

# Passageway restoration project is completed

A project critical to the preservation of Monticello – the restoration of the stone walls of the all-weather passageway that connects the house and the North Dependencies – has been completed.



The goal of this ambitious initiative, directed by Robert H. Smith Director of Restoration William L. Beiswanger, was to restore rather than rebuild the original walls constructed in 1801-02. Though approximately 18 inches thick, the walls had

been damaged over time by soil pressure, tree roots and deteriorated mortar, and had developed pronounced bows.

The final phase of the project dealt with the 70-foot-long passageway's east wall.

Work began November 2005 with archaeological excavations along the length of the passageway and around the cistern at the north end. After the archaeologists completed their work in April 2006, the trench was excavated to the full depth of the wall, the lower stonework was re-pointed, and a reinforced concrete footer was poured.

Following that, flexible wooden pallets were placed on both sides of the wall and held with sets of horizontal screw jacks stacked 3 feet apart every 3 feet along the passageway and trench. Steel posts operated by screw jacks also were installed along the length of the passage; these were turned to

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Monticello

## Passageway

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lift the North Terrace above the passageway less than one-quarter of an inch. The 148 horizontal jacks were then put into action: Those on the passage side were turned incrementally while those on the exterior were released.

The wall was thus compressed into vertical alignment. The jacks and pallets were removed in February, and the stonework was stabilized with grout.

One section of the wall, about 10 feet long, against the brick cistern, had to be rebuilt. All but a 3-foot high section was removed to prevent any damage to the cistern from pressure applied during the straightening procedure. The removed stones were laid out in the order of their assembly and were re-placed in March.

The closing phase of the work also entailed construction of a reinforced block wall directly against the backside of the passage in order to isolate soil pressure. This secondary wall and its footer were waterproofed and drain lines were installed at the outer toe of the footer. A backfill of gravel topped with soil was placed to prevent the secondary wall from pressing the stonework.

The final touches were pointing the interior sides of both the east and west walls and replacing the iron window sashes.

The overall project began in November 2003 with archaeological investigation along the 113-foot-long wall that forms the rear of the stables and carriage house under the North Terrace. The restoration and protection of that wall was completed in 2004. The next phase, restoring and straightening the all-weather passageway's west wall, was completed in 2005.

"This project was innovative in approach and painstaking in execution," said Thomas Jefferson Foundation President Daniel P. Jordan. "We are extremely pleased by the results, and confident that this work will last at least as long as the original."

Financial support for the project was provided by the Roy R. Charles Charitable Trust, The 1772 Foundation, Robert H. Smith, Frederic W. Scott, Jr., The Roller-Bottimore Foundation, the



**The restoration straightened the passageway's stone walls, which had become bowed.**

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Thomas F. Jeffress Memorial, Inc.,  
and Forbes Reback.

The restoration and construction work was done by Cersley Masonry, Inc., of Charlottesville, a father-and-son team that has worked on many restoration projects at Monticello.



**Stonemasons Henry (left) and Wil Cersley rebuilding a section of the passageway's east wall.**

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