

Th: Jefferson

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Opening January 27, 2012 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History: *Slavery at Jefferson's Monticello: Paradox of Liberty*

By Elizabeth Chew

Curator

MONTICELLO IS THE BEST-DOCUMENTED, BEST-PRESERVED and best-studied plantation in North America. As a result of Jefferson's meticulous record-keeping and 50 years of modern scholarly research, Monticello and the Smithsonian's new National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) will present the landmark exhibition titled *Slavery at Jefferson's Monticello: Paradox of Liberty*. The exhibition will open at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on January 27, 2012.

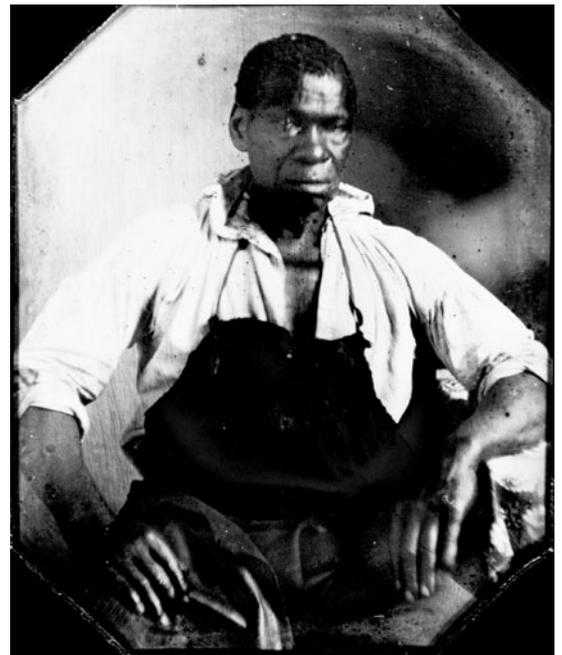
The institutions hope to inform discussion and encourage understanding of slavery and enslaved people in America through the lens of Jefferson's plantation. Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence and called slavery an "abominable crime," yet he was a lifelong slaveholder. In an age inspired by the Declaration of Independence, slavery was pervasive—28 percent of the American population was enslaved in 1790.

"We are working together to produce an exhibition that discusses

slavery as the unresolved issue of the American Revolution and uses Jefferson and Monticello as a window into that contradiction—the unfulfilled promise of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,'" said Leslie Greene Bowman, president and CEO of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello. "We also want to share the stories of the enslaved people at Monticello."

Although the NMAAHC does not yet have its own building on the National Mall—ground breaking will be in summer 2012 with the opening in 2015—the museum has been mounting exhibitions in a gallery in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History since 2009. This will be the NMAAHC's first exhibition dealing with slavery.

Monticello will be the focal point for examining the dilemma of slavery in the United States and Jefferson's views on slavery, as well as the lives of Monticello's enslaved people. The exhibition will contextualize the way that Jefferson and other members of the founding generation viewed slavery and will present



Isaac Jefferson Granger (1775-c.1850) was a tinsmith and blacksmith at Monticello. Learn more about the lives of the enslaved people who lived and worked at Monticello at the new landmark exhibition *Slavery at Jefferson's Monticello: Paradox of Liberty*, January 2012.

the fruits of 50 years of research by Monticello archaeologists and historians on the individuals and families comprising Monticello's enslaved community during Jefferson's lifetime.

Slavery at Jefferson's Monticello: Paradox of Liberty

The exhibition will feature objects from the collections of both Monticello and the NMAAHC, as well as a special loan from the collection of the National Museum of American History.

With the help of objects from the Smithsonian collections, the exhibition's introductory sections will establish the context for slavery in the British colonies of North America and the founding of a new nation based on individual liberty. The paradox of slavery in an age of liberty will be illuminated by the objects on view. Visitors will see objects from the Smithsonian's collections, including the portable desk on which Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence, owned by the National Museum of American History.

Jefferson objects from Monticello's collection, including books, spectacles, writing implements, a revolving book stand, and silver and ceramic tableware, will highlight Jefferson's education, intellectual attainments and life at Monticello.

The largest section of the exhibition will consider the material lives of six enslaved families: the Hemings, Grangers, Herns, Gillettes, Hubbards and Fossetts. Through archaeologically recovered objects from the Monticello plantation, including tableware, clothing accessories, tools and implements, and toys and games, visitors will learn how slaves employed their skill, expertise and any opportunities available to them to improve material conditions for themselves and their families. Through the family stories, visitors will see examples of deep marital and family connections, religious faith, efforts to gain literacy and education, and tenacity in the pursuit of freedom.

Family stories will be brought into the 20th century and beyond via

the Foundation's Getting Word Oral History Project. Through the Getting Word project, which began in 1993, Monticello historians have located and interviewed over 150 descendants of those who lived in slavery here. In the exhibition, visitors will encounter emotionally powerful stories, including that of William Monroe Trotter. A descendent of Joseph and Edith Fossett of Monticello, Trotter was the first person of color in Harvard's Phi Beta Kappa chapter and became a dynamic crusader against racial injustice. In 1905 Trotter and W.E.B. Du Bois founded the Niagara Movement, forerunner of the NAACP, and together they drafted its Declaration of Principles: "We pray God that this nation ... will return to the faith of the fathers, that all men were created free and equal, with certain unalienable rights."

Visitors to the exhibition will see a three-minute film composed of excerpts from interviews conducted for the Getting Word project. In addition, visitors in the gallery will have access to a new Getting Word database and can listen to and watch interviews with descendants. The Getting Word database will be launched online at www.monticello.org in conjunction with the opening of the exhibition.

The collaborative exhibition at the Smithsonian presents a unique opportunity to share the history of slavery with a large national audience, and to connect the stories of the people of Monticello to ongoing dialogues about race, racial



Smithsonian
National Museum of African American
History and Culture

identity and the unfinished business of American history.

"Understanding the details of the lives of enslaved people adds to our understanding of history and our understanding of race relations today. We cannot have a clear view of Jefferson, or the founding of our nation, if we leave slavery out of the story," said Lonnie Bunch, Director of the NMAAHC.

Jefferson's list of slaves at Monticello, Shadwell, Tufton, Lego, and Poplar Forest, 1795, Farm Book, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Jefferson, Thomas. Farm Book, 1774-1824. 174 pages. Original manuscript from the Coolidge Collection of Thomas Jefferson Manuscripts, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Roll of the negroes Nov. 1794. and where to be settled	
Monticello.	Shadwell
<p>Juniter. 43. & Jan. 1800</p> <p>Martin. 55.</p> <p>James. 65.</p> <p>Peter. 70.</p> <p>Lucy. (Jenny's) 80.</p> <p>Critta. 60.</p> <p>Jamey. 87. Apr. 23.</p> <p>Sally. 73.</p> <p>Joe. 80.</p> <p>Betty. 83.</p> <p>Betty Brown. 59.</p> <p>Wormeley. 81.</p> <p>Burwell. 83. Dec. 20.</p> <p>Brown. 85. Dec. 15.</p> <p>Melinda. 87. Nov. 6.</p> <p>Edwin. 93. Nov. 2.</p> <p>Betty Hemings. ab. 35.</p> <p>George.</p> <p>Ursula. ab. 37.</p> <p>George. 59.</p> <p>Isaac. 75. Dec. } smiths</p> <p>Moses. 79.</p> <p>Shepherd. 82. Oct.</p> <p>Barnaby. 83. May 2.</p> <p>Dairy. 84. Sep.</p> <p>Ben. 84.</p> <p>Jamey. 82. or 83. ...</p> <p>Kit. 86.</p> <p>John. 53. ...</p> <p>Dany. 55.</p> <p>Lewis. ab. 60.</p> <p>Abram.</p> <p>Phill. shoem.</p> <p>Schnny. 75.</p> <p>Phill. wagg. ab. 42.</p> <p>Tom Shackle. } carpenters</p> <p>Goliath. ab. 31.</p> <p>Mingo.</p> <p>Fanny. ab. 36.</p> <p>Patty. 81. } spinners.</p>	<p>Isabel</p> <p>James. 76.</p> <p>Edy. 87. Apr. 10.</p> <p>Aggey. 89. Mar.</p> <p>Lilly. 91. Feb.</p> <p>Amy. 93. Mar. 1.</p> <p>Doll. 57.</p> <p>Marlin. 77.</p> <p>Thonia. 93. Jan.</p> <p>Polley. 93. Aug. 26.</p> <p>Jenny. (nill.) 68.</p> <p>Lewis. 88. Mar.</p> <p>Jesse. 90. July.</p> <p>Sally. 92. Sep. 1.</p> <p>Molly. ab. 49.</p> <p>Mary. 76.</p> <p>Bar. Et. 86. Jan.</p> <p>Clarinda. 88. July.</p> <p>Goliath. 91. May.</p> <p>Frank. 57.</p> <p>Toby. 53.</p> <p>Suno.</p> <p>Tufton</p> <p>Ned. 60.</p> <p>Jenny. (Aggey) 64.</p> <p>Ned. 86. Feb. 15.</p> <p>Fanny. 88. Mar. 31.</p> <p>Dick. 90. Mar. 19.</p> <p>Gill. 92. Mar. 18.</p> <p>Sette. 92. Apr. 12.</p> <p>Rachael. 76.</p> <p>Nancy. 91. Sep.</p> <p>Aggey. 92. May.</p> <p>Black Betty.</p> <p>Val. 60.</p> <p>York. 81.</p> <p>Nanny. 78.</p> <p>Sally. 80.</p>
	<p>Squire. ab. 27.</p> <p>Belinda. ab. 39.</p> <p>Jerry. 77.</p> <p>Fris. 75.</p> <p>Squire. 93. Dec.</p> <p>Amey.</p> <p>Phillips. 68.</p> <p>Phyllis. 71.</p> <p>Sally. 78. Aug.</p> <p>Nelly. 91. Feb.</p> <p>Caesar. 71.</p> <p>Lego.</p> <p>Bagwell. 68.</p> <p>Minerva. 71.</p> <p>Ursula. 87. Jan.</p> <p>Mary. 88. Oct. 2.</p> <p>Virginia. 93. m.</p> <p>Judy. Hix.</p> <p>Austen. 79.</p> <p>Thamar. 73.</p> <p>Rachael. 90.</p> <p>Tim. 78.</p> <p>Lucinda. 61.</p> <p>Sarah. 86. Dec.</p> <p>Sandy. 89. Dec.</p> <p>Sousy. 93. Oct.</p> <p>Sabb. ab. 25.</p>