

## THOMAS JEFFERSON: A CHRONOLOGY

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1743 Born at Shadwell, on Rivanna River below present-day Charlottesville, Virginia

1757 Death of his father Peter Jefferson; inherits a few books from him

1758 At school of 'correct classical scholar' James Maury

1760-2 Attends College of William & Mary, Williamsburg. *Partie quarrée* with William Small, George Wythe, and Francis Fauquier

1762-7 Law student under Wythe; admitted to bar 1767

1769 First elected to VA House of Burgesses. Starts ground-clearing and construction of first Monticello

1770 Shadwell fire destroys his first library. Immediately start restocking and advises Robert Skipwith what to buy

1772 Marriage to Martha Wayles Skelton; in 1773 inherits her father's estate, slaves, and, especially, debts which are never fully repaid

1774 *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* published (not by TJ)

1776 At Continental Congress in Philadelphia, drafts Declaration of Independence.

1776-9 Member of VA House of Delegates. Starts revision of VA legal code. Meets James Madison and starts work on VA Declaration of Religious Freedom

1779-81 Governor of VA

1781 When term has expired but successor not yet in post, has to flee Benedict Arnold raid on Monticello. Assembly discusses possible censure. Lifelong enmity with Patrick Henry begins then if not earlier.

1782 Death of wife from complications of labour. TJ first appointed on abortive mission to France

1784 Appointed minister plenipotentiary to France in joint mission; arrives November with older daughter Patsy and slave James Hemings, one of a large extended family acquired from TJ's father-in-law's estate. Becomes sole Minister in 1785.

1786 Enactment of VA Declaration of Religious Freedom. TJ tours English gardens with John Adams

1787 After hearing of death of Lucy, whose birth had brought on her mother's death, negotiates at length to bring younger surviving daughter Polly to Paris. She is accompanied by James Hemings' sister Sally, who is the half-sister of TJ's late wife

1787 Madison writes to TJ with news of draft US constitution; TJ replies.

1787-9 TJ coordinates an international group of journalists and publicists to celebrate the US revolution and constitution (despite his misgivings). *Notes on Virginia* published in London 1788

1789 Opening stages of French Revolution. TJ an active participant. Lafayette and others plot strategy in his house. Advises Lafayette on (what becomes the) Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. Connection with Condorcet results in Condorcetian probability calculations in 'the Earth belongs in usufruct to the living' letter to Madison. Leave of absence September (expecting to return but never does). The Hemings siblings return with him to slavery, supported

by 'implicit promise' of freedom on TJ's death. Sally probably pregnant with a child who dies at birth.

1790 Appointed Secretary of State in Washington administration. Martha (Patsy) marries her cousin almost immediately on return. TJ starts planning demolition and reconstruction of Monticello. Report on Weights & Measures; start of intense dispute with Alexander Hamilton (Secretary to the Treasury) on proposals in AH's Report on Public Credit.

1793 Resigns and returns to Monticello.

1797 Runs for presidency on behalf of incipient Democratic-Republican party. Comes second, which under the constitution as it stands makes him vice-president to John Adams (of the incipient Federalist Party). Plans *Manual of Parliamentary Practice* to guide procedure in the Senate.

1797 Scientific paper on 'megalonyx' fossil

1798 – 1800. Bitter factional politics. TJ accused of Francomania; John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, and other Federalists accused of Anglomania and of yearning for monarchy. With Madison, drafts resolutions opposing the Alien and Sedition Acts and suggesting that states have right to secede.

1800 Bitter factional election. TJ gets plurality of popular vote but ties with Aaron Burr in electoral college. Election thrown into House of Representatives; TJ elected president on 36<sup>th</sup> ballot, March 1801.

1802 Danbury Letter extolling 'wall of separation between Church and State' in federal constitution. First appearance in print of allegation of TJ liaison with 'dusky Sally'

1803 'Syllabus of an Estimate of the merit of the doctrines of Jesus...' sent to Benjamin Rush and Joseph Priestley, in vain hope that one of them will fill it out. Both decline; TJ decides to do the job himself, compiling 'Philosophy of Jesus' by clipping two New Testaments. Authorizes Louisiana Purchase from France. Commissions Lewis and Clark expedition to find navigation route to Pacific and report on natural history of the Missouri basin and of territory to be discovered.

1804. TJ easily wins re-election. Second term starts in March 1805. Embargo Act 1807 after clash between UK and US naval vessels.

1806 Lewis and Clark return, having lost only one expedition member to illness. TJ designs and commissions his mini-Monticello, Poplar Forest, as a vacation home. John Hemings is senior carpenter on project, later employing his nephews Madison and Eston Hemings (TJ's two youngest sons by Sally Hemings) as apprentices.

1806. Death of George Wythe by poisoning, probably by a disappointed relative. Library bequeathed to TJ, strengthening what is already the largest private library in the USA.

1809. Retirement to Monticello.

1812 Rupture with John Adams repaired; their correspondence resumes and continues until shortly before their deaths on July 4, 1826.

1815 Sells his library to Congress, and immediately starts rebuilding one in Monticello and another for Poplar Forest.

1817-25. Planning of University of Virginia. 'Academical village' in Charlottesville begun 1817. Presides over meeting of trustees at Rockfish Gap 1818. University chartered 1819; first students admitted 1825.

c. 1820 TJ completes second compilation of clippings 'The Life and Morals of Jesus', discovered after his death by his white family.

1821. Completes partial autobiography, using his papers for the period of his political career up to 1790, where it breaks off.

1823. Commissions Nicholas Trist to draw up corrected catalogue of his library sale to Congress.

1826 Draws up will March, emancipating five members of the Hemings family. Last letter to Mayor of Washington DC regretting inability to attend Fourth of July celebrations there due to ill health. Dies July 4<sup>th</sup>, reported last words 'Is it the Fourth?'. Later the same day, John Adams dies, reported last words 'Thomas Jefferson lives'. Estate hopelessly in debt. Monticello fixtures and fittings sold 1827, together with "130 Valuable Negroes". Martha Jefferson Randolph, his surviving daughter, moves to the 'quarter farm', Tufton, on the plantation. Poplar Forest bequeathed to TJ's grandson, the son of Maria, who had died in 1804.

1831. Monticello sold.

1873. Memoir of Madison Hemings published in *Pike County Republican*, March 1.

1998 DNA evidence collected by Eugene Foster (principal investigator) proves that descendants of Eston Hemings possessed Y-chromosome DNA that could only have come from a paternal ancestor of TJ.