



Welcome to Monticello with School Tours of America

Monticello, located just outside of Charlottesville, Virginia, was the primary plantation of Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson was a Founding Father, the author of the Declaration of Independence, and the third president of the United States. He began designing Monticello upon inheriting land from his father at the age of 14. The plantation was originally 5,000 acres, growing crops such as tobacco and wheat.



The property is highly regarded for its architectural and historical significance. It was designated a National Historic Landmark, and along with the nearby University of Virginia (also designed by Jefferson), was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Monticello was originally a two-story, eight-room house of classical architecture. Upon his return from France (Jefferson served as American Minister to France from 1785-1789), he began to transform it into a three-story, 21-room brick house.

Monticello has many interesting and unusual aspects. It is the first American home with a dome, which was placed over the parlor. The second-story bedroom windows are on the floor level to make the three-story building appear one story tall from the outside. The third floor has skylights that are invisible from the ground. Jefferson aligned the windows and the central hall to allow a cooling air current to pass through the house.

Monticello also includes many interesting artifacts, including a cannonball clock, one of Jefferson's own designs. This clock has suspended cannon balls that mark off the days of the week. Jefferson designed a dumbwaiter, which is a gadget that serves wine directly from the wine cellar. He even has a mastodon mandible. The fossil was collected by Jefferson and is now displayed in the Monticello Entrance Hall. Monticello was filled with Jefferson's other unique inventions, including a revolving bookstand, a copying machine, a spherical sundial, and a toenail clipper. Finally, the United States nickel has featured a depiction of Monticello on its reverse since 1938 (except for 2004-05).



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