



# “A Well-Ordered Household”: Domestic Servants in Jefferson’s White House

L U C I A S T A N T O N

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**O**ne morning in early December 1802 a Federalist senator, just arrived from New Hampshire, was ushered into the President’s House with some fellow legislators. After a few moments “a tall highboned man” entered the room, wearing “an old brown coat, red waistcoat, old corduroy small clothes, much soild—woolen hose—& slippers without heels.” William Plumer later wrote a friend, “I thought this man was a servant; but Genl Varnum surprized me by announcing that it was the President.”<sup>1</sup> Plumer made no mention of the actual servant who had admitted him, resplendent in a new suit of blue and red, trimmed with silver lace.<sup>2</sup>

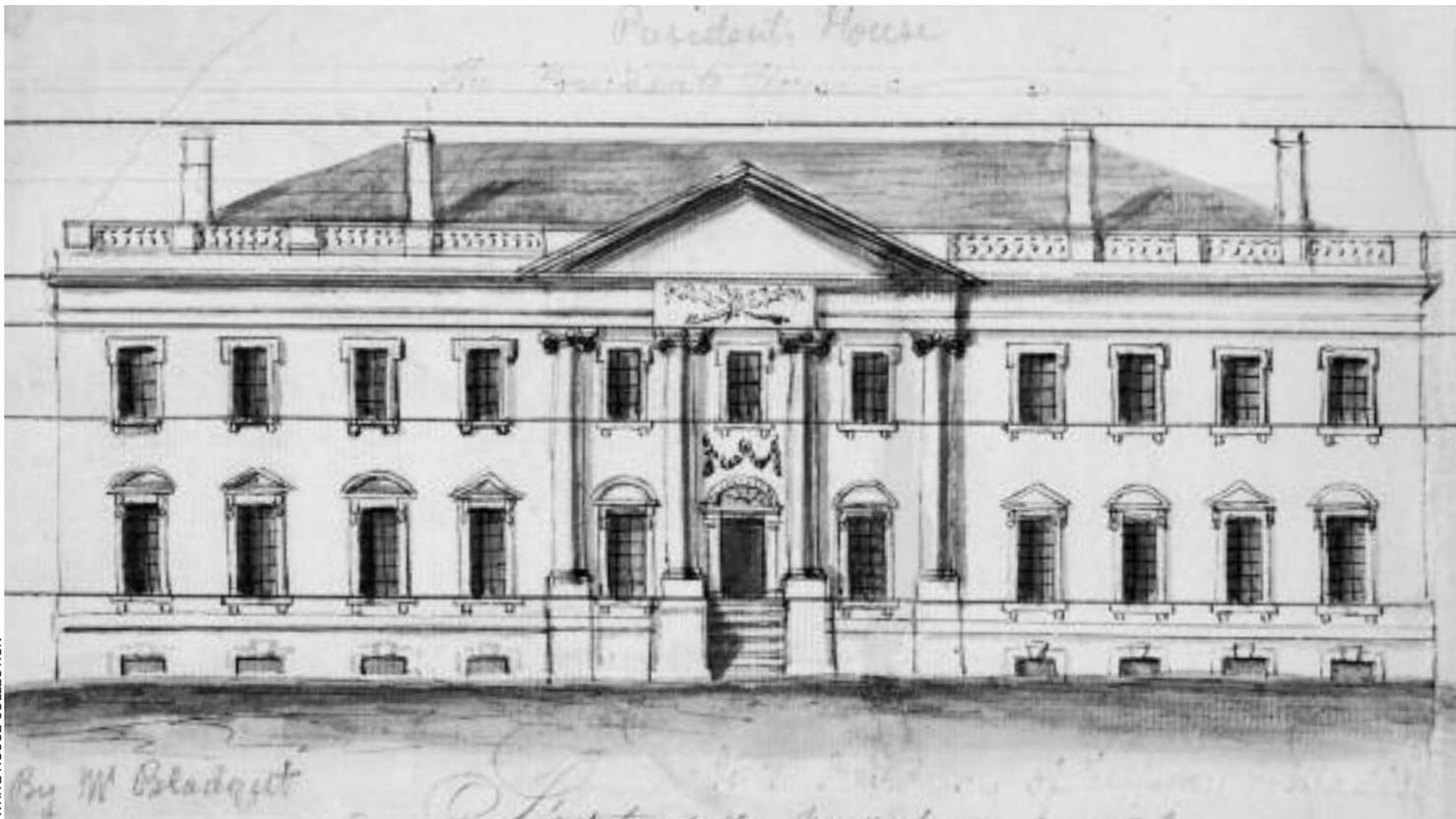
The contrast between Thomas Jefferson’s personal appearance and the elegance of his surroundings was cause for comment throughout his eight years in the Executive Mansion. Hostile Federalists and disdainful British diplomats grumbled about a president as careless of his clothing as of customary etiquette. Even friendly observers remarked on the contradictions in his behavior. “However he may neglect his person,” wrote Mahlon Dickerson in 1802, Jefferson “takes good care of his table. No man in america keeps a better.”<sup>3</sup>

Others echoed Dickerson’s assessment of Jefferson’s table, the central focus and emblem of the well-regulated

household he had been shaping from the start. Back in early 1801, Jefferson had pondered the formation of two administrations, one public and one private. The day after his election in the House of Representatives on the 36th ballot, he started to issue official invitations to prospective cabinet members. Three days later, even before asking Meriwether Lewis to be his private secretary, Jefferson sent off letters in search of a cook and a steward—or rather a *chef de cuisine* and a *maitre d’hotel*.<sup>4</sup> He wrote to Philippe Létombe, the French envoy in Philadelphia: “Being now obliged to fix myself here, I find as great difficulty in composing my household, as I shall probably find in composing an administration for the government. You know the importance of a good maitre d’hotel, in a large house, and the impossibility of finding one among the natives of our country. I have imagined that such a person might be found perhaps among the French in Philadelphia.”<sup>5</sup>

In a city with thousands of French residents, Létombe did find such a person. For the first six months of Jefferson’s presidency, Joseph Rapin gave “the most perfect satisfaction” in the position of majordomo.<sup>6</sup> His replacement was Etienne Lemaire, a “portly well-mannered frenchman,” previously in the service of wealthy Philadelphian William Bingham.<sup>7</sup> Lemaire was remembered by Jefferson’s grandson as “a fine looking man[,] honest and highly accomplished in his line.”<sup>8</sup> Margaret Bayard Smith recalled that Jefferson’s “maitre-d’hôtel had served in some of the first families abroad, and understood his business to perfection.”<sup>9</sup> It was Lemaire

*Thomas Jefferson after  
Jean-Antoine Houdon, 1789,  
Sevres National Porcelain  
Factory, 1908.*



WHITE HOUSE COLLECTION

who choreographed the presidential entertainments, in the French style that was the height of fashion in the new republic.

Observers duly noted the French cast of both Jefferson’s politics and his hospitality. John Quincy Adams’s wife listed the “French Servants in Livery; a French Butler, a French Cuisine, and a buffet full of choice wine,” most of it French.<sup>10</sup> The admiring Margaret Bayard Smith recalled that “republican simplicity was united to Epicurean delicacy; while the absence of splendour ornament and profusion was more than compensated by the neatness, order and elegant sufficiency that pervaded the whole establishment.”<sup>11</sup> Jefferson expressed his keen sense of the proper limits of grandeur in an injunction to his steward: “While I wish to have every thing good in it’s kind, and handsome in stile, I am a great enemy to waste and useless extravagance, and see them with real pain.”<sup>12</sup>

When Jefferson was unsuccessful in persuading his former slave James Hemings to return to his service as chef, Létombe found another Frenchman to fill the second position in the household.<sup>13</sup> Honoré Julien, aged 42, had been in the country for almost 10 years and had worked in George Washington’s kitchen in the last four

months of his presidency.<sup>14</sup> According to Mrs. Smith, his “excellence and superior skill” were acknowledged “by all who frequented [Jefferson’s] table.”<sup>15</sup> Congressman Samuel L. Mitchill wrote that Jefferson’s cook “understands the art of preparing and serving up food, to a nicety.”<sup>16</sup>

In the third position in the domestic hierarchy was the coachman and head of Jefferson’s stables. Jefferson later described Joseph Dougherty, a native of Londonderry, Ireland, and a hold over from the staff of John and Abigail Adams, as “sober, honest, diligent, & uncommonly intelligent in business.”<sup>17</sup> While Federalists deplored the new president’s habitual mode of travel—“a single horse,” with no servant in attendance—Dougherty was also chagrined, as he seldom got to mount the box of the elegant presidential chariot.<sup>18</sup> Over the years, however, his responsibilities expanded beyond the horse stalls and carriage bays. As Jefferson later wrote, Dougherty served “rather as a riding agent than as the head of my stable.”<sup>19</sup>

It must have been these three servants, who served for the full eight years, that Margaret Bayard Smith had in mind when she wrote that Jefferson “secured the best services of the best domestics, not only by the highest

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*In Thomas Jefferson's White House, liveried servants and slaves wore blue coats with red collars and cuffs. The color scheme varied from one household to another.*

*Above: A liveried black servant, Billy Lee, is seen standing in the back of *The Washington Family* by Edward Savage (1789–96). George Washington's red and white livery derived from his coat of arms.*

*Left: This carved wooden doll made in the United States, c. 1812, is apparently dressed in domestic livery, a red coat with blue collar and cuffs.*

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*Few images exist of the servants who worked in Jefferson's households. His slave Isaac Jefferson, a blacksmith and tinsmith, is pictured in the 1840s. Isaac Jefferson's niece Ursula served briefly in the White House as a cook.*

wages, but more especially by his uniform justice, moderation and kindness and by the interest he took in their comfort and welfare. . . . During the whole time of his residence here, no changes, no dismissions took place in his well-ordered household."<sup>20</sup>

There was less stability, however, among the lower-ranking servants, although none is known to have been actually fired. The men who played a shifting variety of roles as footmen, waiters, and porters were, besides Lemaire, the most conspicuous representatives of the domestic staff. In a society where livery was rare, they wore splendid uniforms: blue broadcloth coats with "crimson" or "scarlet" collar and cuffs, plated buttons, and a decorative woven edging, in silver, called livery lace; red waistcoats; and velvet or corduroy pantaloons—not knee breeches.<sup>21</sup> Whereas George Washington's red and white livery derived from his family coat of arms, the blue-and-red color scheme used by Jefferson was by this time a generic standard for servants' uni-

forms in Britain and America.<sup>22</sup> This liveried corps included Irishmen, a German, possibly a Spaniard and a Frenchman, an American soldier, and an enslaved African American.<sup>23</sup> Besides their visible roles in greeting visitors, waiting at table, and attending to guests, these men shouldered the major burdens of fetching, carrying, and cleaning behind the scenes. Jefferson revealed their multiple duties when he sought "one who could act as porter, and at the same time take care of the Cabinet, setting room, and Oval room, leaving the Dining room and hall for John [Freeman]. He should be sober, diligent and goodhumored."<sup>24</sup>

Abraham Golden did double duty as footman and manservant for Meriwether Lewis and Lewis's successor as Jefferson's private secretary.<sup>25</sup> When Golden decided that a life at sea was preferable to one of service, John Pernier—variously described as a free mulatto, a Creole, and a Spaniard—filled his spot for another three years, leaving in 1807 with Lewis when he returned to the West as governor of Louisiana Territory.<sup>26</sup> Robert Dougherty, the coachman's brother, took the position for the remainder of Jefferson's term.

Despite having trusted enslaved domestics at Monticello, Jefferson brought only three slaves to the President's House, a succession of apprentice cooks. As he wrote in 1804, "At Washington I prefer white servants, who when they misbehave can be exchanged."<sup>27</sup> Yet one of his favorite Washington domestics was an enslaved man. Jefferson hired John Freeman, aged about 20, from a Maryland physician, and purchased him in 1804, the contract specifying that he become free in 1815.<sup>28</sup> A document of 1827 reveals that Freeman was five feet seven inches tall, "straight and well made . . . very pleasing countenance."<sup>29</sup> Freeman's duties included waiting at table, care of the hall and dining room, and possibly some personal attendance on the president. Jefferson had no servant who could be described as a *valet de chambre*, wholly dedicated to the care of his clothes and person. In fact, as a grandson-in-law, Nicholas Trist, recalled, Jefferson usually did without a "body servant," as the term was then understood. Trist cited a Jeffersonian maxim, "Never allow another to do for you what you can do for yourself," and added, "It was incompatible with the sentiment of Manhood, as it existed in him, that one human being should be followed about by another as his shadow."<sup>30</sup>

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*Thomas Jefferson returned to his home at Monticello twice each year during his presidency. It is depicted here in a watercolor entitled View of the West Front by Jane Braddick Peticolos, 1825, 16 years after Jefferson left the White House.*

This aversion to the presence of a servant was the source of anguish for Jefferson's family members until his death. In 1803, for instance, his daughter Maria Jefferson Eppes deplored "the unsafe and solitary manner" in which her father slept upstairs in the President's House.<sup>31</sup> John Freeman was nevertheless important to Jefferson, accompanying the president on all his journeys to Monticello. In 1803, Jefferson sent Freeman to Monticello as escort for his departing daughters. After their arrival, Maria Eppes wrote her father that the horses "will set off tomorrow with John, whom I hear you have miss'd very much in the dining room."<sup>32</sup>

Another African American, a free man named John (Jack) Shorter, was a stablehand from the fall of 1801 to the spring of 1809.<sup>33</sup>

There were also women workers in the presidential household, although their duties are largely unclear. Joseph Dougherty's wife, Mary, was on the staff for almost the entire eight years. The wives of Honoré Julien and footman Christopher Süverman worked for shorter periods. Sally Houseman and Bidy Boyle were resident washerwomen, assisted by local women hired in busy periods. Most of the nonresident workers were free blacks. Lemaire's accounts repeatedly refer to the "nègres" and "négresses" he hired on a daily or weekly basis for special jobs like cleaning the privies, sweeping the chimneys, taking care of the infants of the trainee cooks, and tending the presidential flock of sheep.<sup>34</sup>

Into this household of multiple nationalities were introduced three young women who had never left Albemarle County, Virginia. Jefferson began preparing for his retirement in 1801, when he brought an enslaved 14-year-old from Monticello to learn the art of French

cookery in Julien's kitchen. Ursula arrived at the largest house in the first city she had ever seen, staying only a year. Edith (Edy) Fossett, aged 15, replaced her in the fall of 1802, remaining for six and a half years. Her sister-in-law Fanny Hern, aged 18, joined her in the fall of 1806 and returned to Monticello in the spring of 1809.<sup>35</sup>

The cast of characters is completed by mentioning a series of scullions, Jack, Isaac, and Sandy, who were probably free blacks. In the first three years, there was also a more highly paid *garçon de cuisine* named Noel. For most of his presidency, Jefferson had a staff of 11, managing with only 10 for the last year and a half. Their wages, like all the costs of stocking and running the President's House, came out of his own pocket. With an annual salary of \$25,000, he had the deepest pockets of his life. Still, it took close to 15 percent of his income to feed, clothe, and pay his servants.<sup>36</sup> Their wages never varied over the eight years. No one received, or evidently even expected, a raise. In 1802, relieved that a new footman had been found, Jefferson wrote about another candidate: "Some difficulty might have arisen from the proposition for 18. dollars a month, lest that should have furnished grounds to the other servants to whom I give but 14 D. including drink to expect a rise of their wages."<sup>37</sup> The "drink" figure was a customary gratuity of \$2 a month for everyone except Lemaire and Julien, who, as quasi-gentlemen in a kind of class of their own, were not tipped. "Drink money" was the only remuneration for the enslaved household workers.<sup>38</sup>

Despite his expressions of trust in Lemaire, Jefferson kept a close watch on the transactions of his factotum, through whose hands passed as much as \$10,000 in cash each year.<sup>39</sup> Every weekend Lemaire compiled and handed in his accounts, which Jefferson analyzed and transcribed into his memorandum book on Mondays. This analysis involved ever more complicated computations, by which Jefferson sought to gauge the costs of his entertaining. He kept a running record of the weekly average cost of each guest's dinner, and, from 1802, he separately calculated weekly expenditures for meat, vegetables, butter, and eggs. He compared the costs of dinners when Congress was in session and when it was not, and it is no surprise that he also determined how expensively his servants were eating during his twice-yearly absences.<sup>40</sup>

## The Family

Margaret Bayard Smith, the only Washington commentator to discuss the servants in the President's House at any length, wrote that, "without an individual exception they all became personally attached to [Jefferson]. . . . In sickness he was peculiarly attentive to their wants and sufferings, sacrificing his own convenience to their ease and comfort."<sup>41</sup> She also reported that, when describing the harmony of his political administration, Jefferson said that "we were one family."<sup>42</sup> Everyone from scullion to steward was also "family," according to its then customary meaning of an entire household. In his search for a *maitre d'hôtel*, Jefferson had asked for someone who could "take charge of the family." Every summer Lemaire and Joseph Dougherty wrote to Monticello some variation of "all the family are well." A Washington physician who cured the ills of Jefferson's servants wrote out a bill for "Attendance on the President's Family."<sup>43</sup>

Like all families, this one had its share of misfortune and discord. Doctor's bills and letters reveal that servants were often incapacitated by illness.<sup>44</sup> In March 1807, when Jefferson was suffering from his "periodical headache" and his son-in-law was convalescing after a dangerous illness, he reported that "indeed we have quite a hospital, one half below and above stairs being sick." Lemaire was "seriously ill" and John Freeman "just getting about after a 6. weeks confinement with a broken jaw."<sup>45</sup> The presence of young children (of the Doughertys and the enslaved cooks) meant the dreaded diseases of infancy stalked the cellars of the mansion. A boy died in Jefferson's absence in the summer of 1802, and whooping cough carried off Fanny Hern's child in November 1808. Lemaire made several poignant entries in his account book, payments for a coffin made by Peter Lenox and other burial expenses.<sup>46</sup> Of at least five children born in the President's House to the Monticello cooks, only two, James and Maria Fossett, survived to adulthood.<sup>47</sup>

The marriages of the enslaved women felt the strains of separation. Husbands were at Monticello and wives were more than 100 miles away, in a city with a vibrant and quickly growing African American population. Fanny Hern was able to see her husband for a day or two, at intervals. David Hern, a wagoner, journeyed alone to the Federal City twice a year, transporting

The doctor's bill for President Jefferson's household dated March 22, 1802, lists the medical services provided to several servants by Dr. Edward Gantt.

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The President in acct. with Edw<sup>d</sup> Gantt for medical services rendered to the following Persons

1802	
March 21. To Larkin	15
To his child from April 3 <sup>d</sup> to May 13 <sup>th</sup>	1 12 6
To Betty Surman attendance & medicine from June 8 <sup>d</sup> to 20 <sup>th</sup>	7 15
To Breadkeeper	7 6
To Cookman's child	7 6
To Little	2 6
To M <sup>r</sup> . Lecher attendance twice a day with medicine April 18 <sup>th</sup> to 26 <sup>th</sup>	8 19 4
To yourself	1 15 9
To J <sup>o</sup> Dougherty attendance & medicine from Oct. 12 to Nov. 20 <sup>th</sup>	2 16 3
To Betty Surman attendance & medicine from Oct. 12 to 20 <sup>th</sup>	3 15
To Joseph Dougherty from Nov. 4 <sup>th</sup> to 5 <sup>th</sup>	1 13
To Abraham	2 6
To Capt <sup>l</sup> Lewis	1 2 6
	<u>£ 32 15 7</u>

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plants and supplies between Monticello and the President's House. Nevertheless, as former Monticello overseer Edmund Bacon recalled, they got into "a terrible quarrel," Jefferson was "very much displeased," and Bacon was summoned to the capital to take them to Alexandria for sale. When the overseer arrived, the Hens "wept, and begged, and made good promises, and made such an ado, that they begged the old gentleman out of it."<sup>48</sup> Edy Fossett's husband, Joseph Fossett, made an unauthorized journey to Washington when he heard disturbing news from John Freeman or Jack Shorter, soon after their arrival with the president at Monticello in July 1806. The enslaved blacksmith left his forge and set out on foot on a road he had never before taken. Jefferson's reaction was swift. He hired a local man to follow the runaway and alerted Joseph Dougherty: "We know he has taken the road towards Washington, & probably will be there before the bearer. He may possibly trump up some story to be taken care of at the

President's house till he can make up his mind which way to go; or perhaps he may make himself known to Edy only, as he was formerly connected with her." The Irishman reported the capture: "After returning from a cruise where I got wind of him I met with him in the Presidents yard going from the Presidents House. . . . I took him immediately & brot. him to Mr. Perry & has him now in jail. Mr. Perry will start with him tomorrow for Monticello." Lemaire commented on the events as well: "The poor unhappy mulatto got [i.e., Joe] was not difficult to take. He well merits a pardon for this."<sup>49</sup>

Jefferson's biannual migration pattern had further consequences. When at Monticello in 1803, John Freeman became engaged to Melinda Colbert, an enslaved domestic servant of Jefferson's daughter Maria Jefferson Eppes and a granddaughter of Elizabeth (Betty) Hemings. Freeman planned to ask Mrs. Eppes's permission to marry Melinda during the Monticello visit of April 1804, but Jefferson's daughter died on April 17.

*The bustling activity of servants in the late 18th-century kitchen of a large household such as Jefferson's can be seen in this illustration from the Universal Household Cook (c. 1795).*

Her death devastated Jefferson and alarmed John Freeman and Melinda Colbert, who recognized the increased threat of separation for enslaved spouses owned by two different people. The very next day Freeman took up his pen to appeal to the grieving president, who was in the same building. In essence, he asked Jefferson to purchase them both. Jefferson did buy Freeman a few months later, but he declined to purchase Melinda from his son-in-law, explaining that he already had too many house servants “in idleness” at Monticello and, besides, “John knew he was not to expect her society but when he should be at Monticello, and then subject to the casualty of her being here or not.”<sup>50</sup>

Relations within the free families were not entirely harmonious. Footman John Kramer left his wife and the President's House at the same time.<sup>51</sup> Joseph and Mary Dougherty's marital difficulties rose to such a pitch in the summer of 1807 that the coachman also left Jefferson's employ, but he returned to his wife and the presidential stables in the fall. News of their reconciliation caused Jefferson to write: “The differings between man & wife, however they may affect their tranquility, can never produce such sufferings as are consequent on their separation.”<sup>52</sup> Back in 1802, Dougherty, also one who preferred to write his master rather than speak to him on a difficult topic, revealed some of the cracks in the solidarity of the domestic staff. After stating that “what I have to communicate to you is more than I can do when face to face,” he cataloged the various misdemeanors of footman Christopher Süverman and his wife Betsy, pilfering the linens among them.<sup>53</sup> Jefferson's response, presumably verbal, no doubt accorded with his policy for dealing with disputes among his hired Monticello workmen: “It is my rule never to take a side



or any part in the quarrels of others, nor to enquire into them. I generally presume them to flow from the indulgence of too much passion on both sides, & always find that each party thinks all the wrong was in his adversary.”<sup>54</sup>

The presence of an enslaved African American clothed and considered as the other footmen was bound to be a source of resentment. John Freeman spoke of being “treated with a great deal of hostility in your family.”<sup>55</sup> In his very first month, footman Edward Maher was heard complaining that Jefferson “gave preference to a negro rather than to him in following you.” Rapin the steward continued: “I myself heard him murmuring, saying that he would not wear the same sort of outfit as

a negro wore, in speaking of the livery.” Jefferson gave short shrift to these sentiments. He replied that he did not yet know Maher well enough to value him, but “the negro whom he thinks so little of, is a most valuable servant.”<sup>56</sup> Jefferson was not distressed when Maher left his service in 1802, considering him “a very capable servant, but stands too much on etiquette. I like servants who will do every thing they are wanted to do.”<sup>57</sup>

### One Day’s Round

On April 3, 1807, it is assumed that the servants did everything that was expected of them. This was a quiet day, with no open houses or dinner parties. The “fatigues of the table” were over, as the members of Congress had abandoned the capital a month earlier, and the president was about to leave for his spring break at Monticello.<sup>58</sup> Jefferson was an early riser, always up in time to check his thermometer at sunrise, which on this morning was just before 6:00 a.m. He marked down the dawn temperature as 32 degrees, the hygrometer at 6.8, the weather fair, and the wind from the southwest. His secretary, Isaac A. Coles, whose bedroom was a floor below in the East Room, also checked the thermometer and weather vane, noting the same results. A slightly more voluble diarist than the president, Coles described the day as “disagreeably cold.”<sup>59</sup>

By the time these men were up and recording the weather, most of the other residents of the President’s House had been on their feet for hours. At the cellar level, Etienne Lemaire rose to marshal his forces from his bed in the room below the oval drawing room. The footmen were launched on their morning tasks of carrying firewood and coal to the hearths and water to the bedrooms, and dusting and tidying on the first floor—John Freeman in the Entrance Hall and dining rooms and William Fitzjames in the drawing room, the adjacent sitting room, and Jefferson’s cabinet.<sup>60</sup> Robert Dougherty and John Pernier resumed a perpetual round of polishing the silver, not to mention the boots of the upstairs inhabitants—besides Jefferson and Coles, Meriwether Lewis and Jefferson’s son-in-law Thomas Mann Randolph.

With the domestic mechanism set in motion, Lemaire would usually have walked to the stables. On market days, Jack Shorter harnessed the carthorse to the wagon, Joseph Dougherty took the reins, and he and

Lemaire set off to purchase provisions. The day before, at the Center Market, Lemaire had purchased salted beef, chickens, butter, spinach, watercress, and parsley. There was, however, no market on this day, a Friday.<sup>61</sup>

In the enormous room under the north Entrance Hall, the kitchen staff kept the fires burning in a fireplace, an iron range, and a stew-stove. Sandy the scullion filled a scuttle with charcoal for the latter, where pots of coffee and hot chocolate sat on grates above its cast-iron stew-holes. After Fanny Hern scattered corn for the hens and ducks in the poultry yard and gathered up the new-laid eggs, she met the cart of Miller the dairyman and carried in the day’s milk and cream. Edy Fossett was preparing the breakfast breads, while Julien and Lemaire put their heads together to settle on a menu for dinner. Mary Dougherty was on her way to the cupboards to get linens for the breakfast table.<sup>62</sup>

While his servants fetched, carried, chopped, and stirred in the nether regions, the master of the house embarked on a routine that would minimize their visibility. After his session with William Conner the barber, he came downstairs to his cabinet about 6:00 a.m. and dashed off orders for books and two tons of nailrod for the Monticello nailery.<sup>63</sup> William Fitzjames was probably the first of the footmen to don his livery uniform, trading his behind-the-scenes cleaning role for a more ceremonial position as doorkeeper. The only known visitors were the four heads of department, who came for a “consultation” on issues of national security—the Burr conspiracy and the unpalatable Monroe-Pinkney treaty with Great Britain.<sup>64</sup> This morning meeting, which extended through the dinner hour, meant that Jefferson must have missed his midday ride. But he may have mounted Wildair at an earlier hour than usual, since he saw Jack Shorter, the stablehand, paying him for a valise pad.<sup>65</sup> The absence of an attending servant on Jefferson’s daily rides shocked Washington society and spawned numerous stories of his encounters with citizens who abused their president without realizing they were conversing with him.<sup>66</sup>

Even if Jefferson did not take his daily ride, there would have been activity in the stables, where Wildair, four high-blooded bay carriage horses, and the carthorse required currying and feeding. In the carriage bays were a chariot, two phaetons, a gig, and the market wagon. Jack Shorter had to clean harness and haul oats and hay.

Joseph Dougherty would have been anxious to ensure that the phaeton, gig, and horses were ready for Jefferson's and Randolph's journey to Monticello four days hence.<sup>67</sup>

While Jefferson, James Madison, Albert Gallatin, Henry Dearborn, and Robert Smith discussed impressment on the high seas, steam rose from copper stewpans of soup and beans in the kitchen and from a copper boiler in the wash house in the west dependencies wing, where Bidley Boyle wrestled with sheets and pillow cases.<sup>68</sup> Julien directed Edy Fossett in putting together his specialty of the day, "partridge with sausages & cabbage a french way of cooking them." Revolving on the roasting jack before the hearth was a quarter of bear that Lemaire had purchased at market six days earlier. He was anxiously watching Fanny Hern stir an egg custard for the centerpiece of the dessert course.<sup>69</sup> When searching for a steward, Jefferson had specified that "honesty and skill in making the dessert are indispensable qualifications." *Maitres d'hôtel* were proficient in food preparation, especially the dessert, although they were usually not expected to wield the knives and whisks themselves. Contemporary commentators extolled the presidential meals as if a single French chef were responsible, but Lemaire and Julien should get joint credit.<sup>70</sup>

Although Jefferson had given only one dinner party in the month since the congressional session ended, it is clear that standards of cookery and presentation had not been relaxed. Lemaire and John Freeman prepared the small dining room with their usual attention to the alignment of the tablecloth and the arrangement of the silver, china, and glass. The footmen, now all in livery for their role as waiters, brought the dishes of the first course up the stairs and placed them with a studied attention to symmetry on the table: a "ham of bacon" in the center, with a beef *bouilli*, the "quarter" of bear, the partridge dish, soup (perhaps *cressonière*, with watercress Lemaire purchased the day before), potatoes, rice, spinach, beans, lamb's-lettuce salad, and pickles disposed about it.<sup>71</sup> While this dining room did not have a revolving door with circular shelves for swiftly changing courses, as did the public dining room, another kind of dumbwaiter was almost certainly used—especially given the sensitivity of the business at hand. Since his residence in France, Jefferson had used these tiered

*Tiered tables (a form of dumbwaiter) used by Jefferson to minimize the need for servants as seen in this photograph of his dining room at Monticello. Jefferson often used a similar arrangement for his small dinners at the White House.*

tables between the diners to diminish the need for servants, "mute but not inattentive listeners," in the words of Margaret Bayard Smith.<sup>72</sup>

Lemaire announced dinner at 4:00 p.m., and, after the president and his guests sat down at the table, the *maitre d'hôtel* may have remained in the room, as he did for more formal dinners, "seeing that the servants attended to every gentleman but not waiting himself." On this occasion it is more likely that the footmen withdrew, leaving their job to the dumbwaiters. In any case, Jefferson liked to fill the plates of his guests himself. Servants reappeared for the transition from the first to the second course, the all-important dessert.<sup>73</sup> Lemaire always put the principal dessert in its place at the head of the table, on this day "a kind of custard with a floating cream on it." For the bottom of the table there were "apples inclosed in a thin toast a french dish," and "on each side four dishes & three in the middle," probably holding cakes and jellies, as on the preceding days.<sup>74</sup> When the nation's leaders had taken their fill, the waiters removed the tablecloth along with the dishes and brought in the wines. If the same varieties Isaac Coles had noted two days earlier, they came from four nations: Portugese Madeira, Spanish Pajarete, French Hermitage, and Italian Nebbiolo. Accompanying the wine were "olives[,] apples, oranges & 12 other plates of nuts &c."<sup>75</sup>

Coffee and tea were ready in the adjoining oval drawing room, so Jefferson and his fellow diners were now on their own. If they needed a servant for some special purpose—as in 1802 when Jefferson "ordered" his waterproof English greatcoat brought in for a test of its impermeability—the bell system, installed in 1801, was at hand to summon a footman from the servants' hall in the cellar.<sup>76</sup> There, and in the dining room, most of the household staff were dealing with the aftermath

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of this comparatively simple dinner party. They had dishes to wash, candles to extinguish and wicks to trim, linens and plated ware to lock up. One of the servants carried a tray to a small table with doors that “flew open” when a spring was touched. He stocked it, as usual, with “a goblet of water, a decanter of wine, a plate of light cakes, and a night-taper.” When showing this convenience to a guest, Jefferson said, “I often sit up late, . . . and my wants are thus provided for without keeping a servant up.”<sup>77</sup>

Etienne Lemaire was probably the last of the household to go to bed. He had to complete the ritual of clos-

ing down the house, checking that all was in its proper place and under lock and key, the doors and windows secure. He may have also wanted to begin to organize his accounts for the last five weeks, which Jefferson would analyze before his departure.<sup>78</sup> Jefferson sipped his wine and transcribed the deliberations of his cabinet into his political journal at the end of a day so busy that—very unusually—he never made his afternoon observation of the thermometer. He retired in the knowledge that his household was humming along in a course very much “to [his] mind.”<sup>79</sup> Its uniforms, the Gallic refinement of its furnishings and fare, and its reigning

H. J. to MR. Washington Jan. 1. 1802.

I inclose you a pamphlet giving some account of the new operation of making cloth &c. waterproof; as also a piece of paper, one half of which is waterproof. I have received cloth for a overcoat, which I find, on wearing it in rain to answer perfectly. The prices for making clothes waterproof are so moderate, that if it does not injure the quality of the stuff, it will become extensively useful. — The Mammoth Cheese is arrived here and is to be presented this day. It is 4 1/2 in. diameter, 15 in. thick, and weighed in August 12 50. lb. They were offered 1000. D. in New York for the use of it 12. days as a show. it is an ebullition of the passion of republicanism in a state where it has been under heavy prosecution.

By a letter from Stewart at Monticello, I find his company of boys very much reduced. as I am not able to judge here of the causes of this I must ask the favor of you to ride over and decide who of them may be better employed elsewhere (say with Lilly) and have the rest placed in the nailhouse.

Congress have not yet done any thing, nor passed a vote which has produced a division. The sending a message instead of making a speech to be answered, is acknowledged to have had the best effect towards procuring harmony. The real strength in the H. of R. is 66 against 37. two being absent, both republicans. in the Senate it would be 18. & 18. were all here. but there has hitherto been a tie, so that I have not been able to send in the general list of nominations. — The expedition from France against S. Domingo has probably sailed before now. it is of 60,000. men. till it is reduced we shall probably be allowed only to send provisions to the fleet & army.

The last letter I have received from Edgchill is of Dec. 6. however the children were then past all danger. my tenderest love to my dear Martha, and affectionate attachment to yourself.

My dear M. Lemaire

Monticello Mar. 16 09

When I parted with you at Washington, it was my intention to have expressed to you all the sentiments of obligation I have felt myself under to you. but my heart was so full that I could utter but the single word Adieu. indeed the enticing idea of rejoining my family and of being once more master of my own time & actions, was lost in the moment of separation from those who had lived so long in the house with me, & served me so much to my mind. I must supply ~~them~~<sup>now</sup> in writing, what I then could not express, the sense of my attachment to you & satisfaction with your services. they were faithful, & skilful, and your whole conduct so marked with good humour, industry, sobriety & economy as never to have given me one moment's dissatisfaction: and indeed were I to be again in a situation to need services of the same kind, those yours would be more acceptable to me than those of any person living. I have thought it my duty thus to declare what is just & true respecting you; it may give some satisfaction to you, as assuredly it does to myself to bear this testimony to your merit. I shall be glad to know where letters may find you hereafter, & to hear from you at times and at your own convenience, as I shall ever feel a deep interest in your happiness & success. I salute you with affectionate esteem

M. Etienne Lemaire.

Th. Jefferson

Opposite: In this letter to Thomas Mann Randolph dated January 1, 1802, Jefferson writes of the events of the day including ordering a waterproof coat. He also describes the presentation of the famous mammoth cheese, a gift of his supporters in Cheshire, Massachusetts, which weighed more than a ton.

Above: When Jefferson parted with his White House servants at the end of his eight-year administration, he expressed some of his feelings to them in writing. In this letter written March 16, 1809, to his maitre-d'hôtel, Etienne Lemaire, Jefferson expresses his appreciation for his service and adds, "I shall ever feel a deep interest in your happiness and success." Lemaire, in reduced circumstances, was to commit suicide in 1817.

order provided a secure space for personal negligence and “republican simplicity.” Within the elegant confines of his castle, the president could rise the next day to receive his official visitors in his faded coat and worn slippers.

### After 1809

Jefferson said farewell to his household staff on March 11, 1809, when he crossed the Potomac for the last time. Stable hand Jack Shorter accompanied him through a heavy snowstorm to Monticello, while Edy Fossett and Fanny Hern, with Edy’s children, made the journey more slowly in a caravan of wagons. Honoré Julien followed 10 days later in order to spend almost three weeks helping the “two good girls,” as Lemaire called them, to settle in to the new kitchen under the

south terrace. Jefferson reported that Julien’s “pupils are going on very well and much to our comfort and satisfaction.”<sup>80</sup> During the years of his retirement, Monticello visitors praised the “half Virginian, half French style” of the meals they prepared.<sup>81</sup>

Back in Washington, the remaining servants found other places and occupations. Margaret Bayard Smith, in her glowing account of master-servant relations in the President’s House, probably exaggerated when she wrote that Jefferson, “by his generous interference,” helped his former servants to make “some advantageous establishment for themselves.”<sup>82</sup> But there is no question that he parted on very cordial terms with his employees, interested himself in their futures, and on occasions made them financial contributions. He, too, had to resort to the written word to express his sentiments at the moment of parting: “My heart was so full that I could utter but the single word Adieu. Indeed the enlivening idea of rejoining my family and of being once more master of my own time & actions, was lost in the moment of separation from those who had lived so long in the house with me, & served me so much to my mind.” In this letter to Lemaire, he declared his attachment to his “faithful, & skilful” steward, whose “whole conduct [was] so marked with good humour, industry, sobriety & economy as never to have given me one moment’s dissatisfaction.”<sup>83</sup>

Lemaire returned to Philadelphia and prospered for a time, but his life had a “tragical” end. In 1817 he threw himself in the Schuylkill River when a friend defaulted on a \$5,000 loan. Although Lemaire had a fortune equal to twice that sum, “he lost both his health and his reason.”<sup>84</sup> An unusual number of suicides are associated with residents of the President’s House of Jefferson’s time, and financial worries figure in all of them. Less well known than the death of Meriwether Lewis in 1809 is that of his servant, John Pernier, who “followed his master’s example” six months later by taking an overdose of laudanum. Despondent over his failure to be paid for more than a year’s service to Governor Lewis, Pernier was also perhaps troubled by rumors that he was Lewis’s murderer. In his last months, “wretchedly poor and destitute,” he was taken in by former President’s House footman Christopher Süverman, who bore the expenses of his final illness and burial. Jefferson described Süverman at this time as “a very honest man,”

IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE

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PHOTOGRAPH FROM CINCINNATI'S COLORED CITIZENS, 1926

*After obtaining their freedom, Jefferson’s slaves Edith and Joseph Fossett left Monticello. They moved to Cincinnati in about 1840, where their son Peter Fossett, pictured above, became a prominent caterer.*

now completely blind, who bought and sold groceries “from hand to mouth” and was “miserably poor.”<sup>85</sup>

At the time of Pernier’s suicide, Honoré Julien was making a modest but independent living on F Street selling cakes and confectionery, including, in the summer, ice cream. He also carried on a catering business. Over the years, he sent New Year’s greetings to Monticello and occasionally forwarded delicacies, like canvasbacks and Swiss cheese, that were unattainable in the mountains of Virginia.<sup>86</sup> By 1828 his “cookshop” had been discontinued “for want of custom” and was a mere “fruit shop.” His death two years later was announced in the newspaper with the comment, “His probity and worth were proverbial.” He passed on his culinary skills, for his son Auguste Julien catered banquets at the President’s House in the time of James K. Polk.<sup>87</sup> Honoré Julien’s enslaved pupils, after running Monticello’s kitchen for more than 15 years, were both sold at the estate sale after Jefferson’s death. Fanny Hern and her husband were purchased by University of Virginia professor Robley Dunglison. Edy Fossett and her youngest children were bought by free family members. Her husband, Joseph, who had been freed in Jefferson’s will, continued to work as a blacksmith to pay for the purchase of his wife and children. The Fossetts moved about 1840 to Cincinnati, where their sons became the most prominent caterers in the city.<sup>88</sup>

The other slave in the President’s House, John Freeman, also had to struggle for freedom and family unity. On the eve of Madison’s inauguration, Freeman was again driven to take up pen and paper rather than put his case face-to-face. Jefferson wanted his slave to go with him to live at Monticello. By this time Melinda Colbert was Freeman’s wife and living in the President’s House, evidently now free. Her husband considered it unsafe for her to return to Virginia, so he had refused to go. His letter included an apology and a painful concession: “Rather than displeas you i will go and do the best i can. . . . I shall be oblige to leave [Melinda] and the children.”<sup>89</sup> Jefferson bowed to the inevitable. He sold Freeman to Madison, who retained him as dining room servant in the President’s House. Freeman became free according to the original contract in 1815 and evidently continued to work for the Madisons while they remained in Washington.<sup>90</sup> Afterwards, he was a waiter at Gadsby’s Hotel and a messenger in the State Department, among other unknown occupations. John

and Melinda Freeman, who had at least eight children, were active in the antislavery endeavors of Washington’s free blacks. At his death in 1839, John Freeman was able to leave his family a house on K Street several blocks northwest of the President’s House.<sup>91</sup>

Little is known of Freeman’s companion of the road, Jack Shorter. In 1819 he sent word of his “present state” to Jefferson through Joseph Dougherty, his former taskmaster. After his wife had left him to go to “the western country,” Shorter became “dissipated” and unable to make a living. As Dougherty reported, he “flew to me for protection. I succeeded in reforming him.”<sup>92</sup> Dougherty’s own career after his stint on Pennsylvania Avenue was a checkered one. While briefly pursuing the painting trade, he speculated in fine-wooled sheep, grazing them on the common near the President’s House. When the bubble of “Merino mania” burst, he started a porter and ale bottling business, but was ruined by the War of 1812.

Correspondence between the Irishman and Monticello was frequent in these first years of Jefferson’s retirement, when Dougherty acted as his Washington agent, facilitating the transmission of geese, sheep, and books. Dougherty reported on the “wonderfull changes” Dolley Madison had made to the President’s House,<sup>93</sup> and Jefferson provided numerous letters of commendation for minor government posts. One of these letters finally bore fruit in 1818, when Dougherty was appointed superintendent of buildings for the departments of Navy, War, and State. He lost this office before the year was out, however, after being tried and imprisoned for “cowhiding”<sup>94</sup> Samuel Lane, commissioner of public buildings.

At the end of 1823, Dougherty was weathering very hard times, still trying to pay off debts from the war and with only a very low paying position as a ward commissioner. His wife, Mary, took it upon herself to write to her former employer, without the knowledge of her husband. Jefferson sent \$25 in response to her plea for assistance.<sup>95</sup> Yet in 1830, the ebullient Irishman bounded in to the home of Margaret Bayard Smith and sat “talking of the dear old Man” for an hour, providing “a minute detail of Mr. J.’s distribution of every hour of the day, from sun rise until bed time.” In 1819, Dougherty had exclaimed, “Oh! When shall we have another Jefferson!,” and in 1830, two years before his death, he told Mrs. Smith that Jefferson’s “whole life was nothing

but good, . . . it was his meat and drink, all he thought of and all he cared for, to make every body happy. Yes, the purest body.”<sup>96</sup>

## NOTES

The quotation in the title is from: Margaret Bayard Smith, “The President’s House Forty Years Ago” [1841], in *The First Forty Years of Washington Society in the Family Letters of Mrs. Samuel Harrison Smith* (Margaret Bayard), from the Collection of Her Grandson, J. Henley Smith, ed. Gaillard Hunt (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1906), 392.

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- William Plumer to Jeremiah Smith, December 9, 1802, William Plumer Papers, Library of Congress (here after LC), Washington, D.C., quoted in Lynn W. Turner, *William Plumer of New Hampshire, 1759–1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1962), 94.
- Tailor Thomas Carpenter had just delivered the winter suits of livery. Thomas Carpenter, invoice, October 14, 1802–April 26, 1803, Thomas Jefferson Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif. (hereafter HL).
- Mahlon Dickerson to Silas Dickerson, April 21, 1802, *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, With Related Documents, 1783–1854*, ed. Donald Dean Jackson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 2:677.
- Thomas Jefferson to William Evans, February 22, 1801; Jefferson to Philippe Létombe, February 22, 1801, both Thomas Jefferson Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston (hereafter MHS); Jefferson to Meriwether Lewis, February 23, 1801, *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, ed. Jackson, 1:2–3; Jefferson to Robert Morris, February 26, 1801, Jefferson Papers, MHS.
- Jefferson to Létombe, February 22, 1801, Jefferson Papers, MHS.
- Jefferson to Joseph Rapin, August 14, 1801, Jefferson Papers, MHS.
- Ellen Randolph Coolidge to Henry S. Randall, February 13, 1856, in Ellen Coolidge Letterbook, 48, Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge Correspondence, Accession 9090, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville (hereafter UVa); Létombe to Jefferson, July 11, 1801, Thomas Jefferson Papers, LC.
- Thomas Jefferson Randolph, recollections, n.d., 6, accession no. 1397, Jefferson Papers, UVa. Monticello overseer Edmund Bacon described Lemaire as “a very smart man, [he] was well educated, and as much of a gentleman in his appearance as any man.” Edmund Bacon, recollections, in *Jefferson at Monticello*, ed. James A. Bear Jr. (Charlottesville, Va: University Press of Virginia, 1967), 105. Rapin returned to Philadelphia for personal reasons, making a special trip there to find his own replacement. While Jefferson spent the summer at Monticello, Rapin and Lemaire overlapped at the President’s House to ensure a smooth transition. Jefferson to Rapin, August 14, 1801, Jefferson Papers, MHS.
- Margaret Bayard Smith, “President’s House Forty Years Ago,” in *First Forty Years*, ed. Hunt, 391.
- Louisa Catherine Adams, “Adventures of a Nobody,” 161, Adams Family Papers, MHS.
- Margaret Bayard Smith, “President’s House Forty Years Ago,” in *First Forty Years*, ed. Hunt, 391–92.
- Jefferson to Rapin, August 14, 1801, Jefferson Papers, MHS.
- Hemings had been *chef de cuisine* in Jefferson’s households in Paris and Philadelphia, after several years of training in the French capital. Freed in 1796, he was working in a Baltimore tavern in 1801, and “died a suicide” later in the year. See Lucia Stanton, *Free Some Day: The African-American Families of Monticello* (Charlottesville, Va: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2000), 125–29.
- Létombe to Jefferson, March 26, 1801, Jefferson Papers, LC; *Washington National Intelligencer*, December 31, 1830. An anonymous “cookwoman” worked in the kitchen for two months before Julien’s arrival and during his first weeks. Jefferson, entry for June 1, 1801, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books: Accounts, with Legal Records and Miscellany, 1767–1826*, ed. James A. Bear Jr. and Lucia C. Stanton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 1042.
- Margaret Bayard Smith, “President’s House Forty Years Ago,” in *First Forty Years*, ed. Hunt, 391.
- Samuel L. Mitchill to Catharine Mitchill, February 10, 1802, Mitchill Collection, Museum of the City of New York, New York.
- Washington National Intelligencer*, July 25, 1832; William Seale, *The President’s House: A History* (Washington, D.C.: White House Historical Association, with the cooperation of the National Geographic Society, 1986), 101; Jefferson to Joseph B. Varnum, September 19, 1811, Jefferson Papers, LC. See also Jefferson to Samuel H. Smith, August 15, 1813, Jefferson Papers, LC.
- Washington Evening Post*, April 20, 1802, in Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Library of America, 1986), 133–34. The chariot was evidently used only during the two visits of Jefferson’s daughters. Jefferson to Martha Jefferson Randolph, June 18, 1802, *The Family Letters of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Edwin Morris Betts and James A. Bear Jr. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1965), 229; Margaret Bayard Smith, “President’s House Forty Years Ago,” in *First Forty Years*, ed. Hunt, 393.
- Jefferson to Samuel H. Smith, August 15, 1813, Jefferson Papers, LC.
- Margaret Bayard Smith, “President’s House Forty Years Ago,” in *First Forty Years*, ed. Hunt, 392.
- Thomas Carpenter, receipted invoices, January 1–March 30, May 1–July 1, 1801, Jefferson Papers, University of Virginia, hereafter TJ-UVa; and subsequent invoices in the Jefferson Papers, MHS, TJ-UVa, and HL. Jefferson’s contracts with his footmen called for two livery suits a year. Jefferson, entries for March 12 and May 27, 1801, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1035, 1042. In Washington, livery seems to have been restricted to the households of the president, foreign diplomats, and wealthy residents like John Tayloe. Barbara G. Carson, *Ambitious Appetites: Dining, Behavior, and Patterns of Consumption in Federal Washington* (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1990), 94–95.

22. Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America—The Colonial Williamsburg Collection* (New Haven: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, in association with Yale University Press, 2002), 128–32. The livery of John Tayloe’s servants was also blue and red. Carson, *Ambitious Appetites*, 94–95.
23. Edward Maher, John Christoph (known as Christopher) Süverman, and John Kramer/Jean Cremer, hired in the spring of 1801, all worked a year or less. The “fickle” Maher was addicted to changing places; Süverman could not carry out his duties because of increasing blindness; and Kramer apparently left because of marital difficulties. His replacement, William Fitzjames, remained for five years and disappeared from the record without remark. Jefferson to Lemaire, May 14, 1802; Lemaire to Jefferson, May 10, 1802, April 19, 1804; Rapin to Jefferson, May 17, 1802, all Jefferson Papers, MHS.
24. Jefferson to Lemaire, May 14, 1802, Jefferson Papers, MHS.
25. Jefferson, entry for June 1, 1801, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1043; Lemaire to Jefferson, May 10, 1802, Jefferson Papers, MHS.
26. Rapin to Jefferson, April 3, 1801; Lemaire to Jefferson, April 19, 1804, both Jefferson Papers; Donald Jackson, “On the Death of Meriwether Lewis’s Servant,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 21 (1964): 445–48. Golden was possibly a son or relative of Abraham Gauling of Albemarle County. Jefferson, entry for August 3, 1778, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 469; Lester J. Cappon, ed., “Personal Property Tax List of Albemarle County, 1782,” *Papers of the Albemarle County Historical Society* 5 (1944–45): 57; Edgar Woods, *Albemarle County in Virginia* (1901; repr. Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1991), 74. The family name was spelled variously Gauling, Golden, and Golding.
27. Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, August 7, 1804, Jefferson Papers, HL.
28. Jefferson, entry for June 1, 1801, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1043. John Freeman’s owner was Dr. William Baker of Prince Georges County.
29. William Brent, certificate, October 22, 1827, Carter G. Woodson Papers, LC.
30. Nicholas P. Trist, memorandum to Henry S. Randall, n.d., Randolph Family Manuscripts, LC.
31. Maria Jefferson Eppes to Jefferson, January 11, 1803, *Family Letters*, ed. Betts and Bear, 240. A local barber came to the Executive Mansion to shave Jefferson and dress his hair. Jefferson, entries regarding Edward Frethey and William Conner, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, index.
32. Maria Jefferson Eppes to Jefferson, January 11, 1803, *Family Letters*, ed. Betts and Bear, 240.
33. John Shorter was undoubtedly a member of the large extended free black Shorter family living in the District of Columbia. See Dorothy S. Provine, *District of Columbia Free Negro Registers, 1821–61* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1996), 76 and passim.
34. Jefferson, various entries, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton; Etienne Lemaire, accounts, January 1806–March 1809, Jefferson Papers, HL. Some of the outside workers may have been slaves who hired their own time from their owners.
35. Jefferson, entries for November 2, 1801, July 13, 1802, November 7, 1803, October 1, 1806, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1057, 1077, 1111, 1189. Edy Fossett’s arrival is indicated by an increase of \$2 in the servants’ wages. See also Jefferson to Martha Jefferson Randolph, June 18, July 10, 1802, *Family Letters*, ed. Betts and Bear, 229, 233; Edmund Bacon, recollections, in *Jefferson at Monticello*, ed. Bear, 55. Ursula, the daughter of farm laborers Bagwell and Minerva and wife of Monticello head gardener Wormley Hughes, was inoculated against smallpox in May 1801, soon after her arrival. Edward Gantt, invoice, c. March 2, 1802, LC. Edy Fossett, the daughter of carpenter David Hern and his wife Isabel, was the wife of Monticello blacksmith Joseph Fossett. Fanny Hern, the daughter of Edward and Jane Gillette, was the wife of wagoner David Hern. See Stanton, *Free Some Day*, 62–66, 129–31, 133–35, 143–44, 149–50, 155–60. The records indicate that, even during Jefferson’s long summer vacations, the enslaved cooks remained at the President’s House.
36. Jefferson, entries for 1801–9, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton. The monthly wages, totaling an average of \$140, were: Lemaire \$30; Julien \$25; Dougherty \$14; the footmen-porters \$12; Jack Shorter \$8; washerwomen \$7; other women \$8. For a brief period at the end of 1801 there were 13 servants at wages totaling \$175; from the fall of 1807, 10 servants received \$122 each month. In the two instances when Jefferson totaled the annual cost of “servants,” his total was 10 percent or less of his salary, but he did not include the cost of their meals, which, according to his calculations, averaged \$33 to \$45 per week. Jefferson, entries for March 8, 1802, May 4, 1803, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1067, 1098.
37. Jefferson to Rapin, June 3, 1802, Jefferson Papers, MHS.
38. Women servants usually received only \$1 a month in drink money. John Freeman’s gratuity was increased to \$4 a month by the fall of 1804, when he was Jefferson’s property. Jefferson, entry for October 2, 1804, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1137. Jefferson also gave Freeman and Jack Shorter special gratuities of \$5 during the two annual vacations at Monticello.
39. Jefferson’s granddaughter Ellen Randolph Coolidge, who thought Lemaire “a civil and a useful man” who “merited reward,” had some reservations about the steward, “of whose honesty his master had a higher opinion than the world at large, and who I fancy made a small fortune in his employ.” Ellen Randolph Coolidge to Henry S. Randall, February 13, 1856, Ellen Coolidge Letterbook, 48, Coolidge Correspondence, accession 9090, UV.
40. See, for example, Jefferson, entries for October 11, 1801, March 8, June 21, 1802, January 3, 1803, October 9, 1806, January 16, 1807, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1055, 1067, 1075–76, 1089, 1190, 1197, and passim 1801–9. On November 5, 1804, Jefferson began recording monthly, in chart form (1139). Lemaire’s own accounts, 1806–9, in phonetic French, survive in HL. A number of invoices of those who provided regular supplies of milk, meat, and bread also survive there. Jefferson’s method for determining the average weekly cost of one person’s dinner was to divide the total for “provisions” by the number of people who dined at the President’s House each week. From January 3, 1803, he refined the dinner cost analysis by deducting a set amount each week

- for the cost of feeding the servants (1089).
41. Margaret Bayard Smith, "President's House Forty Years Ago," in *First Forty Years*, ed. Hunt, 392.
  42. *Ibid.*, 384.
  43. Jefferson to Létombe, February 22, 1801; Lemaire to Jefferson, August 6, 1803, August 12, 1805, and others, all Jefferson Papers, MHS; Joseph Dougherty to Jefferson, July 26, August 16, 1805, and others, Jefferson Papers, MHS; Edward Gantt invoice, c. March 2, 1802, Jefferson Papers, LC. In the same way, Jefferson, like his fellow slaveowners, referred to all the residents of his Monticello plantation as his "family." See, for example, *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book*, ed. Edwin Morris Betts (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), facsimile p. 27.
  44. See Edward Gantt, invoices, c. March 2, 1802, c. November 1822, Jefferson Papers, LC; Joseph Dougherty to Jefferson, April [1802]; Lemaire to Jefferson, August 6, 1803, September 17, 1804, all Jefferson Papers, MHS.
  45. Jefferson to Martha Jefferson Randolph, March 20, 1807, *Family Letters*, ed. Betts and Bear, 304.
  46. Lemaire to Jefferson, August 17, 1802; Jefferson to Edmund Bacon, November 7, 1808, both Jefferson Papers, MHS; Lemaire, accounts, November 12, 19, 1808, Jefferson Papers, HL. Lemaire considered the death of the unidentified child a blessing, as "he would have been infirm all his life." The only women living in the President's House in the summer of 1802 were Julien's wife, Mary Dougherty, and the washerwoman (probably Sally Houseman), although it is also possible that Ursula did not leave Washington in July, as records imply. Jefferson, entries for July 5, 13, 1802, May 9, 1803, *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1077, 1100. Margaret Bayard Smith remembered that "when the family of one of his domestics had the whooping cough," Jefferson wrote to a lady living at a distance (probably herself) for a remedy that had been successful in her family. Margaret Bayard Smith, "President's House Forty Years Ago," in *First Forty Years*, ed. Hunt, 392.
  47. Ursula's child was probably the first born in the President's House (March 22, 1802), Edith Fossett's children were born in January 1803, January 1805, and October 1807, and Fanny Hern's child probably in 1808. Jefferson, entries for March 22, 1802, January 28, 1803, *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1069, 1091; Edward Gantt invoice, c. March 2, 1802, Jefferson Papers, LC; *Jefferson's Farm Book*, ed. Betts, facsimile p. 128; Lemaire, accounts, November 7, 1807, Jefferson Papers, HL.
  48. Edmund Bacon, recollections, *Jefferson at Monticello*, ed. Bear, 104.
  49. Jefferson to Joseph Dougherty, July 31, 1806; Dougherty to Jefferson, August 3, 1806; Lemaire to Jefferson, August 5, 1806, all Jefferson Papers, MHS. The news that precipitated Fossett's escapade is not known.
  50. John Freeman to Jefferson, [April 18, 1804], Jefferson Papers, LC; copy of July 3, 1804 bill of sale of John Freeman, dated October 22, 1827, Woodson Papers, LC; John Wayles Eppes to Jefferson, July 16, 1804, TJ-UVA; Jefferson to Eppes, August 7, 1804, Jefferson Papers, HL. This is a radically abbreviated account of a complex set of negotiations, many aspects of which are not entirely clear.
  51. Lemaire to Jefferson, May 10, 1802, Jefferson Papers, MHS.
  52. Jefferson, entry for July 3, 1807, *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1206; Lemaire to Jefferson, August 11, 1807; Joseph Dougherty to Jefferson, August 31, September 17, 1807; Jefferson to Dougherty, September 6, 1807, all Jefferson Papers, MHS.
  53. Joseph Dougherty to Jefferson, [April 25, 1802], Jefferson Papers, MHS.
  54. Jefferson to James Oldham, November 30, 1804, Jefferson Papers, LC.
  55. John Freeman to Jefferson, [April 18, 1804], Jefferson Papers, LC.
  56. Rapin to Jefferson, April 3, 1801; Jefferson to Rapin, April 17, 1801, both Jefferson Papers, MHS. Jefferson's letter implies that he was familiar with John Freeman before he assumed office. Freeman may have worked at McMunn's boardinghouse, or he may have been a servant in the household of one of Jefferson's Washington acquaintances.
  57. Jefferson to Lemaire, May 14, 1802, Jefferson Papers, MHS.
  58. Jefferson to Martha Jefferson Randolph, May 6, 1805, *Family Letters*, ed. Betts and Bear, 270.
  59. Jefferson's Weather Memorandum Book, April 3, 1807, Jefferson Papers, MHS; Isaac A. Coles, diary, April 3, 1807, private collection (copy in Jefferson Library, Monticello). This section presents only a fraction of the activities of a single day. Unannotated actions are educated guesses, based on a combination of primary sources and household routines of the period. I am very grateful to C. M. Harris for reminding me of the existence of Coles's diary.
  60. Rapin to Jefferson, April 3, 1801; Jefferson to Lemaire, May 14, 1802, July 26, 1806, all Jefferson Papers, MHS.
  61. Lemaire, accounts, April 2, 1807, Jefferson Papers, HL. Monticello overseer Edmund Bacon remembered of a visit to Washington that he often got up at 4:00 a.m. to accompany Lemaire and Dougherty on their marketing mission. Bacon, recollections, in *Jefferson at Monticello*, ed. Bear, 105.
  62. Accounts with Jacob Miller; Lemaire, accounts, both Jefferson Papers, HL; Joseph Dougherty to Jefferson, [April 25, 1802], Jefferson Papers, MHS.
  63. Jefferson, entry for April 7, 1809, *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1201; Rapin to Jefferson, April 3, 1801; Jefferson to Roches frères and to Jones & Howell, April 3, 1807, all Jefferson Papers, MHS. Rapin mentioned that Jefferson's cabinet "is found arranged by six o'clock in the morning when you descend."
  64. Coles, diary, April 3, 1807; Jefferson, memorandum of meeting of April 3, 1807, "The Anas," *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892) 1:324.
  65. Jefferson, entry for April 3, 1807, *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1200.
  66. Margaret Bayard Smith, "President's House Forty Years Ago," in *First Forty Years*, ed. Hunt, 393, 410; *Jeffersonian America: Notes on the United States of America Collected in the Years 1805-6-7 and 11-12 by Sir Augustus John Foster, Bart.*, ed. Richard Beale Davis (San Marino, Calif: Huntington Library, 1954), 9. According to Foster, only in uncivilized Washington could Jefferson have appeared "without attendants, when he took a ride, fastening his horse's bridle to the shop doors." For a particularly elaborate version of the citizen-president encounter, said to have been related by Jefferson himself, see John Bernard, *Retrospections of America 1797-1811* (New York:

- Harper and Brothers, 1887), 240–42.
67. Washington Boyd, carriage tax receipt, November 6, 1806, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. Jefferson's horses and the chariot had cost a staggering \$3,100. Jefferson, entries for February 3, 1801, April 20, 1801, March 8, 1802, *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1034, 1038, 1067–68).
  68. Coles, diary, April 3, 1807, for food; President's House inventory, February 19, 1809, Jefferson Papers, LC, for copperware.
  69. Coles, diary, April 3, 1807; Lemaire, accounts, March 28, 1807, Jefferson Papers, HL.
  70. Jefferson to Létombe, February 22, 1801, Jefferson Papers, MHS. Among the recipes that survive in the Jefferson Papers, six are credited to Lemaire and only one to Julien.
  71. Coles, diary, April 3, 1807; Lemaire, accounts, April 1–2, 1807, Jefferson Papers, HL.
  72. Margaret Bayard Smith, "President's House Forty Years Ago," in *First Forty Years*, ed. Hunt, 387–88; Seale, *President's House*, 104–5.
  73. Thomas Jefferson Randolph, recollections, Jefferson Papers, UVA; Benjamin Henry Latrobe to Mary Elizabeth Latrobe, November 24, 1802, *The Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, ed. John C. Van Horne et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press for the Maryland Historical Society, 1984), 1:232.
  74. Coles, diary, April 3, 1807.
  75. Coles, diary, April 1–3, 1807.
  76. Samuel L. Mitchill to Catharine Mitchill, February 10, 1802, Mitchill Collection.
  77. Margaret Bayard Smith, "President's House Forty Years Ago," in *First Forty Years*, ed. Hunt, 392–93.
  78. Jefferson, entry for April 6, 1807, *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1200.
  79. Jefferson to Lemaire, March 16, 1809, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*, ed. J. Jefferson Looney et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 1:56.
  80. Jefferson, entries for March 11–17, 1809, *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1243–44; Bacon, recollections, in *Jefferson at Monticello*, ed. Bear, 106–7; Jefferson to Lemaire, April 25, 1809; both Lemaire to Jefferson, May 6, 1809, both *Papers of Jefferson*, ed. Looney et al., 1:162, 188–89.
  81. "Notes of Mr. Jefferson's Conversation 1824 at Monticello," *The Papers of Daniel Webster: Correspondence*, ed. Charles M. Wiltse and Harold D. Moser (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England for Dartmouth College, 1974), 1:371.
  82. Margaret Bayard Smith, "President's House Forty Years Ago," in *First Forty Years*, ed. Hunt, 392.
  83. Jefferson to Lemaire, March 16, 1809, *Papers of Jefferson*, ed. Looney et al., 1:55–56.
  84. Julien to Jefferson, November 7, 1817; Jefferson to Julien, December 25, 1817, both Jefferson Papers, LC.
  85. Jefferson to William D. Meriwether, August 21, 1810, Jefferson Papers, LC; John Christoph Süverman to Jefferson, May 5, August 8, 1810; Jefferson to Süverman, September 23, 1810, both Jefferson Papers, MHS; Gilbert C. Russell to Jefferson, January 31, 1810, Jefferson Papers, LC; John Pernier to Jefferson, February 10, 1810, Jefferson Papers, both LC.
  86. *Washington National Intelligencer*, January 8, June 1, 1810; Julien to Jefferson, January 1, 1810, July 2, 1812, September 11, 1818, January 14, 1825; Jefferson to Julien, January 8, 1810, October 6, 1818, January 27, 1825; Joseph Dougherty to Jefferson, December 18, 1823, all Jefferson Papers, LC. In his January 27, 1825, letter, Jefferson wrote that the canvasbacks had "enabled me to regale my friends here with what they had never tasted before."
  87. Nicholas P. Trist to Virginia J. Trist, November 23, 1828, Nicholas Philip Trist Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.; *Washington National Intelligencer*, December 31, 1830; Seale, *President's House*, 259.
  88. Stanton, *Free Some Day*, 65–66, 150–53.
  89. John Freeman to Jefferson, [March 2, 1809], Jefferson Papers, LC. If officially freed by John Wayles Eppes, Melinda Colbert was subject to the 1806 Virginia law making it illegal for a freed slave to remain in the state for more than a year after manumission.
  90. Deed of John Freeman, April 19, 1809, Woodson Papers, in *Papers of Jefferson*, ed. Looney et al., 1:156; Paul Jennings, "A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison," *White House History* 1, no. 1 (1983): 48, 50; James Madison to Dolley Madison, [August 28, 1814], James Madison Papers, LC; Dolley Madison to Anna Cutts, July 5, 1816 and [1815–16], *The Dolley Madison Digital Edition: Letters 1788–June 1836*, ed. Holly C. Shulman (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004). Jennings's account described Freeman as "butler" in Madison's staff, perhaps indicating enlarged responsibilities but not suggesting that he ran the household; that role fell to Madison's French steward or *maitre d'hôtel*.
  91. Washington city directory, 1827 and 1830; Nicholas P. Trist to Virginia J. Trist, January 27, 1829, Trist Papers; Letitia Woods Brown, *Free Negroes in the District of Columbia, 1790–1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 118; John Freeman, will, August 10, 1839, District of Columbia Archives; files of Getting Word: The Monticello African American Oral History Project.
  92. Joseph Dougherty to Jefferson, February 10, 1819, Jefferson Papers, LC.
  93. Joseph Dougherty to Jefferson, May 15, 1809, *Papers of Jefferson*, ed. Looney et al., 1:199.
  94. Joseph Dougherty to Thomas Mann Randolph, July 20, 1819, Jefferson Papers, LC. Dougherty also directed the wagoning of Jefferson's almost 7,000-volume library from Monticello to Washington, after he sold it to Congress in 1815.
  95. Mary Dougherty to Jefferson, October 25, December 7, 1823, Jefferson Papers, LC; Jefferson, entry for December 30, 1824, *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, ed. Bear and Stanton, 1401.
  96. Joseph Dougherty to Thomas Mann Randolph, 20 July 1819, Jefferson Papers, LC; Margaret Bayard Smith to Mrs. Kirkpatrick, March 31, 1830, in *First Forty Years*, ed. Hunt, 313–14; *Washington National Intelligencer*, July 25, 1832.

