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Digging Into the Past

A masonry chimney and foundation are all that remain visible of the Joiner's Shop located at Monticello. The Joiner's Shop foundation lies at the western end of Mulberry Row. It is one of the few archaeological sites at Monticello where architectural remains are visible aboveground. When referring to the woodwork produced at the Joiner's Shop and installed throughout his mansion, Jefferson wrote that "there is nothing superior in the US." (Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Munroe, March 4, 1815).

Prior to the recent stabilization of the chimney, archaeological excavations revealed that the shop underwent at least two separate construction episodes: the initial construction occurring circa 1775 and a renovation that included the addition of a Rumford fireplace around 1800. Archaeologists uncovered woodworking-related tools at the site, but few domestic artifacts, suggesting the structure served primarily as a workshop and not as a building in which people lived.