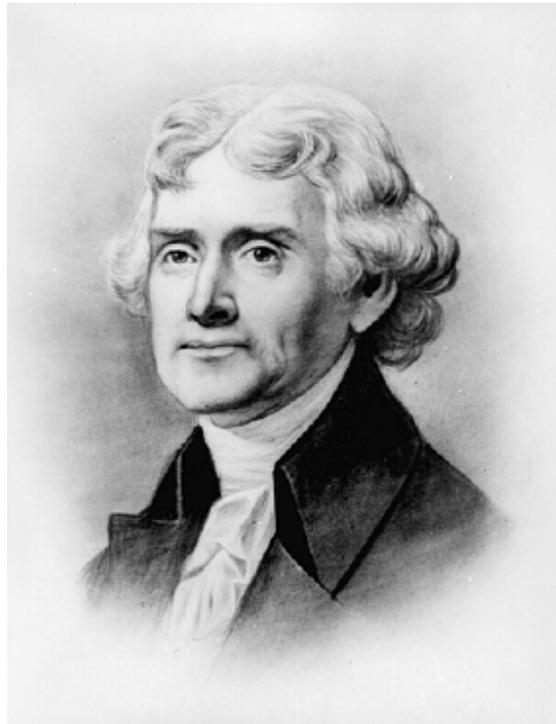


JEFFERSON'S WAR

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Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson felt that he had finished his duty to this country in writing the Declaration of Independence, therefore, causing him to resign his position he held in Congress and return home to Virginia in the fall of 1776. This, of course, made George Washington very angry especially because of the country being in danger and needing good leaders. Jefferson's idleness sparked Washington to write a letter in March of 1779 to Jefferson's neighbor in Virginia explaining in a round about way how upset he really was with Jefferson. Washington was not the only one disappointed in Jefferson. A Virginia politician named Richard Henry Lee was also upset with Jefferson and straight up asked him to please give up his enjoyments at home to be able to help win the war. Others who were resentful included future chief justice John Marshall who was a distant cousin of Jefferson.

Jefferson repeatedly turned down offers to serve his country at a national level, saying that he was needed at home and could not leave. Without coming right out and saying it, Jefferson gave the impression that his wife was ill. She did die in 1782 after giving birth to their sixth child. Some people believed that Jefferson was telling the truth, while others believed he was lying because his wife was not too ill to make all the previous trips back and forth to Washington with him.

In 1779, Jefferson ran for governor of Virginia. Some believed that the reason for this was because George Washington was upset with him along with the threat to his state of Virginia. In May of this year, a British force of 1,800 men wrecked the Virginia coast. In the next month of June, Jefferson was elected governor. He was elected for a second term in 1780, giving him a total of 24 months service. At first, he proved his ability to lead even though it was obvious he did not want this position. He only went home twice in two years. He ordered the assembly to improve the militia and ordered the broad war to prepare a plan

of defense. This caused the establishment of armories and procurement of weapons along with the erection of coastal batteries and the appointment of express riders and sentries, but he did not appoint a general officer to direct all the military operations. He was constantly warned by Washington to call up the militia, but always refused.

On December 31, 1780, a force led by Colonel Benedict Arnold arrived in Jamestown and made a path of destruction all the way to the capital. The even wrecked Jefferson's residence while he cowardly hid in a barn across the river and watched while it happened. Washington stepped in to help, but the British sent in 2,000 more troops led by General William Phillips to help Arnold. Phillips and Arnold struck a second time, April of 1781.

Jefferson's term ended on June 2 of this year and he went on back home to Monticello. The British went there to get him, but Jack Jouett headed him off. Jefferson Barely escaped.

Jefferson eventually stated he was leaving politics. He pretty much said that his family came first, then his estate and then his books. He acknowledged this in his 1781 retirement statement. The bottom line here is that Jefferson just wasn't into his job. It is not what he wanted to do. I fell that the only reason he ran for this position was because he felt obligated to. Washington should have realized that this would cause future problems. Jefferson was just more involved with what was going on at home than what was going on with the war. He wanted to write a book about Virginia, not lead it. This, in turn, caused him to make bad decisions, which caused turmoil for Virginia.