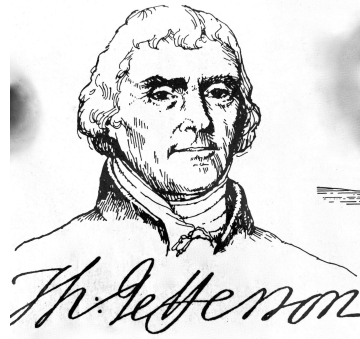


Road to the White House: On the eve of Bill Clinton’s inauguration, Duff Green, an Orange County historian and journalist, compared President-elect William Jefferson Clinton’s bus journey from Monticello in January 1993 to that of Thomas Jefferson in 1800. It demonstrates what travel was like before the Civil War.

From “County Flashback” by Duff Green
Orange County Review
January 14, 1993, page 9



Monticello to Washington City in four days

“President-elect William Jefferson Clinton’s bus journey this coming Sunday from Monticello to Washington will be traveled in relative luxury compared to a similar trip made by Thomas Jefferson nearly 200 years ago.

“According to an illustrated brochure for school children created by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Jefferson braved freezing temperatures, traveled on bad roads, slept on uncomfortable beds, ate mediocre food and had to make frequent stops to feed his horses on his own four-day trip to the new federal city of ‘Washington on the Potomac’.

“The National Trust’s research on Thomas Jefferson’s Road to the White House, provides a fascinating glimpse into the future president’s November 1800 route...



“Upon setting out from his cherished Monticello, Jefferson hired a freed black man, Davey Bowles, to accompany him. According to a farmer’s diary from that day, there was an ‘exceedingly hard frost and high cold winds’ as he traveled the first leg of the journey—28 miles to Montpelier, the Orange County home of his longtime friend, James Madison.

“Scrupulous about recording expenses as well as his impressions of tavern food and guest accommodations, Jefferson writes in his **Memorandum Books** that he purchased corn for his horses along the way. As the United States was without a national currency at the time, Jefferson probably paid the 12 and one-half cent bill with a Spanish bit.

“After spending the night at Montpelier, Jefferson left the next morning for Fleetwood, Virginia, stopping at the still standing Zimmerman’s Cross Keys Tavern in the rowdy town of Stevensburg, Culpeper County, where tavern owner, Reuben Zimmerman, was one of many convinced that the soon to be constructed University of Virginia should be located in his hometown.

“Jefferson continued to New Market, Virginia, which is now Manassas, headed towards Falls Church on a precursor to Lee Highway, and boarded a ferry for the trip across the Potomac River to Georgetown, then a bustling shipping port. He stayed at Conrad and McMinn’s Boarding House on Capitol Hill until his inauguration on March 4, 1801...

“It has been reported that President-elect Clinton will go from Monticello to Washington by way of U.S. Route 29 to Culpeper where he and Vice-president elect Al Gore with their families will attend the 11 a.m. services at Culpeper Baptist Church. Culpeper Baptist is the largest church in that area and seats about 1,000 people. A congregation of only about 300 were present at this past Sunday's service, but an overflow of members is expected this coming Sunday morning...

“**November 23, 1800: Leaving Monticello**

Thomas Jefferson began building Monticello when he was 26 years old. He completed it 40 years later. He devised a number of convenient contrivances for his home and farm. Jefferson also designed the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond and the University of Virginia. Monticello is considered a fine example of neoclassical style.

“**November 24, 1800: To Montpelier—28 miles**

Jefferson headed for the home of James Madison at Montpelier in Orange County. He probably traveled in a **phaeton**, a four-wheel light carriage pulled by two horses. He had traveled to Montpelier many times earlier over a network of familiar roads and often spoke of Gordon’s Tavern in Gordonsville as “a good house.” His route from Gordonsville to Montpelier was possibly over the ‘Chicken Mountain Road.’



“November 25, 1800: To Fleetwood—31 miles

There was still a ‘vast cold’ in the region as Jefferson set out from Montpelier on the morning of November 25, 1800. It is believed he passed through Orange and crossed the Rapidan River at Downey’s Ford as he followed the Carolina Road to Stevensburg. Jefferson stopped at Zimmerman’s Cross Keys Tavern in Stevensburg which he described as ‘an indifferent house.’

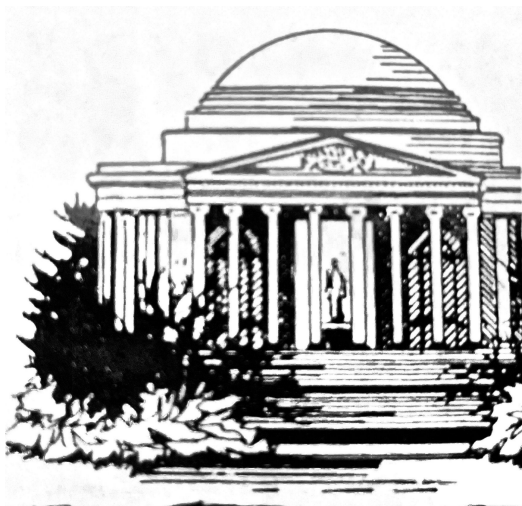
“November 26: To Brown’s Tavern—33.5 miles

Jefferson crossed the Rappahannock River at Norman’s Ford near present-day Remington. He left the Carolina Road and turned northeast toward the town of New Market which is now Manassas. New roads were developing to carry growing numbers of travelers and commerce. Jefferson warned a later traveler to get ‘very particular directions’ through the maze of roads in that area. He recorded on only one stop that day to purchase some oats for his horses at Brown’s Tavern.


“November 26: To Washington City—34 miles

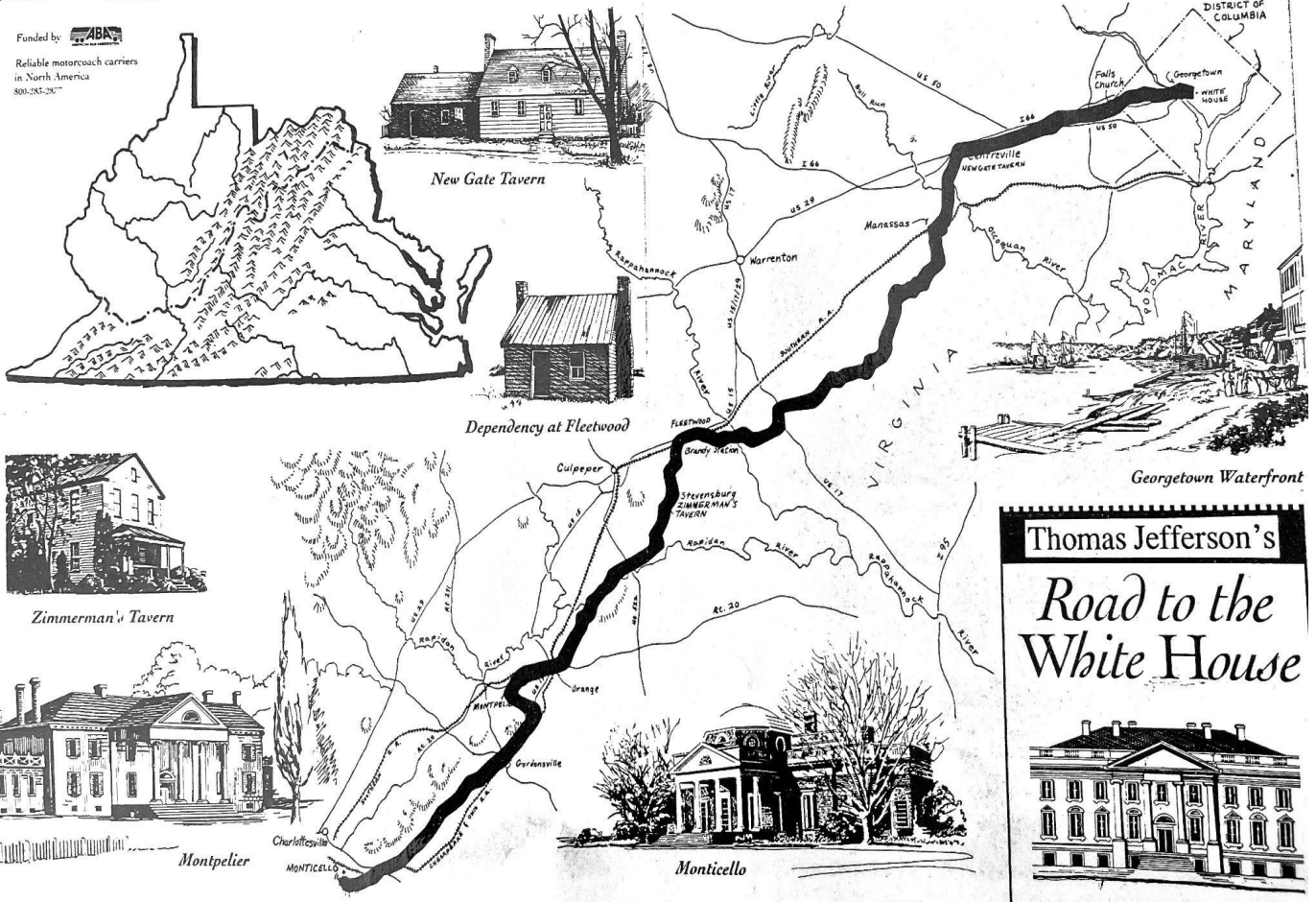
The weather was more moderate when Jefferson set out on the morning of November 27 and headed for Washington. He had breakfast at George Newman’s tavern in Centreville and then continued on through Falls Church where he paid 25 cents for oats at Col. James Wren’s tavern, which he described as ‘a very decent house and respectable people.’ He then headed for the Potomac and probably crossed at the present community of Rosslyn in Arlington County. The ferry which carried him to Georgetown cost him 62 and one-half cents.

“On February 17, after 26 ballots, the House of Representatives selected Thomas Jefferson as president, and Aaron Burr as vice-president. He was inaugurated on March 4, 1801. In 1943 the nation erected a memorial in Washington to honor the Albemarle County native.”



**The neoclassical style of the
Jefferson Monument**

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Montpelier



Monticello

Thomas Jefferson's
*Road to the
White House*

