

Montpelier open for renovation

By CHRIS KAHN, The Associated Press
MONTPELIER STATION, VA — James Madison's ancestral home looks like it was struck by a tornado.

The south wing has crumbled onto the lawn in peach-colored heaps of brick and wood. The floors are peeled away, and the opulent mint-green wallpaper is exposed to the sun.

This is no disaster. The mess in Madison's back yard is part of a \$30 million home-improvement project that will remove two centuries of additions and return the 244-year-old mansion, called Montpelier, to the way it looked when the fourth president lived there.

"We want to bring his presence back," Montpelier Foundation President Michael Quinn said. "We want you to walk in the house and think he's still living in there."

Although visitors will have limited access to the mansion's interior until this summer, the estate will remain open daily throughout the restoration. Furnishings will be on display in a nearby education center; the gardens, old-growth forest, slave quarters and other sites on the estate will be fully accessible, and special tours will offer an inside look at the restoration progress and plans.

The restoration was begun partly because Madison's home, built on 2,700 acres of grassy hills and horse tracks about 90 miles southwest of Washington D.C., bears little resemblance to the way it looked when Dolley Madison sold it in 1844.

William duPont, a businessman who bought the house in 1901, buried many of the

original features as he converted Montpelier into the kind of country house that was popular at the time in wealthy neighborhoods along the East Coast.

The exterior walls were covered with plaster and mango paint. The library where Madison once pondered the Constitution was turned into a bedroom. The duPonts reused just about everything: Madison's doors and windows were pulled off their hinges and pounded into other rooms as the mansion more than doubled in size.

The result has left Montpelier in a poor state for historians, and it has long played second fiddle to Thomas Jefferson's carefully preserved mansion, Monticello, 25 miles away.

Montpelier officials have talked about restoring the home for years. It was the dying wish of its last resident, Marion duPont Scott, who turned the property over to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1983.

More than a decade after public tours began in 1987, researchers started to examine whether it was possible to restore the home



A digital rendering shows the mansion as it will appear when restoration is completed in 2008.

Courtesy of the Montpelier Foundation
Architectural Research Department and PartSense, Inc.

even though no original blueprints were thought to have been made. Supported by grants from the estate of philanthropist Paul Mellon, they peeled back wallpaper and plaster in hundreds of places, locating lost doorways and windows through changes in the brick pattern and grooves left in the wall.

"It takes a certain kind of sickness to want to do this," chuckled Mark Wenger, an architectural historian who is putting together an 1820s-era blueprint of the house.

Even as earth movers started knocking down walls of the first duPont rooms in late March, staff historians were making new discoveries.

In the dusty chamber that was once Madison's dining room, Quinn gasped with excitement as archaeologist Alfredo Maul showed him strips of wood taken from another room that were once part of an unknown staircase. Placed side-by-side, chocolate-colored paint marked the steps.

"Oh my God, you can actually see where the stairs were," Quinn said.

"Some of the original nails are still there, see?" Maul replied.

Outside, men in hardhats were busy picking away at the house with chisels, power saws and hammers. One worker peeked out of a third-story window before returning with a wheelbarrow and dumping a load of debris over the edge. Another waded through the piles of discarded bricks, tapping them with a steel ax to remove the mortar.

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ACCESS: James Madison's Virginia estate, called Montpelier, will remain open daily (9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.) while reconstruction takes place, but for the next few months, only one or two rooms in the mansion will be accessible. Other parts of the 2,750-acre estate will remain open. Visitors will also be offered a special "Restoration Tour" that includes a slide show and "insider briefings" explaining the restoration plan.

MONTPELIER EDUCATION CENTER: Furniture and other items from the mansion will be on display in the Montpelier Education Center, behind the mansion.

ARCHAEOLOGY SITES: An outdoor kitchen, slave quarter and Madison family cemetery are among "archaeology sites" open to visitors.

TOURS: These guided tours are held weekends through Oct. 31, with the cost included in the regular price of admission.

- ▶ "The Montpelier Enslaved Community Tour," Saturdays, 11 a.m.
- ▶ "A Century Ago: the duPont Estate Tour," Saturdays, 2 p.m.

LOCATION: 11407 Constitution Highway, Montpelier Station, Va., on Route 20, four miles past the town of Orange. (Note the town of Montpelier, Va., on Route 33 near Richmond, is not the Madison estate.)

ADMISSION: Adults, \$11; children 6 to 14, \$6.

CONTACT: Call (540) 672-2728 or www.montpelier.org.

Letter from the Society President

Dear Cousins,

The big news is that this is our second newsletter, so you can read how organized our family association is becoming. I hope you will respond by sending 2004 dues along with an updated genealogy. Our registrar, Ruth Lewis, has provided the membership application, which is an easy format for tracing your line to a Madison ancestor. We have so many names in our roster with no documentation of lineage. If you have trouble filling out this form, bring what information you have to our next family reunion, which is to be held at Montpelier June 17 and 18, 2005. We will have experts to lead you through the genealogy process.

Montpelier will be an especially exciting place to visit next year, as you will see it in transition from a 20th century house to the house in which James Madison lived. It will be 60% smaller than at the last reunion and entirely authentic. The house will not be complete in 2005 but the work in progress is fascinating from both an architectural and historic point of view.

In anticipation of the 2008 reopening, The National Society of Madison Family Descendants is beginning a campaign to purchase the flat silver, which has been on loan and is on exhibit throughout the renovation. Please read carefully how you can help secure this set of silver so it can stay at Montpelier for all time.

Please let us know any family news that you would like to include in our next newsletter. Let us know of any address changes and family additions, and please plan to attend the 2005 reunion at Montpelier – James Madison's lifelong home.

Best Wishes,

Ann B. Thornton, President

The Madison's Silver Flatware & Serving Pieces

The National Society of Madison Family Descendants is beginning a campaign to purchase the flat silver that is currently on loan at Montpelier. We would like to present the silver as our gift to Montpelier as part of the 2008 reopening of James Madison's home.

The Madison's original sterling table settings, in the "Fiddle Thread" pattern, were made by Gerard Duru (working dates, 1783-1806) in Paris c 1789. The original set was sent to the Madisons by James Monroe, probably between 1804-06, while he was in Paris as Minister to France. Dolly later had the "M" engraved on the set.

Several examples of the original service are now owned by the Smithsonian Institution.

In 2001, James Robinson, Inc., NY, recreated eight place settings of the "European-sized" set for James Madison's Montpelier's celebration of the 250th anniversary of the President's birth. They also made a large serving (meat) fork and serving spoon for us. There are 32 pieces in this set, which has been on loan to us since March of 2001.

James Robinson, Inc. is a fine reproducer of sterling silver. They have offered us the entire service for \$9,000.00. Following is a listing of the cost for individual pieces currently at Montpelier:

Eight Spoons @ \$221.00 ea
Eight Forks @ \$237.00 ea
Eight Knives @ \$128.00 ea
Three Serving Forks @ \$365.00 ea
Three Serving Spoons @ \$354.00 ea
One Soup Ladle @ \$2,000.00
One Sugar Tongs @ \$110.00

Please help us with this purchase by including any amount you would like to contribute towards this purchase with your dues payment. We have provided a space to list your contribution on the dues coupon. Thank you in advance for your generosity.



Renovation

(continued from page 1)

By mid-June, the demolition crew will remove about 60 percent of the house, including elaborate drawing rooms with silk-paneled walls and bronze chandeliers where the duPonts had drinks and entertained friends around their Steinway piano.

Montpelier workers will then start renovating the interior, returning windows to the right location and repairing the brick.

Artifacts from the duPont era will be saved and stored, Maul said, and eventually displayed in a museum exhibit at Montpelier.

Historic buildings regularly undergo some kind of renovation. But it's rare to see historic buildings demolished on this scale, said William Beiswanger, Monticello's restoration director, who was initially skeptical that Montpelier's plan would improve the house.

"Generally, the notion is that you don't rip off additions to buildings," Beiswanger said.

But Beiswanger changed his opinion when Montpelier researchers gathered enough data to turn an awkward country mansion into an accurate representation of Madison's estate.

When the renovation is finished in 2007, Montpelier officials hope to use the house as a final piece in transforming the estate into a center for studies on the Constitution. Montpelier began holding educational retreats for middle and high school teachers last year.

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GENEALOGY FACT & FICTION

By R. James Thornton

James Madison's mother, Nelly Conway, is often noted as Eleanor Rose Conway. It is my opinion as well as our Madison genealogist, Iris Eaton, that just plain Nelly is correct. Eleanor Rose appears to have been invented to add a little prestige. According to Iris, she always signed as Nelly, and she is cited as Nelly in the President's bubble chart, the final authority. There are three important rules in genealogy, document, document and document. Accuracy is of the utmost importance as you fill out the enclosed application.



By Michael Quinn, President
The Montpelier Foundation

why Restore?

The decision to restore the Montpelier mansion to its Madison-era condition has been years in the making, and reflects many reasons. The overriding reason is to benefit the American nation and its people. With restoration, Montpelier will become a place of learning that links the ideas of James Madison with Americans today. Our mission will be focused on the U.S. Constitution, Madison's greatest legacy.

The restored mansion will make the presence of James Madison tangible and engaging at Montpelier. As a setting where Mr. Madison can be encountered, Montpelier will also be a setting where his accomplishments, his ideas about things such as individual rights and religious freedom, and his role in creating our nation's government will be communicated with all who visit. Visiting Montpelier will be the best, most appropriate, and most personal setting for discovering Mr. Madison, and will provide a window into the founding of our nation.

Our decision to restore the mansion reflects lessons learned in presenting it to the public for more than 15 years. While the home holds many facets of fascinating history, that history had been so overlaid by additions that few visitors were able to grasp the historical significance of what they were seeing. Architectural complexity masked the presence of the Madisons. Visitors spent their time sorting out the dates of windows, of walls, of the sequence of changes and additions. This left too little time for considering the unique history of Montpelier as the home of James Madison — the only place in the nation that reflects his personality, his interests, and his accomplishments.

Our 18-month feasibility investigation concluded that the Madison home is intact. We have William duPont, Sr., to thank for this, as he treated the historic core of the home with a great deal of respect even as he more than doubled its size in 1901.

A key factor in the decision to restore was the wish of Marion duPont Scott, who gave Montpelier to the National Trust so it would be restored. Mrs. Scott felt so strongly about restoring the home that she spelled out her desires in her will. After consulting with the living adult members of the family, the Foundation received their

support for the restoration, in keeping with Mrs. Scott's wishes.

In deciding to restore the mansion, the Montpelier Foundation also decided to tell the duPont chapter of Montpelier's history. William duPont and his wife Annie, were important stewards of Montpelier. His daughter, Marion, established Montpelier as a leading equestrian center. At the same time that we are restoring the mansion, we will be designing and building a museum to be known as the William duPont Gallery. Montpelier will continue to host the Montpelier Hunt Races each November, a Virginia tradition established by Marion duPont Scott and her brother William.

With the restoration, and with the continuing impact of the Center for the Constitution, Montpelier will become first and foremost an educational institution. It will be a place where visitors, educators and others can learn about James Madison and his ideals for the American nation and its government. Our goal is to enhance the understanding and the commitment of all Americans to the principles of the U.S. Constitution, the nation's founding charter.

We are grateful to all of those whose generous support has made possible this restoration and this new vision for James Madison's Montpelier.

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NATIONAL SOCIETY OF MADISON FAMILY DESCENDANTS

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Family Website

The National Society of Madison Family Descendants is in the process of creating a wonderful website which we plan to have operational before Thanksgiving. Our website address will be www.jamesmadisonfamily.com. While the main purpose of the website will be to improve our ability to communicate with our family members, it will also allow us to collect and publish the history, traditions and achievements of past and present members of our family. The website will provide a link with Montpelier and keep us abreast of the collection and recording of the records, documents, and material items relating to the Colonial and Federal periods of the Madison Family. Over time, it is our goal to create a gallery of portraits of our ancestors, their homes, and physical surroundings where possible. It is our hope that our website will strengthen the bonds of friendship of the family of President James Madison and encourage young members to care about our worthy heritage. It will also encourage financial assistance for Montpelier and similar organizations which celebrate the life and work of the fourth President.

Calendar of Events

2004

NOVEMBER 6 – Montpelier Hunt Races: 70th running. Jack Russell Terrier races, flat track and steeplechase races, including the Noel Laing Stakes and the Madison Plate, make for a special day in the country. Gates open at 9:30 a.m., post time 1:00 p.m. For ticketing information and details on corporate and hospitality packages: 540-672-0027.

NOVEMBER 11 – Veteran's Day at Montpelier: Free admission for those who have served, or are serving, in the Armed Forces of the United States. For information: 540-672-2728 ext 104.

2005

APRIL 30-MAY 1 – Montpelier Wine Festival

JUNE 17-18 – Madison Family Reunion

JULY 21-24 – Orange County Fair

OCTOBER 1-2 – Fall Fiber Festival

NOVEMBER 5 – Montpelier Hunt Races

2004 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Name _____ Spouse _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Children age 18 & Under _____

Phone numbers: home () _____ work () _____ cell () _____

Email _____

Please check interests you would be willing to contribute time: () Newsletter () 2005 Reunion () Membership () Genealogy

Type of Membership: Single () \$25.00 Family () \$35.00 per household Lifetime () \$500.00

I would like to contribute \$_____ toward the purchase of the Madison Family Silver.

Make checks payable to: National Society Madison Family Descendants

Please mail to: Iris Eaton, Treasurer, 3807 Olympia Dr., Houston, TX 77019-3031

SAVE THE DATE — Madison Family Reunion JUNE 17-18, 2005

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The National Society of Madison Family Descendants
Ann B. Thornton, President
139 East 66th Street
New York, NY 10021

NATIONAL SOCIETY of MADISON FAMILY DESCENDANTS

Membership Application

Please fill out this form as completely as possible

And include proofs of relationships

1) I _____

Born on _____ Married on _____ at _____

Married to _____ Born on _____ at _____

Died / divorced on _____ at _____

Married on _____ at _____ to _____

Born on _____ at _____

Proof _____

2) The said _____ Was the Child of _____

Born on _____ at _____ Died at _____ on _____

And his (first or) wife _____ Born on _____ at _____

Died at _____ on _____ Married on _____ at _____

Proof _____

3) The said _____ Was the Child of _____

Born on _____ at _____ Died at _____ on _____

And his (first or) wife _____ Born on _____ at _____

Died at _____ on _____ Married on _____ at _____

Proof _____

4) The said _____ Was the Child of _____

Born on _____ at _____ Died at _____ on _____

And his (first or) wife _____ Born on _____ at _____

Died at _____ on _____ Married on _____ at _____

Proof _____

5) The said _____ Was the Child of _____

Born on _____ at _____ Died at _____ on _____

And his (first or) wife _____ Born on _____ at _____

Died at _____ on _____ Married on _____ at _____

Proof _____

6) The said _____ Was the Child of _____

Born on _____ at _____ Died at _____ on _____

And his (first or) wife _____ Born on _____ at _____

Died at _____ on _____ Married on _____ at _____

Proof _____

7) The said _____ Was the Child of _____

Born on _____ at _____ Died at _____ on _____

And his (first or) wife _____ Born on _____ at _____

Died at _____ on _____ Married on _____ at _____

Proof _____

8) The said _____ Was the Child of _____
Born on _____ at _____ Died at _____ on _____
And his (first or ___) wife _____ Born on _____ at _____
Died at _____ on _____ Married on _____ at _____
Proof _____

9) The said _____ Was the Child of _____
Born on _____ at _____ Died at _____ on _____
And his (first or ___) wife _____ Born on _____ at _____
Died at _____ on _____ Married on _____ at _____
Proof _____

10) The said _____ Was the Child of _____
Born on _____ at _____ Died at _____ on _____
And his (first or ___) wife _____ Born on _____ at _____
Died at _____ on _____ Married on _____ at _____
Proof _____

I HEREBY STATE THAT I AM A DIRECT LINEAL DESCENDANT FROM _____.
THE ABOVE DATA IS TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

Name _____ Spouse Name _____
Address _____ City _____ St _____ Zip _____
Telephone (H) _____ (W) _____ (M) _____
Email _____ Occupation _____
Hobbies or Interests _____

Membership Type: () Single \$25.00 per year
() Family \$35.00 per year
() Life \$500.00 per year

All memberships are provisional until proof of lineage has been submitted and accepted by the Registrar. Membership is open to all who can show acceptable proof that they have a blood line to any lateral or collateral American ancestor of President James Madison, paternal or maternal, who was living in this country after 1607.

Please send this form, the dues coupon and your payment to:

Iris Eaton
3807 Olympia Drive
Houston, TX 77019-3031