

# [PDF] Thomas Jefferson

## R. B. Bernstein - pdf download free book

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### Books Details:

Title: Thomas Jefferson

Author: R. B. Bernstein

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### Description:

**From Publishers Weekly** And still they come, these biographies of Thomas Jefferson-so many, in fact, that it's sometimes hard to tell them apart. But not this one. Veteran historian Bernstein (Amending America, etc.) pulls off a remarkable feat: he writes of Jefferson and his "ambiguous legacies" with utter serenity, detachment and balance. He takes no sides and offers no particular arguments about the man. Instead, in prose of the utmost directness and clarity, Bernstein simply lays out the great founder's life in all its complexities, achievements and, at the end, ruin-by which he means not only Jefferson's late-life financial plight but also his sad conviction that a new generation had become unfaithful to "his" Revolution. The acid test these days for partisan or skeptical biographers of Jefferson is how to present his relationship with his slave Sally Hemings. In a characteristic example of his evenhandedness, Bernstein treats the controversy in a concise summary, then tells us what is now known of the relationship and what cannot yet be determined. One comes to trust the author as a guide, not a polemicist. In fact, it's precisely because Bernstein reveals nothing new and argues not at all that anyone wanting to brush up on Jefferson's life or gain

exposure to the latest findings about it will find this book of huge value. It will be most valuable to those seeking an introduction to Jefferson's life and achievements. There's little doubt that the book will become the standard brief one-volume biography of someone who was "the leading spokesman for the revolution of ideas that changed... the face of America and the world."

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**From School Library Journal** Grade 9 Up-An honest look at Jefferson's life, accomplishments, and inconsistencies. Bernstein does not gloss over his subject's flaws and the controversies that surrounded him. The contradictions between Jefferson's beliefs and his behavior, while exposing his human side, are not used to denigrate him or to diminish his accomplishments. Obvious controversies, such as his owning slaves in spite of his writings, his relationship with Sally Hemings, his conflicts with George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, and his volatile friendship with John Adams, are supplemented with lesser-known facts. His determination to lead the life of a landed gentleman despite his inability to afford it; the continuous construction at Monticello that made it much less pleasant than the museum it is today; his pride in founding the University of Virginia and his disappointment in the conduct of the student body; and, simply, the rough edges of his personality are all effectively delineated. The development of Jefferson's religious beliefs is particularly well described, but a misquoting of the Virginia Bill for Religious Freedom results in an incomprehensible sentence. Overall, the book reads well, although some of the background events would benefit from more detail. Black-and-white photos and period prints complement the text. Attractive and appealing, this book is similar in reading level to Joyce Appleby's *Thomas Jefferson* (Times, 2003) and in content to Norman Risjord's *Thomas Jefferson* (Madison, 1994).-*Jeffrey A. French, Euclid Public Library, OH*

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