

C-Span

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April 7, 1999

Dear sir or madam,

My special interest in Thomas Jefferson, and other presidents, seems to have coincided with your recent programs on TV. In my older age, I am preparing to write a small memoir on "America as I have known it."

I have lived and worked in many of our largest cities and small towns throughout eastern U.S. (always visiting historic sites, etc.) and have travelled around the West enough to appreciate fully this whole wonderful country.

Certainly Thomas Jefferson is one of the important reasons for our country's greatness. One of the biographies of him contains two important ideas that really clinched my high regard for our third President: -

1. While Jefferson had many slaves (some inherited) his notes reveal that he gave a great deal of thought to possible solutions to the whole problem of slavery.

2. In his Declaration of Independence, Jefferson made an important change in the words of the English writers that he had ^{borrowed} ~~used~~. I believe I heard Margaret Thatcher repeat the English version of "life, liberty, and property" as a part of our Declaration of Independence. Jefferson, however, chose to delete the word "property" (as an inalienable right) and, in what I consider a stroke of genius, chose the most beautiful thought possible - "the pursuit of happiness".

the reason given was that "property" (including money, I suppose) might imply "power over others," and therefore would not seem to be democratic.

I am very upset today about America's great "love of money", and I hope that America will never choose "property" over Jefferson's hope of "happiness" for all.

Sincerely,

P. S. Of all the places I have lived, the Blue Ridge/Piedmont area of Va. is the greatest — and I say this as a native of another most beautiful spot in our land, now known as the "Northeast Kingdom of Vermont."