

# Th: Jefferson

# MONTICELLO

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## NEW DISCOVERIES AT MONTICELLO



Come see what's new on the mountaintop. Our work is guided by ongoing research, bringing the mountaintop closer to the place Jefferson knew.

### Monticello's Terrace Railing to Be Restored to Its 1824 Design

BY GARDINER HALLOCK,  
ROBERT H. SMITH DIRECTOR OF RESTORATION

An exciting change is about to take place at Monticello. The Chinese Chippendale-inspired white railing around Monticello's terraces will be replaced by a dark green paling or picket railing that reflects Jefferson's design from 1824. Jefferson designed this railing two years after he broke his wrist "[by falling] to the ground from a terrace."

Research by Monticello's restoration experts reveals that Jefferson, in fact, designed two generations of terrace railings. The first railing design, which may have been constructed circa 1808, was to be made of Chinese-inspired panels. It is not known if this railing was ever completed as no image or description survives.

Jefferson designed a second, quite different railing in 1824. His building notebook provides detailed instructions for the second railing – a paling or picket fence – to be made from vertical wooden bars.

Three different watercolors of Monticello from 1825 to 1826 document that a section of railing that followed the picket-fence design was constructed on the east side of the South Terrace. The reconstruction is guided by historical evidence from these watercolors and Jefferson's own notes. The North Terrace railing will be reconstructed this spring, while the South Terrace railing will be installed at a later date. For a little while, you may have the exciting opportunity to see the two designs side by side.



Railings similar to those Jefferson designed in 1824 can be seen in this 1825 painting of Monticello by Aaron Vail. A detail of an 1825 watercolor by Jane Braddick Peticolas that captures the ca. 1824 railings. (TOP)

The 1824 design for the picket railing that will be in place in the fall. (ABOVE)

The Chinese Chippendale-inspired white railings currently around Monticello's terraces. (RIGHT)