

TJ and wine on NPR

by Anonymous - October 3, 2008

It's a topic that has proved endlessly fascinating for a long time: Thomas Jefferson and his love of wine. It's probably because a lot of us can sympathize. We were excited to learn that a locally-produced story about Jefferson, wine, and the efforts to restore the wine cellar at Monticello was picked up by NPR and made it to last week's Weekend Edition Sunday (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=95087999>) on NPR. You'll hear from Monticello's own Justin Sarafin (Dependencies Project Coordinator), Gabriele Rausse (Assistant Director of Gardens & Grounds), and Peter Hatch (Director of Gardens & Grounds). From the NPR write-up:

In the early days, Jefferson drank what most Englishmen enjoyed: heavy, sweet wines like port and sherry. But Gabriele Rausse, who came to Monticello from Italy to tend its modern-day vineyard, says Jefferson's tastes began to change during the Revolutionary War. That's when he came in contact with German mercenaries known as Hessians who fought for the British and were being held prisoner near his home. The Hessians introduced Jefferson to German wine and gave him cases of it to take with him during his ambassadorship in France, Rausse said. But it was when Jefferson discovered French wines that he became enchanted.

I have to agree--I can't stand that sweet, fortified stuff myself. I'm still curious about the Scuppernong that Peter Hatch talked about. Maybe we can fire up a local production one day, in a way reminiscent of what Mount Vernon has done with their reconstruction of Washington's whiskey distillery. (<https://www.mountvernon.org/the-estate-gardens/distillery/>). But that's just my thought.

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