

**THE COMPLETE
ANAS OF THOMAS
JEFFERSON**

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The Complete Anas of Thomas Jefferson by Thomas Jefferson & Franklin B. Sawvel

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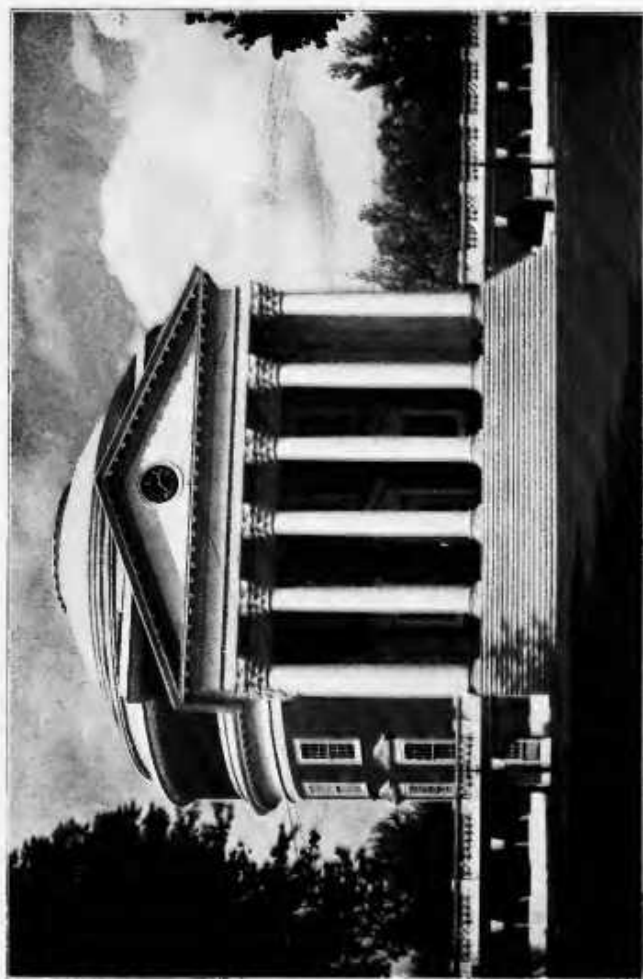
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THOMAS JEFFERSON & FRANKLIN B. SAWVEL

**THE COMPLETE
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UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

The Complete ANAS
of
THOMAS
JEFFERSON

Edited by
Franklin B. Sawvel, Ph. D.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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INTRODUCTION

The aim in the preparation of this volume is to bring together a complete edition of the *Anas* in a single volume.

We became fully sensible of the difficulties to be met and overcome at the outset, and gave up the idea of making merely a reprint from the incomplete and scattered arrangement in the edition authorized by Congress and printed in 1854.

By the courtesy of the Department of State we were granted access to the Jefferson manuscripts in the archives of the Department "with the privilege of copying for publication." After comparing former editions of Jefferson's writings which contain the *anas* with each other and with the original manuscripts, we feel gratified by the belief that we have been able to bring together the first complete edition in a single volume of these crisp, interesting and famous private notes, opinions and conjectures of this celebrated statesman and author.

Apart from his methodical habit of preserving copies of his voluminous official correspondence, opinions, and public documents, Jefferson tells us in the preface to the revised "notes," that, sometime after entering upon the duties of his new office as the first Secretary of State in 1789, he began to jot down the "passing transactions" in aid of his memory, "on loose scraps of paper, taken out of my pocket in the moment, and laid by to be copied fair at leisure, which, however, they hardly ever were." The earliest of these memoranda bears the date of Aug. 13, 1791. And, though most of them and the most im-

portant also, were written between this date and Dec. 31, 1793, when he resigned the Secretaryship, he continued to add "scraps" from time to time down to the close of his second term as President, the last bearing the date Feb. 25, 1809.

In the introduction to his revision of his notes in 1818, beginning with page twenty-two of the present volume, he explains how and why they were put into the form in which they still exist in his own familiar handwriting. In the revision he did not bring together into a separate order or folio these memoranda of conversations with his co-workers, colleagues and opposers, their personal opinions and utterances, with his own replies, inferences and suspicions; but allowed them to remain scattered through three large folios. These personal and private opinions, a sort of confidential diary, he named *Anas*, a meaningless and indefinite title. Hence one difficulty to the collector in determining what to admit and what not.

Again, shrinking from taking too great liberty with his fondness for the use of the comma in punctuation, we have ventured to omit or change one here and there only where clearness demands the change. In the matter of abbreviations we have used greater freedom and followed the edition of his writings edited by H. A. Washington and published by order of the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library in 1853-4. Abbreviated words and phrases, so convenient and essential in the haste of note-taking, are, therefore, written out in full. We have thought his method of abbreviation sufficiently interesting and important, however, to insert one of the *anas* without change of any kind which will be found under date of Jan. 8, 1805. We have also inserted several autograph pages for a like purpose. What the text

may lose in vigor and freshness is more than gained in grace and legibility.

Jefferson usually writes with the terseness of the journalist, the keen observation of character and clearness of the scientist and philosopher, and the legal accuracy of the skilled attorney. In the Anas his style is more colloquial and unhesitatingly crisp, clear and vigorous.

The critical period between the close of the revolution and the final adoption of the Constitution had, nominally at least, just closed. During those fateful four or more years, the un-united colonies and rising states had been drifting, individually and in groups, in every direction in search of a form of government suited to the new conditions; and all were fast drifting toward anarchy. As a continuation of those turbulent, uncertain years, the Anas lift the veil of privacy and take us into the inner private circle of that small group on whom the fate of the new nation rested during Washington's first administration, and the fifteen following years. These were days of diabolical scheming on the part of men who were strongly tinctured with monarchical ideas while professing to serve and even while engaged in administering the high functions of republican government; days when the ultimate type of government was yet unsettled, and grave doubts were held by the ablest statesmen at home and abroad as to the final success and triumph of the New World experiment.

Alexander Hamilton was Secretary of the Treasury at the time, Henry Knox Secretary of War, and Edmund Randolph Attorney General. These three, whose opinions are so often referred to and so freely interpreted in the text, together with Jefferson, formed Washington's first Cabinet. They differed widely in

opinions at times and bitterly, as is well known and evident. The impartial student will read Hamilton's interpretation of the Constitution in the Federalist papers and his personal opinions and views as well as those of Adams, and others on the perplexing questions of the times, in their own writings before giving a final verdict.

It is also true that Jefferson felt that he stood almost alone, the rank republican and reformer, trying to carry his favorite doctrine of natural rights to the doubtful eminence of making them overtop and include all other rights. His ideals were radical for the times and tendencies of which he writes. But somehow, they appealed to the popular and growing sentiment of the masses and ingratiated themselves into the hearts and confidences of the people. J. Wm. Parton says in his preface to his admirable life of Thomas Jefferson: "If Jefferson was wrong, America is wrong; if America is right, Jefferson was right." His genius more than that of any other single individual put the seal of republicanism on the nation's character and institutions and instilled the spirit of pure democracy into American life. He focused the democratic elements on definite objects and principles and became their great champion. At the same time he was unionist, legislator, skillful diplomat, publicist, great commoner, statesman and husbandman; castle-builder and idealist, and cunningly shrewd next to Franklin; at times he was scheming, temporizing, timid, cowardly, sensitive, morbidly jealous of his opponents and rivals and gloriously inconsistent, if you like. But his loyalty and integrity were never questioned. His faith was grounded in the common people. He believed that, "the world is governed

too much" and, "that government is best which governs least."

"Recognition of what he endeavored to accomplish explains many of his apparent inconsistencies. The dominant principles of his creed were that all powers belong to the people, and that governments, constitutions, laws, precedent, and all other artificial clogs and "protections," are entitled to respect and obedience only as they fulfilled their limited function of aiding—not curtailing—the greatest freedom of the individual. For this reason he held that no power existed to bind the people or posterity, except by their own acts. For this reason he was the strict construer of the national constitution where he believed it destructive of personal freedom; and construed it liberally where it threatened to limit the development of the people. He was the defender of the state governments, for he regarded them as a necessary division for local self-government and as natural checks on the national power, and so a safeguard to the people. That he appealed to them in his resolutions of 1798, was because he believed the people for once unable to act for their own interest, and the theories of that paper are a radical and short-lived contradiction of his true beliefs. Because he believed the national judiciary and the national bank to be opposed to the will of the people, he attacked them. Because he believed he was furthering the popular will, he interfered in the legislative department and changed office-holders. Because he wished them free to think and act, he favored separation from England, abolition of slavery, free lands, free education, freedom of religion, and the largest degree of local self-government. His methods and results were not always good. His character and conduct had many serious flaws. Yet in some