

During his years as curator, Mr. Berkeley made a calendar of Jefferson's Papers at UVA, which concentrated on Thomas Jefferson's domestic life, Monticello, and UVA. With the help of John Casteen, current UVA president, he prepared an abstract of each Jefferson document, as well as an index, being careful to include the names of every person and subject mentioned. It is for this reason that Mr. Berkeley felt the DNA committee might consult him or John Casteen because they know, at least in theory, the Jefferson papers relating to Jefferson's domestic life better than anyone else. To his knowledge, this was not done.

He stated that the committee did not consult the Sally Hemings file, which was compiled over a period of nearly 25 years. During a tremendous period of expansion in the university's manuscript holdings, John Wiley, rare books curator, initiated with Mr. Berkeley's help, a collection of millions of documents. Mr. Berkeley's order was that any collection that came in from any Central Virginia county was to be examined with special care for any references to the Hemings, especially Sally. He didn't think the committee had looked at the Carr papers and it was Mr. Berkeley's impression that the committee had an agenda from the beginning.

Quite a few references were found in the papers of the Carr family, who was very much humiliated by the behavior of their [the] nephews. He felt that the Carrs were very much involved in the controversy and that they had probably fathered all of the children of Sally Hemings. He didn't think Samuel had too much to do with Sally, but Peter did.

Mr. Berkeley felt that, if any of the assumptions of the scientific investigation were valid, there were two paramount considerations to think about: Jefferson's character and what people thought at the time. He said that your contemporaries generally know pretty well what is going on.

Mr. Berkeley said, "Jefferson thought, and I think he was passionate in his belief, that the worst of the evils of slavery was the unprincipled license to have what he called sexual commerce with women who were helpless to defend themselves because they were slaves. He repeatedly said it was the worst of all evils of slavery." When asked if Mr. Berkeley thought Jefferson would do such a thing, his reply was, "He would have been a total hypocrite because he expressed himself on that subject many times and was real passionate. I don't think he was a hypocrite, I don't think he was a liar. He was very open. They all hold up the affair, his approach to Mrs. Walker. He propositioned Mrs. Walker when he was a young man and unmarried and I suppose had a young man's high sexual drive as most young men do and she was his social equal. She was not a slave. She belonged to the upper class Virginia people of that day and she rejected him and he accepted it and he's not the first gentleman to try his luck. There's no connection that I see there." When asked why Jefferson didn't publicly deny the allegation, Mr. Berkeley's response was, "Why should he? The Sally Hemings thing was a partisan political move, Federalist trying to defeat him, but he certainly felt very strongly on that."

Mr. Berkeley thought, "...it would not be improbable to accuse Randolph, but he was clearly an earth-bound father with no intellectual interest whatsoever. He liked hunting and fishing and that was about the size of it. I could very well imagine such a man doing this, but Jefferson I think was exactly the contrary. He had rather a romantic playful affair with Ms. Cosway while he was in Paris, wrote that *Head and My Heart* letter. It was sort of a playful relationship I think. He was morbidly sensitive to his wife. He had some of her hair put in a locket and he wore it around his neck and into his grave. I think he was, of all our presidents, he was probably the most rigidly self controlled and self disciplined."

Mr. Berkeley and John Wiley spent a lot of time searching "...for material about Sally Hemings, hoping to find evidence. You don't find evidence of somebody's sexual life, it's very private." They came upon a manuscript in Petersburg, Charles Campbell, *The Petersburg Antiquarian*, which was a series of conversations with Isaac Jefferson, who was the son of Ursula the cook at Monticello. Mr. Berkeley

thought Isaac came through as the most honest man you could imagine. He had hoped to find something more about the Hemings. What he found he thought was negative, but thought it spoke very loudly. Researching the manuscript, they found that one of Campbell's questions was 'who were the Hemings?' "Isaac replied instantly with a near affection, in the courtesy way that a slave, an ex-slave would say, in talking with a gentleman, social lines _____ were much greater then, and Isaac didn't say they was old Mr. Wayles' children, he said, '**Folks said** they was old Mr. Wayles' 'children.' **Folks said**. And there wasn't one more word about Sally. No mention whatsoever. Why? Campbell's questions were very forthright, Isaac's answers were very immediate, and they come through very truthfully to me. I think they were old Mr. Wayles' children." This of course would make Sally [Thomas] Jefferson's in-law. Since Mr. Berkeley has never seen anything to contradict the statement by Isaac, he believes it to be true. Mr. Berkeley thought Jefferson himself was very aware of it. He felt that Jefferson would have felt very strongly about Sally for this reason. But Mr. Berkeley also questions why Campbell never asked about Sally's children. He asked about the Hemings, why not about Sally? Mr. Berkeley thought the answer was perfectly obvious when you think about it. "Everybody knew who they were. Everybody knew she was living with Peter. Samuel had a mistress at Monticello too and I don't remember her name." The reason he is so persuaded what that relationship is, is because they found, and thinks it would be in the file at the university, many mentions of Peter being seen daily at Sally's cabin. What was he doing there? Mr. Berkeley says, "I think he had a long time love affair with her, like it was probably a genuine love affair. She was said to be beautiful, she had the polish of some years in Paris." When asked if she was pretty well white he replied, "Yes, and she lived in Paris and I imagine that she had a lot more glamour than most country girls up here in the woods."

Mr. Berkeley commented on the press announcements and how they stated what a thorough study (by TJMF) had been performed. The press pointed out that the study took six months. Someone else associated with the study had told Mr. Berkeley that the committee really only spent three months on the study. Mr. Berkeley wondered how a three-month study could be so thorough. When asked why he thought the committee report did not include the minority report, Mr. Berkeley replied, "I don't know, I'm afraid they are trying to rush to a conclusion."

Mr. Berkeley went on to say, "I think there's a surge of popular feeling now that slavery was bad so some of the slave owners were dirty folks who ought to be denigrated and black folks were marvelously cultivated people who ought to be elevated. Needlessly a bit true in my estimation. They were both caught in this terrible slave system but in general I think slavery in Virginia was a relatively benevolent thing, as much as slavery can be. Mainly because the holdings were small."

Mr. Berkeley thinks contemporary opinions are enormously important and places Isaac high in that category. He seems so transparently honest in everything he says and he would have no reason that he could see to do otherwise. He felt that contemporary opinion can be wrong, but on subjects like this, local gossip is pretty reliable.

Mr. Berkeley published the book *Thomas Jefferson and His Unknown Brother*, which was a book that included some of the letters between Thomas and Randolph Jefferson. The first edition was edited by Bernard Mayo and the second edition was edited by James Bear, Jr., which included some additions. He thought it was quite logical to think that Randolph may have been involved with Sally. Randolph was a widower for a year and a half before Sally's first child, Harriet I, was born and remarried soon after Eston, Sally's last child, was born. Sally had no more children after that. Randolph had one more child with his new wife.

Randolph wasn't so remote from Monticello, living about 20 miles or less away. Mr. Barger reminds Mr. Berkeley how Randolph was known to have come among the slaves and play the fiddle and dance half the night. Thomas complained that it sometimes kept him awake. Mr. Berkeley replied, "And Thomas, I

think, was relatively remote from the servants." Mr. Barger said he never had any indication from his research that Thomas ever fathered a child of Sally Hemings. It just seemed to Mr. Berkeley to be completely unlikely. "You can't say anything with certainty about somebody's sex life, it just seems enormously unlikely. It would make him both a liar and hypocrite because he denied any connection with Sally Hemings."

Mr. Berkeley met with Fawn Brodie when she came from California to UVA. She thought Jefferson fathered Sally's children and asked Mr. Berkeley if she should publish her conclusions. She had just jumped to this conclusion and every time he saw her during that summer she would ask him why he thought she should not publish her book. He had tried to talk her out of writing her book while she was doing research. He told her, "...I think you'll do Jefferson a great deal of damage, you'll tarnish his name and I don't think you can prove a thing and she admitted that. But she was determined to go ahead with it." He further said, "Oh my goodness, I did all I could to discourage her from doing the book. She was bent on doing it."

Ms. Brodie left Mr. Berkeley with the impression that "...she had a sort of shallow, what I call a California sort of Hollywood view of things and didn't really know much about Thomas Jefferson except he was the third president. She didn't know much more than that." Mr. Berkeley stated, "She said she had studied the calendar and she could prove all this and I said I don't see how that proves anything and you'll help to tarnish a name, a bad name that his Federalists enemies gave him and I don't think it deserves this kind of attention. But she didn't want my opinion, she just wanted to talk about it." Mr. Berkeley thought her agenda had already been set when she came to see him.

Mr. Berkeley stressed again that you must take two big factors, in Jefferson's favor, into consideration, his character and what his contemporaries thought of him. He didn't think any intelligent contemporaries of Jefferson thought he was the father of Sally's children. It's just that very partisan people like James T. Callender thought of that as a way of aging him politically. Mr. Berkeley said that "...politicians get carried away in that he was apparently held in the highest respect by his slaves and by his neighbors and by everybody who knew him." He also thought it was a ridiculous assumption to think that Thomas would father any child while he was in the White House. "It's just not true to his nature. His nature was almost abnormally restrained and self disciplined beyond those people and I think he was a man of impeccable character. I would say, to accept all the scientific findings, I would say the weight of evidence would still point to somebody else in his family."

Mr. Berkeley thought Thomas Jefferson was a great servant of the world and was our greatest president. "His influence goes on and on, everywhere in the world countries are adopting his principles. And I think we are all indebted to him and I would at least give him the benefit of the doubt unless proven guilty. And I haven't seen anything that I would respect as evidence other than this scientific thing that says a Jefferson is the father. Otherwise I would have sworn it was Peter Carr because what seemed to be widely observed by contemporaries to be a real love affair that went on and on, it wasn't just some temporary liaison, it went on for twenty years or more."

When Mr. Berkeley was informed by Mr. Barger about the position Dr. Daniel Jordan had taken on the many aspects of this controversy, it was hard for Mr. Berkeley to comprehend Dr. Jordan having that attitude. Years ago, Mr. Berkeley had personally recommended to Ms. Lee Cochran, Chairman of the Board of TJMF to hire Dr. Jordan as President of TJMF to replace Mr. James Bear, Jr. "...I'm afraid it's kind of a fashionable thing as I was saying, to sort of denigrate the slave owners and elevate the blacks. It's all in the current historical mood I suppose."

Mr. Berkeley also stated during the course of this interview, "I think the report should have been withheld until all possibilities were exhausted and they clearly had not been."

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