



News and Notes About Monticello

High ranking. Monticello placed fifth on a list of America's most-visited historic house museums compiled by Counsel House Research for the 2004 edition of the Almanac of Architecture & Design. The Biltmore Estate in North Carolina claimed the top spot, followed by Virginia's Mount Vernon, California's Hearst Castle, and Tennessee's Graceland. Monticello's visitation total in 2003 was 463,733.

Kitchen update. The reconstruction and reinterpretation of the Kitchen, a major element in the ongoing project to restore all of Monticello's dependencies, is scheduled for completion in June. Visitors will then be able to experience a cooking room architecturally reconfigured, furnished, and equipped to accurately reflect its appearance and patterns of use after 1809, when it was relocated from the space under the South Pavilion to its present location at the south end of the all-weather passageway beneath the house.

Preservation citation. The Thomas Jefferson Foundation received a 2003 award from Scenic Virginia, Inc., a nonprofit organization based in Richmond, in the category Best Preservation of a Scenic Viewshed. The Foundation was cited for its "stewardship of Monticello" and "efforts to enhance the landscape and preserve the viewshed of this most historic of properties."

Special tour. A themed tour exploring the experiences of the slaves who served Jefferson's household made its debut as part of Monticello's observance of African-American History Month. The Enslaved

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Domestic Workers Tour was offered twice each Saturday and Sunday during February.

Wall work. Restoration work has begun on the north dependency retaining wall, which faces the West Lawn, following excavation by Monticello archaeologists. The wall's masonry is being repointed and a secondary wall is being built to relieve pressure on the original structure and improve drainage. In their dig, the archaeologists uncovered artifacts and collected evidence of how and when the retaining wall was built and whether trees were once planted along it, as Jefferson planned.

NEH grant. Monticello has been awarded a \$40,000 grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities to enhance the interpretive program for visitors. The grant will allow Monticello staff members to consult with distinguished scholars from such institutions as the University of Virginia, Johns Hopkins University, and Colonial Williamsburg in developing the themes and content of a new permanent exhibition, a new orientation film, and an audio tour of the house and grounds, and in advancing the restoration and interpretation of Mulberry Row.

COMMENTS? newsletter@monticello.org