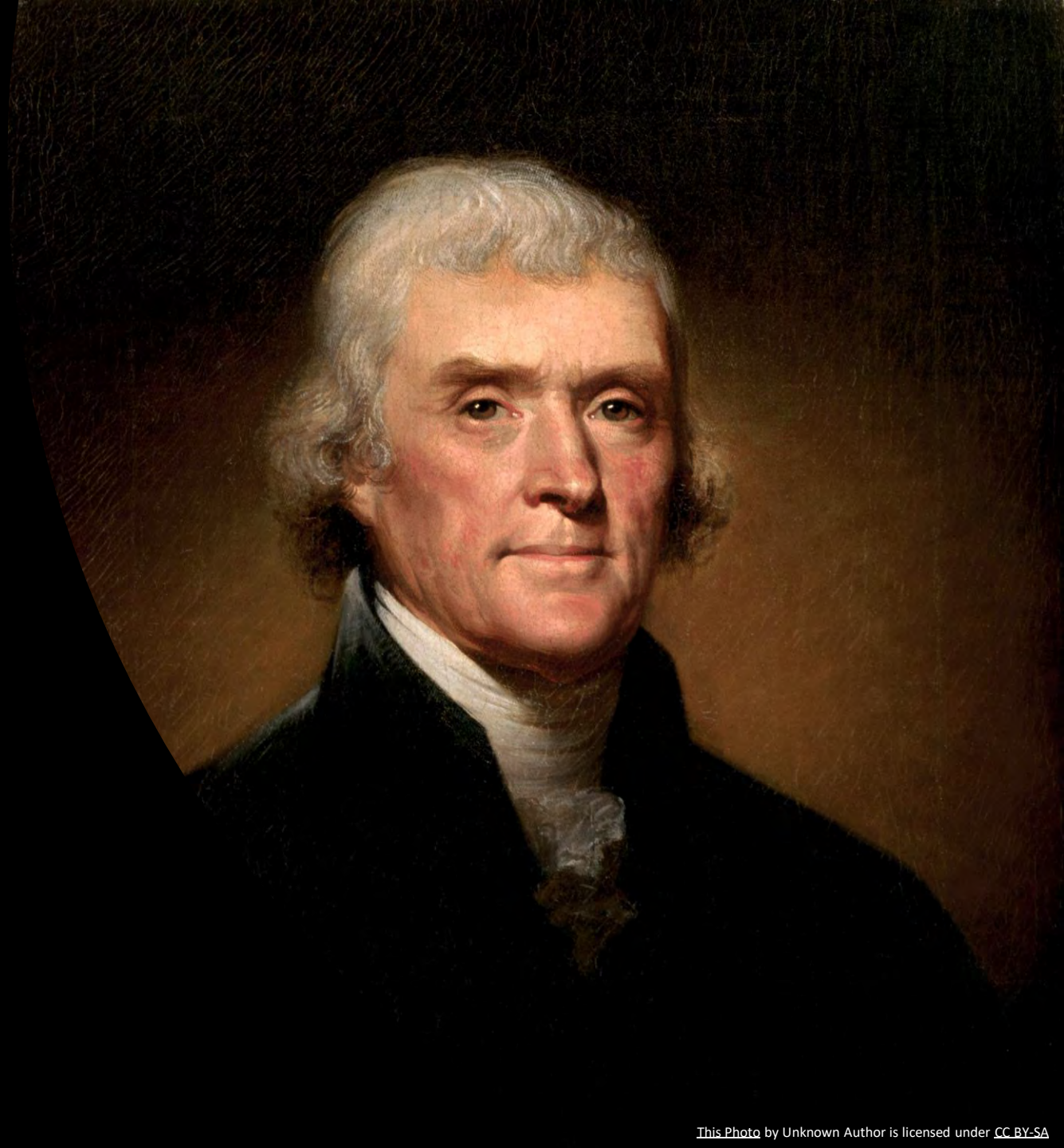


THE LETTERS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

The World of Thomas
Jefferson as revealed in
some of his 19,000+
letters



Thomas Jefferson:

- “If you want to understand my life, read the letters I received and the letters I wrote.”

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!



**There are no written notes
for this class but...**

WHILE WE'RE WAITING...

- I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A GREAT DEAL OF INFORMATION ABOUT JEFFERSON BUT....

• **DON'T WORRY!**

What, Me Worry?



- I'M GOING TO PUT THIS ENTIRE CLASS ONLINE AFTER WE FINISH SO FEEL FREE TO TAKE NOTES OR NOT AS YOU WISH.

- IF YOU HAVE FOLLOW-UP COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS FOR ME AFTER TODAY, YOU CAN REACH ME AT

-

TOMMARYBETH@VERIZON.NET



**FIRST THE
FACTS!**

TEN FACTS ABOUT THOMAS JEFFERSON

- **1. Thomas Jefferson really, really liked books.** The third president, after his retirement, sold his library of 6,500 volumes to the Library of Congress after it was ransacked by the British. Jefferson needed the cash to pay off debts, but he started buying more books. "I cannot live without books," he told John Adams.

2. Jefferson the economist. Jefferson was deeply engaged in economic theory, which he learned to love during his time in France. He was a friend and translator to leading European theorists; he believed in the free market policies; and he opposed bank notes as currency.

- **3. Jefferson the architect.** He designed the rotunda for the University of Virginia, his own home at Monticello, and the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond. Monticello has some good resources about what he called the “hobby of my old age,” though architecture was actually a lifetime pursuit. Monticello and the University of Virginia are on the World Heritage List. **“This country’s most influential architect...”** *Mr. Jefferson’s University*, Garry Wills.

4. JEFFERSON THE FOOD LOVER

- On his return from France, Jefferson brought his love of that nation's cuisine back with him. James Hemings went to France as his slave, and the pair agreed that if Hemings learned how to make French cuisine, he would be freed on his return to America once he had taught his replacement. Jefferson kept his promise.

5. JEFFERSON THE WINE SNOB

- Yes, Jefferson **brought his love of French wine** back to America, too. He had **two vineyards at Monticello, which he apparently used to experiment with.** Acknowledged as **a great wine expert of early America,** he sought to promote wine as an alternative to whiskey and cider.



6. JEFFERSON THE AGRICULTURIST

“Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people.”

- He believed in the United States as an agrarian society, in part, because it would make the nation independent from other nations. Jefferson practiced what he taught: He was one of the first American farmers to employ crop rotation and redesigned the plow to make it more efficient.

7. JEFFERSON THE PALEONTOLOGIST

- He was also **obsessed with fossils** and was involved in a great debate about the mammoth that became a political cause. Jefferson **raised the profile of paleontology** and **he has a mammoth** named after him.

-
- **Jefferson loved stargazing almost as much as he liked books. He made sure astronomy was taught at the University of Virginia, and he designed what may have been the first observatory in the United States.**

8. JEFFERSON THE ASTRONOMER

9. Jefferson the writer

- He was a **prolific writer** during his lifetime, with his authorship of the *Declaration of Independence* and the *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom* included in his epitaph (instead of his two terms as president). The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress contain about 27,000 documents, including his extensive correspondence with key historical figures.



10. Jefferson the musician.

- He took violin lessons as a child and **played the violin** as he courted his future wife, Martha Skelton. Jefferson spent **considerable time studying the violin as an instrument**, but by 1778 he complained about music being played in the New World as being in a “state of deplorable barbarism.”





By now you may have begun to feel as if this guy was born on the planet Krypton but he was all too human...as we shall see.

- **NOW LET'S HAVE A SHORT JEFFERSON QUIZ.**



OK, we'll start
with a soft
ball!

- When Jefferson was a young man,
what color was his hair?

OK, no more
Mr. Nice Guy.
Now we're
going to play
Hardball but
without Chris
Matthews.





JEFFERSON HAD A PET
WHILE HE LIVED IN THE
WHITE HOUSE.



WHAT KIND OF ANIMAL
WAS THE PET AND
WHAT WAS ITS NAME?



When Jefferson was president, for periods of time what was the smallest number of people living in the White House?

IN DEC. OF 1801 JEFFERSON
WAS GIFTED IN THE WHITE
HOUSE WITH A SINGLE ITEM
OF FOOD WHICH WEIGHED
1,200 + POUNDS.

- It was referred to as “The Mammoth...”
- What was it?






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- **WHO WAS Mr. J.'s SECRETARY IN THE WHITE HOUSE BETWEEN 1801 – 1803?**

A NUMBER OF THE PREVIOUS
QUESTIONS CONTAIN THE SAME
ERROR.



WHAT IS THE ERROR AND AT
WHAT POINT IN OUR
COUNTRY'S HISTORY WOULD
THIS NOT BE AN ERROR?

**WHICH INCIDENT
IN HIS PUBLIC LIFE
DID JEFFERSON
CONSIDER THE
MOST INJURIOUS
TO HIS REPUTATION
AND WHOM DID HE
PRIMARILY BLAME
FOR IT?**



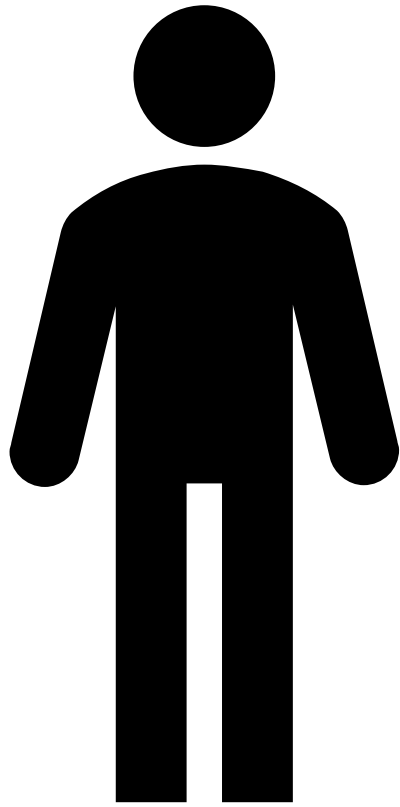
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He has been called, “the shrewdest student of the Jefferson psyche ever placed on earth.”



Who is he?



Jefferson once referred to a famous friend in a letter as someone who was once a Samson in the field and a Solomon in the council but now had his head “shaved by the harlot England.”

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- **WHEN JEFFERSON USED THE EXPRESSION “A FIRE BELL IN THE NIGHT,” WHAT WAS HE REFERRING TO?**

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- JEFFERSON WAS ONCE GIVEN A BOOK ON SCIENCE WRITTEN BY A BLACK MAN. HE READ IT AND WAS IMPRESSED BY IT. HE THEN ASKED TWO QUESTIONS OF THE PERSON WHO HAD GIVEN HIM THAT BOOK.
- WHAT WERE THOSE TWO QUESTIONS?

Who are these
men?



Who said the following?

- "That government is best which governs least."
- Was it: 1) James Madison?
- 2) John Adams?
- 3) Thomas Jefferson?

Which of the following was guilty of, as he put it, “when young and single I offered love to a handsome lady.”



- 21st Century translation: “I put the moves on a close friend’s wife!” Was it...
- 1) Benjamin Franklin?
- 2) John Jay?
- 3) Alexander Hamilton?
- 4) Thomas Jefferson?
- 5) George Washington?

WEBSITES

- **FOUNDERS ONLINE:** <https://founders.archives.gov/>
- **CORRESPONDENCE AND OTHER WRITINGS OF SIX MAJOR SHAPERS OF THE UNITED STATES:**
- George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams (and family), Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison.
Over 182,000 searchable documents, fully annotated, from the authoritative Founding Fathers Papers projects

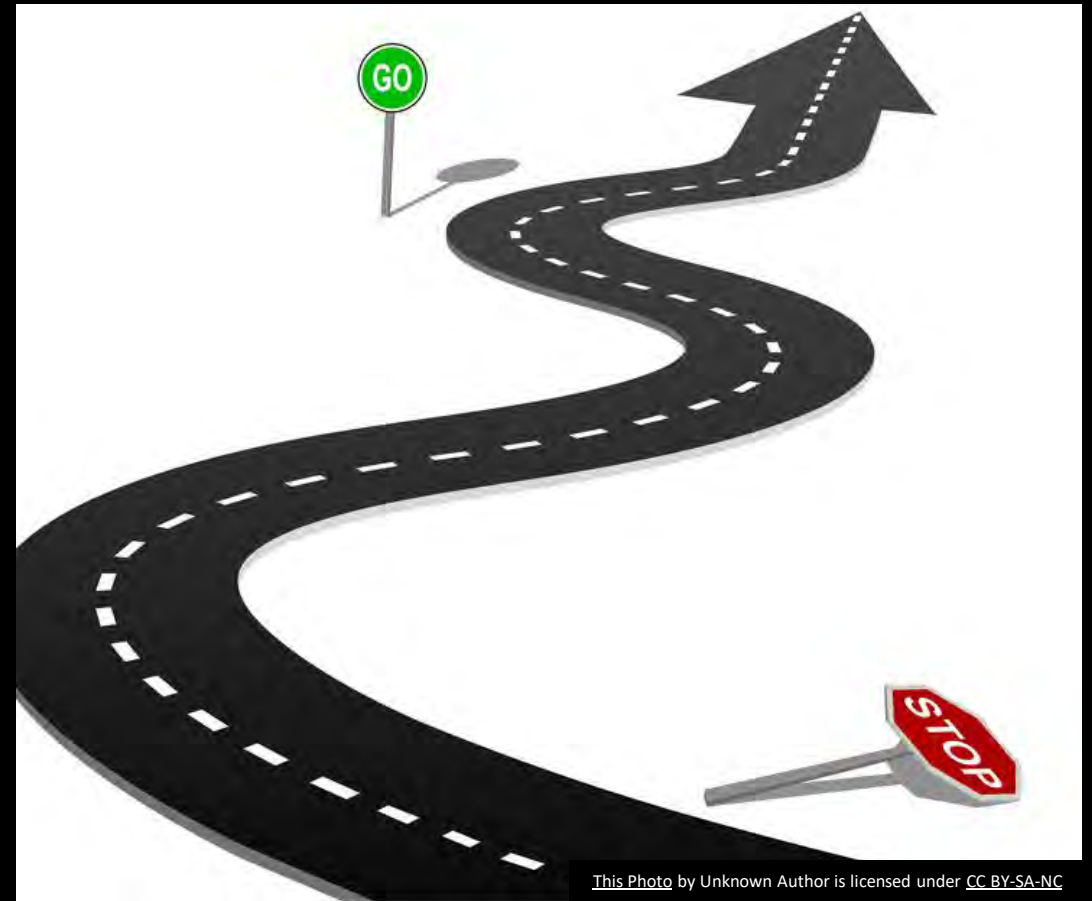
- **MONTICELLO WEBSITE:**
<https://www.monticello.org>
- **THE THOMAS JEFFERSON HOUR:**
[HTTPS://JEFFERSONHOUR.COM/](https://JEFFERSONHOUR.COM/)
- **Google “Jefferson’s handwriting”**

SOME BRIEF COMMENTS ON THESE TJ FACTS!

- **2. JEFFERSON THE ECONOMIST**
- **4. JEFFERSON THE FOOD LOVER**
- **5. JEFFERSON THE WINE SNOB**
- **6. JEFFERSON THE AGRICULTURIST**
- **10. JEFFERSON THE MUSICIAN**

FIRST, A ROADMAP OF

- **WHERE WE'RE GOING and**
- **HOW WE'RE GOING TO GET THERE!**



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**A Jefferson quiz
Answers**



Why am I doing this?



Ten Facts about Thomas Jefferson



**A quick look at the mind of Thomas
Jefferson aka “The American Sphinx”**

5. A brief look at Jefferson and slavery (It will come up again!)



6. Jefferson's Letters: some basic facts about how he managed to write 20,000 to possibly 30,000 letters in his lifetime!



7. A look at some of his letters which will reveal the man writing them.

Finish Line!

PART 1



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- When Jefferson was a young man,
what color was his hair?



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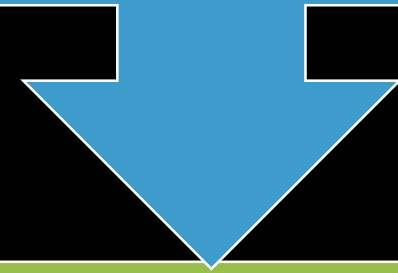
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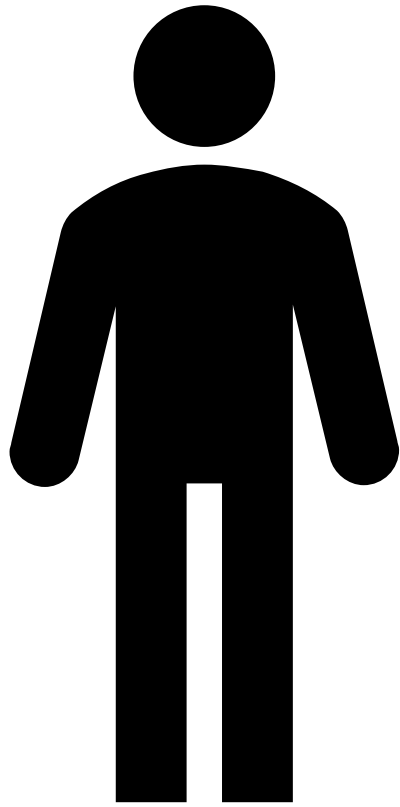
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Beverly Frederick Jefferson (left), grandson of Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson, is pictured with three of his sons, circa 1900. No images of Sally Hemings or her children are known.



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- WHAT WERE THOSE TWO QUESTIONS?

Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784)
Phillis Wheatley, also spelled Phyllis and Wheatly was the first African-American woman to publish a book of poetry. Born in West Africa, she was sold into slavery at the age of seven or eight and transported to North America, also spelled Phyllis and Wheatly was the first African-American woman to publish a book of poetry. Born in West Africa, she was sold into slavery at the age of seven or eight and transported to North America



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Benjamin Banneker was a free African-American almanac author, surveyor, naturalist, and farmer. Born in Baltimore County, Maryland, to a free African-American woman and a former slave, Banneker had little formal education and was largely self-taught.



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Bishop Henri
Gregoire
(1750-1831)

- I have received the favor of your letter of August 17th, and with it the volume you were so kind as to send me on the “Literature of Negroes.” Be assured that no person living wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a complete refutation of the doubts I have myself entertained and expressed on the ...
[To M. Henri Gregoire,
February 25, 1809](#)



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Mrs. John Walker



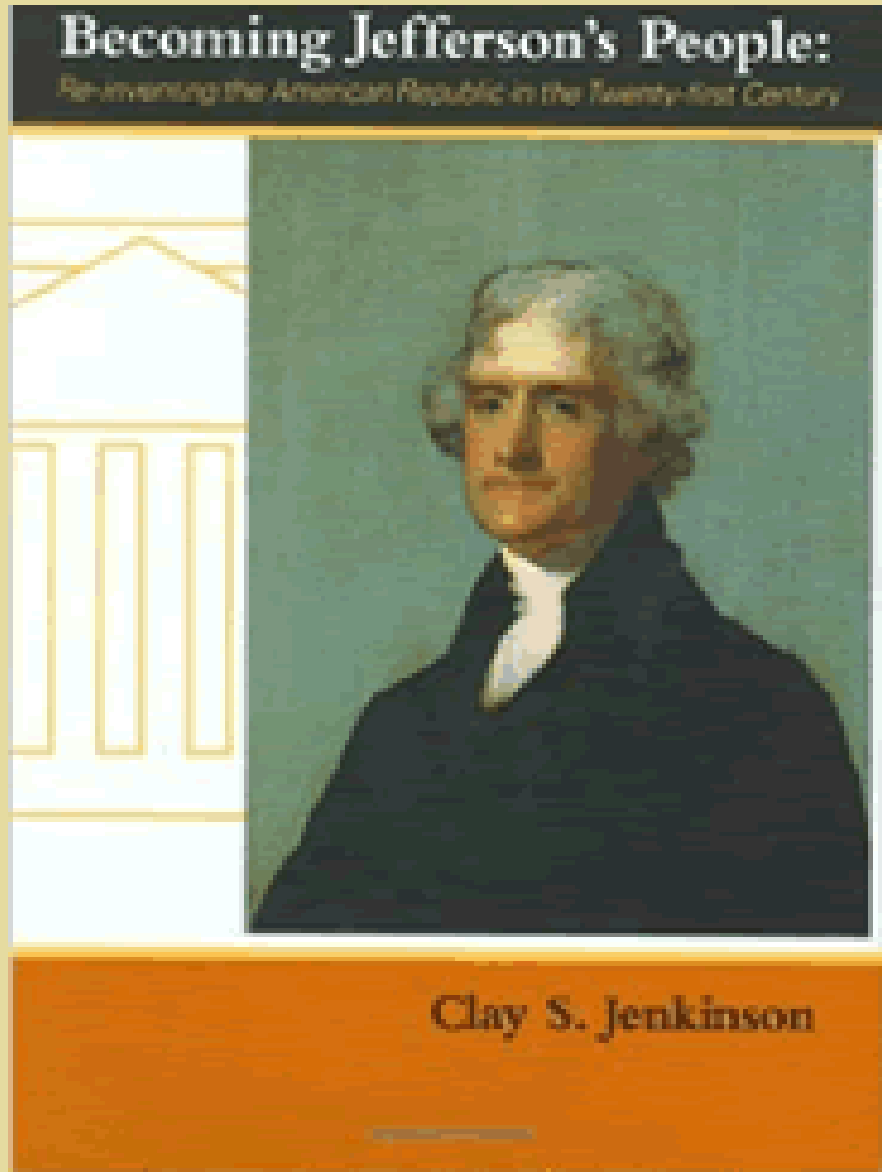
**SALLY FAIRFAX
(1730 – 1811),
WIFE OF GEORGE
WILLIAM FAIRFAX**

so why am i

HERE?

Clay S. Jenkinson

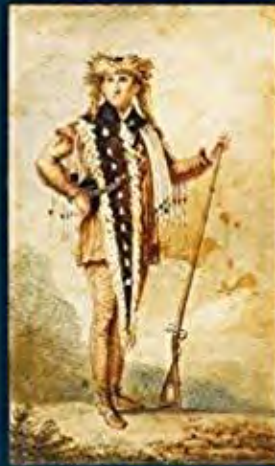




**Becoming Jefferson's People:
Re-Inventing the American
Republic in the Twenty-First
by Clay S. Jenkinson**

**Production of an audio version of this
book has been completed and
will be available soon**

The Character of
**MERIWETHER
LEWIS**
Explorer in the Wilderness



Clay S. Jenkinson

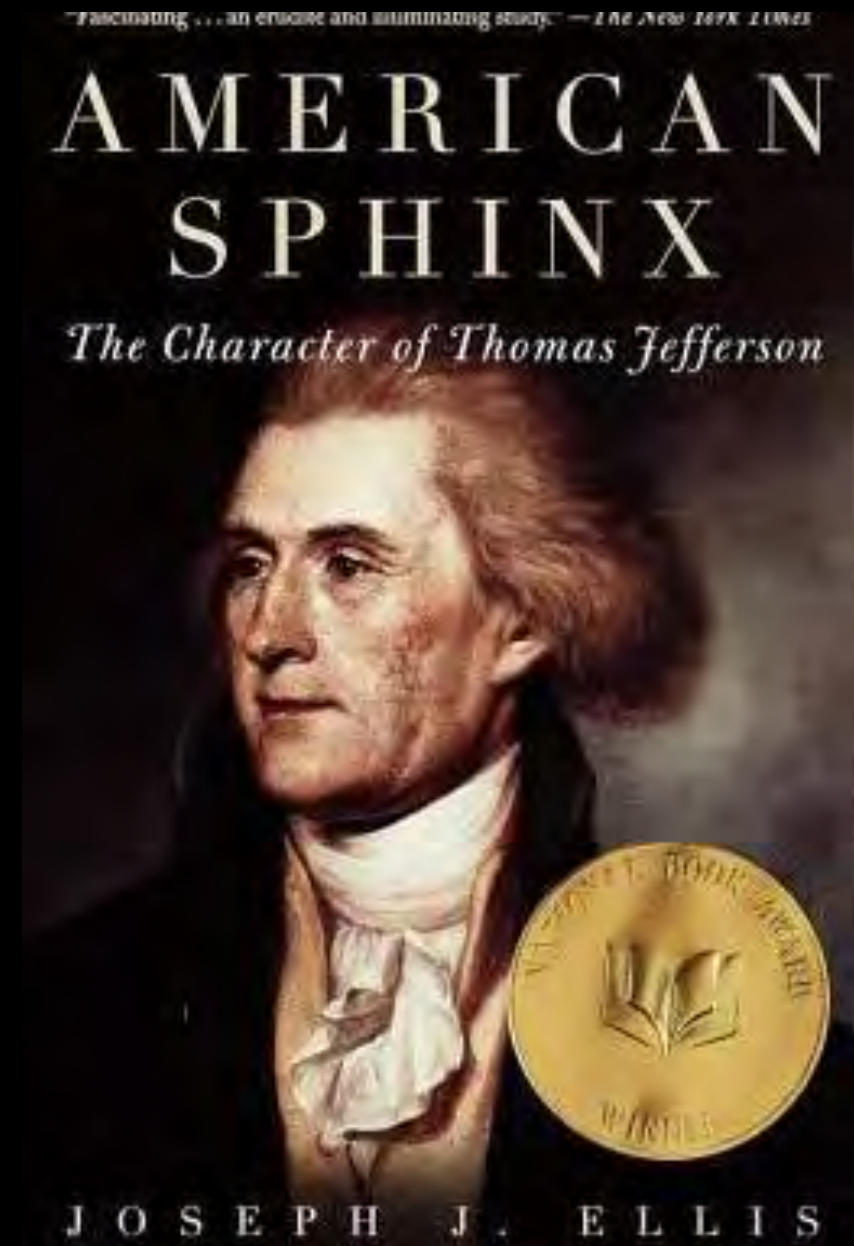
Foreword by David Nicandri



Joseph J. Ellis

“Joseph Ellis questions his ‘sphinx’ with such grace, such learning and such wit that even his old-fashioned Jeffersonians feels obliged to urge his book upon all readers. It is a delight to read.”

C. Vann Woodward,
Department of History,
Yale University.





American Dialogue

THE FOUNDERS AND US

JOSEPH J. ELLIS

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

A QUICK
TOUR
THROUGH
JEFFERSON'S
MIND
(God help
us!)



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From Peter Baker's review of "Most Blessed of the Patriarchs" by Annette Gordon-Reed and Peter S. Onuf:

- *The doors to Thomas Jefferson's private chamber at Monticello opened out onto the main entrance hall. But a visitor in 1809, the year he returned to his mountaintop Virginia refuge for good after the presidency, noticed that **the doors to his inner sanctum were always locked. No one who did not have a key could get in, and he seemed sparing in handing them out.***

Letter from John
Adams to Dr.
Benjamin Rush,
August, 2009,
describing Jefferson
as

- **a mysterious “shadow man”
whose character was “like the
great rivers, whose bottoms we
cannot see and make no noise.”**

- “Merrill Peterson, the best Jefferson biographer..., made what he called the ‘mortifying confession’ that after thirty years of work, **‘Jefferson remains for me, finally, an impenetrable man.’**”
- “American Sphinx,” p. 15

?

- THINK
JEFFERSON...



THINK





Whig History

- Jefferson believed that “in the Saxon past of pre-Norman England and before that in the forests of Germany, a set of people lived freely and harmoniously, without kings or lords to rule over them, working and owning their lands as sovereign agents .” “American Sphinx, p. 37
- Note: This version of history was not J’s invention.

- This is a **“Once Upon a Time”** story of a pristine past where men (and women) lived in **perfect harmony** without coercive laws or predatory rulers. Very romantic. Completely false.
- **Important:** This **false history** did not create Jefferson’s romantic views of the world. It simply helped him justify them. **He already carried this vision within him.**



- “Plato and Aristotle”
- by Raphael



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- As early as 1784, Jefferson was envisioning the day when James Madison, James Monroe and William Short, all Jefferson’s proteges, would live next to him
- at Monticello and trying to convince them to do it.

LETTER: Jefferson to Madison, Feb. 1794

“Monroe is buying land almost adjoining me. (William) Short will do the same. What would I not give (if) you could fall into the circle...Think of it.”

- **Monroe would build his home, Highland, within a few miles of Monticello.**
- **Madison, Jefferson's closest friend, however would build his home, Montpelier, almost 30 miles away.**
- **Short never built a home near Jefferson.**

“The Peaceable Kingdom” by Edward Hicks



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- **Jefferson foresaw his life at Monticello surrounded by his friends and family, a peaceful retreat from the world. It was often anything but!**
- **In 1787 he wrote his daughter, Martha: “To your sister and yourself I look to render the evening of my life serene and contented.”**

THERE ARE TWO WORDS THAT CHARACTERIZE
JEFFERSON'S WHOLE LIFE. THE FIRST IS

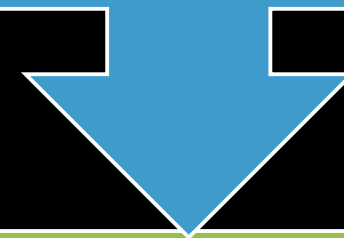
Harmony

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- **3 Examples from his life:**
 - **1) Dinner with A. Burr**
 - **2) His cabinet**
 - **3) Monticello**

**JEFFERSON'S
TEN RULES
FOR A GOOD
LIFE**

9. Always take things by their smooth handle.



10. When angry, count to ten before you speak; if very angry, count to 100.

“The Peaceable Kingdom” by Edward Hicks



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- **In 1787 he wrote his daughter, Martha: “To your sister and yourself I look to render the evening of my life serene and contented.”**



- **THE SECOND WORD IS**

- **ORDER**

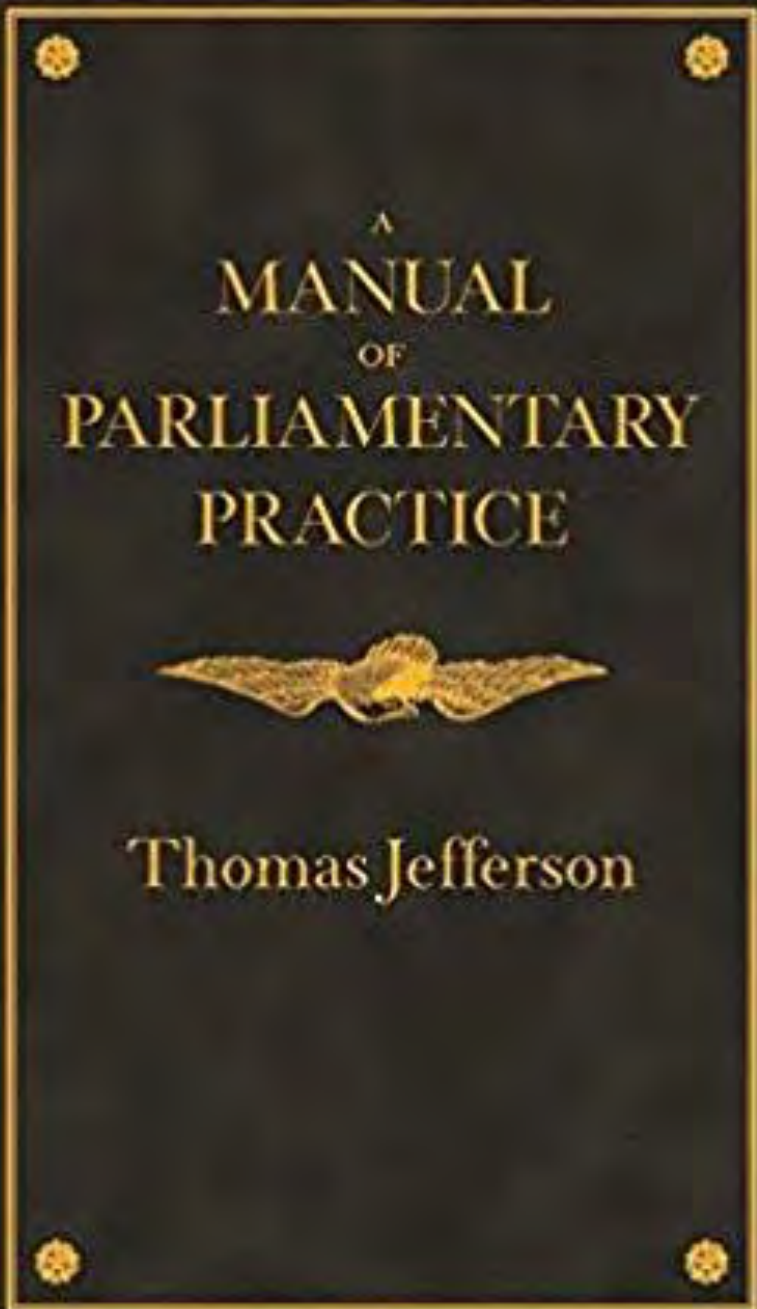
THOMAS JEFFERSON'S *Conception*

FOR THE SUBDIVISION OF THE NEW WEST
THIS PROPOSAL WAS CONTEMPORARY WITH HIS
ORDINANCE OF 1784 FOR THE GOVERNMENT
OF NORTHWEST TERRITORY, BUT WHICH NEVER
BECAME EFFECTIVE



ORDER

“Oh!, blessed rage
for order, ...”
Wallace Stevens,
*The Idea of
Order at Key
West*



-
- ***A Manual of Parliamentary Practice for the Use of the Senate of the United States***, written by Thomas Jefferson in 1801, is **the first American book on parliamentary procedure**.

"I Rise with the Sun"

What was a typical day like for T.J.?

- A typical day for Jefferson started early, because, in his own words, "**Whether I retire to bed early or late, I rise with the sun.**" He told of a fifty-year period in which the sun had never caught him in bed; he rose as soon as he could read the hands of the clock kept directly opposite his bed.

RECORD KEEPING

- **After rising, Jefferson measured and recorded the temperature.** Around four o'clock in the afternoon, Jefferson repeated the measurement,
- **He also recorded the direction and speed of the wind and the amount of precipitation.**
- **Jefferson made note of the weather and other indexes of climate, such as the migration of birds and the appearance of flowers, throughout his life, wherever he was, including France, Washington, and Philadelphia. He shared his records with others in the hope of creating a national database of meteorological information.**

WHAT DID HE CARRY WITH HIM?

- In his pockets, Jefferson carried such a variety of portable instruments for making observations and measurements that he's been dubbed a "traveling calculator." Among his collection of pocket-sized devices were scales, drawing instruments, a thermometer, a surveying compass, a level, and even a globe. To record all these measurements, Jefferson carried a small ivory notebook on which he could write in pencil. Back in his Cabinet, or office, he later copied the information into any of seven books in which he kept records about his garden, farms, finances, and other concerns; he then erased the writing in the ivory notebook.

SLAVERY



- "Jefferson is deeply complicit in the legacy of racism and the legacy of slavery... Jefferson was one of the greatest men who ever lived and right at the center of his life was an appalling breach of human rights."
- Clay Jenkinson

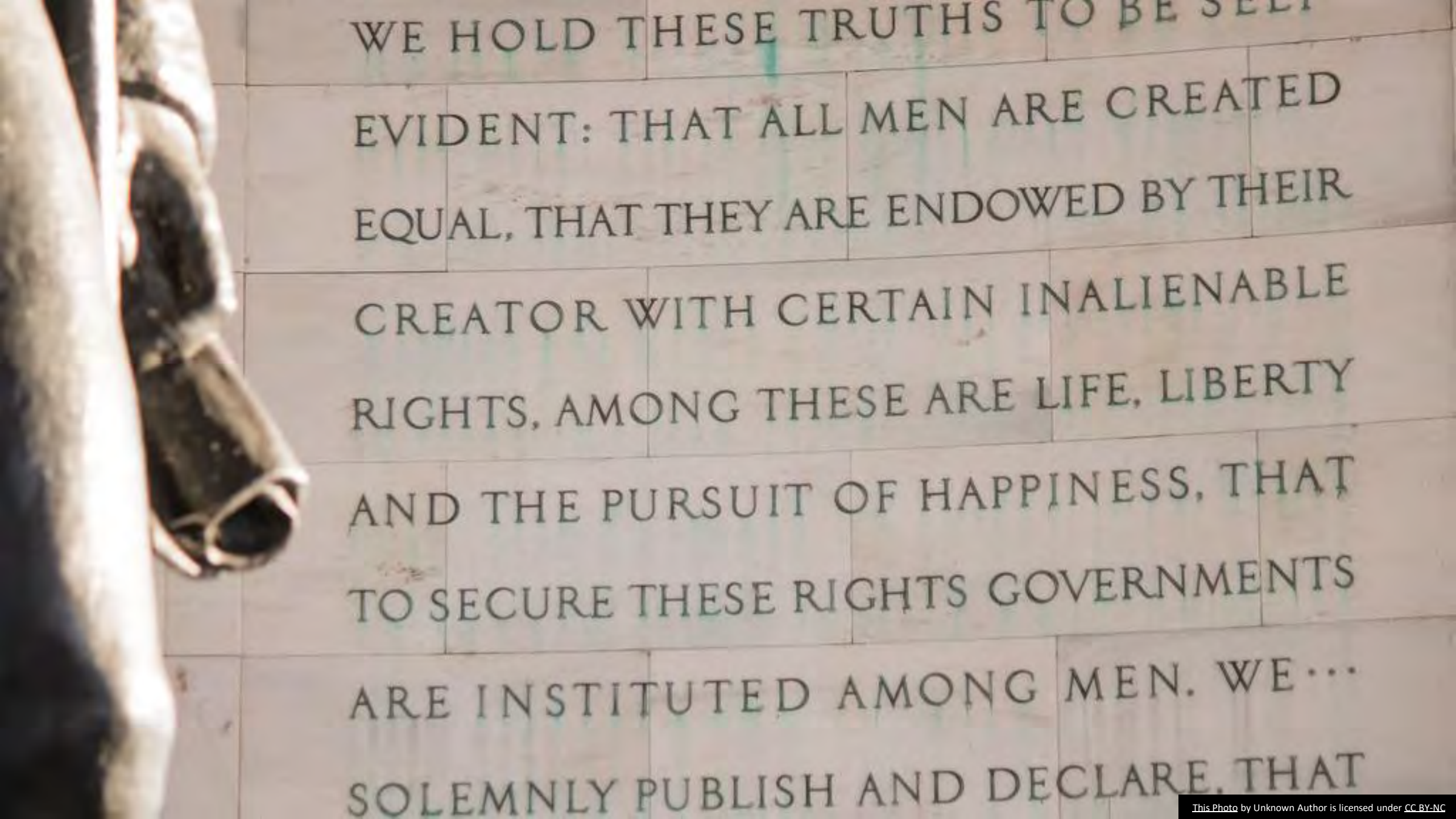
In early 1776 a man placed an advertisement

- in this newspaper offering a reward for an escaped slave of his named Sandy whom he described as “artful and knavish” and “inclining to corpulence.”



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- **Contrast this** irritable prose with something the same man wrote just a few months later...



WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF
EVIDENT: THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED
EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR
CREATOR WITH CERTAIN INALIENABLE
RIGHTS, AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY
AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS, THAT
TO SECURE THESE RIGHTS GOVERNMENTS
ARE INSTITUTED AMONG MEN. WE...
SOLEMNLY PUBLISH AND DECLARE, THAT

- It is just **this sort of contradiction** which flows through all Jefferson's life which has **caused many historians to sum up their frustration thusly...**

• **WHAT
THE...???**



THE LETTERS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

The World of Thomas
Jefferson as revealed in
some of his 19,000+
letters

Just
the
Facts?



- HERE ARE SOME BASIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO CONSIDER BEFORE LOOKING AT JEFFERSON'S LETTERS.



© Colonial Williamsburg

Q.How many letters did Jefferson write?

- A. The most common answer is 19,000+ but some say anywhere between 20,000 to 30,000. New letters of Jefferson have been discovered from time to time.

Q. How did Jefferson write his letters?

- **A.** Jefferson always rose before dawn, bathed his feet in a pail of cold, not icy, water, ate a small breakfast, sometimes went out for a walk and then sat down at his desk to answer his correspondence with his own letters. Often he returned to writing some more at night before retiring to his bed.

Q. How many letters did Jefferson receive on a yearly basis?

- A. A tremendous number. It is estimated that in the year **1820** alone, he recorded receiving **1,267 letters**.
- He felt **duty bound to answer every letter** he received even if he didn't know the writer, even if the letter necessitated a great deal of research on his part.

Q. What was his letter writing process like?

- A. Jefferson spent a good deal of time thinking about the letter writer and then thinking about how best to answer him or her. He sometimes wrote drafts and then discarded them. Once the letter was finished, he made two copies of the letter. He did this with every letter. He also kept a separate log book of every letter that he ever wrote.

Jefferson's Autobiography

- At the age of 77, on Jan. 6, 1821, Jefferson attempted an autobiography. Before he discontinued it, he had covered his life from 1743 to 1790, his return from France. It was not a form of writing that he found amenable. However, he did say,
- “If you want to understand my life, read the letters I received and the letters I wrote.”

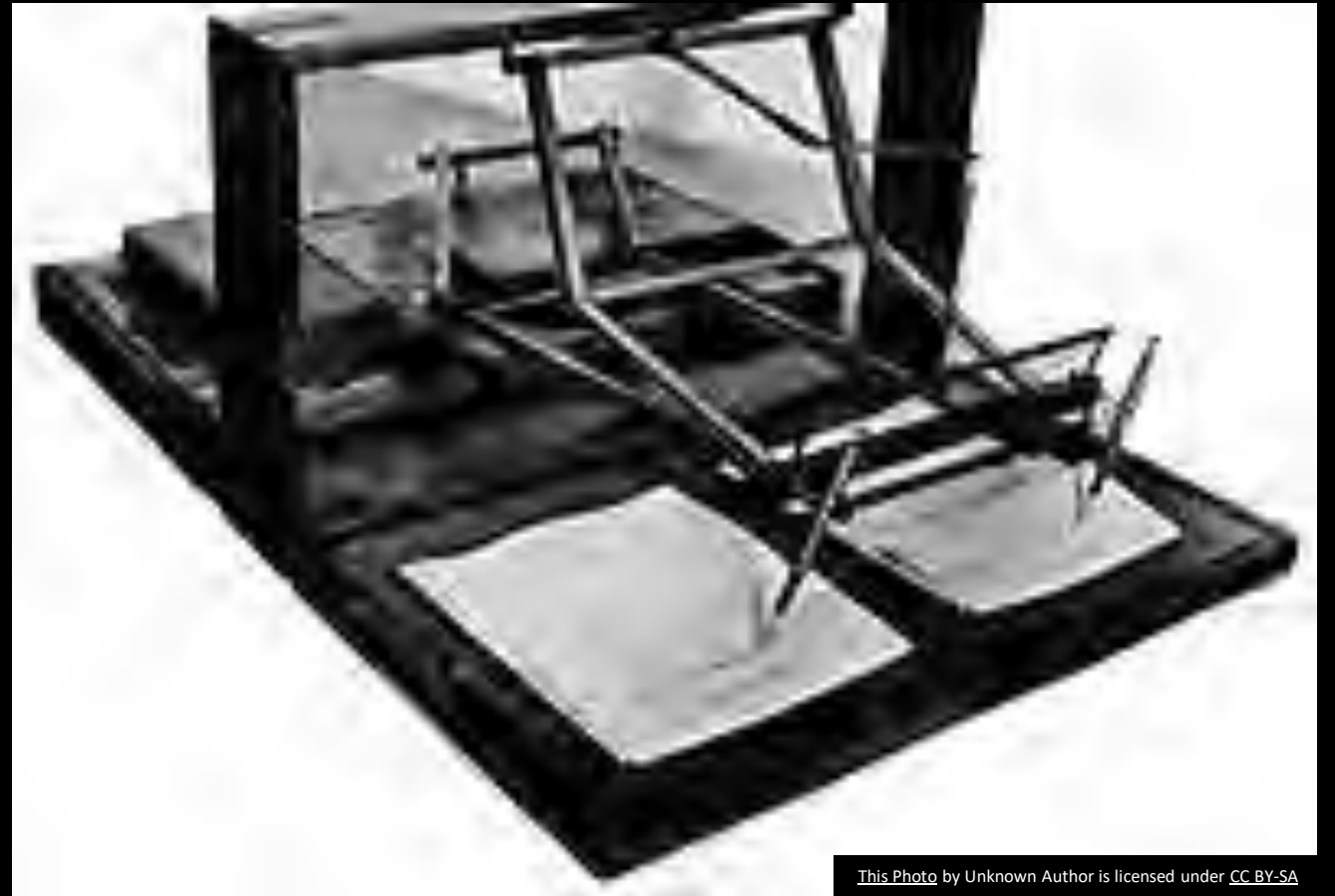
Q. How did Jefferson make his copies?

- **A. Originally, he used a copying press** which he tells us made barely legible copies. In 1806 John Isaac Hawken and Charles Wilson Peale created **the polygraph**(springs and levers) which allowed multiple copies to be made when writing. Jefferson, learning about it, immediately had to have it and bought two, one for the President's House, one for Monticello. He later stated, "I could not, now therefore, live without the Polygraph." Jefferson always loved the newest gadget!
- **Typically, Jefferson tinkered with the mechanism and figured out how to improve it.** He then sent that information to Hawken so he could turn out better polygraphs!

Jefferson's polygraph



JEFFERSON'S POLYGRAPH



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Now ask yourself: How did people get mail in Jefferson's Day???



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Jefferson's Wheel Cipher



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Invented by Jefferson in 1795



[This Photo -](#)

Q. What was his prose like?

- A. Jefferson is famous for saying, “Never use two words, when one will do” and he followed his own advise. His writing style is always clear and direct and immediately understandable. He did not write long sentences with endless subordinate clauses or multiply adjectives when one (or none) would do. He has always been considered one of the best writers in the English language.

Jefferson's hand is relatively easy to read, especially once you've spent some time with it. He didn't like to capitalize the beginnings of sentences, and he maintained his own spellings for a few choice words (like "knolege" or "recieve"). But overall his writing is very legible.

22.01.1809
Dear Sir
Mont. Mar. 13. 25. 11

I was very thankful to you for your ~~love~~ ^{kindness} of the ~~information~~ ^{information} it conveyed was very anxiously looked for. without that fund our situation was disadvantageous in the extreme and ^{indeed} very mortifying. with that, I think we can, in the course of the year, provide our institution with all it's necessary appendages ^{of the apparatus as respectably and completely} as completely as is any one in the Union.

In answer to your communication on the subject of a Professor of Moral philosophy, mentioned in your letter, Mr Henry Tucker, one of our late members of Congress, ^{has} been appointed to that chair in early winter. he did not ^{immediately} accept ^{formally} till the end of the session of Congress. he is now with me, and only goes home to settle his affairs for removal. The Professors from Europe ^{have been most judiciously selected. they} give us extreme satisfaction, ^{as to their} ^{constant character} and accomodating disposn. they equal our highest wishes. a month of almost incessant rain, and roads which have stopped the running of the stages have occasioned our students to ^{set in but} ~~arrive~~ slowly. we hear of many on the road, unable to get along at all so that we do cannot ^{at} conjecture at present what may be the number for this ^{first} year. the Professors however have organized their schools and ^{to their students.} begun their lectures. They are a very fine parcel of young men, but so ^{on} actively prepared, that we have been obliged, for the present year, to ^{be} ~~little~~ on this head in our laws of reception, I pray you to be ^{of} my friendly & respectful esteem.

J. J.

Travell

I suppose which while I lived in Wash. I suggested to you in answer to one of your letters and you granted it with an

- When Jefferson wrote to his grandson Thomas Jefferson Randolph on 16 April 1810 to encourage him to practice daily letter-writing, he added some advice on penmanship:
- “take pains at the same time to write a neat round, plain hand, and you will find it a great convenience through life to write a small & compact hand as well as a fair & legible one.”
- Jefferson maintained this “neat round, plain hand,” and I like to call it Good. Or at least really decent.

The Burden of the Letters

- **Jefferson complained** to Adams about being overwhelmed by the number of letters he received and felt duty-bound to answer:
“**Is this life?**” and described himself as “**a mill-horse, who sees no end to his circle but in death.**”
- **Adams responded** mischievously that **he did not have Jefferson’s problem** because **he had been prescient enough to make himself unpopular.**

•

SOME SPECIFIC LETTERS

- “If you want to understand my life, read the letters I received and the letters I wrote.”

- **Martha Jefferson Randolph**

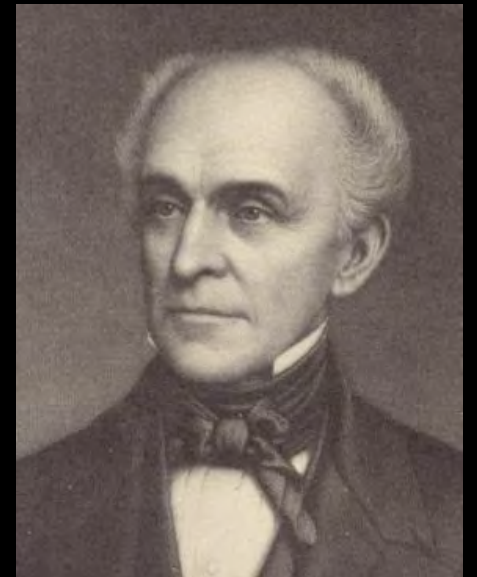
- **James Madison**

- **George Washington**

Edward Coles



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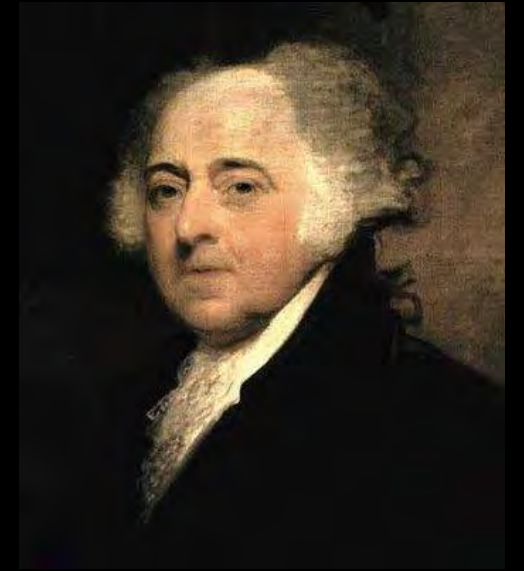


- Abigail Adams

- John Adams

- Lafayette

- Maria Cosway



Jefferson's Daughters

Martha ("Patsy")
Jefferson Randolph
(1772-1836)



Maria ("Polly")
Jefferson Eppes (1778-
1804)



From Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson, 28 March 1787

- It is **your future happiness** which **interests me**, and nothing can contribute more to it (moral rectitude always excepted) than the contracting **a habit of industry and activity**. **Of all the cankers of human happiness, none corrodes it with so silent, yet so baneful a tooth, as indolence**. Body and mind both unemployed, our being becomes a burthen,...Consider therefore the **conquering your Livy** as an exercise in the habit of surmounting difficulties, a habit which will be necessary to you in the country where you are to live, and without which you will be thought a very helpless animal, and less esteemed. **Music, drawing, books, invention and exercise** will be so many resources to you against ennui. But there are others which to this object add that of utility. These are **the needle, and domestic oeconomy**.

- No body in this world can make me so happy, or so miserable as you. Retirement from public life will ere long become necessary for me. To your sister and yourself I look to render the evening of my life serene and contented. It's morning has been clouded by loss after loss till I have nothing left but you. I do not doubt either your affection or dispositions. But great exertions are necessary, and you have little time left to make them. Be industrious then, my dear child.

JEFFERSON DEMANDED PERPETUAL PROOF OF THEIR AFFECTIONS AND THEY RETURNED THE FAVOR:

- **LETTER OF PATSY TO HER FATHER:** “Dearest and adored Father the heart swellings with which I address you when absent and look forward to your return convince me of the folly or want of feeling of those who dare to Think that **any new ties*** can weaken the first and best of nature --- the first sensations of my life were affection and respect for you and none others in the course of it have weakened or surpassed them.”
- *Note: She was recently married!
- **“Psychological incest”** – Mary Beth Norton



GEORGE
WASHINGTON
(1732 – 1799)

Thomas Jefferson to Philip Mazzei, Apr. 24. 1796

- The aspect of our politics has wonderfully changed since you left us. In place of that noble love of liberty and republican government which carried us triumphantly thro' the war, an Anglican, monarchical and aristocratical party has sprung up, whose avowed object is to draw over us the substance as they have already done the forms of the British government... Against us are the Executive, the Judiciary, two out of three branches of the legislature, all of the officers of the government, all who want to be officers, all timid men who prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty,...

- "It would give you a fever were I to name to you the apostates who have gone over to these heresies, men who were Samsons in the field and Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot England."

Effect of this letter:

- Once published, it effectively ended his cordial relationship with Washington.
- The letter shows us how Jefferson saw his political opponents at this time, as apostates and heretics and traitors.

James Madison (1751-1836)

- Jefferson's **closest friend** and often alter ego.
- He spent a good part of his life **"talking Jefferson off the ledge."** (Clay Jenkinson)
- **"...the shrewdest student of the Jefferson psyche ever placed on earth."** (Ellis)



Letter# 1: To James Madison from Thomas Jefferson, 28 October 1785

- FONTAINEBLEAU Oct. 28. 1785.
- DEAR SIR
- Seven o'clock, and retired to my fireside, I have determined to enter into conversation with you; this is a village of about 5000 inhabitants, when the court is not here and 20,000 when they are,...I set out yesterday morning to take a view of the place. ...I fell in with a poor woman walking at the same rate with myself & going the same course. Wishing to know the condition of the labouring poor I entered into conversation with her
-

- proceeded to enquiries into her vocation, condition & circumstance. She told me she was a day labourer, at 8. sous or 4 d. sterling the day; that she had two children to maintain, & to pay a rent of 30 livres for her house (which would consume the hire of 75 days) that often she could get no employment, and of course was without bread. As we had walked together near a mile & she had so far served me as a guide, I gave her, on parting, 24 sous. She burst into tears of a gratitude which I could perceive was unfeigned, because she was unable to utter a word. She had probably never before received so great an aid.

- This little attendrissement (compassion), with the solitude of my walk led me **into a train of reflections on that unequal division of property** which occasions the numberless instances of wretchedness which I had observed in this country & is to be observed all over Europe. The property of this country is absolutely centered in a very few hands,...**the most numerous of all the classes, that is, the poor who cannot find work.** I asked myself what could be the reason that so many should be permitted to beg who are willing to work, in a country where there is a very considerable proportion of uncultivated lands? These lands are kept idle mostly for the sake of game. It should seem then that it must be **because of the enormous wealth of the proprietors**

- I am conscious that an equal division of property is impracticable. But the consequences of this enormous inequality producing so much misery to the bulk of mankind, ...Another means of silently lessening the inequality of property is to exempt all from taxation below a certain point, & to tax the higher portions of property in geometrical progression as they rise. Whenever there is in any country, uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural right. The earth is given as a common stock for man to labour & live on. ...it is not too soon to provide by every possible means that as few as possible shall be without a little portion of land.

- The next object which struck my attention in my walk was the deer with which the wood abounded...I saw a man cutting fern. I went to him under pretence of asking the shortest road to the town, & afterwards asked for what use he was cutting fern. Note: He goes on to reflect on various fruits, the vines that someone is collecting for him, wine, etc.

From James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 19 June 1786

- DEAR SIR
- Since my last which was of the 18th. of May¹ I have recd. your very agreeable favor of the 28th. of Octobr. I began to fear it had miscarried. Your reflections on the idle poor of Europe, form a valuable lesson to the Legislators of every Country, and particularly of a new one.
- COMMENT: Beginning typically with praise of Jefferson's letter, Madison will go on, politely, to try to punch holes in it.
- (Cf. "James Madison," R. Brookhiser, pp. 39-40)

Letter #2: To James Madison from Thomas Jefferson, 20 December 1787

- ...adding a few words on the Constitution proposed by our Convention. I like much the general idea of...I will now add what I do not like. First the omission of a bill of rights...Let me add that a bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular, & what no just government should refuse or rest on inference. The second feature I dislike, and greatly dislike, is the abandonment in every instance of the necessity of rotation in office, and most particularly in the case of the President.

Jefferson suggests a new constitution!

- I do not pretend to decide what would be **the best method of procuring the establishment of the manifold good things in this constitution, and of getting rid of the bad.** Whether by adopting it in hopes of **future amendment, or,** after it has been duly weighed & canvassed by the people, after seeing the parts they generally dislike, & those they generally approve, to say to them ‘We see now what you wish. Send together your deputies again, let them frame a constitution for you omitting what you have condemned, & establishing the powers you approve.

Letter #3: To James Madison from Thomas Jefferson, 6 September 1789 – “the earth belongs... to the living”

- The question Whether one generation of men has a right to bind another, seems never to have been started either on this or our side of the water...I set out on this ground, which I suppose to be self-evident ‘*that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living*’: that the dead have neither powers nor rights over it.
- COMMENT: Jefferson goes on to say that **financial obligations “sunset” after 34 yrs. and laws as well:** “No society can make a perpetual constitution or even a perpetual law.”

Madison's Response:

- Madison replies as always: first, praise, then a different way of looking at all this: 1) scrapping constitutions every 34 years would render them flimsy; 2) the past is not only a burden because the dead pass on improvements as well; 3) if people expect a clean sweep every 34 years, they will game the system in the run-up to the deadline.
- Madison suggests an alternative way of looking at time and rights: “tacit assent may be inferred where no positive dissent appears.”
- Finally, majority rule depends on tacit assent.

Brookhiser's summation:

- “Jefferson and Madison were revolutionary politicians trying to define the freedom they had helped win. Jefferson was searching for freedom’s furthest ramifications; Madison was helping him test what was right and practical.” (“James Madison,” R.Brookhiser, p. 41.)

To James Madison from Thomas Jefferson, 17 February 1826 – “Take care of me when dead...”

- Jefferson begins this letter by talking about the University of Virginia, then the embarrassing problem of **his own debts** and then he says this:
- “The friendship which has subsisted between us, now half a century, and the harmony of our political principles and pursuits, have been sources of constant happiness to me thro’ that long period...It has also been a great solace to me to believe that you are engaged in vindicating to posterity the course we have pursued...Take care of me when dead, and be assured that I shall leave with you my last affections.”

James Madison writing about Jefferson in 1832:

- “Allowances also ought to be made for a habit in Mr. Jefferson as in others of great genius of expressing in strong and round terms, impressions of the moment.”
- Brookhiser: “Jefferson wrote memorably, like Homer. But before you take Homer for a guide to living, consult a scholar. Like Madison.”
- (“James Madison,” R. Brookiser, p. 242)

A Jefferson
letter on
slavery



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- But first, a synopsis of Jefferson's changing views on slavery:



IN 1769

- as a **member of the Virginia House of Burgesses**, Jefferson is poised to propose a bill which would allow owners to free their slaves without acquiring permission from the governor or council as Virginia law required. As a junior member, **he defers to Ricard Bland**, a senior colleague, to propose the bill while he seconds it. **Result: an avalanche of invective and the destruction of Bland's career.**

IN 1770

- Jefferson agrees to represent a young man, the grandson of a mulatto slave, suing for his freedom. Virginia law stated that slave status was inherited from the mother and made no exceptions for children or grandchildren. **Jefferson** challenged the law with language that undermined the assumptions on which slavery rested: “ We assert that under the law of nature all men are born free and everyone comes into the world with a right to his own person.”
- **The judge dismissed Jefferson’s argument** as a sentimental irrelevancy.

IN 1774

- This statement appears in Jefferson's *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*:
- "The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in these colonies...it is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa."
- Note: Without evidence, Jefferson was asserting that slavery, the Colonies agreed, was a vestige of British policy that must be ended.

A MOMENT OF REFLECTION:

- “Jefferson’s opposition to slavery operated at an elevated region of his mind, which never descended to the ground he walked and that his slaves at Monticello worked. **There is** no evidence he gave any consideration to emancipating his own slaves or ever declaring his intention to do so at some point in the future... He knew where history had been and where it was now headed. In his mind’s eye he saw that the end of slavery was already baked into Virginia’s future.
- “American Dialogue,” J. Ellis, pp. 22-23

IN 1782

- Jefferson drafts a **proposal for implementing a policy of gradual emancipation in Virginia**. All slaves born after a specific date would be freed at birth, live with their parents until they had acquired the necessary skills to survive on their own, then be **transported outside Virginia**, presumably to the unsettled western territories.

IN 1784

- As delegate to the Confederation Congress, **Jefferson** chairs the committee to establish rules for the creation of territories and then states between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi acquired in the Treaty of Paris (1783). He **produces the**
- **Ordinance of 1784** which sets three conditions: 1) complete equality with the other states; 2) no hereditary titles and aristocratic privileges; 3) **an end to all forms of slavery by no later than 1800**. The last was seriously considered and **lost by one vote!**

**SUMMING UP JEFFERSON & SLAVERY: 1769 -
1784**

**THIS EFFORT BY JEFFERSON TO BLOCK
SLAVERY'S EXPANSION WAS ALSO HIS
LAST ACT AS A PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR
EMANCIPATION.**

JEFFERSON IN PARIS: 1784 – 1789: His attitude towards slavery changes.

- Why? “Notes on the State of Virginia” is published in which Jefferson
- denounces slavery and talks about the moral corruption it brings to whites. Slavery is pictured as an all consuming culture of depravity which will sink Virginia into an economic abyss. He talks about the need to transport blacks elsewhere for a variety of reasons not the least of which is that they are inferior to whites which he thinks is self-evident.

- Jefferson expresses the hope that the rising generations of Virginia would eventually rise to the task of eliminating slavery. The work of the next generation becomes a familiar refrain.
- He realizes that shipping freed slaves elsewhere is no simple matter. This realization reinforces his reticence on the larger question of slavery.
- This is the origin of his enduring posture as master of Monticello, namely,...

- Not to be a leader in freeing his slaves but “to keep families intact under his patriarchal gaze while the stars aligned as he believed they would.

• LEADERSHIP MEANT WAITING.”

- “American Dialogue,” J. Ellis, pp. 27-28

IN 1787

- **Sally Hemings**, 14 years old, mulatto slave **arrives in Paris** accompanying Maria (Polly), Jefferson's younger daughter.
- **1787 – 1789 Jefferson and Hemings become sexual partners**, almost a decade after Jefferson warned against racial mixing in *Notes*. Jefferson begins to live a lie and knows it.
- **His private secretary, William Short**, knowing of the relationship, **suggests** in a letter that **he might want to rethink his position on racial amalgamation**.

SUMMARY

- Jefferson never answered Short's letter.
- Never changed his rationale for making emancipation contingent upon deporting all freed blacks.
- Did not abandon his sexual partnership with Sally Hemings.

CONCLUSION

- The Jefferson who leaves Paris in 1789 is no longer the clear-eyed critic of slavery who had arrived four years earlier.
- In the upper reaches of his mind, Jefferson the Visionary still had moral certainty that slavery was a doomed institution and that the American Revolution would overwhelm it.

• BUT

- In his daily life, none of these abiding truths led anywhere!

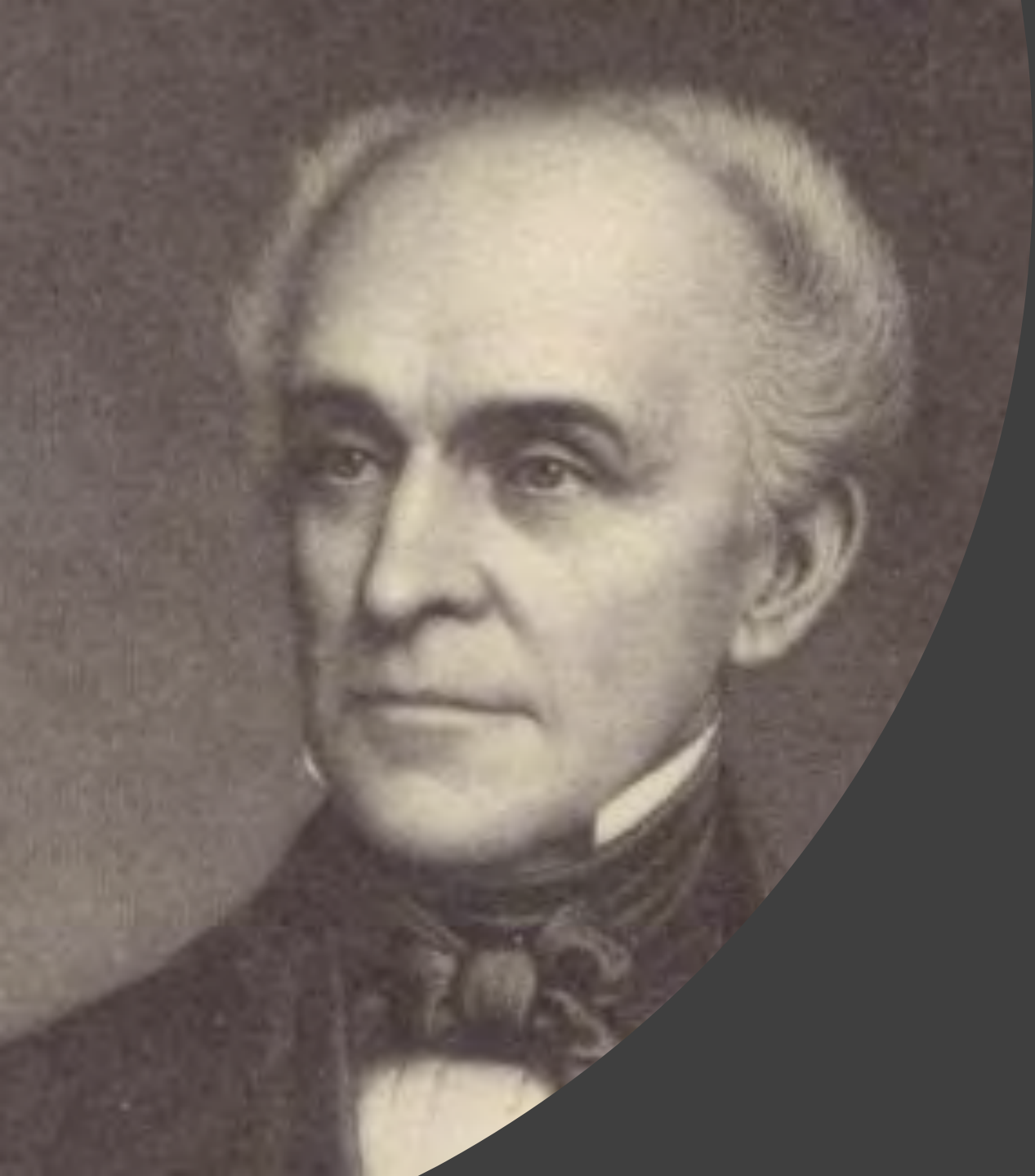
EARLY 1790s, THE DUC de LA
ROCHEFOUCAULD-LIANCOURT VISITS
MONTICELLO AND LATER COMMENTS ON
JEFFERSON & SLAVERY:

“American Dialogue,” J. Ellis, p. 30

- “The generous and enlightened Mr. Jefferson cannot but demonstrate a desire to see these negroes emancipated. But he sees so many difficulties in their emancipation, even postponed, he **adds so many conditions** to render it practicable, that it is thus reduced to the impossible. He keeps, for example, the opinion he advanced in his notes that the negroes of Virginia can **only be emancipated all at once, and by exporting to a distance the whole black race**. He basis his opinion on the **certain danger**, if there were nothing else, of seeing blood mixed without means of preventing it.”

Ellis adds this one damning sentence to the Duke's comments:

- At the time of the good duke's visit, Sally Hemings was nursing Jefferson's second child.



Edward Coles (1786 – 1868)

Letters between Edward Coles and Thomas Jefferson

- **Edward Coles (1786-1868)** was a private secretary to James Madison, governor of Illinois, and abolitionist. He came from a prominent Virginia family. Coles shared an **interesting correspondence with Jefferson regarding slavery**. He pushed Jefferson onto the subject of slavery. In an attempt to get Jefferson to publicly support a plan for gradual emancipation, Coles flattered and cajoled Jefferson by appealing to the moralist, the statesman, and the author of the Declaration of Independence.

- This letter provoked one of Jefferson's most famous letters, but Jefferson made no promise of a public statement and left the emancipation fight to the younger generation. Coles tried one last time on September 26, 1814, but there is no surviving response from Jefferson.

Thomas Jefferson to Edward Coles, Aug. 25, 1814

- **The love of justice and the love of country plead equally the cause of these people (slaves), and it is a moral reproach to us that they should have pleaded it so long in vain, and should have produced not a single effort, nay I fear not much serious willingness to relieve them & ourselves from our present condition of moral & political reprobation.**

- Note: Jefferson then gives a brief survey of his early efforts to do something about slavery and sums up 40 years of history thus: **From an early stage of our revolution other & more distant duties were assigned to me, so that from that time till my return from Europe in 1789, and I may say till I returned to reside at home in 1809, I had little opportunity of knowing the progress of public sentiment here on this subject. I had always hoped that the younger generation ...**
- **Yet the hour of emancipation is advancing, in the march of time. It will come;**

- For men probably of any color, but of this color we know, brought from their infancy without necessity for thought or forecast, are by their habits rendered as incapable as children of taking care of themselves, and are extinguished promptly wherever industry is necessary for raising young. In the mean time they are pests in society by their idleness, and the depredations to which this leads them.

- **“Their amalgamation with the other color produces a degradation to which no lover of his country, no lover of excellence in the human character can innocently consent.”**
- **Note: Consider this sentence against the background of his approximately 25 year liaison with Sally Hemmings, a relationship that Coles, as a Virginia planter, was surely aware of!**

- Jefferson goes on to explain that he is now too old to take this issue on and then attempts to talk Coles out of his plan to emancipate his own slaves by writing this: **But in the mean time are you right in abandoning this property, and your country (Note: Virginia not the U.S.) with it? I think not.** My opinion has ever been that

- , until more can be done for them, we should endeavor, with those whom fortune has thrown on our hands, to feed and clothe them well, protect them from all ill usage, require such reasonable labor only (Note: Jefferson's nail factory!) as is performed voluntarily by freemen, and be led by no repugnancies to abdicate them, and our duties to them. **(Translation: Let's not free them but be benevolent patriarchs to them.)**

- Note: To his great credit, **Coles disregarded Jefferson's advice**, took his slaves out of Virginia to Illinois, set them free and arranged for them to make a life for themselves.



*The Final Years of
Thomas Jefferson*

Twilight at
MONTICELLO

ALAN PELL CRAWFORD

“We have the wolf by
the ears, and we can
neither hold him nor
safely let him go.” Letter
to J. Holmes (1820)

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Jefferson's Autobiography (1821)

- Wants posterity to realize that he regarded slavery as morally repulsive and incompatible with the principles on which the republic was founded so he writes this:
- “Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that **these people are to be free**....I tremble for my country when I reflect that **God is just**...”
- Lincoln uses Jefferson as his moral beacon in his Emancipation Proclamation, even using some of his language in his Second Inaugural Address.

Missouri Compromise (1820)

- The debate whether Missouri should enter the Union as a slave state thrusts Jefferson and his beliefs on slavery into the public spotlight and he becomes obsessed over it and warns of impending civil war.

- He describes it “like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror.”
- “We have the wolf by the ears and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go.”
- Leads him to his most pessimistic and fatalistic remarks about his country: “I regret that I am now to die in the belief, that the useless sacrifice of themselves by the generation of 1776...is to be thrown away by the unwise and unworthy passions of their sons, and that my only consolation is to be, that I live not to weep over it.”

END RESULT:

- Maine is admitted to the Union as a **free state (1820)** and balance is maintained by **Missouri entering as a slave state (1821)**.

The entire 1819 – 1820 congressional debate over the Missouri Question turned on the question of federal vs. state sovereignty.

- Adams believed that extending slavery into Missouri violated what the Founders had intended but doesn't write this to Jefferson because it would risk their friendship. Jefferson, of course, believes the opposite.
- "Diffusion" becomes Jefferson's new solution for the slavery question: allowing slavery to spread through the Western territories would gradually lead to its extinction.

- When Adams learns that Jefferson, Madison and Monroe have all embraced this “diffusion” strategy he fires off letters to his son, John Quincy, and his daughter in law declaring that the **Virginia dynasty had lost its collective mind.**

EFFECT OF ALL THIS ON JEFFERSON

- He limits his contacts --- Adams being the one exception --- to the most reactionary segments of southern political culture with its defense of slavery and doctrine of states rights.
- His language becomes more “hysterical and apocalyptic.” American Sphinx, Ellis, p. 325.
- Links his legacy to the destruction of the republic he had helped create.

AFTER ALL THIS...

- **WHY JEFFERSON?**

BOOKS BEING PUBLISHED THIS WEEK




Susan Wise Bauer

"Rethinking School"

Gordon Wood on the lasting importance of Jefferson (*Friends Divided: John Adams and Thomas Jefferson*):

- **“When he said in 1858 ‘all honor to Jefferson,’ (Lincoln) paid homage to the one Founder who he knew could explain why the breakup of the Union could not be allowed and why so many lives had to be sacrificed to maintain that Union. Lincoln knew what the Revolution had been and what it implied not just for Americans but for all humanity --- because Jefferson had told him so.” (Pages 432-433)**



Wait... I think
I hear the
Finish Line.

LAAAA
♪ ♪



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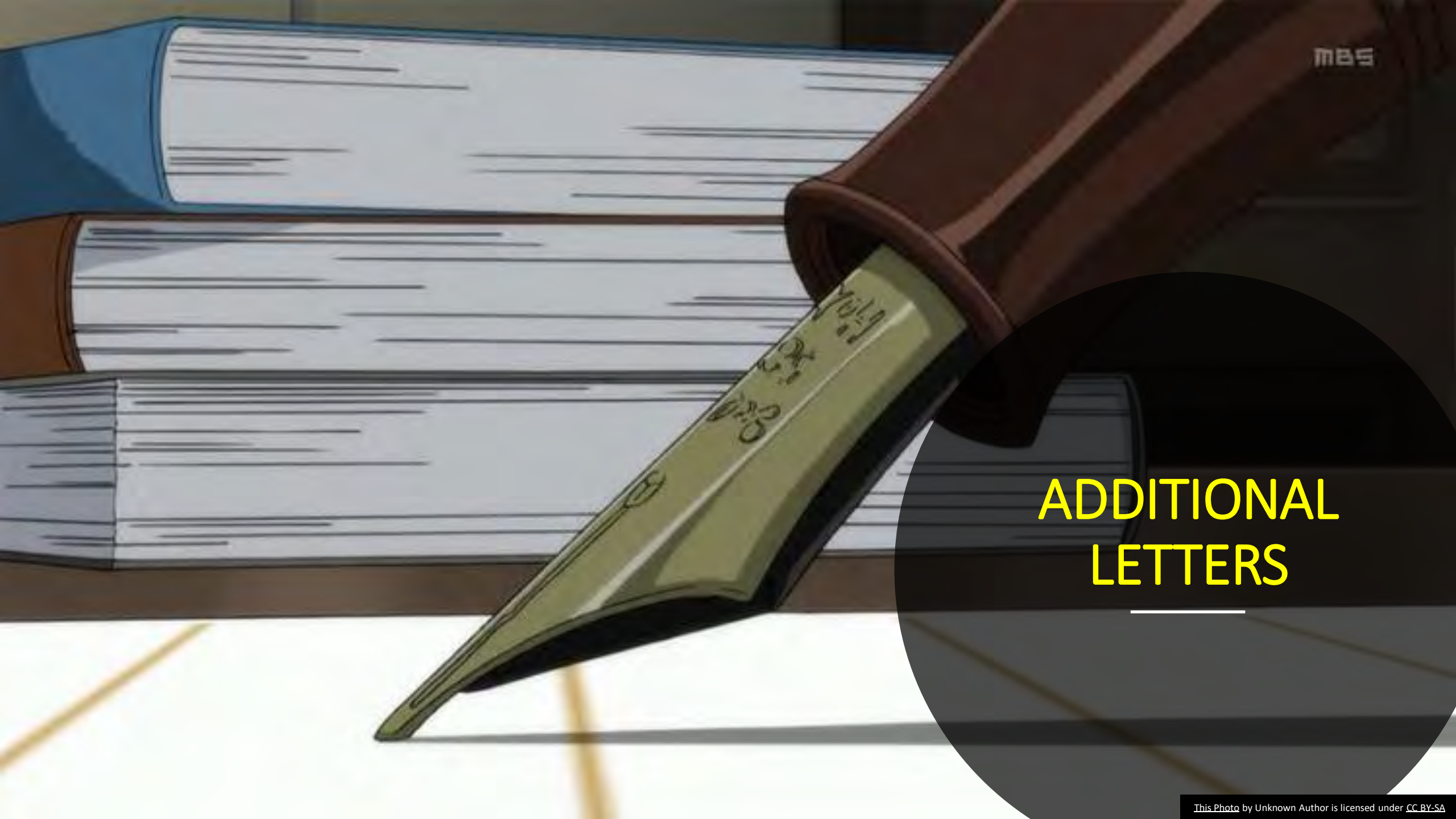
IF YOU HAVE
ANY
QUESTIONS I
CAN
ANSWER...

- **ASK THEM NOW BUT ONE
CAVEAT, PLEASE!**

• IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS I CAN'T ANSWER...



PUT A SOCK IN
IT!



MBS

ADDITIONAL LETTERS

ADDENDUM:

- A QUESTION WAS RAISED DURING CLASS RE. MY ASSERTION THAT Theodore Roosevelt wrote approximately 150,00 letters. The questioner maintained that it was mathematically impossible.
- Clay Jenkinson, a recognized TR expert, cites that number. A check of the internet indicates that others cite it also.
-



Maria Cosway (1760-1838) Italy

- One of the most important women in Jefferson's life and the recipient of "the most self-revealing letter he ever wrote in October 1786..." Ellis, *American Spinx*

From Thomas Jefferson to Maria Cosway, 12 October 1786 (Note: “The most self-revealing letter he (TJ) ever wrote.” “American Sphinx,” J. Ellis, p. 112.

- 12 pages, 4,000 words
- [MY DEAR] MADAM1
- Having performed the last sad office of handing you into your carriage at the Pavillon de St. Denis, and seen the wheels get actually into motion, I turned on my heel and walked, more dead than alive, to the opposite door, where my own was awaiting me...
- Seated by my fire side, solitary and sad, **the following dialogue took place between my Head and my Heart.**

- Ellis: The letter is written in the form of a dialogue between J's head and heart. "It is a love letter and, therefore, the powers of the heart are privileged. The heart has the last word as well as the best lines (i.e., "Had they (philosophers) ever felt the solid pleasure of one generous spasm of the heart, they would exchange for it all the frigid speculations of their lives...")...at another level it is Jefferson's head that is orchestrating the argument and words of the dialogue. The art of crafting the letter allowed him to recover control over the powerful emotions that the relationship with Cosway had released...In the long run the head prevails."

AFTERMATH: T J and Maria Cosway

- Jefferson and Cosway never met again. However, they kept corresponding with one another up until his death in 1826.
- Cosway founded a girl's school in Paris from 1803 to 1809. When it closed, she founded a Catholic girl school and convent in Lodi, northern Italy which she directed until her death in 1839.



Lafayette
(1757-1834)

From Thomas Jefferson to Lafayette, 11 April 1787

- I am constantly roving about, to see what I have never seen before and shall never see again. It will be a great comfort to [you to know, from your own inspection, the condition of all the provinces of your own country, and it will be interesting to them at some future day to be known to you. This is perhaps the only moment of your life in which you can acquire that knowledge. And to do it most effectually **you must be absolutely incognito, you must ferret the people out of their hovels as I have done, look into their kettles, eat their bread, loll on their beds under pretence of resting yourself, but in fact to find if they are soft.**

- You will feel a sublime pleasure in the course of this investigation, and a sublimer one hereafter when you shall be able to **apply your knolege to the softening of their beds, or the throwing a morsel of meat into the kettle of vegetables.**

Abigail Adams



From Abigail Smith Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 20 May 1804

Had you been no other than the private inhabitant of Monticelo, I should e'er this time, have addrest you with that Sympathy which a recent even has awakened in my Bosom, but reasons of various kinds withheld my pen, untill the powerfull feelings of my Heart, burst through the restraints, and call'd upon me **to shed the tear of sorrow over the departed remains of your beloved and deserving daughter, an Event which I most Sincerely mourn.**

- **The attachment which I formed for her, when you committed her to my care upon her arrival in a foreign land, under circumstances peculiarly interesting, has remained with me to this hour, and the recent account of her death which I read in a late paper, recall'd to my recollection the tender Scene of her seperation from me, when with the strongest Sensibility she clung arround my neck & wet my Bosom with her tears, saying Oh now I have learned to Love you, why will they take me from you.**

To Abigail Adams Washington, June 13, 1804

- DEAR MADAM,
- -- The affectionate sentiments which you have had the goodness to express in your letter of May 20. towards my dear departed daughter, have awakened in me sensibilities natural to the occasion, and recalled your kindnesses to her which I shall ever remember with gratitude and friendship. ...thankful for the occasion furnished me of expressing my regret that circumstances should have arisen which have seemed to draw a line of separation between us. The friendship with which you honoured me has ever been valued, and fully reciprocated;

- I can say with truth that **one act of Mr. Adams's life, and one only, ever gave me a moment's personal displeasure. I did consider his last appointments to office as personally unkind.** They were from among my most ardent political enemies, from whom no faithful cooperation could ever be expected, and laid me under the embarrassment of acting thro' men whose views were to defeat mine; or to encounter the odium of putting others in their places. **It seemed but common justice to leave a successor free to act by instruments of his own choice.** If my respect for him did not permit me to ascribe the whole blame to the influence of others, it left something for friendship to forgive, and after brooding over it for some little time, and not always resisting the expression of it, **I forgave it cordially, and returned to the same state of esteem and respect for him which had so long subsisted.**

From Abigail Smith Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 1 July 1804

- Quincy July 1st 1804
- Sir
- **your Letter of June 13th came duly to hand**; if it had contained no other Sentiments and opinions than those which my Letter of condolence could have excited, and which are expressed in the first page of your reply, our correspondence would have terminated here: but **you have been pleased to enter upon some Subjects which call for a reply**: and as you observe that you have wished for an opportunity to express your Sentiments, I have given to them every weight they claim.

- “one act of Mr Adams Life, and *one* only, you repeat, ever gave me a moments personal displeasure. I did think his last appointments to office personally unkind. they were from among my most ardent political Enemies” ...The constitution empowers the president to fill up offices as they become vacant. This was done by president Washington equally, in the last days of his administration...I have never felt any enmity towards you Sir for being elected president of the United States, but the instruments made use of, and the means which were practised to effect a change, have my utter abhorrence and detestation, for they were the blackest calumny and foulest falshoods.

- I rely upon the Friendship you still profess for me, and (I am conscious I have done nothing to forfeit it), to excuse the freedom of this discussion to which you have led with an unreserve, which has taken off the shackles I should otherways have found myself embarrassed with—and **now Sir I will freely disclose to you what has severed the bonds of former Friendship, and placed you in a light very different from what I once view'd you in—**

- one of the first acts of your administration was to liberate a wretch who was suffering the just punishment of the Law due to his crimes for writing and publishing the basest libel, the lowest and vilest Slander, which malice could invent, or calumny exhibit against the Character and reputation of your predecessor,...the remission of Callenders fine was a public approbation of his conduct.

- Untill I read Callenders 7th Letter containing your compliment to him as a writer and your reward of 50 dollars, I could not be made to believe, that such measures could have been resorted to; to stab the fair fame, and upright intentions of one, who to use your own language, “was acting from an honest conviction in his own mind that he was right.” this Sir I considerd as a personal injury. **this was the Sword that cut assunder the Gordian knot, which could not be untied by all the efforts of party Spirit, by Rivalship by Jealousy or any other Malignant fiend.**

- The Serpent you cherished and warmed, bit the hand that nourished him, and gave you Sufficient Specimens of his talents, his gratitude, his justice and his truth. ...This Letter is written in confidence—No Eye but my own has seen what has passed. Faithfull are the wounds of a Friend—often have I wished to have seen a different course pursued by you. I bear no malice I cherish no enmity. I would not retaliate if I could—nay more in the true Spirit of christian Charity, I would forgive, as I hope to be forgiven. and with that disposition of mind & heart— / I Subscribe the Name of
- Abigail Adams

John Adams & Thomas Jefferson

- ***You and I ought not to die before we have explained ourselves to each other.*** – John Adams writing to Thomas Jefferson



- “The most significant correspondence (158 letters) between former American presidents in our nation’s history.”

To John Adams from Thomas Jefferson, 13 November 1818

- The public papers, my dear friend, announce the fatal event of which your letter of Oct. 20. had given me **ominous foreboding**. I tried myself, in the school of affliction, by the loss of every form of connection which can rive the human heart, I know well, and feel what you have lost, what you have suffered, are suffering, and have yet to endure. The same trials have taught me that, for ills so immeasurable, **time and silence are the only medicines**.

- I will not therefore, by useless condolences, open afresh the sluices of your grief nor, altho' mingling sincerely my tears with yours, will I say a word more, where words are vain, but that it is of some comfort to us both that the term is not very distant at which we are to deposit, in the same cerement, our sorrows and suffering bodies, and to ascend in essence to an ecstatic meeting with the friends we have loved & lost and whom we shall still love and never lose again. God bless you and support you under your heavy affliction.



LETTER TO THE DANBURY BAPTISTS

Jefferson To The Danbury Baptists, Jan. 1, 1802

- Believing with you **that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God**, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, ...
- I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should “make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” thus building **a wall of separation between Church and State.**

The Treaty of Tripoli signed in 1796, was the first treaty between the United States of America.

- signed in Tripoli on November 4, 1796, ...
- ratified by the United States Senate unanimously without debate on June 7, 1797, taking effect June 10, 1797, with the signature of President John Adams.
- Adams statement: “...I John Adams, President of the United States of America, **having seen and considered** the said Treaty do, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, **accept, ratify, and confirm the same**, and every clause and article thereof.”

The Treaty of Tripoli, 1796

- Art. 11. As the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion; as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility, of Mussulmen (Muslims);
- NOTE: A superseding treaty, the Treaty of Peace and Amity signed on July 4, 1805, omitted this phrase.