

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.

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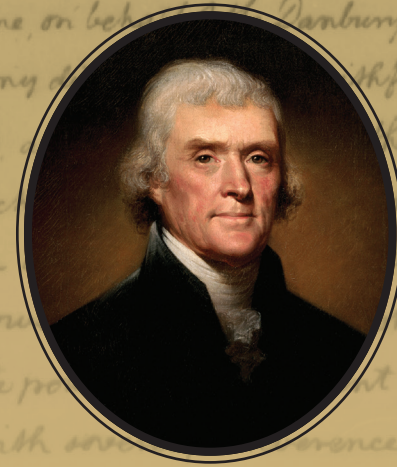
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THOMAS JEFFERSON AND THE VIRGINIA STATUTE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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Faith & Liberty in Fredericksburg

MICHAEL AUBRECHT

