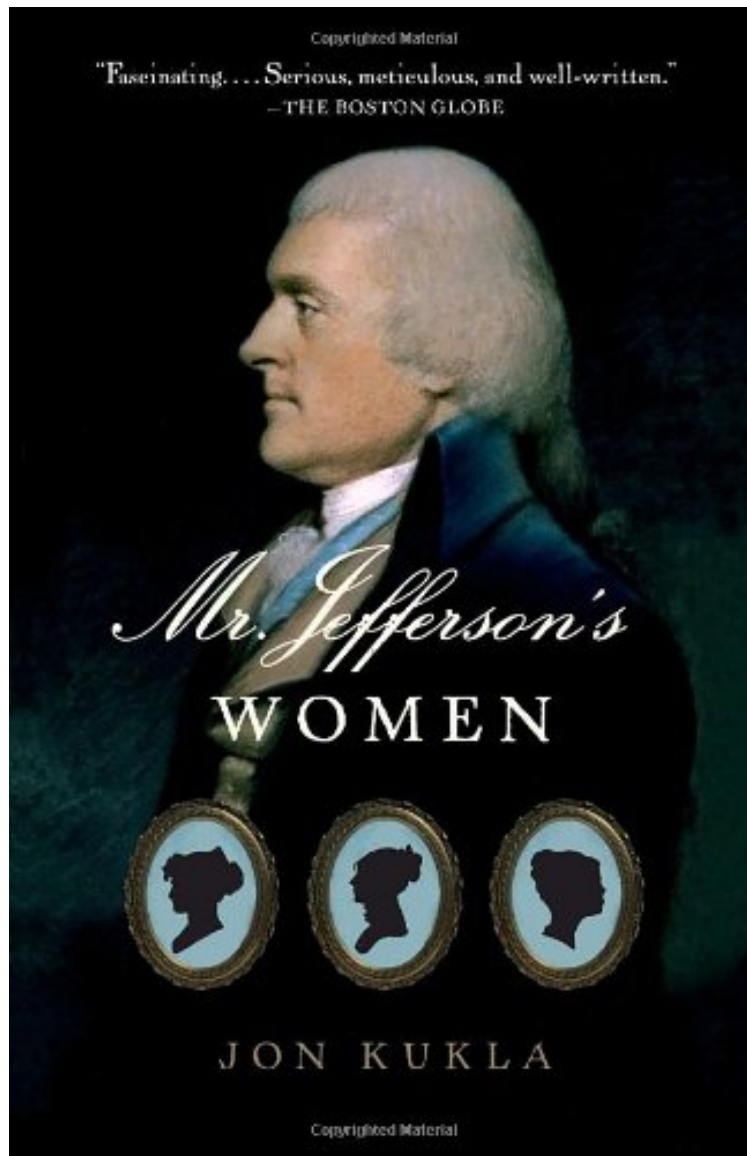


[Download free pdf] Mr. Jefferson's Women

Mr. Jefferson's Women

Jon Kukla

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Jon Kukla : Mr. Jefferson's Women before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mr. Jefferson's Women:

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A Good ReadBy NanvanJon Kukla's treatment of Jefferson's "Women" includes Rebecca Burwell, Betsey Walker, Mrs. Martha Jefferson, Maria Cosway and Sally Hemings, among others the author named "s and Angels," as well as a fairly in-depth look at his relationship with Abigail

Adams. That Jefferson was a misogynist is clear -- he feared and distrusted women, yet loved several. The chapter on Maria Cosway is the most complete description of this woman of the several I have read. Maybe it's the romantic in me, but I prefer Annette Gordon-Reed's treatise of Sally Hemings in her splendid "The Hemingses of Monticello." Kukla allows as how he guesses there MAY have been affection between Jefferson and Hemings, but his wording implies to me that he leans toward just sexual gratification. I lean more toward Gordon-Reed's angle -- 38 years and six pregnancies simply have to account for more than just sexual gratification. I like to think there was genuine affection, perhaps even some feeling of love between them. Kukla dismisses the claim that Sally Hemings got pregnant in Paris and wrote that Hemings got pregnant at Monticello some years later. Yet her son Madison in later writings, as part of the Hemings' family oral tradition, states that when she, her brother James and Jefferson came back to Monticello from Paris, she was pregnant. Madison wrote that during the time his mother was in Paris, she "became Mr. Jefferson's concubine, and when he was called back home, she was "enciente" by him." ("The Hemingses of Monticello," page 326.) For reasons unknown to me as the reader, Kukla did acknowledge Madison's writings about events other than that in other words he did not summarily dismiss Madison Hemings writings! No matter what one reads about our third president, there is no doubt Jefferson is clearly NOT into women's rights. When he wrote those awe-inspiring words of the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal, he meant just that: all MEN are created equal (of course he meant, all WHITE men)! To a modern-day feminist like me who supports equal rights for everybody -- male, female, LGBT, all races and all colors -- Jefferson is the epitome of everything I do NOT stand for! Yet the very gentleness of his spirit that shows through at times, his utter and complete devastation at the death of his wife, his abhorrence for confrontation and desire for harmony, his thin skin and almost obsessive need to be loved -- as well as many other of his personality "quirks" and characteristics -- mark him not as a 21st century Macho Man, but as an 18th century Man of his Times, whose personality reflects many typically feminine qualities. This very dichotomy is what draws me to him.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. EntertainingBy HistorianVery interesting. Does not over do it @ Sally Hemings. Good analysis, esp. in part on TJ trying to seduce Mrs Walker (in which he comes off looking like a Kennedy or Bill Clinton!) 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good history and evidence of personality/character traits not covered in ...By GingerInteresting, but not "can't put down read". Good history and evidence of personality/character traits not covered in our classroom textbooks. All in All, glad I bought. Knowledge is good.

From the acclaimed author of *A Wilderness So Immense* comes a pioneering study of Thomas Jefferson's relationships with women, both personal and political. The author of the Declaration of Independence, who wrote the words all men are created equal, was surprisingly uncomfortable with woman. In eight chapters, Kukla examines the evidence for the founding father's youthful misogyny, beginning with his awkward courtship of Rebecca Burwell, who declined Jefferson's marriage proposal, and his unwelcome advances toward the wife of a boyhood friend. Subsequent chapters describe his decade-long marriage to Martha Wayles Skelton, his flirtation with Maria Cosway, and the still controversial relationship with Sally Hemings. A riveting study of a complex man, *Mr. Jefferson's Women* is sure to spark debate.

From Publishers Weekly This highly insightful study by Kukla (*A Wilderness So Immense*), director of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation, investigates Thomas Jefferson's relationships with women, from Elizabeth Moore Walker, the married neighbor with whom Jefferson may have had an affair, to Sally Hemings, the slave whose children he purportedly fathered. One of the most fascinating chapters examines the young Jefferson's failed attempts to woo a classmate's sister, Rebecca Burwell, whose rejection of his marriage proposal may have incited the misogyny found throughout his writings. Perhaps the least satisfying section studies Jefferson's relationship with his wife, Martha: since Jefferson destroyed their private correspondence after she died, Kukla's re-creation of their relationship is necessarily sketchy. The conclusion moves to a larger argument concerning Jefferson's thinking about women as citizens. Kukla shows that Jefferson was much less open to women's political participation and education than were contemporary Enlightenment thinkers, and his definition of America as a white male polity was rooted in his personal discomfort with women. This is one of the most discerning and provocative studies of Jefferson in years. Bw illus., map. (Oct. 12) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist The enigmatic aspects of Thomas Jefferson's character have frustrated both his contemporaries and historians. John Adams, his on-again-off-again friend, referred to him as a "shadow man." Kukla probes Jefferson's relations with and attitudes toward women. Although the broad outlines of Jefferson's relations with specific women are well known, Kukla has used some obscure sources to provide interesting and even titillating information. He does not present a flattering portrait of Jefferson. In his youthful and futile courtship of a teenage Virginia girl, Jefferson appears understandably clumsy and disturbingly bitter after she rejects him. When he makes "improper advances" toward the wife of a friend, he seems downright obnoxious. Kukla also casts a critical eye on Jefferson's marriage, his apparently intense attachment to Maria Cosway in Paris, and, of course, his supposed affair with his slave Sally Hemings. Kukla concludes that Jefferson's sentiments regarding women were a mixture of suspicion, contempt, and possessiveness.

Still, this is a useful, if flawed, contribution to our knowledge of, perhaps, our most fascinating Founding Father. Freeman, Jay Fascinating. . . . Serious, meticulous, and well-written. The Boston Globe A fine, critical and needed study of one aspect of Jefferson's complicated and extraordinary life. The Times-Picayune Kukla knows his period. . . . As the last few years have made abundantly clear, Thomas Jefferson was rather less sterling than his prose. The New York Times Book Will make people with open minds think again about what they believe. Richmond Times-Dispatch Persuasive and entertaining. American Heritage