

Thomas Jefferson Memorial

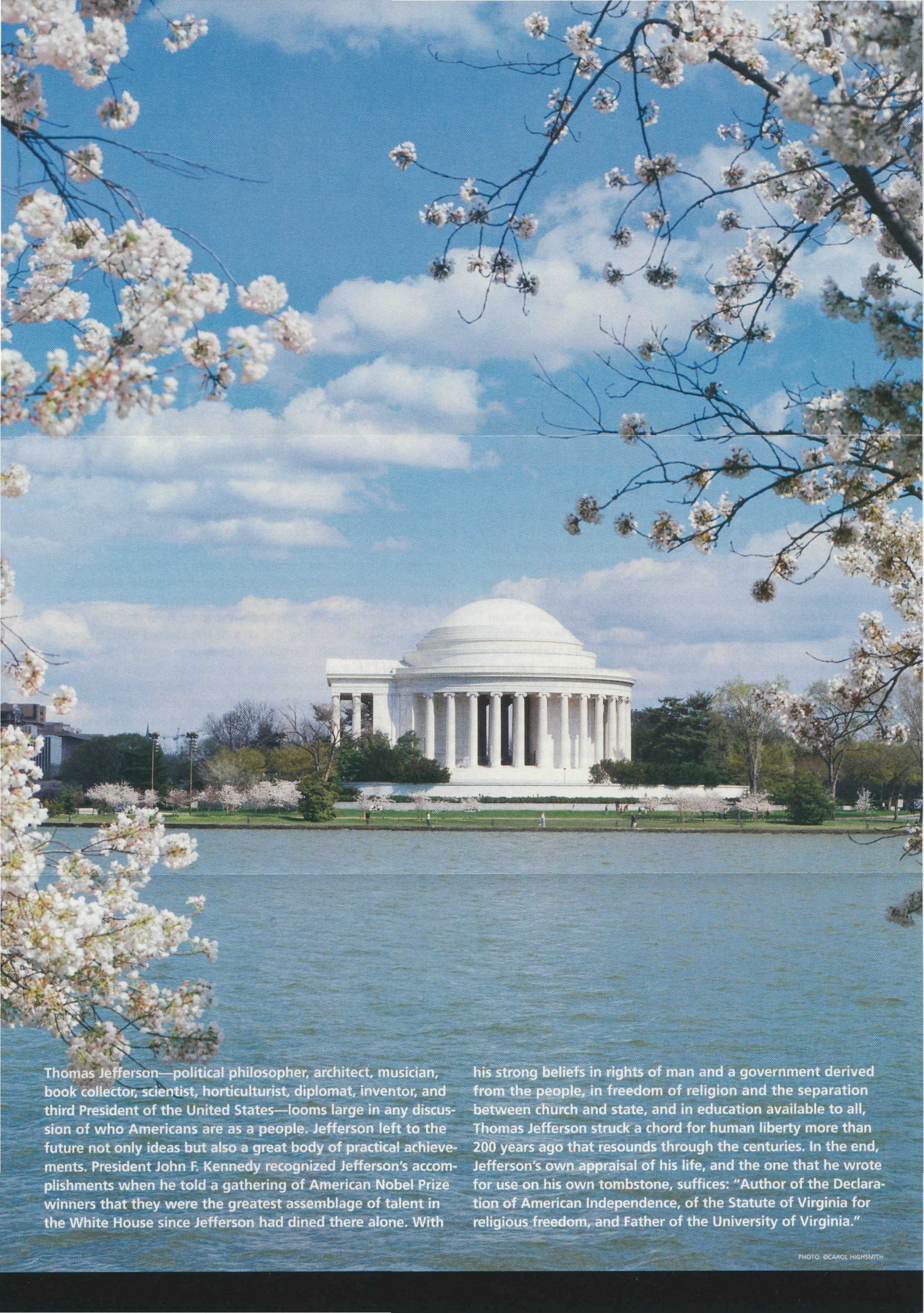
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Washington, D.C.



*We hold these truths to be self-evident,
that all men are created equal, that
they are endowed by their Creator
with certain unalienable rights, that
among these are Life, Liberty, and
the pursuit of Happiness.*

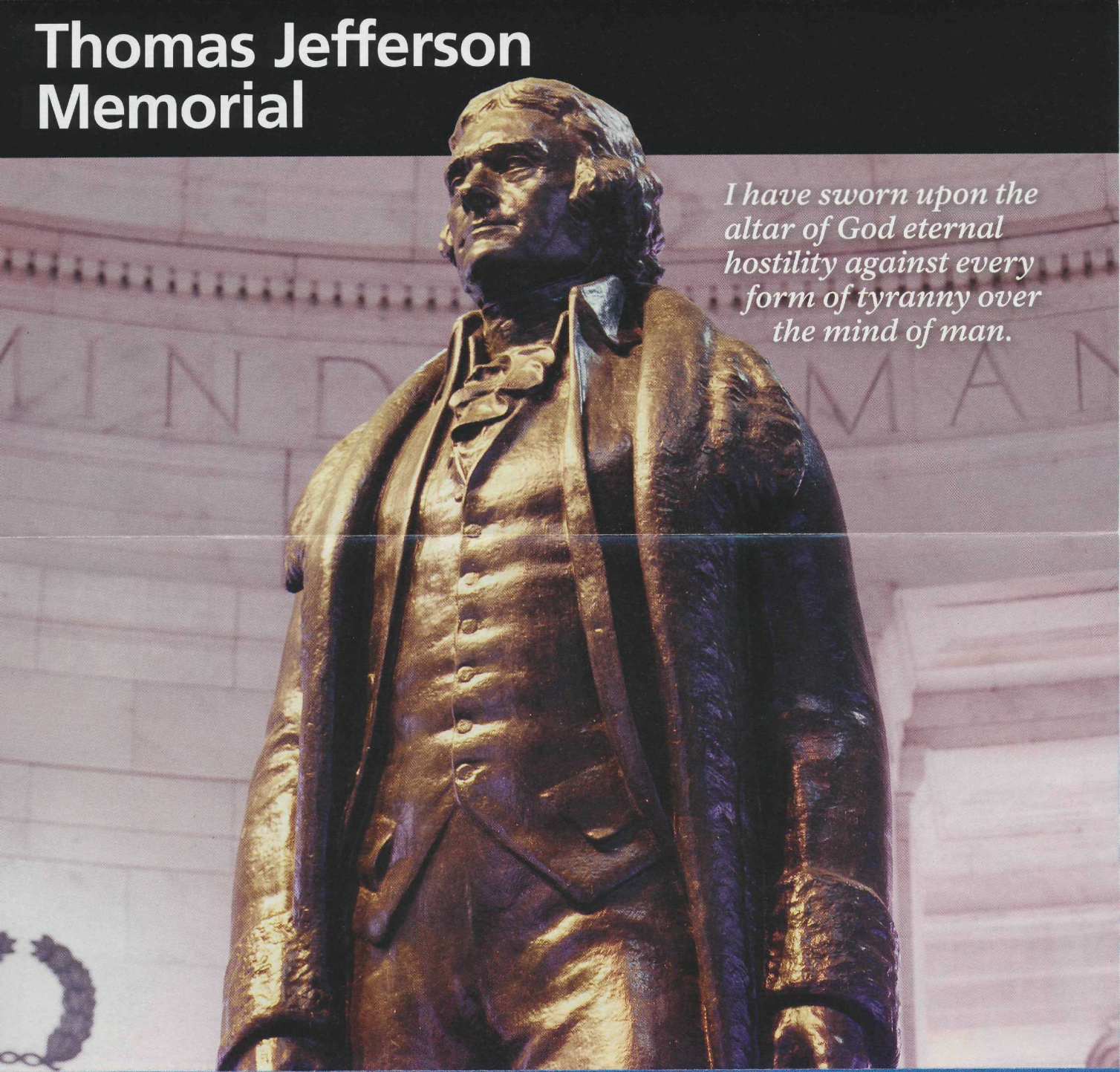
Declaration of Independence



Thomas Jefferson—political philosopher, architect, musician, book collector, scientist, horticulturist, diplomat, inventor, and third President of the United States—looms large in any discussion of who Americans are as a people. Jefferson left to the future not only ideas but also a great body of practical achievements. President John F. Kennedy recognized Jefferson's accomplishments when he told a gathering of American Nobel Prize winners that they were the greatest assemblage of talent in the White House since Jefferson had dined there alone. With

his strong beliefs in rights of man and a government derived from the people, in freedom of religion and the separation between church and state, and in education available to all, Thomas Jefferson struck a chord for human liberty more than 200 years ago that resounds through the centuries. In the end, Jefferson's own appraisal of his life, and the one that he wrote for use on his own tombstone, suffices: "Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia."

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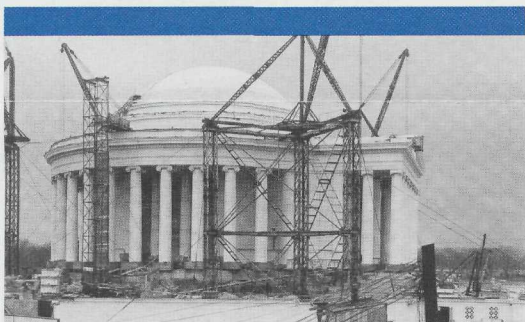
*I have sworn upon the
altar of God eternal
hostility against every
form of tyranny over
the mind of man.*

Thomas Jefferson—A Chronology

1743 Born April 13 at Shadwell, Albemarle County, Virginia. **1769–75** Member of Virginia House of Burgesses; part of an increasingly anti-British faction; helped set up Virginia Committee of Correspondence. **1775–76** Attended Continental Congress; on committee to write the Declaration of Independence, became its principal author. **1776–79** Member of Virginia House of Delegates; involved in rewriting state legal code to reflect republican principles concerning landholding, inheritance, and criminal law; drafted Virginia statute for religious freedom with the help of James Madison. **1779–81** Governor of Virginia. **1784–89** Ambassador to France; studies of architecture and Roman ruins led him to introduce the classical style in the United States, of which the Virginia State Capitol, University of Virginia, and Monticello, his home, are notable examples. **1789–93** Secretary of State

under President George Washington; helped engineer the compromise to create a Federal Territory for a new capital along the Potomac River. **1797–1801** Vice President under President John Adams; supported states rights; opposed Alien and Sedition Acts; ran against and defeated Adams for the Presidency. **1801–09** President; initiated peaceful transfer of power from one party to another; oversaw the Louisiana Purchase, doubling the size of the United States; sponsored Lewis and Clark Expedition to mouth of the Columbia River; strove to maintain peace and not be drawn into the war between Great Britain and France. **1809–26** Lived at Monticello; drew plans, supervised construction, and outlined curriculum of the University of Virginia; corresponded extensively with John Adams. **1826** Died on July 4—the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Building the Memorial



Jefferson's importance as a great figure in United States history demanded a memorial site with prominence equal to the monuments for Presidents Washington and Lincoln. Building the Jefferson Memorial on the Tidal Basin, in a straight line directly south of the White House, achieved this.

The Presidential monuments, White House, and the U.S. Capitol, placed in their east-west and north-south alignments, created a monumental heart for the city.

Architect John Russell Pope was influenced by Jefferson's taste as expressed in his writings and demonstrated

by his works. The circular colonnaded structure is an adaptation of the classical style that Jefferson brought into use in this country. Rudolph Evans sculpted the bronze statue in the center of the memorial (above).

President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated the memorial on April 13, 1943, on the 200th anniversary of Jefferson's birth (right). The memorial is especially beautiful in the spring when the Japanese cherry trees are blooming. The first of these trees planted along the Tidal Basin were gifts from the city of Tokyo to the city of Washington in 1912.

Visiting the Memorial

Park rangers are at the memorial daily, except December 25, to answer questions and give talks. A bookstore and gift shop in the lower lobby carry items relating to the life and philosophy of Jefferson and to parks in and around Washington, D.C.

The memorial is one of over 380 parks in the National Park System. The National Park Service cares for these special places

saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. To learn about national parks and NPS programs visit www.nps.gov.

More Information

Thomas Jefferson Memorial
National Mall and Memorial Parks
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www.nps.gov/thje

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