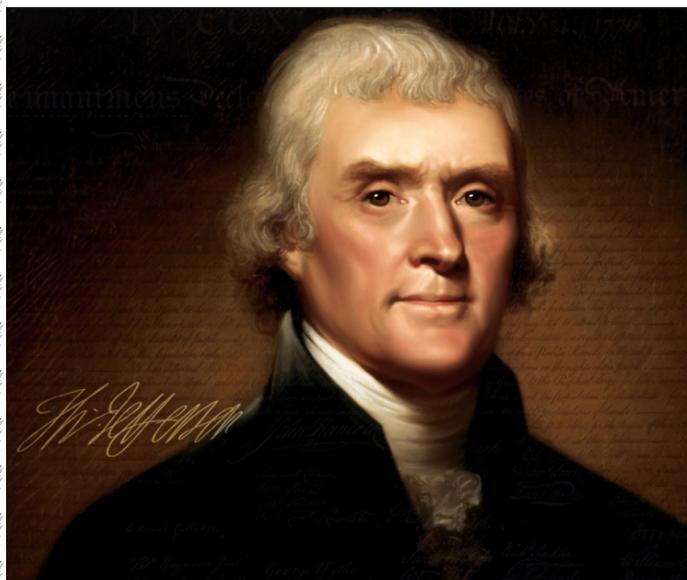


# President Thomas Jefferson

D. A. Sharpe

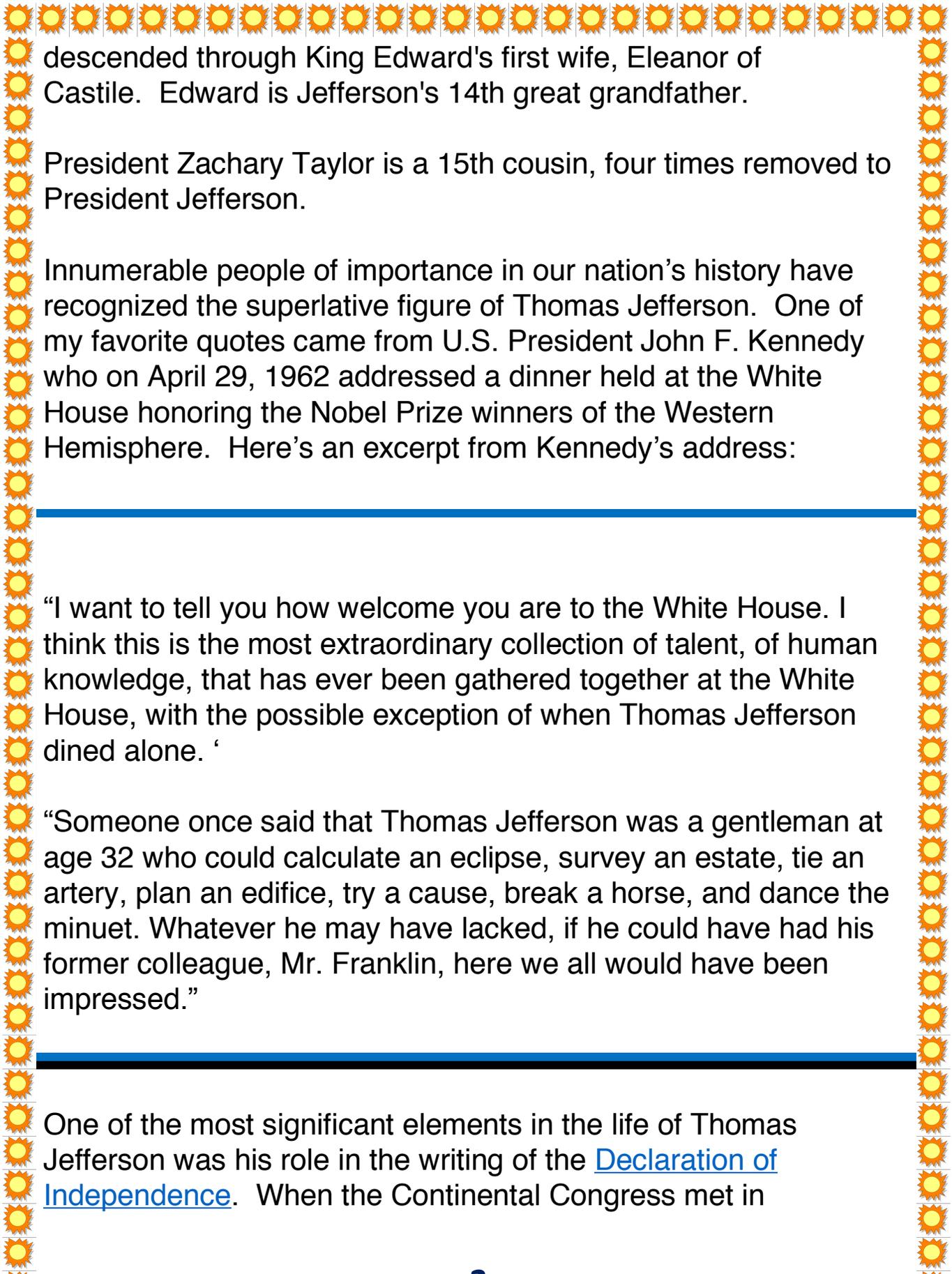


United States President Thomas Jefferson, our third President, is related to our family by being my 29th cousin, four times removed. Our ancestor in common is Eystein Glumra Ivarsson and his wife, Aseda Rognvaldsdatter. They are President Jefferson's 27th great grandparents,

whereas they are my 32nd great grandparents.

[Eystein Glumra Ivarson](#) was Earl or Jarl of the Uplands in Norway about the year 830 AD. Eystein is the ancestor the Abney's have in common with the line of William the Conqueror. It was Eystein Glumralvarsson's grandson, Ganger Rolf, who was in the expedition that launched from Norway and came to the shores of France to conquer what became known as Normandy.

President George Washington is a half 13th cousin, twice removed to President Thomas Jefferson! Their ancestor in common is English King Edward I. Washington is descended through King Edward's second wife, Marguerite of France. Edward is Washington's 12th great grandfather. Jefferson is



descended through King Edward's first wife, Eleanor of Castile. Edward is Jefferson's 14th great grandfather.

President Zachary Taylor is a 15th cousin, four times removed to President Jefferson.

Innumerable people of importance in our nation's history have recognized the superlative figure of Thomas Jefferson. One of my favorite quotes came from U.S. President John F. Kennedy who on April 29, 1962 addressed a dinner held at the White House honoring the Nobel Prize winners of the Western Hemisphere. Here's an excerpt from Kennedy's address:

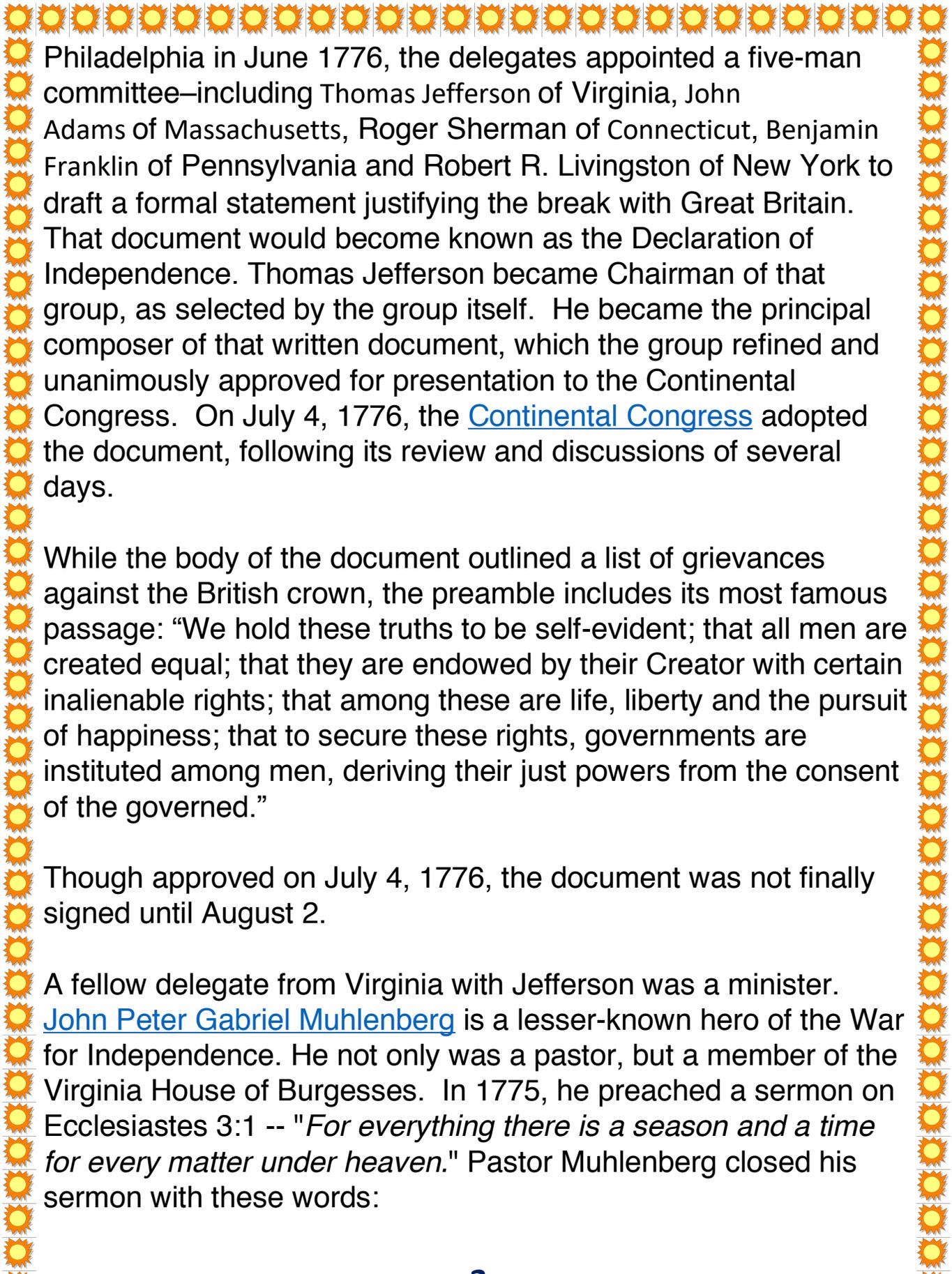
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“I want to tell you how welcome you are to the White House. I think this is the most extraordinary collection of talent, of human knowledge, that has ever been gathered together at the White House, with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone. ‘

“Someone once said that Thomas Jefferson was a gentleman at age 32 who could calculate an eclipse, survey an estate, tie an artery, plan an edifice, try a cause, break a horse, and dance the minuet. Whatever he may have lacked, if he could have had his former colleague, Mr. Franklin, here we all would have been impressed.”

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One of the most significant elements in the life of Thomas Jefferson was his role in the writing of the [Declaration of Independence](#). When the Continental Congress met in



Philadelphia in June 1776, the delegates appointed a five-man committee—including Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, John Adams of Massachusetts, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania and Robert R. Livingston of New York to draft a formal statement justifying the break with Great Britain. That document would become known as the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson became Chairman of that group, as selected by the group itself. He became the principal composer of that written document, which the group refined and unanimously approved for presentation to the Continental Congress. On July 4, 1776, the [Continental Congress](#) adopted the document, following its review and discussions of several days.

While the body of the document outlined a list of grievances against the British crown, the preamble includes its most famous passage: “We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

Though approved on July 4, 1776, the document was not finally signed until August 2.

A fellow delegate from Virginia with Jefferson was a minister. [John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg](#) is a lesser-known hero of the War for Independence. He not only was a pastor, but a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses. In 1775, he preached a sermon on Ecclesiastes 3:1 -- "*For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven.*" Pastor Muhlenberg closed his sermon with these words:

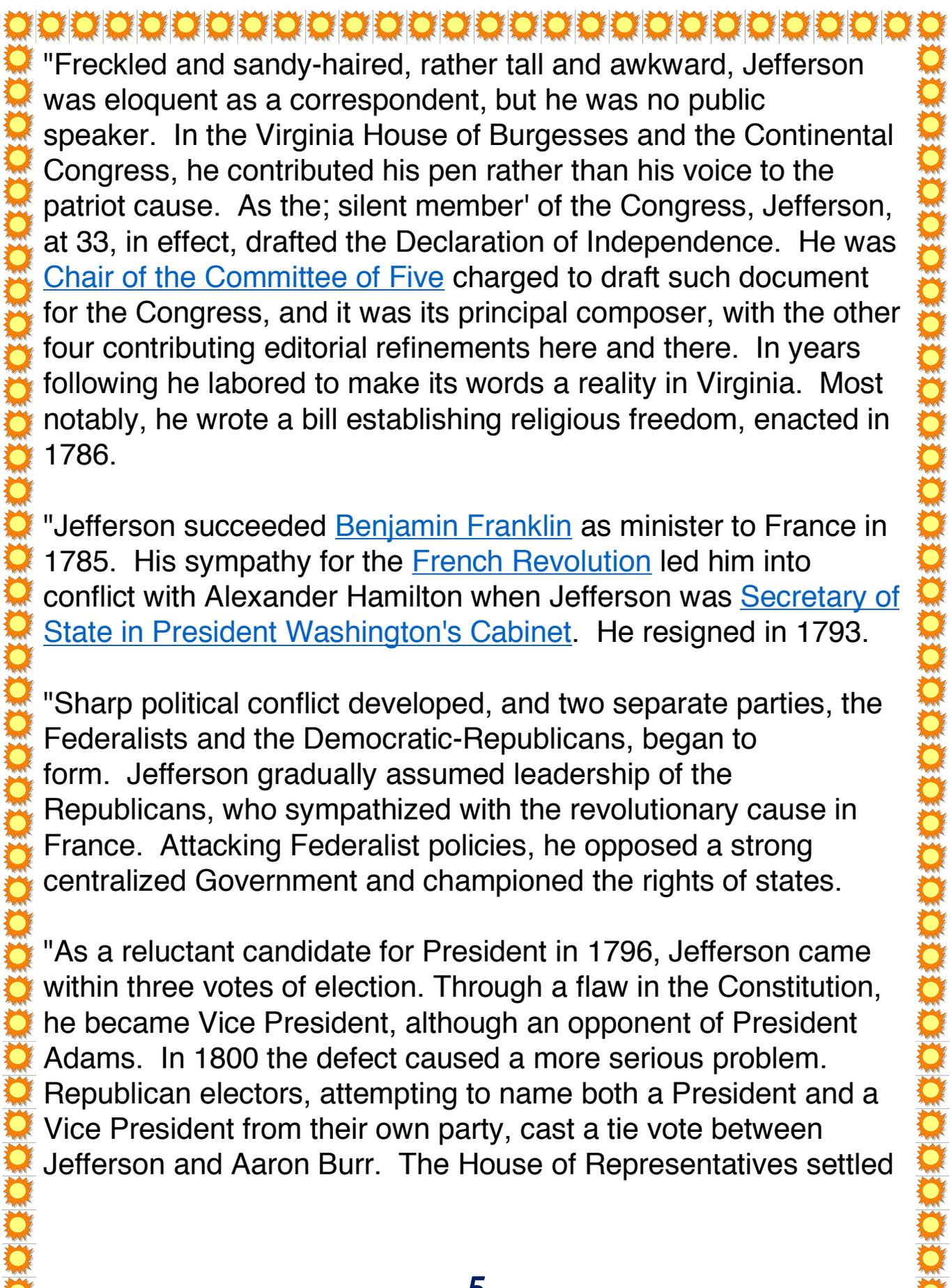
*"In the language of Holy Writ, there is a time for all things. There is a time to preach and a time to fight. And now is the time to fight."*

He then removed his clerical robes and revealed to the congregation that he was dressed in the uniform of a Continental Army officer. Pastor Muhlenberg's example of a man of God fighting for our God-given rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness should give increased fervor and devotion to those who lead us in the fight for faith, family and freedom.

"In the thick of party conflict in 1800, Thomas Jefferson wrote in a private letter, 'I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.'

"This powerful advocate of liberty was born in 1743 in Albemarle County, Virginia, inheriting from his father, a planter and surveyor, some 5,000 acres of land, and from his mother, a Randolph, high social standing. He studied at the [College of William and Mary](#), then read law. In 1772 he married Martha Wayles Skelton, a widow, and took her to live in his partly constructed mountaintop home, Monticello.



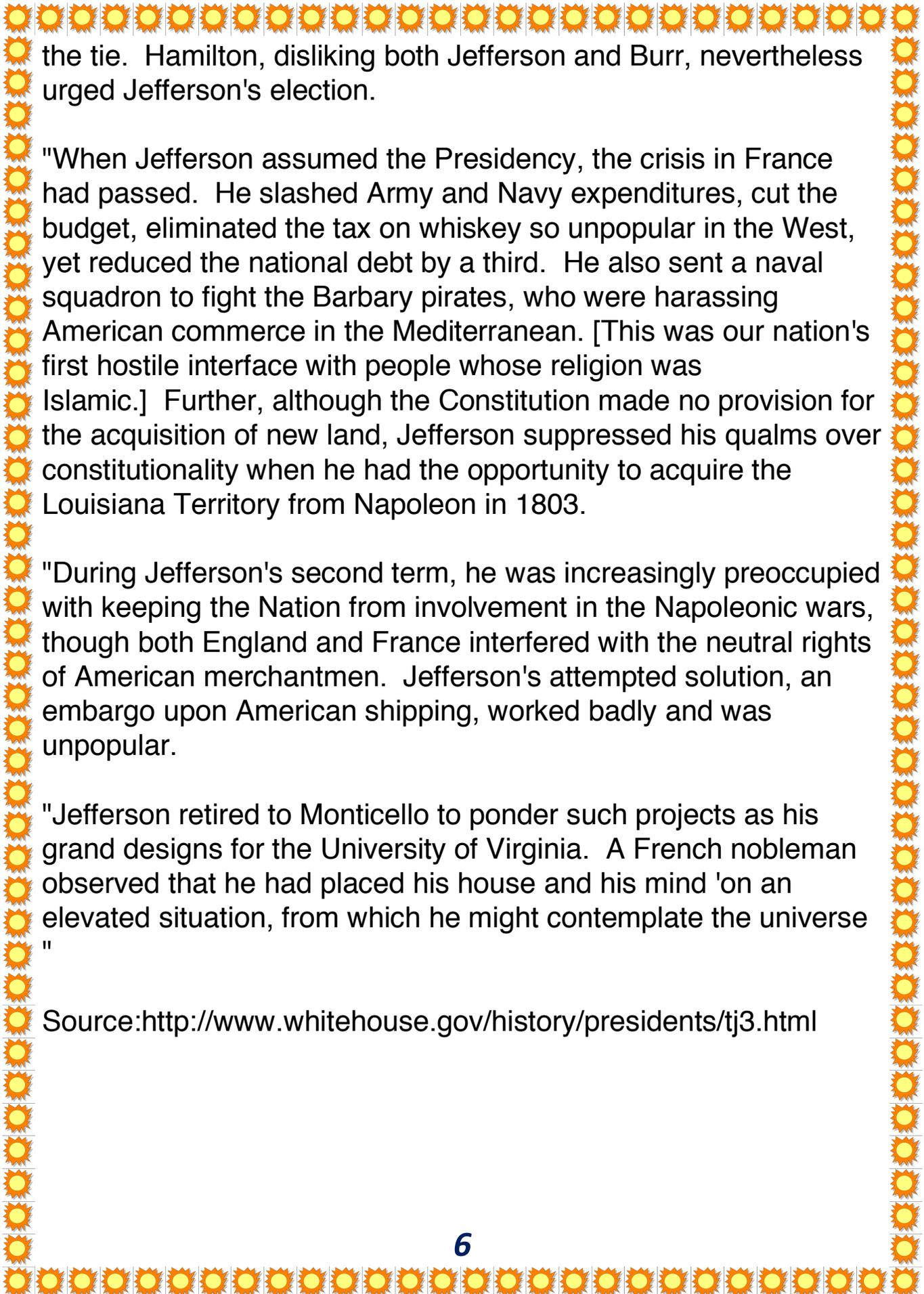


"Freckled and sandy-haired, rather tall and awkward, Jefferson was eloquent as a correspondent, but he was no public speaker. In the Virginia House of Burgesses and the Continental Congress, he contributed his pen rather than his voice to the patriot cause. As the 'silent member' of the Congress, Jefferson, at 33, in effect, drafted the Declaration of Independence. He was [Chair of the Committee of Five](#) charged to draft such document for the Congress, and it was its principal composer, with the other four contributing editorial refinements here and there. In years following he labored to make its words a reality in Virginia. Most notably, he wrote a bill establishing religious freedom, enacted in 1786.

"Jefferson succeeded [Benjamin Franklin](#) as minister to France in 1785. His sympathy for the [French Revolution](#) led him into conflict with Alexander Hamilton when Jefferson was [Secretary of State in President Washington's Cabinet](#). He resigned in 1793.

"Sharp political conflict developed, and two separate parties, the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans, began to form. Jefferson gradually assumed leadership of the Republicans, who sympathized with the revolutionary cause in France. Attacking Federalist policies, he opposed a strong centralized Government and championed the rights of states.

"As a reluctant candidate for President in 1796, Jefferson came within three votes of election. Through a flaw in the Constitution, he became Vice President, although an opponent of President Adams. In 1800 the defect caused a more serious problem. Republican electors, attempting to name both a President and a Vice President from their own party, cast a tie vote between Jefferson and Aaron Burr. The House of Representatives settled



the tie. Hamilton, disliking both Jefferson and Burr, nevertheless urged Jefferson's election.

"When Jefferson assumed the Presidency, the crisis in France had passed. He slashed Army and Navy expenditures, cut the budget, eliminated the tax on whiskey so unpopular in the West, yet reduced the national debt by a third. He also sent a naval squadron to fight the Barbary pirates, who were harassing American commerce in the Mediterranean. [This was our nation's first hostile interface with people whose religion was Islamic.] Further, although the Constitution made no provision for the acquisition of new land, Jefferson suppressed his qualms over constitutionality when he had the opportunity to acquire the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon in 1803.

"During Jefferson's second term, he was increasingly preoccupied with keeping the Nation from involvement in the Napoleonic wars, though both England and France interfered with the neutral rights of American merchantmen. Jefferson's attempted solution, an embargo upon American shipping, worked badly and was unpopular.

"Jefferson retired to Monticello to ponder such projects as his grand designs for the University of Virginia. A French nobleman observed that he had placed his house and his mind 'on an elevated situation, from which he might contemplate the universe"

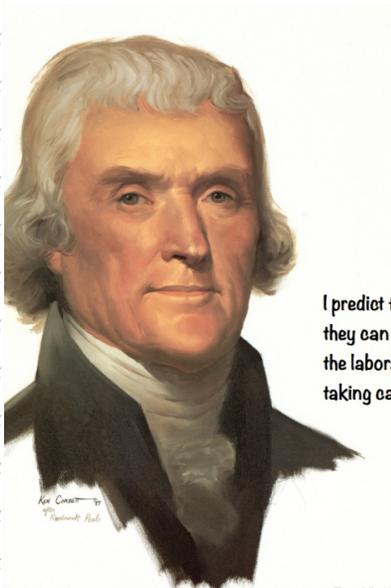
Source:<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/tj3.html>



"On the day Thomas Jefferson died, friends were soliciting money for his relief at a ceremony in the House of Representatives marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The former president's assets had dwindled considerably and he desperately needed cash. Had he lived, however, he would not have been able to depend on this

solicitation. According to John Quincy Adams, only four or five people at the ceremony contributed to Jefferson's relief."

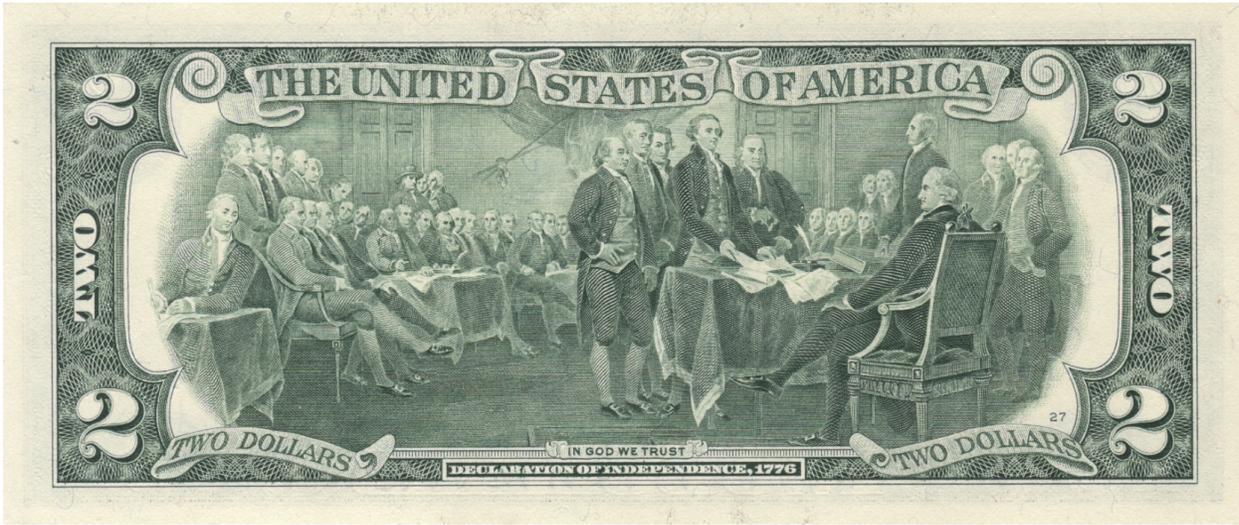
[Source: Richard Skenkman & Kurt Reiger, "One-Night Stands with American History," Perennial - Harper Collins Publishers, 2003, 10 East 53th Street, New York NY 10022, page 18.]



Thomas Jefferson is immortalized in our minds for many reasons, but partly because he was selected to be one of the four former Presidents comprising that group of four Presidents boldly sculptured on the face of [Mount Rushmore](#). His presence in that group represents the nation's efforts toward

forging out a working government and its structures that would endure as it has. In addition, though many may not notice it, President Jefferson is the portrait displayed upon the face of the two-dollar bill.

Actually, he is one of only three historic Americans honored on our currency who appear on both sides of the bill in which he appears. Jefferson's portrait is on the front side of the \$2.00 bill. On its reverse side is the famous painting depicting John Trumbull's 'The Declaration of Independence,' a painting that presents every signer of the Declaration of Independence. The Committee of Five is prominently in front of the Chair of the Congress, John Hancock, with the tallest figure prominently the center of focus being Thomas Jefferson!



John Turnbull's famous painting out of the Convention producing the Declaration of Independence, of which Thomas Jefferson was a central figure, is what graces the reverse side of the \$2.00 bill. Here is a key [to those names in the painting](#).

I told my sixth cousin, once removed, Joe B. Abney, Jr. of Austin, Texas, that I had discovered that he was the 28th cousin, four times removed to President Jefferson. I told him he could have bragging rights for that! He replied, and I quote him most interestingly,

"Now that I'm aware of our relationship, I'm going to forgive him for his liberal and populist leanings. Also, given your political interests, I am certain, you have studied former Presidents more than I have ..... but, a little tidbit of history that you might find interesting about our dear Cousin Jefferson, is that he died woefully in debt up to his ears. For all his education, polish and world class bearing, in addition to a substantial inheritance ..... he apparently had no acumen for business. He kept a journal,

that he wrote in daily, from the time he was a young man until his last days. It has been awhile since I studied him, but I recall that the last entry he made in this journal was a calculation that showed he had only a few pennies on hand and just enough lamp oil to last for about another week. I have always felt that this last, stunning, revelation of an entry in his journal, is tantamount to proof that this great and proud man hung on to witness the 50th anniversary of one of his greatest accomplishments ..... and then quietly passed away in his bedroom of a broken heart.

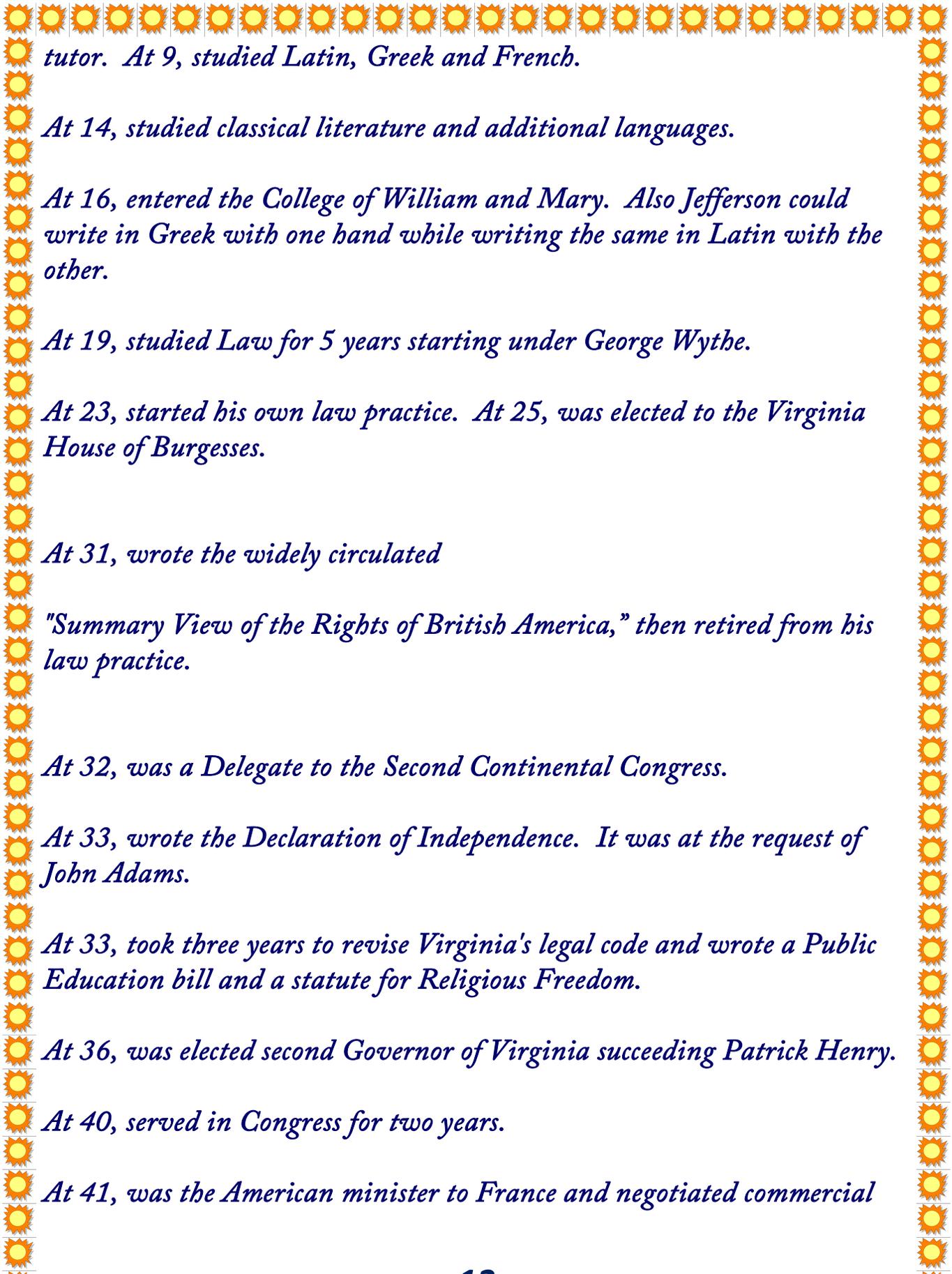
"I am glad we take better care of our former Presidents now than we did in the beginning of our country (and apparently until after the Civil War .... look at what a pauper Grant died as!!). Although, I don't suppose they need much caring for anymore, given that nowadays you can't get elected clerk of even the remotest county, much less President of the United States, unless your pockets are bulging with money....preferably, old money.

"Anyways ..... .thanks for informing me of my bragging rights. Rest assured they will encounter frequent usage!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Well, Joe is a dear cousin and I always appreciate his constant keeping up with me. Since this quotation, Joe has spent a lot of time working as a contractor in Iraq in and around the war settings.

The utter magnificence of what Thomas Jefferson brought to our country can be embodied in browsing through a number of his quotations or things others have said of him.

*Thomas Jefferson was a remarkable man who started learning very early in life and never stopped. At age 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 Jefferson 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," then retired from his law practice.*

*At 32, was a Delegate to the Second Continental Congress.*

*At 33, wrote the Declaration of Independence. It was at the request of John Adams.*

*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 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 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 81, almost single-handedly created the University of Virginia and served as its first President.*

*In 1807, explorer Zebulon Pike sent two grizzly bear cubs to Thomas Jefferson as a gift. Pike's Peak in Colorado is named in honor of Zebulon Zike.*

*At 83, died on the 50th anniversary of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence, along with John Adams. Thomas Jefferson knew because he himself studied the previous failed attempts at*

government. He understood actual history, the nature of God, His laws and the nature of man. That happens to be way more than what most understand today. Jefferson really knew his stuff.

Thomas Jefferson is quoted as stating the following telling facts:

"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."*

*Thomas Jefferson said in 1802:*

*"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.*

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were the only two signers of the Declaration of Independence who later became a President of the United States. They each died on the same day, July 4, 1826, exactly 50 years after they signed the Declaration of Independence.

Thomas Jefferson, truly, was a great founder among all those famous founders by which our nation has been blessed. It was a disgrace that his departure from this earth was amidst such poverty. As my cousin, Joe Abney said, at least we treat our former Presidents much better.

When he was young, Thomas Jefferson enjoyed playing the violin. Later, as a politician, I suppose he still fiddled around!

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