



President's Letter

When Thomas Jefferson first moved to Monticello in 1770, the only standing structure was the one-room South Pavilion. A few years later, construction began on the “original” Monticello, which became a modest eight-room house. After five eye-opening years in Europe, Jefferson made plans to radically renovate his mountaintop home, incorporating new ideas for style and convenience. Thus began an era of “putting up, and pulling down” that essentially concluded in 1809, with the result being a 21-room residence. Four decades of “putting up, and pulling down” produced an architectural masterpiece that is still celebrated nearly two centuries later.

I write these words as we begin to construct Monticello’s new Thomas Jefferson Visitor Center and Smith History Center. The Thomas Jefferson Foundation’s history of welcoming guests is certainly parallel to the development of Monticello itself. Perhaps longtime visitors recall purchasing tickets at the old “gatekeeper’s house” just inside the entrance off Route 53. In the 1970s, the Foundation constructed a much-needed Ticket Office and Shuttle Station on the grounds, and later developed an off-site Visitors Center with a permanent exhibition and theater. Like the original house that Jefferson designed for his mountaintop, these facilities have served us and our visitors well.

But just as Jefferson experienced a whole new world of architecture during his years in France, we at Monticello have developed a whole new vision for how to welcome our visitors. Our plans call for a state-of-the art facility where our guests – from the smallest children to the most senior adults, from individual travelers to large tour groups – will be able to learn about Jefferson,

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Monticello, and their larger context while enjoying new amenities and conveniences.

With the same excitement with which Jefferson must have unveiled his plans for the redesigned Monticello, we are thrilled to embark on this significant project. The initial outpouring of support for the Thomas Jefferson Visitor Center and Smith History Center has been gratifying, and we invite you to participate in this historic moment, whether by checking our Web site to follow the new center's development, by visiting Monticello itself, or by supporting the Thomas Jefferson Foundation and its own ambitious plans for "putting up, and pulling down."

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel P. Jordan".

Daniel P. Jordan
President

COMMENTS? newsletter@monticello.org