house.



Learn about domestic work at Monticello through the **CROSSROADS** exhibition underneath the house.



Thomas Jefferson's polygraph  
Courtesy of the University of Virginia

**STUDY AND BEDCHAMBER**

Every day, Jefferson spent time reading and writing in his cabinet, or study. His desk holds a polygraph, a copying machine with two pens. When Jefferson wrote with one pen, the other made an exact copy. Jefferson saved copies of almost all of the approximately 19,000 letters he wrote in his lifetime.



Jefferson's bed was in an alcove between the cabinet and the bedroom. The design was a space-saving idea he borrowed from France. Jefferson died in this room on July 4, 1826.



**BOOK ROOM**

Jefferson kept his library of 6,700 books in this room in his private apartment, or suite. During the War of 1812, the British burned the US Capitol in Washington, DC, along with the congressional library. In 1815, Jefferson, by then greatly in debt, sold his library to the nation; his books became the nucleus of the present Library of Congress. Shortly after the sale, Jefferson wrote to John Adams, "I cannot live without books," and he began buying more. After his death, much of his library was sold to pay his debts, along with the house, most of its contents and the enslaved workers. Today, only a few original volumes remain from the retirement library at Monticello. The other books here are the same titles and editions as the originals. Jefferson firmly believed that educated citizens were essential to the survival of democracy.

**NORTH OCTAGONAL ROOM**

Frequent occupants of this semi-octagonal bedroom were the fourth president of the United States, James Madison, and his celebrated wife, Dolley. Madison was Jefferson's close friend and important ally; his estate, Montpelier, is about 30 miles—about a day's travel then—from Monticello.



**DOME ROOM**

Monticello's iconic design element was based on the Temple of Vesta in Rome as depicted by Palladio. Sometimes called the "skyroom," the Dome Room was at times used for guests, for storage, and as temporary living quarters for Jefferson's grandson and his wife.

**THE UPSTAIRS**

Occupied primarily by Jefferson's daughter, sister and grandchildren, these private quarters illustrate the dynamics of family life in the early 1800s and illuminate the interactions between all of Monticello's inhabitants - both enslaved and free. The second and third floors were often filled to capacity, accommodating what one family member described as "an almost perpetual round of company."

**MARTHA JEFFERSON**

Martha Jefferson Randolph, known as Patsy to family and friends, was the first child of Thomas Jefferson and his wife, Martha Wayles Skelton. She moved to Monticello after her father's retirement, where she focused on educating her 11 children and supervising domestic activities on the plantation.



Martha Jefferson Randolph's bedchamber



**MULBERRY ROW**

Named for the mulberry trees planted along it, Mulberry Row was the center of plantation activity at Monticello from the 1770s until Jefferson's death in 1826. Enslaved, free, and indentured workers and craftsmen lived and worked along Mulberry Row which changed over time to accommodate the varying needs of Monticello's construction and Jefferson's household and manufacturing initiatives. Changing over time as structures were built, removed, or repurposed, Mulberry Row had more than 25 workshops, dwellings, and storage buildings for weavers, spinners, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, nailmakers, carpenters, sawyers, charcoal burners, stablemen, joiners, or domestic servants.



**THE STONE STABLE**

The Stone Stable on Mulberry Row has been in almost continuous use since it was constructed in 1809. The stable was the transportation hub and conduit of goods that linked the mountaintop to the rest of Thomas Jefferson's plantations and, through the Jefferson family connections, the world. These two stone buildings were likely used to store feed and tack during Jefferson's lifetime.

**THE PLANTATION**

Jefferson divided his plantation into separate farms run by resident overseers who directed the labor of enslaved men, women, and children. Most of Jefferson's slaves came to him by inheritance. For most of his life he was the owner of about 200 enslaved people, two-thirds of them at Monticello and one-third at Poplar Forest. Tobacco was his main cash crop but he switched to wheat in the 1790s.



**STOREHOUSE FOR IRON**

Built around 1793, this log structure was recently reconstructed based on archaeological and documentary evidence. Jefferson referred to it as a "storehouse for nailrod & other iron," but it was also a site for tinsmithing, nailmaking, and domestic life.



**THE HEMMINGS CABIN**

Woodworker John Hemmings and his wife, Priscilla, likely lived in a cabin like this reconstruction. It represents one of three structures built circa 1793 on Mulberry Row for enslaved families. When creating this cabin, builders used traditional materials and methods.

Monticello  
Dependencies, Gardens and Grounds



**FLOWER GARDEN**

By 1808, Jefferson had laid out and planted 20 oval-shaped flower beds at the four corners of the house and a flower border along a gravelled walk encircling the West Lawn. The serpentine design of the flower walk and the oval "island" beds reflect Jefferson's interest in the informal style of landscape design, a field he considered "one of the seven fine arts."

**VEGETABLE GARDEN**

When Jefferson referred to his "garden," he meant his vegetable garden, on the southeast slope of the mountain. Although it provided food for the family table, the garden also functioned as a laboratory where he grew 330 varieties of some 99 species of vegetables and herbs. This was a revolutionary American garden and Jefferson's most enriching horticultural achievement. Today, the garden serves as a preservation seed bank of Jefferson-era and 19th-century vegetable varieties.



**GREENHOUSE**

Jefferson grew flowers and fragrant plants such as orange trees in his greenhouse, which is adjacent to his Book Room. He kept tools and a workbench there too, and may have installed an aviary for his pet mockingbirds. Attached to the greenhouse are two outdoor porches with moveable slats which control the amount of light entering the space.



**SOUTH TERRACE AND PAVILION**

This terrace, reserved for Jefferson and his family, leads to the South Pavilion, the first building erected on the mountaintop. The one-room living space that initially sheltered Jefferson alone soon had not one but three residents—in 1772 his wife, Martha, joined him in the South Pavilion, and later that year their eldest daughter was born.

**THE DEPENDENCIES**

A striking aspect of Jefferson's design for Monticello is the incorporation of the "dependencies," or essential service rooms, so that they were easily accessible, without the need to venture outdoors. They were invisible from the public spaces of the house. Two wings, with kitchen, smokehouse, dairy, ice house, and carriage bays, are connected by an all-weather passageway at the cellar level. Along this passageway are spaces for the storage of food, beverages, and firewood. In these dependencies the lives of Jefferson family members intersected with the lives of the enslaved African Americans who worked on the plantation as well as in the house.



**KITCHEN**

The Kitchen was among the best equipped kitchens in America complete with a stew stove. Common in Europe but relatively rare in the United States, this precursor of the kitchen range had charcoal fires in grated cast-iron openings and could be regulated more precisely than a roaring fireplace. The bake oven was used for bread and other baked goods. In 1790, Jefferson shipped copper pots, pans and pieces of specialized cookware to Monticello from France for his cooks to use in food preparation.

**SALLY HEMINGS**

Sally Hemings (1773-1835), a member of the large Hemings family, was an enslaved lady's maid at Monticello. DNA test results in 1998 indicated a genetic link between the Jefferson and Hemings families. Based on scientific evidence and oral history, Monticello and most historians now believe that, years after his wife's death, Thomas Jefferson was the father of Sally Hemings' children: Beverly, Harriet, Madison, and Eston Hemings.



**WINE CELLAR**

As one of the most knowledgeable wine enthusiasts in the country, Thomas Jefferson served as wine adviser to Presidents Washington, Madison, and Monroe. His cellar was filled with wines from France, Portugal, Spain, Hungary, Germany, and Italy, reflecting tastes he acquired during his European travels. Jefferson sometimes imported several hundred bottles per year. He preferred bottles to casks because bottles ensured that the wine could not be adulterated by wine merchants or by crewmen on board a vessel during shipment.



**NORTH PAVILION**

Mirroring the South Pavilion, the construction of the North Pavilion completed Jefferson's scheme for organizing domestic functions. The upper floor, like that of the South Pavilion, was used by members of Jefferson's family; son-in-law Thomas Mann Randolph used it as a study, while granddaughter Virginia Randolph and her husband Nicholas Trist lived there after their marriage in 1824.

**ICE HOUSE**

The main purpose of the ice house was food preservation. It was used to store fresh meat and butter as well as for making ice cream and chilling wine. Packed tightly and insulated with wood chips or straw, the ice sometimes lasted through the summer.

**JEFFERSON'S GRAVE**

Thomas Jefferson is buried at Monticello with other members of his family in a gravesite he chose in 1773. This plot is owned by an association of Jefferson's descendants and is still used as a cemetery. The epitaph he wrote for his tombstone included only: "Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statue of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia."



**AFRICAN AMERICAN GRAVEYARD**

Men, women, and children of Monticello's African American families are buried in more than 40 graves in a wooded plot adjacent to the visitors parking area. During the winter of 2000-2001, archaeologists confirmed this site as a slave burial ground, identifying 20 graves, including those of eight children. There are likely other burial grounds still undiscovered on the plantation.



Uriah Phillips Levy

**THE LEVY FAMILY STEWARDSHIP**

Monticello survives today because of the efforts of its two major owners after Jefferson's death: Uriah Phillips Levy, the first Jewish commodore in the United States Navy, and his nephew, Jefferson Monroe Levy. For nearly 100 years, the Levys worked to restore and preserve the house. In 1923, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation was founded and purchased the property from Jefferson Levy. The Foundation has carried on the tradition of preservation established by the Levy family.



ca. 1809-1826

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