

FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

The Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia gets a makeover

Launched in 2007 with 300 articles, the online Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia has grown to include more than 1,000 articles — all thoroughly researched, with extensive footnotes and citations. The website is maintained by Jefferson Library staff and volunteers.

The online reference recently received a significant upgrade and now features updated text and images along with new selections from Monticello's library of more than 270 livestreams, videos and podcasts.

Here is a small sampling of excerpts from the expansive website:



Before the government permanently relocated to Richmond, Jefferson and his family lived in the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg for nearly a year.

PUBLIC LIFE *Governor of Virginia*

On June 1, 1779, the General Assembly elected Thomas Jefferson as the second governor of Virginia. Three candidates — Jefferson, John Page and Thomas Nelson — each secured substantial support, with Jefferson being elected on the second ballot. He succeeded Patrick Henry, who had occupied the executive office for three terms.

To the General Assembly, Jefferson publicly expressed his thanks, writing that “no rewards can be so pleasing ... as those which include the approbation of our fellow citizens.” To Richard Henry Lee, Jefferson privately lamented that “public offices are, what they should be,” burdens that “it would be wrong to decline, though foreseen to bring with them intense labor and great private loss.”

THE HOUSE *Water Supply*

The water supply at Monticello was a constant struggle for those living on the mountaintop. In 1769, when construction began on the mountain, Jefferson directed a crew of enslaved workmen to dig a well near the South Pavilion. The men spent 46 days digging through 65 feet of rock. Dry weather conditions caused the well to fail for six of the 28 years between 1769 and 1797. Whenever the well ran dry, enslaved laborers had to cart water up from the springs lower down on the mountain.

In 1808, Jefferson ordered the construction of four 8-foot-cubed cisterns. The cisterns were positioned near the house to capture rainwater running off the roofs and

terraces. Work on the new project began in 1810, but it took many years of trial and error to create a waterproof plaster before the cisterns held rainwater — and even then, it was never a perfect system.



A period water pump has been re-created for one of the house's cisterns. The pump is functional and is used by Monticello gardeners.

FOOD AND DRINK *Macaroni Recipe*

Jefferson was not the first to introduce macaroni (with or without cheese) to America, nor did he invent the recipe, as some have claimed. A recipe for macaroni — a word that Jefferson used as a general term for pasta — in



Jefferson's sketch and notes on the production of pasta by machine in Italy. At Monticello, Jefferson had a pasta machine from Naples, and in later years he regularly ordered pasta from Europe.

his own hand survives, although it was most likely dictated to him by one of his chefs or butlers:

“6 eggs. yolks & whites.
2 wine glasses of milk
2 lb of flour
a little salt
work them together without water, and very well.
roll it then with a roller to a proper thickness
cut it into small peices which roll again with the hand into long slips, & then cut them to a proper length.
put them into warm water a quarter of an hour.
drain them.
dress them as Maccaroni.*
but if they are intended for soups they are to be put into the soup & not into warm water”

**To dress the noodles “as Maccaroni” means to layer them with cheese.*

SCIENCE AND EXPLORATION

Lewis and Clark Expedition

When Jefferson took office in 1801, most of the United States population lived within 50 miles of the Atlantic Ocean. European settlers’ knowledge of the western part of the continent was limited to what had been learned from French traders and fur trappers and Spanish and British explorers.

On January 18, 1803, President Jefferson sent a confidential letter to Congress asking for \$2,500 to fund an expedition to the Pacific Ocean. He hoped to establish trade with the Native American people of the West and find a water route to the Pacific. Jefferson also was fascinated by the prospect of what could be learned about the geography of the West, the lives and languages of the Native Americans, the plants and animals, the soil, the rocks, and the weather, and how they differed from those in the East.

Having embarked in 1804, a group of about 45 people headed by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark reached the Pacific Ocean in November 1805.



Reproductions of Native American artifacts from the Lewis and Clark Expedition are displayed in Monticello's Entrance Hall.

Miguel Flores-Viana

BY THE NUMBERS

71 articles about commonly misattributed quotes

80 articles about Jefferson's political career

101 articles about Jefferson's interest in science and exploration

139 articles about Jefferson's interest in agriculture and gardening

52 articles about slavery at Monticello

Explore more of Thomas Jefferson's world at
www.monticello.org/encyclopedia.

