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Indianapolis Literary Club
Essay by David B. H. Best
Title: *Invaluable Friends*

ONE OF THE GREATEST FEARS THAT PEOPLE HAD IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WAS THAT OF A FIRE. ON FEBRUARY 1, 1770 THIS FEAR WAS REALIZED IN THE MIND OF THOMAS JEFFERSON WHEN THE MANSION HOUSE AT SHADWELL WHERE HE WAS BORN WAS REDUCED TO A PILE OF ASHES IN A CONFLAGRATION. AMONG THOSE ASHES WERE THE REMAINS OF HIS LIBRARY OF SOME 400 VOLUMES. HE WAS AWAY AT THE TIME OF THE FIRE. TO UNDERSTAND HOW DEVASTATING THE LOSS WAS TO TWENTY-SIX YEAR OLD JEFFERSON, NOW A PRACTICING LAWYER, WE READ IN A LETTER DATED FEBRUARY 20, 1770 TO HIS COLLEGE FRIEND, JOHN PAGE, THE FOLLOWING: "MY LATE LOSS MAY PERHAPS HAVE REACHED YOU BY THIS TIME, I MEAN THE LOSS OF MY MOTHER'S HOUSE BY FIRE, AND IN IT, OF EVERY PAPER I HAD IN THE WORLD, AND ALMOST EVERY BOOK. ON A REASONABLE ESTIMATE I CALCULATE THE COST OF THE BOOKS BURNED TO HAVE BEEN £200. STERLING. WOULD TO GOD IT HAD BEEN THE MONEY; THEN HAD IT NEVER COST ME A SIGH!" BECAUSE BOOKS VALUED MORE THAN MONEY TO HIM WE CITE HIM AS A TRUE BOOK LOVER.

TO UNDERSTAND THE FULL EFFECT OF THIS SHATTERING EVENT THIS ESSAY WILL DWELL IN BRIEF UPON THE CONTENTS OF MR. JEFFERSON'S THREE LIBRARIES, THE GRAND PLAN FOR HIS LIBRARY, AND HOW HE CATALOGUED HIS LIBRARY. WE BEGIN WITH THE SHADWELL FIRE LIBRARY. NO COMPLETE INVENTORY EXISTS FOR THIS LIBRARY. HOWEVER, THREE PARTIAL LISTS DO EXIST. THE

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FIRST IS A LIST OF THE TITLES IN PETER JEFFERSON'S LIBRARY IN HIS DETAILED ESTATE INVENTORY. ONE BOOK IN PARTICULAR IN HIS FATHER'S LIBRARY WAS *Ichnographia Rustica, or, The Nobelman, Gentleman, and Gardener's Recreation* BY STEPHEN SWITZER. THE BOOK CONTAINS A DETAILED SET OF "RULES FOR LAYING OUT A COUNTRY ESTATE." PERHAPS THIS BOOK INFLUENCED JEFFERSON IN HIS LAYOUT AND DESIGN OF MONTICELLO. A SECOND SOURCE IS A LIST OF BOOKS THOMAS JEFFERSON EITHER PURCHASED FROM OR HAD BOUND BY THE OFFICES OF THE *VIRGINIA GAZETTE* IN 1764 AND 1765. THE THIRD SOURCE IS AN INVOICE OF SEVERAL BOOKS JEFFERSON RECEIVED IN A SHIPMENT FROM A LONDON BOOKSELLER IN 1769.

FROM THESE SOURCES WE CAN CONCLUDE THAT THE SHADWELL LIBRARY CONTAINED A STRONG ELEMENT OF BOOKS OF HISTORY AND LAW. HIS HISTORY BOOKS WERE OF BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY IN BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN LANGUAGES. AT HIS AGE THOMAS JEFFERSON READ IN SEVEN LANGUAGES. HIS SUBSTANTIAL LAW COLLECTION INCLUDED MANUALS OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE, CIVIL PROCEDURE, AND EQUITY PLEADINGS; COMPILATIONS OF LAWS AND STATUTES, INCLUDING THE MOST UP-TO-DATE COLLECTIONS OF VIRGINIA LAWS AND OLDER COLLECTIONS OF ENGLISH STATUTES; REPORTS OF CASES; COLLECTIONS OF TRIALS; AND BOOKS OF FORMS.

INCLUDED IN THE SHADWELL LIBRARY WERE ESSAYS BY JOSEPH ADDISON WHOM JEFFERSON CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE MOST ELOQUENT WRITERS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND A HANDSOMELY BOUND AND GILT FOLIO EDITION OF JOHN MILTON'S *WORKS*. ONE OF THOMAS JEFFERSON'S FAVORITE AUTHORS WAS LAURENCE STERNE. IN 1765 JEFFERSON HAD ACQUIRED TWO-VOLUME

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EDITIONS OF STERNE'S POPULAR DEVOTIONAL WORK, *THE SERMONS OF MR. YORICK* AND STERNE'S NOVEL, *THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF TRISTRAM SHANDY*. THE FIVE-VOLUME EDITION OF *THE WORKS OF LAURENCE STERNE* PUBLISHED IN 1769 WAS ALSO IN THE SHADWELL LIBRARY. STERNE HAD ALSO PUBLISHED *A POLITICAL ROMANCE*, A POLITICAL ALLEGORY EMPHASIZING THE ABSURDITY OF INGRAINED TRADITIONS OF INHERITANCE. JEFFERSON LATER FOUGHT HARD TO ELIMINATE SUCH IDEAS ABOUT INHERITANCE.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TOOK GREAT PRIDE IN HIS KNOWLEDGE OF CLASSICAL LANGUAGES. HE ENJOYED ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF CLASSICAL WORKS, INCLUDING *THE COMMENTARIES OF THE EMPEROR MARCUS ANTONIUS* AND *THOUGHTS OF CICERO*. THE LATTER WAS A COMPILATION OF EXTRACTS FROM THIS GREAT ROMAN ORATOR AND PHILOSOPHER WHO TREATED A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS: CONSCIENCE, ELOQUENCE, FRIENDSHIP, OLD AGE, PASSION, RELIGION, AND WISDOM. THE BOOK WAS A CONVENIENT REFERENCE AND AN EXCELLENT TOOL FOR LEARNING LANGUAGES. ITS TEXT WAS PRINTED IN LATIN AND FRENCH IN PARALLEL COLUMNS ON THE EVEN PAGES AND ENGLISH ON THE ODD PAGES.

OF INTEREST IN TODAY'S POLITICAL WORLD IS THE MUSLIM BIBLE, THE KORAN (QUR'AN). JEFFERSON OWNED A COPY OF THE QUR'AN, SPECIFICALLY, GEORGE SALE'S ENGLISH TRANSLATION, *THE KORAN, COMMONLY CALLED THE ALCORAN OF MOHAMMED*. THE BOOK NOT ONLY DEALT WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURE OF THE ISLAMIC FAITH, BUT IT ALSO FORMED THE SUPREME SOURCE OF ISLAMIC LAW. BY READING THE QUR'AN JEFFERSON EXPANDED HIS LEGAL STUDIES. IT ALSO ENHANCED HIS STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF RELIGION.

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JEFFERSON ALSO ACQUIRED FROM HIS FATHER'S LIBRARY WILLIAM ELLIS'S *LONDON AND COUNTRY BREWER*. THOMAS JEFFERSON, DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE WAS THE FOREMOST CONNOISSEUR OF FINE WINES IN THE COUNTRY, DEVELOPED EXPERTISE AS A BREWER. HIS HOMEMADE MALT LIQUOR WAS SERVED AT THE TABLE. HE CONSIDERED THAT BY DRINKING PORTER ITS HEALTHFUL PROPERTIES WERE "PECULIARLY SALUTARY FOR YOUR STOMACH."

OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE IN THE SHADWELL LIBRARY WAS SIR FRANCIS BACON'S *THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING* THAT WAS ALSO KNOWN AS "BACON'S PHILOSOPHY." JEFFERSON HAD HIS COPY REBOUND IN WILLIAMSBURG. THE WORK EXERTED A PROFOUND INFLUENCE ON JEFFERSON. HE CONSIDERED BACON, SIR ISAAC NEWTON AND JOHN LOCKE AS THE THREE GREATEST MINDS IN HISTORY. JEFFERSON ADAPTED BACON'S FACULTIES OF THE MIND AS ADVANCED IN THIS WORK – MEMORY, REASON, AND IMAGINATION. THESE THREE JEFFERSON USED TO ORGANIZE THE BOOKS IN HIS LIBRARY INTO THREE MAJOR GROUPS – HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, AND FINE ARTS – DIRECTLY CORRESPONDING TO BACON'S FACULTIES OF THE MIND. HIS LIBRARY CATALOG WILL BE ADDRESSED IN DETAIL MOMENTARILY.

NOT INCLUDED IN THE SHADWELL LIBRARY BUT RESIDING IN AN IMPORTANT PLACE IN JEFFERSON'S BOYHOOD YEARS WAS THE CHAPMAN BOOKS. THE CHAPMAN CRISSCROSSED THE COLONIES WITH A PACK ON HIS BACK CONTAINING A VARIETY OF INEXPENSIVE GOODS THAT WERE BOTH USEFUL AND ENTERTAINING. INCLUDED IN HIS PACK WAS A STOCK OF BOOKS. THEY WERE ALSO KNOWN AS "LITTLE BOOKS," "SMALL BOOKS," OR "SMALL HISTORIES." MANY REFERRED TO THEM SIMPLY AS "HISTORIES." THE MOST POPULAR

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CHAPMAN TEXTS INCLUDED *DR. FAUSTUS, THE FAMOUS HISTORY OF THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTENDOM, THE HISTORY OF FORTUNATUS, THE HISTORY OF PARISMUS, THE HISTORY OF TOM THUMB, JACK THE GIANT KILLER, REYNARD THE FOX, VALENTIN AND ORSON, AND THE WISE MEN OF GOTHAM.* CHAPBOOKS WERE READ AND READ AND REREAD UNTIL THEY FELL APART AND WERE THEN USED AS WASTE PAPER FOR MANY PURPOSES, EVEN LAVATORY PAPER. THESE BOOKS LEFT A LASTING IMPRESSION UPON JEFFERSON. AS AN EXAMPLE IN A LETTER MANY YEARS LATER TO MARIA COSWAY WHOM HE HAD MET THROUGH JOHN TRUMBULL IN PARIS JEFFERSON IMAGINED A FANCIFUL WAY TO GET TOGETHER: "I WISH THEY HAD FORMED US LIKE THE BIRDS OF THE AIR, ABLE TO FLY WHERE WE PLEASE. I WOULD HAVE EXCHANGED FOR THIS MANY OF THE BOASTED PREEMINENCES OF MAN. I WAS SO UNLUCKY WHEN VERY YOUNG, AS TO READ THE HISTORY OF FORTUNATUS. HE HAD A CAP OF SUCH VIRTUES THAT WHEN HE PUT IT ON HIS HEAD, AND WISHED HIMSELF ANYWHERE, HE WAS THERE. I HAVE BEEN ALL MY LIFE SIGHING FOR THIS CAP. YET IF I HAD IT, I QUESTION IF I SHOULD USE IT BUT ONCE. I SHOULD WISH MYSELF WITH YOU, AND NOT WISH MYSELF AWAY AGAIN." *THE HISTORY OF FORTUNATUS* AS RECOLLECTED BY JEFFERSON TOLD A REMARKABLE TALE OF AN ADVENTUROUS MAN WITH AN INEXHAUSTABLE PURSE AND A MAGIC CAP THAT NOT ONLY MADE HIM INVISIBLE BUT ALSO TRANSPORTED HIM WHEREVER HE WANTED TO GO.

THOMAS JEFFERSON AT THE AGE OF FIVE ATTENDED A SCHOOL AT TUCKAHOE, THE HOME OF WILLIAM RANDOLPH WHO UPON HIS DEATH THREE YEARS EARLIER IN HIS WILL HAD REQUESTED THAT JEFFERSON'S FATHER, PETER JEFFERSON, TAKE CHARGE OF HIS

PLANTATION AND THE EDUCATION OF HIS CHILDREN. IN THE TUCKAHOE SCHOOL YOUNG JEFFERSON READ AESOP'S *FABLES* AND *ROBINSON CRUSOE*. LATER IN HIS LIFE JEFFERSON ACQUIRED SEVERAL EDITIONS OF AESOP IN GREEK, SOME WITH LATIN TRANSLATIONS AND WITH LEARNED COMMENTARIES. MANY YEARS LATER WHILE SERVING IN CONGRESS IN 1780 AESOP'S *FABLES* EXHIBITED AN INFLUENCE ON JEFFERSON. WHILE DEALING WITH SEVERAL CONTENTIOUS LEGISLATORS JEFFERSON APPRECIATED THE RECEIPT OF A LETTER FROM HIS FRIEND FRANCIS HOPKINSON WHICH INCLUDED THE LATEST SCIENCE NEWS FROM PHILADELPHIA'S INTELLECTUAL WORLD. IN RESPONDING TO HOPKINSON, JEFFERSON WROTE, "IN TRUTH AMIDST THIS ETERNAL SURFEIT OF POLITICS WHEREIN ONE SUBJECT SUCCEEDS ANOTHER LIKE AESOP'S FEAST OF TONGUES A SMALL ENTREMET OF PHILOSOPHY IS RELIEVING." HIS REFERENCE TO AESOP REFERRED TO ONE OF THE FABULOUS LIVES OF AESOP, WHICH PREFACED CONTEMPORARY COLLECTIONS OF AESOP'S *FABLES*. IN THIS STORY, AESOP'S MASTER, THE PHILOSOPHER XANTHUS, HAVING INVITED HIS DISCIPLES HOME FOR DINNER, ORDERED AESOP TO SERVE A FINE, SAVORY MEAL. AESOP SERVED TONGUE AS THE FIRST COURSE, FOR WHICH THE DISCIPLES PRAISED XANTHUS, FINDING TONGUE A DISH APPROPRIATE TO PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE. WHEN AESOP BROUGHT THE SECOND COURSE - ANOTHER TONGUE DISH - THE DISCIPLES, AT FIRST TAKEN ABACK, FINALLY APPROVED THE DISH, FOR THEY REALIZED THAT ONE TONGUE COULD SHARPEN ANOTHER. WHEN AESOP BROUGHT OUT MORE TONGUE FOR THE THIRD COURSE, THE DISCIPLES COULD THINK OF NOTHING GOOD TO SAY ABOUT IT. XANTHUS THREATENED TO BEAT AESOP, WHO PROCEEDED TO EXPLAIN THE PROPRIETY OF HIS CULINARY CHOICE: EVERY DOCTRINE AND ALL PHILOSOPHY ARE

ESTABLISHED AND PROPAGATED BY THE TONGUE. THE NEXT DAY XANTHUS PLANNED ANOTHER DINNER FOR HIS DISCIPLES. HOPING TO AVOID THE FIASCO OF THE PREVIOUS DAY, HE ORDERED AESOP TO PREPARE THE WORST MEAL HE COULD. AESOP SERVED EXACTLY THE SAME DISHES. ASKED FOR AN EXPLANATION, AESOP RESPONDED THAT NOTHING COULD BE WORSE THAN THE TONGUE. MEN PERISHED AND CITIES WERE DESTROYED BY RUMORS THE TONGUE SPREADS; IN SHORT, NOTHING PROPAGATED EVIL MORE THAN THE TONGUE. THUS FROM THIS AESOP EPISODE THOMAS JEFFERSON RECOGNIZED THE WORD "TONGUE" AS EMINENTLY SIGNIFICANT. TO HIM BOTH LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY, THE TONGUE SERVES AS THE CONDUIT THROUGH WHICH IDEAS ARE CONVERTED INTO WORDS. THE STUDY OF DIFFERENT TONGUES WOULD BECOME A LIFELONG PURSUIT FOR THOMAS JEFFERSON.

OTHER FABLES REMAINED WITH JEFFERSON FOR A LIFETIME. HE USED THEM TO ACCURATELY ILLUSTRATE DECISIVE POINTS. IF A FEDERALIST OPPONENT EXPRESSED A DESIRE FOR A MONARCHICAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT, JEFFERSON WOULD COMPARE HIM TO AESOP'S FROGS, WHICH IMPLORE JUPITER TO SEND THEM A KING. JUPITER EVENTUALLY CHOOSES AS THEIR KING A HERON, WHICH EATS UP ALL ITS AMPHIBIOUS SUBJECTS.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF JEFFERSON'S PRODIGIOUS MEMORY WAS A POEM FROM THOMAS WHITE'S *LITTLE BOOK FOR LITTLE CHILDREN*:

**I'VE SEEN THE SEA ALL IN A BLAZE OF FIRE
I'VE SEEN A HOUSE HIGH AS THE MOON AND HIGHER
I'VE SEEN THE SUN AT TWELVE OCLOCK AT NIGHT
I'VE SEEN THE MAN WHO SAW THIS WONDROUS SIGHT.**

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HE SENT THESE LINES TO HIS GRANDDAUGHTER CORNELIA A HALF CENTURY LATER. IN JEFFERSON'S MIND THE LINES, THOUGH PARADOXES, WOULD FORCE YOUNGER READERS TO STUDY THEIR GEOGRAPHY AND DISCOVER WHERE IN THE WORLD SUCH CONTRADICTORY PHENOMENA COULD POSSIBLY OCCUR.

FROM HIS ADOLESCENT YEARS HE BEGAN HIS PRACTICE OF KEEPING COMMONPLACE BOOKS IN WHICH HE RECORDED DECISIVE BITS OF INFORMATION RELATING TO ALL ASPECTS OF HIS LIFE AND HIS INTERESTS. OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE WAS HIS LITERARY COMMONPLACE BOOK. IN IT HE RECORDED QUOTATIONS FROM THE BOOKS HE READ. AFTER MASTERING THE FUNDAMENTALS OF LATIN WHILE ATTENDING THE REV. WILLIAM DOUGLAS'S SCHOOL HE ALLOTTED SPACE FOR PASSAGES FROM VIRGIL, HORACE, AND OVID. FROM HORACE HE ENTERED THIS STRIKING ENTRY IN HIS COMMONPLACE BOOK: "O RURAL HOME: WHEN SHALL I BEHOLD YOU! WHEN SHALL I BE ABLE, NOW WITH BOOKS OF THE ANCIENTS, NOW WITH SLEEP AND IDLE HOURS, TO QUAFF SWEET FORGETFULNESS OF LIFE'S CARES!" WRITTEN WHEN HE WAS IN HIS ADOLESCENCE IT HAD TO BE A SENTIMENT HE WOULD ECHO MANY TIMES DURING HIS POLITICAL CAREER. IT REFLECTED HIS ENDURING LOVE OF BOOKS AND HOW OFTEN HIS POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES WOULD STEER HIM AWAY FROM HIS STUDIES.

PRIZED AMONG THE BOOKS IN HIS SHADWELL LIBRARY WAS HIS FATHER'S COPY OF *THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND* WHICH DID NOT SURVIVE THE FIRE. JEFFERSON REPLACED IT WITH A TEN-VOLUME EDITION IN THE ORIGINAL FRENCH BY RAPIN. A VISITOR NOTED THE SET AND RECALLED WHAT JEFFERSON SAID ABOUT IT: "RAPIN WAS HERE IN FRENCH, THOUGH VERY RARE IN THAT LANGUAGE. MR. JEFFERSON SAID THAT AFTER ALL IT WAS THE BEST HISTORY OF

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ENGLAND, FOR HUME'S TORY PRINCIPLES ARE TO HIM UNSUPPORTABLE."

IN HIS FATHER'S *BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER* WHICH DID SURVIVE THE FIRE THE FAMILY RECORDS REMAIN INTACT. IN ADDITION WE FIND THEREIN INSCRIPTIONS RECORDED BY THOMAS. TO THE TENTH VERSE OF PSALMS 10 – "THE DAYS OF OUR AGE ARE THREESCORE AND TEN, AND THOUGH MEN BE STRONG THAT THEY COME TO FOURSCORE YEARS: YET IN THEIR STRENGTH THEY BUT LABOUR AND SORROW; SO SOON PASSETH IT AWAY, AND WE ARE GONE" – TO WHICH HE SUPPLIED A FOOTNOTE IN GREEK FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF HERODOTUS. ROUGHLY TRANSLATED IT MEANS: "FOR I SET THE LIMIT OF MAN'S LIFE AT SEVENTY YEARS."

WE NOW TURN TO THOMAS JEFFERSON'S SECOND LIBRARY. HE HAD BEEN COLLECTING BOOKS IN A SERIOUS VEIN FOR TEN YEARS. NOW THAT HE COULD BEGIN AGAIN HE FOUND HIMSELF FREE TO INDULGE HIS WIDE-RANGING INTELLECTUAL INTERESTS AND HIS PASSION FOR BOOKS IN A GRAND PLAN THAT WOULD EMBRACE VIRTUALLY ALL OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE. THE GREAT LIBRARY OF WILLIAM BYRD II OF WESTOVER PROVIDED JEFFERSON WITH A MODEL WITH WHICH TO PATTERN THE LIBRARY HE WAS TO FASHION. THE BYRD LIBRARY NUMBERED SOME 3,500 VOLUMES OF AN UNUSUAL RANGE: GREEK AND ROMAN CLASSICS, LAW, DIVINITY, AND MEDICINE. IT ALSO CONTAINS AN UNUSUAL AND BY FAR LARGEST SECTION IN THE LIBRARY CLASSIFIED AS "ENTERTAINMENT, POETRY, TRANSLATIONS, Etc." INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION WERE THE WORKS OF THE ELIZABETHAN AND RESTORATION DRAMATISTS FOUND NOWHERE ELSE IN AMERICAN LIBRARIES. IT CONTAINED THE FOLLOWING: A LARGE NUMBER OF BOOKS OF ARCHITECTURE,

INCLUDING THE WORKS OF VITRUVIUS, PALLADIO, AND MORE RECENT WRITERS ON THAT SUBJECT; SIZABLE COLLECTIONS OF BOOKS ON DRAWING AND PAINTING; COLLECTIONS OF MUSIC, INCLUDING EXAMPLES OF ITALIAN AND ENGLISH OPERAS; MANY BOOKS OF PHILOSOPHY, CLASSICAL AND MODERN – AMONG THEM THE WORKS OF HOBBS, DESCARTES, BOYLE, SHAFTESBURY, LOCKE, AND OTHER RELATIVELY RECENT WRITERS; TWENTY OR MORE WORKS ON GARDENING AND AGRICULTURE; AN AMPLE ASSORTMENT OF OTHER UTILITARIAN BOOKS, SUCH AS TREATISES ON DISTILLING, COOKERY, AND RELATED SUBJECTS; A SCATTERING OF TEXTBOOKS ON LANGUAGE, RHETORIC, MATHEMATICS, AND LOGIC. . . . AND A CAREFULLY BALANCED COLLECTION OF THE BEST LITERATURE AND LEARNING OF THE DAY THAT HAD NO EQUAL IN AMERICA.”

TO SAY THAT THIS COLLECTION WHETTED THE LITERARY APPETITE OF ONE OF THE MOST PRECOCIOUS YOUNG MEN IN THE COLONIES IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT. THREE YEARS AFTER THE FIRE JEFFERSON VISITED WESTOVER HOPING TO BUY THE LIBRARY HIMSELF. HIS 1773 MEMORANDUM BOOK, UNDER THE HEADING “WESTOVER LIBRARY” LISTS THE NUMBER OF VOLUMES BY FORMAT (THAT IS, FOLIO, QUARTO, OCTAVO, AND SO ON) AND PRICE. HE CALCULATED THE SIZE OF THE LIBRARY AT 3,486 VOLUMES AND A TOTAL PRICE OF L1219/18. JEFFERSON CALCULATED THE VALUE OF BOOKS IN HIS OWN LIBRARY THAT HE COULD SPARE, BUT HE STILL CAME UP A L1000 SHORT. LATER THE BYRD LIBRARY WAS PURCHASED BY ISAAC ZANE. HE TRANSPORTED IT TO PHILADELPHIA FOR RESALE. JEFFERSON DID PURCHASE A NUMBER OF THE WESTOVER VOLUMES FOR HIS OWN LIBRARY.

NEXT WE COME TO THE SKIPWITH LIST. ROBERT SKIPWITH HAD REQUESTED OF JEFFERSON A LIST OF BOOKS “SUITED TO THE

CAPACITY OF A COMMON READER WHO UNDERSTANDS BUT LITTLE OF THE CLASSICKS AND WHO HAS NOT LEISURE FOR ANY INTRICATE STUDY," COSTING L25 OR L30. JEFFERSON REPLIED WITH A LIST OF 148 TITLES. HOWEVER, SKIPWITH'S LITERARY INTERESTS VARIED GREATLY FROM JEFFERSON'S. JEFFERSON, IN ATTEMPTING TO HEED SKIPWITH'S ADMINITIONS AND RECOMMEND SOMETHING LIKE A GENTLEMAN'S LIBRARY, COULD NOT HEED HIS LIMITATION IN COSTS. JEFFERSON RECOMMENDED A COLLECTION THAT EXCEEDED L100. JEFFERSON'S LETTER TO SKIPWITH WITH THE LIST AND COST ALSO INCLUDED AN INVITATION TO SKIPWITH TO COME TO MONTICELLO, "FROM WHICH YOU MAY REACH YOUR HAND TO A LIBRARY FORMED ON A MORE EXTENSIVE PLAN."

BY 4 AUGUST 1773 HIS MEMORANDUM BOOK RECORDED 1,256 VOLUMES AT MONTICELLO. VOLUMES OF MUSIC AND HIS BOOKS IN WILLIAMSBURG WERE NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOTAL. IN THREE AND A HALF YEARS JEFFERSON HAD MANAGED TO ASSEMBLE A LIBRARY THREE TO FOUR TIMES AS LARGE AS THE SHADWELL LIBRARY, AMOUNTING TO ABOUT ONE NEW BOOK PER DAY.

A FEW YEARS LATER THOMAS JEFFERSON ACQUIRED TWO OF THE FINEST LIBRARIES IN VIRGINIA, THOSE OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS PEYTON RANDOLPH AND THE LEARNED RICHARD BLAND. BOTH LIBRARIES CONTAINED MANUSCRIPT RECORDS OF EARLY VIRGINIA HISTORY WHICH JEFFERSON GREATLY PRIZED. THE 1770s POSED PROBLEMS FOR JEFFERSON IN OBTAINING ADDITIONS TO HIS LIBRARY: PROBLEMS OF GEOGRAPHY, DISRUPTIONS OF WAR, DOMESTIC TURMOIL, AND WILDLY INFLATED CURRENCY. DESPITE THESE CHALLENGES HE CONTINUED TO STEADILY TO ADD TO HIS BOOK COLLECTION. IN WILLIAMSBURG HE BOUGHT BOOKS FROM

THE OFFICE OF THE *VIRGINIA GAZETTE*. SOME 300 TITLES WERE LISTED THERE IN 1775. HE PURCHASED BOOKS FROM THE ESTATES OF HIS FATHER-IN-LAW , JOHN WAYLES, AND THAT OF HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW AND CLOSEST FRIEND, DABNEY CARR, AND FROM THAT OF THE ESTATE OF THE REVEREND JAMES HORROCKS, THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY. HE ALSO ADDED BOOKS TO HIS COLLECTION FROM THE LIBRARIES OF THE REVEREND SAMUEL HENLEY AND THOMAS GWATKIN, BOTH FACULTY MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE. AND NOT THE LEAST OF ALL HE ADDED BOOKS FROM THE LIBRARY OF THE FLEEING ROYAL GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA, LORD DUNMORE.

JEFFERSON AS A MEMBER OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS IN 1775 AND 1776 HAD ACCESS TO THE BOOKSTORES OF PHILADELPHIA. HIS MEMORANDUM BOOKS REFLECT THESE PURCHASES. THE YEAR 1776 WAS IN FACT A BANNER YEAR FOR ADDITIONS TO HIS LIBRARY. HE EVEN SENT A DIRECTIVE TO WILLIAMSBURG FOR THE REMOVAL OF HIS BOOKS THERE IN THE EVENT THE BRITISH OVERRAN THE TOWN. WHEN HE WAS GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA IN 1781 THE SAME DIRECTIVE WAS ISSUED FOR CHARLOTTESVILLE. IN 1782 THOMAS JEFFERSON ACCEPTED A DIPLOMATIC APPOINTMENT IN FRANCE. HE RECOGNIZED THIS AS A DRAMATIC OPPORTUNITY TO ADD TO HIS LIBRARY. WHILE WAITING TO BOARD SHIP IN PHILADELPHIA HE ROOMED WITH HIS FRIEND JAMES MADISON. THE TWO MEN EXCHANGED BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND DESIDERATA LISTS. JEFFERSON HAD WITH HIM A CATALOG OF BOOKS HE OWNED AND WITH IT HE INCLUDED A LIST OF BOOKS HE INTENDED TO PURCHASE ABROAD. AS OF 6 MARCH 1783 HIS CATALOG OF BOOKS HE OWNED TOTALED 2,640 VOLUMES. JEFFERSON INDEED HAD A GRAND PLAN FOR HIS LIBRARY.

IN THE LETTER HE WROTE TO CONGRESS IN 1815 OFFERING HIS LIBRARY TO CONGRESS, JEFFERSON DESCRIBED HIS BOOK COLLECTING EFFORTS IN PARIS IN SOME DETAIL: "WHILE RESIDING IN PARIS I DEVOTED EVERY AFTERNOON I WAS DISENGAGED, FOR A SUMMER OR TWO, IN EXAMINING ALL THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSTORES, TURNING OVER EVERY BOOK WITH MY OWN HAND, AND PUTTING BY EVERYTHING WHICH RELATED TO AMERICA, AND INDEED WHATEVER WAS RARE AND VALUABLE IN EVERY SCIENCE. BESIDES THIS, I HAD STANDING ORDERS THE WHOLE TIME I WAS IN EUROPE, ON ITS PRINCIPAL BOOK-MARTS, PARTICULARLY AMSTERDAM, FRANKFORT, MADRID AND LONDON, FOR SUCH WORKS RELATING TO AMERICA AS COULD NOT BE FOUND IN PARIS."

THE FIVE YEARS HE SPENT IN PARIS FROM 1784 TO 1789 WERE PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ONES DURING HIS ENTIRE CAREER AS A BOOK COLLECTOR. HE CONSIDERED EUROPE TO HAVE AN ADVANTAGE OVER THE UNITED STATES AND THEREFORE AS HER MOST VALUABLE COMMODITY FOR AMERICANS. WHEN HE COULD NOT GO IN PERSON, JEFFERSON USED HIS FRIENDS AND FELLOW DILOMATS AS AGENTS. IN ADDITION JEFFERSON BECAME A BOOK-HUNTER FOR HIS FRIENDS BACK HOME. THESE EFFORTS FAR OUTNUMBERED HIS OWN REQUESTS FOR HELP. FOR EXAMPLE, HIS SELECTIONS FOR JAMES MADISON PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN MADISON'S DETAILED PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION. THE AMOUNT OF MONEY JEFFERSON SPENT FOR BOOKS DURING HIS FIVE YEARS IN PARIS AND THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE WAS IMMENSE, EVEN FOR A WEALTHY VIRGINIA PLANTER. RECOGNIZING THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF HIS INDULGENCE FOR BOOKS WHENEVER POSSIBLE HE BOUGHT CHEAPER AND SMALLER FORMAT EDITIONS, AND IF IT WAS AN EXPENSIVE BOOK HE DROVE FOR A HARD

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BARGAIN. HE WROTE THE FOLLOWING TO ONE OF HIS AGENTS IN LONDON: "SENSIBLE THAT I LABOR GRIEVOUSLY UNDER THE MALADY OF BIBLIOMANIE, I SUBMIT TO THE RULE OF BUYING ONLY AT REASONABLE PRICES, AS TO A REGIMEN NECESSARY IN THAT DISEASE."

PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR AMERICA IN 1789 JEFFERSON COMPILED A SEPARATE CATALOG OF THE BOOKS HE HAD PURCHASED ABROAD. MOST OF THE BOOKS WERE IN FRENCH. THE LARGEST CATEGORIES WERE POLITICS AND GEOGRAPHY WITH CONSIDERED EMPHASIS ON BOOKS RELATING TO AMERICA. HIGHLY PRIZED BY JEFFERSON AND IN CONSIDERABLE NUMBERS WERE BOOKS OF LANGUAGES. GRAMMARS, DICTIONARIES, AND LEXICONS IN BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN LANGUAGES RECEIVED HIGH PRIORITY. WHILE IN PARIS HE ADDED SOME 2000 BOOKS TO HIS LIBRARY. IN THE FALL OF 1789 WHEN HE RETURNED TO AMERICA HIS LIBRARY NUMBERED APPROXIMATLEY 5,000 VOLUMES.

ACCEPTING THE OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE IN PRESIDENT WASHINGTON'S CABINET SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVING AT MONTICELLO IN 1789 JEFFERSON HAD WITH HIM IN PHILADELPHIA HIS PARIS BOOKS. THESE HE USED TO GREAT ADVANTAGE AS HE PREPARED A WELL-KNOWN STATEMENT ON RELATIONS WITH FRANCE. IN THE STATEMENT HE CITED THE WORKS OF GROTIUS, WOLF, PUFENDORF, AND VATTEL, BOOKS HE HAD PURCHASED IN PARIS. BEFORE HE RESIGNED HIS OFFICE AS SECRETARY OF STATE IN 1793 HE RECITED THE SENTIMENTS HE HAD UTTERED WHEN HE LEFT HIS GOVERNORSHIP IN 1781, AND HE WOULD INVOKE AGAIN WHEN HE LEFT THE PRESIDENCY, ON THE PLEASURES OF RETURNING TO HIS FAMILY, HIS FARMS, AND HIS BOOKS. THE WORDS WERE VERSIONS OF A FAMOUS PASSAGE OF LATIN THAT HE LEARNED AS A SCHOOLBOY.

FROM THE WORKS OF HORACE THE WORDS FOUND A PLACE IN HIS LITERARY COMMONPLACE BOOK: "O RURAL HOME: WHEN SHALL I BEHOLD YOU! WHEN SHALL I BE ABLE, NOW WITH BOOKS OF THE ANCIENTS, NOW WITH SLEEP AND IDLE HOURS, TO QUAFF SWEET FORGETFULNESS OF LIFE'S CARES." FROM EARLY IN HIS LIFE HIS LIBRARY FORMED AN ESSENTIAL PART OF HIS VISION OF THE GOOD LIFE.

AFTER FOUR YEARS IN RETIREMENT HE TOOK UP THE DUTIES OF VICE-PRESIDENT IN 1797. FOR THE NEXT TWELVE YEARS, WHILE SERVING IN PHILADELPHIA AND WASHINGTON, HE RENEWED VIGOROUSLY THE INCREASE OF HIS BOOK COLLECTING. IN 1803 HE WROTE TO A PARIS BOOKSELLER THAT "MY COLLECTION OF BOOKS IS NOW SO EXTENSIVE, & MYSELF SO FAR ADVANCED IN LIFE THAT I HAVE LITTLE OCCASION TO ADD TO IT." BUT ADD TO IT HE DID. HE WAS NOW DEDICATED TO THE CREATION OF A TRULY DISTINCTIVE LIBRARY. NOW HIS GRAND PLAN WAS TO CREATE A COLLECTION INTENDED TO HAVE UTILITY WELL BEYOND WHAT WAS NEEDED FOR HIS PERSONAL USE.

AS PRESIDENT HE FRAMED A PLAN BASED ON HIS CONSIDERABLE KNOWLEDGE OF BIBLIOGRAPHY AND THE BOOK MARKET TO CREATE A CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY. AS PRESIDENT HE WAS RECEIVING REGULARLY AND IN GREAT NUMBERS PRESENTATION COPIES OF BOOKS FROM THEIR AUTHORS. IN 1806 FROM THE WILL OF HIS DEAR FRIEND AND MENTOR, GEORGE WYTHE, JEFFERSON WAS BEQUEATHED HIS EXTENSIVE LIBRARY. WYTHE'S WILL STATED THAT WHILE HIS BOOKS WERE "PERHAPS NOT DESERVING A PLACE IN (JEFFERSON'S) MUSEUM," THEY WERE "THE MOST VALUABLE TO HIM OF ANYTHING WHICH I HAVE THE POWER TO BESTOW."

NOW AFTER SERVING AS VICE-PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT AND RETIRING TO HIS MOUNTAIN TOP HOME MONTICELLO HE HAD ACHIEVED THE GRAND PLAN FOR HIS LIBRARY, THE FOREMOST PRIVATE LIBRARY IN AMERICA. TO IDENTIFY THE BOOKS HE OWNED HE HAD EARLY ON ESCHEWED THE PRACTICE USED BY MANY OF ATTACHING A BOOKPLATE ON THE INSIDE COVER OF A BOOK TO DESIGNATE ITS OWNERSHIP. HE CONSIDERED THE USE OF AN ARMORIAL BOOKPLATE TO BE OSTENTATIOUS. HOWEVER, HE HAD SOUGHT THE HELP OF A FRIEND AND FELLOW VIRGINIAN THOMAS ADAMS, THEN LIVING IN ENGLAND, TO SEE IF HE COULD LOCATE THE JEFFERSON COAT OF ARMS. THIS EFFORT CAME TO NOUGHT. BEGINNING IN HIS TEENAGE YEARS JEFFERSON MARKED HIS BOOKS WITH A FEW STROKES OF THE PEN. THE PRACTICE USED BY MANY WAS REFERRED TO AS A "SIGNATURE." HE PLACED A CURSIVE T PRECEDING THE PRINTED J ON THE FIRST PAGE OF THE J-SIGNATURE, AND A CURSIVE J AFTER THE PRINTED T ON THE FIRST PAGE OF THE T-SIGNATURE. IN HIS RETIREMENT LIBRARY HE QUIT USING THE CURSIVE AND BEGAN INSCRIBING HIS T's AND J's IN BLOCK CAPITALS TO DISTINGUISH THE BOOKS IN HIS RETIREMENT LIBRARY FROM THOSE IN THE COLLECTION HE HAD SOLD TO CONGRESS.

IN CLASSIFYING THE BOOKS IN HIS LIBRARIES HE ADOPTED AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED THE SCHEME OF FRANCIS BACON AND PROMULGATED IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BY JEAN LEROND D'ALEMBERT IN THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE MONUMENTAL *ENCYCLOPEDIÉ*. BACON DEVISED THE THREE FACULTIES OF MEMORY, REASON, AND IMAGINATION. JEFFERSON EQUATED THOSE THREE FACULTIES WITH HIS THREE PRINCIPAL CATEGORIES OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE: HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, AND FINE ARTS. JEFFERSON DIVIDED HISTORY INTO CIVIL AND NATURAL, CIVIL DIVDED INTO

CIVIL PROPER AND ECCLESIASTICAL, CIVIL PROPER INTO ANTIENT AND MODERN, ANTIENT INTO ANTIENT HISTORY AND MODERN INTO FOREIGN, BRITISH, AND AMERICAN. THESE FINAL CLASSIFICATIONS HE CALLED CHAPTERS. IN HIS CATALOG THERE WERE 46 CHAPTERS, LATER REDUCED TO 44. ANY BOOK IN HIS COLLECTION FOUND ITS PLACE IN ONE OF THE 46 CHAPTERS. JEFFERSON LOOKED UPON THE CATALOGING OF BOOKS ALPHABETICALLY AS FAULTY. ONE COULD EASILY FORGET THE NAME OF AN AUTHOR. WHAT WORD IN A TITLE WOULD BE USED FOR ALPHABETICAL PURPOSES?

NEXT WE ADDRESS THE TRAGIC LOSS OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS WHEN BRITISH TROOPS BURNED THE CAPITOL BUILDING ON AUGUST 24, 1814 IN RETALIATION FOR AN AMERICAN RAID ON YORK (NOW TORONTO) IN WHICH THE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS WITH THEIR LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES BURNED. ONE WAGON-LOAD OF BOOKS WAS SAFELY CARTED AWAY. THREE THOUSAND BOOKS WERE REDUCED TO ASHES. THOMAS JEFFERSON WAS DEEPLY SADDENED WHEN NEWS OF THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CARNAGE REACHED HIM. HE CONSIDERED THIS AN ACT OF BARBARISM. HIS WAS A PASSIONATE INTEREST IN THE LOSS. THROUGH HIS ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS HAD DEVELOPED DURING HIS PRESIDENCY. TWO MONTHS AFTER HIS INAUGURATION IN 1801 THE SHIPMENT OF BOOKS FORMING THE NUCLEUS OF THE ORIGINAL LIBRARY OF CONGRESS REACHED WASHINGTON. JEFFERSON URGED ADDITIONAL BOOK PURCHASES. THROUGH HIS GENTLE PRODDING CONGRESS DID PASS AN APPROPRIATION BILL. IN JANUARY 1802 CONGRESS PASSED A LAW ESTABLISHING THE POSITION BY PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT OF THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS. JEFFERSON APPOINTED JOHN

BECKLEY. THAT SAME ACT ALSO ESTABLISHED THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY. JEFFERSON PREPARED A CATALOGUE OF SUITABLE BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY, CONFINING THE BOOKS "TO THOSE BRANCHES OF SCIENCE WHICH BELONG TO THE DELIBERATION OF THE MEMBERS AS STATESMEN." EXCLUDED WERE CLASSICAL BOOKS, ANCIENT OR MODERN. INCLUDED WERE A SIGNIFICANT COLLECTION OF LAW BOOKS AND BOOKS ON PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE.

OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE WAS JEFFERSON'S EFFORTS TO PERSUADE CONGRESS TO PURCHASE SOME BOOKS FROM BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S LIBRARY. N. G. DUFIEF WAS SELLING FRANKLIN'S LIBRARY PIECEMEAL IN PHILADELPHIA WITH LITTLE SUCCESS. SOME TWO THOUSAND BOOKS REMAINED IN THIS LIBRARY. WHAT DUFIEF WAS SUGGESTING WAS A RADICAL SHIFT IN THE PURPOSE OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. INSTEAD OF A WORKING REFERENCE LIBRARY FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, IT SHOULD BE A REPOSITORY FOR BOOKS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY. JEFFERSON WAS HESITANT TO CHANGE THE FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE LIBRARY REPORTED THAT IT HAD EXHAUSTED THE APPROPRIATION FUNDS. FRANKLIN'S BOOKS REMAINED BEYOND THE REACH OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT JEFFERSON WAS BEGINNING TO RETHINK WHAT THE PURPOSE OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SHOULD BE.

UPON LEARNING OF THE TRAGIC LOSS OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS THOMAS JEFFERSON MADE THE MONUMENTAL DECISION TO SELL HIS SECOND LIBRARY IN TACT TO THE CONGRESS. ON

SEPTEMBER 21, 1814 JEFFERSON DRAFTED A LETTER TO SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH THAT DESCRIBED HIS OFFER TO SELL HIS LIBRARY TO CONGRESS. ACCOMPANYING THE LETTER WAS THE CATALOGUE OF THE BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY. SMITH PRESENTED THE LETTER TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY. THE COMMITTEE DECIDED THAT THE OFFER REQUIRED THE APPROVAL OF BOTH THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE. ON OCTOBER 7, 1814 A RESOLUTION WAS PRESENTED BOTH TO THE HOUSE AND SENATE THAT THE TWO CHAMBERS AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF THE JEFFERSON LIBRARY. ON OCTOBER 10 THE RESOLUTION PASSED THE SENATE. THAT SAME DAY THE SENATE INFORMED THE HOUSE OF ITS APPROVAL OF THE RESOLUTION AND URGED THE HOUSE TO DO THE SAME. THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PROCEEDED TO DEBATE THE RESOLUTION. ITS DEBATE WAS CALLED "ONE OF THE MOST MEAN-SPIRITED PARTY BATTLES IN CONGRESSIONAL ANNALS."

ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11 JEFFERSON'S LETTER TO SMITH WAS READ BEFORE THE HOUSE. MUCH "DESULTORY CONVERSATION" FOLLOWED. CONGRESSMEN QUESTIONED THE VALUE OF THE LIBRARY. SOME WONDERED ABOUT THE BOOKS IT CONTAINED. DEBATE WAS POSTPONED TO A LATER DATE. ON OCTOBER 17 THE DEBATE RESUMED. CHARLES INGERSOLL, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM PENNSYLVANIA, YEARS LATER RECALLED WHAT HAPPENED: "THE DISCUSSION AND VOTES IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE PURCHASE OF JEFFERSON'S LIBRARY BETRAYED THE ENGLISH PREPOSSESSIONS OF SOME, THE NARROW PARSIMONY OF OTHERS, THE PARTY-PREJUDICES OF NEARLY ALL." SOME OBJECTED TO THE COST OF THE LIBRARY, OTHERS TO ITS SIZE, AND STILL OTHERS TO THE NATURE OF JEFFERSON'S COLLECTION, WHICH, THEY INSISTED, CONTAINED TOO MANY FOREIGN WORKS. ONE MEMBER OF THE

HOUSE COMMENTED: "ACCORDING TO THE CATALOGUE OF NAMES A GREAT PROPORTION OF THE BOOKS ARE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES, AND WHOLLY UNINTELLIGIBLE TO 9/10ths OF THE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS." SOME OBJECTED BECAUSE THE LIBRARY CONTAINED WORKS OF VOLTAIRE, JOHN LOCKE, AND ROUSSEAU. SUPPORTERS OF JEFFERSON'S OFFER RECOGNIZED THAT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS WOULD BECOME NOT ONLY A WORKING LIBRARY BUT ALSO A LIBRARY FOR THE NATION. FINALLY ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19 THE RESOLUTION WAS FINALLY APPROVED BY THE HOUSE WITH ONE AMENDMENT, THAT CONGRESS MUST APPROVE THE PURCHASE ONCE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY HAD REACHED TERMS WITH JEFFERSON.

THE EXACT SIZE OF THE LIBRARY WAS DETERMINED TO BE 6,487 VOLUMES. THE ENTIRE COLLECTION WAS VALUED AT \$23,950, BASED ON AN ARBITRARY VALUE ASSIGNED TO EACH VOLUME ACCORDING TO FORMAT - FOLIO, QUARTO, OCTAVO, and DUODECIMO. THE ACTUAL VALUE OF THE LIBRARY FAR EXCEEDED THIS AMOUNT. ONE ESTIMATE WAS £50,000 STERLING! THE SENATE APPROVED THE PURCHASE ON DECEMBER 3. DEBATE ON THIS ISSUE IN THE HOUSE RESUMED IN JANUARY, 1815. AFTER SEVERAL AMENDMENTS WERE DEFEATED THE BILL FINALLY PASSED THE HOUSE ON JANUARY 30, 1815.

ON MAY 8, 1815 THE FINAL WAGONLOAD OF BOOKS LEFT MONTICELLO FOR WASHINGTON. THAT DAY JEFFERSON WROTE THE FOLLOWING TO SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH: "OUR TENTH AND LAST WAGONLOAD OF BOOKS GOES OFF TODAY. . . IT IS THE CHOICEST COLLECTION OF BOOKS IN THE UNITED STATES, AND I HOPE IT WILL NOT BE WITHOUT SOME GENERAL EFFECT ON THE LITERATURE OF

OUR COUNTRY.” THE LIBRARY FOUND ITS NEW HOME IN WASHINGTON.

WE BRIEFLY MENTION THREE OTHER LIBRARIES, HIS VACATION LIBRARY AT POPLAR FOREST, HIS RETIREMENT LIBRARY, AND THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA. HIS RETIREMENT LIBRARY ASSEMBLED AFTER THE SALE OF HIS SECOND LIBRARY TO CONGRESS IS BEST DESCRIBED BY JEFFERSON’S FAVORITE GRANDCHILD, ELLEN RANDOLPH COOLIDGE: “BOOKS WERE AT ALL TIMES HIS CHOSEN COMPANIONS, AND HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH MANY LANGUAGES GAVE HIM GREAT POWER OF SELECTION. HE READ HOMER, VIRGIL, DANTE, CORNEILLE, CERVANTES, AS HE READ SHAKSPEARE AND MILTON. IN HIS YOUTH HE HAD LOVED POETRY, BUT BY THE TIME I WAS OLD ENOUGH TO OBSERVE, HE HAD LOST HIS TASTE FOR IT, EXCEPT FOR HOMER AND THE GREAT ATHENIAN TRAGICS, WHICH HE CONTINUED TO THE LAST TO ENJOY. HE WENT OVER THE WORKS OF ESCHYLUS, SOPHOCLES, AND EURIPIDES, NOT VERY LONG BEFORE I LEFT HIM (1825). OF HISTORY HE WAS VERY FOND, AND THIS HE STUDIED IN ALL LANGUAGES, THOUGH ALWAYS, I THINK, PREFERRING THE ANCIENTS. IN FACT, HE DERIVED MORE PLEASURE FROM HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH GREEK AND LATIN THAN FROM ANY OTHER RESOURCE OF LITERATURE, AND I HAVE OFTEN HEARD HIM EXPRESS HIS GRATITUDE TO HIS FATHER FOR CAUSING HIM TO RECEIVE A CLASSICAL EDUCATION. I SAW HIM MORE FREQUENTLY WITH A VOLUME OF THE CLASSICS IN HIS HAND THAN ANY OTHER BOOK.”

AFTER 1786 WHEN JEFFERSON SUFFERED A DISLOCATED WRIST WHILE IN PARIS IT BECAME DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO HANDLE THE LARGER BOOKS. HE CAME TO PREFER THE SMALLER OCTAVOS AND DUODECIMOS THAT REQUIRED LESS SPACE AND WERE CHEAPER.

WAS THE BOOKS IN HIS LIBRARIES THAT WERE HIS “INVALUABLE FRIENDS.”

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