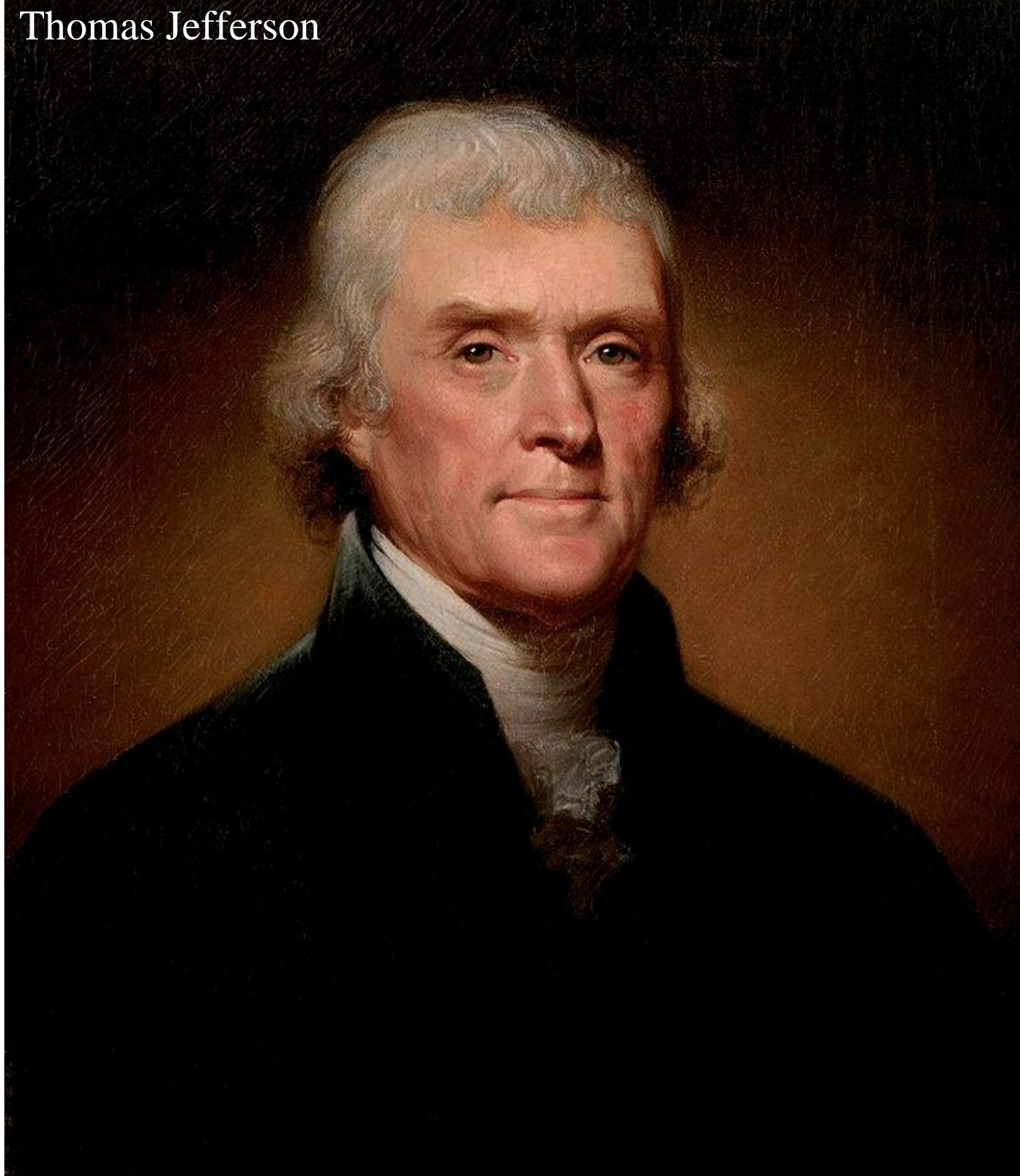


Thomas Jefferson



Biography

Born April 1743 in Virginia

↳ Father was a planter, slaveholder and land surveyor.

↳ Mother was the daughter of a ship's captain

↳ Within a few generations his Jefferson ancestors rose from tobacco farmers to county elite/wealthy.

1757 (age 14), father dies and the plantation was divided between Jefferson and his brother

Being a minor, Jefferson was under the guardianship of John Harvie (a military figure and planter)

↳ Jefferson inherits 5,000 acres (including Monticello) and 20-40 slaves. He took control of the property after he turned 21.

1759 (age 16) he started William and Mary College

1765 (age 22) his oldest sister Jane died at age 25.

↳ Jefferson falls into deep mourning; he was already missing his two other sisters – Martha (who married months earlier and left) and Mary (also married, and lived distant)

↳ At home with him were two younger sisters and two toddlers.

↳ *While growing up Jefferson struggled with loneliness and abandonment issues that eventually developed into a reclusive lifestyle as an adult.*

1767 (age 24) he becomes an attorney. He practices law through 1773.

Many personal tragedies during Jefferson's lifetime

- Childhood best friend, died in 20s
- His son-in-law was alcoholic and abusive toward his daughter Martha. (when they separated for several years, she and her 11 children came to Monticello to live, adding to Jefferson's financial hardships)
- Two nephews kill a slave (who had broken a tea cup)
- Jefferson outlived . . .
 - ▲ His father (Jefferson was 14)
 - ▲ His mother (dies 1776, right before independence)
 - ▲ His sister Jane, when he was 22
 - ▲ His wife Martha
 - ↳ Four children with Martha
 - ↳ Two were young...7 months (Jane) and 3 years (Lucy)
 - ✚ In a span of ten years, three of his children die
 - ▲ Three children with Sally Hemings
 - ▲ One grandchild

1768 (age 25), Jefferson begins construction of Monticello

↳ Construction was by Jefferson and his slave laborers, some of whom were master carpenters

1772 (age 29) he married Martha.

↳ A happy marriage by all accounts
↳ Of six children, only two survive to adulthood

1773, Martha's father John Wayles dies.

↳ Martha and Jefferson inherit his 135 slaves, 11,000 acres and the debts of the estate.
↳ Among the slaves was Betty Hemings and her ten children, the youngest six of whom were half-siblings of Martha. *See notes on Sally Hemings*

1782 Martha dies (diabetes and ill health)

↳ Jefferson was at his wife's bedside and was distraught after her death. In the following three weeks, Jefferson shut himself in his room, where he paced back and forth until he was nearly exhausted. Later he would often take long rides on secluded roads to mourn for his wife

1785 his youngest daughter Lucy dies (age 3) of whooping cough



1786 Jefferson met and fell in love with Maria Cosway

↳ An accomplished Italian-English artist and musician of 27. They saw each other frequently over a period of six weeks. A married woman, she returned to Great Britain, but they maintained a lifelong correspondence.

1787 Jefferson sent for his youngest child – Polly, then age 9 – to join him in France. Is accompanied by Sally Hemings

Jefferson is credited with inventing:

- The polygraph (a letter copying device; basically one pen attached to another pen which copied the first pens motion)
- credited with inventing a macaroni machine,
- a revolving chair with a leg rest and writing arm,
- new types of iron plows created especially for hillside plowing.
- designed beds for his home that were built into alcoves on webs of rope hung from hooks,
- automatic doors for his parlor.

In the buildup to revolutionary war

- ▲ 1774 following the passage of the Intolerable Acts by the British Parliament in 1774, Jefferson wrote a set of resolutions against the acts. Previous criticism of the Acts had focused on legal and constitutional issues, but Jefferson offered the radical notion that the colonists had **the natural right to govern themselves**. Jefferson argued that Parliament was the legislature of Great Britain only, and had no legislative authority in the colonies.
- ▲ 1775 served in the Continental Congress
- ▲ 1776 wrote the Declaration of Independence

During the Revolutionary War

- ▲ 1779, Jefferson was the Governor of Virginia
- ▲ 1781, General Cornwallis dispatched 250 men on a secret expedition to capture Jefferson. He escapes.

During the Articles of Confederation

- ▲ In 1785, Jefferson was appointed the United States Minister to France, and served through 1789
- ▲ Beginning in early September 1785, Jefferson collaborated with John Adams, US minister in London, to outline an anti-piracy treaty with Morocco.
 - ↳ Still in force today, it is the longest unbroken treaty relationship in U.S. history.
 - ↳ Working with the state of Virginia. He continued to support freehold suffrage, by which only property holders could vote
 - ↳ Advocated for religious freedom

During the Washington Presidency

- ▲ Secretary of State under Washington from 1790 to 1793.
- ▲ Jefferson and James Madison organized the Democratic-Republican Party to oppose the Federalist Party during the formation of the First Party System.
- ▲ Frequently at odds with Hamilton

During the Adams presidency

- ▲ Was vice president
- ▲ XYZ Affair, 1800
 - ↳ Fallout out with John Adams

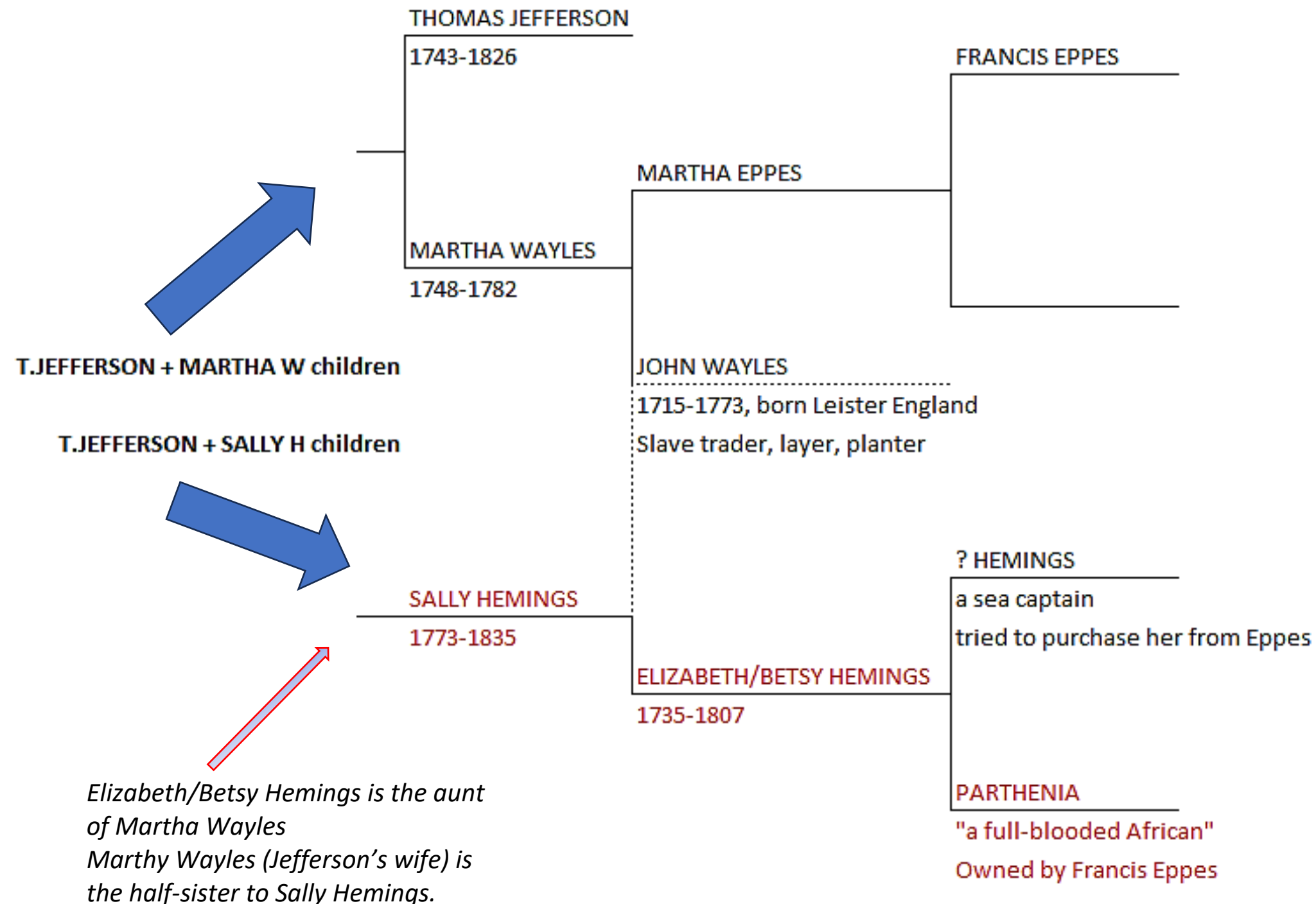
As president

- ▲ Louisiana Purchase
 - ↳ Promoted a western expansionist policy (Louisiana Purchase had doubled the nation's claimed land area).
 - ↳ To make room for settlement, Jefferson began the process of Indian tribal removal from the newly acquired territory.
- ▲ Set forth the Lewis and Clark Expedition
- ▲ Jefferson pursued the nation's shipping and trade interests against Barbary pirates and aggressive British trade policies
- ▲ As a result of peace negotiations with France, his administration reduced military forces.
- ▲ He was re-elected in 1804
 - ↳ ...But his second term was beset with difficulties at home:
 - ↳ including the trial of former vice president Aaron Burr.
 - ↳ In 1807, American foreign trade was diminished when Jefferson implemented the Embargo Act in response to British threats to U.S. shipping.
 - ↳ Jefferson signed the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves.

In retirement (post-presidency)

- ▲ After retiring from public office, Jefferson founded the University of Virginia
- ▲ Lived quietly at his Monticello home, increasingly isolated as his fellow Revolutionary generation all pass.

Jefferson and Sally Hemings



WHAT WE KNOW

- ❖ Rumors from the time suggested Thomas Jefferson had kids with his slave, Sally Hemings
 - ↳ Suggested connection: Angelica Schuyler-Church, Abigail Adams
 - ↳ Accusation of parentage: political rivals, including publicist James Callender (1758-1803)
 - ↳ Callender revealed the Hamilton-Reynolds affair, and other scandalmongering stories
- ❖ Children of Sally Hemings received their freedom as they turned age 21, or upon Jefferson's death.
 - ↳ Sally was never legally emancipated. Instead, Jefferson's daughter Martha 'unofficially freed' Sally.
- ❖ DNA evidence confirms that living Y-line (male) descendants of Jefferson and of Sally Hemings share a common Jefferson ancestor. Jefferson was the only Jefferson male who was near Sally nine months prior to every birth.

"Regards to Miss Sally"

- ❖ Marie Jacinthe de Botidoux to Jefferson's daughter Martha (they were old schoolmates), 1790

"...Untill the President [Washington] dies or resigns, when I suppose he [Jefferson] is to be invited from his Conversations with Egeria in the Groves, to take the Reins of the State, and conduct it forty Years in Piety and Peace.

(*"Conversations"* is a by-word for sex; *"familiar"* – appears in a different letter – is a by-word for intimate)

- ❖ John Adams to his son's Charles and John Quincy, 1794

She wrote of the closeness (in features) to Sally and Jefferson's daughter Mary.

- ❖ Angelica Schuyler-Church to Alexander Hamilton

"It is well known that the man, whom it delighteth the people to honor, keeps, and for many years past has kept, as his concubine, one of his own slaves," the story began. *"Her name is Sally."*

- ❖ publicist James Callender, in a newspaper column, 1802

What appears to have happened

(Documented)

- ❖ 1773 – The Hemings family are inherited by Jefferson and his wife. (Sally would be an infant)
- ❖ 1782 – Jefferson’s wife dies
- ❖ 1787-1789, Sally Hemings is in France with Jefferson. (Sally was age 14 or 15 upon arrival; she accompanied his youngest daughter there). Physical “Relationship” begins. She is pregnant when they return to the States
 - ↳ She agrees to return to Virginia with him when he promises to free her children when they came of age.
 - ↳ Source: PBS Boston, citing Jefferson/Sally’s son



What happened to Hemings after Jefferson's death?

Thomas Jefferson died in 1826.

- ↪ In his will, ALL of Hemings children were freed. But not Sally herself.
- ↪ Sally Hemings was never legally emancipated. Instead, she was unofficially freed – or “given her time” – by Jefferson's daughter Martha after his death.

SALLY HEMINGS

- 1830 Federal census: Sally Hemings and her sons Madison and Eston are listed as free white people in the 1830 census.
- 1833 Special Census (made after Nat Turner's Rebellion): Sally Hemings described herself as a free mulatto who had lived in Charlottesville since 1826.
- 1835 Madison Hemings reported that his mother lived in Charlottesville with him and his brother Eston until her death in 1835. The location of her grave is not known.

MADISON HEMINGS

- Madison resettled in southern Ohio in the late 1830s, where he worked at his trade and owned a farm.
- He chose to remain in the black community.
- He died in 1878.

ESTON HEMINGS

- A carpenter, he moved to Chillicothe, Ohio, after 1835
- There he was a well-known professional musician before moving around 1852 to Wisconsin, where he changed his surname to Jefferson along with his racial identity.
- He died in 1856.

BEVERLY HEMINGS

- Born 1798
- He became a carpenter and fiddle player
- Raised a family in Washington DC or Maryland

HARRIETT HEMINGS

- Born 1801, “ran away” in 1822
- She was a spinner in Jefferson's textile factory
- On her departure: Jefferson's employee gave her \$50 and stage fare for her destination.
- Believed to have gone to Washington DC, and “married a man of good standing” and raised a family.

Both were allowed to leave Monticello without being legally freed. They passed into White society and neither their connection to Monticello nor their African heritage was ever discovered.

*Historians and family members have been

Both Madison and Eston made known that they were sons of Thomas Jefferson.

ARGUMENTS HE IS SUPPORTIVE OF SLAVERY

- Jefferson owned about 600 slaves over his lifetime, the most being about 140 at a single time.
- As governor of Virginia c.1779, he proposed promoting army signups by giving a slave to all new enlistments.
- He feared that freeing slaves into existing American society would cause civil unrest between prejudiced white planters and vindictive freed slaves.
- He did not free a vast majority of his slaves.
- Jefferson had relations with a slave – Sally Hemings – resulting in four children
- 1795, under Washington's direction, he sent Haiti money to suppress a slave rebellion
- Most of the slaves he owned at the time of his death were sold to pay the debt of his estate.
- Jefferson brought slaves to work at the White House.

ARGUMENTS HE IS CRITICAL OF SLAVERY

- As a attorney he represented people of color as well as Whites.
- From the 1770s on, Jefferson wrote of supporting gradual emancipation, based on slaves being educated, freed after 18 for women and 21 for men (later he changed this to age 45, when their masters had a return on investment), and resettled to Africa
- 1775 - “All men are created equal...” “...natural rights...”
- By mid-1770s, he equated slavery with tyranny.
- 1775 - In drafting the Declaration of Independence he blames the King for forcing the slave trade on the colonies and refers to slavery as an “abominable crime.”
- 1778 - Jefferson supported a bill to prohibit the international slave trade in Virginia; the state was the first in the union to adopt such legislation
- 1783 - Jefferson wrote an ordinance banning slavery in all the nation's territories, but it failed by one vote. He attempted to prevent the expansion of slavery into the new territories
- 1807 - as President he bans the international slave trade.

ANALYSIS

- In the years after 1785 and Jefferson's return from Paris, the most notable thing about his position on slavery was his "immense silence". Historians believe that - in addition to having internal conflicts about slavery - Jefferson wanted to keep his personal situation private; for this reason, he chose to back away from working to end or make-better slavery.
- Jefferson may have supported colonization because of concerns for his unacknowledged "shadow family"

TRYING TO HAVE IT BOTH WAYS

- Jefferson freed two people during his life. He freed five people in his will (all male Hemings). He allowed two or three people to escape without pursuit, and recommended informal freedom for two others
- Jefferson argued for gradual emancipation and an end to slavery in his 1785 book (but also made clear racist beliefs)
- He advocated gradual emancipation and colonization of slaves already in the United States, rather than immediate manumission
- Jefferson felt slavery was an issue for each state to decide

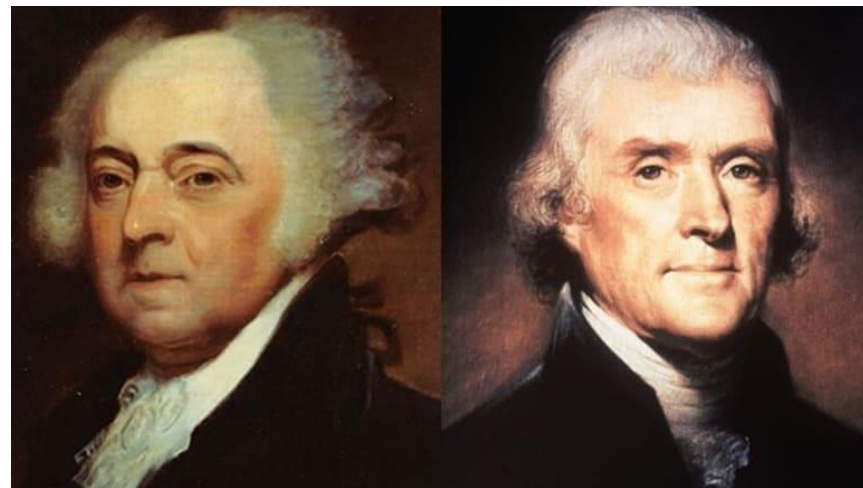
Jefferson and Adams

Both men expressed regret for the distance between them to common friends

Rekindling communication starting in 1812



28 October 1818
Abigail Adams dies of typhoid fever



4 July 1826

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson

50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence

↳ Jefferson's last words: (doctor) "*No Doctor, nothing more*"
(family) "*Is it the Fourth? Adams...*"

↳ Adams last words: "*Thomas Jefferson survives*"

Jefferson died a few hours before Adams