

# New Investments by Monticello Solve Jefferson's Water Dilemma

by Liz Russell - May 12, 2016



([https://www.monticello.org/sites/default/files/styles/body\\_image/public/uploaded-content-images/montalto.jpg?itok=CzgDrUPc](https://www.monticello.org/sites/default/files/styles/body_image/public/uploaded-content-images/montalto.jpg?itok=CzgDrUPc)). Water supply to Monticello, the mountaintop home of Thomas Jefferson, has been a perpetual problem since its construction. Dry wells, leaky cisterns, and distant water sources may have been the inspiration for Jefferson's plans to construct an aqueduct from a spring located on Montalto, the "high mountain" that rises 410 feet above Monticello.

While Jefferson's aqueduct never came to fruition, more than 200 years later the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello is investing in critical upgrades to its public water service with the construction of 200,000-gallon underground tank on Montalto that sends water back down the mountain via underground pipes. This gravity-fed water supply greatly enhances fire suppression safety not only for Monticello, but also for the [David M. Rubenstein Visitor Center](https://www.monticello.org/visit/tickets-tours/private-events/venues/visitor-center/)

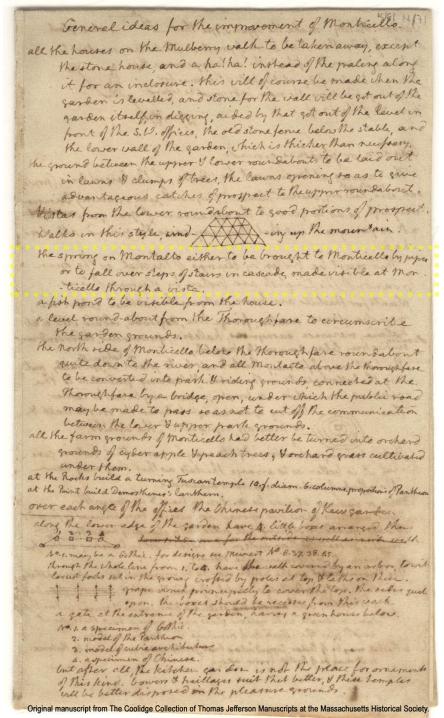
(<https://www.monticello.org/visit/tickets-tours/private-events/venues/visitor-center/>), the [Jefferson Library](https://www.monticello.org/research-education/for-scholars/jefferson-library/) (<https://www.monticello.org/research-education/for-scholars/jefferson-library/>) and the [Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies](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/>).

We are simultaneously investing in wastewater treatment upgrades to safely and adequately accommodate visitor and operational needs by connecting to the Rivanna Water & Sewer Authority's Moore's Creek Treatment Facility, an award-winning facility near Monticello.

Transitioning away from on-site wastewater treatment is the most environmentally and archeologically responsible plan. All costs associated with the water and sewer upgrades as well as all ongoing service fees are funded solely by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello.

The project broke ground in December 2015 and is scheduled for completion in early 2017. These critical water and sewer upgrades help ensure that Monticello is safeguarded for future generations.

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Original manuscript from The Codicil Collection of Thomas Jefferson Manuscripts at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

<https://monticello-www.s3.amazonaws.com/files/old/uploads/content-images/MHS-water-sewer.jpg>

Jefferson's memorandum for "the improvement of Monticello"

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