



Uncovered: Evidence of Slave House's Location

Two sub-floor pits that were partially excavated this summer have added to what's known about Monticello's plantation community.

Of the 18 Jefferson-era slave sites identified, through their artifact scatters, by the Monticello Plantation Archaeological Survey, only two clues to the exact locations of buildings had been discovered—the remains of a chimney at Site 6 and those of a hearth at Site 8. The two sub-floor pits uncovered at Site 8 during the summer fieldwork thus provided only the third architectural trace of a slave residence on what was once Monticello's farmland.

The pits—storage spaces dug beneath the floors of slaves' houses—were also the first examples of sub-floor pits found at Monticello away from Mulberry Row, the main “street” of the plantation.

The sub-floor pits at Site 8—which is located about 700 yards east of the main house—have yielded ceramics, nails, buttons, fragments of tobacco pipes, animal bone, and charcoal. The pits likely were out of use when they were abandoned, probably in the late 18th century. There are indications that the building above them was destroyed by fire, but evidence suggests that it was burned intentionally after its occupants had been moved.

The fieldwork at the site was directed by

Sara Bon-Harper, Monticello's archaeological research manager, and included the students in Monticello's annual Archaeological Field School.

COMMENTS?

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-  INDIAN DELEGATION
-  JULY 4
-  LEWIS & CLARK BICENTENNIAL
-  LEWIS & CLARK EXHIBITION
-  LEWIS & CLARK EXPOSITION
-  LIBRARY DEDICATION
-  NEWS AND NOTES
-  PRESIDENTS LETTER
-  SAUNDERS BRIDGE
-  SHADWELL MARKER
-  SLAVE HOUSE
-  TWO NEW MONOGRAPHS
-  WEB FEATURE

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