

A Guide to the Merrill D. Peterson Papers

Merrill D. Peterson Papers 1852-1993

1852-1993



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History

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

12807

Language

English

Creator

Merrill D. Peterson

Extent

ca. 16,000 items

Repository

University of Virginia. Library. Special Collections Dept.

Alderman Library
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903
USA

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research.

Use Restrictions

See the [University of Virginia Library's use policy](#).

Acquisition Information

The collection is a gift from Professor Emeritus Merrill D. Peterson

Funding Note

Funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities

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Biographical Sketch

Merrill Daniel Peterson, one of the nation's most honored and respected historians on the age of Jefferson has been Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation Professor Emeritus at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville since his retirement in 1987. He was born on March 31, 1921, the son of William Oscar and Alice Dwinell (Merrill) Peterson in Manhattan, Kansas. Peterson received his bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas in 1943 and earned a Ph.D. in the history of American civilization from Harvard in 1950. He taught at Harvard, Brandeis and Princeton Universities. At Brandeis, he was the Harry S. Truman Professor and dean of students before he joined the University of Virginia faculty in 1962, succeeding another noted Jefferson scholar, Dumas Malone, as Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation Professor of History. He later served as chairman of the University's Corcoran Department of History and dean of the faculty of arts and sciences.

Peterson is the author of *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, for which he won the Bancroft Prize in American History and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation's gold medal in 1961. His other publications include: *Major Crises in American History*; *Democracy, Liberty and Property: The State Constitutional Conventions of the 1820's*; *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography*; *James Madison: A Biography in His Own Words*; *Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue*, which resulted from his Lamar lectures delivered at Mercer University in 1975; *Olive Branch and Sword: The Compromise of 1833*, from his Fleming lectures at Louisiana State University in 1980 and *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay and Calhoun*, from his work as a National Endowment for the Humanities fellow at Chapel Hill, North Carolina in 1980-1981. Peterson is also editor of six books in American History including: *Thomas Jefferson: A Profile*; *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*; *Thomas Jefferson Writings*; *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*; *The Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom: Its Evolution and Consequences in American History* and *Visitors to Monticello*.

In 1976, Peterson received a doctor of humane letters degree from Washington College and was named a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1980. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the American Historical Association and the University of Virginia's honorary Raven Society. He has served on the board of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy for whom he planned a major symposium commemorating the bicentennial of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. In 1987, he was project director for a year-long colloquium on the humanities and the American people in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Humanities. Other organizational memberships and fellowships include: the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, the Virginia Historical Society, the Southern Historical Association, the Society of American Historians, the American Antiquarian Society and the Massachusetts Historical

Society, the Guggenheim fellowship, the Center for Advanced Studies in Behavioral Sciences fellowship and the Poynter fellowship at Indiana University. In 1974, Peterson served as scholar-in-residence at the Bellagio Study Center in Italy and, in 1975, on the faculty of the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies in Vienna, Austria. In 1988-1989, he lectured on U.S. History at the National University of Ireland in Dublin as a Fulbright Scholar and in 1993, President Clinton named him chairman of the Thomas Jefferson Commemoration Commission.

Scope and Content

The collection contains ca. 16,000 items (15 shelf feet) consisting of department and personal communications with historians, university colleagues, students, friends and academic organizations throughout the United States and from around the world (grouped under *Correspondence*); academic, lecture and professional organization records associated with Peterson's activities while at Harvard, Brandeis and the University of Virginia (grouped under *Academia*); writings, including TMss, drafts, notes and communications with publishers relating to the books and articles Peterson authored (grouped under *Publications*) and an assortment of newsclippings; pamphlets; photographs (14 items); reprints; unpublished MDP writings and background material including, MDP notes, bibliographical listings and items relating to the alleged Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings relationship (grouped under *Miscellany*).

In addition, outside of this collection under related accessions, are a collection of photocopied letters of Calhoun, Clay and Webster which Peterson used in his research for The Great Triumvirate [Mss #10718] and a tape recorded lecture "Jefferson, the Enlightenment and the Revolution" which he delivered at a University of Virginia student forum on October 8, 1973 [Mss #8033-b,-c].

Container List

Group I: Correspondence

Correspondence

Unit Date 1949-1967

Container Box 1

Extent (6 folders)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1968-1972

Container Box 2

Extent (6 folders)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1973-1974

Container Box 3

Extent (6 folders)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1975-1976

Container Box 4

Extent (7 folders)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1977-1979

Container Box 5

Extent (7 folders)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1980-1981

Container Box 6

Extent (6 folders)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1982-1984

Container Box 7

Extent (7 folders)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1985-1986

Container Box 8

Extent (6 folders)

Correspondence

Unit Date 1987-1989

Container Box 9

Extent (7 folders)

Group II: Academia

Brandeis University

American Civilization Committee (Merrill D. Peterson)

Unit Date 1958-1962

Container Box 10

American Civilization Course Lecture Notes

Unit Date 1953-1955, n.d.

Container Box 10

Extent (2 folders)

"American System, 1815-1832"

Unit Date 1959

Container Box 10

Applications and Grants

Unit Date 1954-1962

Container Box 10

Course Material and Reprints

Unit Date 1951

Container Box 10

History Department--Memoranda

Unit Date 1959-1962

Container Box 10

History Department--Personnel

Unit Date 1958-1962, n.d.

Container Box 10

"Perspectives in American History" (Merrill D. Peterson and L.W. Levy)

Unit Date 1951-1952

Container Box 10

Speech Material**Unit Date** ca.1960's**Container** Box 11**Teaching Appointments****Unit Date** 1954-1963**Container** Box 11**Harvard University****Ph.D. Thesis--"The Jefferson Image in the American Mind, 1826-1861"****Unit Date** 1950**Container** Box 12**Student Class Notes****Unit Date** 1946**Container** Box 12**University of Virginia****American Council of Learned Societies (James Settle)****Unit Date** 1968-1970**Container** Box 13**American Historical Association (Nominating Committee)****Unit Date** 1967-1969**Container** Box 13**"American Revolution", Oxford History of the United States****Unit Date** 1963-1965**Container** Box 13**Assembly of Professors****Unit Date** 1964-1976, n.d.**Container** Box 13**Extent** (2 folders)**Bicentennial of the American Revolution--Classroom Project****Unit Date** 1974-1975**Container** Box 13**Bicentennial of the American Revolution-- Federalist, 1976****Unit Date** 1971-1975**Container** Box 13**Bicentennial of the American Revolution--National Committee****Unit Date** 1971-1976**Container** Box 14**Extent** (3 folders)**Bicentennial of the American Revolution--National Gallery of Art Exhibit****Unit Date** 1971-1974**Container** Box 14

Bicentennial of the American Revolution--Organization of American Historians (Bicentennial Committee)

Unit Date 1973

Container Box 14

Bicentennial of the American Revolution--Personal Memorabilia

Unit Date 1971-1979, n.d.

Container Box 14

Extent (2 folders)

Bicentennial of the American Revolution--Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery

Unit Date 1968-1970

Container Box 15

Bicentennial of the American Revolution--Virginia Bicentennial Booklets

Unit Date 1970-1971

Container Box 15

Center for Advanced Studies in Behavioral Sciences

Unit Date 1966-1968

Container Box 15

Colloquium on the Humanities and the American People

Unit Date 1987-1988, n.d.

Container Box 15

Extent (3 folders)

Conferences--American Philosophical Society (November, 1972)

Unit Date 1972

Container Box 16

Conferences--Historians and Teachers of Social Studies (February, 1971)

Unit Date 1970-1971

Container Box 16

Conferences--National Archives (November, 1973)

Unit Date 1972-1973

Container Box 16

Conferences--National Center for Scientific Research (February, 1978)

Unit Date 1978

Container Box 16

Conferences--National Historical Society (November, 1970)

Unit Date 1970

Container Box 16

Conferences--Virginia State Department of Education (March, 1970)

Unit Date 1969-1970

Container Box 16

Doar House Judiciary Committee Project**Unit Date** 1974-1975**Container** Box 16**Federalist Papers Reexamined Project****Unit Date** 1976, n.d.**Container** Box 16**History Department--Chaired Professors****Unit Date** 1975-1976**Container** Box 16**History Department--Chairmanship****Unit Date** 1978**Container** Box 16**History Department--Miscellaneous Communications****Unit Date** 1975-1977, n.d.**Container** Box 16**Institute of Early American History and Culture****Unit Date** 1965-1968**Container** Box 16**Lecture Notes****Unit Date** 1961-1968, n.d.**Container** Box 16**Extent** (1 of 9 folders)**Lecture Notes****Unit Date** 1961-1968, n.d.**Container** Box 17**Extent** (2-9 of 9 folders)**Legal History Programs for History and Law Students****Unit Date** 1967-1972**Container** Box 18**Malone, Dumas--Notes and Memoirs****Unit Date** 1981-1987, n.d.**Container** Box 18**Extent** (3 folders)**Miscellaneous Administrative Records****Unit Date** 1972-1987, n.d.**Container** Box 18**National Endowment for the Humanities****Unit Date** 1966-1983**Container** Box 18**Extent** (1-2 of 3 folders)

National Endowment for the Humanities

Unit Date 1966-1983

Container Box 19

Extent (3 of 3 folders)

National Trust for Historic Preservation--Montpelier

Unit Date 1986-1988

Container Box 19

Notes on VirginiaProject

Unit Date 1981-1982

Container Box 19

Organization of American Historians

Unit Date 1968-1975

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Extent (2 folders)

Papers of James Madison

Unit Date 1971-1987

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Papers of James Madison--Editor Applicants

Unit Date 1986-1986

Container Box 19

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Papers of John Marshall--Advisory Committee

Unit Date 1966-1970

Container Box 19

Pine Knot--Theodore Roosevelt's Virginia Retreat

Unit Date 1907-1992

Container Box 19

Phi Beta Kappa Book Awards--Emerson Award Committee

Unit Date 1982-1984

Container Box 19

Reviews--Merrill D. Peterson

Unit Date 1951-1964

Container Box 20

Extent (2 folders)

Reviews in AmericanHistory--Editorial Board (Merrill D. Peterson)

Unit Date 1972-1975

Container Box 20

Rockefeller Foundation--Bellagio Study and Conference Center

Unit Date 1973-1977

Container Box 20

Salzburg Seminars in American Studies

Unit Date 1973-1975

Container Box 20

Simkins Prize in Southern History

Unit Date 1972-1974

Container Box 20

Speech: remarks at "sympathy for Selma" event at the Rotunda

Unit Date 1965 March 17

Container Box 20

"Three Revolutions of Thomas Jefferson"--Film Documentary

Unit Date 1974-1976, n.d.

Container Box 20

Extent (1-3 of 6 folders)

"Three Revolutions of Thomas Jefferson"--Film Documentary

Unit Date 1974-1976, n. d.

Container Box 21

Extent (4-6 of 6 folders)

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation and The Jefferson Foundation

Unit Date 1972-1991

Container Box 21

Extent (2 folders)

United States Information Agency (USIA)

Unit Date 1974-1976

Container Box 21

University Press of Virginia

Unit Date 1977-1988

Container Box 22

Extent (3 folders)

Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom--Virginia Foundation for the Humanities

Unit Date 1983-1985, n.d.

Container Box 22

Williamsburg International Assembly

Unit Date 1962-1967

Container Box 22

Group III: Publications

Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue

Unit Date 1976-1981, n.d.

Container Box 23

Extent (4 folders)

Articles (by Merrill D. Peterson)-- Encyclopedia of the American Constitution

Unit Date 1979-1984, n.d.

Container Box 23

Articles (by Merrill D. Peterson)-- Encyclopedia of World Biography

Unit Date 1969-1970

Container Box 23

Articles (by Merrill D. Peterson)-- World of Jefferson, Weidenfeld and Nicolson

Unit Date 1972-1973, n.d.

Container Box 23

Democracy, Liberty and Property: The State Constitutional Conventions of the 1820's

Unit Date 1963-1969, n.d.

Container Box 23

Extent (1-2 of 3 folders)

Democracy, Liberty and Property: The State Constztutional Conventions of the 1820's

Unit Date 1963-1969, n.d.

Container Box 24

Extent (3 of 3 folders)

Great Triumvirate--Correspondence

Unit Date 1973-1979, n.d.

Container Box 24

Great Triumvirate--Illustrations

Unit Date 1986, n.d.

Container Box 24

Great Triumvirate--Ms

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 24

Extent (1-3 of 4 folders)

Great Triumvirate--Ms

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 25

Extent (4 of 4 folders)

Great Triumvirate--Notes

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 25

Great Triumvirate--Notes on Calhoun

Unit Date 1985, n.d.

Container Box 25

Great Triumvirate--Notes on Clay

Unit Date 1978-1989, n.d.

Container Box 25

Great Triumvirate--TMs

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 25

Extent (1-3 of 9 folders)

Great Triumvirate--TMs

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 26

Extent (4-9 of 9 folders)

Great Triumvirate--TMs and Proof

Unit Date 1989

Container Box 26

Extent (1-2 of 7 folders)

Great Triumvirate--TMs and Proof

Unit Date 1989

Container Box 27

Extent (2-7 of 7 folders)

James Madison, A Biography in His Own Words

Unit Date 1971-1974, n.d.

Container Box 28

Extent (2 folders)

Jefferson Image in the American Mind

Unit Date 1954-1974, n.d.

Container Box 28

Extent (3 folders)

Major Crises in American History: Documentary Problems

Unit Date 1959-1975

Container Box 29

Extent (3 folders)

Olive Branch and Sword: The Compromise of 1833

Unit Date 1980-1984, n.d.

Container Box 29

Extent (2 folders)

Portable Thomas Jefferson

Unit Date 1972-1980, n.d.

Container Box 29

Thomas Jefferson: A Profile

Unit Date 1967-1979, n.d.

Container Box 29

Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography

Unit Date 1981-1987, n.d.

Container Box 30

Extent (2 folders)

Thomas Jefferson and the American Revolution-- TMss with annotations

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 30

Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation

Unit Date 1961-1977, n.d.

Container Box 30

Extent (3 folders)

Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation-- Ms

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 31

Extent (1-6 of 13 folders)

Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation-- Ms

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 32

Extent (7-13 of 13 folders)

Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation--TMs with annotations

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 33

Extent (1-6 of 8 folders)

Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation--TMs with annotations

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 34

Extent (7-8 of 8 folders)

Thomas Jefferson, the Founders and Constitutional Change

Unit Date 1979-1985, n.d.

Container Box 34

Visitors to Monticello

Unit Date 1989-1990, n.d.

Container Box 34

Visitors to Monticello--TMs with annotations

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 34

Extent (2 folders)

Writings

Unit Date 1979-1985, n.d.

Container Box 35

Extent (4 folders)

Group IV: Miscellany

Background Material--Bibliographical Items

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 36

Background Material--Merrill D. Peterson Notes

Unit Date 1971-1989, n.d.

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Background Material--Sally Hemings

Unit Date 1971-1991, n.d.

Container Box 36

Extent (2 folders)

Newsclippings

Unit Date 1948-1993, n.d.

Container Box 36

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Pamphlets and Conference Handouts

Unit Date 1971-1987, n.d.

Container Box 36

Photographs

Unit Date 1971-1986, n.d.

Container Box 37

Reprints

Unit Date 1852-1981, n.d.

Container Box 37

Extent (2 folders)

Unpublished Merrill D. Peterson Writings

Unit Date 1946-1948, n.d.

Container Box 37

Extent (2 folders)