



President's Letter

On April 20, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation completed its most consequential preservation initiative since Monticello was purchased in 1923. Brown's Mountain – Jefferson's beloved Montalto – is ours, and fairly won. The prime 330-acre "high mountain" that towers 400 feet above Jefferson's "little mountain" belongs again to Monticello.

Acquired by Jefferson in the 1770s, Montalto dominates our westward vista and has long been the Foundation's number one preservation priority. When it came on the market recently, it was coveted by developers for subdivision into as many as 24 "McMansions."

Led by Board Chairman Tom Saunders and an "A list" team of advisers, the Foundation pulled together, in 24 hours, a successful offer of \$15 million. Two hundred years ago, Thomas Jefferson championed another land acquisition for exactly the same price – namely, the Louisiana Purchase.

For many years we have been concerned about presenting Monticello in its most authentic context. This purchase assures that the views Jefferson enjoyed will also be enjoyed by all Monticello visitors. We are pleased to have welcomed more than 25 million visitors since our doors opened to the public in 1923, and we expect at least that many over the next 81 years. To enhance the visitor experience, on the horizon are an audio tour, restoration of the Kitchen and other dependencies, a reservation system to reduce the waiting time for house tours, and an interactive virtual tour of Monticello on our Web site.

I'm also delighted to report that the architectural firm Ayers/Saint/Gross of Baltimore has been retained to design a new visitor center, the Hunter and Carl

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Smith History Center, and a new administration building – all nearby but away from our core stewardship on the mountaintop itself. Our plans to relocate offices and work areas now in historic spaces will help make the mountaintop itself even more authentic.

This issue of Monticello includes further details about these matters, articles about the 10th anniversary of our International Center for Jefferson Studies and other accomplishments and activities, plus what we consider a special feature, the opportunity to publicly acknowledge the tremendous support of our friends. Indeed, it was the confidence our donors have shown in our stewardship that encouraged us to take the very bold action we took in acquiring Montalto. Thank you!

President

COMMENTS? newsletter@monticello.org