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“Kicked About’’: Native Culture at Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello

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In the summer of 2012, while a graduate student in art history specializing in American and Native American art at the University of Michigan, I spent three months as a curatorial intern at the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, the organization that oversees Monticello, the former home of Thomas Jefferson in central Virginia. While the staff at Monticello spent much of the previous decade reconstructing slave histories and physical spaces on the site, little had been done with its Native histories since curator Elizabeth Chew had reinstalled the Indian Hall for the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.¹ As conceived by Jefferson, the Entrance Hall to Monticello had served as a kind of museum, containing maps, natural history specimens, European paintings and sculptures, and Native-made objects. Many of these latter objects had been sent eastward by Lewis and Clark in the early stages of their expedition, prompting the staff of Monticello to remount the hall and its Native collections for the 2002 Bicentennial. In 2012, I was hired because of my expertise and assigned the task of reexamining these collections with an eye toward expanding their presence within the overall narrative of Monticello.

Two of the most prominent Native-made objects in Jefferson’s original hall were a pair of male and female figures that Jefferson had received several years prior to Lewis and Clark’s shipments. The pair was described in the 1809 to 1815 inventory of Monticello: “12. & 15. Two busts of Indian figures male and female by Indians in hard stone. 18 I. high. They were dug up at a place called Palmyra, on the Tennessee.”²



Figure 1. The Entrance Hall, Monticello, as reinstalled in 2002 ©Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello.

Curiously, the figures had disappeared from the historical record with Jefferson’s death in 1826.³ For the 2002 reinstallation, Monticello commissioned sculptor Joel Queen, of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, to make a pair of contemporary figures in place of the originals. Today, this pair still flanks the central doors of the hall, welcoming tour visitors to Monticello (fig. 1).⁴

It came as quite a surprise, then, that during my internship I reidentified two stone heads that today sit in the hall display cases and are what remain of Jefferson’s original statues (fig. 2; seen at the far right of fig. 1).⁵ The two heads are nearly identical in height (10 3/4 in.) and close in weight (12 to 14 lbs.) and are made of a similar soapstone. They share incised eyes, carved ears, an angled neckline, a flattened back, and a single carved brow bone. The heads have sustained a high degree of damage, displaying major gashes and breakage with evidence of later re-carving and incising. The male head includes rough-hewn holes containing plaster in the back and base of the neck, while the mouth and nose of the female head are mutilated beyond recognition. A coat of black pigment has been applied to the female head, which, where worn thin, reveals flakes of red beneath.



Figure 2. Anonymous carver, Late Mississippian tradition, heads from a Middle Cumberland shrine pair of figures, female (left) and male (right), c. 1250–1350 CE. Found near Palmyra, Tennessee. Soapstone talc with various pigments, (L) 10 1/2 x 8 1/2 x 6 in and (R) 11 x 8 1/2 x 6 1/2 in. (L) Thomas Jefferson Foundation Purchase, 2014 and (R) loaned by the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution ©Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello.



Figure 3. John White, *An Ossuary Temple*, c. 1585–93. Watercolor over graphite, touched with gold, 11 5/8 x 8 in. British Museum, London.

I was able to identify the heads as resembling Mississippian Culture (800–1600 CE) funerary pairs.⁶ The male head is identified by deeply grooved parallel lines on either side of the mouth, representing either tattoos or wrinkles.⁷ Their full bodies would have displayed different poses, with the female kneeling (sometimes with a delineated skirt line around her legs) and the male in a cross-legged posture.⁸ Early explorers described such pairs, visible in riverside or mound temples as the expeditions crossed the landscape. In the 1525 chronicle of a kidnapped Catawba man baptized by the Spanish as “Francisco de Chicora,” de Chicora narrated the Spanish exploration of a North American “palace” in whose courtyard they “found two idols as large as a three-year-old, one male and one female.”⁹ Pairs are presumed to represent married couples, but such figures also appeared alone. A visual depiction of one such sanctuary figure appears in a late sixteenth-century watercolor by John White (fig. 3). The sketch shows a Roanoc ossuary temple in North Carolina, with a cross-legged male figure of wood seated to the right of a row of desiccated funerary bodies. Wood may

have been the most common medium for such figures, which may partially explain why so few of these figures and pairs have survived to the present day (fig. 4).

As it turns out, the Monticello heads belong to a very specific region and subtype of Mississippian figures. They were dug up on the western periphery of the Nashville Basin at what is known as the Murphy Farm site—identified as “Palmyra, on the Tennessee,” in the 1809 to 1815 Monticello inventory cited above. In this region, Native-made mounds were built singly and were relatively evenly spaced, suggesting small village patterns. A fully intact head at The Metropolitan Museum of Art comes from this same region and exhibits many of the same traits as the Monticello heads: incised eyes and a single softened brow line, visible hairline, ears carved in relief with inner compartments, elongation at the top of the head, a fairly flat back, open mouth, and an upward gaze (fig. 5). It is thought that the open mouths released the represented ancestor’s breath into the world, acting as an in-between location or kind of access portal between the living and the dead.¹⁰ The extraordinarily similar size of all three heads, along with the matching angles and incised eyes, suggest that the carvers adhered to a strict regional standard in size, technique, and style, or, more provocatively, that all three heads may have been made by the same hand or workshop.



Figure 4. Anonymous carver, Late Mississippian tradition, human figure, 1200–1500 CE. Found in a cave near Pineville, Kentucky. Wood and pigments, 26 in high. National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC (04/8069). Photo by NMAI Photo Services.



Figure 5. Anonymous carver, Late Mississippian tradition, head from a Middle Cumberland shrine figure, male, 1200–1300 CE. Found in Tennessee. Marble, 7 1/2 x 5 1/2 x 6 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Additional elements of the surviving Monticello heads correspond to details given in the series of letters that document the discovery of the pair and their arduous travels to Monticello. A Tennessee yeoman offered the figures to Jefferson via letter in 1799.¹¹ Jefferson then enlisted the help of General James Wilkinson, a regular correspondent with Jefferson, to organize their shipment to Monticello.¹² In 1801, the figures traveled via ship from New Orleans to Norfolk, then overland to Washington, D.C., and to the White House, into which Jefferson had only recently moved.¹³ Jefferson then sent the pair to Monticello via wagon in August 1802, but during this last stage of their journey, the figures broke.¹⁴ This breakage likely accounts for some of the damage seen today, particularly the crudely drilled holes and plaster within the male head. The entire process took thirty-four months and more than 2,800 miles—a testament to the great difficulty in transporting material goods in early America.¹⁵

But why would Jefferson have wanted or accepted the figures in the first place, let alone paid for their extensive (and expensive) travels? While it may seem odd that a military figure such as General Wilkinson was asked to help in the shipment of the original figures, Jefferson and Wilkinson were members of the Committee of Ancient Antiquities at the American Philosophical Society (APS) in Philadelphia, which had been organized “to collect information respecting the Past and Present State of This Country.”¹⁶ By 1798, the committee had issued a circular to recruit citizens to help the Society with these aims, and several of its points specifically called for Native-made objects as well as research into Native architectures and cultures, both past and present:

2. To obtain accurate plans, drawings and descriptions of whatever is interesting, (where the originals cannot be had) and especially of ancient Fortifications, Tumuli, and other Indian works of art: ascertaining the materials composing them, their contents, the purposes for which they were probably designed, &c.

...

4. To enquire into the Customs, Manners, Languages and Character of the Indian nations, ancient and modern, and their migrations.¹⁷

It is entirely plausible that the Tennessee farmer’s offer of the statuary pair to Jefferson was in response to this call from the APS.

The signatories of the APS call were largely of a generation that had grown up with regular Native delegation visits passing through their neighborhoods and sometimes lodging in their homes.¹⁸ As a young lawyer, Jefferson had worked multiple cases of Native Americans suing for their freedom; as statesman Jefferson hosted delegations and attended Cherokee *ne jo di* (stickball) matches; and throughout his lifetime, he purchased moccasins and other Native-made objects.¹⁹ He, and others in his circle, translated these many experiences into the (re)presentation of Native peoples, both past and present, in their various projects, many of which had nationalist overtones. The APS call was only one of a host of projects that reflected and addressed Native presence in the Americas, both historical and contemporary. Besides the Lewis and Clark expedition and the hall at Monticello, Jefferson’s own projects included America’s first mound dig, his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785), and the collection of Native vocabularies.²⁰ He also obtained several important early accounts of American exploration for his library, which he often pulled out for his visitors.²¹ One volume included a print version of a John White watercolor of the Roanoc ossuary temple (fig. 3), by which Jefferson may have connected his soapstone figures and the earlier inhabitants of the region. These books were used to educate Meriwether Lewis on Native cultures before he and Clark headed West, thereby shaping their own approach to Native peoples.

The various displays of the Mississippian shrine pair exemplify this presence of Native culture in early American spaces. Between their arrival in Washington, D.C. in late 1801 and their overland shipment to Monticello the following August, the pair was likely on view in the White House. Once at Monticello and repaired, the figures were mounted on either side of sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon’s terracotta plaster busts of Turgot and Voltaire that Jefferson had purchased from the artist in Paris (fig. 1).²² In this arrangement, the statuary pair represented America, placed on par—literally and conceptually—with European art and

ideas. Later, the figures appear to have been shown with Jefferson’s own bust, as described by William Wirt in 1826:

On one side [of the Great Hall], specimens of sculpture set out, in such order, as to exhibit at a *coup d’œu*, the historical progress of that art, from the first rude attempt of the aborigines of our country up to that exquisite and finished bust of the great patriot himself, from the master hand of Ceracchi.²³

We have grown so accustomed to difference as the definer between historical Native and European art that such claims of historical continuance with Ceracchi’s bust—as well as with the European art and American politics represented by its described display—seem preposterous. To Jefferson, however, Native arts, architectures, histories, politics, and languages were the foundations on which a distinct America would rest. His representation of Native peoples in the Indian Hall certainly imposed non-Native ideologies such as art and progress onto its subjects and objects, as seen in Wirt’s description. But it is important to recognize the visibility of Native histories and cultures within early American public discourse, symbolized by Jefferson’s placement of these figures in the White House and the hall at Monticello.

This visibility and presence seems to have had little traction with the next generations. An 1826 letter from Jefferson’s granddaughter, Ellen W. Randolph, to her mother Martha (Jefferson’s daughter) discusses at great length the public disagreements between two supposed experts on Native life and cultures.²⁴ Ellen expresses extreme distress that, so removed now from first-hand knowledge of Native peoples, she has no means by which to determine the truth of the experts’ competing claims. Several years earlier, Martha, who largely ran the day-to-day operations of Monticello, had ordered the points replaced on Jefferson’s Native-made arrows with “African” ones crafted by Monticello slaves, as if there were no material differences between the two.²⁵ After Jefferson’s death, the president’s children and grandchildren sold off or gave away most of Monticello’s Native-made objects, and their failure to record these transactions in any surviving records suggests that a low value was attributed to these items. As a consequence, we have no record detailing how the two stone heads left Monticello.

Such generational change in both knowledge and regard corresponds to a lack of direct contact with Native peoples, especially among East Coast elites.²⁶ Cultural amnesia soon followed. Two different relic hunters recovered the surviving stone heads at the central Virginia estate of Carrsbrook in 1861 (male) and 1881 (female).²⁷ At the time of the 1881 recovery, the owner of Carrsbrook did not know where the surviving head was: “It has been kicked about this very large yard for years, + is doubtless laying around.”²⁸ The relic hunters delivered the two heads to the Smithsonian Institution (male) and the Valentine Museum (female), which lent them to Monticello for display in the 1990s. Museum object records from the Smithsonian and Valentine museums attributed the heads to African American makers—a label still attached to the heads when I began my research.²⁹

The image of rare Native-made objects being “kicked about” Carrsbrook’s expansive yard vividly illustrates the destruction of Native cultural heritage that accompanied Manifest Destiny in the United States. Such destruction was possible when cultural amnesia held sway over the American imagination, creating the historical absence of Native peoples that was promoted by nineteenth-century American colonial processes—the rewriting of history described by scholar Jean O’Brien, whereby nineteenth-century Americans of European

descent recast the histories of their towns and regions solely in Anglo terms.³⁰ We continue to work under these whitewashed histories, as the stone heads’ inherited misattributions remind us. These objects provide an opportunity, however small, to re-articulate the presence and cultures of Native peoples in early America.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

I follow Native Studies in my terminology. In this essay, writing from the United States, I refer to indigenous peoples of North America as Native Americans. I use the qualifier “Native” as the adjectival form. Because Native histories predate current nation-states, and various groups existed on both sides of what are now the U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico borders, I use these terms inclusive of the North American continent.

- ¹ Monticello, like many institutions across the United States, participated in a nationally coordinated effort to celebrate the bicentennial of the Corps of Discovery expedition through the newly acquired Louisiana Territory, led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark from 1803 to 1805. The archive of the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial activities can be found at <http://www.lewisandclark200.org/>.
- ² *Catalogue of Paintings &c. at Monticello* (c.1809–15), reprinted in the appendix of Susan Stein, *The Worlds of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993).
- ³ The figures do not appear in either the Jefferson family bankruptcy estate sales records of 1827 or the family art sale at the Boston Athenaeum in 1828. The latter can be found at www.monticello.org/site/house-and-gardens/boston-athenaeum-sale-1828. There are also no surviving records from the donation of the Jefferson Native-made objects and natural history collections to the University of Virginia. See Elizabeth Chew, “Unpacking Jefferson’s Indian Hall” (July 2009; <http://www.discoveringlewisandclark.com/article/3086>), as well as her descriptions of the Indian Hall project on the Monticello website (www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/framing-west-monticello). I did locate a note in Jefferson’s Memorandum that he had sold a buffalo skin to Alexander St. Clair Heiskell, a local peddler; see the entry for November 23, 1824, in James A. Bear Jr. and Lucia C. Stanton, eds., *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books: Accounts, with Legal Records and Miscellany, 1767–1826*, Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Second Series, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 1408. This notation opens the possibility that Jefferson sold some Native objects during his lifetime. If so, however, any additional sales are not noted.
- ⁴ Details of the reinstallation and Monticello’s contemporary commissions from Native artists can be found at www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/recreating-indian-hall-monticello-peabody-native-arts-project.
- ⁵ In addition to the data obtained from the surviving heads, my research was based on the primary descriptions of the intact figures from the related Thomas Jefferson (hereafter designated as TJ) correspondence (see n11 to n14); the print account in *The Monthly Magazine* (London) 24, no. 160 (August 1, 1807): 74, later rephrased and reprinted in the *Richmond Enquirer*, July 4, 1808; John Haywood, *The Natural and Aboriginal History of Tennessee, Up to the First Settlement Therein by the White People in the Year 1768* (Nashville, Tenn.: G. Wilson, 1823), 151–52; and visitor accounts of Monticello by Augustus John Foster in *Jeffersonian America: Notes on the U.S. of America Collected in the Years 1805–1807 and 1811–1812 by Sir Augustus Foster* (1807; San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1954), 145–46; by John Edwards Caldwell in *A Tour Through Part of Virginia in the Summer of 1808* (1808; Richmond, VA: Dietz Press, 1951), 39; and by Baron de Montlezun, *Voyage fait dans les années 1816 et 1817, de New Yorck à la Nouvelle-Orléans, et de l’Orénoque au Mississipi*, vol. 1 (Paris:

Gide files, 1816), 69, 70. The de Montlezun account was partially taken from the Caldwell description, which was widely reprinted.

- ⁶ Mississippian is both a time and a culture designation for various centers of indigenous activity in the Mississippi River basin. It is a broad, overarching category, stretching from the East Coast to Cahokia, and up the Mississippi River to Minnesota and Wisconsin, while extending from around 800 CE through early European contact. Groups share moundbuilding characteristics and various religious practices and are broken into many subsets. The best identification text for figures such as these is Kevin E. Smith and James V. Miller, *Speaking with the Ancestors: Mississippian Stone Statuary of the Tennessee-Cumberland Region* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009). Smith and Miller had identified these heads as Mississippian and Middle Cumberland before I did. Their associated information on the heads and the Indian Hall, however, comes from Roger Kennedy, *Hidden Cities: The Discovery and Loss of Ancient North American Civilizations* (New York: Free Press, 1994), which research by scholars at Monticello has subsequently proven to be incorrect.
- ⁷ Male statuary figures are also often characterized by a topknot at the back of the head. On this male head, a hole is where the topknot should be, but the wrinkles or tattoo marks are still clear. In addition to Smith and Miller, *Speaking with the Ancestors*, see David S. Brose, James A. Brown, and David W. Penney, *Ancient Art of the American Woodland Indians* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1985), 192–93.
- ⁸ The visitor descriptions cited in n5 use both “kneeling” and “Indian-style” to describe the figures’ postures, but are not specific in identifying which sex was associated with which.
- ⁹ Smith and Miller, *Speaking with the Ancestors*, 166–73.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, chapters 1 and 7.
- ¹¹ Morgan Brown to TJ, October 1, 1799, and TJ to Morgan Brown, January 16, 1800, in Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 31 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 195, 309.
- ¹² See TJ to Daniel Clark, January 16, 1800; TJ to James Wilkinson, January 16, 1800; and James Wilkinson to TJ, May 22, 1800, in *Ibid.*, 31:309, 312, and 585; and James Wilkinson to TJ, September 1, 1800, in *Ibid.*, 32:119.
- ¹³ Daniel Clark to TJ, July 20, 1801, in *Ibid.*, 34:598; Captain Thomas Newton to TJ, October 16, 1801, and TJ to Capt. Thomas Newton, November 9, 1801, in *Ibid.*, 35:453, 588. See also Jefferson’s note for the repayment for freight, November 9, 1801, in Bear and Stanton, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, vol. 2, 1058.
- ¹⁴ TJ to John Barnes, August 6, 1802, in Boyd, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 38:164.
- ¹⁵ From the Cumberland region, the figures had to travel the Natchez Trace to New Orleans to sail to an East Coast port, as this was the surest way to transport goods from the deep South to the mid-Atlantic region in the period. The need to ship objects along this route accounts for Jefferson’s communications with Wilkinson, who had ties to agents and merchants in Natchez.
- ¹⁶ The goal of the APS Committee and their circular appear in the introductory paragraph of the reprint of the Society circular in “Circular Letter: The Society Having Appointed a Committee to Collect Information Respecting the Past and Present State of This Country, the Committee during the Last Year Addressed the following Letter to Such Persons as Were Likely, in Their Opinion to Advance the Object of the Society,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 4 (1799), xxxvii–xxxix. APS reprinted the circular again in their 1802 edition of *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*. For details on the American Antiquities committee, see *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 22, no. 119, *Part III—Early Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge, Compiled by One of the Secretaries, from the Manuscript Minutes of Its Meetings from 1744–1838* (July 1885), 246–65 (which covers 1797) and 265–77 (which covers 1798). The appointed committee members all appear as signatories on the circular: Thomas Jefferson, James Wilkinson, George Turner, Dr. Caspar Wistar, Dr. Adam Seybert, Charles Willson Peale, and Jonathan Williams.

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- ¹⁷ Besides APS versions of the circular (n16), reprints also appeared in *The Weekly Magazine of Original Essays, Fugitive Pieces, and Interesting Intelligence* 2, no. 21 (June 23, 1798): 238, and *The Medical Repository of Original Essays and Intelligence Relative to Physic, Surgery, Chemistry, and Natural History* 2, no. 1 (August 1, 1798): A111. The former was published in Philadelphia, the latter in New York City. I have updated the text to contemporary spellings and orthography.
- ¹⁸ See, for instance, the letters exchanged between Jefferson and John Quincy Adams discussing the Native peoples they had met in childhood: TJ to Adams, June 11, 1812, and Adams to TJ, June 28, 1812, in J. Jefferson Looney, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*, vol. 5 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 122, 182.
- ¹⁹ Three cases appear in Jefferson’s Memorandum between 1768 and 1772; see Bear and Stanton, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, vol. 1. Starting in October 1646 with the treaty between Necotowance and the English, any Native person found crossing the boundary into territory held by the English had to display a coat or badge of striped cloth or be shot on sight. Later, under Commonwealth law, Native Americans traveling in Virginia without letters of passage were automatically enslaved. This law was not overturned until the General and Supreme Court decisions of 1777 and 1808. When the Marquis de Lafayette visited Monticello in 1824, Jefferson sent him back to France with more than twenty-five pairs of moccasins.
- ²⁰ See, respectively, Jeffrey L. Hantman and Gary Dunham, “The Enlightened Archaeologist,” *Archaeologist* 46, no. 3 (May/June 1993): 44–49, and Megan Snyder-Camp, “‘No General Use Can Ever Be Made of the Wrecks of My Loss’: A Reconsidered History of the Indian Vocabularies Collected on the Lewis and Clark Expedition,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 129–39. Other projects of the period include Peale’s Philadelphia Museum and Wilkinson’s donation and shipment of objects to both TJ and the APS.
- ²¹ These were the Theodor de Bry edition of *Thomas Harriot’s Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (Frankfurt: Johann Wechel, 1590), and the *Historia de Nueva-España, por su esclarecido conquistador Hernan Cortes, aumentada con otros documentos, y notas, por el Ilustrissimo señor Don Francisco Antonio Lorenzana, Arzobispo de Mexico* (Mexico City: n.p., 1770). Visitors who recorded being shown these volumes by Jefferson include John Augustus Foster (British diplomat), Francis Gray (Massachusetts politician), and Margaret Bayard (editor, author, publisher, and politician). I wish to extend my gratitude to Monticello librarian Endrina T ay for this information.
- ²² *Catalogue of Paintings &c. at Monticello*.
- ²³ This account of the hall was widely circulated in various texts across the nineteenth century, but it stems from William Wirt’s eulogy for Jefferson and John Adams as delivered on October 19, 1826. Not equivalent to most later sources that claim to reprint the Wirt eulogy (including Wirt’s own books), this print version first appeared in Benson J. Lossing, “Monticello,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 8, no. 38 (July 1853): 148. The author had likely meant *coup d’œil*, or “quick look or glance.”
- ²⁴ Ellen W. Randolph to Martha Jefferson Randolph, January 2, 1826, available in online family letter archive at Monticello (<http://tjrs.monticello.org/>). The debate was between Lewis Cass, governor of Michigan Territory at the time, and the family’s friend John Dunn Hunter, who had authored the controversial account of Native American life, *Memoirs of a Captivity Among the Indians of North America*, published in 1824.
- ²⁵ Martha Jefferson Randolph to her sister Ann C. Morris, December 4, 1820 (<http://tjrs.monticello.org/>). Jefferson owned no African objects, and it is unclear that any direct African material culture objects were circulating among white elites in Virginia at this time. I read Martha’s reference to an “African” point as a reference to an object originating from the Monticello slave community. The original arrows likely came from the Lewis and Clark expedition.
- ²⁶ See the letters exchanged between Jefferson and John Quincy Adams discussing the Native peoples they had met in childhood: TJ to Adams, June 11, 1812; and Adams to TJ, June 28, 1812, in Looney, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*, 5:122, 182.

²⁷ At the time of Jefferson’s death, Carrsbrook was owned by the Stockton family who had close ties to Thomas Jefferson’s descendants. Diane Ehrenpreis, an expert in Monticello historical object research and provenance, is owed my deepest thanks for her patient instruction and encouragement in publishing these findings.

²⁸ Col. C.C. Wertenbacker to S. Valentine, October 27, 1881; from the correspondence and curator notes at the Valentine Museum, Richmond, copies of which are in the object files of Monticello.

²⁹ The Smithsonian attribution was based on the drilled holes and plaster in the neck and back, which were taken to be evidence of the head’s use as a folk-carved gatepost. The fact that resident freedmen’s children found the missing head on Carrsbrook in 1881 determined the Valentine Museum attribution. These misattributions raise important and as yet unaddressed questions about how peoples of the African diaspora may have interacted with historical Native-made objects.

³⁰ Jean O’Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).