

Thomas Jefferson MONTICELLO

The 21st-Century Gateway to Monticello

After nearly a decade of planning, the Thomas Jefferson Visitor Center and Smith Education Center had its Grand Opening on April 15, 2009. The new center that serves as the 21st-century gateway to Jefferson's timeless Monticello has transformed the visitor experience. Multiple components offer guests fresh perspectives on Monticello and the enduring significance of Jefferson's life and ideas.

The new center gives visitors of all ages distinctive opportunities to learn more about Jefferson and to explore Monticello and the new offerings at their own pace and according to their own preferences. Emphasizing the power of place and the strength of ideas, these all-new features highlight Jefferson's accomplishments, his beliefs about liberty and their global relevance today, the wider community of people — both enslaved and free — who lived on the plantation, and the remarkable house and landscapes of Monticello. Curators and historians on the Monticello staff developed the content of all the interpretive components.

Located on the lower slope of Monticello mountain, the center comprises five pavilions around a central courtyard. The three-level, 42,000-square-foot complex follows the contour of its hillside setting and blends into the landscape with natural building materials, two "green" roofs, and other environmentally sensitive elements.

The center's visitor amenities, which opened in November 2008, include a café with indoor and outdoor seating, a spacious gift shop, and an indoor ticket and information counter.

The largest capital project and the most ambitious educational initiative in the history of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, the new center features:

Four innovative exhibitions

- ♦ **Thomas Jefferson and 'the Boisterous Sea of Liberty'** illustrates the development and ongoing influence of Jefferson's core ideas about liberty on a wall of 21 flat-panel LCD screens, including seven interactive touch screens.
- ♦ **Monticello as Experiment: 'To Try All Things'** explores Jefferson's use of Monticello as a laboratory for his belief that "useful knowledge" could make life more efficient and convenient and lead to the progress of the nation.
- ♦ **Making Monticello: Jefferson's 'Essay in Architecture'** showcases the architectural origins, construction, and four-decade evolution of the Monticello house, widely regarded as one of the icons of American architecture.



Thomas Jefferson Visitor Center and Smith Education Center



"Thomas Jefferson and 'the Boisterous Sea of Liberty'" exhibition in the Michelle Smith Gallery

- ♦ ***The Words of Thomas Jefferson*** brings Jefferson's thoughts to light through projection in an innovative display.

A powerful introductory film

- ♦ ***Thomas Jefferson's World***, Monticello's visually rich introductory film, describes Monticello's central importance to Jefferson's life and work and emphasizes Jefferson's consequential accomplishments and his core ideas about human liberty — the world-changing ideas — that reach from his place and time in history to the present day.

New resources for young people

- ♦ The **Griffin Discovery Room** gives Monticello visitors — especially those ages 6 to 11— the chance to literally get in touch with Jefferson's life and times through hands-on elements and activities, including reproductions from the house and plantation. The new, fully equipped **Classrooms** in the Carl and Hunter Smith Education Center can accommodate an expanded number of student groups and also serve as venues for workshops and other programs for both young people and adults.



The Words of Thomas Jefferson exhibition in the Stacy Smith Liss Gallery



Activities in the Carl and Hunter Smith Education Center