



DECADE OF DIVERSIFIED SCHOLARSHIP

International Center for Jefferson Studies Marks Anniversary

“I look to the diffusion of light and education as the resource to be relied on for ameliorating the condition, promoting the virtue, and advancing the happiness of man,” Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1822. This year, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation celebrates 10 years of forwarding that vision through the International Center for Jefferson Studies.

To advance Jefferson’s quest to “enlighten the people generally” and the Foundation’s educational mission, the ICJS has created a unique, dynamic environment that nurtures Jefferson

scholarship and shares its findings through classroom teaching, lectures, conferences, publications, and the electronic media.

“When I first heard the idea in 1993, I distinctly remember thinking what an advantage it would be for researchers to work on Jefferson-related subjects in the shadow of Monticello,” said Douglas L. Wilson, the International Center’s founding director. “Monticello and its environs, more than any other place I know of, have a unique power to evoke. One can read Jefferson’s works and study his career anywhere, but there is something – some perspective or measure of understanding – that can only be acquired by ascending Jefferson’s

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The interior of the Jefferson Library, site of many ICJS programs.

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mountain and visiting the grounds of the University of Virginia.”

Adding to the intangible benefits of its location, the ICJS has in its first decade made tremendous strides in providing a wealth of materials and workspaces.

“The convenience of the new Jefferson Library at Monticello and the comprehensiveness of the university’s Alderman Library make an ICJS fellowship a scholar’s dream,” said historian and author James Lewis, a former ICJS fellow.

Yale University professor Joanne Freeman, who held the first ICJS dissertation fellowship, appreciated the collegial, intellectual community of staff members and visiting fellows. “I loved my time at the center,” she said. “When you are working in isolation on a dissertation or a book, it’s wonderful to have a defined working space surrounded by friendly people.”

The ICJS was established in April 1994 through a cooperative agreement between the Thomas Jefferson Foundation and the University of Virginia. Located at Kenwood, a 78-acre tract once owned by Jefferson just a half-mile from the entrance to Monticello, the ICJS unites the diverse scholarly and educational programs at Monticello, which range from archaeological fieldwork and the management of the Jefferson Library to organizing tours for schoolchildren and recording oral history.

Through its fellowship program, which accommodates both short- and long-term residencies, the International Center has hosted more than 120 historians, educators, and museum professionals at work on projects related to the life, era, and legacy of Jefferson. Coming from across the United States and 28 foreign countries, these visiting scholars have brought fresh, worldwide perspectives to Monticello and carried their new knowledge of Jefferson’s ideas and ideals to all corners of the nation and the



**Kenwood,
headquarters of
the ICJS.**

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globe. Fellows also regularly share their views and findings in forums that are an integral part of the ICJS' extensive series of talks, lectures, discussions, and seminars, many of which are open to the public.

Scholarly conferences are another major vehicle for disseminating scholarship about Jefferson and highlighting the currency of Jeffersonian principles in today's world. Since 1995 the International Center has organized and conducted 18 conferences at Monticello and other venues, including Paris, Berlin, London, Warsaw, and Bellagio, Italy, sometimes in conjunction with other institutions, ranging from the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture to the Polish Academy of Sciences. These gatherings of eminent thinkers have focused on topics as diverse as architecture, slavery, the impact of technology on the study of history, the ideals of the American Revolution, the presidential election of 1800, and the Louisiana Purchase.

The ICJS also serves as the publishing arm of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. There are currently 23 books in print, with more on the way. The list features the 13 titles in the Monticello Monograph Series, softcover books designed and written for a wide audience that treat various aspects of Jefferson's diverse interests and legacy; *Thomas Jefferson's Monticello*, a hardcover gift book with 225 color images and essays by four senior members of the Monticello staff; and new editions of Jefferson's Farm Book and Garden Book. In development are both scholarly and general-interest publications. Since 2002, the University of North Carolina Press has been the exclusive trade distributor for Foundation publications under an agreement fostered by James P. Horn, Saunders Director of the ICJS at the time.

The International Center's publications program also includes *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*, a definitive compilation of Jefferson's correspondence and other documents from 1809



Archaeological fieldwork is an important element of ICJS research.

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to his death in 1826 (see story on Page 6). Volume 1 of this ambitious series will be published later this year by Princeton University Press.

The *Retirement Series* editorial staff is housed in the Jefferson Library, the newest and largest of the International Center's facilities. Opened in April 2002 and the winner of a 2003 Library Building Award from the American Institute of Architects and the American Library Association, the 15,500-square-foot building at Kenwood contains shelf space for 28,000 volumes, a central reading room, two conference rooms, an informal "common" room, a multimedia center, and offices. The Jefferson Library's collections include books, periodical articles, unpublished reports, photographs, archival materials, and ephemera. The library's online catalog, the Thomas Jefferson Portal (<http://tjportal.monticello.org>), offers Internet users worldwide access to these resources.

While the Kenwood campus serves as the hub of scholarly activities at Monticello, the International Center's departments are by no means bound by its precincts. The long list of programs and projects conducted under the ICJS umbrella includes research into African-American life at Monticello and the operations of the plantation; the Archaeology Department's systematic investigation of the plantation landscape and the new Digital Archaeological Archive of Chesapeake Slavery; the Hunter and Carl Smith Education Department's Study Tours, through which more than 13,000 schoolchildren make curriculum-based trips to Monticello each year, and the Outreach Program that brings the world of Monticello into classrooms throughout Virginia; continued work on *Getting Word*, the African-American oral history project that was established in 1993; the Monticello-Stratford Hall and Gilder Lehrman Seminars for teachers, which have alumni in all 50 states and eight foreign countries; and a non-credit evening course at UVa on Jefferson and Monticello.

The accomplishments of the International Center for Jefferson Studies have been made possible by several groups of people, beginning with the visionaries who fostered its creation. Chief among these was the late Rodman C. Rockefeller, a member of the



Jefferson and Science
is one of 13 titles
in the Monticello
Monograph Series.

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Foundation Board of Trustees who was devoted to the establishment of an entity with unmatched resources that would yield a harvest of fresh thinking on Jefferson and his legacy. Foundation President Daniel P. Jordan nurtured this vision and shared it with others, enlisting the assistance of more than 100 individuals and organizations who together have contributed more than \$16 million in support of the International Center, including endowment for three positions, Saunders Director, Shannon Senior Research Historian, and Hunter J. Smith Director of Education.

The ICJS has also benefited from the leadership of its directors. Wilson, the founding director, brought instant credibility to the

International Center with his credentials as a Jefferson historian and library administrator. During Horn's tenure from 1999 to 2002, the fellowship program was strengthened, the conference component was expanded, and the ICJS attained increased visibility in both the scholarly and public arenas. The current Saunders Director, Andrew J. O'Shaughnessy, has since taking the position in August 2003

worked to build upon the accomplishments of his predecessors, steer existing projects toward completion, and develop new strategies and programs.

"The scope of the work of the International Center is absolutely impressive," O'Shaughnessy said. "It is a thriving, active place whose energy and diversity of enterprises and interests is matched only by those of Thomas Jefferson himself."

- BETH CHEUK

Beth Cheuk is publications coordinator at the International Center for Jefferson Studies.



TF / Stephanie Gross

Participants in the 2003 Monticello-Stratford Hall Summer Seminar for Teachers.

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