

THOMAS JEFFERSON
A POWERFUL ADVOCATE FOR LIBERTY



By Patricia Owens
KFRW Americanism Chair



MONTICELLO

THE HOME OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

OPENED 1772

ARCHITECT; THOMAS JEFFERSON

COLONIAL REVIVAL ARCHITECTURE, NEOCLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE

BURIALS; THOMAS JEFFERSON, MARTHA JEFFERSON

THOMAS JEFFERSON

Powerful Advocate of Liberty

Across our great nation there seems to be a groundswell of protest against the leftist agenda of those who now hold power in the Executive and Legislative branches of government.

The tenor of this grassroots movement is growing louder as its number swells and its purpose becomes defined. It is a protest characterized as —a call for restoration of our Constitution's authority and return to its standard for Rule of Law---as expressed by the author of our Declaration of Independence---Thomas Jefferson.

As one of the most recognizable presidents of all time, Thomas Jefferson left his mark on America in a big way. This powerful advocate of liberty was born on April 13, 1743 in Albermarle County, Virginia. He was the eldest of two sons and also had six sisters.

Jefferson inherited from his father (who was a planter and surveyor) some 5000 acres of land-- - and from his mother (who was a Randolph)--- high social standing. He studied at the College of William and Mary, then read law. In 1772, he married Martha Skelton, a widow, and took her to live in his partly constructed mountaintop home, Monticello.

Freckled and sandy-haired, rather tall and awkward, Jefferson was eloquent as a correspondent---but he was no public speaker. So he contributed his pen (his writings) rather than his voice, to the patriot cause.

Thomas Jefferson returned from his post as minister to France in 1789, expecting to resume his private life at Monticello. **Instead, he learned that he had been appointed the nation's first Secretary of State by President George Washington.** For the next twenty years, with little break, he would play a leading role in the “experiment” of creating a national government.

From Jefferson's point of view, the experiment began badly. Most policies were set by the Treasury Secretary, Alexander Hamilton, who believed that “stability and order in Government...were essential to public strength and private security and happiness.”

Jefferson believed just the opposite: that private happiness is the SOURCE--- not the RESULT --- of stable government. He saw Hamilton's approach as a form of monarchy and a betrayal of democratic principles.

Those who shared Jefferson's views soon formed the Republican party, while Hamilton's supporters became known as the Federalists.

In 1798, while Jefferson was Vice President, attacks in the press led the Federalists to pass the Sedition Act, which outlawed all opposition to the government, whether by protest or in print.

Jefferson responded by drafting a resolution for the Kentucky legislature, --- (known as the Kentucky Resolution) that essentially claimed states have the right to overrule any federal law they believe to be unconstitutional. For Jefferson, government had become a struggle for power.

Two years later, Jefferson was himself President, brought to power by what he would call the Revolution of 1800, which swept Federalists out of office.

Thomas Jefferson considered the Declaration of Independence his greatest achievement. It marked the beginning of self-government in America, kindling a flame that he believed would eventually light the world. The Declaration was a PERSONAL achievement for Jefferson as well--- a masterpiece of eloquence that still inspires us today.

Throughout Jefferson's life, the idea that individual rights should have been protected was at the heart of his political statements. He was one of America's MOST POWERFUL ADVOCATES OF LIBERTY.

Thomas Jefferson himself had studied the previous failed attempts at government. He understood actual history, the nature of God, His laws and the nature of man.

John F. Kennedy once held a dinner in the White House for a group of the brightest minds in the nation at that time. He made this statement: "This is perhaps the assembly of the most intelligence ever to gather at one time in the White House---with the exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone."

In light of his wealth of knowledge and numerous contributions to America---the following is a time line of Jefferson's accomplishments and a summary of some of the contributions he made throughout his life to our nation as well as some of his most profound statements.

- ∴ **At 5, began studying under his cousin's tutor.**
- ∴ ***At 9, studied Latin, Greek and French.**
- ∴ ***At 14, studied classical literature and additional languages.**
- ∴ ***At 16, entered the College of William and Mary. Also could write in Greek with one hand while writing the same in Latin with the other.**
- ∴ ***At 19, studied law for 5 years starting under George Wythe.**
- ∴ ***At 23, started his own law practice.**
- ∴ ***At 25, was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses.**
- ∴ ***At 31, wrote the widely circulated "Summary View of the Rights of British America"---and retired from his law practice.**
- ∴ ***At 32, was a Delegate to the Second Continental Congress.**
- ∴ ***At 33, drafted the Declaration of Independence.**

- ⌚ **At 33, took three years to revise Virginia's legal code and wrote a Public Education Bill and a Statute for Religious Freedom.**
- ⌚ **At 36, was elected the second Governor of Virginia succeeding Patrick Henry.**
- ⌚ **At 40, served in Congress for two years.**
- ⌚ **At 41, was the American minister to France and negotiated commercial treaties with European nations along with Ben Franklin and John Adams.**
- ⌚ **At 46, served as the first Secretary of State under George Washington.**
- ⌚ **At 53, served as Vice President and was elected president of the American Philosophical Society.**
- ⌚ **At 55, drafted the Kentucky Resolutions and became the active head of Republican Party.**
- ⌚ **At 57, was elected the third President of the United States.**
- ⌚ **At 60, obtained the Louisiana Purchase doubling the nation's size.**
- ⌚ **At 61, was elected to a second term as President.**
- ⌚ **At 65, retired to Monticello.**
- ⌚ **At 80, helped President Monroe shape the Monroe Doctrine.**
- ⌚ **At 83, died on the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence along with John Adams.**

THOMAS JEFFERSON QUOTES

“When we get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, we shall become as corrupt as Europe.”

“The democracy will cease to exist when you take away from those who are willing to work and give to those who would not.”

“It is incumbent on every generation to pay its own debts as it goes---a principle which if acted on would save one-half the wars of the world.”

“I predict future happiness for Americans if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them.”

“My reading of history convinces me that most bad government results from too much government.”

“No free man shall ever be debarred the use of arms.”

“The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government.”

“The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.”

“To compel a man to subsidize with his taxes the propagation of ideas which he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical.”

“I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around the banks will deprive the people of all property-until their children wake up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered.”

“The STATES can best govern our home concerns and the GENERAL GOVERNMENT our foreign ones. I wish, therefore...never to see all offices transferred to Washington, where further withdrawn from the eyes of the people, they may more secretly be bought and sold at market...When all government...shall be drawn to Washington as the center of all power, it will render powerless the checks provided of one government on another...Were we directed from Washington when to sow, and when to reap--- we should SOON WANT BREAD.”

After hearing some of these---you might think that---perhaps---Thomas Jefferson had a crystal ball into the future.

Today's patriots are not yet calling for a revolution and bloodshed, but short of a revolution ---many of today's patriots are calling for restoration of our Constitution's authority---limiting the government's scope as to its original intent, and a return to the standard for Rule of Law.

Many of today's patriots believe--- that if we fail to accomplish this task--- and the Rule of Law is overwhelmed by the rule of men---tyranny and anarchy will prevail--- and then the ultimate arbiter of the law will depend---not upon constitutional rule ---but ultimately, and sadly, upon which of the rivals has more firepower.

So DID this powerful advocate of liberty---Thomas Jefferson---indeed have a crystal ball into the future???

One final Thomas Jefferson quote: “Honor, justice and humanity, forbid us tamely to surrender that freedom which we received from our gallant ancestors---and which our innocent posterity have a right to receive from us. We cannot endure the infamy and guilt of resigning succeeding generations to that wretchedness which inevitably awaits them, if we basely entail hereditary bondage on them.”

This quote from one of our country's EARLY patriots-Thomas Jefferson-summarizes the belief of many of today's patriots who share his beliefs.

