

# Back Home

Recent acquisitions from Jefferson descendants help bring the past to life

The story of life at Monticello continues to gain detail and complexity. Part of that story is fueled by the tireless efforts of curators and historians who seek out historical objects and bring them home to Monticello. These items – including important contributions from Jefferson’s descendants – have been acquired through a variety of channels.

Many personal items once worn or used by Jefferson survive thanks to generations of family members who recognized that everyday objects such as clothing and calling cards have important stories to tell.

Other acquisitions are anything but ordinary. Recently, a true family treasure returned to Monticello when another Jefferson descendant secured and donated a rare memento created by one of Jefferson’s daughters.

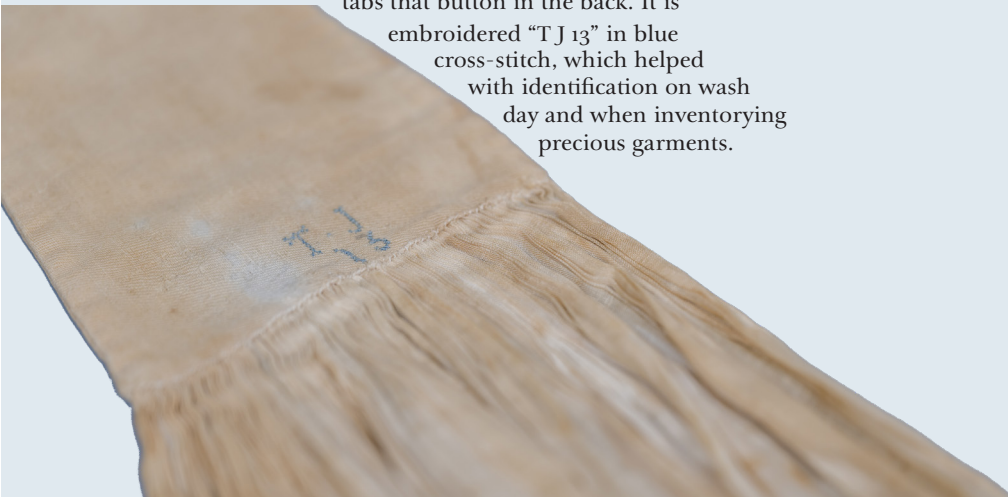


## Calling Cards

The most recent addition to Monticello’s collection of calling cards (center) once used by Jefferson features a facsimile of his signature rather than a standard typeface. By presenting such a personalized document to the public, Jefferson was emphasizing the man and not his standing or office. Even when he was president of the United States, his card featured his signature and not his illustrious title.

## Cravat

In his retirement, Jefferson wore this cotton cravat that features a gathered panel in front, set into linen tabs that button in the back. It is embroidered “TJ 13” in blue cross-stitch, which helped with identification on wash day and when inventorying precious garments.



## Riding Mitts

Fingerless cotton mitts like those pictured above were used by Jefferson when horseback riding, according to family history. Such a light, glove-like garment would have protected against blisters and sunburn while also being comfortable on a hot Virginia day.



## Polly's Watercolor

Recent research suggests that Mary “Polly” Jefferson painted this watercolor on paper at a girls’ school in Philadelphia, circa 1793. Polly based the artwork on a popular print of Hebe, the Greek goddess of youth, and she personalized her interpretation by inscribing the pedestal with “M<sup>rs</sup>Jefferson/son.” as a tribute or memento mori to her deceased mother, Martha Wayles Skelton Jefferson. This small painting is the sole object in the collection that relates to Jefferson’s beloved daughter who died at the young age of 26. *Gift of the family of Harold Jefferson Coolidge.*