

The Jefferson-Hemings Controversy

Robert F. Turner

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In 2000, the newly formed Thomas Jefferson Heritage Society asked a group of more than a dozen senior scholars from across the country to carefully examine all of the evidence for and against the allegations that Thomas Jefferson fathered one or more children by Sally Hemings, one of his slaves, and to issue a public report. In April 2001, after a year of study, the Scholars Commission issued the most detailed report to date on the issue.

With but a single mild dissent, the views of the distinguished panel ranged from "serious skepticism" to a conviction that the allegation was "almost certainly false." This volume, edited by Scholars Commission Chairman Robert F. Turner, includes the "Final Report"—essentially a summary of arguments and conclusions—as it was released to the press on April 12, 2001. However, several of the statements of individual views—which collectively total several hundred carefully footnoted pages and constitute the bulk of the book—have been updated and expanded to reflect new insights or evidence since the report was initially released.



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