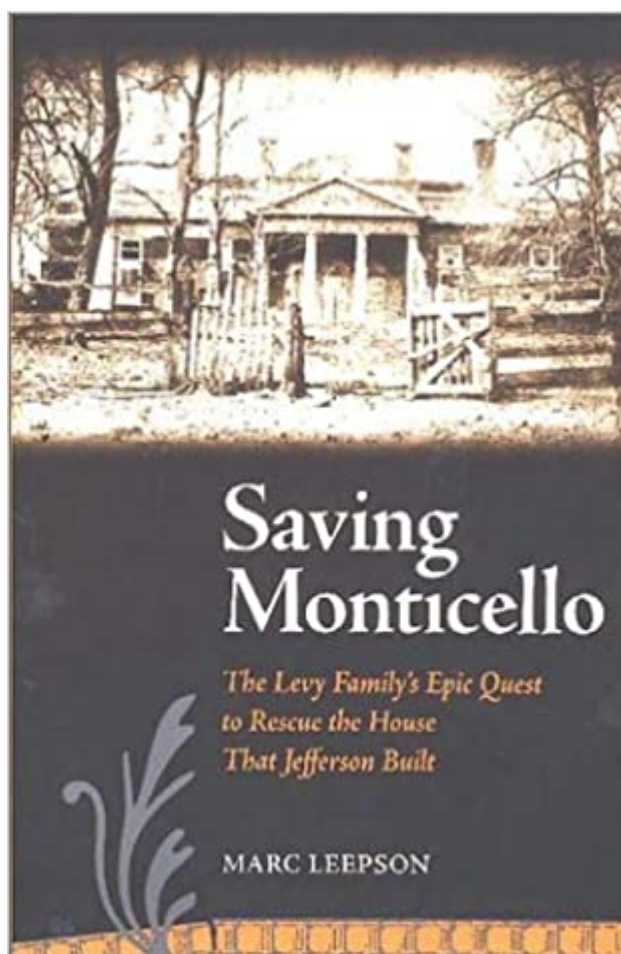


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Saving Monticello: The Levy Family's Epic Quest To Rescue The House That Jefferson Built



Synopsis

How a Jewish navy veteran and his descendants saved one of America's most recognizable architectural landmarks

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this excellent account of Monticello's ownership after Thomas Jefferson's death, Leepson, who has written for the New York Times, Preservation and Smithsonian, turns the spotlight on a family that contributed to the preservation of history but heretofore went unnoticed. When Jefferson died in 1826 his enormous debt (even by today's standards) forced his heirs to sell the beloved estate. Unfortunately, James Turner Barclay, a Charlottesville, Va., druggist who paid \$7,000 for it, let the house decline during the few years he owned it. In 1834 the house was purchased by U.S. Navy Lieutenant Uriah Phillips Levy, a wealthy, bold, passionate admirer of Jefferson who quickly poured money into its repair. Thus began this Jewish-American family's nearly 90-year proprietorship of Monticello. After being briefly appropriated by the Confederacy during the Civil War, it again landed in the hands of a Levy, Uriah's nephew Jefferson Levy. Monticello became a kind of surrogate child for this extremely successful, unmarried businessman and sometime politician. When the patriotic New York socialite Maud Littleton began her campaign to make Monticello a government-owned shrine in 1911, the battle that ensued in Congress and the newspapers was as emotional as any child custody battle, but more compelling for the dynamic lives and personalities involved. Through extensive research and with fascinating detail, Leepson uncovers the facts surrounding Monticello's owners and preservation involved are great wealth, patriotism, anti-Semitism, and social and

political influence. Leepson's absorbing account is an overdue chronicle and homage to the national treasure and its memorable saviors. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Digital edition.

Hang on for a wild ride through history with colorful characters that even Jefferson's imagination couldn't have foreseen. (Norfolk Virginian-Pilot) In this excellent account of Monticello's ownership after Thomas Jefferson's death, Leepson... turns the spotlight on a family that contributed to the preservation of history.... With fascinating detail, Leepson uncovers the facts surrounding Monticello's owners and preservation. (Publishers Weekly) This book provides useful and welcome evidence of the Levys' role [in saving Monticello]. Leepson is a diligent, thorough researcher.... [A] good book. (Washington Post) Leepson... has opened the curtain on a little-known portion of American history, and Saving Monticello is a welcome treat... a fascinating book. (Chicago Tribune) In its own way, the story of the Levys at Monticello is as compelling as the story of Jefferson at Monticello. It's not simply a story of how a remarkable family saved a special place, it's a very human story—indeed, a very American story—wonderfully told. I highly recommend it. (Richard Moe, President, National Trust for Historic Preservation Roanoke Times 9/14/03)

I purchased this book because I enjoy reading everything I can get my hands regarding Monticello. This book brings Monticello's "quiet" years to the fore. Uriah and Jefferson Levy rescued Thomas Jefferson's home from certain destruction, despite adversity. From whom or what? Read the book! I gave the book a four instead of a five star rating because, Theodore Roosevelt could not have been a member of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation in 1923. He died in 1919. Perhaps I was reading this portion wrong. But the book was a delightful read nonetheless. Thanks!

After visiting Monticello, this book describes in exciting detail a very significant aspect of the history of this historic site that is, unfortunately, not very well known or even publicized. It is must reading for anyone who has visited this historic site or interested in American history. Great book!!!!

Great story on the life of Monticello and how it was nearly lost to us as a nation. Not only the house is amazing but the grounds and gardens are important to our national horticulture thanks to Thomas Jefferson.

In this masterfully written account, author Marc Leepson explores the often precarious and somewhat neglected history of Monticello after the death of Thomas Jefferson. Mr. Leepson's scholarly work reveals how frighteningly close the world came to losing this architectural masterpiece, and the debt owed the Levy family for its rescue. Anyone interested in Jefferson or Monticello should read this book!

I have always loved Monticello and have been endlessly fascinated with Thomas Jefferson and his complexity. The Monticello we all know once stood a very great chance of being lost forever. The people whom purchased the home and restored it are equally fascinating. This book is very detailed and has been meticulously researched. If you love Monticello and the evolution of the preservation of this inspiring home, you will find this a great read.

This is a great book. A saga that is more than the story of how Monticello was passed on through the years, but rather, a reflection of broader political and social history from the 1830s to the 1920s. Very detailed; interesting facts; some surprises; and as one editorial review has noted "rich with memorable, larger-than-life characters." If any serious Hollywood producer happens to be reading, the book offers a terrific story that could be made into a movie. I can't wait to read Marc Leepson's next book.

Great book on the history of Thomas Jefferson's home. Life and times of how a historic home goes through so many transitions through the yrs, but is ultimately saved.

I learned a great deal about something I thought I knew, Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, in this eye-opening book that tells the amazing story of Jefferson's house and how Uriah Levy and Jefferson Levy saved it from ruin on two different occasions. The book is exceptionally readable and deeply researched. Anyone who has an interest in Thomas Jefferson, Monticello, Jewish American history or American historic preservation should read this most excellent book.

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