

THE THOMAS JEFFERSON HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

Thursday, May 26, 2000

Professor Robert Turner
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 24031

Dear Professor Turner,

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Thomas Jefferson Heritage Society, Inc. (the "Heritage Society") held earlier today, a decision was made to ask you to accept the chairmanship of a committee of scholars to examine the ongoing dispute over the alleged paternity of Thomas Jefferson of one or more children by his slave Sally Hemings. You were selected for this role both because of your personal knowledge and expertise on Thomas Jefferson, and because of your reputation as an honest and thorough scholar who is committed to the pursuit of the truth, wherever it may lead.

The committee will be known as the Scholars Commission on the Jefferson-Hemings Issue (the "Scholars Commission"), and will include among its other members:

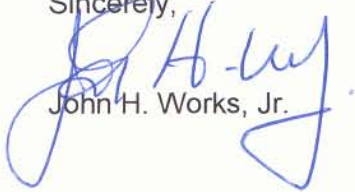
- Professor Robert H. Ferrell, Professor Emeritus of History, Indiana University.
- Professor Forrest McDonald, Distinguished University Research Professor of History, University of Alabama.
- Professor Alf Mapp, Jr., Eminent Scholar Emeritus & Louis I. Jaffe Professor Emeritus, Old Dominion University.
- Professor Raymond Gesteland, Genetics Professor, University of Utah.
- Mrs. Cynthia Lee Harris Burton, Charlottesville area genealogist.
- Professor David Mayer, Professor of Law & History, Capital University.
- Professor Tom Traut, Professor of Biochemistry & Biophysics, Dir. Of Graduate Studies, University of North Carolina.
- Professor Willard Sterne Randall, Historian.

You have our assurance that the work of the Scholars Commission will be completely independent of efforts to influence your methodology or conclusions by the Heritage Society or its members. We urge you to review the DNA evidence prepared by Dr. Foster, the January 2000 report of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation on this issue, and such other material as you and your colleagues might find useful in addressing the question of whether Thomas Jefferson was the likely father of one or more of Sally Hemings' children.

Many of our members have collected documents and other materials of possible relevance to this enquiry, which will be provided to you and your colleagues should you wish to examine them. But we leave the details of your organization and methodology to you and your colleagues, asking only that you make a good faith effort to report back to us on your conclusions on or before the end of January, 2001.

If you are agreeable to undertaking this responsibility, which I estimate will require no more than one day a week of your time between now and its conclusion, please let me know at your earliest convenience so that I may convey your decision to the Board and we can move forward with the formation of the Scholars Commission. I suspect that you or members of the group will wish to speak directly with Dr. Foster, representatives of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, and others who have examined these issues in the past, and you may even wish to solicit information from one or more groups interested in this matter and to consider other views and evidence. While Scholars Commission members are not likely to be compensated for their work, the Heritage Society will be able to pay for certain necessary expenses to facilitate the Scholars Commission's efforts. We can discuss these issues in more depth at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John H. Works, Jr.", written over the typed name.

John H. Works, Jr.