

# Founding Daughter: Commemorating the Life & Leadership of Martha Jefferson Randolph

## Founding Daughter: Commemorating the Life & Leadership of Martha Jefferson Randolph

**Lesson Description and Objectives:** Students will formulate questions, interpret primary sources and construct evidence to support an argument. Students will be able to answer essential questions, discuss their assumptions and predictions, comment on comparisons and agree amiably. Mastery may be demonstrated through art, literature analysis or object lessons. Further mastery may be demonstrated through analyzing an enslaved woman, granddaughter, tutor or mother.

**Grade level:** High School (9-12)

**Topic:** Jefferson's Family Life, People Profiles, Primary Documents & Jefferson's Writings

**Subject:** Art, U.S. History

**Tags:** Martha "Patsy" Jefferson Randolph, Women of Monticello, Family

**Lesson Type:** Group and Individual

### Essential Questions:

- What can we learn from a primary document related to Martha "Patsy" Jefferson Randolph and her life at Monticello?
- What does Martha "Patsy" Jefferson Randolph's style of clothing "say" about her position on the plantation?
- If you could interview Martha "Patsy" Jefferson Randolph today, what might you want to ask her?
- What would be the "tools" you might find in Martha "Patsy" Jefferson Randolph office? How would the office supplies in Patsy's differ from today?

What comparisons could you draw?

**Prior Knowledge:** Martha "Patsy" Jefferson was the oldest daughter of Thomas and Martha Jefferson. There is more information that will follow about her. It is important to know that this "Founding Daughter" was the heir to our Founding Father, Thomas Jefferson. He was the 3rd president of the United States, founded the University of Virginia, wrote the Virginia Statue for Religious Freedom and the Declaration of Independence.

**Standards:**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy RH.9-10.9 (National Common Core)

Compare and contrast treatment of a primary document.

Clarifying Standards/Standards Alignment: (North Carolina standard)

- American History I: AH1.H.1.1:

- ♣ Formulate questions.
- ♣ Interpret a primary source.
- ♣ Construct evidence to support an argument.
- ♣ Interpret period attire.

**Estimated Time to Complete Lesson(s):** 120 minutes

**Materials Needed:** objects/artifacts from home (example: spoon, bowl, writing instrument), giant poster size sticky note, sticky dots, markers, crayons, art paper, feather pens, ink, period clothing, computer with internet access and /or calligraphy paper

**Procedure:**

Activating Strategies:

- **Class Discussion:** I assume, I predict and I wonder

Brainstorm with your table group the answer to the following, “ I assume Martha “Patsy” Jefferson Randolph was related to Thomas Jefferson because

\_\_\_\_\_.

After I look at Martha “Patsy” Jefferson Randolph portrait, I predict

that she \_\_\_\_\_. After analyzing her name and studying her portrait, I wonder if Patsy \_\_\_\_\_.

Cognitive Strategies:

- **Virtual Visit:**

1. Virtually visit the office of Martha “Patsy” Jefferson Randolph. Go to [explorer.monticello.org](http://explorer.monticello.org) and link to the South Square Room.
2. Click on the camera icon to view the furnishings. Compare what you see in her office to a modern

equivalent. (example: writing desk to laptop )

3. Glance below the virtual room to the bar below. Click on one of the related materials in the South Square room that served as an office for Martha “Patsy” Jefferson Randolph.

4. Why do you think she choose to house these specific artifacts at her disposal? How might the object have made her job easier for planning, caregiving or daily life at Monticello?

5. To jumpstart your thinking, consider why the mother of eleven children would have a children’s game on the floor beside her desk.

**Mini-Lecture:** The teacher will share a mini lecture to provide background knowledge on Martha Jefferson Randolph, also called “Patsy.” The notes below may prove helpful

- Martha Jefferson Randolph (1772-1836)
- traveled in circles of presidents and aristocrats known on two continents
- gracious and sincere
- debated issues ranging from a woman’s place to slavery, religion and democracy
- very well educated both at home and later in a convent school
- mistress of the household at Monticello
- served as hostess at Monticello where she greeted famous guests
- Early in life mother died
- Lived in Paris with her father, Thomas Jefferson
- Bore eleven children
- served as “First lady” at the President’s house
- married Thomas Mann Randolph -? member of Congress and governor of Virginia (troubled marriage)

Sources:

- *Martha Jefferson Randolph, Daughter of Monticello -? Her life and Times* by Cynthia A. Kiener from Robert H. and Clarice Smith Reading Room in the Jefferson Library
- <http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/>
- [monticello.org](http://monticello.org)

1. What is one of Martha “Patsy” Jefferson Randolph’s many talents?

2. Why would she be considered a Founding Daughter?

3. What do you think is Martha “Patsy” Jefferson Randolph greatest accomplishment?

4. What did you learn that surprised you about Martha “Patsy” Jefferson Randolph?

- **Primary Source Analysis:** After reading and discussing the letter from Jefferson to Patsy (below) meet with a classmate. Create a bubble map on large sticky note chart poster paper for the document. Look up any words you are not familiar with since the dialogue in the primary document may not be as familiar as 21st century speech.

Points to ponder: classes, advice and admonishments

<https://seaofliberty.org/explore/jefferson-?martha-?jefferson/1107>

**Double your understanding:** Combine your group of two with another pair and compare your observations. Add answers you agree with to both charts. This will increase your bank of answers.

- **Increase your understanding:** Post your charts around the room. With sticky dots in hand, carousel around the room adding dots to the best observations to encourage discussion.
- **Take your understanding to a whole new level:** Select one observation of Martha “Patsy” Jefferson Randolph that doesn’t fit the typical model for a woman in the colonial period. Was she “ahead of her time?”

**Assessment/ Reflective Strategies:** (Show what you know.)

**Allow students to choose the medium that they feel will best demonstrate their mastery of this lesson:**

- **Art:** Rewrite the \_\_\_\_\_ in colonial script (with a feather pen, if available).
- Draw a picture of Martha “Patsy” Jefferson Randolph, in period attire. Add comments about her that circle around her picture.
- Draw a picture of Martha “Patsy” Jefferson Randolph’s office in the South Square Room using the link, [explorer.monticello.org](http://explorer.monticello.org). Click on the camera icon to view the furnishings.
- Dress up as “Patsy” or another person who knew her from Monticello and teach a classmate about life.

**Literature:** Read another primary document written by “Patsy.” Write discussion question stems about that document that begin with the 5 W’s (who, what, where, when and why)

**Object Lesson:** Research an object/ artifact that Patsy may have used in her office or daily life. Bring a modern version of that object to class and “show what you know” holding the object. (example: flower basket, journal, log, teacup, etc.)

Extension: **Create comparisons.**

1. There were many women at Monticello who also led fascinating lives. Select a female to study and make a double bubble map of one woman who lived at Monticello to compare with Martha “Patsy” Jefferson Randolph. Consider searching for the following:

- Name (year-?year)
- Interesting information
- Education
- Responsibilities at Monticello
- Early in life
- Later in life

2. After you create your map, find a partner and discuss the following using phrases such as “Tell me more.”

- Why are you choosing \_\_\_\_\_ to compare to Patsy? How are their lives different?
- How are they the same?

- What is the relationship between the two women?
- What documents or artifacts might they have in common? Where might the two women live?
- What would be the value of each woman to Monticello?

submitted by:

Theresa P. Pierce

[rowanhistorylady@gmail.com](mailto:rowanhistorylady@gmail.com)

Rowan County Early College High School

P.O.Box1595

Salisbury, North Carolina 28145

*Interesting point about images: Some people act surprised that no paintings exist of someone. The actual surprise would be if one did. Images rarely exist because portraits were expensive.*

Image source: [monticello.org](http://monticello.org)

*Thomas Jefferson*  
MONTICELLO