"Memoirs of a Monticello Slave, as Dictated to Charles Campbell by Isaac" (1847)

Old Master was never seen to come out before breakfast-about 8 o'clock. If it was warm weather he wouldn't ride out till evening: studied upstairs till bell ring for dinner. When writing he had a copyin' machine. While he was a-writin' he wouldn't suffer nobody to come in his room. Had a dumb-waiter; when he wanted anything he had nothin' to do but turn a crank and the dumb-waiter would bring him water or fruit on a plate or anything he wanted. Old Master had abundance of books; sometimes would have twenty of 'em down on the floor at once-read fust one, then tother. Isaac has often wondered how Old Master came to have such a mighty head; read so many of them books; and when they go to him to ax him anything, he go right straight to the book and tell you all about it. He talked French and Italian. Madzay talked with him; his place was called Colle. General Redhazel (Riedesel) stayed there. He (Mazzei) lived at Monticello with Old Master some time. Didiot, a Frenchman, married his daughter Peggy, a heavy chunky looking woman-mighty handsome. She had a daughter Frances and a son Francis; called the daughter Franky. Mazzei brought to Monticello Antonine, Jovanini, Francis, Modena, and Belligrini, all gardeners. My Old Master's garden was monstrous large: two rows of palings, all 'round ten feet high.

Mr. Jefferson had a clock in his kitchen at Monticello; never went into the kitchen except to wind up the clock. He never would have less than eight covers at dinner if nobody at table but himself. Had from eight to thirty-two covers for dinner. Plenty of wine, best old Antigua rum and cider; very fond of wine and water. Isaac never heard of his being disguised in drink. He kept three fiddles; played in the afternoons and sometimes arter supper. This was in his early time. When he begin to git so old, he didn't play. Kept a spinnet made mostly in shape of a harpsichord; his daughter played on it. Mr. Fauble, a Frenchman that lived at Mr. Walker's, a music man, used to come to Monticello and tune it. There was a fortepiano and a guitar there. Never seed anybody play on them but the French people. Isaac never could git acquainted with them; could hardly larn their names. Mr. Jefferson always singing when ridin' or walkin'; hardly see him anywhar outdoors but what he was a-singin'. Had a fine clear voice, sung minnits (minuets) and sich; fiddled in the parlor. Old Master very kind to servants.

The fust year Mr. Jefferson was elected President, he took Isaac on to Philadelphia. He was then about fifteen years old; traveled on horseback in company with a Frenchman named Joseph Rattiff and Jim Hemings, a body servant. Fust day's journey they went from Monticello to old Nat Gordon's, on the Fredericksburg road, next day to Fredericksburg, then to Georgetown, crossed the Potomac there, and so to Philadelphia-eight days a-goin'. Had two ponies and Mr. Jefferson's tother riding horse Odin. Mr. Jefferson went in the phaeton. Bob Hemings drove; changed horses on the road. When they got to Philadelphia, Isaac stayed three days at Mr. Jefferson's house. Then he was bound prentice to one Bringhouse, a tinner; he lived in the direction of the Waterworks. Isaac remembers seeing the image of a woman thar holding a goose in her hand-the water
spouting out of the goose's mouth. This was the head of Market Street. Bringhouse was a short, mighty small, neat-made; treated Isaac very well. Went thar to larn the tinner's trade. Fust week larnt to cut out and sodder; make little pepper boxes and graters and sich, out of scraps of tin, so as not to waste any till he had larnt. Then to making cups. Every Sunday Isaac would go to the President's house-large brick house, many windows; same house Ginral Washington lived in before when he was President. Old Master used to talk to me mighty free and ax me, "How you come on Isaac, larning de tin business?"

As soon as he could make cups pretty well, he carred three or four to show him. Isaac made four dozen pint cups a day and larnt to tin copper and sheets (sheet iron)-make 'em tin. He lived four years with Old Bringhouse. One time Mr. Jefferson sent to Bringhouse to tin his copper kittle and pans for kitchen use; Bringhouse sent Isaac and another prentice thar-a white boy named Charles; can't think of his other name. Isaac was the only black boy in Bringhouse's shop. When Isaac carred the cups to his Old Master to show him, he was mightily pleased. Said, "Isaac you are larnin mighty fast; I bleeve I must send you back to Vaginny to car on the tin business. You is growin too big; no use for you to stay here no longer."