



Family Correspondence Available Online

In January 1818, Ellen Randolph, visiting in Richmond, sent a letter home to her mother, Martha Jefferson Randolph. Though enjoying “so many of the comforts of life, so much warmth and ease, so few duties to perform, so many hours of indolence and luxury,” Ellen wrote that “every absence from home only serves to make me appreciate it more highly.” She told her mother that she blessed God “for having been born at Monticello, your daughter, and so much the object of my dear Grand father’s care.”

This letter by one of Thomas Jefferson’s granddaughters is part of a rich body of Jefferson family correspondence now available through Monticello’s Family Letters Project, an online companion to *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*.

The Family Letters Project site – www.monticello.org/familypapers – offers full, searchable transcriptions of approximately 400 documents, most of which have never been published, from various repositories. The letters and related papers were written by and to Jefferson’s immediate relatives and members of his extended family over the years from 1809 to 1873. The letters are transcribed literally, retaining original spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and even slips of the pen.

The documents accessible on the Web site provide personal insights into the lives of Jefferson and his relatives that rarely appear in his own writings. Many of the letters were authored by women and contain vivid accounts of domestic and social life in 19th-century Virginia.

The site also includes brief descriptions of people and locations mentioned in the correspondence, and,

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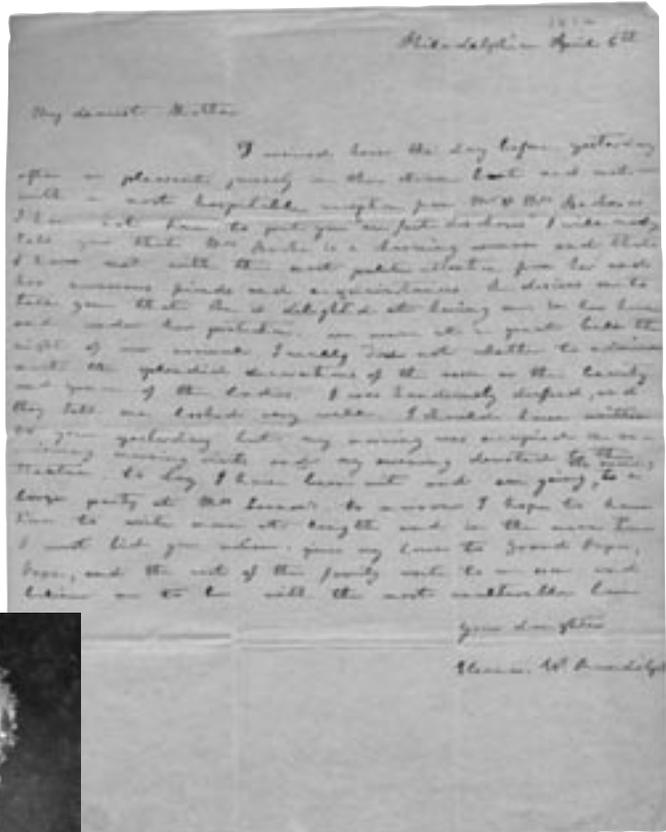


Family Correspondence

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where available, links to color scans of the original documents.

The Family Letters Project will continue to grow as more letters and documents are transcribed; it will also incorporate additional correspondents and years.



University of Virginia



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An 1816 letter to Martha Jefferson Randolph (left) from her daughter Ellen.

COMMENTS? newsletter@monticello.org