



Previewing Jefferson's Private Suite

THE CABINET Thomas Jefferson's private suite, his sanctum sanctorum, is the most important suite of rooms at Monticello as it allows visitors to experience and contemplate the spaces he designed and reserved for himself. His Cabinet, reinstalled with numerous original objects as well as its original green color scheme, is the place where Jefferson carried on his prolific correspondence, kept a daily record of the weather and read the news of the day. Now Monticello's visitors will better understand Jefferson as the Enlightenment man of letters, science, and study.

1 GLOBES William and Thomas M. Bardin, considered to be among London's finest globemakers, made this pair of terrestrial and celestial globes. They are the same size as the lost originals Jefferson acquired for himself in 1806. Jefferson apparently ordered globes with short stands because he intended to place them under two lecterns in his Cabinet.



2 BAROMETER Thomas Jefferson was a lifelong weather observer, keeping a daily log of temperatures and other weather observations. He used an English barometer, one similar to this, and a thermometer to capture this information. His records are useful for climate studies today.



3 DUMBBELLS Jefferson used this pair of dumbbells, small and made from lead, to exercise his wrists after he broke one in a fall. The family saved these humble objects because of their intimate association with Jefferson.

4 POLYGRAPH Jefferson regularly used this copying machine, which he considered one of the best inventions of his age. The polygraph allowed Jefferson to send the original letter and keep a copy for himself. Much of his surviving correspondence are polygraph copies.

Thomas Jefferson's private suite, including the Library, Greenhouse, Cabinet and Bedchamber, are newly installed and open daily to visitors.

5 WALLPAPER Scientific analysis of the walls revealed evidence of green wallpaper in the Cabinet. Reproduction papers, currently installed on the walls, are derived from samples found on a grammar book used at Monticello in the early 19th century.

6 SOFA Jefferson likely commissioned this sofa in New York in 1790 from Thomas Burling, a renowned cabinetmaker who also made furniture for George Washington. The sofa may have had green horsehair upholstery as shown here. Jefferson's granddaughter Cornelia placed it under this window in a drawing she made in ca. 1826.

7 REVOLVING STAND Jefferson designed and commissioned this singular five-sided stand to enable him to utilize multiple documents and small books at one time. The revolving stand rests on a reproduction pedestal base that can be adjusted to various heights.

8 FOLDING SCREEN Based on documentary and physical evidence, we believe this folding screen replicates one that Jefferson had made in 1808 by James Dinsmore, the Irish joiner who produced much of Monticello's elegant woodwork. Jefferson's design called for two folding wings; when open they allowed for the passage of light and air, and when closed, provided warmth and privacy between the Cabinet and the Bed Chamber.



THE LIBRARY Prior to the sale of his personal library to Congress in 1815, Jefferson's private suite included an additional room that he referred to as the "Book Room," a space that housed hundreds of books as well specially commissioned furniture. Once most of the books were sold, this room became a family sitting room. Jefferson proceeded to reconfigure the rooms adjoining his Cabinet into the Library, and Greenhouse we see today. In these spaces Jefferson managed his plantations, conducted scientific studies, designed the University of Virginia, and found relaxation at his workbench.



THE BEDCHAMBER The Bedchamber is the most private of all the rooms within the suite, the most private space of an intensely private man. Within this room, which until now had been overshadowed by the better-understood Cabinet, Jefferson's personal life played out both as a married man and during his long years as a widower. His disciplined routines of rising in the morning when he could see the hands on his obelisk clock or the daily, ice-cold footbath all took place here, away from visitors and most of his family.



1 SWORD This shamshir sabre from Persia dates to the 18th century and is a stand-in for Jefferson's own lost example. Contemporaries called it the Indian sword noting that it had a Damascus steel blade and had been a gift from an Arabian chief. These references indicate that the sword related to the Barbary Wars, which took place during Jefferson's presidency.

PISTOLS Jefferson acquired these pocket pistols from the dealer John Dealtry in London in 1786, paying 4-10 pounds. Because of its small size and detachable barrel, this type of pistol was useful when traveling. Visitors to Monticello noted that he hung a pair of pistols at the foot of his bed, but it is not known whether these are the ones he kept at hand. *Not pictured.*



3 OBELISK CLOCK Jefferson's own design provided the inspiration for Parisian clockmaker Louis Chantrot to create this unique timepiece, which features a pair of classical obelisks flanking a circular brass clock and pendulum. It was one of Jefferson's most favored possessions, and he installed it at the foot of his bed where he noted the hours of his day, from dawn to dark.

4 BED CURTAINS While in Paris Jefferson purchased silk damask curtains in a shade called *bleu ciel*, which he used in his bed chambers in both Paris and Monticello. In addition, he acquired matching window curtains, upholstered seating, and a bell pull—all in the same costly silk.



5 BOOTS Jefferson's riding boots are rare survivors given the hard use they would have seen as part of his kit for his daily ride on horseback around the plantation. The family saved them, along with other pieces of his personal clothing, because of the close association to him.

6 CAMPECHE CHAIR Family correspondence reveals that Jefferson enjoyed the comforts of a Campeche chair in the summer, in his Bed Chamber, as well as in the Parlor and on the portico. He liked the relaxed posture that it provided.

7 NIGHTSTAND Jefferson commissioned a night table in Paris, one built to his specifications with a marble top and a reinforced shelf to hold books. His surviving drawing and instructions reveal that Jefferson liked to read in bed, and he installed a lamp at the head of his alcove for this purpose.

8 MARTHA JEFFERSON'S BUREAU This Virginia-made chest of drawers made for Jefferson's wife Martha is one of the rarest and earliest pieces of furniture at Monticello. Jefferson kept it in his bed chamber, in this exact location.

9 WALL COLOR Scientific analysis revealed that Jefferson selected a blue wall color for his Bed Chamber during his retirement. The wall color matched his French damask bed and window curtains but contrasted with the crimson bed and window hangings he likely used in the winter months.

10 BOOKCASE Family tradition says that Thomas Jefferson made this bookcase for himself and used it in the Bed Chamber.

11 OVERMANTLE MIRROR This mirror with its unusual demi-oval form and two brass candle sconces not only provided a handsome addition to the room but also reflected light.



2 BEDSTEAD This reproduction French bedstead, which is the equivalent of a modern double bed, replicates the lost original that Jefferson's daughter kept for her own use when she left Monticello in 1829. Shipping records indicate that Jefferson sent home his bed, various mattresses, bedding and silk curtains from Paris in 1790.

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