

# Thomas Jefferson MONTICELLO

SPRING 2013

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VOLUME 24, NUMBER 1

## Monticello will lead innovative project to advance the archaeological study of slavery

Monticello archaeologists will launch an innovative collaborative project designed to advance the study of slavery in North America and the Caribbean, thanks to a recently announced grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The \$450,000 grant provides two years of funding for the new project, “The DAACS Research Consortium,” which will allow faculty, students, and scholars from leading graduate programs and museums to contribute data from archaeological collections to the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS)—an Internet-accessible digital archive based in the Archaeology Department at Monticello.

“We are grateful to the Mellon Foundation both for its previous support of DAACS and for its commitment to this exciting new opportunity to further scholarly collaboration in archaeology using digital technology,” said Leslie Greene Bowman, president and CEO of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello.

The Mellon grant will fund development of new software infrastructure using open-source tools in a partnership with the University of Virginia’s Institute of Advanced Technology in the Humanities and Convoy, Inc., a Charlottesville-based design firm. The software will allow partners to use an ordinary web browser to enter data from their excavations into the DAACS database, to discover meaningful patterns, and to compare patterns across geographically

scattered archaeological sites.

“The new research consortium will enable our collaborators to add important new data from archaeological sites of slavery to the DAACS database and to share data with one another and the larger scholarly community and the general public via the DAACS website,” said Jillian Galle, the Monticello archaeologist who manages the project.

The grant also funds instruction for consortium members in DAACS database structures and classification and measurement protocols in order to ensure that members’ contributions to the database conform to community-developed standards. The project offers instruction for graduate students in relational database technology and quantitative methods to discover and make sense of hidden patterns of variation in archaeological data.

“A major goal is to facilitate the kind of quantitative, comparative analysis that will help us document and understand variation in

the life ways of enslaved people in the early modern era,” said Fraser Neiman, director of archaeology at Monticello.

DAACS was founded by Monticello and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation to foster scholarly collaboration and data sharing. DAACS has received major funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Reed Foundation.

