

Thomas Jefferson MONTICELLO

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Tours, events in February will focus on African-Americans' contributions

THE MANY contributions made by the men, women, and children who were enslaved at Monticello will be acknowledged during Black History Month in 2010 with two themed tours, a children's workshop, and a lecture/performance.

"While the African-American experience is part of our interpretation every day, in February we place a special emphasis on the work lives and family ties of the enslaved community," said Leni Sorensen, Monticello's African-American research historian. "Whether as farm laborers, domestic staff, or in other positions, these people filled absolutely essential roles in the daily life and various enterprises on the plantation, and what they did deserves to be highlighted."

One of the month's themed tours will take place in the house and cover the experiences of the slaves who served

Thomas Jefferson's household. The guided "Answering the Bell: Working in the House at Monticello" tours will begin at noon and 2 p.m. every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday during February and on President's Day (Monday, Feb. 15). Visitors

can register for these tours, which are included in the price of admission, in the Dominion Welcome Pavilion at the



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Thomas Jefferson Visitor Center and Smith Education Center upon arrival at Monticello.

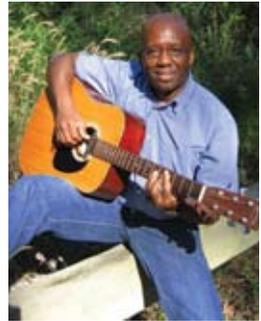
The other Black History Month tour offering is an exploration of Mulberry Row, the center of African-American life at Monticello. The guided Plantation Community Tours, which focus on the people who lived and labored on the plantation, will start at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays during month and on Presidents Day. The tours will start at the east end (paved area) of Mulberry Row and are included in the price of admission.

On Saturday, Feb. 20, from 10 a.m. to noon, Monticello's archaeology lab will open its doors to children in grades 4 through 7 accompanied by an adult for a free, hands-on workshop that explores slave artifacts unearthed at Monticello. Reservations are required for the Archaeology Workshop for Children and can be made by calling (434) 984-9880.

On Thursday, Feb. 11, music historian, recording artist, and interpreter of African-American spirituals Calvin Earl will appear at Monticello's Jefferson Library. The free lecture/performance by Earl—who rose to national prominence in 2007 when he secured legislation in Congress that would honor slaves for their contributions to our nation "with our deepest gratitude and respect" and formally recognize the African-American spiritual as a national treasure—will begin at 4 p.m.

Earl's appearance will be the first event in the Celebrate Black History at Monticello 2010 series. Other events in the program, designed to recognize African-American culture and contributions, will be held throughout the year.

The 2009 Celebrate Black History at Monticello series included a February lecture by Sorensen on Monticello's skilled domestic workers, an October talk by civil rights leader, journalist, and author Roger Wilkins, and a November panel discussion with descendants of the enslaved communities at Monticello and Montpelier and researchers from the homes of Jefferson and James Madison.



Music historian and performer Calvin Earl will appear at the Jefferson Library on Feb. 11.

COMMENTS?
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