



# Jefferson Library Opens New Doors for Research, Scholarship

Culminating six years of Jeffersonian dreaming, planning, working, and re-working, the opening of the Jefferson Library marks the establishment of a significant new home for the pursuit of knowledge.

The product of a thoroughly cooperative venture, the library has moved from idea to reality in the hands of a skilled architectural team, dedicated Thomas Jefferson Foundation staff members, generous and engaged donors, and talented builders. What has emerged out of their collective effort is a structure that meets current needs and anticipates others yet to come.

“It is exciting to know that ours is the first and

only freestanding presidential library devoted to a Founding Father,” said Foundation President Daniel P. Jordan. “This beautiful and technologically impressive facility becomes immediately the premier center of research for Jefferson studies.”

The \$5.5 million facility was occupied by TJF staff members and put into operation in March. A dedication ceremony featuring remarks by noted historian and author David McCullough, an Honorary Trustee of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, was held



The south elevation of the 15,500-square-foot Jefferson Library.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE.

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## *This Issue's Other Stories*

- BOOK DEAL
- ENTRANCE BRIDGE
- FOUNDATION BOARD
- GIFT REPORT
- LEWIS & CLARK LOGO
- LEWIS & CLARK POSTERS
- LEWIS & CLARK SITE
- MONTICELLO CABINET
- MOOSE
- NEW ACQUISITIONS
- PRESIDENTS LETTER
- SUNDIAL
- TWINLEAF
- VISITATION
- WEST PORTICO STEPS

# MONTICELLO



## Jefferson Library

CONTINUED, PAGE **TWO**

April 13, the 259th anniversary of Jefferson's birth.

Painstakingly designed to match the general aesthetic of Kenwood, home of the International Center for Jefferson Studies, the three-story, 15,500-square-foot building subtly blends into the Foundation's scholarly campus.

Nearly every exterior detail – from the slate roof to the white bricks – was chosen “with the goal of referencing and complementing Kenwood,” said

Michael B. Merriam, Monticello's director of facilities planning and construction and the library project manager. “We did not want the library to overwhelm the original buildings.”

This was not an easy task given that the library is more than double the size of the 6,000-square-foot main house, which was built in 1940. Chief architect Warren Cox found the solution in positioning the building on the edge of a gently sloping hill, with only the top two stories visible from the Kenwood side.

The rear of the library presents an entirely different aspect, dominated by a two-story, semicircular bay window. From this vantage point, one gets a greater sense of the building's size, only hinted at from the front. Within the building, the bay window is visible in its entirety as the midsection of the second floor ends in a balcony, opening an airy expanse over the Robert H. and Clarice Smith Reading Room.

The east and west walls of the reading space are lined by two-story cherry bookshelf alcoves, which constitute part of the Jefferson Library's 28,000-volume storage capacity. A growing number of titles relating to Jefferson and his contemporaries are found on these shelves alongside general reference texts. These books are available to the public, but registration is required upon the first visit.



TJF / Jessica Tyra

**Some of the library's bookshelf alcoves as seen from the second-floor balcony.**

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## Jefferson Library

CONTINUED, PAGE **THREE**

Other, more historic and delicate resources are to be kept in the Rockefeller Special Collections Room. Rare books and architectural drawings of Monticello restoration work are among the materials held in this limited-access space.

Patrons enter the building at the second-floor level. After registering and checking their bags, they are directed to the first floor, where the Smith Reading Room, Multimedia Resource Room, and library staff offices are located. Four large study tables with plug-ins for Internet access run along the center of the Smith Reading Room. Located next to the reference desk, the Multimedia Resource Room houses audio and video tapes, slides, microfilm, the equipment to play and view them, plus image scanners and photocopiers.

The Jefferson Library also offers much-needed meeting and office space. The Berkeley Room can comfortably host meetings of up to 22 people, and features audiovisual equipment, a drop screen, and teleconferencing capability. The Trustees Room, named in honor of all past and present Foundation trustees, is intended for groups of eight or fewer. Gilder-Lehrman Fellows and other scholars will have space for informal gatherings in the Nichols Room, furnished as a "common room" with parlor-style decor.

The third floor, originally slated for mechanical space, was reconfigured in the design phase of planning to hold a suite of offices for the editorial staff of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*. Featuring a sky-lit lobby, the floor also includes shelving specially designed for the more than 14,000 facsimile documents from which transcription work is done.

### Jefferson Library

**Architect** Hartman-Cox Architects;  
Warren Cox, design partner;  
Gail A. Douglass, architect

**Interior Design** Hartman-Cox  
Architects

**Landscape Architect** Meade Palmer  
(deceased)

**Structural Engineer** James Madison  
Cutts, Engineers

**MEP Engineers** Flack + Kurtz

**Geothermal Engineers** Wedgco  
Engineering

**Civil Engineers** Roudabush, Gale &  
Associates

**General Contractor** Martin/Horn,  
Inc.; Jack M. Horn, Sr., project  
manager; Jeff Simms, superintendent

**TJF Project Manager** Michael B.  
Merriam

**Cost** \$5.5 million

**Groundbreaking** June 10, 2000

**Beginning of Construction** Sept. 15,  
2000

**Construction** Steel frame, painted  
brick walls, slate roof

**Gross square footage** 15,500

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## Jefferson Library

CONTINUED, PAGE **FOUR**

Perhaps one of the most interesting “hidden” aspects of the Jefferson Library is its geothermal heating-cooling system. Water is circulated through a network of 40 wells, each 240 feet deep, and nearly three miles of pipe. By using the tremendous capacity of the bedrock to both generate and absorb heat, less energy is needed to operate the heat pumps in the building. The system also eliminates the need for costly back-up electric heat, extends the life of the equipment, and is easier to service.

Technologically, the Jefferson Library is up to date and well suited for upgrades in a world where the latest advances can quickly become obsolete. High-speed network connections are placed throughout the building, and the devices necessary to accommodate videoconferencing and wireless Internet access can easily be integrated in the future.

A multifaceted Internet tool dubbed the Thomas Jefferson Portal is one of the library’s most outstanding features, giving patrons access to a broad range of information pertaining to, as the library mission statement phrases it, “the life, times, and legacy of Thomas Jefferson.” The Portal links the databases of the Foundation’s various departmental libraries and main Jefferson Library to those of institutions such as the University of Virginia, Library of Congress, and Massachusetts Historical Society.

“The Thomas Jefferson Portal will access a constellation of research collections and create the effect for users of a single merged database,” said Foundation Librarian Jack Robertson. “It will be the entry point for researchers and people worldwide with questions about Jefferson.”

All of the inherent potential of the building will ensure a new era for the central Foundation library, which emerged alongside seven distinct departmental libraries over time. The first efforts at gathering books and research files for the Foundation at large were made by James A. Bear, longtime director of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation who retired in 1984. Initially housed in the Board Room in the



TJF / Jessica Tyne

**The Jefferson Library has space for 28,000 volumes.**

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## Jefferson Library

CONTINUED, PAGE **FIVE**

Weavers Cottage, the collection was moved to the Gate House in the late 1980s, then to Peter Jefferson Place in 1999. Its long odyssey has now ended at the Jefferson Library, a facility designed for scholarly advancement and technological growth in the decades to come.

The Jefferson Library is at Kenwood, approximately one-half mile east of the main entrance to Monticello. The library's operating hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The library is open to the public free of charge, but there is no lending service. Visitors are required to register upon arrival.

- JESSICA TYREE

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