



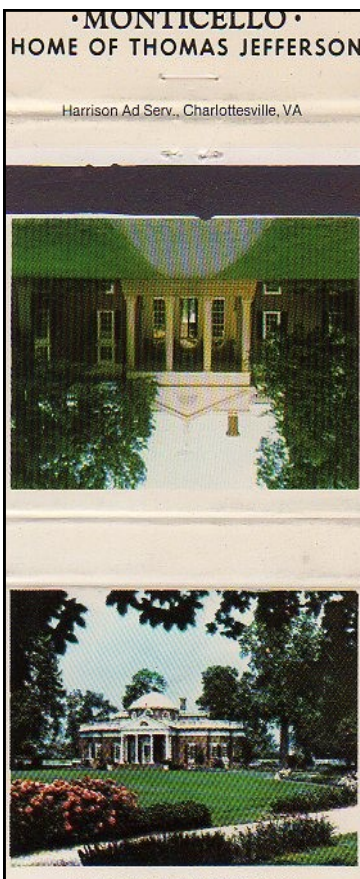
# An American Tour: 71



## Virginia's Monticello

Monticello is the primary plantation of Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, who, after inheriting quite a large amount of land from his father, started building Monticello when he was twenty-six years old. Located just outside Charlottesville, Virginia, in the Piedmont region, the plantation was originally 5,000 acres, with extensive cultivation of tobacco and mixed crops, with labor by slaves. What started as a mainly tobacco plantation switched over to a wheat plantation later in Jefferson's life. At Jefferson's direction, he was buried on the grounds, an area now designated as the Monticello Cemetery, which is owned by the Monticello Association, a lineage society of his descendants through Martha Wayles Skelton Jefferson.

The house, which Jefferson designed, was based on the neoclassical principles described in the books of the Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio. He reworked it through much of his presidency to include design elements popular in late eighteenth-century Europe. It contains many of his own design solutions. The house is situated on the summit of an 850-foot (260 m)-high peak in the Southwest Mountains south of the Rivanna Gap. Its name comes from the Italian "little mount." The plantation at full operations included numerous outbuildings for specialized functions, a nailery, and quarters for domestic slaves along Mulberry Row near the house; gardens for flowers, produce, and Jefferson's experiments in plant breeding; plus tobacco fields and mixed crops. Cabins for field slaves were located further from the mansion.



After Jefferson's death, his daughter Martha Jefferson Randolph sold the property. After other owners, in 1834 it was bought by Uriah P. Levy, a commodore in the U.S. Navy, who admired Jefferson and spent his own money to preserve the property. His nephew Jefferson Monroe Levy took over the property in 1879; he also invested considerable money to restore and preserve it. He held it until 1923, when he sold it to the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, which operates it as a house museum and educational institution. It has been designated a National Historic Landmark. In 1987, Monticello and the nearby University of Virginia, also designed by Jefferson, were together designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

[<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monticello>]

