

## Holiday Signature Tours set for 10 evenings in December

FOR THE SECOND year, Monticello will mark the holiday season by conducting specially themed versions of its popular evening Signature Tours in December.

Holiday Signature Tours will be offered on four Saturdays (Dec. 1, 8, 15, 29), three Tuesdays (Dec. 4, 11, 18), and three Thursdays (Dec. 6, 20, 27) during the month. There will be two tours each evening, beginning at 5:30 and 5:45 p.m. Each tour will be led by two historic interpreters and be limited to a maximum of 20 people.

These hour-long guided tours of Thomas Jefferson's celebrated home will offer visitors an intimate look at how the holidays were celebrated in Jefferson's time, plus the rare opportunity to experience Monticello after dark.

Each Holiday Signature Tour will feature a relaxed-pace excursion through the rooms on the main floor of the house, which will be decked with local greenery, and a visit to the third-floor Dome Room. The tour content will focus on the atmosphere of family and fellowship that was at the center of the holiday season at Monticello.

In Jefferson's Virginia, most people lived agrarian lives and winter offered time for extended visiting and socializing. The merry season stretched from before Christmas through Twelfth Night (Jan. 6) and beyond. In 1762, the 19-year-old Jefferson described Christmas as "the day of greatest mirth and jollity." Weddings were often held during this season, including that of Jefferson and Martha Wayles Skelton (Jan. 1, 1772).

Holiday celebrations were, however,



**Monticello's Tea Room, where special foods were served during the holidays in Jefferson's time.**

TJF / Robert C. Lautman

quite different than those we know today. During the years of Jefferson's retirement at Monticello (1809-26), socializing and special food would have been the focal points of the season, rather than decorations or lavish gifts. No documents exist to tell us how, or if, Jefferson decorated Monticello for the holidays, but he did make note of the festive scene created by his grandchildren on Christmas Day 1809.

Holiday Signature Tours were introduced last year and proved popular right away: Each of the tours, held on eight dates in December, sold out well in advance. (The "regular" Signature Tours,

which were introduced in 2005 and offered during the summer months, also have sold out on a regular basis.)

Continued on next page.

*Thomas Jefferson*  
**MONTICELLO**

**Monticello** is a newsletter published twice each year by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc. The Thomas Jefferson Foundation is the private, nonprofit corporation that has owned and operated Monticello since 1923. Its mission is preservation and education.

© Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc., 2007

COMMENTS?

[newsletter@monticello.org](mailto:newsletter@monticello.org)

## Holiday Tours

Continued, Page 2.

Tickets for this year's Holiday Signature Tours go on sale Nov. 1. Tickets are \$40 per person; no discounts apply. Reserved tickets are required and can be purchased with a credit card through the Web site [monticello.org](http://monticello.org) or by calling (434) 984-9822.

Holiday Signature Tours are not appropriate for children under age 6. Also, because the third floor of Monticello is accessible only by steep, narrow staircases, that portion of the tour is not handicapped-accessible and is not recommended for individuals who may have difficulty climbing stairs.

<< [Back to Table of Contents](#)