Thomas Jefferson Collection: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Huntington Library staff.
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
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Overview of the Collection
Title: Thomas Jefferson Collection
Dates (inclusive): 1764-1826
Collection Number: mssJefferson File
Creator: Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826.
Extent: 1046 pieces
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Abstract: This collection contains letters, documents, and manuscripts that reflect the life and career of Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), the third President of the United States.
Language: English.
Access
RESTRICTED. Available with curatorial approval. Requires extended retrieval and delivery time. For more information, contact Reader Services.
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. Thomas Jefferson Collection, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Acquisition Information
The collection was assembled from various sources. Two groups of manuscripts, both acquired through the George D. Smith Book Company, of New York, came into the library in 1916 and 1918. These, together with various individual items from sales of the American Art Association, the Anderson Galleries, B.A. Brown, Learmont, G. H. Hart, and others, have been interfiled and arranged in one chronological sequence.
Custodial History
One of the two major groups of Jeffersoniana formerly belonged to Mr. William K. Bixby who secured them in 1912 from George P. Coleman, of Richmond, Va. These were largely published in 1916 in a limited edition, with notes by Worthington C. Ford.
The second group apparently emanated from the heirs of Jefferson, though how Mr. Smith acquired them is unknown. The papers are, as far as we know, virtually unpublished. They comprise Mr. Jefferson's private correspondence, mostly with family and agents, and are largely office copies or drafts; some appear to have been made with the polygraph. The architectural drawings, etc. in this group dovetail with the famous Coolidge collection, but in no instance duplicates it.
Scope and Content
This collection contains letters, documents, architectural drawings and surveys, account books and receipted bills of Thomas Jefferson, as well as letters addressed to him. Included are items that deal with Jefferson's law practice, surveying jobs, management of his plantations, interests in architecture, horticulture and agriculture, personal finance, family matters, and views on education. The collection contains Jefferson's daily accounts and memoranda for 1775 written in a copy of the Virginia Almanack for 1775 and for 1805-1809 in his "Day Book," his "Fee Book," "Casebook," notes on the twelfth amendment, and drawings.
Persons represented by four or more pieces: James Breckinridge (4 pieces); Arthur S. Brockenbrough (6 pieces); John Hartwell Cocke (27 pieces); Cummings, Hilliard, & Company (14 pieces); Robley Dunglison (6 pieces); John Patten Emmet (4 pieces); Alexander Garrett (7 pieces); Thomas Jefferson (461 pieces); John V. Kean (12 pieces); James Oldham (5 pieces); John Patterson (5 pieces); John M. Perry (8 pieces); James Pleasants (12 pieces); and George Tucker (4 pieces).
Family papers include intimate letters written by Jefferson from Paris, Philadelphia, and Washington, to members of his family including Martha (Jefferson) Randolph (14 pieces); Thomas Mann Randolph (32 pieces); Ann Cary Randolph (4 pieces); Maria (Jefferson) Eppes (11 pieces); John Wayles Eppes (34 pieces); Francis Eppes (13 pieces); Francis Eppes,
Subjects reflected in this collection include Jefferson's work as an attorney (1767-1774); an administrator of the estates of Peter Jefferson and others; a farmer and business man; a surveyor, architect, and landscape gardener; and as an educator and "father of the University of Virginia."

Papers reflecting Jefferson's role as a farmer and business man include letters addressed by Jefferson to his agents, John Barnes (31), Edmund Bacon (21), and others; also estimates, bills, and accounts. There are also materials related to tobacco, planting and selling; lands and slaves; estate management; and horticultural interests and experiments. Financial transactions including attorney's fees, plantation expenditures, household maintenance at Monticello and the White House, traveling expenses, and personal accounts.

Papers reflecting Jefferson's work as a surveyor, architect, and landscape gardener include surveys of Jefferson lands in Albemarle and Bedford Counties, Virginia, and neighboring estates; architectural drawings and specifications of domestic buildings (floor plans, details, estimates, calculations, etc., for Monticello and other residences) and public buildings (floor plans, etc., for the Capitol and Governor's house, Richmond, Va.; the "President's house," Washington; William & Mary College, Williamsburg, Va.; Hotel Langeac, Paris; and the University of Virginia); and the laying out of the gardens at Monticello.

Within the collection, Jefferson's role as an educator is reflected in materials concerning: Jefferson's views on education as expressed in his letters having to do with the education of his grandson, Francis Eppes; documents related to his role establishing the University of Virginia including the origin of an idea, meetings of the "Visitors"; the promotion of financial support; and the campus and buildings (including the design and supervision of construction, the employment of workmen, and estimates of costs, letting of contracts, control of funds); the Selection of faculty; direction of curriculum; regulation of the library; as an arbiter and final authority in all matters of precedent; and correspondence with subscribers, parents, students, and well-wishers.

Note: The papers have been included in: The Papers of Thomas Jefferson (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1950-).

**Arrangement**
The collection is arranged chronologically.

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the [Huntington Library's Online Catalog](https://www.huntington.org/).

**Subjects**
Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826 -- Archives.

**Forms/Genres**
Commonplace books -- United States.
Letters (correspondence) -- United States.
Personal papers -- United States.
Professional papers -- United States.