



President's Letter

We are well aware of Jefferson's interest in land. From his passion for botany and agriculture, we know he was fascinated by nature in all forms. His devotion to chronicling, observing, and experimenting with natural life reveals his reverence for it. Also, his leadership in the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark Expedition reflects his enterprising spirit with the greater goal of expansion of the American landscape and ideals.

Jefferson himself owned more than 5,000 acres of land that constituted the Monticello plantation, and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation recently placed a conservation easement on approximately 1,060 acres of his holdings to preserve the land in perpetuity. This dramatic step is in keeping with the Foundation's mission of preservation and education, and it complements other initiatives – the creation of the Thomas Jefferson Parkway, the purchase of Montalto, the preservation easement at Shadwell – undertaken to protect Jefferson's landscape from subdivision and commercial development.

Details of the conservation easement are contained in the cover story of this issue of *Monticello*. These pages also include articles on Monticello's refurbished and reinterpreted Kitchen, the soon-to-be-published Monticello cookbook, and other activities and accomplishments. There's also the annual Gift Report, in which we recognize the donors at all levels whose generosity makes possible our stewardship of Jefferson's numerous legacies.

We are, naturally, proud of our advances in various fields, and we are grateful to our donors. But we take special satisfaction in perpetuating Jefferson's ideal of reverence and respect for land by preserving it for future

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Monticello



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generations. As Jefferson wrote to John W. Eppes in 1813, "The earth belongs to the living. ... The soil is the gift of God to the living."

President

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