

After Jefferson's death in 1826, his heirs sold his property, including his slaves, to pay his debts. Naval officer Uriah Phillips Levy, who admired Jefferson for

THE LEVY LEGACY

his support of religious liberty, purchased Monticello in 1834 to preserve it. This is the grave of his mother, Rachel Phillips Levy, who died here in 1839. Uriah Levy bequeathed Monticello to the United States in 1862, but the government refused it. After litigation, his nephew Jefferson Monroe Levy gained title to Monticello in 1879. He sold the house and 662 acres to the just-formed Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation in 1923. The Levys' dedication for nearly 90 years preserved Monticello for future generations.

Buildings on Mulberry Row during Jefferson's era.



Uriah Phillips Levy (1792-1862) was the first Jewish American to achieve the rank of commodore in the U.S. Navy where he fought against religious discrimination and flogging.
U.S. Naval Academy Museum



Rachel Machado Phillips Levy (1769-1839) by Adolph Wertmüller. Uriah's mother, a fourth-generation American from Philadelphia, came to Monticello in 1837 and died while her son was at sea.
American Jewish Historical Society



Jefferson Monroe Levy (1852-1924), a New York lawyer and investor, served three terms in the U.S. Congress (1899-1901, 1911-13), and owned Monticello until 1923.
American Jewish Historical Society

The homes of great men should be protected and preserved as monuments to their glory.

Uriah Phillips Levy, 1832



Excavation of stone house. Archaeological investigation confirmed the existence of two Jefferson-era structures, the "wash house" dating from ca. 1790 and a stone dwelling erected ca. 1809.

SITE HISTORY

The first structure on this site was the "wash house" where enslaved women laundered clothes for the Jefferson household. After the wash house moved to the cellar of the South Pavilion around 1809, a new stone dwelling was built here, likely to house slaves. In 1839, Levy partially dismantled the building to create a wall around his mother's grave.



Monticello by Rufus W. Holsinger, 1912. These photographs document Jefferson Monroe Levy's preservation efforts. He and his uncle welcomed visitors to Monticello.
Special Collections, University of Virginia Library