

## **Thomas Jefferson Reputation and Legacy**

Francis D. Cogliano suggests his *Thomas Jefferson: Reputation and Legacy* can be a successor to *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* by Merrill D. Peterson. That's quite a stretch, but *Reputation and Legacy* is well worth the reader's time. Cogliano takes a comprehensive look at Jefferson's constant effort to acquire books and historical manuscripts. When Virginia must produce its own laws after the Revolution, Jefferson's records became the principal source of that research. It is well known his personal collection became the Library of Congress after it was destroyed by the British in the War of 1812. Even the recounting of the effort by Jefferson's family after his death to bring his papers to the public is clear and interesting.

Unfortunately, Cogliano does not bring the same originality to the chapter on Sally Hemings. He records the conclusions of others and fails to deal with the striking inconsistencies in the paternity claim. The influence of Monticello to assume paternity and ignore the evidentiary gaps is evident. It is apparent Cogliano did not have the research and details of *Jefferson Vindicated* available to him, or go beyond what he could find on the Monticello web page. He applauds Andrew Burstein's admonition in *Jefferson's Secrets* to accept the paternity as historical fact and to spend future efforts determining what the relationship was. Apparently, this can be accomplished by further musing.