

Age of Jefferson  
February 3-6-8, 2006

# THE FOUNDERS' REPUBLIC:

## Things You Can Tell About Jefferson and the Founders Just by Looking Around Monticello

- I. Monticello as Roman temple: Conspicuous consumption or public edification?
  - a. SLIDE: Jefferson profile, old and new Monticello views
- A. The Founders' classical tastes in architecture: a "Palladian" style that (they hoped) reflected both their cultural & political values.
  - 1. Models of Greek and Roman temples became defining style of public architecture in U.S.
  - 2. Source of classical design ideas: Andrea Palladio and the *Four Books of Architecture*
    - a. SLIDE: Palladio & his book, examples of Palladian architecture
  - 3. Aspects of the Palladian style that appealed to Founders: geometric shapes, symmetry, smooth & simple lines
- B. The Founders' classical role models
  - 1. Self-image as like the lawgivers of old: Publius, etc.
  - 2. Jefferson's epitaph
    - a. Slide: Jefferson's grave
- C. Classical conspicuous consumption and Jefferson's spending habits
  - a. Slides: Monticello photo, painting, plus view
  - b. Slides: Hotel de Salm, Pantheon, UVA/Jeff. Mem.

- c. Slide: obelisk clock
- d. Slide: parlor
- e. Slides: guest-room and unused dome room
- f. SLIDE: Lottery ticket and estate sale ad

## II. Monticello as a monument to the American Republic.

- a. Slides: Entry hall, details with TJ, AH busts, then Great Clock  
(explained below)
- b. Slide: Kneeling woman, Lewis, Mandan Buffalo robe, Missouri River  
Indian profiles, young Sac chief, Jackson, view of New Orleans
- c. Slide: Tea Room and busts
- d. Slide: Declaration print & engraving

## III. Monticello as a monument to the Enlightenment: Jefferson's 3 Greatest Men

- a. Slide: Bacon, Newton, Locke

B. Francis Bacon, the *Novum Organum*, and the rise of the scientific method.

C. Sir Isaac Newton and the implementation of the scientific method

- 1. Belief in progress and power of new scientific truths to improve human life;  
passion for improvement in all areas.
- 2. “Nature” gets a facelift.
- 3. Natural law: Newtonian mechanics as a metaphor for government and society.

D. John Locke’s “liberalism” and the political Enlightenment.

## IV. Practicing the Enlightenment: Science, Religion, and the Founders (mostly Jefferson)

A. When Science in Fashion: Jefferson & Founders as omniscient *philosophes*.

1. Jefferson as scientist, inventor, designer, entrepreneur.
  2. Science as a genteel hobby: The American Philosophical Society.
    - a. Slide: APS & Rittenhouse
    - b. Slide: Scientific instruments
    - c. Slide: Cabinet (+ bedroom and link to floorplan)
  3. The “philosophe” syndrome: cataloging all knowledge in your spare time.
  4. Science as "rational amusement": Charles Willson Peale's museum
    - a. Slide: Peale, family, Rubens, ticket
    - b. Slide: Disinterment
    - c. Slide: Mammoth schematic, advertisement
  5. Size matters: America as a laboratory, controversies over results of same.  
Jefferson's attack on Buffon's theory of degeneration
  6. Jefferson and Technology: science or gadgetry?
    - a. Slides: Office equipment (lap desk, copying press, pantograph- an instrument for copying a plane figure to a desired scale, consisting of styluses for tracing and copying mounted on four jointed rods in the form of a parallelogram with extended sides), polygraph.
- B. The Gospel According to Thomas: Jefferson, Enlightenment, and Religion
1. Relative secularism of the early United States, compared to later.
  2. Deism and unitarianism of many or most of the Founders.
  3. Jefferson’s religion: VA Statute for Religious Freedom, “Jefferson Bible”
    - a. SLIDE: Jefferson Bible original title page, link to others