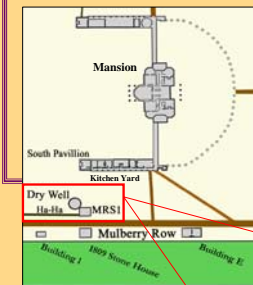


# Whose Trash is This? Unraveling Ethnostratigraphy on Monticello Mountain

Elizabeth Clites and Lynsey Bates – Monticello Department of Archaeology

## Introduction

From 1768 to 1826, the Monticello Mountaintop was the center of a bustling plantation where members of Thomas Jefferson's household, free workmen, and slaves interacted. In the western Kitchen Yard, a long Jefferson-period occupation, combined with the presence of several distinct social groups and continuous landscape manipulation for over 230 years, result in a stratigraphically convoluted assemblage.



Excavations were conducted by the Monticello Department of Archaeology under the direction of Dr. William Kelso between 1979-1981.



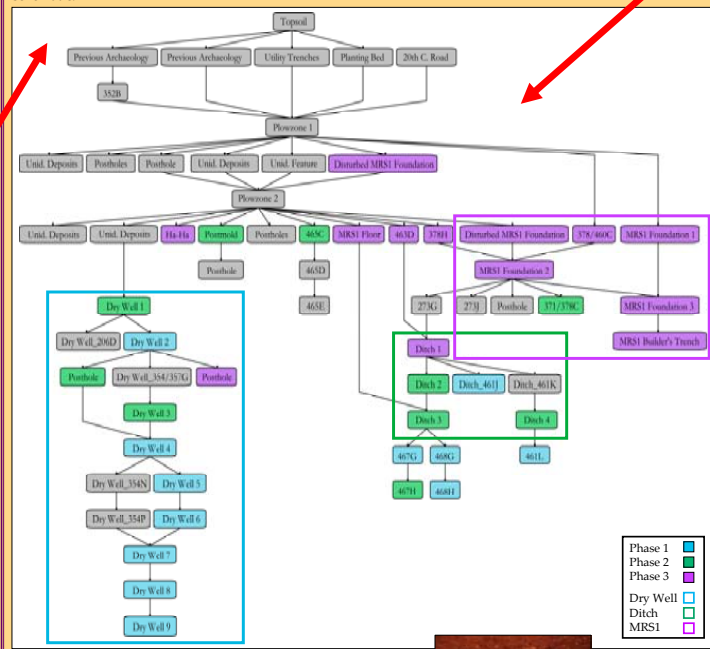
## The Features

- Dry Well**
  - 18.5ft x 17ft x 19ft
  - Use: dry food storage
  - Construction referenced in one Jeffersonian document
  - Dates: c.1771 – c.1783
- Ditch**
  - 68.5ft x 7ft
  - Runs between the South Pavilion and Mulberry Row
  - Not recorded in Jeffersonian documents
  - Dates: c.1787 – c.1795
- Mulberry Row Structure 1 (MRS1)**
  - 20.5ft x 15ft stone foundation
  - Clay floor and no internal heat source
  - Not recorded in Jeffersonian documents
  - Dates: c.1798 – c.1802

Estimated dates for each feature were determined from documents as well as artifact TPQs and Mean Ceramic Dates (MCDs).

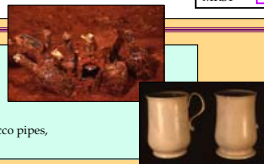
## Harris Matrix

A Harris Matrix is a diagram that illustrates stratigraphic relationships between deposits. Excavation records, drawings, and photographs were used to establish features, stratigraphic groups, and stratigraphic relationships, which were then converted into this matrix. Three feature groups, the dry well, ditch, and MRS1, are clearly visible on this schematic.



### The Assemblage:

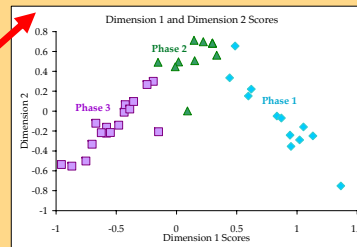
- Over 115,000 total artifacts from topsoil, plowzone, and feature contexts
- Over 26,000 ceramic sherds
- Over 18,000 glass sherds
- Nearly 550 personal items, including buttons, buckles, tobacco pipes, beads, fan blades, and brushes



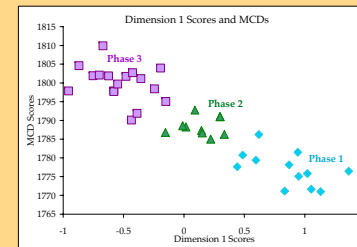
Stratigraphic groups (SGs) are contexts that were excavated separately but correlate with one another as part of a larger single deposit.

The relationships between these deposits, such as the MRS1 foundation cutting into the ditch fill, are also illustrated. However, to determine the broader temporal phases of deposition, we employ Correspondence Analysis and MCD data.

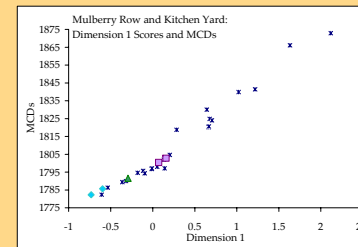
## Correspondence Analysis



Deposits with similar ceramic content group together on this CA graph. When compared with the adjacent Dimension 1 and MCD Graph, three main phase groups were distinguished.



Using both CA and MCD data, this graph illustrates the temporal relationships of all the site deposits.



After the phase groups were established, the kitchen yard assemblage was compared to previously phased sites on Mulberry Row. Again using MCDs and CA scores, this graph shows that Phase 1 is a fairly unique and early assemblage, whereas Phases 2 and 3 align with Mulberry Row assemblages.

Correspondence Analysis (CA) is a statistical method that illustrates patterns that are otherwise difficult to discover. Analyzing numerous variables, CA graphs group similar assemblages near one another.

This CA analysis was generated after excluding "modern" and disturbed deposits, as well as those with small sample sizes. This included contexts such as the road bed, planting bed, topsoil, and plowzones.



## Potential Deposit Sources

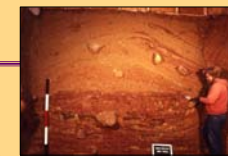
### Household

- Both elite and non-elite household assemblages are found in the kitchen yard
- The **dry well** ceramic assemblage contains a unique quantity of elite items, such as overlazed Chinese porcelain
- Both the **ditch** and **MRS1** appear to contain a mixture of elite and non-elite ceramics, with a slightly higher proportion of elite, decorated ceramics in **MRS1**

### Kitchen

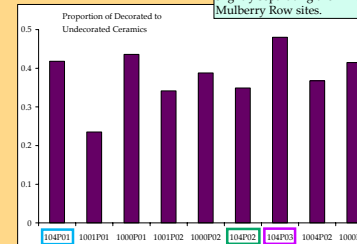
- **Dry well** ash and charcoal deposits containing burned peach pits and corn cobs likely originated from the nearby South Pavilion kitchen

This graph illustrates that, while the kitchen yard groups with Mulberry Row sites on the CA, all of the kitchen yard features have a high proportion of decorated ceramics, slightly separating them from contemporary Mulberry Row sites.



### Construction

- Three **dry well** SGs likely originated from construction episodes and contained specialty bricks as well as re-located subsoils
- A high quantity of nails in **MRS1** is possibly from construction episodes separate from MRS1 construction



### Mulberry Row?

- Both the **ditch** and **MRS1** have ceramic assemblages that are very similar to Mulberry Row on the CA graph, which suggests that at least some of their deposits are from similar or the same sources

## Conclusions

### Relationship to Mulberry Row

A more detailed analysis of decorated ceramics from the dry well showed that it differs significantly from contemporary Mulberry Row sites (see Clites and Bates 2008). The other two features are not as distinctly elite and are potentially a mixture of ceramics from sources similar to Mulberry Row deposits. Whether or not this suggests that Mulberry Row is the source of the Kitchen Yard deposits is still unclear and this potential relationship will be a focus of future research.

### Final Thoughts

The presence of these kitchen yard features exemplify a long period of landscape rearrangement on the mountaintop. The dry well and MRS1 are also some of the only evidence of Jefferson's early architectural plans and landscape configurations that were later replaced by the landscape we see today. Finally, this research adds details to the chronology of the mountaintop and provides insight into the lives of those living and working on Monticello Mountain.

### References

Clites, Elizabeth and Lynsey Bates (2008). "In Digging My Dry Well": Examining Early Life on Monticello Mountain. Paper presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology.  
 Bear, James A. Jr. and Lucia C. Stanton, ed. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Second Series: Jefferson's Memorandum Books*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

### Acknowledgements

Funding for this Research Provided by Robert H. Smith

Special Thanks to: Karen Smith, Fraser Neiman, Don Gaylord, Chris Mundy, Erin Stamer, Jesse Sawyer, and Derek Wheeler