

Th. Jefferson

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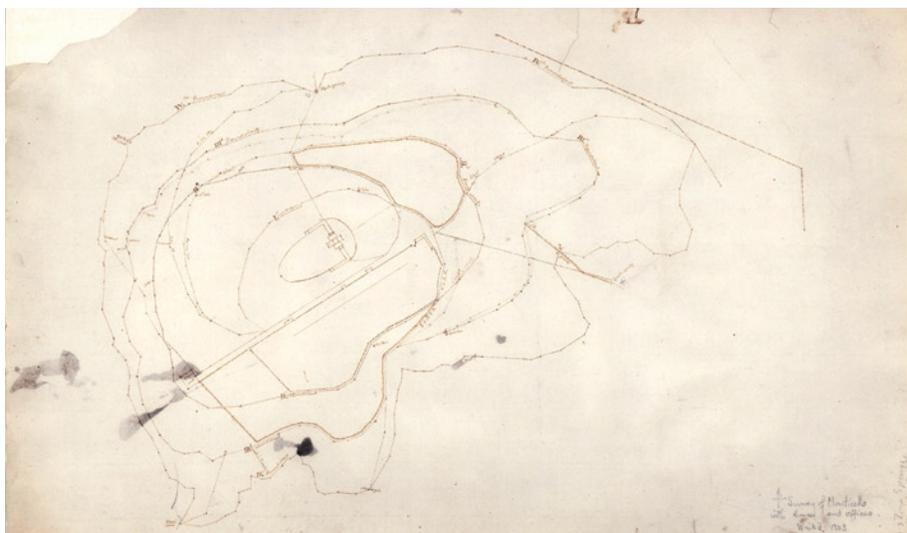
Reuniting Monticello's Landscape

THANKS TO A MAJOR GIFT FROM THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA, one of the most transformative projects in Monticello's modern history will take place next year. On October 11, Ann Gordon Evans, president of the Garden Club of Virginia, announced the club's enthusiastic support for "Reuniting Monticello's Landscape," the restoration of the missing landscape link between the ornamental grounds at the house and the plantation world centered on Mulberry Row. The Garden Club of Virginia has a long history of support for Monticello's landscape restoration, beginning in 1939 with the East and West Gardens, including the serpentine flower walk.

"Reuniting Monticello's Landscape" will reinstate critically important elements of Jefferson's original road scheme—the kitchen road, the kitchen path, and the original dimensions and location of Mulberry Row itself. Important features of Jefferson's mountaintop landscape, recorded in his ca. 1809 drawing, are noticeably absent today. The project calls for the removal of modern elements to allow for a true picture of Jefferson's meticulously designed balance between the ornamental gardens and the ornamental farm (*ferme ornée*). Extensive areas of paving, a vestige of a 1930s-era parking lot, and a

modern brick stair on a nonhistorical alignment, have displaced Jefferson's original paths and roads southeast of the house. This unfortunate existing condition misrepresents Jefferson's plan for Monticello and also prevents visitors from understanding and experiencing the landscape as Jefferson envisioned it.

The project's goals are to re-establish the Jefferson-era land form, to restore the system of interconnected roads that reflects his rational plan for managing a large and diverse plantation, and to re-create the historic vistas to the east and the varied views of the house to the west. In



Jefferson drew up this plan of the mountaintop road system as it neared completion around 1809. Courtesy Massachusetts Historical Society.

Reuniting Monticello's Landscape

the first decades of the 19th century, the kitchen road linked Monticello's kitchen, at the south end of the passage below the house, to the eastern end of Mulberry Row, near three slave dwellings that Jefferson designated "servants houses r, s, and t." The kitchen road was a key feature of Jefferson's later landscape design because it offered access to the partially hidden service spaces under the house, separate from the more formal access to Monticello's front door across the east lawn.

Preparation for the project began in the 1970s with Director of Restoration William Beiswanger's study of Jefferson's drawings, especially a drawing of the mountaintop roads made ca. 1809. Beiswanger recognized the absence of the kitchen road, which was still partly visible in an early 20th-century photograph. To make sure that Jefferson's plan was fully implemented, staff archaeologists carefully mapped the missing kitchen road on their modern map, then conducted excavations to confirm the precise location and condition of the kitchen road. The archaeology department began its final phase of excavation in mid-September. The distinguished historic landscape architect Will Rieley of Rieley & Associates will develop the plan in conjunction with Monticello's team.

Follow the excavation and restoration on our blog, www.monticello.org.



Monticello's archaeology team carefully dissects a stratigraphic maze of recent pipe trenches to reveal a cobble pavement, the foundation for the Kitchen Path as it approached the kitchen.

The archaeology team has recovered masses of small, early nineteenth century artifacts from excavations in the kitchen yard, where the Kitchen Road and Kitchen Path met, suggesting high levels of traffic in Jefferson's day.

Archaeologists use a drawing frame to map precisely the locations of the greenstone cobbles that comprised the base of the Kitchen Path.



Reuniting Monticello's Landscape



The white dashed lines on this recent aerial photo show the roads and paths to be restored. 1) The Kitchen Road. 2) The Inner Loop Road, which archaeologists discovered is a later 19th-century addition. 3) The Kitchen Path leads from the kitchen to Mulberry Row and the vegetable garden gate. 4) A segment of Mulberry Row currently buried by modern fill and paving. 5) The kitchen yard. 6) A path leading from the South Dependency to Mulberry Row.

Director of Restoration retires after more than four decades at Monticello

WILLIAM L. BEISWANGER, the Robert H. Smith director of restoration, has studied Monticello's landscape and architecture for longer than Jefferson himself actually lived on the mountain. In December, Beiswanger will retire after more than four decades at Monticello.

"Bill is a person of virtue and talent. He possesses the kind of intelligence and accomplishment that Jefferson hoped would flourish in the new American republic," said Susan Stein, Richard Gilder senior curator and vice president for museum programs.

Beiswanger has inspired many with the remarkable range of his knowledge, intellect, astuteness, professionalism, astonishing memory, and generosity. In 1969 he came to Monticello from the University of Virginia School of Architecture to make measured drawings of Monticello's furniture.

"Many times we have been dazzled by his recall of the minutest detail and his ability to locate the most obscure source, whether it is the date construction began on the south terrace wing or a reference to Thomas Whateley's *Observations on Modern Gardening*," said Stein.

With his fine eye for color and design, Beiswanger is known at Monticello for his superb taste, visual talents, and

speaking and writing abilities. With courtly manners and considerable charm, Beiswanger is exceedingly good company. Still, characteristically self-effacing, he is happiest, like Jefferson, when surrounded by his own books on garden design and architecture.

Beiswanger's many accomplishments have literally transformed the mountaintop. Every Monticello preservation effort of the last four decades was the product of his assiduous study, among them the grove, the vegetable terrace garden, the orchard, the vineyard, the berry patches, *ferme ornée*, the garden pavilion, the roof, the dome room oculus, the garden pavilion, the corner terraces, the Venetian enclosures, and the soon-to-be-completed-reinstatement of Jefferson's original mountaintop road scheme. Beiswanger's careful scholarship documenting the history of individual spaces and his legendary record-keeping will provide future generations with a superb resource.

"We thank Bill for charting the course of Monticello's restoration and for helping us recover Jefferson's lost world," said Leslie Greene Bowman, president and CEO of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation.

If you would seek his monument, look around Monticello.

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— SUSAN STEIN, RICHARD GILDER SENIOR CURATOR AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR MUSEUM PROGRAMS

