

Th: Jefferson

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From the President

Dear Friends,

I write from my office on Jefferson's mountaintop, with a view of the transformative progress along Mulberry Row. This is the most significant restoration in the Foundation's long history, and we are profoundly grateful to the community of supporters who made it possible. Your engagement—as visitors, advisors, donors, students and scholars—inspires our dual mission of education and preservation.

Monticello is a perpetual work-in-progress, just as it was during Thomas Jefferson's lifetime.



ABOVE: The inaugural board of trustees of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 1923

RIGHT: Commodore Uriah Levy, who purchased Monticello in 1834

At this pivotal moment, we stand on the shoulders of the generations of Americans who came before us—individuals with the foresight to understand Jefferson's enduring relevance. Monticello, his home and masterpiece, is a touchstone for all who seek to explore the meaning of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

In protecting this historic treasure for future generations, we look to Jefferson's ideas for guidance—and to a legacy of stewardship that extends back nearly two centuries.



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Monticello survives because of the Levy family, who purchased Jefferson's home and plantation in 1834. Uriah Phillips Levy was the first Jewish commodore in the United States Navy. He admired Jefferson for his stance on religious liberty, and believed that "the houses of great men should be preserved as monuments to their glory"—a very modern notion in the mid-19th century. The Levy family cared for Monticello for more than 90 years, establishing a legacy of stewardship by restoring the home and allowing public visits.

After Congress twice declined to purchase and preserve the property, Monticello went up for sale in 1923. Patriotic Americans again came to its rescue. On April 13, 1923, the 180th anniversary of Jefferson's birth, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation was incorporated in New York City. Its purpose: "to preserve and maintain Monticello as a memorial to Thomas Jefferson and his ideas." The inaugural board took out a \$500,000 mortgage, a monumental sum in those days, to acquire the house and 300 of Jefferson's original acres.

Eight years later, the Foundation launched its first campaign, determined to "wipe out the final debt, fully restore Monticello, and continue the work of patriotic education."

We have worked step-by-step since then to restore Monticello and its signature mountaintop landscape, removing modern overlays and re-acquiring original land and furnishings. Today, Jefferson's home and plantation

are designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. Unparalleled scholarship, anchored by our Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies, underscores every project we undertake.

Now, guided by the past and inspired by the future, the Foundation has launched *We Hold These Truths: The Campaign for Monticello*. We hope you will consider joining the lineage of stewardship that has protected Monticello for more than 180 years.

Thank you for all you do to safeguard this American treasure. We look forward to welcoming you back to the mountaintop soon—there are many new stories and places to explore!

Sincerely,



*Leslie Greene Bowman,
President and CEO*