



# Monticello introduces Acoustiguide tour

Monticello visitors now have a new way to get detailed information about Thomas Jefferson's mountaintop while exploring the out of doors at their own pace.



**The Acoustiguide tour is accessed with lightweight hand-held wands.**

The Monticello Mountaintop Acoustiguide audio tour is a recorded guide that presents the latest research on Monticello through the use of lightweight hand-held wands. The audio tour, which was introduced in September, was produced by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation and the Acoustiguide Corporation.

Narrated by Academy Award-winning actress and local resident Sissy Spacek, the Monticello Mountaintop Acoustiguide tour leads visitors through the Vegetable Garden, down Mulberry Row, along the south and north Dependencies, by the South Pavilion and terrace, and around the West Lawn's winding flower walk to the Grove. Topics addressed on the tour include the evolution of the Monticello landscape and Jefferson's vision for it, Jefferson and slavery, the work and domestic lives of enslaved people, Jefferson's philosophy of gardening, agriculture at Monticello, and the exterior architecture of the house.

The narration is interspersed with period music, sound effects, and the voices of actors reading the words of Jefferson, his granddaughter Ellen Randolph Coolidge, enslaved workers Isaac Jefferson and John Hemmings, family friend and visitor Margaret Bayard Smith, and others. The voice of Jefferson is supplied by Bill Barker, a respected character interpreter at Colonial Williamsburg.

There's also background and commentary by four experts from the Monticello staff. Director of Gardens and Grounds Peter Hatch explains Jefferson's approach to gardening,

## *This Issue's Other Stories*

-  AUSTRIA CONFERENCE
-  BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
-  DIGITAL ARCHAEOLOGY ARCHIVE
-  MONTICELLO PODCASTING
-  MULTIMEDIA WEBSITE
-  NEWS & NOTES
-  PLANTATION DATABASE
-  PRESIDENT'S LETTER
-  SLAVE DWELLING ARCHAEOLOGY
-  TJF BOARD NEWS

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE.

© Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc., 2005





## Acoustiguide tour

CONTINUED, PAGE **TWO**

viticulture at Monticello, and apple cultivation.

Shannon Senior Historian Lucia Stanton brings to life stories of Mulberry Row and many of Monticello's enslaved inhabitants. Robert H. Smith Director of Restoration William L. Beiswanger explains the

evolution of the Monticello house from an eight- to a 21-room domed dwelling. Director of Archaeology Fraser Neiman explains how archaeology informs our understanding of life at Monticello.

The Acoustiguide tour is not intended to supplant the guided Plantation Community Tours and Gardens and Grounds Tours that are conducted April through October. Rather, the audio tour provides another vehicle for learning about Monticello, and also enables visitors to obtain in-depth information about the mountaintop during the months when the outdoor guided tours are not offered.

The audio tour has a suggested route, which is shown on a map provided to all users, but visitors can choose the various stops in any order. The tour's total running time is approximately one hour.

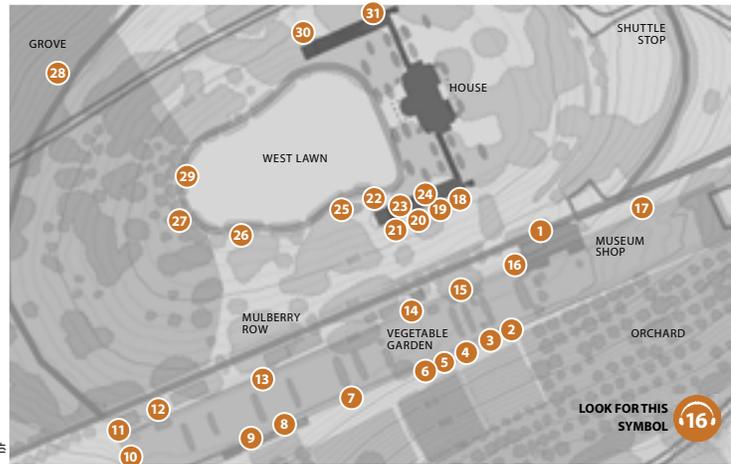
Acoustiguide, based in New York, is a worldwide leader in audio programming for museums and cultural institutions, heritage and historic sites, zoos and aquariums, and other venues.

Funding for the development and production of the audio tour was provided by Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Smith of Arlington.

The Monticello Mountaintop Acoustiguide is available for \$5 at the Mountaintop Museum Shop.

- ELIZABETH CHEW

*Elizabeth Chew is associate curator for collections at Monticello.*



**A map provided to all Acoustiguide users shows the suggested route for the audio tour.**

**COMMENTS? [newsletter@monticello.org](mailto:newsletter@monticello.org)**