When people think of Monticello, they usually focus first on Thomas Jefferson. That's natural, as Jefferson was – and is – the central, defining figure in Monticello's history. But, as some of the articles in this issue of Monticello remind us, many other individuals have played consequential roles in building, creating, sustaining, and preserving the house, grounds, and plantation.

As time passes, Monticello researchers continue to uncover valuable information that provides rich glimpses into the lives, talents, and relationships of others who lived on and around the mountaintop. Planning the restoration of the kitchen, cook's quarters, and the house's other dependencies has revealed much about the daily lives and the managerial skills of Martha Jefferson, her daughters, and granddaughters, and talented chefs such as James and Peter Hemings and Edith Fossett. A more somber reminder of the contributions made to Monticello's history came earlier this year when archaeological excavations identified a slave burial ground. In October, the Foundation held a Ceremony of Commemoration at the site in honor of those buried there as well as the other members of the enslaved community who lived and labored at Monticello.

Monticello's history does not conclude with Jefferson's death in 1826, and in some ways the story only becomes more tempestuous and varied. The family of Commodore Uriah P. Levy and his nephew Jefferson Monroe Levy owned the property even longer than Jefferson did, holding the house for 89 years. Americans owe a large debt to the Levys, not merely for saving Monticello but for preserving it essentially in its original form, at their own considerable expense. The Thomas Jefferson Foundation
recently published a volume documenting this important chapter of Monticello’s history, *The Levy Family and Monticello, 1834–1923: Saving Thomas Jefferson's House*. We were fortunate enough to have the talented scholar Melvin I. Urofsky write the book, and blessed to have a benefactor as generous and informed as Ambassador John Langeloth Loeb, Jr.

Even during Jefferson’s lifetime, Americans recognized Monticello for its powerful history, and many came to sightsee and sneak a look at its notable owner. Interest in the property has only grown in recent times, and the projects and discoveries now in progress at the Foundation underscore our increased awareness that Monticello’s history continues to be truly fascinating, rich, and diverse. And in these trying times for our nation, we recognize that the ideas and ideals of Thomas Jefferson carry even greater significance.

Daniel J. Jordan
President