



# House's Place on Nickel is Assured

A nickel doesn't buy very much nowadays. But as recent events have indicated, there's still a great deal of value attached to the imagery on the five-cent piece.

The nickel has borne images of Thomas Jefferson and Monticello since 1938. When the U.S. Mint began to consider changing the design of the nickel last year without consulting Congress, Virginia's representatives on Capitol Hill took action.

On June 26, 2002, U.S. Rep. Eric Cantor, a Republican from Richmond, introduced H.R. 4903, also known as the "Keep Monticello on the Nickel Act." The bill passed in the House of Representatives but died in the Senate.

On Jan. 7 of this year, Cantor submitted a new measure, H.R.

258, the "American Five-Cent Coin Design

Continuity Act of 2003." This bill

passed both the House and the Senate, where it was championed by Republican Sen. George Allen, and was signed into law by President Bush on April 23.

According to the provisions of the legislation, nickels produced for 2004 and 2005 will carry images commemorating the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark Expedition on their reverse (back) sides, with an updated image of Monticello returning for 2006. A Jefferson image will remain on the nickel's obverse (front).

"Virginia and Thomas Jefferson played a unique role in shaping our nation's history," Cantor told the



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# MONTICELLO



## Nickel

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Richmond Times-Dispatch. "I am proud to help ensure that the nickel will continue to commemorate Thomas Jefferson and Monticello in our everyday lives."

There will be two new nickels in 2004. The first will have a derivation of the clasped hands from the Jefferson Peace Medal, with "Louisiana Purchase" and "1803." The second will carry a rendition of the Lewis and Clark Expedition's keelboat with the two captains in the bow and several of the men poling, with "Lewis and Clark" beneath the image. The current Jefferson profile, which is based on Jean-Antoine Houdon's 1789 bust, will remain on the obverse of both versions.

The Jefferson image to appear on the 2006 nickel has yet to be determined. Possibilities include the current profile and a design based on Gilbert Stuart's 1805 "Edgehill" portrait.

Similarly, the Monticello image that will appear for 2006 has not been chosen. Design options include the depiction of the house that appeared on the 1994 Jefferson commemorative dollar and a three-quarters view of the house that was rejected for the current nickel design in 1938.

"We are delighted with the resolution of this matter," said Thomas Jefferson Foundation President Daniel P. Jordan. "Recognizing Lewis and Clark and the Louisiana Purchase – two of President Jefferson's major accomplishments – on the nickel is perfectly appropriate, and we're pleased that Monticello will return in a new form in 2006."

"Of course, that Jefferson will remain on the coin is most significant."

According to the U.S. Mint, producing the Lewis and Clark and Louisiana Purchase nickels will cost at least \$600,000. The Mint will make between 2.1 billion to 2.5 billion of the new nickels each year, as opposed to the typical annual output of between 1.3 billion and to 1.6 billion five-cent coins. The U.S. government expects to make \$100 million from the design change, according to the Mint.

New designs for existing coins, such as the state quarters that were introduced in 1999, have proved popular with both serious collectors and members of the general public. William T. Gibbs,

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## Nickel

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news editor of Coin World, the largest weekly publication for coin collectors, told the Associated Press that most of his readership would be happy with the new nickels, “especially if the designs are pleasing to the eye.”

The legislation also created a citizens’ Coin Design Advisory Committee, with members appointed by the president and Congress, to advise the secretary of the treasury on any changes to coins that are proposed by the Mint.

Cantor said the main purpose of the panel would be to help “avoid the Sacagawea experience,” referring to the dollar coin issued in 2000 bearing an image of the Indian woman who helped guide Lewis and Clark to the Pacific Ocean. Like the Susan B. Anthony dollar coin introduced in 1979, the Sacagawea dollar has failed to catch on with the American public.

- KIM CURTIS

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