

Thomas Jefferson MONTICELLO

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Robert H. Smith Center opens on Montalto with Jefferson Conference

Montalto, Thomas Jefferson's "high mountain" overlooking Monticello and home of the Robert H. Smith Center, is the Thomas Jefferson Foundation's new premier location for scholarship and stewardship. The site opened May 13 with the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies conference "Jefferson's Adversaries: British Leadership in the American War of Independence."

The mountain, which rises 410 feet above Monticello, was Jefferson's first land acquisition. He was 28 in 1771 when he got Edward Carter to agree "to give me as much of his nearest mountain as can be seen from mine, and 100 yds. beyond the line of sight ..." With its panoramic views of Monticello and the vistas of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Montalto presents a spectacular site for the Thomas Jefferson Foundation's new world-class education center.

The leadership gift for the Montalto renovation project was made by Robert H. Smith shortly before he died in December 2009. Over the years, Smith and his wife Clarice have been transformational donors for numerous educational programs at Monticello. This year, the Smiths' vision for Montalto came to fruition with an international conference on Jefferson.



TJF recently completed renovating "Repose," the 1905 structure atop Montalto, home to the Robert H. Smith Center. TJF

"Bob envisioned the Thomas Jefferson Foundation as an organization of global influence through its research and scholarship. Montalto has been transformed into a world-class center for education. An international conference on Jefferson was a significant and moving way to recognize Bob's legacy," said Leslie Greene Bowman, president and CEO of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation.

The opening conference brought together a committee of international

Dr. O'Shaughnessy's forthcoming book, *The Men Who Lost America*,

evaluates the role of British leadership in the Revolutionary War, a war that Britain seemingly should have won. It is commonly assumed that the incompetence of the commanders and politicians led to Britain's defeat. These leaders have been ridiculed in popular culture and, though less crudely presented, these caricatures even permeate scholarly literature. This book focuses on the ten key British military decision makers in the Revolutionary War. It challenges the stereotypes and offers a very different explanation of why Britain lost America.

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scholars, including leading authorities on the British side of the American Revolution, for a manuscript workshop to discuss the forthcoming book *The Men Who Lost America* by Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, Saunders Director of the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies.

The committee was among the first to read and review O’Shaughnessy’s manuscript in advance of publication. Peter Onuf, member of the International Center for Jefferson Studies’s advisory board and Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation Professor at the University of Virginia,

moderated the conference. Philip Zelikow, scholar, author, American diplomat and former executive director of the 9/11 Commission was the Friday night dinner speaker.

Workshop committee members included Ira Gruber (Emeritus, Rice University), Maya Jasanoff (Harvard University), Stephen Conway (University College, London University), Harry Dickinson (Emeritus, Edinburgh University), Julie Flavell (University of Dundee) and Mark Urban (BBC).

“We are privileged to have such a fine group of scholars in our presence. The Robert H. Smith

International Center for Jefferson Studies is dedicated to promoting a global dialogue about Jefferson’s ideas. This workshop is a gathering of great minds and great ideas at a one-of-a-kind location,” said O’Shaughnessy.

The Foundation will use Montalto to further its mission of education and preservation and expand its vision of creating a global dialogue with Jefferson’s ideas. The Foundation’s Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies plays a central role in the development of educational programs at Montalto.

“With this view I have purchased at different times the whole of the mountain adjoining the one I live on, & above the level of the gap uniting them ... Without that resource I could not have built as I have done, nor could I look forward with any comfort.”

— JEFFERSON TO RICHARD MORRIS,
AUGUST 29, 1803

