



From the President

Dear Friends,

In 1874, James Parton, one of Jefferson's earliest biographers, wrote, "If Jefferson was wrong, America is wrong. If America is right, Jefferson was right."

Thomas Jefferson – philosopher, revolutionary, president, connoisseur, gardener, epicure, diplomat, scientist, educator, innovator and farmer – was the essential architect of American life. In this issue you can read about how Jefferson inspired our Library of Congress – arguably the greatest library in the world. This is just one of his many contributions to the advancement of democracy.

Today, Jefferson's accomplishments and complexities, his brilliance and failures, remain part of the national discourse. Americans are still grappling with issues of race and equality – and in recent months, Jefferson's duality on human rights has been discussed by respected journalists and thought leaders. What can we learn from the Founding Father who famously declared that "all men are created equal" and yet was a slaveholder throughout his life? That question continues to captivate the country nearly 200 years after Jefferson's death.

The discussion of Thomas Jefferson's legacy underscores the relevance of the Foundation's ongoing commitment to scholarship. From *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series* to the *Getting Word* oral history project to the restoration and interpretation of Mulberry Row, the Foundation seeks to foster a deeper understanding of Jefferson and the essence of America for people around the globe. As Jefferson wrote to William Roscoe in 1820, "we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead ..."

I am truly grateful for your interest and support.

Sincerely,

Leslie Greene Bowman

Leslie Greene Bowman,
President and CEO

JEFFERSON IN THE NEWS

Two centuries later, Thomas Jefferson is still making headlines.

"WITH HIS BRILLIANCE and his accomplishment, [Jefferson] is immortal. Yet because of his flaws and his sins and his failures, he strikes us as mortal too, a man of achievement who is nonetheless susceptible to the temptations and compromises that ensnare all of us when we're being honest with ourselves. He was not all he could be, but no politician, no human being ever is.



Jon Meacham, speaking about Jefferson at the 2015 Aspen Ideas Festival



Andrew O'Shaughnessy, Saunders Director of the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello

the Atlantic

"Is the Democratic Party Abandoning Jefferson and Jackson?"

Monticello's **Andrew O'Shaughnessy** was quoted in an article exploring the decision by Democratic Party leaders in Connecticut, Missouri and Georgia to drop Jefferson and Jackson's names from their annual fundraising dinners:

[It is] "inevitable and appropriate that historians adopt a more critical perspective towards Thomas Jefferson, but it is possible to appreciate his contribution to the advancement of democracy while acknowledging his involvement in slavery, which he himself denounced as an 'abominable crime.'"

"I WISH ALL OF THESE presidential candidates, Democrat and Republican alike, could have been at Monticello yesterday where I was for a weekend ... it was the most thoughtful, wise, civil discussion about race and slavery, and the contradiction of the man who said 'all men are created equal,' and kept slaves."



Tom Brokaw, speaking on the May 3, 2015 edition of *Meet the Press*

SALON

Salon also covered the Democratic Party decision. In an article titled "It's not Thomas Jefferson's fault: Race, the Confederate flag and the new historic correctness," history professors **Andrew Burstein** and **Nancy Isenberg** argued for the importance of context in assessing Jefferson's shortcomings:

"Yes, Jefferson owned slaves. He was born into a slave society and was, even at his very best moment, a timid abolitionist. He rationalized that he did as much as any man to care for his human property, and he hoped that the next generation could do what his generation had failed to do."

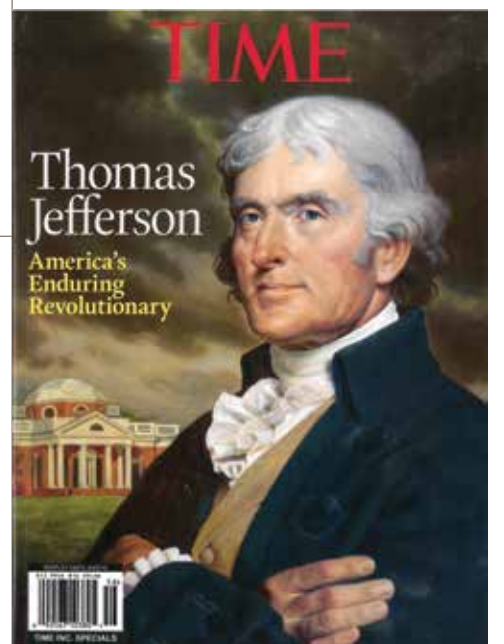


Annette Gordon-Reed, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian



Slate Academy:
History of American Slavery

A new podcast series explores "America's defining institution, as told through the lives of nine enslaved people." Episode 4 includes a report on the "Unsung Hemingses" of Monticello by Pulitzer Prize-winning historian **Annette Gordon-Reed**.
www.slate.com/academy



A 2015 special issue of *Time* magazine features nearly 100 pages on "America's Enduring Revolutionary."