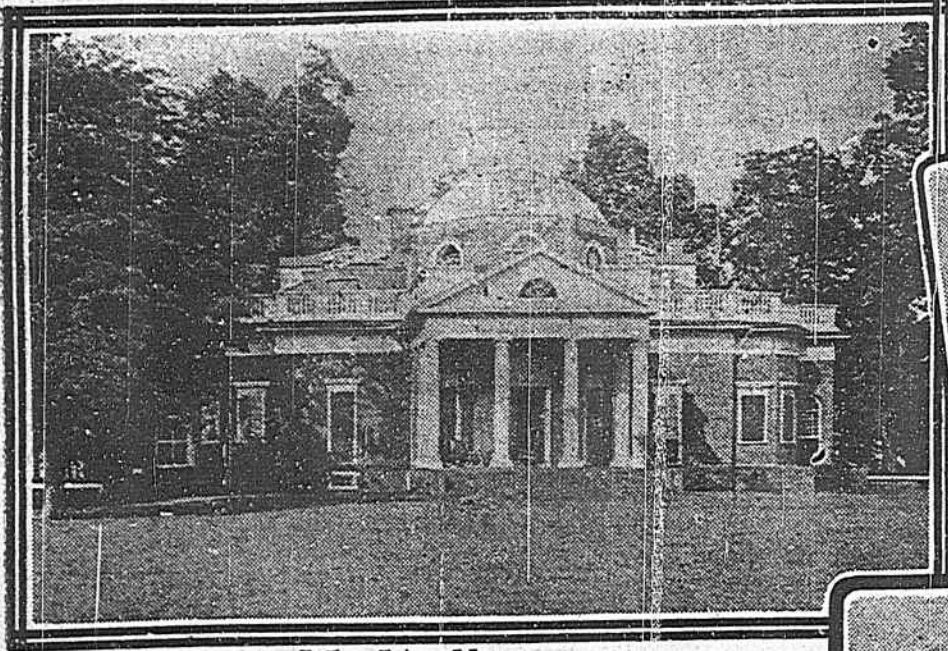


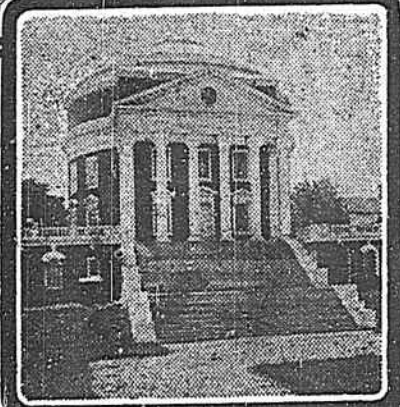
# THOMAS JEFFERSON ARCHITECT



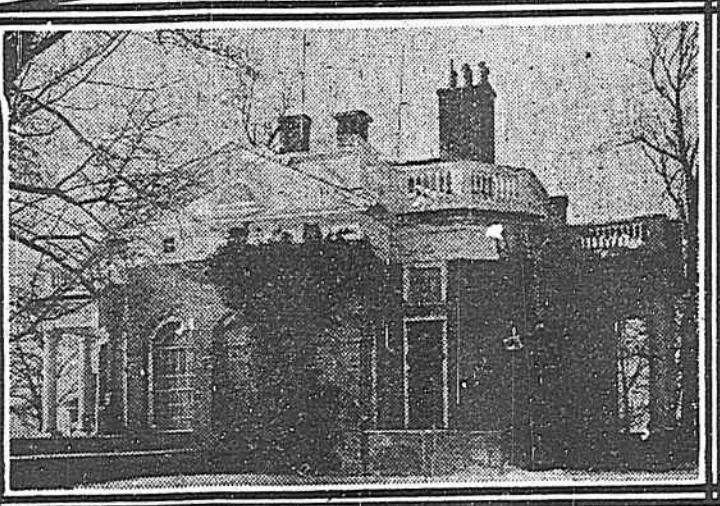
Monticello



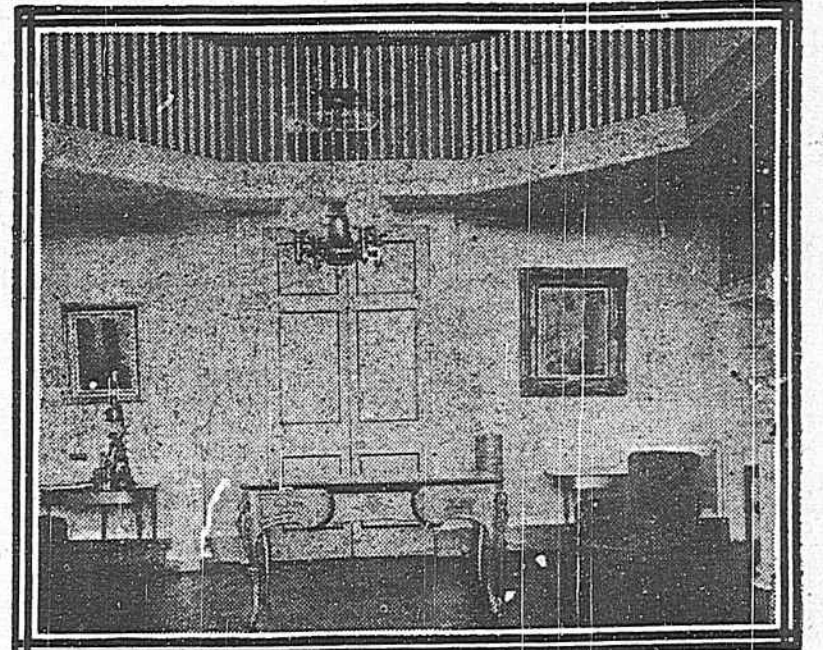
The University of Virginia



Rotunda of the University



Side View of the Mansion at Monticello



The Great Hall at Monticello

Each recurring Fourth of July finds a grateful republic doing fit honor to the memory of Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence. And each successive holiday finds our public speakers and school teachers, toast masters and orators of the day extolling not merely the authorship of the declaration but other varied accomplishments of our most versatile statesman. He is praised as a President of the United States, as the founder of a great political party, as a diplomatist who aided in winning foreign sympathy for the young republic, as a champion of religious liberty and as the founder of the University of Virginia—a truly model seat of learning.

Yet with singular unanimity these Fourth of July orators overlook one of Jefferson's most notable accomplishments and one in which he took perhaps greater pride than in any other. In consequence of this oversight there are probably few persons who, lest they have had opportunity for a careful study of his biography, are aware that Thomas Jefferson was an architect. Not merely a theoretical architect, mind you, but a practical exponent of the profession, who demonstrated by actual achievement that he possessed no mean ability in this sphere.

Architecture was not a mere hobby with Thomas Jefferson in the sense that golf is the hobby of the present occupant of the white House or that natural history, in one form or another was with his strenuous predecessor. On the contrary he applied himself to the art seriously and turned the results of this application to practical account. It would seem as though there must have been something in the air during the period when Jefferson lived, that turned men's minds to architecture as a field of endeavor. A number of the leaders of the period, particularly in the State of Virginia, "Mother of Presidents," dabbled in architecture, although none of them attained Jefferson's eminence in the pursuit as judged by the evidence which has come down to the present generation.

George Washington, himself, although the fact has not been exploited as has been his work as a surveyor, or, was an architect of no mean ability and several of the historic homes of the Washington family and its connections were constructed wholly or in part from his designs, either during the life time of our first President or after his death.

Not only was Jefferson a practical architect, but buildings were erected in accordance with his plans,—in many instances under his personal supervision and direction,—and a number of these buildings stand today as man who was responsible for their creation. If we may digress a moment it may be noted that this preservation of the fruits of Jefferson's architectural genius is the more welcome because of other monuments to the author of the declaration of Independence the country has all too few. Even the monument over his grave, located on the wooded hillside in Virginia that he loved so well is a simple shaft. This was in accord with his wishes and here again his architectural instinct manifested itself for Jefferson himself gave explicit instructions as to the type of memorial to be reared over his last resting place and composed himself the inscription which was chiseled thereon.

From an architectural standpoint the most notable products of Jefferson's skill as an architect are located in the highlands of Albemarle, that picturesque section of old Virginia in and around the quaint little city of Charlottesville—a favored region which held in the affections of our third President the place that Mount Vernon occupied in the heart of George Washington. Here is located Monticello, the stately and beautiful residence which Jefferson designed for himself and which happily endures today, apparently in the same state of preservation that it was when its original owner closed his eyes upon it—then as now, an ideal example of an American country seat. Here also are located the splendid classical buildings of the University of Virginia, of which Jefferson was the real

founder and the first head, and for which institution he not only designed the buildings but evolved every detail of the arrangements of the grounds.

But Jefferson's home county in the Old Dominion has by no means a monopoly of the heritage of architectural wealth which he left to the nation whose early pilot he was. He left this impress of his ideas in our Capitol Building at Washington—admittedly the most imposing governmental structure of its kind in the world; he helped plan the capital city, the symmetrical arrangement of whose streets and avenues has served as a model for the world's newer seats of government such as those of Canada and Australia; and most interesting, of all, perhaps, his architectural influence is manifest in the plan of the White House which, as restored during the Roosevelt administration in accordance with the original drawings gives conspicuous place to features such as the terraces which are plainly "borrowed" from the Jeffersonian masterpiece, Monticello.

In most of his architectural work Jefferson leaned most pronouncedly to the classical. Some of the buildings which he designed for his particular hobby—the University of Virginia, in effect all but copies of famous Grecian structures. This tendency evidences the fact that in his allegiance to architecture, as in all else, Jefferson was a deep student. Possibly too, Jefferson's travels in Europe and his residence in France as

a commissioner of the new Republic of the Western Hemisphere may have helped to mould his architectural ideals in this direction. And yet it may be of interest to struggling young architects and others that the author of the Declaration of Independence never believed in the idea of Americans going to Europe for an education. He once wrote: "It appears to me that an American coming to Europe for an education loses in his knowledge, in his morals, in his health, in his habits and in his happiness."

Jefferson's love of the classics manifested itself when he was quite a young boy. He repeatedly declared that if he were left to decide between the pleasure derived from the classical education which his father had given him and the large estate which he inherited he would have decided in favor of the former. When in college, which course he began at the age of seventeen, he read the most difficult Latin and Greek authors with facility. As a young man he began the study of architecture both practically and as a science, dividing his leisure between this pursuit and his beloved violin.

It was by no means strange that Jefferson's best architectural talent should have been called up in designing Monticello, for in the role of a lover-husband fashioned it as the ideal abode for himself and the beautiful and wealthy bride whom he had married at the age of twenty-nine. Jefferson alike to George Washington

married a widow of means, although he was himself very wealthy by inheritance, having before marriage an income of about \$5,000 a year—an immense sum in those days. Jefferson at the time of his marriage was the owner of an estate of 5,000 acres and his wife brought to him as her dowry no less than 40,000 acres, so that with such a baronial estate it was indeed fitting that he should design an imposing manor house to occupy Little Mountain, the swell of land on the estate which was chosen as a site and which commanded a magnificent view of a panorama that embraced woodland and pasture.

Jefferson had chosen the site for his home while yet a student, so that he had years of thought to give to the manor house which he ultimately designed and erected on the ten acre tract crowning the 600-foot hill which had long since caught his fancy. The floor plan which he evolved is suggestive of a gigantic letter E with the wings opening westward. To the north and south were placed the walks or promenades, supported by masonry structures containing servants' quarters and storage rooms and it is these "terraces" or colonades which we see duplicated in the restored Presidential Mansion at Washington. The exterior of Monticello Mansion is in the Doric order of Roman architecture, but the interior is in the Ionic style, the most impressive feature of the interior being the great hall, thirty feet square, which extends to the full height of

the building with a music gallery under the ceiling.

Although no one can question the ability of Jefferson as an architect, it makes us shudder to think what would have happened had he been confronted by modern conditions when dwellings are "run up" in a few weeks or a few months at most. The mansion at Monticello was under construction for 52 years. Work was commenced in 1770, two years before Jefferson was married, and it dragged along, with frequent changes in the plans, until 1802, when Jefferson was President of the United States. However if Jefferson was a slow-going architect, no person can say that he was an economical one for according to the account books which the architect-builder kept with that methodical care for which he was famous, the house involved an actual monetary outlay of only \$7,200. Of course, the work was done by slaves and most of the material was obtained on the estate. Bricks were made on the site by the slaves (of which Jefferson had several hundred, although he was always opposed to slavery and made attempts to abolish it) and the Sage of Monticello even established on the estate a nail-factory where every nail used in the construction of the building was forged.

Next to Monticello the classic buildings of the University of Virginia represent the most interesting and most important achievements of Thomas Jefferson, architect. The forerunner of the University of Virginia, which was, by the way, the first university established in the New World, was authorized by the State Legislature of Virginia in 1803, the year following the completion of Monticello. However no headway was made with the project until March, 1814, when Jefferson, the real head and founder of the institution in its ultimate form, was elected to the board of directors.

Jefferson threw himself into the project heart and soul. He designed the first building and laid its cornerstone and later formulated the whole architectural scheme of the university which is one of the most beautiful in the United States and probably in

the whole world. Jefferson's plan for the educational system of the university was, from the outset, an elastic one that would permit expansion in accordance with the advance of thought and the extension of knowledge and so likewise the architectural plan which he formulated for "the child of his old age" as the university has been called, was likewise designed to provide an arrangement and grouping of buildings, the symmetry of which would not be affected by any additions that would have to be made in later years. The scheme was worked out just as he foresaw and the newer buildings are in perfect harmony with those designed by Jefferson.

In his preparation of designs for the university buildings, Jefferson received much of his inspiration from the historic designs of Palladio and in his adaptation of these he proved himself an artist as well as an architect. The arrangement on the buildings has been compared to that of an old Italian monastery. The original group, planned and built under Jefferson's personal supervision, consists of four parallel rows of structures and at one end stands the Pantheon-like rotunda. Many of the buildings are replicas of historic buildings of ancient times. The students' quarters on each side of the quadrangle are reproductions of Roman villas and are so designed that each student has a separate outside entrance to his room.

The replica of the Pantheon, above mentioned, is about one-third the size of its Grecian model. It is used as a library and in the rotunda are many interesting relics of Jefferson, including communications written during the closing years of his life and which attest, as for instance, by the setting down of specifications as to the dimensions of the monument to be erected over his grave,—that the architectural bent was strong in this remarkable man up to the very last days of his life.

President Taft says he is going to return to the practice of law when he leaves the presidency. Ambitious periodicals please note.

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The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, said:

It is a mean thing to go up to heaven while your family go to the poorhouse. When they are out at the elbows the thought of your splendid robe in Heaven will not keep them warm. The minister may preach a splendid sermon over your remains, and the quartette may sing like four angels aighted in the organ loft, but your death will be a swindle.

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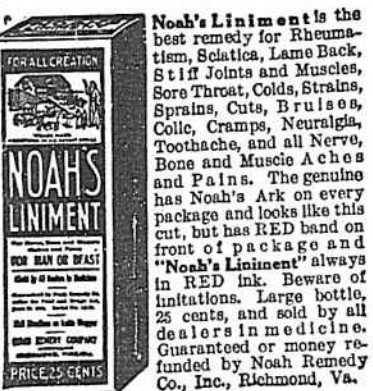
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