

M. Andrew Holowchak

Thomas Jefferson in Paris

The Ministry of a Virginian “Looker-on”

SERIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Summary

Jefferson's years in France as minister plenipotentiary were a time of large edification. He approached his ministry as a “looker on”: Jefferson, while in France, always kept a critical distance from events, so that he could measure and critically examine them from the perspective of a dispassionate natural philosopher. Being dispassionate, Jefferson was pulled into events only insofar as circumstances required him to do so. Yet his “adventures” from his critical distance (e.g., his trip to London to meet the king, his ventures in the salons of Paris, and his travels through Southern France, Northern Italy, the Rhineland, and the Netherlands) were many, and varied. He even, at times, lost his critical, looker-on perspective from distance as he allowed himself to become immersed in events, as in the case of his relationship with lovely Italian artist and musician Maria Cosway. This book is a portal into the mind of Thomas Jefferson, as looker-on, during his tenure in Paris. Why was Jefferson so eager to accept the ministry to Paris? What was his impression of the great city and its people while he stayed? What lessons, while in Paris, did he learn which he could transport to Virginia and his country? Those and other questions Holowchak aims to answer in this book.

About the author

M. Andrew Holowchak, Ph.D. is a professor of philosophy and history, who taught at institutions such as University of Pittsburgh, University of Michigan, and Rutgers University, Camden. He is editor of ‘Journal of Thomas Jefferson and His Time’ and author/editor of over 50 books and over 200 published essays on topics such as ethics, ancient philosophy, science, psychoanalysis, and critical thinking. His current research is on Thomas Jefferson—he is acknowledged by many scholars to be the world's foremost authority—and he has published nearly 150 essays and 20 books on Jefferson. Holowchak has a B.A. in Psychology and Philosophy (Wayne State University), an M.A. in Philosophy (Wayne State), an M.A. in History and Philosophy of Science (University of Pittsburgh), and a Ph.D. in History and Philosophy of Science (University of Pittsburgh).

This book is an original, in-depth, well-written study of Thomas Jefferson's time as ambassador to France and its prelude and effects on his later political thought and activity in America. The author is one of the greatest Jeffersonian scholars in the world, with many books on this American Founder and a Classical philosopher with rare depth in the field of History. Highly recommended.

It deals with everything from Jefferson's impressions of Europe, his democratic political theory in relation to the French government, and public contacts and acquaintances to personal experiences, tastes and affairs during this dramatic epoch of world political historical change.

The author writes in an interesting and engaging style, attractive to general readers as well as scholars in the field. It makes a genuinely true contribution not only to that era of U.S./European political transformation, but to a better understanding of how our contemporary world exists now.

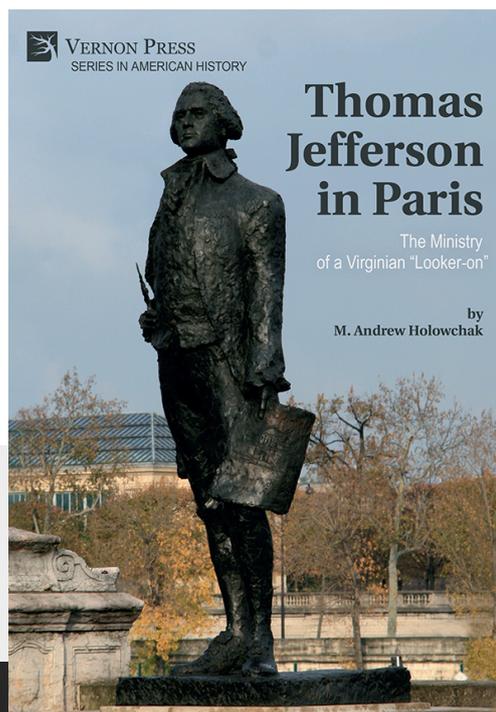
I'm sure this will be a popular study of a famous American Founder and a pleasure to read by people around the world.

Dr. Garrett Ward Sheldon

Professor Emeritus

University of Virginia, USA

Author of “The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson”
(Johns Hopkins University Press)



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