



Jefferson the President: First Term, 1801-1805

Dumas Malone

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Jefferson the President: First Term, 1801-1805

Dumas Malone

Jefferson the President: First Term, 1801-1805 Dumas Malone

A fascinating account of the details of Jefferson's first term, including the Louisiana Purchase, his duel with the Supreme Court & continued opposition to Hamiltonian doctrine, & his championing of science & learning at home & abroad.

Jefferson the President: First Term, 1801-1805 Details

Date : Published September 30th 1971 by Back Bay Books (first published 1970)

ISBN : 9780316544665

Author : Dumas Malone

Format : Paperback 542 pages

Genre : Biography, History, Politics, Presidents, North American Hi..., American History, Nonfiction

 [Download Jefferson the President: First Term, 1801-1805 ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Jefferson the President: First Term, 1801-1805 ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Jefferson the President: First Term, 1801-1805 Dumas Malone

From Reader Review Jefferson the President: First Term, 1801-1805 for online ebook

Steve says

<http://bestpresidentialbios.com/2013/...>

“Jefferson the President: First Term” is the fourth volume in Dumas Malone’s monumental biographical work on Thomas Jefferson. This volume was published in 1970 and was followed four years later by volume five, after which Malone received a Pulitzer Prize for the still incomplete series. The final volume was published in 1981 when its author was eighty-nine years old.

Consistent with previous volumes in this series, this book can be read as a stand-alone work – in this instance focusing almost solely on Jefferson’s first term as president – but seems much better read as part of Malone’s complete series. Also consistent with earlier volumes, this book was clearly the result of meticulous and painstaking research and groans under the weight of factual insights and accountings, though not the synthesis and evaluation I would have also appreciated.

Most readers will view this book as even less a biography than earlier volumes, it seeming instead more a historical account of the years 1801-1805. This is primarily due to Malone’s heavy focus on the notable events of the period, rather than Jefferson’s actions themselves. Owing partly to his party’s control of Congress, and the harmony within his cabinet, Jefferson rarely needed (or wanted) to be in the spotlight. As a result, Jefferson’s character recedes into the background for much of the book and we learn little of this man’s innermost-self.

Also receding in this volume is the pro-Jefferson “slant” which the reader may by now expect of Malone. In part, this is a natural result of circumstances of the times: the principal antagonists of the series thus far (the Federalists, and Hamilton in particular) are virtually politically extinct during this period and create relatively few headaches for Jefferson. And owing to a duel he clearly lost with Jefferson’s vice president, Alexander Hamilton does not even survive the first term of Jefferson’s presidency.

Only in the case of Sally Hemings do we get a full dose of Malone’s familiar sympathy with his biographical subject. Here, for the first time in the series, we learn of the controversy surrounding the possible (and, to many, quite likely) “relationship” between Jefferson and Hemings. True to old form, Malone quickly dispatches the issue in Jefferson’s favor. Unfortunately, his defense of Jefferson is so efficiently and narrowly executed that I expect it will leave most modern readers unconvinced.

“Jefferson the President: First Term” is organized thematically by chapter rather than chronologically. Although with most books this causes me significant discomfort (as it has appears to have caused many others who have read this volume), the entirety of this book encompasses just four years. As a result, the timeline is not particularly difficult to reassemble and the events seem relatively easy to consider separately. Causing more pain, in my view, is that this book is not less tedious to read than earlier volumes.

Overall, I came away from this volume feeling quite well-familiarized with the first term of the Jefferson Presidency. I learned a great deal (perhaps even more than I cared to) of Jefferson’s efforts to challenge the Federalist domination of the judicial branch and to negotiate and integrate the Louisiana Purchase. But I learned surprisingly little of Jefferson’s re-election to the highest office; this piece of history is covered in paragraphs while other seemingly trivial matters receive chapters. Nonetheless, I am much wiser for the overall experience and look forward to the next volume of this adventure.

Overall rating: 3¾ stars

Nathan says

The series continues, with little distinction from its predecessors. This is the story of Jefferson's first term, and it might be summed up by the word "difficult". Jefferson's major first-term accomplishments: his early appointments, the purchase of Louisiana, the continuing patronage of art and science, and the clarification and defense of his overarching political philosophy are dogged and nearly overshadowed by the opposition to almost every one of them by the Hamiltonian, pro-federalist factions of early American government. This conflict is, by and large, the theme of this dense and arcane volume. Malone shows us, in painstaking and sometimes laborious detail, that American political discourse has changed little in the the last 210 years: the debates over the proper size and role of government in private life, the acrimonious and sometimes exaggerated accusations, the personal dirt-digging and mud-slinging, all have readily recognizable counterparts in Jefferson's day. While that might not be too terribly encouraging for readers looking to Jefferson's time as some golden era to be pined for, it is quite interesting to note the similarities.

The conflict is about all there is to dealt with here. Malone, as always, keeps an eye on Jefferson's private life: the solace he found in his family, his concerns for their wellbeing and the education of his daughters, the loss of his younger daughter, as well as his enduring and varied intellectual interests: telescopes, steam power, agriculture. In previous volumes, Malone's treatment of the private Jefferson served as a bit of a break from the heavy going of the political chaos; here, unfortunately, it is quite overshadowed.

Closing with the open question of how his appointments would succeed, the uncertain outcome of the political battles, and the aftermath of political scandal, this fourth volume is a piece of a increasingly complex and precarious puzzle. Whether the history-- and Malone's skill as an historian-- will resolve it remains to be seen.

Andrew Canfield says

This biographical saga of the third president's life and times just keeps getting better and better. The level of analysis in the nearly 500 of this masterpiece seems to be par for the course for historian Dumas Malone; the several decades it took him to compose these six books appear to be time well-spent.

This book kicks off with the wacky Electoral College tie between Aaron Burr and Thomas Jefferson in 1800-31 apiece-a situation which Malone indicates might have come about because of machinations on the part of the latter. It then discusses Alexander Hamilton's incongruous efforts to ensure his rival Jefferson actually ends up being the president when it is thrown to the House of Representatives. The book repeats an oft-mentioned tale of a supposedly bitter President Adams- a man who, despite being the incumbent president, could not even manage to make the two-way runoff in the House-leaving Washington early to avoid Jefferson's inauguration ceremony.

The First Term, as the title implies, covers the first four years of the Jefferson administration (March 1801 through March 1805). A very compelling work, this book looks at his decision to offer a pardon to James Callender due to his alleged sedition under the Sedition Act, only to have the bomb-throwing newspaper editor turn on him when he is not a pure enough republican once assuming office. It discusses the demand for bribes, or "tributes," from the governments of the Barbary states of North Africa; in this, Jefferson, who

is not a fan of a deep water navy, decides to use the threat of possible force to create a better bargaining position for his young nation. Readers are also introduced to Meriwether Lewis as Jefferson's new secretary, although his famous journey with Clark will apparently have to wait for coverage of the second term.

Looming large over this book is the third president's main contribution to the U.S.-the pulling off the Louisiana Purchase. This purchase is described in all its painstaking detail: the manner in which the Spanish had yet to technically pass control of the territory over to France prior to it begin agreed to; Jefferson and some of his fellow republicans' hand wringing over the constitutionality of the purchase absent a constitutional amendment; and, finally, Jefferson's choices being limited when he discovers the treaty can be undone if not signed quickly enough, meaning the process of a constitutional amendment to justify territory acquisition could eat up too much time and possibly end up forfeiting this massive gain for the nation. Due to this, he is able to overcome his scruples, an example of the Virginian behaving as a realist while in office (as opposed to his democratic-republican purity while Secretary of State and especially in early "retirement".)

The book also talks about Jefferson's relationship with his two daughters (both of whom were married to men who ultimately became members of Congress). His daughter Maria passed away during his first term, a sad situation which Malone covers with appropriate empathy.

The author does not seem as blindingly supportive of Jefferson and as defensive of the man as he was during the first few books of the series. Malone is more willing to call him out when he makes mistakes, playing the part of a good biographer in the sense that he is unwilling to be a total excuse artist for his subject. Despite this there is still plenty to admire, and Malone overlooks no detail in explaining the complicated Louisiana Purchase situation as well as the trial of Justice Samuel Chase, a trial which at the time was one of the biggest news stories in the United States. The lack of trust between the executive branch and a judiciary which was still finding its way under the still-young Constitution made for some controversy over the course of the book.

If you want to know Thomas Jefferson's first term as president backwards and forwards, this biography is a spectacular place to learn about it.

-Andrew Canfield Denver, Co.

Robfussell says

white guy #3 vol4

Ray Ziemer says

This book was actually pretty boring, but that's not TJ's fault. Not really Dumas Malone's fault either, but I was disappointed there wasn't more about Lewis & Clark. Malone defers virtually all discussion of the expedition to the next book I guess.

TJ was just fortunate that his first term was so uneventful. The country was at peace, even though France and England were starting to heat up. The money he got from us helped Napoleon fight in Europe, I suppose. The most bellicose action from TJ, even though he wasn't much in favor of building up the navy, was sending the marines to the "shores of Tripoli" to deal with the barbary pirates. (Some things never change.) TJ authorized construction of light gunboats as opposed to big expensive men-of-war ships.

Anyway, all the political crap is maddening to read about - it's bad enough I have to read about it in the paper

every day, the Federalists and the Republicans were snipping away at each other just as bad then, maybe worse.

I have to say, Malone doesn't give much space to the Burr-Hamilton duel, either - or to Burr himself. Malone's approach is - if TJ didn't do anything about it, or even go on record about it, Malone will hardly speculate what he thought about it. Which leaves the reader wanting more.

Lucky TJ, though - He had the support of his party (mostly), the country, the Congress; and his enemies were self-destructing. His problems were mostly minor domestic deals. His big international deal for Louisiana had worked out great.

I guess his second term wouldn't be that tranquil.

Beverly says

Book 4 of the 6 book series by Dumas Malone on Jefferson covers Jefferson's first term as President. It is a tough read, not because there is not a lot of good stuff about Jefferson in the book, but because Dumas Malone doesn't seem to know how to write a book that doesn't sound like a textbook.

Malone loves to use big words that the average reader will not know the meaning of. Some examples - perfervid instead of impassioned, diffident instead of shy, equivocal instead of ambiguous, maladroit instead of ineffective or awkward, surreptitious instead of kept secret, philippic instead of bitter attack, and the list goes on. He also has a penchant for French phrases - coup de grace, cause celebre, laissez faire, reduction ad absurdum, coup de main, bette noir, and in one place he quotes a Frenchman in French (so no one knows what the Frenchman actually said). Honestly I'm not sure who Malone thought his audience was.

As for the content of the book, there is a lot of interesting history if you have the patience to persevere. You will need your trusty Google handy. Chapters are arranged thematically which means that it is hard to get a total picture of what was happening in any given year. It is more like reading a series of essays on Jefferson than reading a biography. I much prefer for a story to flow chronologically.

I enjoyed the chapter on his family. Seeing his humanity more clearly has softened my dislike of Jefferson. I enjoy reading about his devotion to his family and his pursuit of knowledge, but I still feel he has somewhat of a duplicity about him. Dumas doesn't help much. He clearly favors Jefferson to the point that he can barely admit Jefferson did anything wrong and he goes to great lengths to justify Jefferson. His animosity towards Callendar blinds him to any possible fault in Jefferson regarding Sally Hemings and the Walker affair.

I did not really see much about Jefferson in the Madison vs Marburg and judicial discussions. They were more focused on Congress and the Chief Justice than Jefferson's thoughts on either. I had to google the Madison vs Marburg and judiciary act of 1801 to get a good understanding of what these were about. Dumas does not introduce the subject well, does not familiarize his audience with the general theme before diving into details. And there are waaaaaay too many details.

If these books were better written I would give them 4 or 5 stars because the content is well worth the pain of reading them. However they are difficult to read because of the things mentioned above and that significantly reduces my enjoyment of the book.

On to Book 5 which covers Jefferson's second term as President.

John Blake says

2 books left but I need a break from Mr. Jefferson

Guera25 says

This was the best of the set thus far. Informative and adroit with getting bogged down in ponderous prose, and I'll admit that it was was bleakly hilarious to watch Malone, a white intellectual, sputter and howl with indignation at the mere insinuation that Jefferson had any sort of sex life after his sainted wife's death, let alone with a slave. His high dudgeon says more about him than Jefferson, and since DNA tests have confirmed that the latter did, in fact, father numerous children by Sally Hemings, Malone's vehement protestations are ridiculous, bordering on hysterical. Malone could not have known this in 1969, but his snobby, paternalistic racism on the subject doesn't reflect well on him here.

Aaron Million says

Dumas Malone picks up Volume IV of the life of Thomas Jefferson by reviewing the closing days of the disputed election of 1800, where the House of Representatives ended up choosing Jefferson over Aaron Burr. Malone continues his penchant for excusing away most of Jefferson's many flaws, and emphasizing his positive attributes whenever possible. I am not sure if it that the deeper I go in the series the more exposed I am to Malone's favorable treatment of Jefferson, or if Malone himself – through studying Jefferson so closely – becomes increasingly enamored with his subject. Malone spends the first few chapters defending Jefferson against any charges of a “deal” to provide quid pro quos to some Representatives in exchange for their votes in his favor regarding the House's responsibility to determine the ultimate winner of the deadlocked election. Once Jefferson takes office, the love-fest continues. On page 61, writing about Jefferson's management of his office and his administration, Dumas comments “...rarely if ever in the history of the presidency has there been equally skillful and successful administration that was based to the same extent on personality.”

But there is no more glaring of a weakness in Malone's overly friendly treatment of Jefferson than when he discusses the possibility of Jefferson impregnating one of his slaves, Sally Hemings. Writing of these, at that time, unfounded charges on page 214 Malone states: “They are distinctly out of character, being virtually unthinkable in a man of Jefferson's moral standards and habitual conduct.... it is virtually inconceivable that this fastidious gentleman whose devotion to his dead wife's memory and to the happiness of his daughters... could have carried on through a period of years a vulgar liaison which his own family could not have failed to detect. It would be as absurd as to charge this consistently temperate man with being, through a long period, a drunkard.” If Jefferson had still been alive when Malone wrote those words, I would seriously question how much Jefferson may have paid him to write such an encomium. If there were any remaining doubt as to whether Malone was able to view Jefferson's actions and the man himself objectively, I think the above passage makes that answer clear. Malone wrote this prior to the DNA testing that did confirm that Jefferson did father children with Hemings. I do not expect Malone to have assumed that Jefferson did this, but as a responsible biographer, I think his penchant for usually bathing Jefferson in sunshine and for almost refusing to even consider that the man may have done something like this is to call into question his ability to write an even-handed biography. I do not question Malone's dedication to his craft, nor that he was the

preeminent Jefferson scholar of his time and probably all-time (all of the footnotes in these volumes by themselves prove that). But I do, at times, question his judgment in attempting to provide an accurate portrayal of the man.

Fortunately, when it comes to political matters, Malone, while still favorably disposed to Jefferson, is somewhat more objective in his treatment. Malone does excellent work in describing Jefferson's actions concerning the Louisiana Purchase. Jefferson was not completely upfront about some of his motives and some of his behind-the-scenes maneuvering to obtain the vast swath of territory. He knew it was beyond the bounds of his Constitutional authority yet he could not pass up such an excellent opportunity to expand the borders of the young United States. Malone acknowledges that Jefferson was not above partisan feelings and that he knew his overwhelming support in Congress would help smooth the way for the passage of the treaty with France.

Malone handles Jefferson's presidency in a topical fashion, while trying to move along chronologically through his first term. Normally, I do not care for this approach as it tends to isolate what the subject is doing, but obviously Jefferson was engaged in many different things at the same time. However, Malone is so thorough in his treatment of each topic that it works for his style of writing. He also tries to mix policy-laden chapters (Jefferson's dealings with Congress and the Supreme Court, for example) with lighter sides of Jefferson's character, such as his family life. Speaking of the latter, it was sad to read about Jefferson's youngest daughter dying – she never quite recovered from having her seventh child. Jefferson was so guarded with his feelings though that if he did speak at length to anyone about how he felt, it was not recorded or repeated.

Malone's editor(s) must have been asleep at the wheel for a good part of this series. I re-read my review of Volume III and noted that Malone described ad nauseam the lack of a complete roof over Jefferson's house, Monticello. Well, on page 38 of this book, he mentions it again, when comparing it's living standards to that of the Executive Mansion (now known as the White House). Enough already about the roof at Monticello and whether it was on or off! I appreciate a thorough review of someone's life, and the diligent research that Malone clearly conducted on Jefferson, literally spending decades reading and writing about one of the most important figures in American history. But we do not need every single detail about the man's daily life to get an accurate picture of what his life was like. All too frequently in this series, Malone gets bogged down in excessive detail such as this; detail that really adds nothing to our understanding of Jefferson.

In the end, like the other volumes in this series, this is a serious piece of scholarship blighted by some serious flaws, which ultimately stem from the subjectivity of the author for his subject. However, anyone wishing to really read and learn about Jefferson would need to read these works. The sheer volume of information that Malone chronicles makes them worthwhile from that point. No one has studied him more closely than Malone. But keep in mind that, while certainly not a hagiographer, many issues and events are strongly interpreted in Jefferson's favor.

amy francis says

Brilliantly written biography in a series of biographies by Dumas on Thomas Jefferson. HIGHLY recommend for anyone interested in the political history of our country. I'm on a quest to truly understand the details about how the United States was founded, why, and the personalities of the major players in that task. Will be posting about each of the biographies in this series, but cannot state emphatically enough how much I enjoy reading these over and over.

Each book sequentially covers a part of Jefferson's robust life. He was, as many know, not just an enormous

influence in American history, but a prolific author and highly educated man. He was also very clinical about his beliefs in life and made no secret of his suspicion of religious ideals.

This would be an incredible summer reading series for someone in high school or college.

John Nelson says

As the title states, this book covers the events of Jefferson's first term as President. It was a momentous time: the Louisiana Territory became available after Napoleon's dream of a new empire in America fell apart, Jefferson spearheaded its purchase despite his own doubts that the Constitution authorized the federal government to acquire new territory, Lewis and Clark's expedition to the Pacific coast set off, and the party rivalries and questions of foreign trade and international relations which more or less are constantly present in American politics were present.

This also is as good as time as any to discuss Jefferson's alleged relationship with Sally Hemings. Sally Hemings was a Jefferson family slave who served Jefferson in Paris while he served as American minister to France, then returned with him to America even though she could have stayed in France as a free woman, and lived the remainder of her life at Monticello.

The tone of political debate at the time was even more rancid than it is today. During Jefferson's first term in office, a polemicist whom Jefferson previously had employed turned against him, and published a torrent of insults that would have made James Carville blush. Included among these attacks was the allegation that Jefferson had carried on an affair with "Dusky Sally."

With a star witness like this, it is not surprising that historians traditionally have given this story little credence. At the same time, it never completely went away. Visitors to Monticello periodically remarked about what they saw as a familial resemblance between Jefferson and certain of the house servants at Monticello. Moreover, the historical record certainly leaves room for the possibility that Jefferson engaged in a long-term liaison with Hemings. Jefferson spent most of his adult years as a widower. He was a private man who rarely socialized outside his own home, and had only one, brief flirtation with a woman after his wife's death. Hemings was described by diarists as a very beautiful woman, and members of the Hemings family always received favorable treatment at Monticello, which would be consistent with a relationship between Hemings and Jefferson. Malone notes all these facts in his life of Jefferson (in both this volume and others), and one gets the feeling that Malone regarded such a relationship as a possibility, though with one exception he did not directly comment upon it.

In recent years the tide has turned. A genetic test determined that one of Sally Hemings' descendants also was related to the Jefferson family. The technique used for this test focused on a genetic marker that is passed from father to son. As a result, the test was able to determine lineage only where there was an unbroken male line of descent.

Jefferson had no surviving sons, so no living person can claim descent from Jefferson through this test. Rather, the test that was performed showed merely that a known descendant of Sally Hemings also was descended from Jefferson's paternal grandfather. TJ himself was only one of several who could have fathered the child whose offspring ultimately led to the test subject.

The "politically correct" view is that this test conclusively proved that Jefferson was the father of all of Hemings' children. It did nothing of the sort. This, of course, is poppycock, though it does make that possibility somewhat more likely.

Dumas Malone concluded that Jefferson did not father children by Sally Hemings. This conclusion appears to have been based primarily upon Malone's distaste for the possibility that Jefferson, whom he regarded as one of the great figures of history, would have done anything so immoral as to keep a much younger woman as a mistress. Race appears to have had little to do with this conclusion, and he cites no real evidence for it. The politically-correct version, of course, also is not based on the facts, but rather flows from the modern-day Left's desire to tear down the icons of American and Western history.

Ultimately, the possibility that Jefferson had a long-term relationship with a black woman probably is more titillating than significant. There is value in knowing the truth, and in the future improved genetic testing may finally reveal the truth with certainty. Regardless of the result, however, I do not believe the answer will be all that significant to history. Illicit sex sells books, but we should not allow the "National Enquirer" version of history to distract us from what is important about Jefferson, or any other icon of history.

J. says

This is Malone's fourth book in his six volume set and he is just now starting to hit his stride. Or maybe that's because Jefferson started hitting his stride during this time period in his life. Odd to say about the man who penned the Declaration, but true. I am not enamored with the man's personal and duplicitous nature, but this tale gave me a better appreciation for his politics, old school though they were, compared to Washington and Hamilton, but nonetheless very much needed during a time of uncertainty regarding a new nation's continued survival. He, like the other founding fathers and mothers was the right man for the time. Without him, Britain would have had a better chance to retake the colonies, or now referred to as the States United.

James Violand says

This review applies to the entire series, Jefferson and His Times.

Anyone who wants to understand a fraction of Jefferson, needs to start here. This work is the source that most academicians use. It is thorough and depends upon Jefferson's correspondence, editorials, reports, day books, conversations and memories. What more could you ever need? Heavily footnoted, this series puts to shame all other works on this great American. Some popular authors have written of Jefferson suggesting what he may have thought, or he may have done (Brody, anyone?) Malone is authoritative and needs not speculate. Read the series and then ask yourself, "Is it more likely than not that Jefferson fathered Sally Hemming's children?" I can only conclude that he did not. I remember when Clinton was president and, when incidents arose which questioned his fidelity, suddenly this old rumor became current. Someone interviewed the descendants of Hemmings and guess what? They all believed they were related to him! Isn't that peculiar? NO! What does a reasonable man expect them to say? Is it not more impressive to be part of a family that was sired by one of the greatest Americans or his philandering nephew, Peter Carr. All resurrected in the hope of distracting the American public from a current political scandal.
