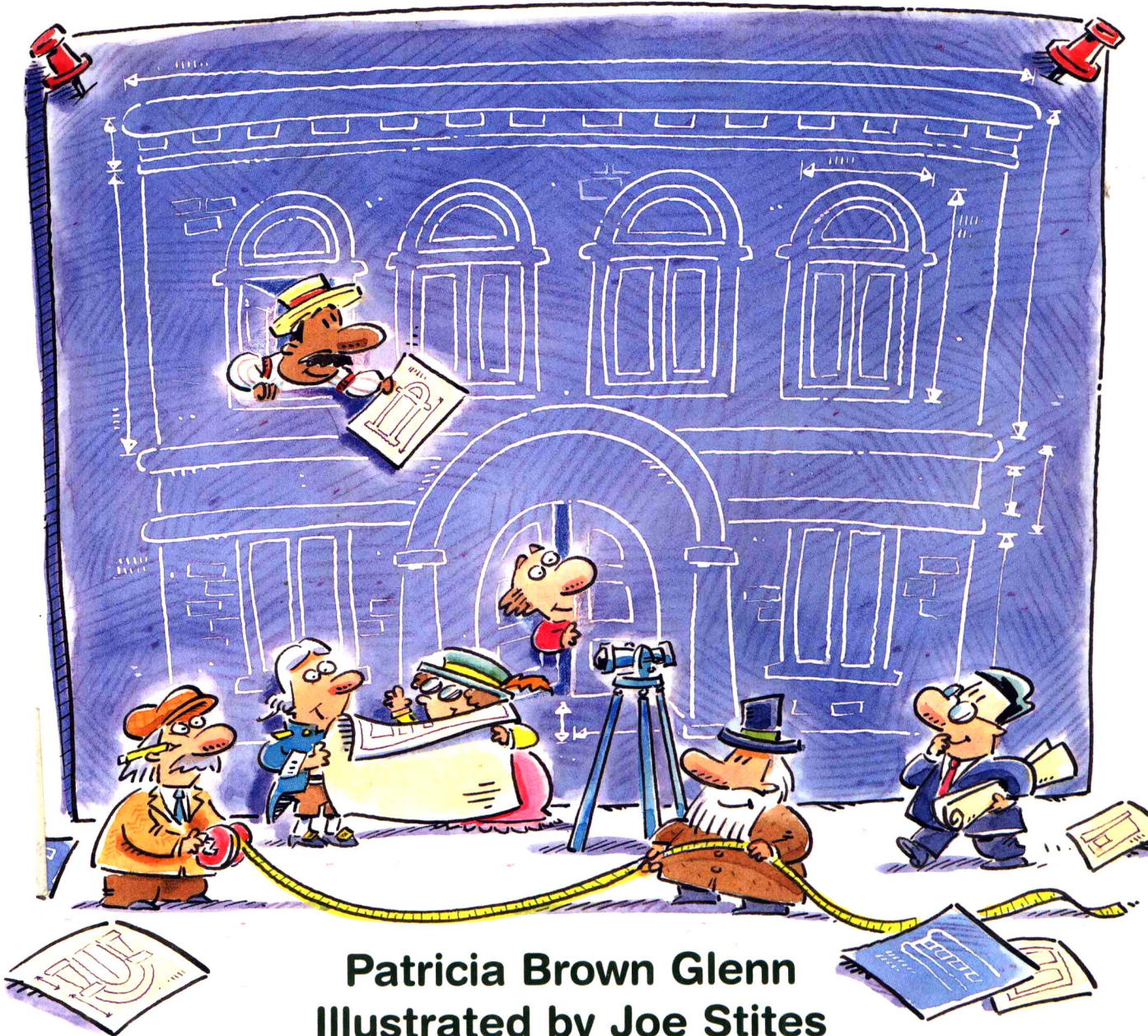


Discover

America's Favorite Architects



Patricia Brown Glenn
Illustrated by Joe Stites

DISCOVER AMERICA'S FAVORITE ARCHITECTS

PATRICIA BROWN GLENN

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOE STITES



PRESERVATION PRESS



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This book is for my parents, Virginia L. Brown and Maynard H. Brown, with great love, respect, and gratitude; and for my two children, Eliot and Ginny, with more love than I ever knew was possible.

This text is printed on acid-free paper.

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I sincerely appreciate the contemporary architects featured in *Discover America's Favorite Architects* for letting me in your door. The buildings you have designed bring an excitement and immediacy to these pages that may inspire the young architects of tomorrow.

I want to thank my friend, Mike Pronko. He'll never know how his unfailing confidence in me has helped me through this project.

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If I have failed to mention anyone who has helped me create this book, please excuse the omission; I am most certainly indebted to each and all of you.

Please read, reread, and pass along.

WHAT IS AN ARCHITECT?

Designer... Dreamer... A fulfiller of dreams... Practical... Far-sighted... Planner... Creative... Curious... Environmentalist... Historian.

There is no one way to describe all that is an architect. Perhaps the single trait that they have in common is to meet the needs of their commission while remaining true to themselves. This is not always easy or possible, and often involves compromise on the part of both the designer and the client.

Not all architects are innovators. Some are simply fine designers who use common sense and skill to create a building according to function, dimensions, site, and budget. Others are pioneers who, because of their race, religion, or gender, have braved entry into a field where for so many years they have been unwelcome. Their perseverance and ultimate success have made it possible for others to enter the profession of architecture with self respect.

There are those, who, with tremendous insight have used modern technology and industry to build some of our finest landmarks. They have used new materials and new ideas to formulate innovative styles and in the process changed our perceptions of what architecture is, should be, and can be. Others cannot turn their heads from the past and must rely upon the generations before them to show them the way. Their work is true and honest, good and familiar. There is room for them too.

Fortunately, there are those architects who have cared about our environment: our nation's park land and the beautification of our cities. They have looked ahead—beyond their own lifetimes—to ensure that our inheritance will include mountain ranges, virgin forests, clear waterfalls, rows of tree-lined streets, and city parks in which our children can play. To these designers, we owe a tremendous debt.

Each architect in this book has contributed to the American cityscape or landscape in a unique way. Some have designed residences; others monuments, museums, libraries, railroad stations, churches, parks, entire towns, and more. Each has left his or her signature on the canvas of our country's built environment. Many of our finest architects immigrated from Europe during World War II to escape Hitler, and found sanctuary at our colleges and universities as teachers. Their horrible misfortune has been our immeasurable gain.

This is necessarily an incomplete groups of architects; there are so many who have made contributions and whose greatness deserves recognition. But *Discover America's Favorite Architects* begins here; recognizing these 10 men and women first as individuals and then collectively for their contribution to American architecture. They are arranged in chronological order for easier understanding and to discover how deeply—remarkably in some cases—one has influenced the other or others as the case may be.

In as much as they are different, they share a strong sense of commitment, a powerful and urgent commitment to their ideals through their designs. It is this commitment in the end that distinguishes each architect here and makes our nation so unique, so beautiful, and so great.

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A great architect is not made by way of a brain nearly so much as he is made by way of a cultivated, enriched heart. It is the love of the thing he does that really qualifies him in the end.

And I believe the quality of love is the quality of great intelligence, great perception, deep feeling.

—Frank Lloyd Wright

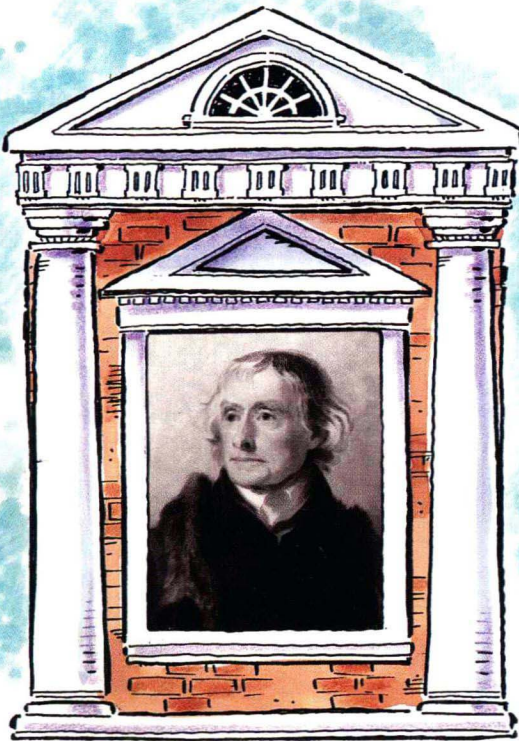
Address to Taliesin Fellowship, September 24, 1952

THOMAS JEFFERSON

(1743-1826)

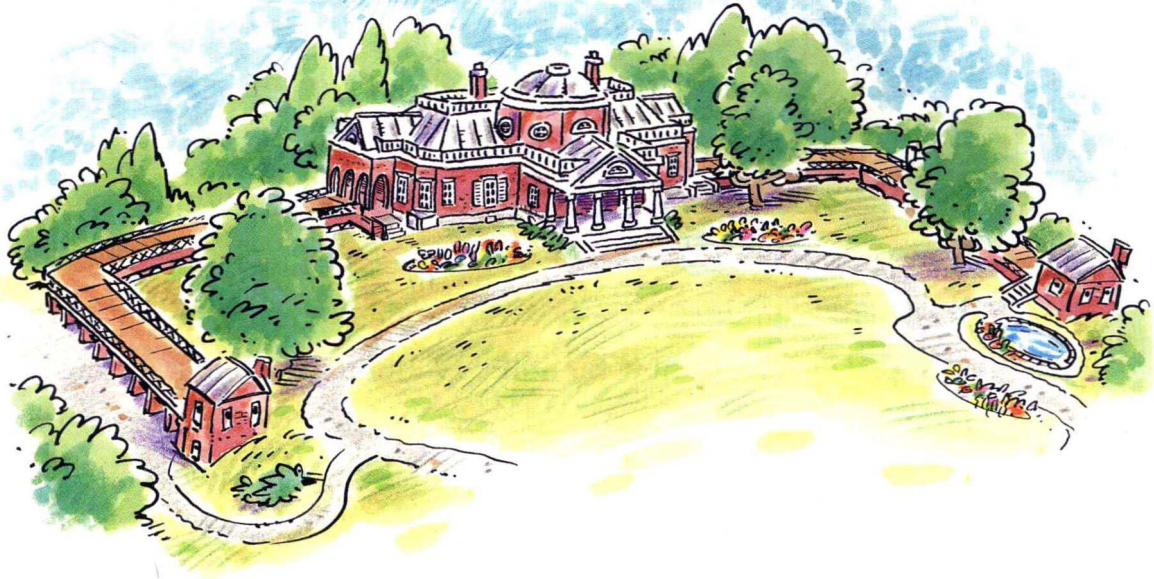
“Architecture is my delight, and putting up and pulling down, one of my favorite amusements.”

—Thomas Jefferson



It has been said that if Thomas Jefferson had not also been the primary author of the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Minister to France, President of the United States, and accomplished in so many different areas, he would have gained the reputation he so justly deserved as a great architect. His influence on architectural style in the early nineteenth century was significant, in his native state Virginia where most of his finest works are located, and across the nation.

His keen interest in Roman architecture helped him develop his own style of classicism—sometimes referred to as Jeffersonian but most often as Classical Revival—that presented itself in columns and porticos of churches, banks, schools, government buildings, and even houses. During Jefferson’s lifetime, architecture was not thought of as a profession but rather as a

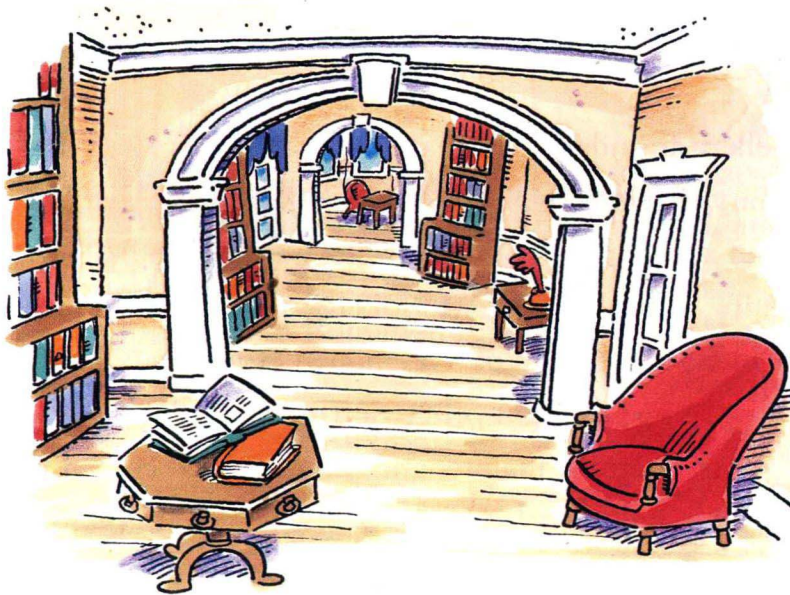


Overview of Monticello, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1768–1809.

hobby that educated gentlemen might pursue. It is all the more remarkable that Jefferson, as an amateur architect, was sought out time and again for designs, opinions, and even urban planning skills. His curiosity was boundless, his thirst for knowledge insatiable and his gifts to our country and our indebtedness to him immeasurable.

Jefferson received an excellent foundation in math and science at the College of William and Mary that was to aid him throughout his career. He became a lawyer and set up shop in a one-room brick house he built for himself on his family's estate. It was here, at Monticello, that he put down roots. The cottage stands today at one end of a U-shaped grouping balanced by an identical building that served as a law office on the other side. Inbetween are stables, servants' quarters, maintenance areas, and at center, the main house. In 1772, Jefferson and his bride, Martha Wayles Skelton, moved into the one room brick "honeymoon cottage" and lived there two years.

It is important to realize that Monticello, from the beginning, was a labor of love and the foundation of Jefferson's life with his wife, Martha. For him, it was a work in process, starting in 1768 and ending in 1809. The house was his passion, and it was here that he initially shows his great admiration of Andrea Palladio, the Venetian sixteenth-century Italian architect whose published works occupied a prominent place in Jefferson's library. In Jefferson's own words, "Palladio is the Bible." By letting Palladio guide him in the language of the ancient monuments, Jefferson was able to adapt classical designs that helped shape our new republic. Working with available local materials and craftsmen, the marble of ancient Rome was transformed into red brick with stuccoed columns and enriched moldings painted white to look like marble. In fact, because there were few men knowledgeable in the crafts needed to build Monticello, Jefferson trained them all: bricklayers, carpenters, stonecutters, cabinetmakers, and ironworkers. He was involved in every aspect of Monticello's production. In fact, Jefferson was often consulted by neighbors about their houses; Jefferson designed some, advised on others, and often lent out a workman or two to aid in construction.



In 1923, almost 100 years after Jefferson's death, The Thomas Jefferson Foundation bought and restored Monticello to its former glory.

A trip to France in the late 1780s to serve a term as U.S. minister, and then a prolonged absence from Monticello to carry out government responsibilities kept Jefferson from remodeling the house until 1796. The previous two-story mansion now had three stories and a marvelous portico with colossal columns. The ground floor was enlarged with the addition of a grand central hall, four additional rooms, and piazzas on either side. The crowning glory, however, was the dome seen from the west facade; it was built over the drawing room and borrowed from French and ancient architecture.

Jefferson loved gadgets and inventions and spared nothing to make Monticello more livable. A few examples are: a compass on the porch connected to a weathervane on the roof to tell the direction of the wind; double doors between rooms that opened and closed at the same time; and a dumb waiter in either side of the mantel that allowed an empty wine bottle to be lowered into the cellar on one side while a fresh bottle arose on the other! Stairways and passageways were of great concern to Jefferson, too, and he took pains to keep them as small and inconspicuous as possible. This, in particular, is one of Jefferson's design characteristics that is apparent in other houses he built.

Deeply in debt upon his death, Jefferson's beloved Monticello was sold as a part of the estate. In the end, with hardly a stick of furniture and a few



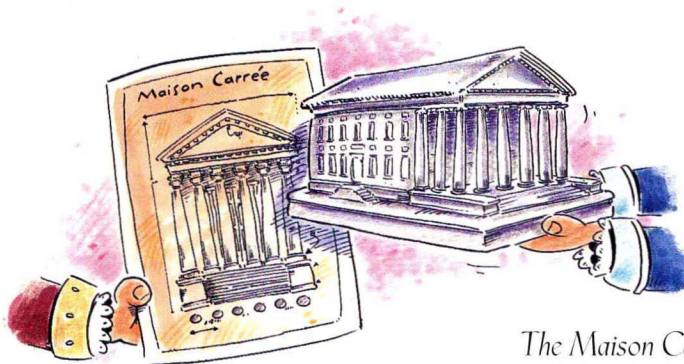
Monticello was nearly always full of friends and visitors. To make entertainment more pleasurable, Jefferson devised a "dumb waiter table," rectangular in shape, and containing many shelves, which was placed next to each person at the dinner table. All that the guest needed during the meal was immediately at hand thus servants were unnecessary. In this way it was assured that conversation among four people, the ideal number for a meal, was never interrupted.

curtains for privacy, his deep affection for his home was expressed this way: “All my wishes end where I hope my days will end, at Monticello.”

Jefferson went to France on a diplomatic assignment between 1784-1789. He lived in a beautiful home with large rooms, some oval in shape, many windows to let in the sun, and elegant classical detailing. He was enchanted with French art and architecture, and surrounded himself with important architects, artists, and thinkers of the day. Among them was the French architect, Charles Louise Clérissseau.

While in Paris, he received a commission to design the new Virginia State Capitol in Richmond. Jefferson felt certain that all three branches of government—executive, legislative, and judicial—should be housed together under one roof. He chose an unusual model for such an assignment: the ancient Maison Carrée at Nîmes. Together with Clérissseau, he prepared plans and submitted a plaster model of the Capitol which they sent across the ocean to America. The plan was simple; it showed a large rectangular space divided into halls and offices with windows cut into the walls for light.

Jefferson introduced the first reproduction of a classical temple for modern use with his Capitol design. Other master builders seized upon the idea, and soon



The Maison Carrée at Nîmes, France, 20 B.C., was the model for the Virginia Sate Capitol in Richmond, Virginia, 1785-1798.

the Roman (and later Greek) Revival style was evident everywhere throughout the states.

Jefferson returned from France a far more educated and capable architect. The success of the Richmond temple and news of his work on Monticello made him an authority in the eyes of many. It was for this reason that then U.S. President George Washington and his executive cabinet consulted with him about the new public buildings for Washington, D.C., the nation's capital on the Potomac River. Jefferson was asked to draw up specifications for a design contest for the President's House and the Capitol. James Hoban won the competition for the White House, and Dr. William Thornton was selected for the Capitol building. (Notice the influence of Jefferson in the Capitol dome!) Thornton was replaced by the British architect, Benjamin Henry Latrobe. Latrobe was appointed Surveyor of Public Buildings in 1803 by Jefferson, and remained in that post until 1818.

Pierre-Charles L'Enfant, a city planner from Paris, France, was given the task at this time of laying out the city of Washington. Modeling it after Louis XIV's Versailles, L'Enfant designed a basic plan made up of diagonals and circles. But L'Enfant was too difficult to work with and was dismissed. Thomas Jefferson took on the responsibility for finishing the plans for the new city on the river. He decided on the location of the Mall, the White House, and the Capitol on Jenkin's Hill. Without the organization of Thomas Jefferson at every level of design, Capitol Hill would not have the lovely setting we enjoy today.



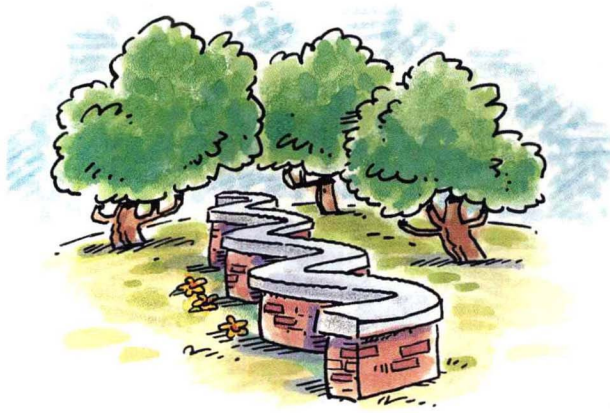
Although begun by Frenchman Pierre-Charles L'Enfant, the final design for the city of Washington was completed by Thomas Jefferson.



Marble capitals of columns from a building around the quadrangle at University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1817–1826.

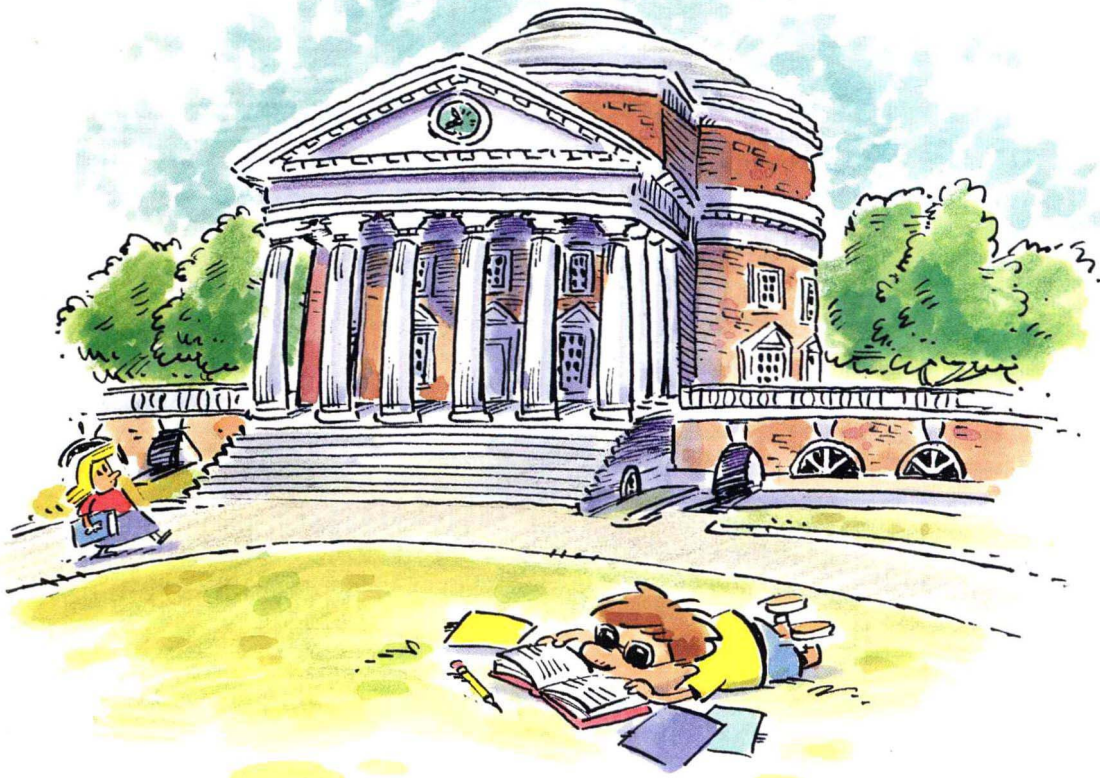
On October 6, 1817, when Jefferson was 74 years old, he laid the cornerstone for the University of Virginia. This was the greatest architectural achievement of his life, and in his opinion, his crowning personal achievement. Often referred to as Jefferson's university, the idea for the state university was his, too. He pushed the legislation through to secure land, designed and supervised its construction, planned the curriculum, hired the first faculty, was a member of the first board, and held the post as the first rector.

Jefferson's vision for the University of Virginia centered around what he called an "academical village," not just a single large building. He described



Serpentine garden walls at University of Virginia.

his concept this way: "a small and separate lodge for each professorship, with only a hall below for his class, and two chambers above for himself; joining these lodges by barracks for a certain portion of the students, opening into a covered way to give a dry communication between all the schools, the whole of these arranged around an open square."



The Rotunda on the University campus.

The campus was laid out with buildings to the east and west, bordering a giant green space that lead to a grand Rotunda rising above all on the north end. The south end provided an open view of the mountains and valleys of Virginia. Unusual serpentine brick walls and lovely gardens criss-crossed the backyards of the east and west lawns, while additional dormitory space was provided for students slightly further away on either side of the campus.

It was Jefferson's plan that each building be unique, but more importantly relate to a specific piece of ancient Roman architecture. In a letter to Dr. William Thornton, he wrote that these buildings ". . . shall be models of taste and good architecture, and of a variety of appearance, no two alike,



Poplar Forest, Bedford County, Virginia, 1806. Guests to Monticello literally overwhelmed Jefferson and caused him to seek some peace and quiet at Poplar Forest.

so as to serve as specimens for the architectural lecturer.” The orders in these structures, in various combinations include Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian to allow students the opportunity, first hand, to see quality works of architecture. The marble for the capitals was carved in Italy and imported because local stone and stone cutters proved inadequate.

The university’s Rotunda was perhaps the crowning achievement of the entire complex, and the influence of its design the most far-reaching. It was a perfect sphere crowned with a dome, and was based on the ancient Roman Pantheon, and measured half its size. Jefferson, however, divided the building into three floors while the real Pantheon was only one large room. There were laboratories in the basement, classrooms and a natural history museum