



# Restoration of Monticello's Dependencies Under Way

When Daniel Webster dined at Monticello in 1824, he complimented the cuisine "served in half Virginian style, half French style, in good taste and abundance." His praise not only described the efforts of

Martha Jefferson Randolph or one of her daughters, but those of two enslaved women, Edith Fossett and Fanny Hern, who took over as Monticello's principal chefs in 1809.

Beginning with James Hemings in 1784, all of Jefferson's cooks were trained in the French culinary arts. Jefferson's unusually well-equipped kitchen, in fact, was largely

outfitted in France, where he purchased scores of copper pots, molds for ice cream, a waffle iron, iron cooking forks, and many items suited for the preparation of elaborate recipes. Monticello's menus appear to have been chosen by Martha Jefferson Randolph or her daughters, who took one-month turns as "housekeeper." Virginia Randolph wrote that she was "seated upon my throne in the kitchen, with a cookery book in my hand."

The kitchen and the 12 other spaces located beneath and near the main house formed a partly hidden crossroads of Monticello's two worlds, for it was in these "utility rooms" that members of Jefferson's family and slaves met and interacted to carry out the work of the house and plantation.
















Recognizing the significance of these spaces, the Thomas Jefferson

Robert C. Lautman



**The rooms and spaces beneath the South Terrace will be returned to their historical appearance.**

## *This Issue's Other Stories*

-  BLOCKBUSTER WINE
-  CHILDREN'S OUTREACH
-  HONOR ROLL 2000
-  INTERNATIONAL CENTER
-  JEFFERSON INAUGURATION
-  JEFFERSON'S CABINET
-  JULY 4 ENDOWMENT
-  LECTURE SERIES
-  LEWIS & CLARK ON WEB
-  MERIWETHER LEWIS
-  MONTICELLO CABINET 2000
-  NEW MONOGRAPHS
-  NEW TRUSTEES
-  PRESIDENT'S LETTER
-  PRITZKER PRIZE

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE.

© Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc., 2001

# MONTICELLO



## Monticello Restoration

CONTINUED, PAGE **TWO**

Foundation is embarking on one of the most consequential projects it has ever undertaken – the restoration and interpretation of Monticello’s extensive dependencies.

The plan is to bring to life the kitchen; cook’s room; smokehouse; wash house; storage cellars for wine, beer, food, and provisions; dairy; and ice house by not only restoring and furnishing the spaces but also by describing the people who lived and worked in them. The project is a cornerstone of the Foundation’s ambitious goal to restore the Monticello mountaintop as authentically as possible to the way it was in Jefferson’s day.

At present, these important rooms are silent – they are inaccurately restored, unfurnished, or used for modern purposes. The existing contents of the “Colonial” kitchen, for example, date from the late 1940s, when little was known about Jefferson’s inventory of French cookware or the stew stove, a precursor of the modern cooktop. The cook’s room, likely occupied by Edith Fossett and her family, is now empty but for a single sign. The cellar of the South Pavilion – the first Monticello building erected by Jefferson – and the dairy under the South Terrace are now rest rooms. As the Foundation implements its Master Plan and recently completed Site and Facilities Plan, these rooms will be restored to their historical appearances.

The restoration project is the result of more than two decades of many different research initiatives that have analyzed and documented every conceivable aspect of the dependencies, from architecture, artifacts, and recipes to slave life. Most recently, architectural historians from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, greatly aided by William L. Beiswanger, Robert H. Smith Director of Restoration at Monticello, completed a study of each room that will inform the restoration process.

One of the most exciting aspects of the interpretation of the depend-



Library of Congress

**A 1796 inventory of the kitchen at Monticello, written by James Hemings.**

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE.

© Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc., 2001



## Monticello Restoration

CONTINUED, PAGE **THREE**

encies is the opportunity to tell some little-known stories about life at Monticello. For example, the cook's room, adjacent to the kitchen and within audible range of its striking tall case clock, was likely occupied after 1809 by Edith Fossett; her husband, Joseph, who was Monticello's chief blacksmith; and their children. One son, Peter Fossett, reported that his mother was "Jefferson's favorite cook."

And while Jefferson's fondness for wine has been thoroughly documented, it is less known that beer was one of the "table drinks" at Monticello, and for a time was brewed on the grounds. Brewing at Monticello dates to the time of Jefferson's wife, Martha, who made light ales between 1772 and 1774, noting in a journal that she "brewed a cask of beer" about every two weeks during fall and summer. Beer was apparently purchased elsewhere from 1774 until September 1813, when Jefferson met Joseph Miller, a brewer temporarily living in Charlottesville. Miller trained the slave Peter Hemings in the art of malting and brewing, and Hemings became a skilled brewer.

The restoration of the dependencies is under way with the support of some generous gifts. Detailed planning of the overall project has been made possible by a \$40,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Consulting experts will confer with Monticello staff members to determine architectural changes, restoration and furnishing schemes, and interpretive emphases for each space.

Longtime friends have contributed to the restoration endeavor. The Florence Gould Foundation committed the lead gift for the kitchen. The Charles Trust, thanks to Jefferson enthusiast and Cabinet participant Tom Johnson of Richmond, contributed funds to restore the cook's room. Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc., made a gift to interpret brewing at Monticello and restore the cellar where beer likely was stored. The Anheuser-Busch gift was matched by longtime Monticello donors and Cabinet participants John and Bobbi Nau of Houston.

— SUSAN R. STEIN

*Susan R. Stein is Monticello's curator.*



Robert C. LaPrade

**The wine cellar was restored – inaccurately – in the 1950s.**

**COMMENTS? [newsletter@monticello.org](mailto:newsletter@monticello.org)**