

250 Years of Religious Freedom
Pictorial History of Jefferson's *Bill* and the
Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom

January 13, 2021

Resumed March 17, 2026

Prepared for PDF for website August 21, 2026

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the **1976** Bicentennial Celebration

and the **2027** 250th Anniversary of Jefferson's Bill

Thomas Jefferson



George Mason

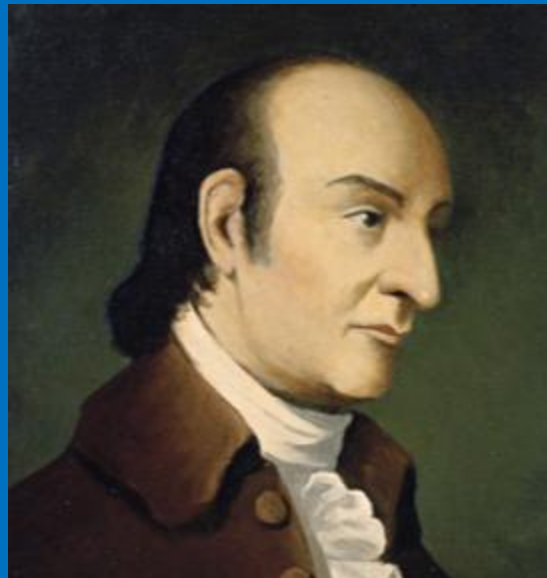


Thomas Ludwell Lee

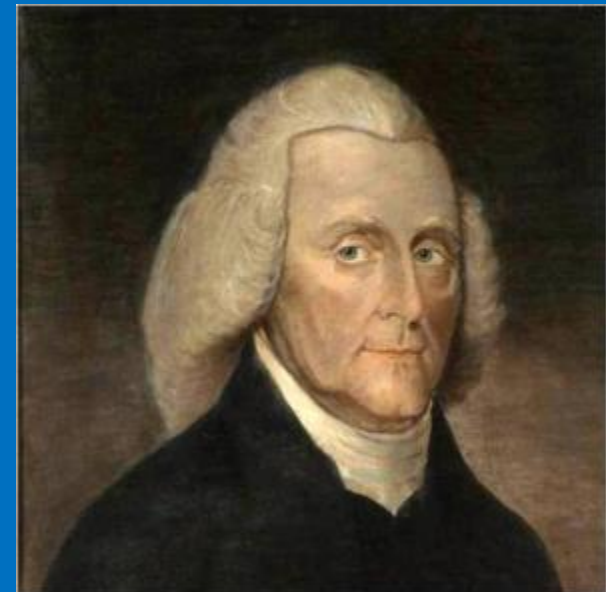


**January 13-17, 1777
House of Burgesses
Committee of
Revisors**

**Fredericksburg
Virginia**



George Wythe



Edmund Pendleton

Where they came from:

Jefferson – Albemarle

Mason – Fairfax

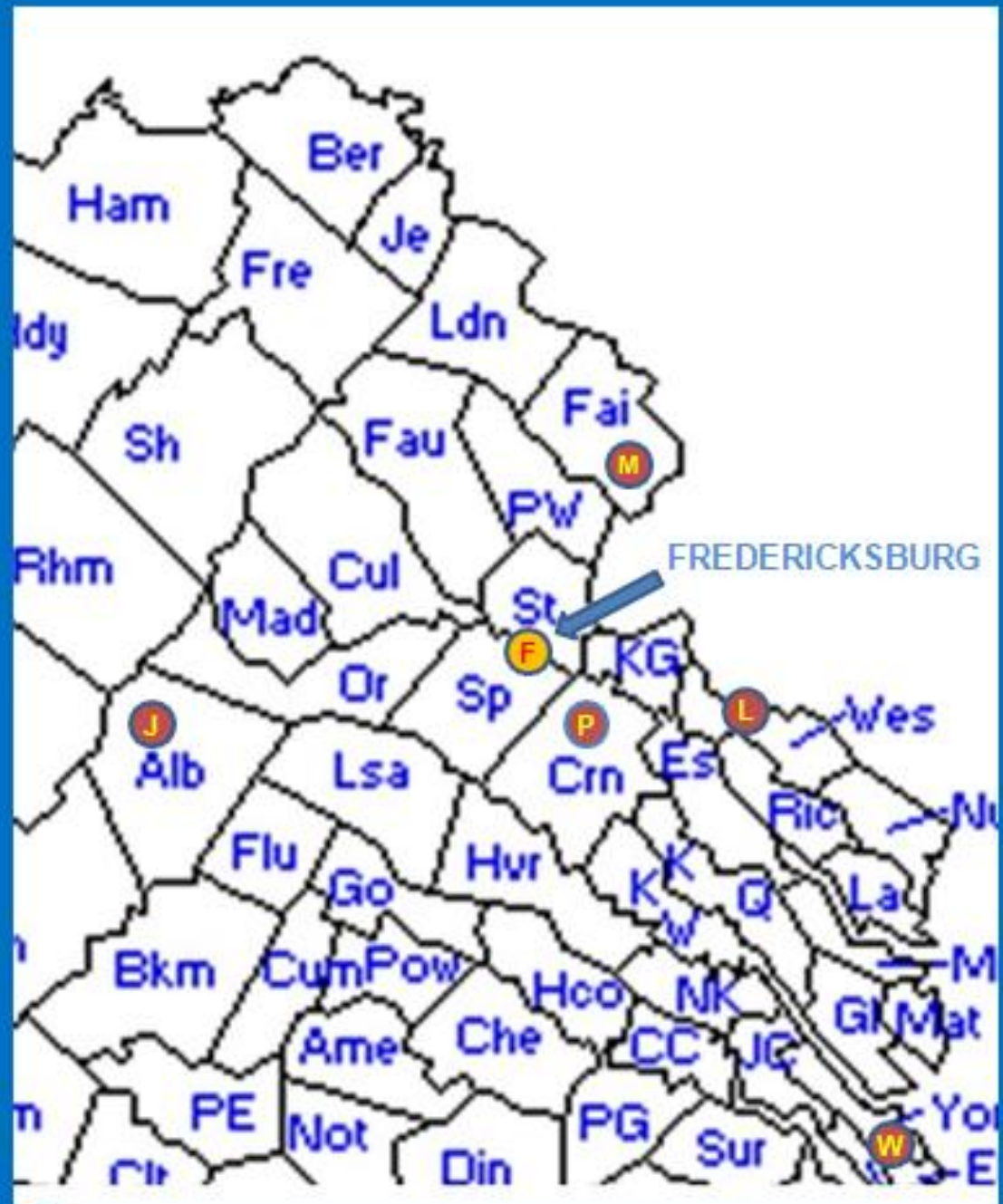
Lee – Westmoreland

Pendleton – Caroline

Wythe – Williamsburg

...and met in

Fredericksburg as a
central location, away
from the busy capital of
Williamsburg





This drawing was based on a plat which showed the foundation of George Weedon's Tavern, and was the basis for Cliff Satherthwaite's 2001 painting.

Site of Weedon's Tavern



The same corner today, showing historic panels



2002 William and Caroline Street tabletop display showing Cliff Sattertwhaite's painting of Weedon's Tavern

Weedon's Tavern

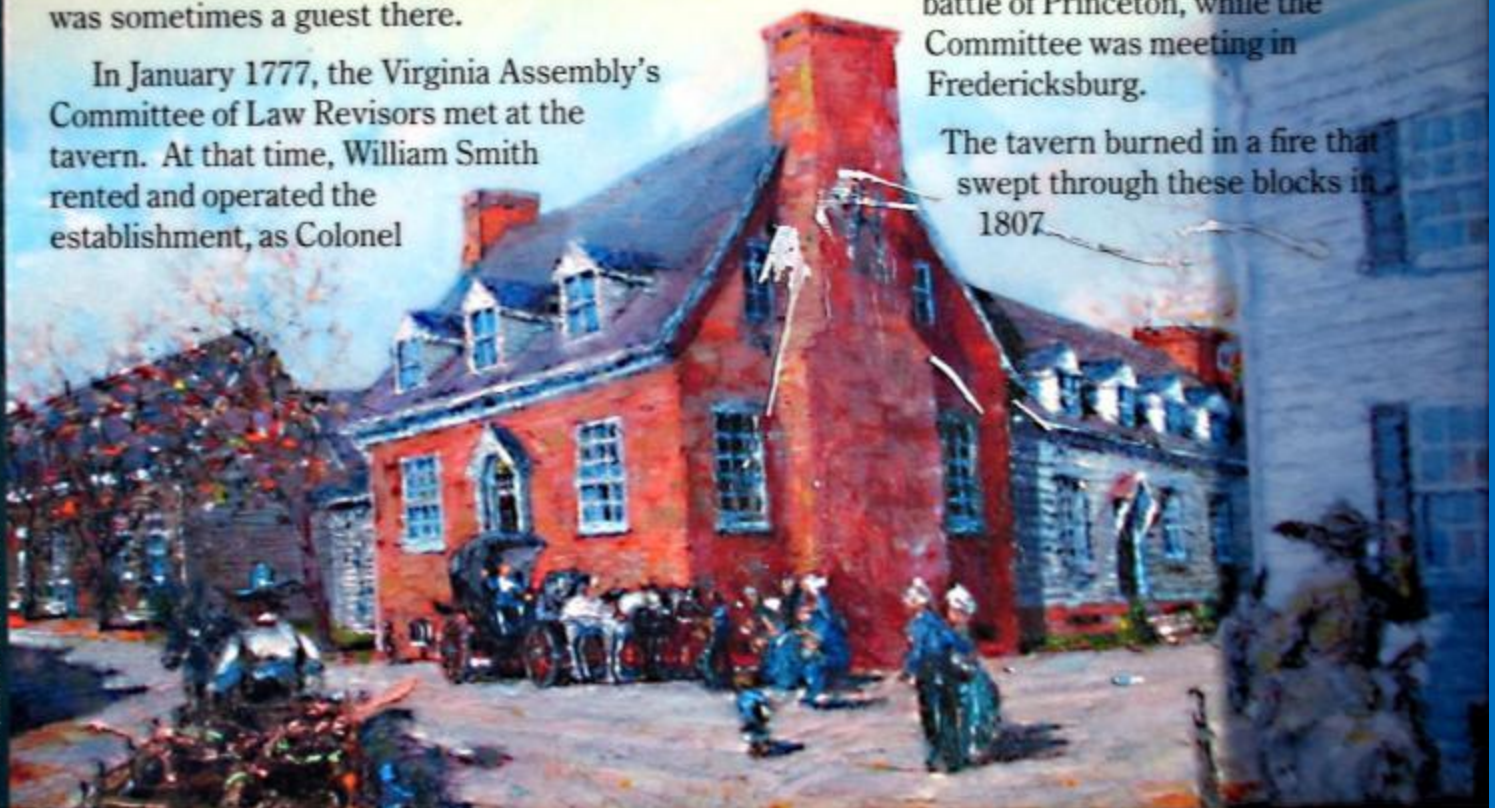
Constructed shortly after Fredericksburg's founding in 1728, the tavern across the intersection became a popular gathering place under the proprietorship of its first owner, John Gordon, and then of his son-in-law George Weedon. George Washington was sometimes a guest there.

In January 1777, the Virginia Assembly's Committee of Law Revisors met at the tavern. At that time, William Smith rented and operated the establishment, as Colonel

Weedon was in New Jersey with General Washington's Continental Army. Weedon's brother-in-law, Hugh Mercer, was also serving with Washington. Mercer, a doctor in civilian life, had practiced in an office just one block to the north. He died of wounds sustained at the battle of Princeton, while the Committee was meeting in Fredericksburg.

The tavern burned in a fire that swept through these blocks in 1807.

On January 9, 1777, Thomas Jefferson arrived at Weedon's Tavern to organize the committee that would recodify the laws of the newly established Commonwealth of Virginia. Painting by Cliff Satterthwaite. Researched and commissioned by Paula S. Felder.



Original 2002 Panel, which was removed in 2015



Satterthwaite's painting of Weedon's Tavern. The white building on the left can be seen in the Civil War engraving and the modern photographs which follow



Three Freedoms Corner: The arrow on the right shows the destroyed Bank of Virginia, on the site of Weedon's Tavern, the Opera House, and then Woolworth's, William & Caroline Sts.



The same view 2025. The building on the left survived the war.

Jefferson's Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom

Drafted 1777

First printed copy 1779

Enacted by the General
Assembly, January 16
and signed into law
January 19 1786

A BILL for establishing RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, printed for the consideration of the PEOPLE.

WELL aware that the opinions and belief of men depend not on their own will, but follow involuntarily the evidence proposed to their minds, that Almighty God hath created the mind free, and manifested his Supreme will that free it shall remain, by making it altogether insusceptible of restraint: That all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion, who being Lord both of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in his Almighty power to do, but to extend it by its influence on reason alone: That the impious presumption of legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking, as the only true and infallible, and as such, endeavouring to impose them on others, hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world, and through all time: That to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors, is sinful and tyrannical: That even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion, is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness, and is withdrawing from the Ministry those temporal rewards which, proceeding from an approbation of their personal conduct, are an additional incitement to earnest and unremitting labour for the instruction of mankind: That our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, any more than on our opinions in physics or geometry: That therefore the persecuting any citizen as unworthy the public confidence, by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which, in common with his fellow citizens he has a natural right: That it tends also to corrupt the principles of that very religion it is meant to encourage, by bribing with a monopoly of worldly honours and emoluments, those who will externally profess and conform to it: That though indeed there are criminal who do not withstand such temptation, yet neither are those innocent who lay the bait in their way: That the opinions of men are not the object of civil government, nor under its jurisdiction: That to suffer the civil Magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion, and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles on supposition of their ill tendency, is a dangerous fallacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty; because he being of course Judge of that tendency will make his own opinions the rule of judgment, and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with, or differ from his own: That it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overtacts against peace and good order: And finally, that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself; that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict, unless by human interposition, disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate; errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them.

WE the General Assembly of *Virginia* do enact, that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious Worship place or Ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

AND though we well know that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding Assemblies, constituted with powers equal to our own, and that therefore to declare this act irrevocable would be of no effect in law; yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind, and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present, or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right.

**Adjacent to “Ten Dollars
Reward for RUN away
fellow named ABRAM...”**

[illegible]

A N A C T

For establishing RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

WHEREAS Almighty God hath created the mind free; that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either as was in his Almighty power to do; that the impious presumption of legislators and rulers civil, as well as ecclesiastical, who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible; and as such endeavouring to impose them on others, hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world, and through all time: That to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical; that even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion, is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern

Entries next to each other on the same page of the Gazette

Ten Dollars Reward



RUN away from the subscriber the 8th ult. a likely negro fellow named ABRAM, by trade a barber, is stout and well made, about five feet seven or eight inches high, had on and took with him, a suit of light coloured Trize, and sundry other articles.

As he was a servant to an officer during the late war and travelled a good deal, chiefly in the northern states, it is probable he will pass for a free man, he being very artful and cunning; speaks quick, and always has a smile on his countenance when spoken to. From his having a mother at Smithfield, it is probable he will make that way first. Any person delivering the said fellow to the subscriber, shall receive the above reward, exclusive of what the law allows.

ANTHONY GREGGHEGAN.

Richmond, January 25, 1786.

WE the General Assembly of Virginia do enact, that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious Worship place or Ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

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1779: "...any religious Worship place or Ministry whatsoever..."

"Be it enacted by the General Assembly, That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested or burthened, in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.

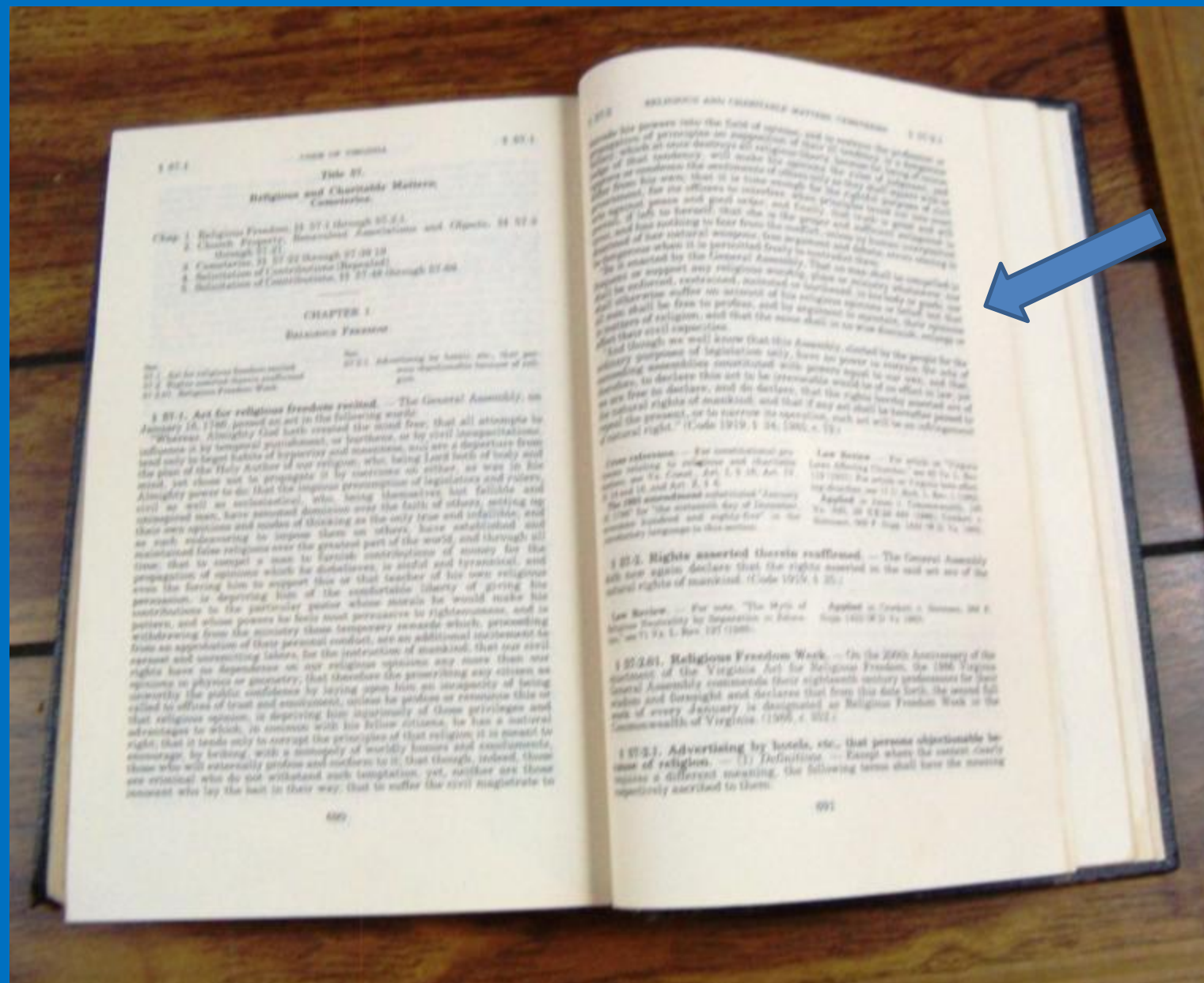
"And though we well know that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding assemblies constituted with powers equal to our own, and that, therefore, to declare this act to be irrevocable would be of no effect in law; yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind; and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present, or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right." (Code 1919, § 34; 1985, c. 73.)

1786: "...any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever..."

**Mather Brown's
1786 portrait of
Jefferson, age 43**

**National Portrait
Gallery
Smithsonian**





1950 Code of Virginia

Arrow indicates the Enactment Clause, unchanged since 1777

Title 57.

Religious and Charitable Matters; Cemeteries.

- Chap. 1. Religious Freedom, §§ 57-1 through 57-2.1.
 2. Church Property; Benevolent Associations and Objects, §§ 57-3 through 57-21.
 3. Cemeteries, §§ 57-22 through 57-39.19.
 4. Solicitation of Contributions [Repealed].
 5. Solicitation of Contributions, §§ 57-48 through 57-69.

CHAPTER 1.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

Sec.

- 57-1. Act for religious freedom recited.
 57-2. Rights asserted therein reaffirmed.
 57-2.01. Religious Freedom Week.

Sec.

- 57-2.1. Advertising by hotels, etc., that persons objectionable because of religion.

§ 57-1. Act for religious freedom recited. — The General Assembly, on January 16, 1786, passed an act in the following words:

"Whereas, Almighty God hath created the mind free; that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishment, or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion, who, being Lord both of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in his Almighty power to do; that the impious presumption of legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible, and as such endeavoring to impose them on others, have established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world, and through all time; that to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical, and even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion, is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness, and is withdrawing from the ministry those temporary rewards which, proceeding from an approbation of their personal conduct, are an additional incitement to earnest and unremitting labors, for the instruction of mankind; that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions any more than our opinions in physics or geometry; that therefore the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which, in common with his fellow citizens, he has a natural right; that it tends only to corrupt the principles of that religion it is meant to encourage, by bribing, with a monopoly of worldly honors and emoluments, those who will externally profess and conform to it; that though, indeed, those are criminal who do not withstand such temptation, yet, neither are those innocent who lay the bait in their way; that to suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion, and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles on supposition of their ill tendency, is a dangerous fallacy, which at once destroys all religious

liberty, because he, being of course judge of that tendency, will make his opinions the rules of judgment, and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with or differ from his own; that it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government, for its officers to interfere, when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order; and finally, that truth is great and will prevail, if left to herself; that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict, unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate; errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them:

"Be it enacted by the General Assembly, That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested or burthened, in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.

"And though we well know that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding assemblies constituted with powers equal to our own, and that, therefore, to declare this act to be irrevocable would be of no effect in law; yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind; and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present, or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right." (Code 1919, § 34; 1985, c. 73.)

Cross references. — For constitutional provisions relating to religious and charitable matters, see Va. Const., Art. I, § 16; Art. IV, §§ 14 and 16; and Art. X, § 6.

Law Review. — For article, "Virginia Laws Affecting Churches," see 43 Va. L. Rev. 119 (1957). For article on Virginia laws affecting churches, see 17 U. Rich. L. Rev. 1 (1982). For

article, "State Aid to Religious-Affiliated Schools: A Political Analysis," see 28 Wm. & Mary L. Rev. 119 (1986). For several articles on religion and the state, see 27 Wm. & Mary L. Rev. 833 — 1109 (1987).

Applied in *Jones v. Commonwealth*, 185 Va. 335, 38 S.E.2d 444 (1946); *Crockett v. Sorenson*, 568 F. Supp. 1422 (W.D. Va. 1983).

§ 57-2. Rights asserted therein reaffirmed. — The General Assembly doth now again declare that the rights asserted in the said act are of the natural rights of mankind. (Code 1919, § 35.)

Law Review. — For note, "The Myth of Religious Neutrality by Separation in Education," see 71 Va. L. Rev. 127 (1985). For several articles on religion and the state, see 27 Wm. &

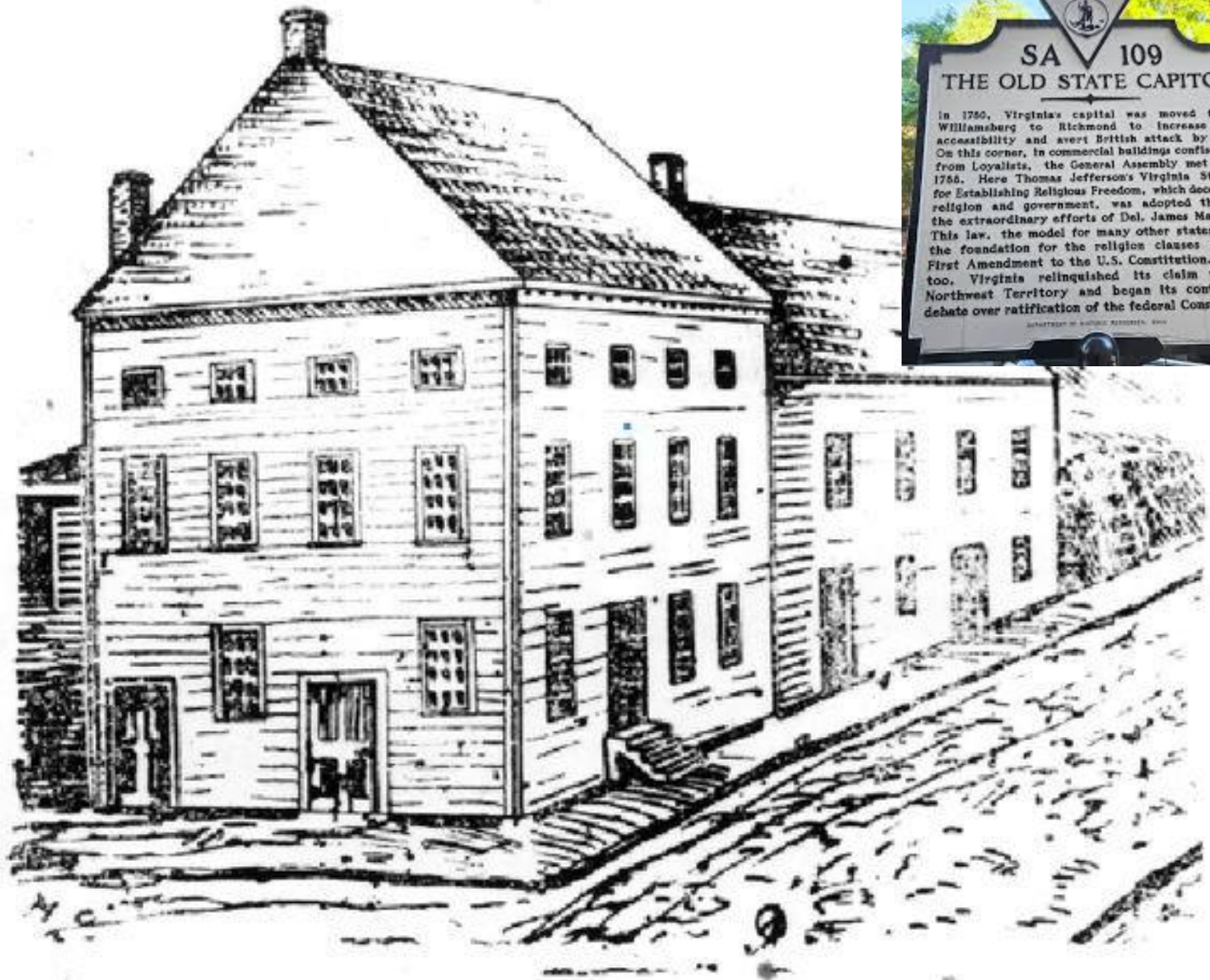
Wm. L. Rev. 833 — 1109 (1987).

Applied in *Crockett v. Sorenson*, 568 F. Supp. 1422 (W.D. Va. 1983).

§ 57-2.01. Religious Freedom Week. — On the 200th Anniversary of the enactment of the Virginia Act for Religious Freedom, the 1986 Virginia General Assembly commends their eighteenth century predecessors for their wisdom and foresight and declares that from this date forth, the second full week of every January is designated as Religious Freedom Week in the Commonwealth of Virginia. (1986, c. 352.)

§ 57-2.1. Advertising by hotels, etc., that persons objectionable because of religion. — (1) Definitions. — Except where the context clearly requires a different meaning, the following terms shall have the meaning respectively ascribed to them:

"Person" means any individual, partnership, association, corporation, or organized group of persons whether incorporated or not.



SA 109
THE OLD STATE CAPITOL

In 1780, Virginia's capital was moved from Williamsburg to Richmond to increase its accessibility and avert British attack by sea. On this corner, in commercial buildings confiscated from Loyalists, the General Assembly met until 1786. Here Thomas Jefferson's Virginia Statute for Establishing Religious Freedom, which decoupled religion and government, was adopted through the extraordinary efforts of Del. James Madison. This law, the model for many other states, laid the foundation for the religion clauses of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Here, too, Virginia relinquished its claim to the Northwest Territory and began its contentious debate over ratification of the federal Constitution.

RENDERING BY HISTORIC RESTORERS, 2004

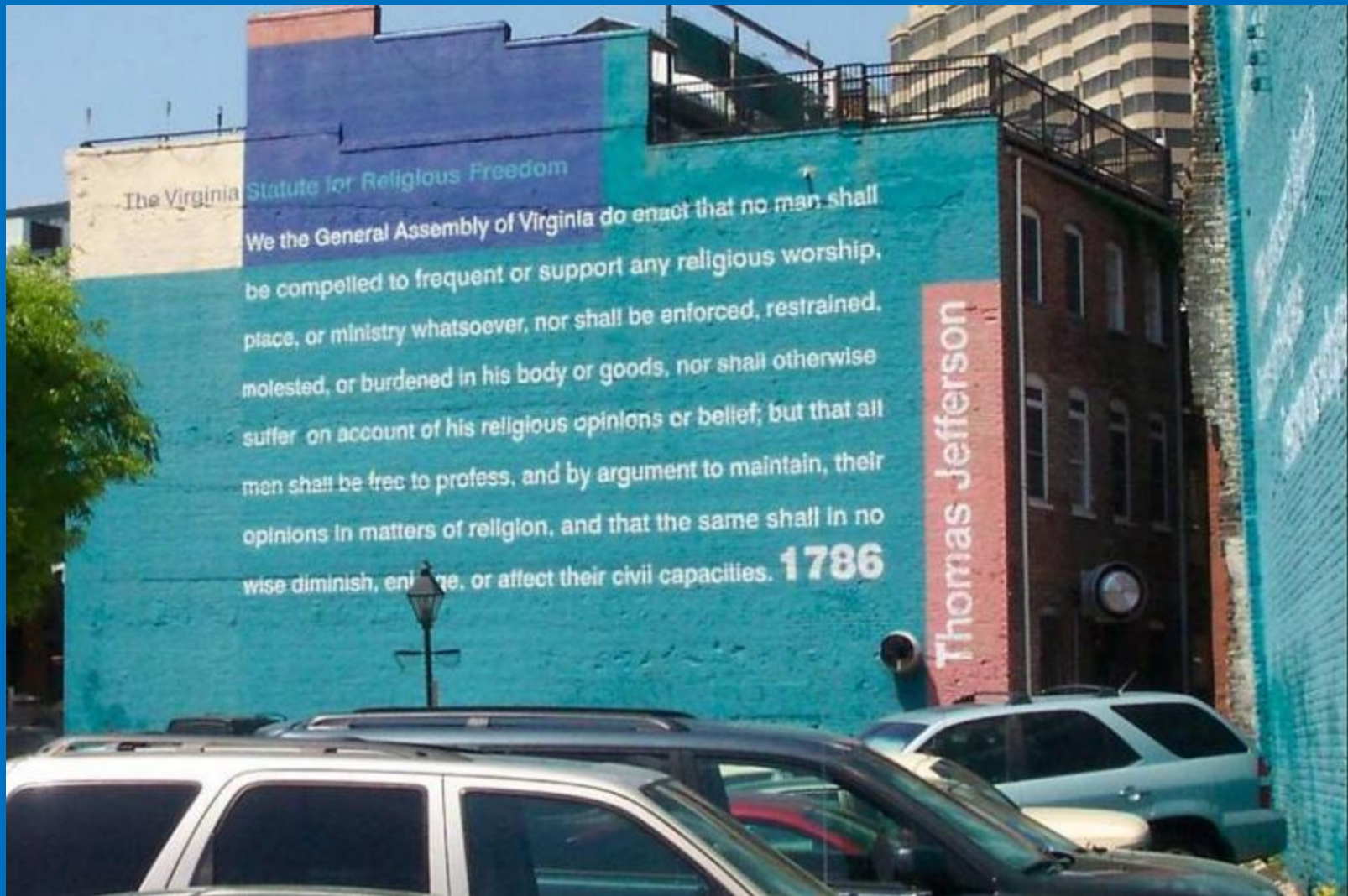
A rendering of the old State Capitol buildings, 14th & Cary St.
Richmond, where the General Assembly moved in 1780



This Richmond parking lot, 14th & Cary, was the site of the 1780 General Assembly building. The 1984 First Freedom Center was in the buildings on the right



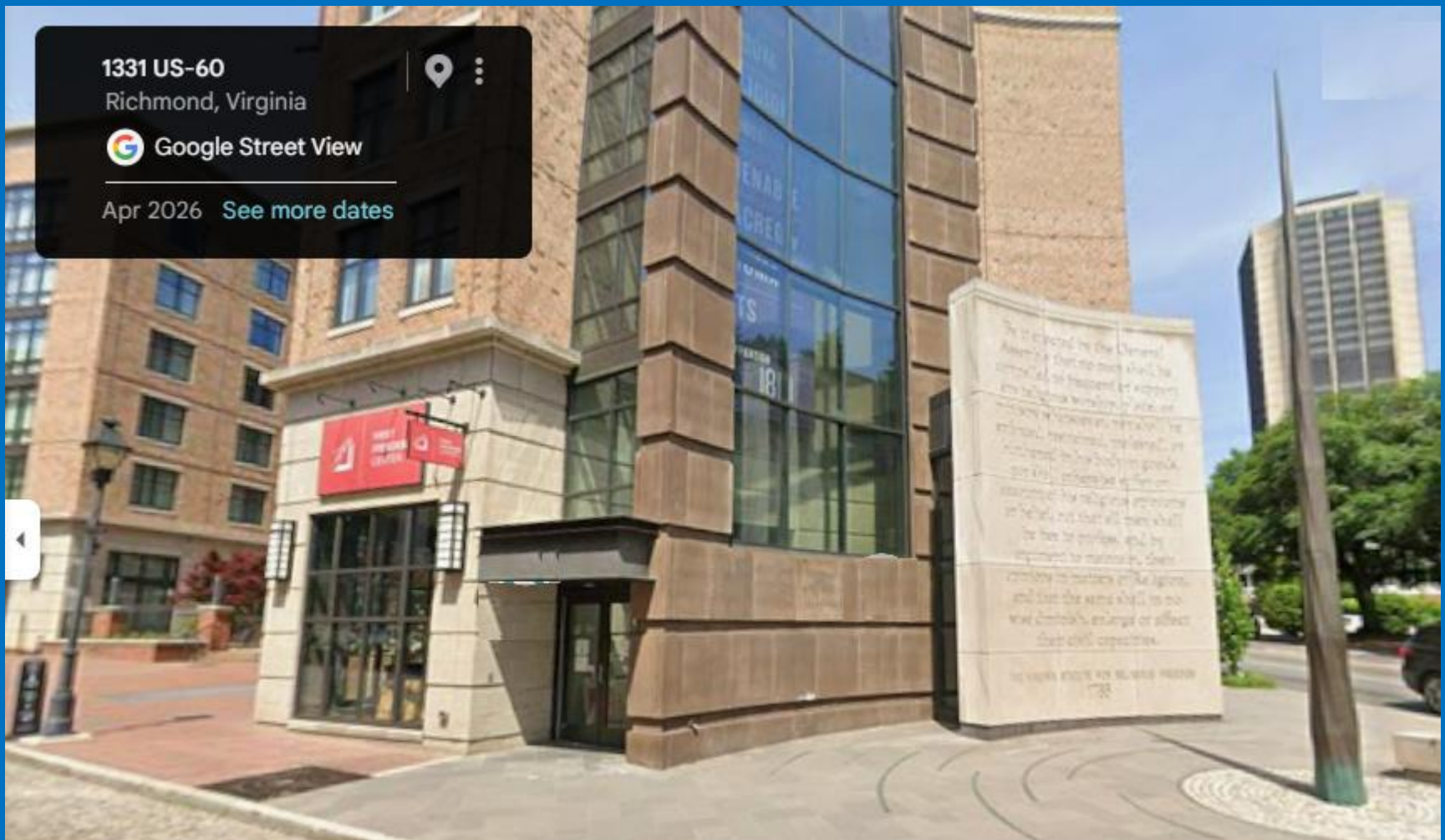
The parking lot, now gone, allowed visitors to see the two murals on the adjacent buildings...



...including the Enactment Clause, unchanged since 1777. Philip B. Meggs, VCU artist and historian of graphic design, designed the mural for the 1986 bicentennial of the Statute²



Valentine First Freedom Center, built 2015, 14th & Cary St.



1331 US-60

Richmond, Virginia

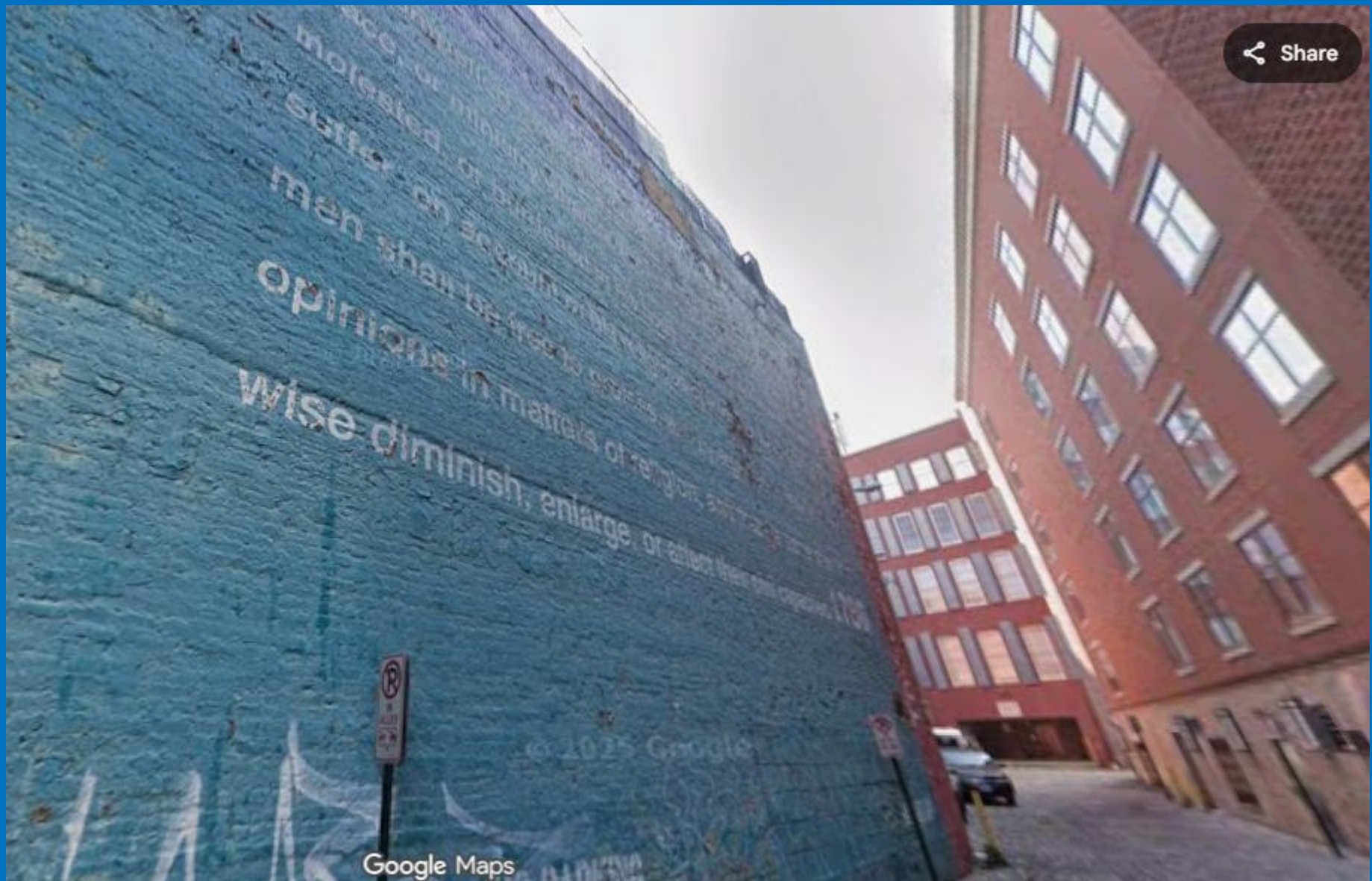


Google Street View

Apr 2026 [See more dates](#)

Valentine First Freedom Center, built 2015, 14th & Cary St.





Meggs' Enactment Clause mural, now on "Religious Freedom Center Alley", is less visible today

Article I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Article I: The first of Madison's ten amendments to the Constitution (the "Bill of Rights")

adopted December 15, 1791

The Bill of Rights

Ratified December 15, 1791

Article I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Article II

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Article III

No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Article IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Article V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any Criminal Case to be a witness against himself, nor be

deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Article VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining Witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.

Article VII

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Article VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted.

Article IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Article X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

**Final portrait of
Jefferson, at
Monticello, age 78,
early 1821**

Thomas Sully



“...the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mahometan, the Hindoo, and infidel of every denomination.”

**– TJ Autobiography,
1825**

**He died the following
year, July 4, 1826**

after the general peace, in 1785. when by the unwearied exertions of Mr. Madison, in opposition to the endless quibbles, chicaneries, perversions, vexations and delays of lawyers and demi-lawyers, most of the bills were passed by the legislature, with little alteration.*

The bill for establishing religious freedom,² the principles of which had, to a certain degree, been enacted before, I had drawn in all the latitude of reason & right. It still met with opposition; but, with some mutilations in the preamble, it was finally passed; and a singular proposition proved that it's protection of opinion was meant to be universal. Where the preamble declares that coercion is a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion, an amendment was proposed, by inserting the word "Jesus Christ," so that it should read "a departure from the plan of Jesus Christ, the holy author of our religion" the insertion was rejected by a great majority, in proof that they meant to comprehend, within the mantle of it's protection, the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mahometan, the Hindoo, and infidel of every denomination.

Beccaria and other writers on crimes and punishments had satisfied the reasonable world of the unrightfulness and inefficacy of the punishment of crimes by death; and hard labor on roads, canals and other public works, had been suggested as a proper substitute. The Revisors had adopted these

* See *Correspondence of James Madison*, i., 199, 203, 207, 212; iii., 532, 580, 583, 612.

² Printed in this edition under June 18, 1779.



Original 1833 Jefferson obelisk, showing William Clarkson visiting Monticello cemetery in 1881, shortly before its being replaced and sent to the University of Missouri



Jefferson died 50 years after the Declaration of Independence

The original 1833 Monticello obelisk, in Missouri

In 1885, Jefferson's descendants gave it to the University of Missouri, the first land grant university west of the Mississippi (i.e. the 1803 Louisiana Purchase)

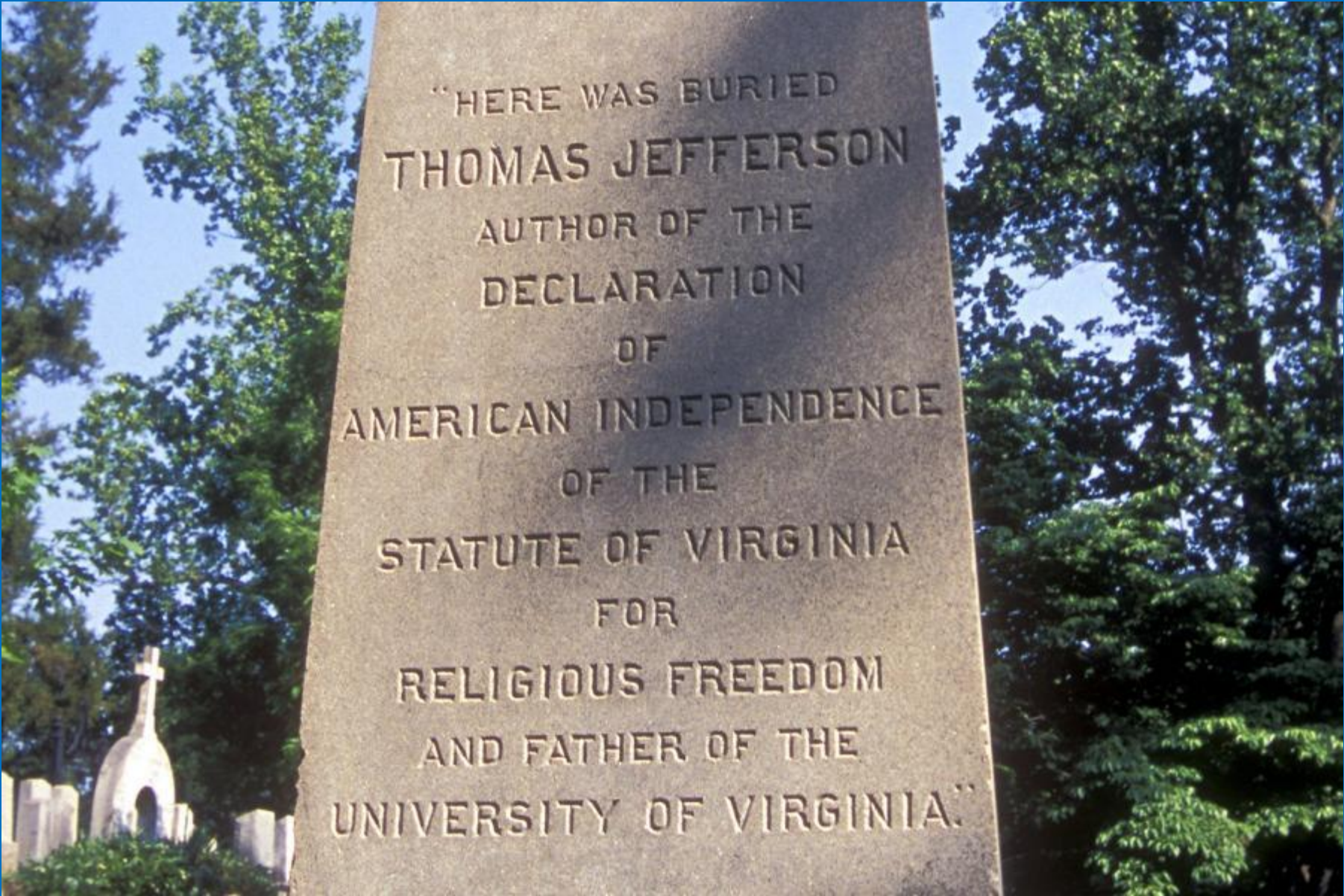




The 1833 obelisk at the University of Missouri

**In 1883, the new obelisk
was placed at Monticello**





"HERE WAS BURIED
THOMAS JEFFERSON
AUTHOR OF THE
DECLARATION
OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE
OF THE
STATUTE OF VIRGINIA
FOR
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
AND FATHER OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA."

**Jefferson, famously, wrote his own epitaph
"as evidence that I have lived"**

The Beginnings of the Religious Freedom Monument and celebration in Fredericksburg, Virginia

1929



Clair - Emma - Marion Herbert

Fredericksburg stonemason St Clair Brooks, his wife, Emma, and children, Marion, about 4, and Herbert, in 1929

**St Clair and Emma, Marion,
Herbert, and two younger siblings,
perhaps around 1935?**

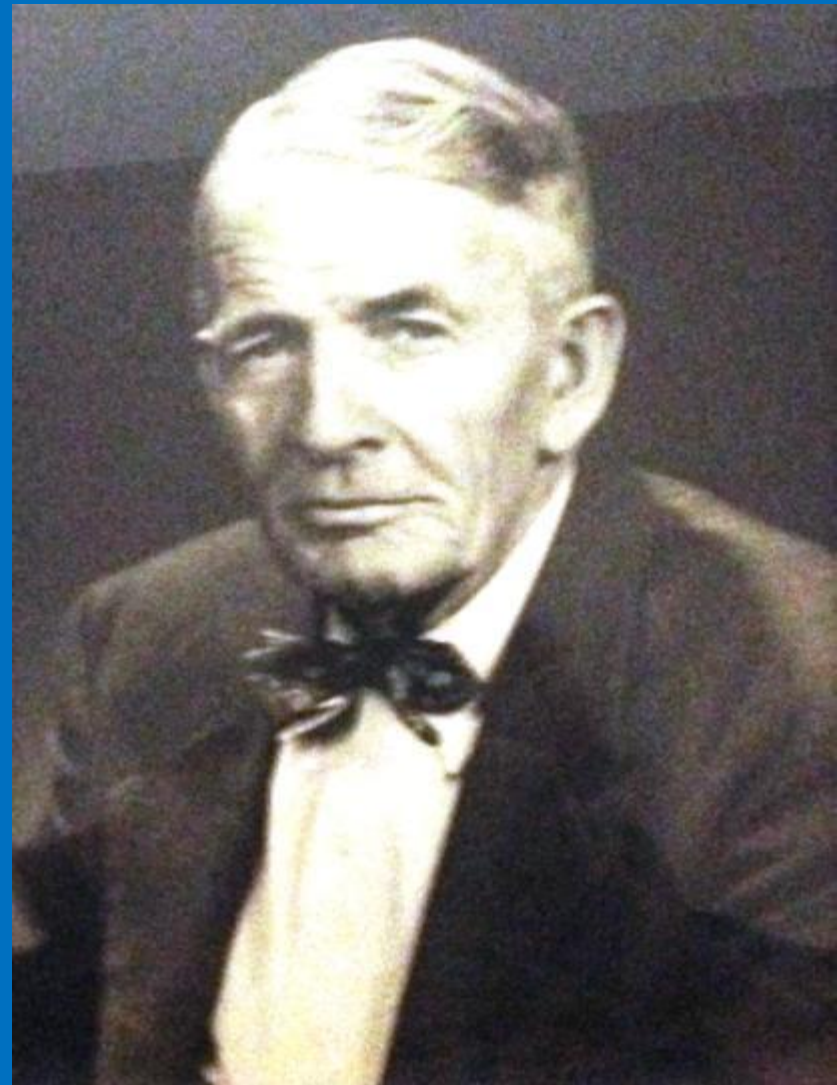




Staff Photos
TO AN 'ORDINARY ENGLISHMAN'—Mayor A. V. Baker examines a sketch of the Washington surveyor house near here presented to him last night at a dinner in his honor, while Toastmaster James Ashby, Jr., holds a ham presented the Briton at the same time. The Falmouth, England, mayor was grateful for the gifts because it means "you extend your hand to an ordinary Englishman." Looking on are (left to right) St. Clair Brooks, the visitor's official host; N. W. H. Gaydon, of the British embassy, and C. L. Ashley, who commanded Navy forces at Falmouth, England, in World War II.

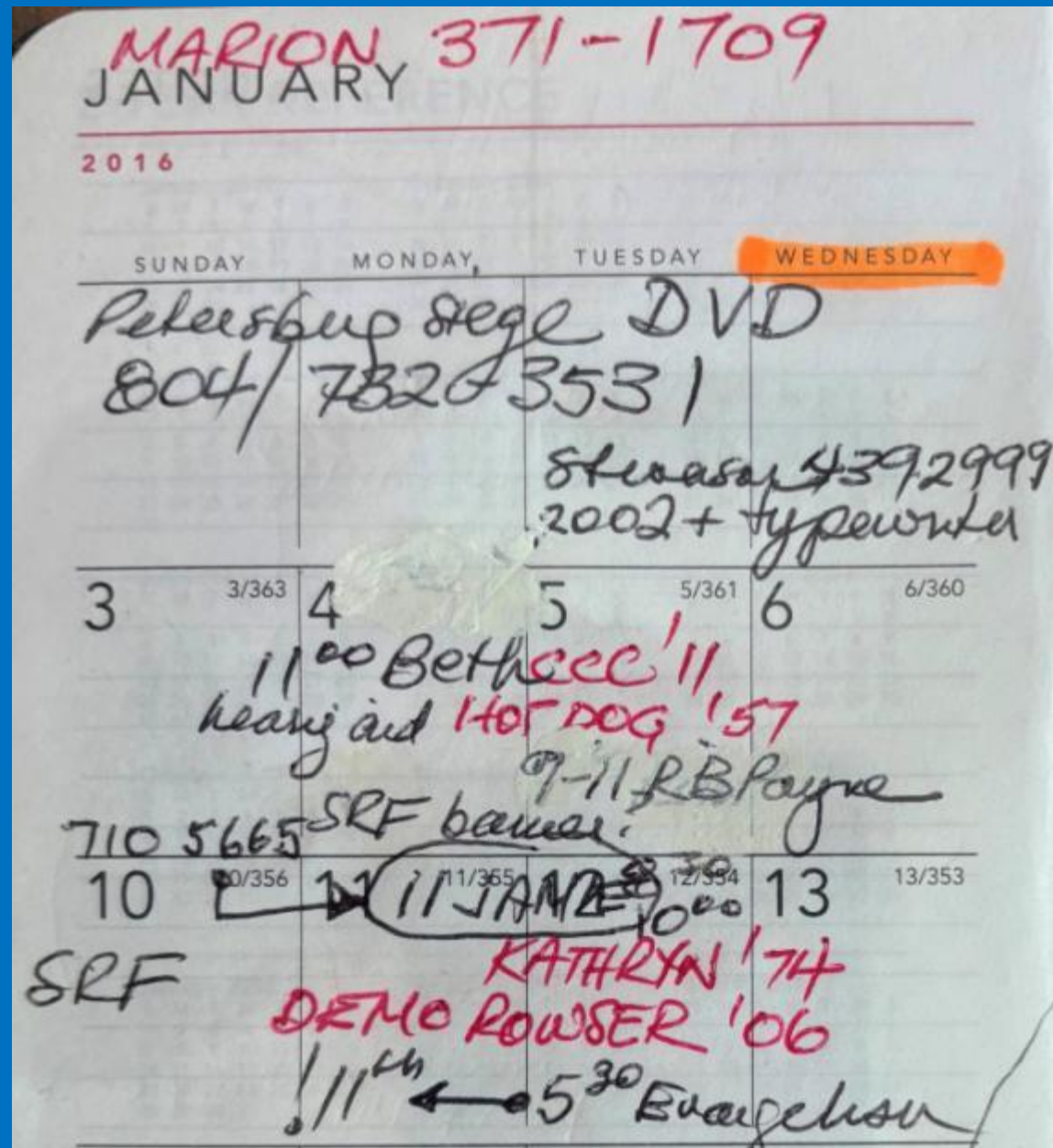
St Clair Brooks, far left, unofficial "Mayor" of Falmouth, Virginia, one of nine U.S. towns named Falmouth, hosts Mayor Baker of Falmouth, England, November 1950

December 2, 1883
– March 5, 1953



The Brooks home was geographically within St Clair Brooks Park, the 30 acres of which was given by John Lee Pratt when he died in 1975, in memory of his childhood friend

We called Marion at 371-1709 and picked her up 1 pm, January 10, 2016, at her home, 200 Butler Road



**Marion sat with us
on the risers for the
last time on January
10, 2016, at age 90**

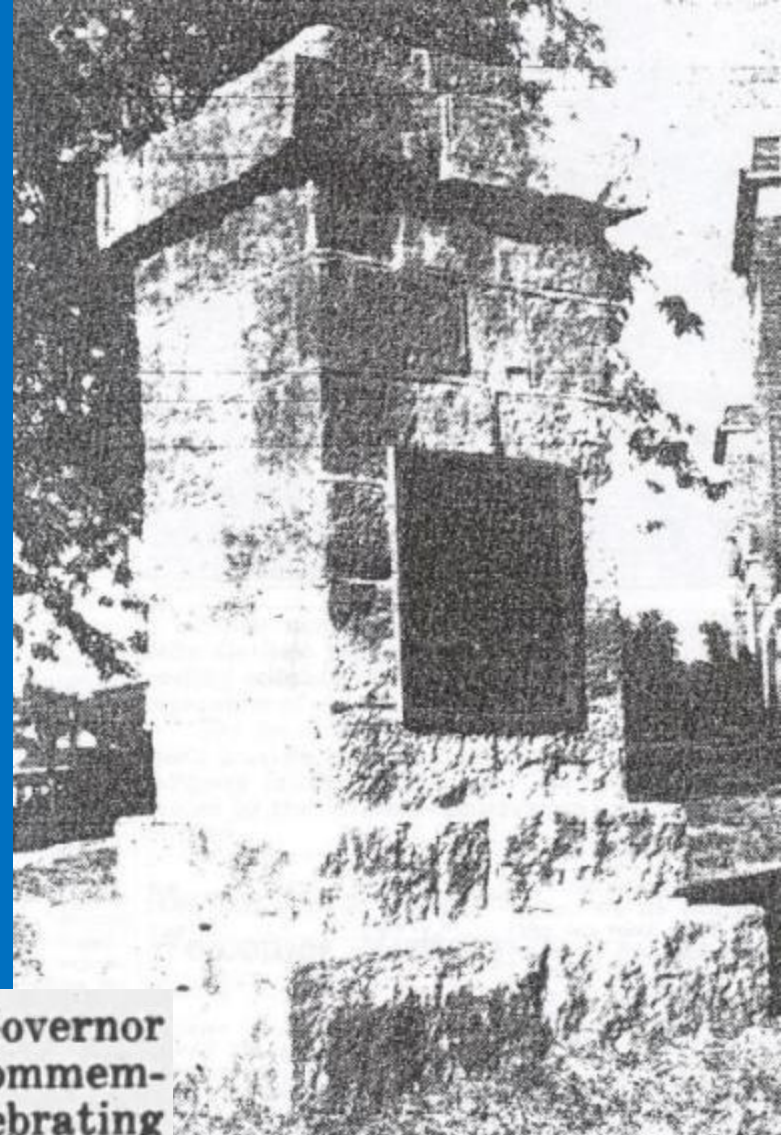
**Marion Brooks
Robinson
September 5, 1925 –
March 28, 2018**



155th Anniversary
1932

**The monument was built at
Maury School in 1932, by
stonemason St Clair Brooks
and unveiled in October**

**It remained there until the 1976
Bicentennial, when it was
moved to Washington Avenue,
at a cost of about \$5000**



Stone monument unveiled here Sunday by Governor John Garland Pollard as the climax of exercises commemorating religious life of George Washington and celebrating separation of church and state.

The monument situated on the high school campus was made possible by contributions from sixteen of the leading religious faiths in America. The bronze tablet was presented by the Virginia Conservation and Development Commission.

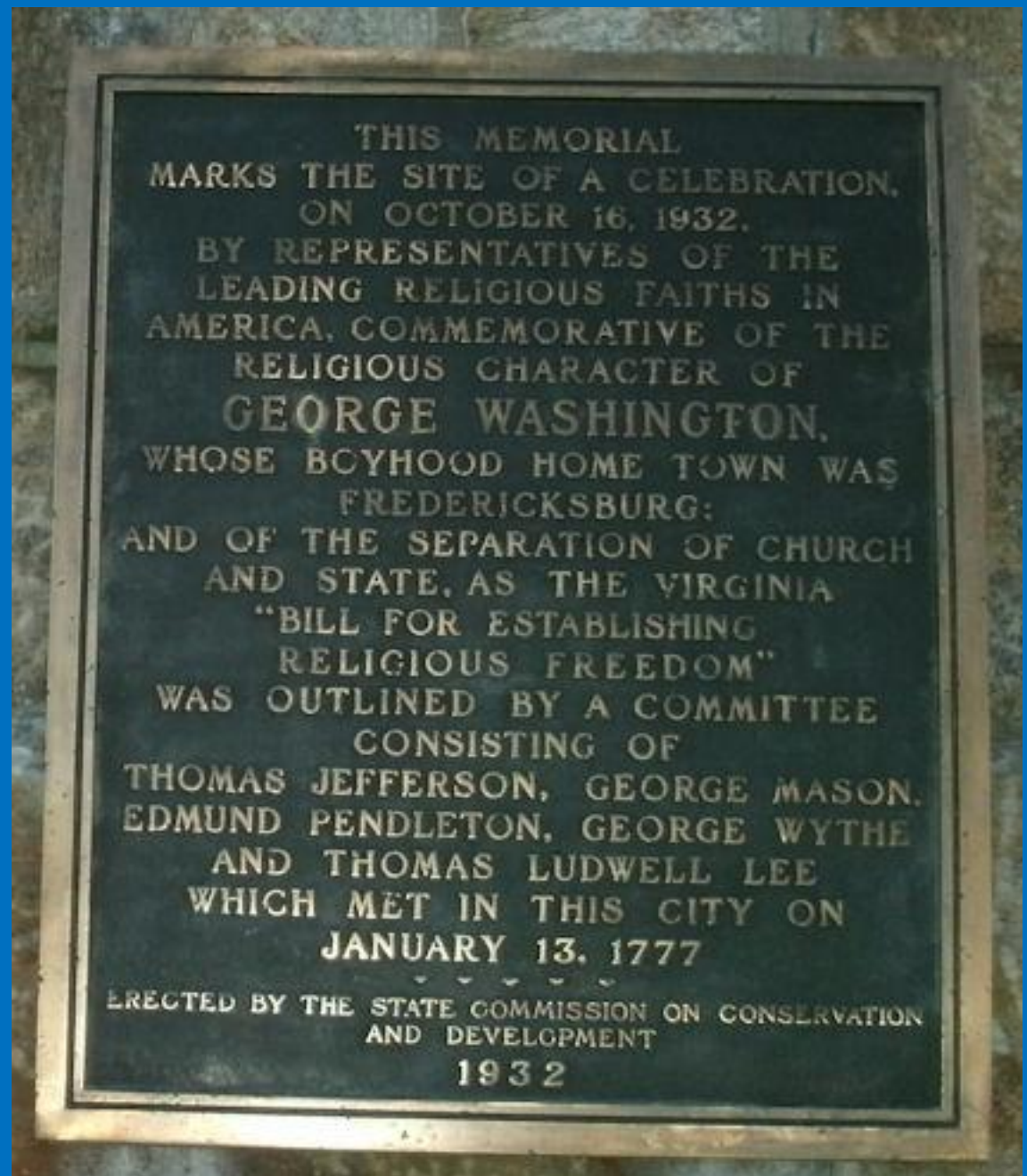
October 16, 1932

**George Washington's 200th birthday, February 22,
was the occasion for the 1932 celebration and monument,
lifting up Washington's "religious character"**

**Separation of Church and State, Jefferson's *Bill for
Establishing Religious Freedom*, and the Revisors' meeting
was the lower portion of the inscription**

**The Free Lance-Star discussed a proposed debate with
Charleston, South Carolina, the "City of Steeples", about
which city was indeed "America's Most Historic City"**

**October 1932
plaque, now on the
back face of the
monument as it sits
on Washington
Avenue**





Sunday October 16, 1932
Columbus Day was the previous Wednesday, October 12, 1932

Fredericksburg Proves Its Claim to the Title of "Most Historic City in America"

**Charleston's Infringement Upon Use of Slogan Is
Challenged By Fredericksburg. Debate Agreed
Upon But Charleston Defaults By Not Fixing
Date and Place.**

The article "America's Most Historic City" was the editorial cornerstone of a 44-page, Feb. 22, 1932, *Free Lance-Star* edition celebrating George Washington's bicentennial. The article highlighted local landmarks like Ferry Farm and the Mary Washington House to solidify the city's reputation.

159th Anniversary
1936

In the forty years, 1932 to 1973, not much happens in Fredericksburg related to the Bill or the Statute

•1936: 150th Anniversary

The year 1936 marked the sesquicentennial of the statute's passage by the Virginia General Assembly (January 16, 1786). While broader national recognition followed later, this milestone reinforced the statute's legacy as the precursor to the First Amendment.

•1940s: Nationalization Influence

During the 1940s, interest in the statute grew as the U.S. Supreme Court began nationalizing the First Amendment's religion clauses. Legal scholars and historians increasingly highlighted Jefferson's statute as the authoritative "standard of religious liberty" during this era.



The Jefferson Memorial was built between 1939 and 1943, and dedicated April 13, 1943, the 200th anniversary of Jefferson's birth.

Inside is inscribed "Almighty God hath created the mind free... No man shall be compelled to frequent or support religious worship... but all men shall be free to profess... their opinions in matters of religion."



...and "Truth is great and will prevail if left to herself; she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate".

200th Anniversary
1977



**Kurt Leidecker (1902-1991) MWC
Center for Asian Studies, Jefferson
Institute for Religious Studies
Recruited by Knights Gene Albrycht
and Don Hildebrand to ask City
Council to move the monument**



Staff photo by Roman Lykowski

A change of scene

The top column of the Religious Freedom Monument was moved to its new site on Washington Avenue yesterday to await the transfer of its heavy stone pedestal from the Maury School grounds after a concrete foundation is also poured at the new site. By Jan. 13 the relocated monument is due to be ready for the 200th anniversary of the drafting

of the Act of Religious Freedom in Fredericksburg, which it commemorates. A new bronze plaque on its south face will be unveiled at that time. Garden clubs are also planning to landscape the 44-year-old monument when it's in place, midway between the First Christian Church and the Mary Washington obelisk (in background at right).

Free Lance-Star December 3, 1976: The monument was being relocated to Washington Avenue for the Bicentennial

PROGRAM

The Thomas Jefferson Bicentennial

FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA

JANUARY 13, 1977



SPONSORS

THE THOMAS JEFFERSON INSTITUTE FOR
THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, INC.

and

THE FREDERICKSBURG AREA
BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 1977

PUBLIC GATHERING

ORDER OF EXERCISES

North end of Washington Boulevard mall in front of relocated "Freedom Monument"; in case of inclement weather, inside adjacent First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), courtesy of Rev. E. Elwood Campbell.

3:00 P. M.

ASSEMBLING of participant individuals, organizations and youth groups around their standard

3:15 P. M.

RINGING OF CHURCH BELLS of Presbyterian Church:
Miss Sally Rowe

3:30 P. M.

WORDS OF WELCOME: Dr. Kurt F. Leidecker, Director,
The Thomas Jefferson Institute

INVOCATION: Rev. Vincent S. Sikora, St. Mary's Roman
Catholic Church

PROCLAMATION: Rev. Lawrence A. Davies, Mayor of
the City of Fredericksburg

RECOGNITION BY MILLS E. GODWIN, JR., GOVERNOR OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA: Charles M. Hearn,
President, Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc.

P~~X~~SENTATION OF COLORS: Knights of Columbus

~~X~~STAR-SPANGLED BANNER: James Monroe High School Band,
Ronald Jordan, Director

ROLL CALL OF FAITH: Christian and non-Christian

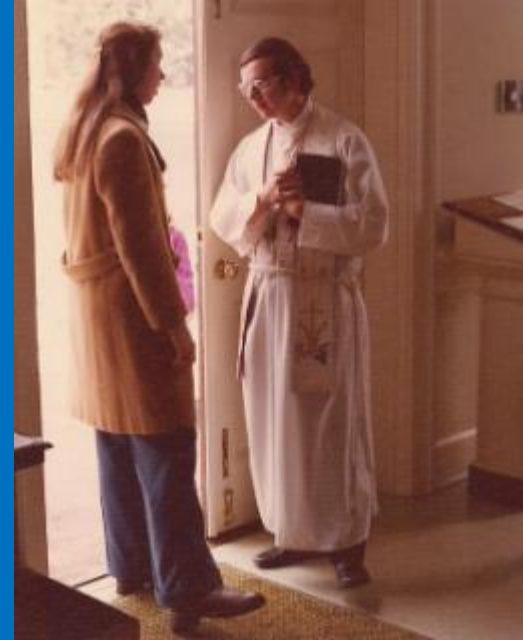
ECUMENICAL RESPONSE: Rev. James G. Cobb, Christ
Lutheran Church, President Fredericksburg Ministerial
Association

ROLL CALL OF YOUTH GROUPS



**Gov. Mills Godwin
(1914-1999)**

**Rev. James
Cobb**

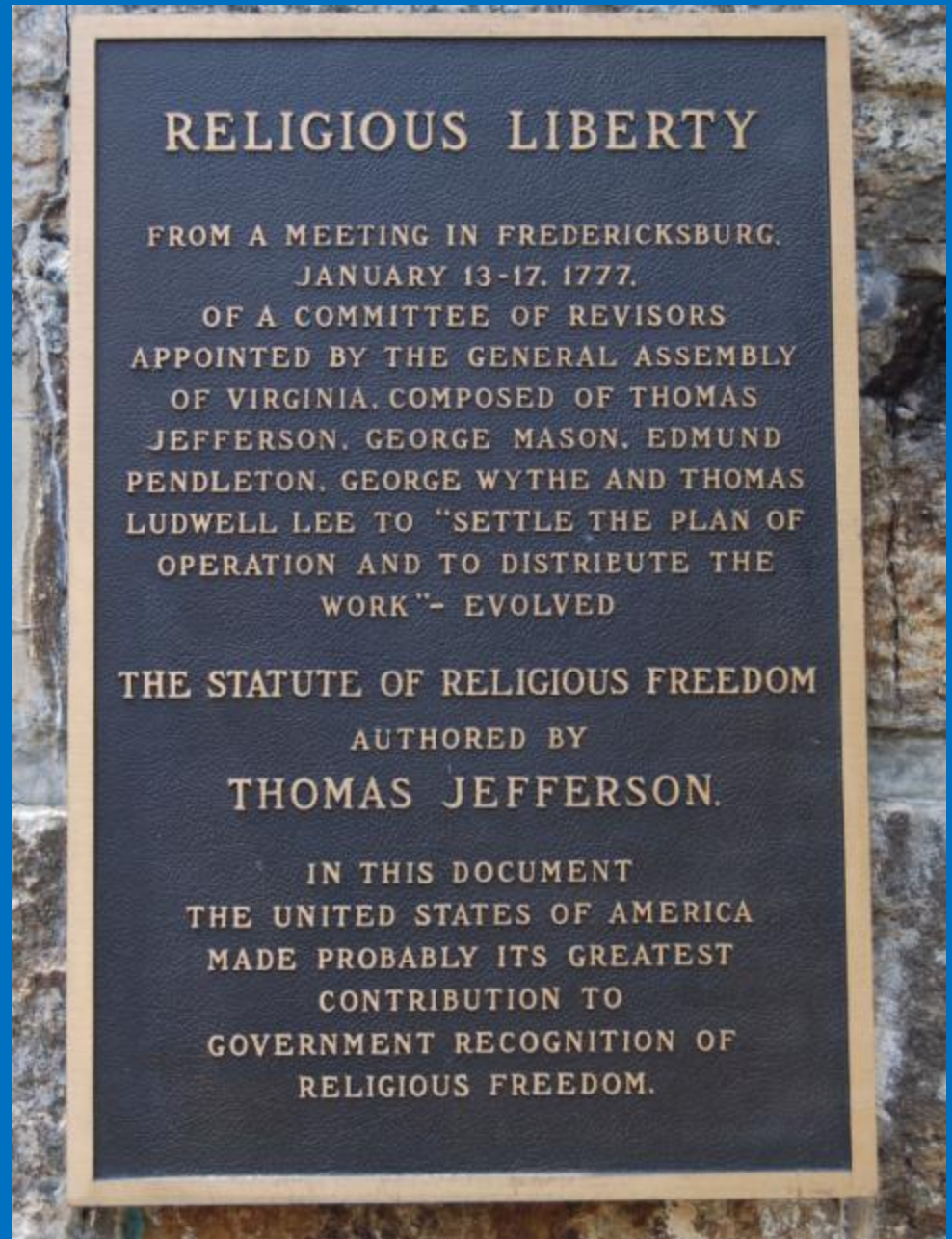


**Fr. Vincent Sikora
(1925-1989)**

**Fr. Charles
Sydnor**



**December 1976
plaque, now on the
front face of the
monument**



RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

FROM A MEETING IN FREDERICKSBURG,
JANUARY 13-17, 1777.

OF A COMMITTEE OF REVISORS
APPOINTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF VIRGINIA, COMPOSED OF THOMAS
JEFFERSON, GEORGE MASON, EDMUND
PENDLETON, GEORGE WYTHE AND THOMAS
LUDWELL LEE TO "SETTLE THE PLAN OF
OPERATION AND TO DISTRIEUTE THE
WORK"- EVOLVED

THE STATUTE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

AUTHORED BY

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

IN THIS DOCUMENT
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MADE PROBABLY ITS GREATEST
CONTRIBUTION TO
GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION OF
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

209th Anniversary
1986



**200th Anniversary of January 1786 passage into law
Wegner Arts medallion 00, gift of Gordon Shelton to RK**

215th Anniversary
1992

January 1992?

**Memorial to Kurt
Leidecker 1902-
November 17, 1991**

**Thomas Jefferson
Institute for the
Study of Religious
Freedom, 1974**



223rd Anniversary
2000

Data from *RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE WORLD:
A GLOBAL REPORT ON FREEDOM AND PERSECUTION*

Figure 2: Religious Freedom by Religious Background

Religious Freedom Rating	Catholic	Protestant	Orthodox	Mixed Christian	Hindu	Buddhism and related religions	Islam	Other	Mixed Muslim/Christian
1*	Ireland	Estonia Finland Netherlands Norway United States							
2*	Austria Brazil Lithuania Poland	Namibia South Africa Sweden United Kingdom Zimbabwe				Japan South Korea Taiwan			
3*	Argentina Belgium Chile El Salvador France Guatemala Hungary Philippines Spain		Romania Ukraine	Germany Latvia		Mongolia		Israel	
4**	Colombia Mexico	Tanzania	Armenia Bulgaria Georgia Greece Macedonia Moldova Russia			Singapore Sri Lanka	Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Malaysia Morocco		Lebanon
5**	East Timor		Belarus		India Nepal		Azerbaijan Egypt Indonesia Turkey		Nigeria
6***	Cuba					Bhutan China Vietnam	Bangladesh Mauritania Pakistan Uzbekistan		
7***						Burma North Korea Tibet (China)	Iran Saudi Arabia Sudan Turkmenistan		

* = "free"

** = "partly free"

2000 Freedom House report shows United States is the only large country with the highest level of religious freedom

	Population	Area km2	Density
Estonia	1,408,556	45,226	31
Finland	5,211,311	337,030	15
Eire	3,917,336	70,273	56
Netherlands	16,318,199	41,526	393
Norway	4,574,560	385,199	12
Total	31,429,962	879,254	36
%	11%	9%	
United States	293,027,571	9,631,118	30

225th Anniversary
2002



2002 225th Anniversary Pewter medallion made by Ralph & Ellis Gooch, Cardinal Pewter, Kenmore Avenue

Wegner Metal Arts 2002 Monument



Join the
225th Anniversary Celebration
of the

1777 BILL FOR ESTABLISHING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

"...no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever...all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion..."

Thomas Jefferson

- Jan 11 Williamsburg Day
- Jan 13 Knights of Columbus Ceremony
- Jan 14 "The Changing Global Landscape of Religious Freedom"

*Dr Paul Marshall, Author/Scholar
Center for Religious Freedom*

Central Rappahannock Regional Library

- Jan 16 Virginia and National Religious Freedom Day
Celebration of Faiths
Dodd Auditorium

- Jan 17 "Religious Freedom in the United States of America"

*Nadine Strossen, Keynote Speaker
National Director of ACLU*

*Followed by the presentation of Student Awards in
Art, Writing, Oratory*

Dodd Auditorium

- Jan 20 1:30 pm Inauguration of Historic Panels, William and Caroline Street
2:00 pm-5:00 pm Walking/Driving Tour of Faiths and Houses of Worship



Monument for the
Virginia Statute for Religious
Freedom
Erected 1932
Fredericksburg, Virginia

All Faiths are encouraged to participate

For more information, please contact...

Fredericksburg Visitor Center

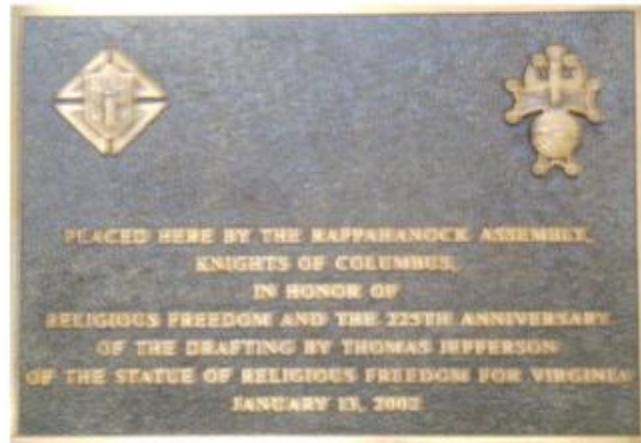
(540) 373-1776

800 678-4748



The Fredericksburg Council of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom

**Religious Freedom Day
Celebration
January 13, 2002**



**Fredericksburg
Virginia**



**Plaque Placed at the Foot of the
Monument of Religious Freedom
by Rappahannock Assembly
Knights of Columbus
January 13, 2002**

A TOUR OF FAITHS AND HOUSES OF WORSHIP

*Religious Freedom Celebration
Fredericksburg, Virginia
January, 2002*

225 Years of Religious Freedom



*"...no man shall be compelled to frequent
or support any religious worship, place, or
ministry whatsoever...all men shall be free
to profess, and by argument to maintain,
their opinion in matters of religion..."*
Thomas Jefferson

Acknowledgements

EditorRita Robles

Publisher/graphics.Phill Solow



Fredericksburg Council of the Virginia
Statute for Religious Freedom
Fredericksburg, Virginia
Office of the Mayor
540-372-1022

Another Fine Publication from the Folks at
PHILL WILL
(540) 785-7863

January 20, 2002 Walking/Driving Tour of Faiths

**Mayor Bill Beck's
Welcome**

**2002 Tour of Faiths
booklet**

A Welcome from the Mayor...

It gives me great pleasure to welcome our many visitors, as well as area residents, to this celebration in honor of the 225th Anniversary of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. We are very proud of the fact that Fredericksburg was the location where such a simple, yet defining, principal was conceived by great minds, a principal that to this day sets aside the United States of America as a beacon of freedom. It is also a principal, that sadly, we sometimes take for granted. This is why we are taking the time and energy for these celebrations.

As you proceed down the civic corridor that is Princess Anne Street, I hope you will take delight in the beauty of our churches, our Gothic Revival courthouse, and our stately City Hall, along with the banks and businesses of our city. Princess Anne Street is a microcosm, which proclaims with elegant, historic buildings, and a graceful human scale, the virtue of our great American experiment.

So, take a moment during this celebration to reflect on the ideal embodied in the Statute of Religious Freedom, and in the role played by Fredericksburg, in this defining document.

Peace to all who assemble here.

Bill Beck

"Fredericksburg's Best Kept Secret" THE VIRGINIA STATUTE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Jefferson's tombstone at Monticello, in Charlottesville, Virginia, carries the epitaph he wrote himself: **"Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia."** In his instructions for his tombstone, Jefferson wrote, "Because of these, as testimonials that I have lived, I wish most to be remembered." Jefferson's role as sole author of the Declaration of Independence was reduced even during his lifetime, but his authorship of the Statute for Religious Freedom can be proclaimed without qualification. Jefferson considered the Statute one of his crowning achievements. Some argue that it is the most important document ever written in the New World.

The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was one of the liberties brought about by the American Revolution, as the laws of British colonial Virginia were revised and rewritten. In particular, laws about religious practice had been in existence for hundreds of years that could render it criminal to express religious opinions or exercise modes of worship other than within, or with the approval of, the established Church of England. While these laws might not be applied in one or another instance, their very existence threatened pastors and practitioners with ineligibility for public service, fines, imprisonment, and other consequences, if they were not members of the Church of England. As recently as 1768, three Baptist pastors, Lewis Craig, John Waller, Jr., and James Chiles, had been jailed in Fredericksburg for their preaching.

The major initial legislative roles were played by George Mason and James Madison. In the Virginia Declaration of Rights, written in Williamsburg in May and June of 1776, Mason's language read **"fullest Toleration in the Exercise of Religion."** The 25-year-old James Madison, in his "first public act" successfully urged that the phrase be changed to read **"free exercise of religion"**. Mason and Madison would also be the ones to shepherd the principle into Virginia and United States law over the years which followed. But it was the genius and eloquence of Thomas Jefferson which, beginning in Fredericksburg in January 1777, distilled the idea of religious freedom into the document which was to become law, further loosening the ties between the fledgling state of Virginia and the Church of England.

"Disestablishment" of the Church of England was opposed by many, including the orator and patriot Patrick Henry. It was Patrick Henry who, in 1775, had spoken the famous words, "give me liberty or give me death." Yet Henry was one of many Virginians who, even years after the Declaration of Independence, felt that the moral integrity of the new nation depended upon a strong state-supported church. This position, **"antidisestablishmentarianism"**, was to delay passage of the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom nine years, until 1786.

But in 1777, Jefferson did not know that he and his Fredericksburg committee, appointed by the new General Assembly of Virginia to revise the laws of the new state to conform to the Declaration of Independence, might face such a long struggle.

Jefferson counted on the momentum of the Revolutionary spirit to lead quickly to passage of his **Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom**, Bill No. 82. He did not anticipate the difficulties the bill would face before its passage nine years later. Jefferson would describe the process as **"...the severest contests in which I have ever been engaged."** But Bill No. 82 would ultimately pass with few alterations, in the General Assembly, in Richmond, on January 16, 1786. It was exactly nine years after its beginnings in Fredericksburg, and only eighteen years after Pastors Craig, Waller, and Chiles had been imprisoned for preaching the Baptist Gospel.

Armed with this success, and the support of the Virginia legislature, James Madison pressed for a national Bill of Rights, which was passed in 1791, as the first amendments to the Constitution. It is significant that **the first words of the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States are, "The Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."** At the same time as Madison was making his efforts in the United States, Jefferson was similarly engaged in France, encouraging adoption of similar language into the 1789 French Bill of Rights, Article X of which would read, **"No one must be disturbed for his opinions, even religious ones..."**

Today, it can be said that the United States is one of perhaps a half-dozen nations in the world which enjoy the highest measure of freedom of religious expression. There is a line of history that leads from the Declaration of Rights in Williamsburg in 1776, to Jefferson's committee in Fredericksburg and the drafting of the Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom in 1777, to the passage of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom in Richmond in 1786, to the Bill of Rights in 1791, to the freedom of religious expression Americans enjoy today. Jefferson's words from 1777 still ring: **"Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."**

The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom remains today in the **Code of Virginia, Title 57-1**. To celebrate the 225th anniversary of the creation of this document, the Fredericksburg Council of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, chartered by Mayor Bill Beck, is bringing together pastors, historians, educators, and representatives of many different spiritual backgrounds to study the events which occurred here in Fredericksburg, and to celebrate the document which made it possible for an American to follow the dictates of his or her own conscience. The anniversary celebration will last from September 2001 until May 2002, and will center on the week of January 13-17, 2002. It will then be exactly 225 years since Jefferson and his committee met at Smith's Tavern, at the northeast corner of William and Caroline Street, in downtown Fredericksburg, to "settle the plan of operation and to distribute the work."



Table of Contents

"Fredericksburg's Best Kept Secret"

THE VIRGINIA STATUTE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

By Robert Kravetz, with assistance from Paula Felder

The Bahá'í Faith

Beth Shalom Temple - Judaism

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

Earthwalk Ways for the Spiritual Seeker

Fairview Baptist Church

First Church of Christ, Scientist

Fredericksburg Baptist Church

Fredericksburg United Methodist Church

Hollywood Church of the Brethren

Inner Circle

Islamic Center of Fredericksburg

Mount Hope Baptist Church

Presbyterian Church

St. George's Episcopal

St. Patrick Catholic Church

Science of Spirituality

Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site)

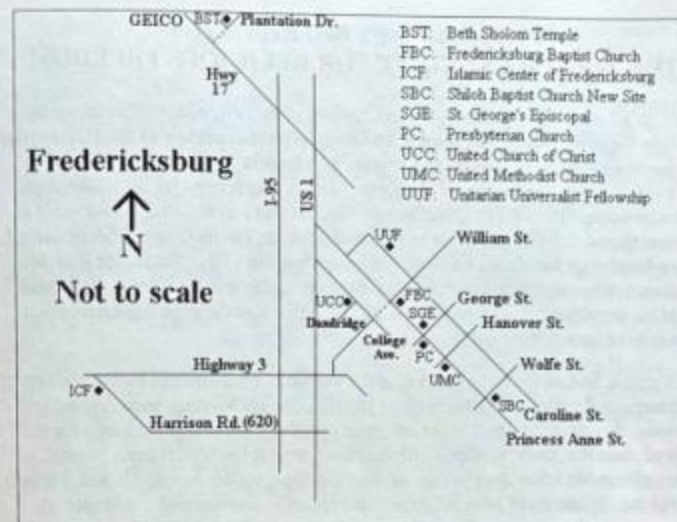
Trinity Episcopal Church

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

United Church of Christ

Wat Low Buddhavong

Committee Chair Thanks



Walking/Driving Tour of Faiths

Sunday, January 20, 2:00 - 5:00 PM, Participating Congregations

Meet and talk with members of participating faiths. The following groups will have their buildings open to the public from 2 to 5 PM.

Beth Shalom Temple (805 Lyons Blvd.)
 Fredericksburg Baptist Church (1019 Princess Anne St.)
 Fredericksburg United Methodist Church (308 Hanover St.)
 Islamic Center of Fredericksburg (7020 Harrison Road)
 Presbyterian Church (810 Princess Anne St.)
 St. George's Episcopal Church (905 Princess Anne St.)
 Shiloh Baptist Church New Site (525 Princess Anne St.)
 Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (1115 Caroline St.)
 will be hosting Baha'i Faith, First Church of Christ, Scientist,
 Earthwalk Ways, Inner Circle, Science of Spirituality, and Wat
 Lao Buddhavong (Buddhists).
 United Church of Christ (1213 Dandridge St.)

*Trolley Tours of Fredericksburg will travel to Beth Shalom Temple and the Islamic Center. The trolley will leave from William and Caroline Sts. at 2:00 PM and return at 4:00 PM.

We will have a separate trolley for downtown Fredericksburg

National Service Award

The Fredericksburg Council 4034 was honored by the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus with the Service Program Award for Community Activity, the top national award for community service projects for 2002

226th Anniversary
2003

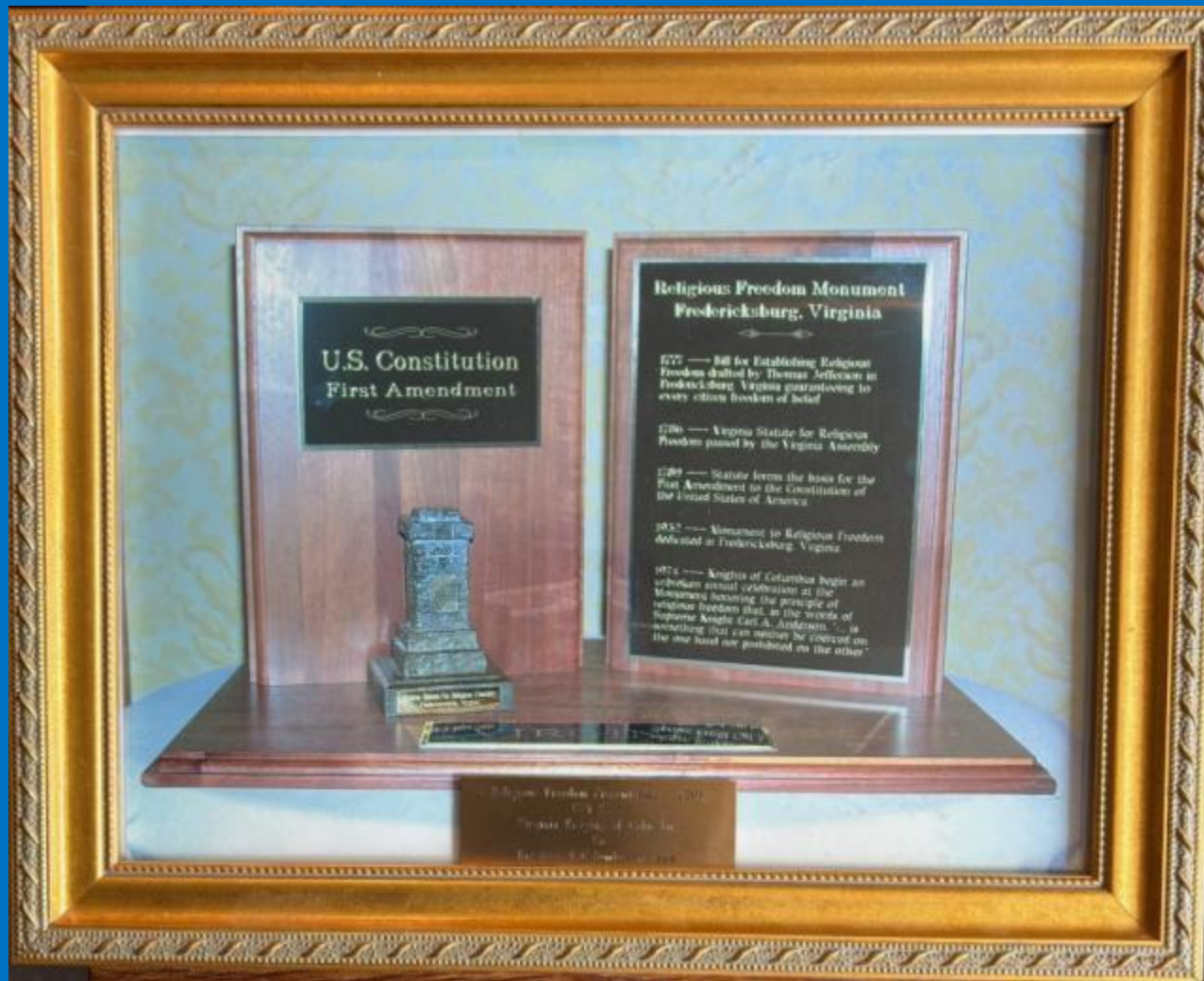


**Justice Scalia and Mayor Bill Beck
SRF226 January 12, 2003**



**Marion Brooks Robinson and Cathy Kravetz
January 12, 2003**

227th Anniversary
2004



Virginia Knights 2004 presentation to Knights Museum, New Haven Connecticut. It quotes Supreme Knight Carl Anderson: [Belief] is something that "...can neither be coerced on the one hand nor prohibited on the other."

228th Anniversary
2005

Religious Freedom Day

January 16, 2005



Fredericksburg, VA



Hosted by

Rappahannock Assembly
Knights of Columbus



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

12:30 PM	Parade Participants Assemble at Fredericksburg Train Station
1:15 PM	Dignitaries Gather at Mary Washington College Catholic Student Center
1:30 PM	Parade Begins
2:00 PM	Ceremony Begins
3:00 PM	Reception for Knights of Columbus and Guests at Mary Washington Catholic Student Center
3:45 PM	Presentation by Knights of Columbus
4:00 PM	Events Conclude

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Rev. Richard Carbaugh, *Pastor, Christ Lutheran
Church, Fredericksburg*
Rev. Jeffrey Jones, *Minister, Unitarian
Universalist Fellowship of
Fredericksburg*
Jay L. Cotner, *Grand Commander, Knights
Templar of Virginia*
Jim McFall, *Faithful Navigator, Rappahannock
Assembly, Knights of Columbus*
William M. Mulvihill, *Vice Supreme Master,
Calvert Province, Knights of Columbus*
Raymond A. Wycoff, *State Deputy, Virginia State
Council, Knights of Columbus*
Thomas Tomzak, *Mayor of Fredericksburg*
Dr. Robert Kravetz, *Associate Professor of
Anesthesiology, Medical College of
Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth
University*

Featured Speaker

Dr. Robert Kravetz, M.D., F.A.C.P.
Associate Professor of Anesthesiology
Medical College of Virginia
Virginia Commonwealth University

Dr. Kravetz is a long-time resident of the Fredericksburg area, having served as a staff anesthesiologist at Mary Washington Hospital from 1976 to 1998, followed by similar duties at Riverside-Tappahannock Hospital until 2001. He is a member of the faculty at George Mason University, in addition to his position at MCV, where his responsibilities include Department Director of Medical Student Education. Dr. Kravetz' graduate education began at Yale University, followed by the Sorbonne in Paris and the School of Medicine at Case Western University, he received internship and medical residency training at Mount Sinai Hospital in Cleveland, the University of Virginia and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda. Dr. Kravetz served on active duty with the United States Navy from 1972-76, achieving the rank of Lieutenant Commander, and was designated as the Anesthesiologist to the President of the United States in 1975-76. Particularly noteworthy in view of his very full schedule, Dr. Kravetz for the past five years has served as the Medical Director of the Lloyd F. Moss Free Clinic.

Dr. Kravetz is a member of nine professional organizations, including active participation in various capacities for the Virginia Society of Anesthesiologists, the Medical Society of Virginia and the Fredericksburg Area Medical Society. Community-oriented citations awarded by local organizations to Dr. Kravetz include the Stafford Volunteer Rescue Squad, the Rappahannock EMS Council and the Fredericksburg Jaycees.

Dr. Kravetz enjoys as an avocation the study of Thomas Jefferson's Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom. For the 225th Anniversary Celebration of the signing of the Statute for Religious Freedom in 2002, he served as the Chairman of the Religious Freedom Council, and was an organizer of the Celebration. He published two extensive articles appearing in the Fredericksburg Free Lance Star on January 12 and 13, 2002, *Virginia's Road to Independence and Religious Freedom*, (co-authored with Paula S. Felder) and *Faithful to Freedom*. Dr. Kravetz is currently the Acting Secretary of the Council for Religious Freedom.

Program

Welcome	Ken Malley, Master of Ceremonies Rappahannock Assembly Knights of Columbus
National Anthem	
Pledge of Allegiance	
Invocation	Reverend Richard Carbaugh Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church Fredericksburg, Virginia
Introduction of Distinguished Guests	
Proclamation	The Honorable Thomas Tomzak Mayor of Fredericksburg, Virginia
Address	Dr. Robert Kravetz Associate Professor of Anesthesiology Medical College of Virginia Virginia Commonwealth University
Wreath Laying	Dr. Robert Kravetz William V. Mulvihill Vice Supreme Master Calvert Province, Knights of Columbus Jay L. Cotner Grand Commander Knights Templar of Virginia
Benediction	Reverend Jeffery Jones Minister, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fredericksburg
Closing Hymn	God Bless America

January 13, 2005

Church = State; Church - State; Church / State; Church + State; Church * State; Church ? State



VIRGINIA'S STATUTE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: WHAT DID JEFFERSON REALLY MEAN? A PANEL DISCUSSION

The Reverend Barry Lynn

Executive Director, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State
And

Mr. Joseph Loconte

The William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society at the Heritage Foundation

Moderated by

Dr. David Cain

Distinguished Professor of Religion,
UMW's Department of Classics, Philosophy and Religion

*Sponsored by UMW's Campus Academic Resources Committee,
UMW's Department of Classics, Philosophy and Religion
and the Fredericksburg Council for the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*

Thursday, January 13th

7:30 p.m.

Lee Hall Ballroom

University of Mary Washington

Refreshments to follow



Church = State; Church - State; Church / State; Church + State; Church * State; Church ? State

Church = State; Church - State; Church / State; Church + State; Church * State; Church ? State

*You are cordially invited to attend
A Panel Discussion:
Virginia's Statute for Religious Freedom –
What Did Jefferson Really Mean?*

*With
The Reverend Barry Lynn, Executive Director,
Americans United for the Separation of Church and State*

*And
Mr. Joseph Loconte
The William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society
at the Heritage Foundation*

*Moderated by
Dr. David Cain, Distinguished Professor of Religion,
UMW's Department of Classics, Philosophy and Religion*

*Thursday, January 13th at 7:30 p.m.
Lee Hall Ballroom at the University of Mary Washington*

Refreshments to follow

*Sponsored by UMW's Campus Academic Resources Committee, UMW's Department of Classics,
Philosophy and Religion and the Fredericksburg Council for the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*



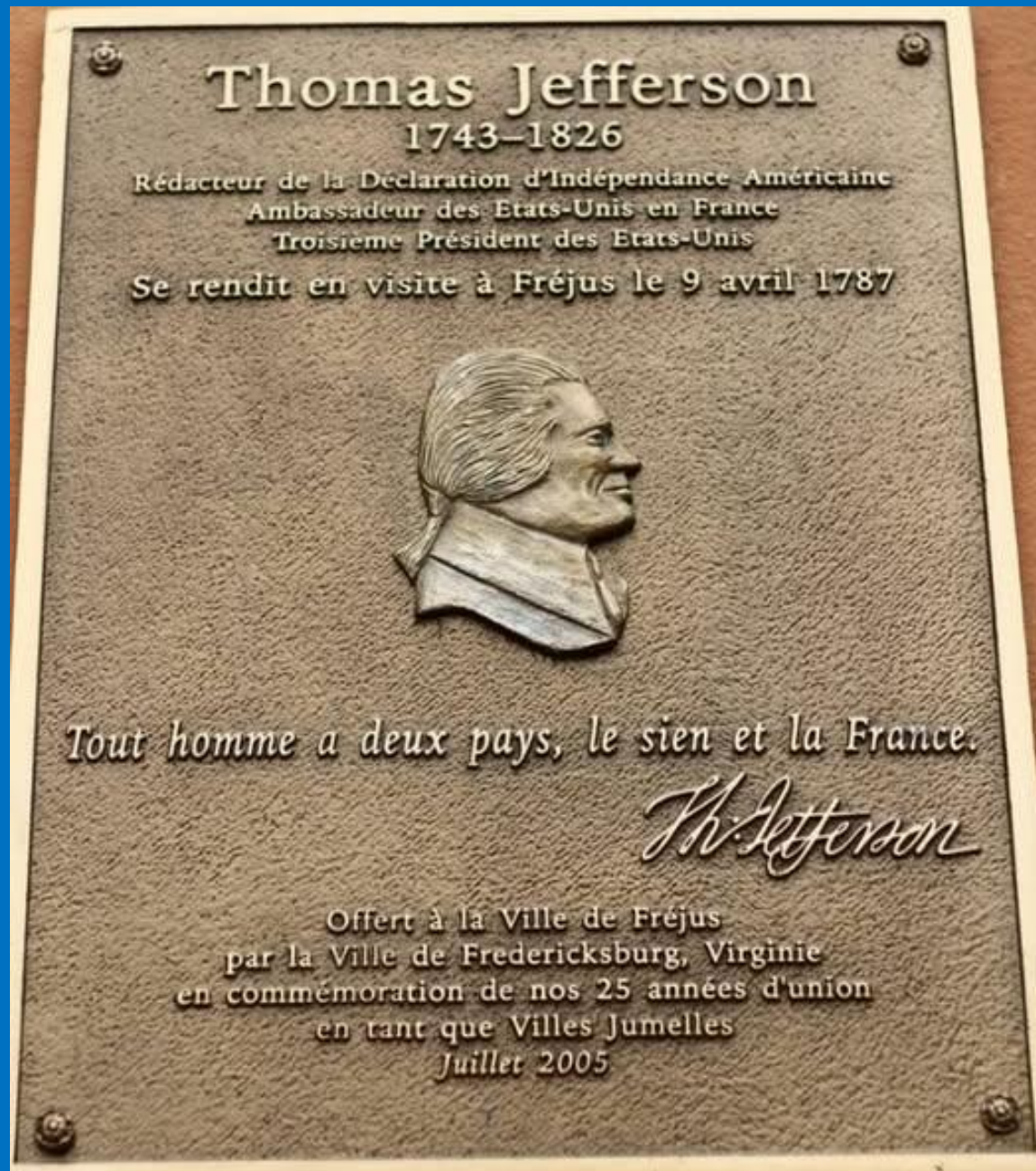
City Hall of Frejus, with a marker commemorating Jefferson's visit in April 1787 – a gift of Fredericksburg in 2005, the 25th year of our Sister City association

"Symbole de l'amitié franco-américaine, cette plaque commémore le passage à Fréjus, le 9 avril 1787, de Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), humaniste d'exception, ambassadeur des États-Unis en France et 3ème Président des États-Unis."

"All men have two homelands, their own, and France."

-Th. Jefferson

**Presented to Frejus
by Fredericksburg
July 2005**



229th Anniversary
2006







Bhante Y. Wimala is a prominent Sri Lankan Buddhist monk known globally for his humanitarian work and teaching



The guest speaker is Tim Kaine, inaugurated Governor the day before. His inauguration was the first in Williamsburg since Jefferson, in 1779

Church = State; Church - State; Church / State; Church + State; Church * State; Church ? State



STATUTE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WEEK

Rappahannock Assembly Knights of Columbus
Parade and Commemorative Ceremony

Sunday, January 15, 2006

Parade begins at the Fredericksburg Train Station
at 1:30 p.m.

Commemorative Ceremony at the
Religious Freedom Monument on Washington
Avenue begins at 2:00 p.m.

Tainted Legacy: 9/11 and the Ruin of Human Rights

Lecture by the **Rev. Dr. William F. Schulz**
Executive Director, Amnesty International USA

*Presented by
the Fredericksburg Council for the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
and the University of Mary Washington*



Bill Schulz

"has done more than anyone else...to
make human rights issues known in
the United States."

New York Times Review of Books

Thursday, January 19th
7:30 p.m.

Lee Hall Ballroom
University of Mary Washington
Refreshments to follow

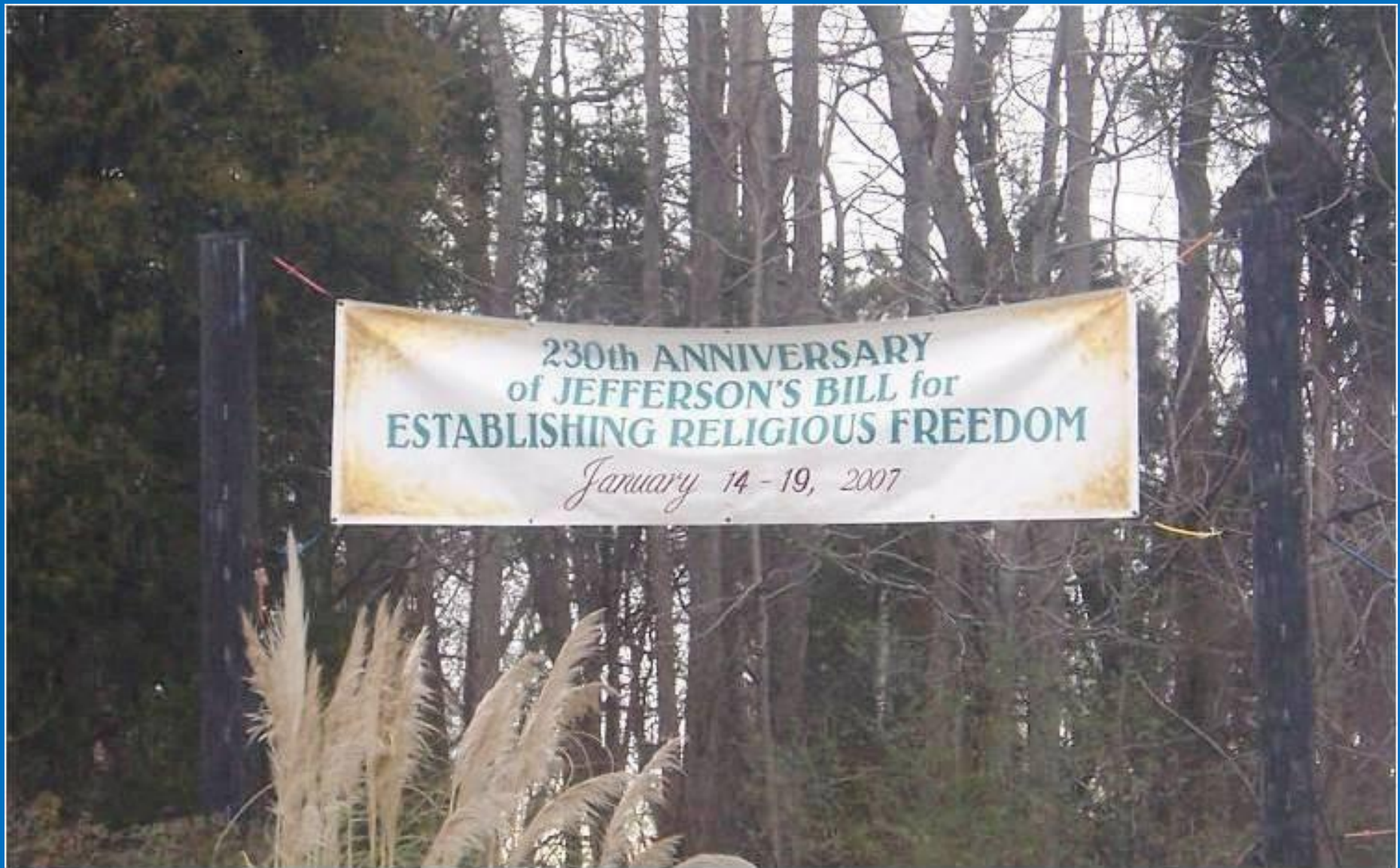


Church = State; Church - State; Church / State; Church + State; Church * State; Church ? State

Church = State; Church - State; Church / State; Church + State; Church * State; Church ? State

Church = State; Church - State; Church / State; Church + State; Church * State; Church ? State

230th Anniversary
2007



1x3 meter Blue and Gray Parkway banner

**2007 Keynote
Speaker of the
Virginia House
of Delegates
Bill Howell**

January 14





**January 16,
Mr. Clark,
site manager**

April 27, Dr. Kravetz

**Excavation of the
uppermost part of the
base of 1932 site during
renovation of Maury
School, 2007**



**2007 Letter about
the remaining base
of the monument at
Maury School**

Dear Mrs. Tansill,

I am attaching six jpegs and a word document about Marion [Brooks Robinson]. Now that I think of it, I'll also send you a picture of Marion and my wife Cathy at one of the recent religious freedom celebrations. Mr. Clark and I calculated that the granite base, at 20 tons, weighed just about the same as the monument itself. Each is about 265 cubic feet (cement, in the case of the base, and granite, in the case of the monument.) The base measures 6x6x4 1/2 feet, and would likely have remained unidentifiable without the history. Our hint that it was there was the small portion visible before the excavation. Marion and her daughter visited Maury to see the base just before it was again covered over, a few months ago. The monument, now on Washington Avenue, is over 11 feet tall.

Robert Kravetz

231st Anniversary
2008

Religious Freedom Day

January 13, 2008



235th Anniversary
2012

The Fredericksburg chapter of the Washington Area Secular Humanists (WASH), part of the Coalition of Reason, participated in the Knights of Columbus annual Religious Freedom parade in January 2012.

This was the first time non-theistic groups were represented in the parade

237th Anniversary
2014



Fredericksburg Coalition of Reason assembles at the train station before the Knights parade, January 12, 2014. Behind is the banner of Redeemer Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod)



Note the chalk spike marks on the street for the Knights of Columbus and the Knights Templar



**Mayors Rev. Davies and Greenlaw, and Rep. Bobby Orrock,
on the left of the podium; Rev. Cregan with the flat cap, third
from the right**



Keynote speaker and Baptist minister William Murray, January 2014. His Religious Freedom Coalition had moved from Lafayette Boulevard, in Fredericksburg, to D.C., in late 2012, just over a year earlier.



The Knights Templar, Knights, and Mr. Murray laying the wreath, January 12, 2014.



Murray was plaintiff for his mother's 1963 Supreme Court case against forced reading of the Bible in school





Fredericksburg Coalition of Reason



**Marchers probably walking toward Central
Rappahannock Regional Library**



Library conference sponsored by University of Mary Washington and Fredericksburg Coalition of Reason

238th Anniversary
2015

239th Anniversary
2016



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM DAY

January 10, 2016



Fredericksburg, Virginia

Hosted by

Rappahannock Assembly



Knights of Columbus



240th Anniversary
2017



2017 240th Anniversary 1x12 banner at the old Visitor Center

241st Anniversary
2018



**1x3 meter Blue Gray Parkway banner
January 9-30, 2017**



2018 241st Anniversary Visitor Center 1x12 meter Banner



January 14, 2018 photo?

243th Anniversary
2020



**January 12, 2020 Amelia and Prince Edward Streets,
facing Northeast**

**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints banner is
just ahead of the trolley**

January 12, 2020





**Fr. Donald J. Rooney, Keynote Speaker, January 12, 2020
Rep. Bobby Orrock, Master of Ceremonies, at lower right**



KHATIB PROGRAM IN RELIGION & DIALOGUE

at the University of Mary Washington

UMW Khatib Program starts in 2020

“Dr. and Mrs. Khatib believe that it is only through mutual understanding and respect for each other’s religions that tolerance and peaceful coexistence is possible.”

**244th Anniversary
2021**



Truncated ceremony due to Covid, January 2021

**245th Anniversary
2022**



246th Anniversary
2023



David Bereit, CEO, 40 Days for Life January 2023

AI: “mobilized 750,000 volunteers in more than 700 cities across all 50 states and dozens of other nations to save thousands of children and close nearly 100 abortion centers. David is a convert to Catholicism”.

247th Anniversary
2024



Sunday, January 14, 2024



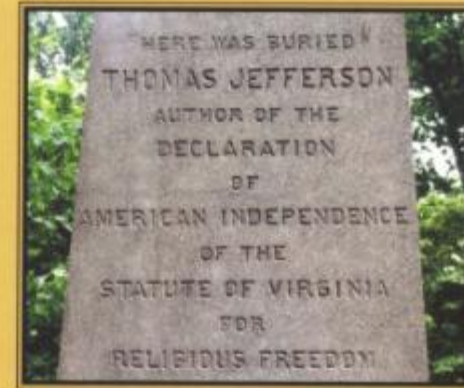
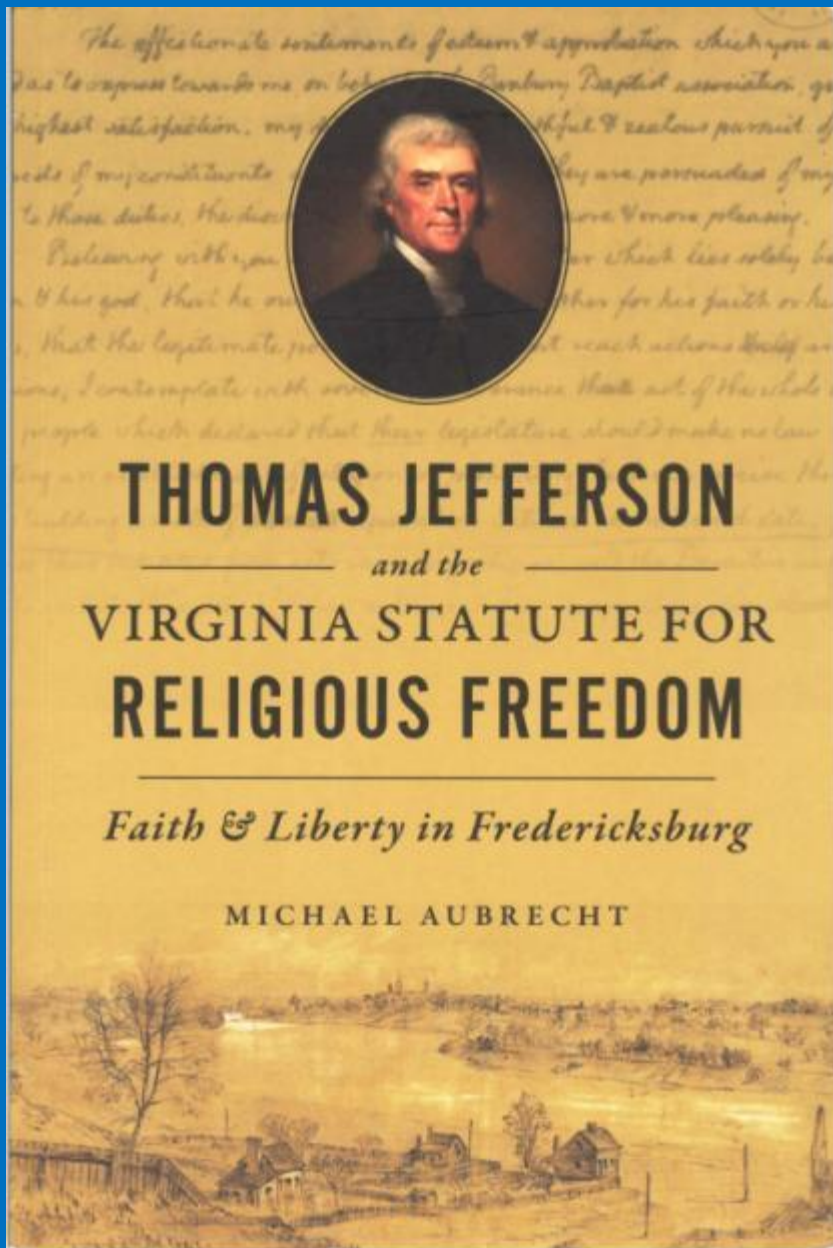
Sunday, January 14, 2024. Robert & Cathy Kravetz on the right, bringing and holding the banner yearly since 2002



**Msgr. John C. Cregan, Keynote Speaker
January 14, 2024**



Fr. Richard Miserendino, Chaplain UMW Catholic Campus Ministry, delivers closing prayer. Del. Bobby Orrock, lower right, is again Master of Ceremonies



A Legacy of Freedom

Prior to his death, Thomas Jefferson left behind specific instructions for the obelisk monument that was to mark his grave. He requested the following epitaph: "Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom and Father of the University of Virginia." These contributions were, in his words, the "testimonials that I have lived, I wish most to be remembered." It is curious that with all his contributions to the nation, he chose to note his authorship of a state law. Jefferson crafted this statute neither in Philadelphia nor in any other busy cities of the day, but rather while staying in the small town of Fredericksburg on the Rappahannock River. Local historian Michael Aubrecht tells the tale of the creation of this remarkable document and the influence it continues to have.

THE History PRESS

\$24.99
MADE
IN THE
USA



Michael Aubrecht's 2024 book, first of its kind

**Preston
Thayer and
R. Kravetz
June 2024
concept for
temporary
art for 2027**



248th Anniversary
2025

249th Anniversary
2026



Knights parade, January 11, 2026

50TH ANNUAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM DAY

January 11, 2026



Hosted by
Rappahannock Assembly 1613
Fredericksburg, Virginia



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS



Purpose (Pitch Statement):

This proposed **White Garden** planting strengthens the setting of the Religious Freedom Monument by creating a calm, dignified, low-maintenance landscape that supports reflection and community engagement while keeping the monument as the clear focal point.

Concept:

Inspired by themes of peace, unity, and reflection, this garden uses a selection of native and historically informed, white-flowering, low-maintenance plants to honor the legacy of the site and create a contemplative space for the community.

Rationale

- Symbolizes purity, peace, and spirituality—naturally aligning with the values of religious freedom
- Creates a calm, reverent atmosphere that encourages quiet reflection
- Represents new beginnings and hope, echoing the promise of liberty
- A single-color palette creates a refined, cohesive, and timeless design by emphasizing texture, light, and form
- Creates a low-maintenance, drought-tolerant, pollinator-friendly landscape
- Offers visual year-round interest with seasonal white blooms
- Provides an elegant, photo-worthy backdrop for public engagement and reflection



Design Intent & Stewardship:

This design intentionally uses a limited number of plant types, repeated in massing, to create a calm and cohesive landscape that supports the purpose of the monument rather than competing with it. The repetition guides the eye naturally toward the monument as the focal point and reinforces a formal, timeless character appropriate for a space of reflection while also making the planting easier to maintain.

Scope (Planting Areas):

The planting includes a **30' x 10' (300 sq. ft.)** bed immediately behind the monument and **two 15' x 6' (180 sq. ft.)** beds flanking the brick patio and benches.

Plant	Qty		Avg Cost	Subtotal
Serviceberry (<i>Amelanchier</i> spp.)	1		\$100	\$100
Viburnum (<i>Viburnum</i> spp.)	6		\$45	\$270
Hydrangea (<i>Hydrangea arborescens</i> / smooth hydrangea)	11		\$50	\$550
Glossy Abelia (<i>Abelia</i> × <i>grandiflora</i>)	5		\$35	\$175
Bridal Wreath Spirea (<i>Spiraea prunifolia</i>)	11		\$35	\$385
	33 plants			\$1,480

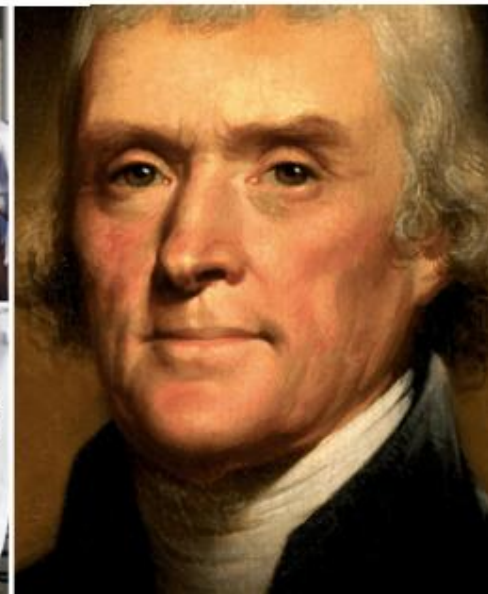
Maintenance Summary:

The selected palette is designed to be low-maintenance through hardy, well-adapted shrubs that require minimal care once established. Species such as viburnum, abelia, and spirea generally maintain their form with little pruning, while hydrangeas thrive with a simple annual cutback. Limiting the number of plant types and repeating them throughout the design makes maintenance more efficient and consistent while providing a long season of interest with minimal ongoing effort well suited for a dignified and sustainable monument landscape.

**John Siegler's vision of a White Garden for the Monument
proposed March 27, 2026**

Fredericksburg Council of The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom

Celebrating 250 Years of Faith and Freedom in Virginia's Most Historic City



Website created by Michael Aubrecht March 30, 2026



**Abby Construction
workman cleans the
monument, June 8-10,
prior to mortar
repointing and bronze
plaque cleaning**





250th Anniversary planning meeting Tuesday July 7, 2026
Michael Aubrecht, Robert Kravetz, Nancy Moore, Matt Kelly
John Wilkes, Mary Katherine Greenlaw, Bill Beck, Clint Schemmer
Rick Pullen, Thomas Cleary, John Siegler, Craig Vasey

250th Anniversary
2027



250th

January

2027