

## Let Democrats Buy Monticello

(By Henry M. Hyde in Baltimore Sun.)

Simeon, Va., Aug. 5.—A campaign is now under way for the sale of Monticello, the historic country estate of Thomas Jefferson, to a private purchaser.

Several attempts have been made to persuade congress to purchase the stately and beautiful old place as a national shrine. They have all been foredoomed to failure from the start.

I have talked with some of the leaders in congress on the subject. They are afraid of making a precedent in the public purchase of the historic homes of our great men. If Monticello were so purchased, they believe, every state and most of the counties in the union would press similar claims on the public treasury.

Let it be remembered that even Mount Vernon was preserved as a place of patriotic pilgrimage and inspiration solely by the efforts of a private association of women.

A Monticello Association has been formed and it has conducted a campaign for raising funds for several months. It has not been successful. It has secured pledges for less than one-third the amount necessary to buy and maintain Monticello.

Meanwhile former Congressman Jefferson Levy, of New York, its present owner, has become tired of waiting. He has placed Monticello in the hands of a Washington real estate agent for immediate sale.

There are not, perhaps, in the United States half a dozen estates which combine such beauty of location with such pure perfection of classic architecture. From the top of the little "Mount of Heaven," where it stands, the old brick man-

sion looks out and over one of the most beautiful landscapes on the continent, the misty purple shoulders of the Blue Ridge rising 20 miles away to frame the picture. On the rolling red hills in the middle distance lies the little city of Charlottesville, where in days before the Revolution Patrick Henry, George Mason, and Jefferson himself stirred the spirit of the Colonists. And just to the west rise the domes and ranges of the University of Virginia, founded by Jefferson as the crown of the system of universal popular education which he taught.

There is no estate in the United States combining such natural and architectural beauty with such tremendous historic interest, in which is also so perfectly preserved the atmosphere and spirit of the early days of the republic.

The country is fortunate that the family of Jefferson Levy, which has owned Monticello for more than 75 years, has during all this time kept it, so far as possible, in its original condition. The estate now embraces some 700 acres. The house, designed by Thomas Jefferson in his early 20s, before he had ever been to Europe, is said by the best judges to be almost unequalled in America in the dignity and simplicity of its classic lines. The plans were ready and the building started in 1769, when Jefferson was only 26. The Revolution and Jefferson's long absence in France delayed its completion until 1801. It stands today almost as it stood then, and still deserves to be ranked—as the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt wrote in 1896—"with the most pleasant mansions in France and England."

It is almost unthinkable that this estate, where the author of the Declaration of Independence himself lies buried, this enduring monument of his genius as an architect, should be permitted to pass into the hands of other private owners, who would be quite within their rights if they closed its gates to pious pilgrims or even altered or "rebuilt" the ancient mansion.

Apparently it is hopeless to expect congress to buy it as a national monument. No multi-millionaire stands forward to buy the estate and dedicate it to the nation: The present association formed for the purpose of buying and preserving it seems impotent.

Why should not the Democratic party, which Jefferson founded, and which looks up to him for constantly renewed inspiration, buy Monticello and maintain it as the central shrine and fountain of their political faith?

If each of the men and women who vote the Democratic ticket at national elections would contribute a dime to the fund, it would be sufficient.

tives which has presented itself to the United States shipping board. As pointed out by M. L. Gilbert, formerly controlling interest in the Ship Construction and Trading company,

the ships would bring at least \$30,000 or \$40,000 as they stand if offered to Greece and other sorely pressed European countries for the Mediterranean trade.

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### WOODEN FLEET WORTH \$2,750,000 TO U. S. AS JUNK

A New York, dispatch, dated Aug. 25, follows: The Evening World today prints the following:

The United States shipping board can take the wooden ships—nearly 300 of them—in the James river and clear more than \$11,000 on each one by selling the fittings and hulls at auction, according to Edward S. Reiss, who has bought many ships from the board.

Instead of getting only \$2,100 a-piece, as the bid of the Ship Construction and Trading company, offers, the board, on the basis of 250 ships, would net at least \$2,750,000 if it undertook the work itself.

At Claremont, Va., where the ships are stored, the board has a large force of watchmen and guards. If this same force had been employed during the last year at dismantling the ships—involving no additional cost to the government—auction sales could have been held, progressively or in bulk, to yield even more than \$10,000 a boat, Mr. Reiss pointed out.

This is only one of the alterna-