

THOMAS JEFFERSON

A play based on information in *A Day in the Life of Thomas Jefferson*

SCORE: History/Social Studies

By Carole L. Cooney

Setting: The RDN TV Station

Characters:

Narrator

Sandy Blake, newscaster

Bill Turner, newscaster

Ellen Wayles Randolph, grand-daughter of Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson Randolph, grandson of Thomas Jefferson

Narrator: Welcome to Station RDN, the Richmond Dispatch News! Today's "Facts of the Famous" program is one we have been waiting for, for a long, *long* time. Sandy Blake and Bill Turner, our RDN Award-Winning Team, will be interviewing two *very special* guests!

Sandy: Today, Bill and I have the pleasure of speaking with Thomas Jefferson's granddaughter, Ellen Wayles Randolph and his grandson Thomas Jefferson Randolph.

Bill: Let's see what we can learn about one of our great Presidents! Ellen, I hear that you were one of President Jefferson's favorite grandchildren. Is that true?

Ellen: Oh, yes! Grandfather was my "earliest best friend."

Sandy: How did you get close to your grandfather?

Ellen: I loved visiting him. There were so many times when he would allow me to ride with him all over his lands. He was such a good horseman.

Bill: Thomas Jefferson Randolph, how does it feel being named after the third President of the United States?

Thomas: Sometimes my friends tease me, but I am very proud to have my grandfather's name.

Sandy: What impressed you the most about him?

Thomas: I liked the way he controlled everything. He was calm and filled with courage. It has been said, that "he never abandoned a plan, a principle, or a friend."

Sandy: Ellen, do you remember what he looked like?

Ellen: Oh yes! I used to giggle when I saw the clothes he wore.

Sandy: Why?

Ellen: Well... Grandfather didn't like to wear what was fashionable. Instead he'd wear whatever he liked. Sometimes, he wore clothes that were old with some that were new. But, no matter what he wore, he was my wonderful grandfather.

Bill: Thomas, what do you remember about your grandfather?

Thomas: I remember how tall he was – just like a giant! At six feet two and a half inches tall he stood straight and strong, just like an arrow. Mother always told me to be just like Grandfather Jefferson and stand up straight!

Sandy: Ellen, I hear that your Grandfather made many inventions. Wasn't there something he made for his closet?

Ellen: Grandfather was so clever. He never wanted to waste time or space. So he invented a clothes-hanging device. It was just a pole with sticks spiraling from top to bottom. He would hang his shirts and pants on the sticks and turn the pole to reach the clothes he would wear that each day. He called it the "turning machine." I certainly wish I had one!

Bill: Thomas, do you have a favorite invention of your Grandfather's?

Thomas: I loved the weathervane Grandfather put on top of the Northeast Portico. He showed me how to read the wind direction off a compass rose on the Portico roof that was connected to the weathervane directly above it. Grandfather told me he wanted to create a national database of information about such things as the weather, the migration of birds, the appearance of flowers and meteorology. I truly admire how smart my Grandfather was.

Sandy: Is there any thing else you'd like to share about your Grandfather?

Thomas: Yes. The words on his gravestone are the very ones he wrote. Ellen, let's recite them so that everyone will know a little bit more about our famous Grandfather.

Ellen and Thomas:

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

Born April 2 1743

Died July 4 1826

Bill: We have certainly learned many interesting facts about your famous Grandfather Thomas Jefferson!

Sandy: Thank you for sharing parts of your remembrances with us. This is Station RDN hoping you'll be back with us tomorrow for another exciting "Facts of the Famous!"