



**Debt of Gratitude:**  
**The Benefits of Teaching Thomas Jefferson's Views on Debt to Students**  
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Thomas Jefferson: Personality, Character and Public Life

The study of Thomas Jefferson is an integral part of an American history education. But the lens used to examine his life and the lessons drawn from it have changed over time. The Jeffersonian ideal of individual freedom, for example, was used to justify greed in the nineteenth century and consumerism in the twentieth-century.<sup>1</sup> Today high school history teachers can use Jefferson to promote critical thinking skills, illustrate strong character traits, and keep this American hero relevant for our students. Teaching Jefferson's struggle with debt is not a magic pill for all that ails high school history teachers nor does it resolve the puzzling paradoxes of Thomas Jefferson, but the topic offers a rare opportunity to address several student needs at once.

Social studies teachers, like all teachers, suffer from ever increasing time constraints and would greatly benefit from the use of biography to deliver their lessons with an added bonus of character education. Studying historical figures in American history like Thomas Jefferson would not only provide students with great examples of character, but make a more intimate and meaningful study of history. Students often live in a world of absolutes, sending each historical figure they study to heaven or hell as they are introduced. They have become unable to critically analyze famous historical figures, especially founding fathers, because our society has deified them and erased their complexities with well intentioned, patriotic and nostalgic motives, or dismissed them entirely based on one character flaw or historical action. As a result, children recognize Jefferson's image on the nickel or Mount Rushmore but they find this "Apostle of Freedom" inaccessible; he has become an American hero with whom they can not relate. Teaching an abridged biography of Jefferson with an emphasis on his fight against debt would give students, as one historian points out, "a Jefferson who loses battles as often as he wins them, a Jefferson who struggles and fails."<sup>2</sup> It is crucial for students who are forming their own dispositions to have exposure to the mistakes of our American heroes; it instills empathy, an essential ingredient for those digesting lessons on both personal character and American history. Lessons on Jefferson and debt are also more palatable because concepts of wealth management are the same today as they were during Jefferson's life, thereby avoiding problems with presentism in their study of history. Advanced placement students are capable of understanding the larger economic forces at play during Jefferson's life and lower level students will more easily digest the complex debt issues of the eighteenth century by applying personal experiences which may include financial struggle. If superintendants and curriculum directors need further

convincing, it should be pointed out that Jefferson himself would approve of such an endeavor. He believed examining character traits like resiliency should be one of the principal studies of mankind because we all suffer from “calamities and misfortune,” but the most successful among us learn to minimize the damage.<sup>3</sup> By studying Jefferson’s financial decisions, a student of any ability level would be able to sort out Jefferson’s paradoxical nature in such a way that demystifies the man, acknowledges his faults, and still holds him in high regard.

Most exciting for history teachers is the innovative way in which teaching Jefferson’s views on debt helps achieve basic and complex social studies objectives in the curriculum. For example, analyzing our rights to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” in the *Declaration of Independence* through Jefferson’s obsession with debt sheds light on Jefferson’s definition of liberty. And more advanced students could tackle historian Herbert Sloan’s belief that when Jefferson realized his own financial mistakes were irreversible he sought to make amends by eliminating the national debt and at least liberate the American people.

This paper explores parts of Jefferson’s life that are often overlooked in high school classrooms. American history curriculum on Jefferson focuses on the Declaration of Independence, his role in Washington’s cabinet and his presidency. But teachers could actually save time explaining the complexities of Jefferson to their students by adding a few short lessons on his struggle with debt at other times in his life. My belief in adding such lessons was largely influenced by Herbert E. Sloan’s seminal book entitled *Principles and Interest: Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Debt*. By adding lessons on Jefferson’s struggle with debt between 1789 and 1797, classes will better grasp the existing staple lessons on Jefferson in addition to having a fuller understanding of several issues he faced while in France, the decline of the Virginia gentry, and his switch to wheat production. By adding only a few short lessons, teachers will heed Sloan’s warning that an entire biography with a focus on debt would be misleading.<sup>4</sup> Although it would be interesting to analyze and explore other examples such as Jefferson’s presidential plan to acquire western lands by ensnaring Native Americans with the very same agriculturally induced debt that he fell victim to.<sup>5</sup> My intentions here are to extrapolate the history of Jefferson’s fight against debt during those eight critical years for the classroom teacher so that lesson plans may be developed.

## Powerless Plenipotentiary

While living in France, Thomas Jefferson rented the Hôtel de Langeac, a two-story town house located on the outskirts of Paris. The rent and furniture exceeded his annual salary of nine thousand dollars.<sup>6</sup> Jefferson intended to live the luxurious aristocratic life he was accustomed to in Virginia. As one historian explains it, “to be a member of gentry was to be no man’s inferior.”<sup>7</sup> But Jefferson also felt compelled to keep up the appearances associated with a respectable sovereign nation and subsidized it by acquiring personal debt. Jefferson almost immediately began writing letters to his superiors in Philadelphia, complaining about his cost of living and the inadequate pay he received for his work as minister. A teacher who simply makes note of Jefferson’s initial expenditures in France could expect students easily identify the beginnings of financial trouble for the rest of his time in France and throughout his life.

As Minister to France, Jefferson recommended cost saving measures to those in Philadelphia like international free trade and an international task force led by the United States to attack the Barbary pirates, both of which were rejected by the U.S. government. Jefferson often found himself in the uncomfortable position of defending what he saw as the poor decisions of his young country. Classroom discussion should ignore the merits of Jefferson’s solutions and recognize that Jefferson became discouraged by the Articles of Confederation earlier than most and found the need for a stronger federal government that could address the foreign policy issues he faced.

Despite it all, Jefferson thrived in these difficult circumstances and proved to have masterful diplomatic skills. When French soldiers who fought for the colonists in the American Revolution demanded explanation for the delays in payment for their service, Jefferson deftly handled the crisis by taking “the smooth handle,” and profusely apologized. Speaking in broken French, he promised to honor their valiant service with payment as soon as practicable. He was able to convince the French soldiers it was a debt of honor and was of the utmost importance to his government. It was a ploy Jefferson had used to stave off his own creditors in Bristol and it was just as effective on the other side of the English Channel. Behind the scenes, Jefferson’s requests to pay these men were repeatedly denied in Philadelphia and he was eventually forced to solve the problem himself.

Students would be fascinated to learn that part of what made Jefferson such a gifted foreign minister were his contradictions and inconsistencies. Historian Joseph J. Ellis believes,

“his psychological agility, his capacity to play hide-and-seek within himself, was a protective device.”<sup>8</sup> This protective device allowed for Jefferson to politely agree with all sides of an issue while keeping his true beliefs private until opportunities to advance his cause presented themselves. This diplomatic strategy was crucial for a man charged with representing such a young and unstable country in a foreign land. Jefferson’s contradictory statements throughout his life are very real and problematic but it is possible that while in France some of his contradictions were intentional.

## Going Dutch

During the American Revolution the American Congress incurred debt from France, Spain and private Dutch investors. Jefferson wanted to move all of this debt away from France and Spain into new loans with the Dutch investors in an attempt to establish America as a truly independent, capable, sovereign nation. But in 1785, the U.S. Government was unable to make interest payments to France and defaulted on further installments that were due in 1787. So the following year, Ferdinand Grand’s bank in Paris, the official depository of the United States, refused to pay for Jefferson’s diplomatic expenses. As America’s financial crisis worsened, making prompt payments to the Dutch became a priority. It was in the U.S. Government’s interest to maintain a good relationship with the Dutch who had been the largest money lenders in the world and could lend additional money if needed. The Dutch for their part were losing power and influence in the world in recent years and as a result were eager to extend additional loans in an attempt to strengthen the commerce between the two nations. For these reasons, in conjunction with the Dutch need to protect their initial investment, the bankers in Amsterdam extended three additional smaller loans between 1783 and 1788.

The senior diplomat and chief negotiator in securing these loans was John Adams. But when he left London for the United States in 1788 it was up to Jefferson to solve America’s debt problems for the next year and a half by himself. When Jefferson famously secured a third loan in 1788 for \$400,000 with Willink, Van Staphorst, and Hubbard he really was only getting a re-loan, for the same amount, with the same terms as the second loan from 1787 for a one-time only commission charge of 8 percent.<sup>9</sup> The Dutch were not only willing to offer re-loans but were interested, as was Jefferson, in acquiring all American debt owed to France. Thomas Jefferson saw the reliance on French loans as problematic and believed that if America was to have any

debt at all, he preferred that it be with the private banks in Amsterdam rather than the strong and influential Bourbon monarchy for whom Jefferson had immense distrust. Therefore, Jefferson believed that securing Dutch loans afforded America the opportunity to establish its own self-reliance and limit his country's exposure to the corruption of Europe. But the French wisely opted not to sell and were eventually paid in full by the United States.

The Dutch re-loan in 1788 was Jefferson's biggest achievement while in France, a fact that should not be lost on students. Teachers could help students see that the loan allowed the United States to consolidate its European debts, pay the French veterans of the American Revolution, and created a source of funding for the ransom to be paid to the pirates for captives in Algiers. When Jefferson took his leave of absence in September of 1789, he confided in his *chargé d'affaires*, William Short, that he was optimistic about the "growing" credit at Amsterdam and looked forward to paying off all debt owed to the French with additional Dutch loans.<sup>10</sup> It is conceivable that advanced students could even trace Jefferson's public debt policy while in France to his old Whig beliefs that debt was synonymous with monarchism and corruption.

## Usus et Fructus Sine Pensione

Use and Enjoyment without Payment

On September 6, 1789, Jefferson wrote his famous letter to James Madison sharing his belief that one generation does not have the right to bind another to any social construct whatsoever. Historian Herbert Sloan suggests that Jefferson reached this conclusion after recognizing that France's long standing debt was a major cause of the French Revolution. Jefferson was expressing his belief that public debt was an unjust restriction on personal freedom and that it warranted revolution. But at the nexus of this interpretation is Sloan's belief that Jefferson was also thinking about his own financial troubles while writing this letter. If this is true, it would help explain why Jefferson came to believe that all debts, laws and constitutions should expire at the end of every generation. It seems entirely possible that under the pressure to pay off his ever growing personal debt, Jefferson let slip a wishful thought of shirking his financial responsibilities.

The idea that "the earth belongs in usufruct to the living," was popular in French salons and students should recognize that it was not something Jefferson developed. But he promoted

the notion in part because of his dislike for the uneven distribution of wealth in France; a gap between rich and poor that he also acknowledged in American society. Students can find evidence of these opinions in Jefferson's letters to Abigail Adams and William S. Smith in which he reacts to a farmers' uprising over debt in Massachusetts, later known as Shays' Rebellion. Jefferson's statements might seem wild or confusing for students and several interpretations should be provided for class discussion. Some historians believe these opinions reflect Jefferson's desensitized tolerance for violence and chaos while living in Paris during the French Revolution. Others believe the letters, sans encryption, were diplomatic attempts to downplay the gravity of the situation, calm the fears of European banks and show support for the French during such a chaotic and tumultuous time. While examining these primary resources, teachers will have the opportunity to point out the disagreement historians have on this issue and the fact that no definitive interpretation exists.

It is unclear if Jefferson's comments regarding Shays' Rebellion ever reached or affected Ferdinand Grand or the Dutch investors. But Jefferson's attempts to mollifying his own creditors while in France are crystal clear and stunningly effective. A large portion of Jefferson's debt was with the firm of Henderson, McCaul, and Company in Glasgow. One of the lenders, Alexander McCaul was a friend of Jefferson's who attended the College of William and Mary with him. Jefferson took advantage of their friendship and was able to convince the firm, through his talents of the written word, that the loan was not based on a legally binding amortization schedule but instead on a moral obligation to eventually make payment. Students would certainly have no trouble finding examples of such abuse in their own lives and teachers could easily impress valuable life lessons like thrift and responsibility upon them.

When McCaul inquired about payment in 1786, Jefferson replied with excuses that detailed the plight of Virginia planters and promised to pay with future profits from his plantation. Jefferson, like the U.S. Government, was not even able to make interest payments on debt in 1787.<sup>11</sup> When Jefferson allowed himself to acknowledge his alarming debt problem he would at times become disillusioned. In July of 1787, Jefferson wrote to his overseer at Monticello that, "The torment of mind I endure till the moment shall arrive when I shall not owe a shilling on earth is such really as to render life of little value here."<sup>12</sup> But these moments of torment were few. His spending habits were in part linked to his optimistic belief that he could resolve his financial problems.

Students should note that Jefferson made no payments to McCaul until 1789 and did so only after McCaul politely reminded him to do so. Finally recognizing that his debt had grown to an alarming size, he left France, initially on a leave of absence, in October of 1789 to put his financial affairs in order. Teachers could easily use Jefferson's packing list to depict him as a shopaholic who compulsively bought on credit. The eclectic souvenirs he brought back included thirty eight boxes of books, apricots, French wine, a portable copying device, phosphorus matches, olive trees, a pasta maker, artwork, Parmesan cheese, raisins, and macaroni. Eighty six more crates would follow on another ship. Jefferson's spending spree while in France pushed him another \$4,000 further into debt.<sup>13</sup>

## Decline of the Virginia Gentry

On the last leg of his journey home, traveling from Norfolk to Monticello, Jefferson received a letter from George Washington asking him to serve as Secretary of State. Jefferson accepted the call of duty and continued his remote control of Monticello. Despite Jefferson's change in public service positions students would benefit from the continued storyline with Jefferson's loan from McCaul. Two years after returning home, Jefferson wrote to McCaul's Virginia agent from Philadelphia to inform him of his poor crops and the exorbitant bill for shipping his goods home from Paris as cause for his long overdue payments. McCaul believed in Jefferson's positive outlook on solving his own debt problems and sent Jefferson a letter in response full of praise for his honesty and forthrightness. McCaul would never be paid in full. He waited over 50 years for repayment and after Jefferson's death was still unable to recoup his money from the executor of his estate.<sup>14</sup>

It is essential that students recognize that Jefferson's financial problems mirrored those of the Virginia gentry as a whole. Virginians still owed £2.3 million to English and Scottish traders as of 1790. They opposed the Constitution fearing stronger federal power would force them to pay their debt and when ratified it became the watershed event that began a decline in wealth and political power.<sup>15</sup> Jefferson, still in France at the time, called for "justice" and was one of the few who supported debt repayment, believing it was the best way to maintain the social classes of Virginian society.<sup>16</sup>

The business practices of Virginia planters were to blame for their financial problems. Virginia planters were only paid once a year and relied on credit throughout the rest of the year.

As a result these men regularly used "book debt" as cash in Virginia, entangling merchants in Williamsburg, Baltimore and especially London.<sup>17</sup> Virginia gentry also acted as lenders to their neighbors making them both creditors and debtors simultaneously. Tens of thousands of such loans created a crazy web of transactions that ensnared all of Virginia. Worst of all, Virginia gentry regularly used their land for securities (collateral) in acquiring loans. In such cases, their debt was passed down to family members when they died unless those who inherited the land sold it as payment. Such was the case for Jefferson when his father-in-law died in 1773 and Jefferson opted to keep the entire estate believing he could pay the £4000 still owed on the mortgage. Students should understand that despite the acquired debt, in keeping this father-in-law's land Jefferson became one of the largest land owners in the state with almost eleven thousand acres. He rarely sold his land, considering it his most valuable asset and, "that of which I am the most tenacious." The planter class definition of wealth placed a premium on land ownership which afforded Jefferson the belief that he was one of the richest men in Virginia despite the enormous amount of debt he still owed English and Scottish creditors.<sup>18</sup>

As usual, Jefferson's inner defense mechanism only allowed for occasional cognizance of the problem. In a moment of honesty, he clearly and succinctly explained to a friend that the debts of Virginia's planter class were, "hereditary from father to son for so many generations, so that the planters were a species of property, annexed to certain mercantile houses in London." In a letter to his daughter, Jefferson acknowledges the same difficulty but optimistically suggested that austerity measures would suffice:

"The unprofitable condition of Virginia estates in general leaves it next to impossible for the holder of one to avoid ruin. And this condition will continue until some change takes place in the mode of working them. In the mean time, nothing can save us and our children from beggary but a determination to get a year beforehand, and restrain ourselves vigorously to the clear profits of the last. If a debt is once contracted by a farmer, it is never paid but by a sale [of the estate]."

This is an ironic statement for Jefferson, whose spending habit was unrestrained. But Jefferson believed he could make his plantation profitable again.<sup>19</sup> Students should have no problem identifying the faulty logic in Jefferson's definition of wealth and could competently discuss the effects such personal trouble might have on his work as Secretary of State.

While serving in Washington's cabinet, Jefferson voiced the concerns that he and other Virginians had concerning debt. But unlike his peers, he expressed these inherently conservative, reactionary and sometimes even negative ideas in a positive and optimistic way.

Historian Joyce Appleby was one of the first to recognize this unique Jeffersonian quality and asserts that as the party system developed, members adopted Jefferson's optimistic view that national debt reduction was a realistic possibility. Other historians take a more negative view, like Joseph Ellis, who believes that Jefferson's leadership in debt reduction came from a guilty conscience and suggests that, "private habits of indulgence gave him a peculiarly powerful appreciation of government austerity."<sup>20</sup> But if Jefferson ultimately failed to eliminate the debt in both public and private arenas his point seems moot. It is more important to recognize Jefferson's exceptional views of solving public and private debt problems that set him apart from the rest of Virginia gentry. The gentleman planters of Virginia had grown accustomed to managing their plantations as entertainment, ignoring financial realities and resented demands for debt repayment. They felt entitled to their life of luxury. When circumstances were no longer in their favor they pushed for social and economic changes that brought about the American Revolution that ironically destroyed their own genteel way of life; and they became bitter after realizing this fact.<sup>21</sup> The decline of Virginia gentry provides students with lessons in building personal character and understanding of the ramifications of the American Revolution which include learning to be accountable for your actions and acquiring the social studies skill of identifying unintended consequences.

## Trading Hoes for Plows

When Jefferson left Washington's cabinet, he owed roughly £4,500 to his English creditors in Bristol and another £2,000 to the firm in Glasgow.<sup>22</sup> Most of the debt was still from his father-in-law. Jefferson returned to Monticello intent on freeing himself from his "thralldom of debt" and rescuing his lands from, "the ravages of overseers [which] has brought on them a degree of degradation far beyond what I had expected."<sup>23</sup> But Jefferson would continue his paradoxical ways when he returned, making valiant efforts to pay down his debt while simultaneously starting an expensive rebuilding of Monticello that would last for almost 30 years.

Jefferson thought he could still afford to be optimistic about his finances; there was still time to solve the problem. He wanted to implement changes on his plantation that would increase profits. Piedmont plantations survived by producing small crops of high quality tobacco and bringing it to market for little cost by using tributaries and rivers like the Meadow Branch and

the Rivanna River. But Jefferson recognized that his land, located on the eastern side of a mountain range was not well suited for tobacco to begin with and was now depleted of nutrients. Furthermore, Jefferson's experience with France's agricultural lobby, the Farmers-General, gave him first-hand knowledge of how difficult exporting tobacco to France was going to be if he intended to continue trading with Europe after trade relations with England had been severed.

So Jefferson looked to a different cash crop; one in which profits depended on quantity, not quality. He invested \$30,000 in a new flour mill and meticulously planned a seven year crop rotation that would slowly introduce large-scale wheat production. The change in crops would take advantage of the disruption of wheat production and the demand for foodstuffs as a result of the Napoleonic Wars. Wheat only required about twenty-five work days a year and was usually associated with farming and free labor. But the gang labor model Jefferson used for growing tobacco could be applied to the intense work required of wheat at harvest time, especially in large scale production.<sup>24</sup> His slaves, as a result, were put to work in other areas such as slaughtering livestock, mending fences, making bricks for Monticello and tending other crops in Jefferson's diversified seven year plan that included barley, corn, flax, oats, peas, potatoes and rye. He rarely hired out his slaves and only sold them as a last resort, as creditors had forced him to do in 1792. Despite Jefferson's dislike for industrialization and his emphasis on an agrarian solution to his debt problems, a small factory making nails at Monticello ironically became the most profitable venture bringing in almost a thousand dollars a year. The business could have proved more profitable had it not been for the continued use of book debt in Virginia, forcing Jefferson to wait on payment for nails bought on credit. But soon, British nails flooded the market and drove prices down.

Students who study Jefferson's slave ownership by way of analyzing his struggle with debt will gain a fresh perspective on the plantations at Monticello. This approach avoids the pitfalls of presentism with slavery and moves the discussion to understanding the difficult reliance Jefferson had on an institution he hated. It also helps explain why Jefferson felt he could not free his slaves after his death. Concerning debt, students should recognize that Jefferson thought he had turned a corner; he successfully sent his first wheat harvest to market in 1793 and continued to focus his plantation on wheat production for the rest of his life.<sup>25</sup> Jefferson was able to pay off Farell and Jones, his primary creditors in Bristol. Although the achievement was not entirely of Jefferson's doing. Unlike Alexander McCaul, William Jones and his Virginia

agent Richard Hanson, were persistent. Regardless, Jefferson was making progress and made calculations for successfully paying off his debt through wheat production. Bernstein points out that his calculations were hopelessly optimistic but to be fair, bad luck was largely to blame.<sup>26</sup> More specifically, bad weather and insects destroyed his wheat crops in the first three years. Jefferson's plan also suffered from a lack of land allotted for cultivation. Only one of every eleven acres was farmed in seven different locations, leaving the rest of his land to forest.<sup>27</sup>

## Struggle is Good

When Jefferson returned to Monticello after serving two terms as president and nearly destroying the federal financial system that he despised, he still believed he could pay off his personal debt.<sup>28</sup> Jefferson began to take drastic measures and sold his library of 6,487 books for \$23,950. Then in a move that is as frustrating as it is expected, he immediately began to buy more books, admitting to John Adams, "I cannot live without books..." eventually acquiring another thousand books before he died.<sup>29</sup> This sort of behavior certainly did not help, but students should understand that two events at the end of Jefferson's life assured his financial destruction. The Panic of 1819 single handedly sealed his fate by destroying the Piedmont economy, dropping prices on agricultural goods, the value of paper money and land.<sup>30</sup> But then in March of 1819, Wilson Cary Nicholas, a close friend and political ally asked Jefferson to back (co-sign) a loan. Five months later, Nicholas defaulted on the \$20,000 loan and then died in 1820, placing the burden of twelve hundred dollars a year in interest on Jefferson for years. Jefferson called the events his "*coup de grace*," and made plans to sell his land by lottery and all but five of his one hundred and thirty slaves in February of 1826.

Jefferson's failed war against debt left him embarrassed and depressed. Newspapers covered Jefferson's lottery application to the legislature, causing him "much mortification."<sup>31</sup> In a letter to his friend James Monroe he shared his belief that his private failings were for lack of attention and ability.<sup>32</sup> While his assessment may have some truth to it, other factors were certainly involved. His efforts to eliminate public debt are just as debatable. Jefferson believed the Virginia gentry would grow in number after the American Revolution and aid in his attempt to eliminate the national debt and bring about a decentralized government. Instead, Americans became something quite different than what he expected. The liberating effects of capitalism

had produced the opposite.<sup>33</sup> But perhaps most disheartening was Jefferson's loss of optimism and hope for his family's future and that of the republican experiment.

Jefferson's enduring optimism while struggling with debt throughout his life is a characteristic we should all aspire to have. Even if one is not inclined to agree with Jefferson's Republican goals, his leadership on the issue was admirable and his warnings against debt are still good advice today. Sloan believes that Jefferson's lifelong fight against debt, "gave his life meaning, and it would be a mistake to suppose it only a minor or an ancillary feature of the legacy Jefferson intended to leave that a republican society was impossible without serious consideration of the ways debt could distort and, ultimately, frustrate the realization of republican dreams."<sup>34</sup>

For these reasons, teachers should caution students about the conclusions they draw from the end of Jefferson's life. Of course, judgments made on financial decisions ultimately must take into account the bottom line: when Jefferson died, his grandson and executor of his estate could only pay a portion of the \$107,000 of debt he owed after five days of auction and the national debt had increased to over \$81,054,000.<sup>35</sup> But Jefferson's plans to eliminate debt should not be seen as total failures ripe for second guessing in a case study at Harvard Business School. Jefferson's fight against debt offers new opportunities for teachers to deliver social studies curriculum, as well as, create innovative lessons that also provide examples of strong character and leadership for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

## Notes



- <sup>1</sup> Ellis, Joseph J., *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson* (Vintage Books, 1996), p.8
- <sup>2</sup> Sloan, Herbert E., *Principle and Interest: Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Debt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 12
- <sup>3</sup> Thomas Jefferson to John Page, July 15, 1763, in Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. I (New York, 1905)
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4
- <sup>5</sup> Thomas Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, February 27, 1803, in Merrill D. Peterson, ed., *Thomas Jefferson Writings*, (Library of America, 1984), p. 1118
- <sup>6</sup> Ellis, *American Sphinx*, p. 82
- <sup>7</sup> Sloan, *Principle and Interest*, p. 31
- <sup>8</sup> Ellis, *American Sphinx*, p. xvii
- <sup>9</sup> Shackelford, George Green, *Jefferson's Adoptive Son: The Life of William Short, 1759-1848* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993), p. 72
- <sup>10</sup> Shackelford, *Jefferson's Adoptive Son*, p. 73
- <sup>11</sup> Ellis, *American Sphinx*, p. 162
- <sup>12</sup> Jefferson to Nicholas Lewis, July 29, 1787.
- <sup>13</sup> Burns, Ken. *Thomas Jefferson*. DVD. PBS, 1997.
- <sup>14</sup> Sloan, *Principle and Interest*, p. 24
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33
- <sup>17</sup> Bernstein, R. B., *Thomas Jefferson*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 12
- <sup>18</sup> Ellis, *American Sphinx*, p. 163; Edwin Morris Betts and James A Bear. ed., *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book, with Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Princeton, 1953), p. viii-x, 201-02, 325-36; packet of materials from the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation at Monticello entitled, "My Family, My Farm, and My Books" (1990-91)
- <sup>19</sup> Answers to [Jean] D meunier's Additional Queries, [January-February 1786], Julian P. Boyd et al., eds., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. X, 27 (Princeton, 1950-); Jefferson to Mary Jefferson Eppes, January 7, 1798, *Domestic Life*, 247-48.
- <sup>20</sup> Ellis, *American Sphinx*, p. 233
- <sup>21</sup> Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson*, p. 188; Sloan, *Principle and Interest*, p. 32
- <sup>22</sup> Ellis, *American Sphinx*, p. 162
- <sup>23</sup> Jefferson to George Washington, [April] 1794, Sarah N. Randolph, *The Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson* (Charlottesville, 1978). Originally published 1871, p. 229-30
- <sup>24</sup> Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (UNC Press Books, 1998), p. 191; Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation at Monticello [Online]: <http://www.monticello.org/site/plantation-and-slavery/trading-hoes-plows-transition-tobacco-to-wheat> [9 July 2013]
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, February 17, 1826, in Merrill D. Peterson, ed., *Thomas Jefferson Writings*, (Library of America, 1984), p. 1514; Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.186
- <sup>27</sup> Ellis, *American Sphinx*, p. 166; Avery O. Craven, *Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606-1860* (Urbana, 1925); Jack Temple Kirby, "Virginia's Environmental History: A Prospectus," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, IC (1991), 464-67; Edwin Morris Betts, ed., *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book, with Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Princeton, 1953), p. 335-36, 227-8, 238-39.
- <sup>28</sup> Sloan, *Principle and Interest*, p. 8
- <sup>29</sup> Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 20 June 1815, In Lester J. Cappon, ed., *The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence Between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams*, Volume 2. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1959). 441-43 (quote at 443).
- <sup>30</sup> Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson*, p. 187; Jefferson to James Madison, February 17, 1826, James Morton Smith, ed., *The Republic of Letters: The Correspondence Between Thomas Jefferson and James Madison 1776-1826*, Vol. III. (New York, 1995), p.1966

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- <sup>31</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, February 17, 1826, in Merrill D. Peterson, ed., *Thomas Jefferson Writings*, (Library of America, 1984), p. 1514
- <sup>32</sup> Ellis, *American Sphinx*, p 344; Jefferson to James Monroe, March 8, 1826, Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. X. (New York, 1892-99),p. 383.
- <sup>33</sup> Sloan, *Principle and Interest*, p. 9
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10
- <sup>35</sup> Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation at Monticello [Online]: <http://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/debt> [9 July 2013]; U.S. Department of the Treasury [Online]: [http://www.treasurydirect.gov/govt/reports/pd/histdebt/histdebt\\_histo1.htm](http://www.treasurydirect.gov/govt/reports/pd/histdebt/histdebt_histo1.htm) [9 July 2013].