



JEFFERSON PAPERS

# First *Retirement Series* Volume is Completed

Work on *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series* has passed a major milestone: On Dec. 16, the editorial staff sent the first volume from Monticello to Princeton University Press.

The material in Volume 1 covers the period from March 4 to Nov. 15, 1809, with 544 documents, including letters both by and to Jefferson. The printed volume will inaugurate a new series in the definitive compilation of Jefferson's papers, a project that began at Princeton University in 1943 with the goal of printing, noting, or otherwise accounting for what the first editor, Julian Boyd, called "everything legitimately Jeffersonian by reason of authorship or of relationship."

Since 1950, Princeton has published 30 volumes in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: First Series*,

covering his life through January 1799, as well as five volumes in the topical Second Series, including Jefferson's account books and writings on religion and parliamentary practice. The Thomas Jefferson Foundation took over full editorial and financial responsibility for Jefferson's retirement years in 1999 as part of an innovative arrangement with Princeton, which continues to edit the earlier volumes and which has shared with Monticello its document archive, expert advice, and commitment to quality.

The volumes in the *Retirement Series* will document Jefferson's written legacy between his return to private life and his death on July 4, 1826 – one of the

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**Letter to Jefferson from Augustin François Silvestre, dated June 8, 1809.**

## *This Issue's Other Stories*

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# MONTICELLO



## Jefferson Papers

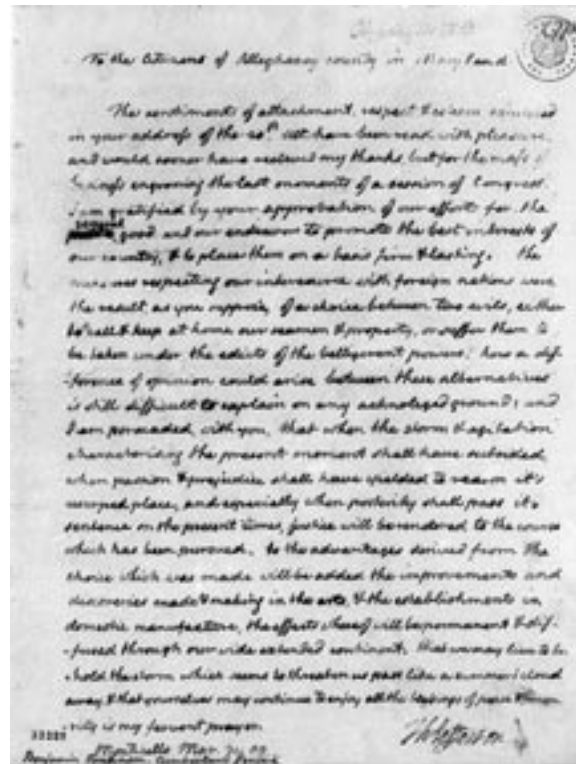
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most interesting and least studied periods in the third president's life. Less than a third of the extant documents authored by Jefferson during these years have previously appeared in print in whole or in part, while more than four in five letters written to Jefferson during his retirement years have never been published. Also, what has been published to date is scattered across a wide range of books and articles, few of which conform to modern scholarly norms.

General themes in Volume 1 of the *Retirement Series* include Jefferson's preparations for his final departure from Washington, such as settling accounts; Monticello matters, including efforts to restore order at his mismanaged mill complex; his acknowledgment of a flood of accolades upon his leaving the presidency; and his continuing engagement in public affairs, including exchanges with his successor, James Madison.

During the period covered by Volume 1, Jefferson maintained a wide and varied correspondence with scientists and scholars on both sides of the Atlantic while fielding written requests for money, favors, and advice from a kaleidoscopic array of relatives, acquaintances, strangers, cranks, anonymous writers, and a blackmailer. Highlights of the volume include a first-hand account of Jefferson's demeanor at Madison's inauguration; a visitor's detailed description of life at Monticello; a French scientist's chemical analyses of tobacco; the earliest descriptions of the death of Meriwether Lewis; and Jefferson's characteristically modest assessment of the value of his writings in reply to a printer interested in publishing them.

The documents printed in the *Retirement Series* will reproduce



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**Letter from Jefferson to the citizens of Allegany County, Maryland, dated March 31, 1809.**

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## Jefferson Papers

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the original spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Annotation will account for the location of each document, the relationship between documents for which more than one text survives, explanations of obscure terms or events, brief identifications of all known correspondents, and notes on significant additions and deletions. Each printed volume also will include a full index.

The nine-person *Retirement Series* editorial staff, based at the Jefferson Library, is divided into three teams. Two groups of editors work simultaneously on different volumes while a digital team does advance work on documents from years beyond the scope of the volumes being edited.

The *Retirement Series* project has been made possible by contributions from The Pew Charitable Trusts, Richard Gilder, Mrs. Martin S. Davis, Thomas A. Saunders III, and The Sidney A. Swensrud Foundation.

Volume 1 of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series* is scheduled for publication late in 2004, about the same time Volume 2 is to be submitted to the publisher. A total of 23 volumes is projected, and the goal is to complete a volume each year and finish the work on this phase in 2026 – the bicentennial of Jefferson's death and the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

- J. JEFFERSON LOONEY

*J. Jefferson Looney is editor of*

*The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series.*

**COMMENTS? [newsletter@monticello.org](mailto:newsletter@monticello.org)**