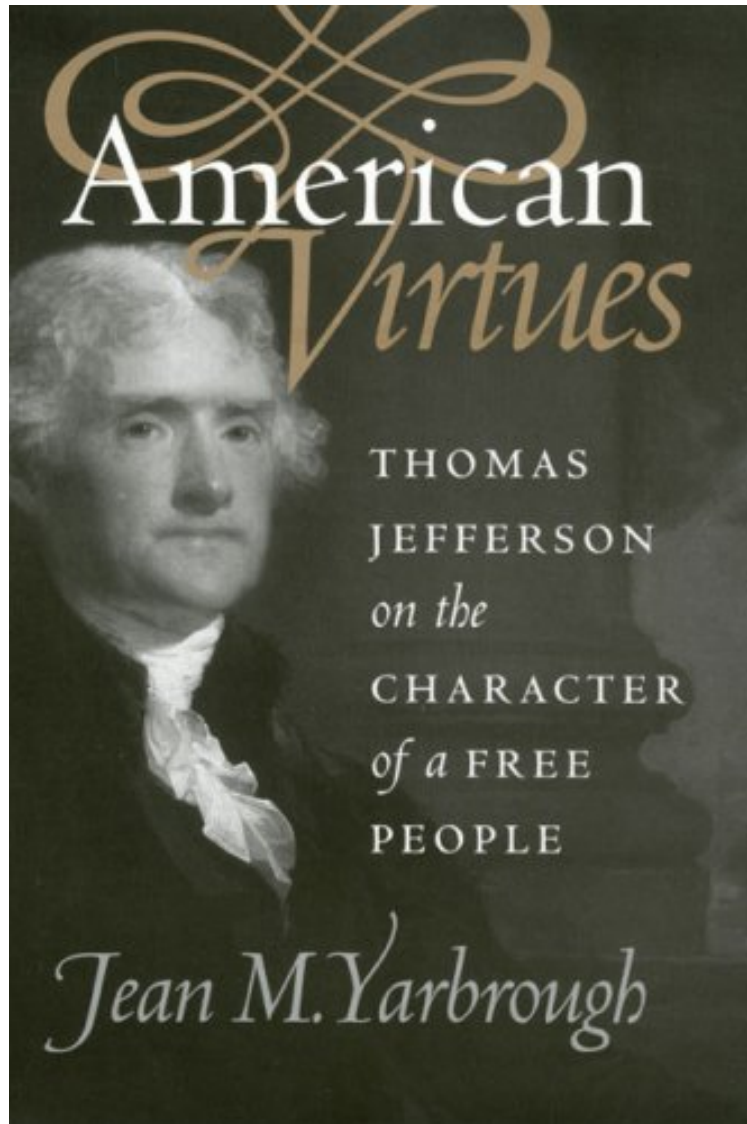


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## **American Virtues: Thomas Jefferson on the Character of a Free People (American Political Thought (University Press of Kansas))**

*Jean M. Yarbrough*

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**Jean M. Yarbrough : American Virtues: Thomas Jefferson on the Character of a Free People (American Political Thought (University Press of Kansas))** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Virtues: Thomas Jefferson on the Character of a Free People (American Political Thought (University Press of Kansas)):

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book!By T. BlabeyAmerican Virtues is an excellent review of one the greatest Presidents in American history. President Jefferson had great insight into human nature and what it takes for citizens to be self-governing, as set forth in this book.0 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Too philosophical and detailed.By WalterI found this book to be far too detailed in analyzing and comparing the moral guiding precepts of Jefferson. Jefferson was an enigma in his often contradicting beliefs and practices. I had hoped this book would have more concisely elaborated on these inconsistencies with fewer words. I stopped reading the book after a few chapters.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Insightful examination of Jefferson's deepest beliefsBy Robert KirkI thoroughly enjoyed the author's work in explaining Jefferson's view of liberty, freedom, and religion. Many great references to the readings that Thomas Jefferson did as a younger man and you can tell how some of his thought process developed. My favorite part of the book was Jefferson's ideas about religion and christianity. Very revealing and interesting because so many people think all the founder fathers were very religious. It's not a long book but it is well written and seriously keeps your interest throughout the 190 pages. In summary, a great book to learn about an amazing person and how he came about living his virtues.

Since the early days of the republic, Americans have recognized Thomas Jefferson's distinctive role in helping to shape the American national character. As Founder and statesman, Jefferson thought broadly about the virtues Americans would need to cultivate in order to preserve and perfect their experiment in republican self-government. Now in an age preoccupied with rights and divided over questions of character in public and private life, Jefferson can help us to think more clearly about our most urgent concerns.American Virtues is the first comprehensive analysis of Jefferson's moral and political philosophy in over twenty years and the first ever to focus exclusively on the full range of moral, civic, and intellectual virtues that together form the American character. It asks what kind of character Americans as a people must cultivate to ensure their freedom and happiness and how we as a free society can nurture moral and intellectual excellence in our citizens and statesmen.Beginning with the Declaration of Independence, Jean Yarbrough explores how Jefferson's conception of rights helps to form the American character. In subsequent chapters, she examines the moral sense virtues of justice and benevolence; the "agrarian" virtues of industry, moderation, patience, self-reliance, and independence; patriotism and modern republicanism; slavery and agrarian vice; the effect of commerce on character; the virtues connected with private property; the civic virtues of vigilance and spirited participation; the meaning of virtue and happiness for women; the virtues of republican statesmen; the place of the Epicurean virtues of wisdom and friendship in liberal republicanism; and piety and the secularized virtues of charity, toleration, and hope.In broadening the examination of virtue to include not only civic or republican virtue but the whole range of moral and intellectual excellence that perfect the individual character, American Virtues moves beyond the liberal-republican debates and makes a fresh contribution to the Jeffersonian literature.

"At a time when all of us have opinions about Thomas Jefferson's character, Jean Yarbrough is the first to understand that his ideas about our character are far more interesting. Yarbrough deftly probes the interweaving of concern with both private and public virtue that marked Jefferson's thinking, giving praise where it is due and criticism where it is deserved. The result is a morally engaged and thoughtful inquiry into the fundamental character of democratic citizenship from a leading student of early American political theory."Jack Rakove, author of *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* "Jean Yarbrough has produced a searching reevaluation of America's philosopher-statesman, Jefferson a man too philosophic to be a statesman, too political to excel as philosopher. Yarbrough shows him absorbed in the work of uniting rights and virtue, enabling a free people to govern itself and to live together competently in self-reliance. True to the man and his time, yet profoundly useful today, her distinguished book presents this American hero as he was so that we can learn from him."Harvey Mansfield, author of *Machiavelli's Virtue and Taming the Prince* "The best exposition we have of Jefferson's thought."From the Back CoverAmerican Virtues is the first comprehensive analysis of Jefferson's moral and political philosophy in over twenty years and the first ever to focus exclusively on the full range of moral, civic, and intellectual virtues that together form the American character.