

Th: Jefferson

MONTICELLO

SUMMER 2009

www.monticello.org

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 1

New Web site puts the focus on the currency of Jefferson's ideas

MONTICELLO'S online presence now includes a Web site highlighting the relevance of Thomas Jefferson's ideas to contemporary issues.

Jefferson Today – www.jeffersontoday.org – features brief commentaries on how and why quotations from Jefferson are applicable to current events and offers users the opportunity to participate by posting comments, submitting their own commentaries, and suggesting topics for future discussion.

The site, which was launched in January, also includes a blog showcasing Jefferson-related items as they appear elsewhere on the Web, a selection of additional Jefferson quotations, a list of Jefferson namesakes (awards, institutions, schools, etc.), and other features.

The inaugural "edition" of Jefferson Today centered on the 2008 presidential election, employing quotations from Jefferson about equality, participatory democracy, and America's place in the world as the launching points for discussion. Contributors to the online dialogue included Annette Gordon-Reed,



award-winning author of *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family*; Peter S. Onuf, Thomas Jefferson Foundation Professor of History at the University of Virginia and co-host of the public radio program *BackStory with the American History Guys*; and Julian Bond, president of the NAACP.

More recently, the site has focused on the current economic situation – "It is incumbent for each generation to pay its own debts as it goes," Jefferson wrote

in 1820 – and the rise in piracy off the coast of Africa – an issue Jefferson confronted during his presidency.

Jefferson Today is a project of Monticello's Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies, which was established in 1994 to foster Jefferson scholarship and widely disseminate findings.

"Jefferson's ideas remain pertinent to the present," said Andrew O'Shaughnessy, Saunders Director of the Smith ICJS. "The goal of this site is to illustrate the continuing relevance of his thoughts and words, and to generate timely and lively discussion with a variety of voices."

The development of Jefferson Today was made possible by support from Mr. and Mrs. H. Eugene Lockhart and the John and Amy Griffin Foundation.

Jefferson Today also is easily accessible through the home page of Monticello's Web site, www.monticello.org.

COMMENTS?

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Monticello is a newsletter published twice each year by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc. The Thomas Jefferson Foundation is the private, nonprofit corporation that has owned and operated Monticello since 1923. Its mission is preservation and education.

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