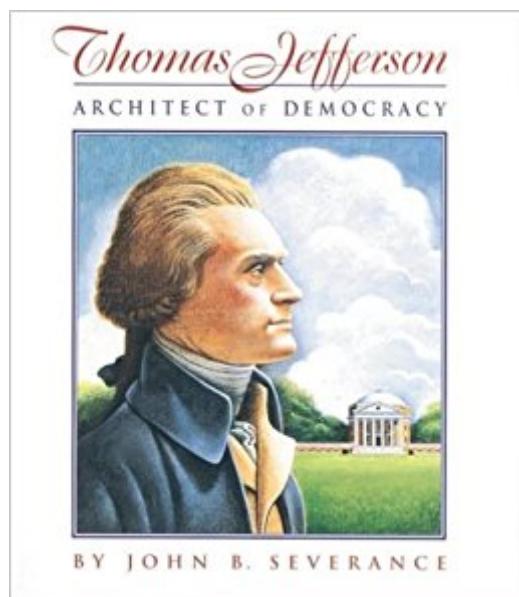


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# Thomas Jefferson: Architect Of Democracy



## **Synopsis**

The words of the Declaration of Independence, so familiar to us and so important to our country, were those of Thomas Jefferson. He was a primary force behind United States independence. Without his influence, our country would be vastly different from the nation we know today. Jefferson initiated public education, established a national library, and paved the way for the abolishment of slavery. Although he was not a power-hungry or even ambitious politician, Jefferson served in many different offices, including president, in order to help his fledgling country remain on its feet. His faith and dedication to the idea of self-government never wavered, even in the face of many personal hardships. John B. Severance traces Jefferson's life from his plantation boyhood to his two terms as president and his last days preparing for the opening of the University of Virginia, weaving details of both Jefferson's political career and his rich personal life together to create a thoughtful and well-researched biography. Jefferson quotes, bibliography, index.

## **Book Information**

Hardcover: 192 pages

Publisher: Clarion Books; 1st edition (September 21, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0395845130

ISBN-13: 978-0395845134

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,193,539 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #44 in Books > Teens > Art, Music & Photography > Architecture #159 in Books > Teens > Biographies > Political #430 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Architecture

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Severance's (Gandhi: Great Soul) ambitious portrait of America's third president chronicles Jefferson's life and career from his early education through his positions as author of the Declaration of Independence, governor of Virginia, ambassador to France, U.S. vice president and president, and finally as founder of the University of Virginia. Severance makes his gripping subject immediately relevant to modern readers by asserting that the soft-spoken Jefferson (who could

barely make himself heard beyond the third row of Congress) would never have been elected in our present era of microphones and television sound bites. Severance is largely successful placing Jefferson in the context of the ideas and personalities of his time, but he sometimes assumes a prior familiarity with American history (e.g., after describing the protest against the 1773 Tea Act, he then uses the term Boston Tea Party without explicitly making a connection between the two). The most powerful passages rely on Jefferson's own words to strengthen this characterization of one of America's valiant proponents of democracy. However, when Jefferson's words and deeds conflict—as in his vehement statements against slavery juxtaposed with his lifelong dependence on slave labor? Severance points out the contradictions but does not analyze the issues. Still, the text encompasses the spectrum of both professional and private life, highlighting Jefferson's less famous roles as a devoted father and grandfather, enterprising architect and methodical scientist. Black-and-white archival prints effectively support the impressive span of events and people. Ages 10-up. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 7-10-This attractive and thorough biography helps bring life to a visionary forefather. Severance follows Jefferson's career from his school days at William and Mary through his rise in American politics. Throughout the concise and swift-moving narrative, the author integrates aspects of world history and of 18th- and 19th-century cultural, scientific, and literary life that help to place Jefferson within his world. Readers will see how the influences of Locke; principles of the Enlightenment; the impact of the French Revolution; and relationships with Adams, Madison, and Hamilton informed Jefferson's philosophy and shaped his ideas. He is depicted as a curious, creative, brilliant champion of democracy: a crusader for individual rights and education. While one might wish for more information on Jefferson's family and personal life, the emphasis here is on political and military history. A wealth of archival drawings and maps and reproductions illuminate the potentially overwhelming detail of text. Severance places Jefferson's paradoxical views toward slavery—his hopes for emancipation although he was a slaveholder himself—within its historical context. The end result is an energetic account of a humane and dynamic leader. Jennifer A. Fakolt, Denver Public LibraryCopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Very informative, basic history book. Easy to read, not too much detail. I use it to teach my ESL students a little history in preparation for the US citizenship test.

well done

recommend it to my friend. next day arrive. This is a wonderful product at an awesome price point. Out of the packaging, it was ready to use, with no sharpening required. No tearing, no pulling, easy to clean, and a nice grip. for my best friend, as description.

I am an 8th grade teacher and this is on my summer reading list for incoming students. They get to choose between this and two Albert Marrin books on Washington and Lincoln. This book is the favorite of my students, in part because it is shorter and more readable than the other two. I find it difficult to find exceptional biographies for Middle School readers. They are not ready for adult books, but most of the children's biographies have a target age of 9-12. This is ideal for them, and I enjoyed it as well.

Fast shipping. Product was as described.

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