

Celebrating 100 Years of Preservation and Education

1923-2023

Livestream: The Centennial of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation: 100 Years of Education and Preservation



Watch at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpIxupVa7WI>

([https://www.monticello.org/bigtree/pages/edit/2998/Watch%20at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpIxupVa7WI](https://www.monticello.org/bigtree/pages/edit/2998/Watch%20at%20https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpIxupVa7WI)).

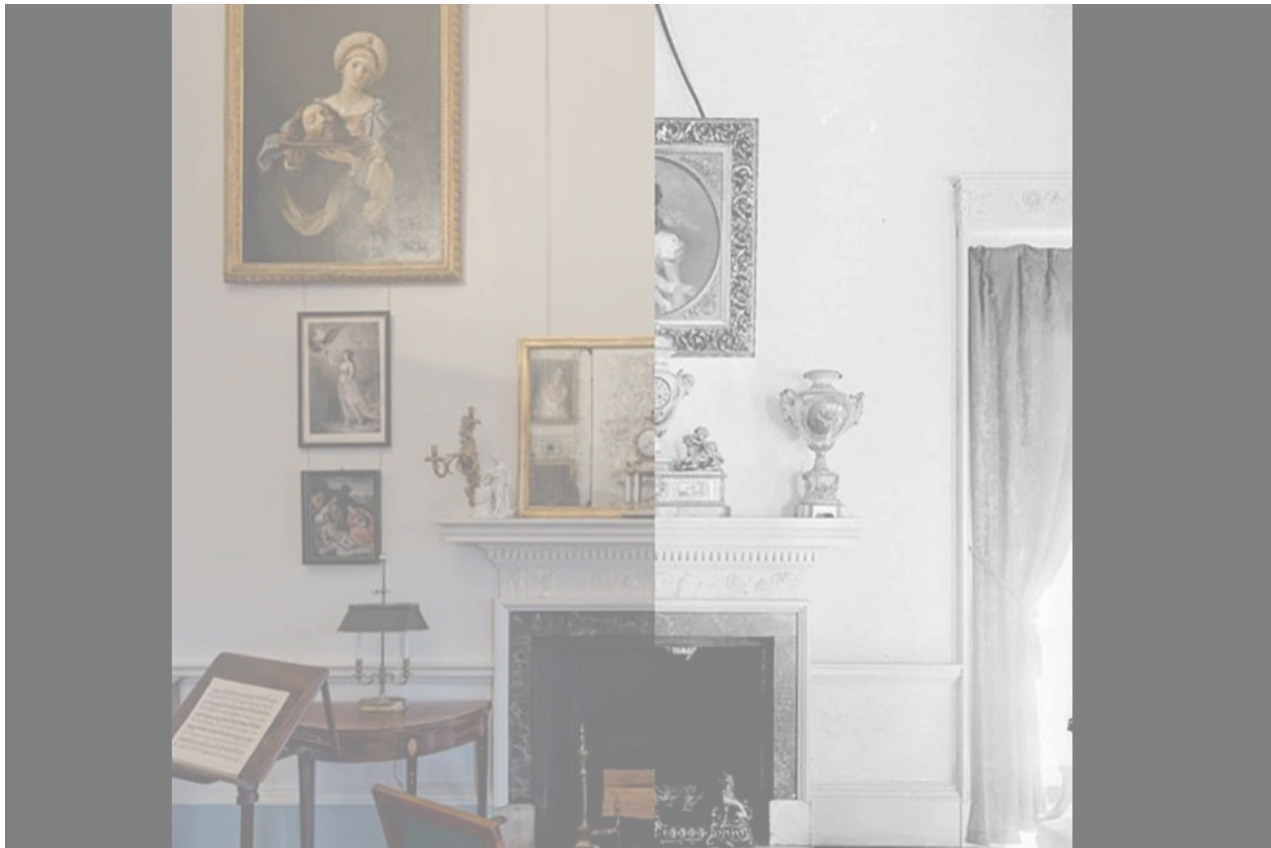
Explore photos, podcasts, an online exhibit, and a timeline of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation's first 100 years.

Monticello - Then and Now



Monticello West Front during the Levy period of ownership (left) and today (right)





"Sharing History" Podcast Series



Episode 1 - Who Owns Monticello →

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weVu1rmlLEI>)

100 years ago, a group of well-connected people hoped to settle a decades long battle over a not-so-simple question: "Who owns Thomas Jefferson's Monticello?"



Episode 2 - Paying for Monticello →

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjcTRAjY6x8>)

In 1923, the newly created Thomas Jefferson Foundation fulfilled its primary purpose by acquiring Monticello to preserve it in Jefferson's memory. But now it had another problem: money.



Episode 3 - Restoring Jefferson's Reputation →

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2Qei20SwXw>)

When the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation took possession of Monticello in the 1920s, it didn't just have a house to restore, it had a reputation to restore: Jefferson's.



Episode 4 - A Crusade for Monticello →

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_L32KyimdXds)

Journalist, author, documentary filmmaker, Steven Pressman -- with help from author Marc Leepson and Susan Stein, Monticello's Richard Gilder Senior Curator, Special Projects -- focuses in on Maud Littleton's years-long public campaign first to purchase and then to wrest Monticello from the Levy family.



Episode 5 - Restoring an American Icon →

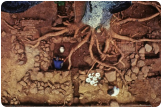
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89dTelbr-1w>)

Monticello today is American icon, Jefferson's architectural masterpiece, and a symbol of the American story. It's on the back of the U.S. Nickel. It's a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Replicas of it dot the American landscape, both real and imaginary. But it wasn't always so.



Episode 6 - Object(-ive) History at Monticello → **(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NB4rB4FgLsg>)**

Every object tells a story, right? Imagine what 5,000 might have to say.



Episode 7 - Revolutionizing Archaeology at Monticello **→ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9h10pokCgY>)**

Learn how archaeology transformed history at Monticello, and how Monticello's archaeologists helped transform the field of historical archaeology.



Restoring Monticello's Flower Gardens → **(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icSXYZNYnLY>)**

Celebrating a Century: Treasures from the Archives **(<https://monticello.quartexcollections.com/exhibits/celebrating-a-century>)**

Explore the history of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation through photographs, documents, and other objects from our Foundation archives.

Founded in 1923, the **Thomas Jefferson Foundation** owns and operates Monticello as a nonprofit organization dedicated to a two-fold mission; preservation and education. Preservation - of Monticello, the house Jefferson designed for himself and his family - of Monticello, the plantation where hundreds of enslaved African Americans lived and labored. Education - about Jefferson's dual legacy as the spokesman of American ideals and human progress while enslaving African Americans as property - about the triumphs and tragedies of Monticello's enslaved African American community.

Highlights from the Foundation's History

1834

○ 1834–1923 - Levy Family Ownership

For almost 90 years the Levy family maintains the property as a piece of American heritage. While not their primary residence, the Levy family routinely hosts Independence Day celebrations at Monticello

LEARN MORE: LEVYS AT MONTICELLO [_\(<https://www.monticello.org/thomas-jefferson/brief-biography-of-jefferson/a-day-in-the-life-of-jefferson/all-my-wishes-end-at-monticello/the-levy-family-and-monticello/>\)](https://www.monticello.org/thomas-jefferson/brief-biography-of-jefferson/a-day-in-the-life-of-jefferson/all-my-wishes-end-at-monticello/the-levy-family-and-monticello/)



○ 1923 - Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation

The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation (TJMF) is incorporated in New York City on April 13, Jefferson's birthday. The Foundation purchases Monticello and 650 acres from Jefferson Monroe Levy for \$500,000.



○ 1924–1930 - Repairs and Restoration

The Foundation begins immediate repairs to stabilize and secure the main house and surrounding grounds under direction of historian and architect Fiske Kimball.

PODCAST: THE DYNAMIC DUO OF FISKE AND MARIE KIMBALL [_\(https://www.monticello.org/exhibits-events/livestreams-videos-and-podcasts/fiske-and-marie-kimball-pod/\)](https://www.monticello.org/exhibits-events/livestreams-videos-and-podcasts/fiske-and-marie-kimball-pod/).



○ 1939–41 - Garden Club of Virginia Landscape Restoration

With critical support from the Garden Club of Virginia, the Foundation restores the winding flower border on the West Lawn, the fishpond, and the flower beds to Thomas Jefferson's original design.

GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA [_\(https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/garden-club-virginia/\)](https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/garden-club-virginia/).

○ 1960 - National Historic Landmark

The Secretary of the Interior designates Monticello as a National Historic Landmark

○ 1963 - July 4 Naturalization Ceremony at Monticello

The first annual U.S. Naturalization Service Ceremony is held at Monticello on July 4th. In the sixty years since, close to 4,000 people from around the world have sworn their oath of American citizenship on the steps of Jefferson's iconic home.

JULY 4TH AT MONTICELLO [_\(https://www.monticello.org/july4\)](https://www.monticello.org/july4).



○ 1980s - Expanded Garden Restorations and New Archaeology

The Foundation restores Monticello's Vegetable Garden, South Orchard, and Vineyards, and conducts archaeological excavations along Mulberry Row



○ 1986 - Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants

The Foundation establishes the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants to collect, preserve, and distribute historic plant varieties. The Center promotes greater appreciation for the origins and evolution of garden plants, with an emphasis on plants related to Monticello and on Jefferson's horticultural interests.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR HISTORIC PLANTS [_\(https://www.monticello.org/house-gardens/center-for-historic-plants/\)](https://www.monticello.org/house-gardens/center-for-historic-plants/).



○ 1987 - World Heritage Site

UNESCO jointly designates Monticello and the University of Virginia as World Heritage Sites

MONTICELLO, A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE [_\(https://www.monticello.org/thomas-jefferson-foundation/monticello-a-unesco-world-heritage-site/\)](https://www.monticello.org/thomas-jefferson-foundation/monticello-a-unesco-world-heritage-site/).

○ 1990–1992 - Roof Restoration

The Foundation undertakes the restoration of Monticello's complex roof system, which was one of the most progressive and innovative roof structures of Jefferson's time.

READ ABOUT THE HISTORY OF MONTICELLO'S UNIQUE AND STRIKING ROOF

(<https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/roofing/>).



○ 1993 - Getting Word African American Oral History Project

Monticello historians conduct the first interviews for the Getting Word Oral History Project. This project collects, preserves, and shares the oral traditions of the descendants of people enslaved at Monticello. To date, Getting Word staff have traveled more than 40,000 miles to interview more than 200 descendants.

EXPLORE THE PROJECT (<https://gettingword.monticello.org/>).



○ 1993 - 250th Birthday Commemoration

The Foundation celebrates Jefferson's 250th birthday with special events and an exhibition that returns 250 Jefferson-related objects to the house, permanently and on loan.



○ 1993 - Slavery-focused Tours

Plantation Community Tours (later renamed as Slavery at Monticello Tours) begin on Mulberry Row, the center of plantation activity at Monticello from the 1770s until Thomas Jefferson's death in 1826.



○ 1994 - Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies

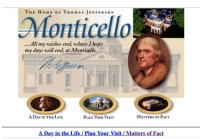
The Foundation establishes the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies (ICJS) as a multidisciplinary educational initiative. The Center is also home to the Jefferson Papers project (Retirement Series), which is producing the definitive edition of Jefferson's correspondence in the years after his presidency along with scholarly annotations and commentary.

ICJS [_\(https://www.monticello.org/research-education/for-scholars/international-center-for-jefferson-studies/\)](https://www.monticello.org/research-education/for-scholars/international-center-for-jefferson-studies/).



○ 1996 - Monticello Online

Monticello launches its first website, www.monticello.org, on President's Day



○ 1997 - Plantation Archaeology Survey

Monticello archaeologists begin a years-long, systematic excavation survey of the land owned by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. Since its inception, the survey had identified dozens of sites associated with historic plantation.

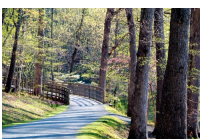
LEARN MORE [_\(https://www.monticello.org/research-education/for-scholars/archaeology-daacs/current-research/plantation-survey/\)](https://www.monticello.org/research-education/for-scholars/archaeology-daacs/current-research/plantation-survey/).



○ 2000 - Saunders-Monticello Trail

The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation opens the Saunders-Monticello Trail and also changes its official name to the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc.

THE TRAIL [_\(https://www.monticello.org/visit/the-saunders-monticello-trail/\)](https://www.monticello.org/visit/the-saunders-monticello-trail/).



○ 2000 - DNA Study and Report

The Foundation releases its “Report on Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings,” which concluded that Jefferson was “most likely was the father of all six of Sally Hemings’s children appearing in Jefferson’s records.” This research and writing evaluates the 1998 DNA findings of Dr. Eugene Foster and associates.

THOMAS JEFFERSON AND SALLY HEMINGS: A BRIEF ACCOUNT

(<https://www.monticello.org/slavery/jefferson-slavery/thomas-jefferson-and-sally-hemings-a-brief-account/>).



○ 2002 - Jefferson Library

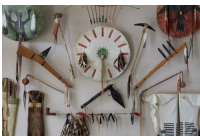
Historian David McCullough and others dedicate the Jefferson Library. The first free-standing library dedicated to the study of a Founder, this 15,500-square-foot facility combines the power of place with the power of ideas.

THE JEFFERSON LIBRARY (<https://www.monticello.org/research-education/for-scholars/jefferson-library/>).



○ 2003 - Lewis and Clark Bicentennial

Monticello hosts the kickoff event for the national commemoration of the Corps of Discovery’s exploratory expedition to the Pacific coast. The expedition was conceived of and commissioned by President Jefferson in the same year as the Louisiana Purchase. Native American artists work to re-create the “Indian Hall” at Monticello with art forms encountered by Lewis and Clark.”



○ 2004 - Montalto

The Foundation purchases Montalto, the neighboring mountain that rises 400 feet above Monticello. Jefferson owned the summit and eastern side of Montalto from the early 1770s until his death in 1826.

MONTALTO [\(https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/montalto/\)](https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/montalto/)



○ 2009 - New Visitor Center

The new David M. Rubenstein Visitor Center and Smith Education Center officially opens and welcomes guests to the historic mountaintop with new exhibition galleries, hands-on children exhibits, a film, shop, and café.



○ 2013–2018 - Mountaintop Project

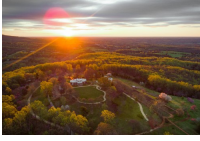
This multi-year effort restores Monticello as Jefferson knew it, telling the stories of the people — enslaved and free — who lived and worked on the 5,000-acre plantation. The project includes major restorations of the upper floors of the home, rooms in the South Wing, buildings on Mulberry Row, and historic landscaping.

LEARN MORE [\(https://www.monticello.org/thomas-jefferson-foundation/mountaintop-project/\)](https://www.monticello.org/thomas-jefferson-foundation/mountaintop-project/)



○ 2023 - Building for the Future

The Thomas Jefferson Foundation is looking ahead to the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of American Independence in 2026 and to the next 100 years of bringing history forward into national and global dialogues.



2023

**Want more information on the Foundation's milestones and evolution?
Check out this [article for a full chronology](https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/thomas-jefferson-foundation-chronology/)»
(<https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/thomas-jefferson-foundation-chronology/>)**

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