News and Notes About Monticello

Library exhibition. Thomas Jefferson and the Origins of American Political Parties, an exhibition of rare printed materials related to early U.S. politics, is on display at the Jefferson Library through Jan. 30. Among the items on view are an 1801 edition of Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia that includes his first inaugural address and an 1803 newspaper reporting on the congressional debate over the Louisiana Purchase. The exhibition was conceived by Douglas C. Kelley of Ann Arbor, Mich., who donated 12 of the objects on display to the Foundation.

Approaching milestone. Monticello is nearing the 25 million mark in all-time attendance. Through Sept. 30, 24,830,321 people had visited Monticello since 1923, the year it was purchased from the Levy family by the newly established Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation. Monticello officials expect to greet visitor No. 25,000,000 early in 2004.

New monograph. A book by a former fellow at the International Center for Jefferson Studies is the latest addition to the Monticello Monograph Series. The Louisiana Purchase: Jefferson's Noble Bargain? by James E. Lewis, Jr., examines the complexities behind the land deal that literally transformed the United States 200 years ago. The title by Lewis, who teaches history at Kalamazoo College in Michigan, is the 13th in the Monograph Series, which was established in 1993.

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Family affair. The descendants of Elizabeth Hemings held their first family reunion the weekend of July 12-13 at Monticello. More than 150 family members and friends attended the event, which included tours of the house and grounds, a cookout lunch at Kenwood, a talk by Brent Staples of The New York Times editorial board, an evening reception at Monticello, and a sunrise service at Monticello’s slave burial ground. Elizabeth Hemings, who became part of the enslaved community at Monticello in 1774, was the mother of 12. More than 75 of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren lived and worked at Monticello over six decades.