

Behind the Big House



Interpreting Arkansas's extant slave dwellings and remembering the enslaved people who inhabited them.

**DECEMBER 2 - 3, 2022
TAYLOR HOUSE AT HOLLYWOOD /
VALLEY PLANTATION
DREW COUNTY, AR**



In partnership with



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
AT MONTICELLO



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Behind the Big House moves beyond the “Big Houses,” or stately historic homes, to explore extant slave dwellings and interpret the experiences of the enslaved people who inhabited them. The University of Arkansas at Monticello's Taylor House served as one such big house on the Hollywood Plantation, later known as the Valley Plantation, which once spanned more than 10,000 acres across Desha, Drew, and Lincoln counties. This year's program will focus on best practices for interpreting slavery at historic sites as well as researching the lifeways of African American farmers after emancipation.

Behind the Big House Program

Friday, December 2, 2022

Taylor House Grounds & John Hancock, Jr. Property

5:00 PM Behind the Big House and Preservation Libations

Participants will enjoy libations provided by Preserve Arkansas and rotate through five interactive stations.

Station 1. Genealogy and Cemeteries

Carla Coleman of Preservation of African American Cemeteries (PAAC) will lead a discussion about the importance of cemeteries in genealogical research at the African American cemetery associated with the Hollywood / Valley Plantation.

Station 2. Cooking with Soul

Chef Jarita Frazier-King of the Natchez Heritage School of Cooking will lead a hands-on cooking demonstration that celebrates the history and culture of Black food traditions from Africa to America.

Station 3. Archeology and Zooarcheology

Dr. Michelle Rathgaber, Dr. Melissa Zabecki, and additional Arkansas Archeological Survey staff will share artifacts and faunal remains found near the Taylor House and explain what these things can teach us about the way enslaved people lived.

Station 4. Food Preservation

Dr. Suzzette Goldmon and Ms. Teki Hunt, M.Ed., of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences will display and demonstrate canning and drying techniques used in previous and modern times to extend the life of fresh foods from their station at the historic smokehouse.

Station 5. Taylor House Tour

Dr. John Henris and Dr. Kyle Day of the University of Arkansas at Monticello and Joseph McGill of The Slave Dwelling Project will share the history of the 1846 Taylor House and evidence of its enslaved builders.

6:30 PM Visitor Center | Welcome

Rachel Patton, Executive Director, Preserve Arkansas

6:40 PM Recognition of Hollywood / Valley Plantation Descendants

Dr. Matthew Rooney, Arkansas Archeological Survey

7:00 PM Behind the Big House: Reconciling Slavery, Race, and Heritage in the U.S. South

Dr. Jodi Skipper, University of Mississippi

8:00 PM Fireside Chat: Slavery and Race in Arkansas

Joseph McGill, The Slave Dwelling Project

9:00 PM Sleep Tight

Joseph McGill and interested participants sleep at the site.

Behind the Big House Program Continued

Saturday, December 3, 2022

Taylor House Visitor Center

8:30 AM Coffee and Pastries

9:00 AM Welcome

Rachel Patton, Preserve Arkansas

9:15 AM **Body Politics: Enslaved Women's Struggles in Arkansas**

Dr. Kelly Houston Jones, Arkansas Tech University

10:15 AM Break

10:30 AM **Archeology in Service to Community: No Hollywood Story**

Dr. Matthew Rooney, Arkansas Archeological Survey

11:30 AM **Off the Grid: A History of Nature, Black Power, and Freedom on the Arkansas Frontier**

Dr. Story Matkin-Rawn, Independent scholar

12:30 PM Dismissal



ABOUT US

Preserve Arkansas is the only statewide nonprofit advocate for the preservation of Arkansas's historic places. Our organization works to build stronger communities by reconnecting Arkansans to our heritage and empowering people to save and rehabilitate historic places. Learn more and become a member at [PreserveArkansas.org](https://www.PreserveArkansas.org).

UPCOMING

Dec. 10 - Holiday Ramble to Historic Washington State Park

Jan. 27 - Arkansas Preservation Awards, Robinson Center, Little Rock