

Jefferson on the Run (1781)

**A Drama about Thomas Jefferson's Escape
from Benedict Arnold during the
Revolutionary War**

**Teaching American History Project
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George Cartwright
Ben Goodwin
Sarika Mosley
Laura Renalds
Karen Rollins
Kristi Skiba

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Historical Background Narrative

By the time that Paul Revere rode into Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, shouting “the British are coming,”¹ few believed that the political and legal differences between the American colonies and Great Britain could be settled peacefully. A revolution seemed inevitable. For 12 years prior, British policy eroded the bond of brotherhood between the homeland and the colonists through a series of “Intolerable Acts.”² Issues of taxation without representation and perceived abuses of government authority created a two-tier citizenry -- those who worked for the British Government and those who were merely “settlers” in the American Colonies.

Previous to that famous ride, patriot leaders met in Philadelphia, on September 5, 1774, as the first Continental Congress. Most of the colonies sent delegates to the Congress, men of financial stability, like-minded and ready to act. Delegates Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Patrick Henry of Virginia, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, John and Sam Adams of Massachusetts began drafting a plan of action to deal with what they felt were abuses of the British government. Though this first Congress did not declare independence, the winds of war began to blow. A revolution was coming.³ The siege and battle in the city of Boston in 1775-76, at the forefront of colonial unrest, unified support from the other colonies. In addition, Committees of Correspondence formed and began to exchange informative letters about regional resistance to British forces that circulated throughout the colonies.⁴

The American Revolution officially began with the creation, distribution, and signing of the Declaration of Independence in July, 1776 that severed political allegiance to Great Britain and established a new nation.⁵ Written primarily by Thomas Jefferson, his eloquent words and ideas of equality under the law as a God-given right shaped the philosophy of the young nation. George Washington was named military commander of the new Continental Army and appointed several young officers to his staff. Among them was Benedict Arnold, a name that would soon be forever linked with “traitor.”



CITATION: Signing of the Declaration of Independence, painting by John Trumbull (Library of Congress).

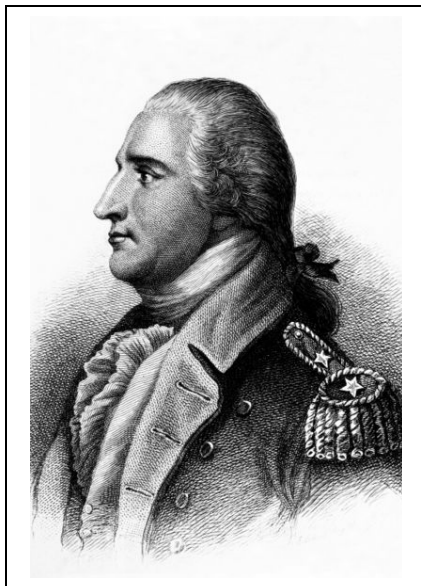
¹ Golden, Nance. *Great Moments in American History*. “The British are Coming” – The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere (Rosen, 2004).

² Social Studies for Kids (<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/www/us/intolerableactsdef.htm>).

³ Kid-Port Reference Library: *The First Continental Congress* (<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h675.html>).

⁴ U-S History.com (<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h675.html>).

⁵ National Archives: *Declaration of Independence* (<http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration.html>).



CITATION: Portrait Benedict Arnold by John Trumbull, 1879 (National Archives).

Benedict Arnold started out as a close friend of George Washington. His military career in the new rebel army included successful campaigns against British forces in Massachusetts, Canada, Connecticut and other regions. While Arnold's heroics on the battlefield led to many victories, his boldness and flagrant independence caused rifts with the other commanders and generals. Internal bickering, his excessive lifestyle, and charges of malfeasance plagued Arnold's career. After being wounded in early 1778, he was put in charge of Philadelphia, a city with strong Tory (pro-British) leanings, and proceeded to live an extravagant lifestyle, amassing debts and local enemies in large numbers. In 1780 he was subjected to a court martial trial. Though he was eventually acquitted, Arnold became angry and bitterly disillusioned. He was faced with a choice. By switching loyalties and rendering a cardinal service to the British, he hoped to attain a position of "such eminence as to conduct these negotiations, end the war, and restore America to her old allegiance."⁶ In order to realize these ambitious dreams, Arnold resorted to the blackest treachery. In July, 1780, he sought and obtained command of West Point with

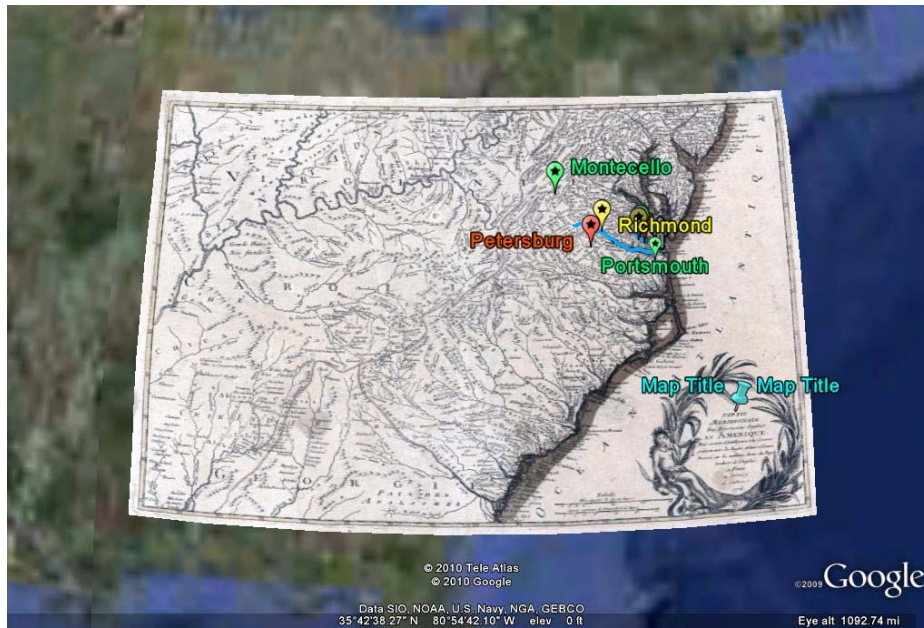
the intent of surrendering it to the British. Money probably also played a big part in this defection. Arnold was offered in excess of 10,000 pounds and a commission in the British military. In a contemptuous letter to the "Inhabitants of America," published in the London Chronicle (November, 1780), Arnold states his allegiance to the British crown and to his efforts to "devote [his] life to the re-union of the British empire."⁷

Benedict Arnold fixated on capturing a leader of the Patriots to prove himself to the British. He chose Thomas Jefferson, then governor of Virginia. Virginia had inadequate defenses and seemed an easy target. In January of 1781, Arnold led a contingent of British soldiers and headed up the James River with "27 sails." The Independent Chronicle (July 5, 1781) captured that event and wrote that "300 cavalry, and 100 infantry entered Charleston [Virginia]...for the express purpose of seizing the members of the assembly of Virginia, and the principal officers of that government...but the gentlemen having...gained intelligence of the rapid approach of the enemy, retired from the village...but his excellency Gov. Jefferson, and two other gentlemen, (members of the legislature) it is feared were taken..."⁸ Thomas Jefferson, then governor of Virginia, was not captured. A friend of Jefferson, Jack Jouette, spotted the flotilla and sent a warning. Jefferson escaped with his family with only 18 minutes to spare. For nearly a year, Jefferson and family fled from the British, staying in many places, including his Poplar Forrest and Monticello estates, always just ahead of the vindictive Arnold.

⁶ Wilson, James Grant and John Fiske. *Appleton's Encyclopedia of American Biography*, Vol. 1 (D. Appleton & Co., 1891).

⁷ Archiving Early America: Benedict Arnold's Letter to the Inhabitants of America, London Chronicle, Nov. 11-14, 1780 (<http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/writings/arnold/>).

⁸ The Independent Chronicle, July 1781 (<http://mitchellarchives.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/arnold-1780-mh.jpg>).



Citation: Map of Monticello, Richmond, Portsmouth and other locations addressed in *Flight From Monticello*. From the Revolutionary War Google Earth Project, Teaching American History Project, Portland State University (available for download at http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/1776_Decisions.html).

Only 200 militiamen responded to Governor Jefferson’s call to defend the capital against this invasion -- most Virginians had already served and therefore thought they were under no further obligation to answer such calls. Despite this untenable military position, the author of the Declaration of Independence was severely criticized by some for fleeing Richmond during the crisis. Kranish states, “Steuben [one of the generals commanding the southern campaign], having been in the state for barely two months, also portrayed Virginia as being in disarray, writing to Washington that weapons and men were scattered, while the troops did not have tents or even kettles.” Steuben said: “It is impossible to describe the situation...I am in want of everything; and nothing can be got from the state.”⁹ Another general (Nathaniel Green) added in a letter to von Steuben, “I fear when you leave it nothing will be done...the state is lifeless and inactive.”¹⁰

Jefferson both defended and derided himself at a hearing in the House of Burgesses in Virginia. He said, “I was never off my horse but to take food or rest, and was everywhere my presence could be of any service,” insisting that he tried, but did not have the military prowess of a general such as von Steuben.¹¹ Two months later, after Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, Jefferson was cleared of any wrongdoing during his term as governor. But, the comments and accusations disturbed Jefferson for the rest of his life. After years of dedicated public service as Governor of Virginia, Legislator, Ambassador to France, and President of the United States, he still states “I felt these injuries...had inflicted a wound on my spirit which will only be cured by the all-healing grave.”¹²

⁹ Kranish, Michael. *Flight from Monticello: Thomas Jefferson at War* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 204.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 204.

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 190.

¹² *Ibid*, pp. xii.

Jefferson on the Run (1781)

A Drama about Thomas Jefferson's Escape from Benedict Arnold during the Revolutionary War

Historical Background Narrative: Modified

"The British are coming, the British are coming!" shouted Paul Revere as he frantically rode through town trying to warn the Colonists about the British invasion. By the time that Paul Revere rode into Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, few believed that the differences between the British and American "rebels" could be settled peacefully. War was coming.

The American Revolution officially began with the creation, distribution, and signing of the Declaration of Independence, written mostly by Thomas Jefferson, in July 1776. Jefferson would later become Governor of Virginia, and later he was elected as the third President of the



CITATION: Portrait Benedict Arnold by John Trumbull, 1879 (National Archives).

United States of America. George Washington became the Commander of the new Continental Army. Benedict Arnold, who was considered one of Washington's most brilliant young generals, fought in many battles against the British. But Arnold was ambitious and also made enemies among the other generals.

In 1778, Arnold was severely injured and was sent to Philadelphia, a place with many pro-British supporters. He was also taken to court and had to defend himself against many

accusations of illegal actions. Arnold became bitter and believed

he had been treated poorly by the revolutionaries. He began to

talk to the British about defecting, or switching sides. The British offered Arnold 10,000 pounds

of sterling silver and the chance to become a famous general if he would betray the new nation. After Arnold was made commander of West Point, he decided to defect and turn over plans of the fort to the British. He had officially become a traitor.

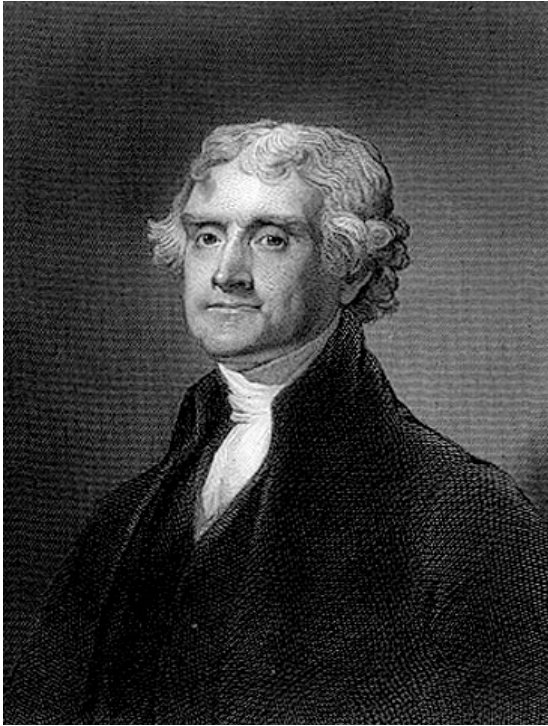
For the next two years, Arnold was intent on capturing a major leader of the patriots in order to prove himself to the British. He decided to choose Thomas Jefferson, governor of Virginia, as his target. The State of Virginia had little defenses. Arnold headed toward the capital of Virginia (Richmond), sailing up the James River with many boats to try and capture Jefferson. Jefferson escaped with his family due to the help of a friend, Jack Jouette, who had spotted the boats and sent a warning. For months, Jefferson and his family fled, always just ahead of the vengeful Arnold.



Citation: Map of Monticello, Richmond, Portsmouth and other locations addressed in *Flight From Monticello*. From the Revolutionary War Google Earth Project, Teaching American History Project, Portland State University (available for download at http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHV3/1776_Decisions.html).

Thomas Jefferson was never captured by Benedict Arnold. After the war, he quit as governor. He also received harsh criticism about his weaknesses as a leader and how unprepared his state was against the British invasion. He even questioned of himself in front of the Virginia

House of Burgesses. Even though Thomas Jefferson went on to be our country's third president, the charges against him during the Revolutionary War haunted him to the end of his life.



CITATION: The Teacher's Paradise, Thomas Jefferson Biography
(http://www.teachersparadise.com/ency/en/wikipedia/t/th/thomas_jefferson.html).

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**A Drama about Thomas Jefferson's Escape from
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Jefferson on the Run (1781)

A Drama about Thomas Jefferson's Escape from Benedict Arnold during the Revolutionary War

THE WORLD OF THE PLAY:

The location of this drama is in the upper south region of the British Colonies of the New World (soon to become the United States of America -- mostly in the colony of Virginia) on the North American continent in the northern hemisphere. The climate is generally temperate but humid, 48 inches of rain or snow per year. The region experiences extremes of temperature from 26 degrees in the winter to 98 degrees in the summer. It is an agricultural area. Crops produced are tobacco, corn, peanuts, sweet potatoes (and U.S. presidents!). The forests of the state are broadleaf, and the terrain is rolling hills with many lakes and rivers leading to the sea.

The light is a pleasant green in the spring, summer and fall, then stark and cold in the winter. In the hot, breathless summer, alive with disease laden mosquitoes and fleas and ticks dripping from the deciduous trees, plantation owners ride in their fields, managing their slaves and supervising the harvest. The pace is at times frenetic and tense with moments of pastoral calm. Activity slows in the dead of winter as homes are locked in an icy blanket of white.

It is the year 1781, the final year of the War of Independence in the colonies. The political mood is revolutionary and tinged with defiance; the Declaration of Independence has been created, signed and delivered to the American colonists. War with Great Britain has been going on for 4 years. It is the topic of discussion both in back rooms and debate halls. Colonial leaders are restrained, but the populous is tense and tired. The era's philosophy is influenced by the Reformation and is passionately aimed at making permanent changes to the political structure of the colonies.

Characters

Thomas Jefferson – The 38-year old Governor of Virginia and author of the Declaration of Independence. He is married to Martha Skelton and father of 3 children. Though Jefferson excels at political theory and leadership, he himself admits his abhorrence to war and lack of military leadership experience. Jefferson wears travelling clothes.

Messenger – a patriot resident of Virginia.

Jack Jouett (*JOO eht*) – A 26-year old militiaman (no known picture); a friend of Jefferson, he is a formidable 6 foot, 4 inches tall and weighs 220 pounds. He carries himself proudly, having fought many battles against the British. Jouett is wearing rebel clothes, a ratty uniform and worn boots.

Jefferson's Slave – Governor Thomas Jefferson owned many male and female slaves, both as field workers and domestic servants. The male slave in this drama is a household servant, tall and thin, wearing simple, but clean clothes.

British Officer (Benedict Arnold?) – This soldier is a British officer in full general's uniform, possibly Benedict Arnold (the events recalled in this drama are documented, but historical sources cannot verify whether the British officer chasing Jefferson is actually Benedict Arnold).

British Soldiers 1 & 2—Scruffy, unshaven British soldiers in dirty “redcoats.”

Martha Jefferson – Formerly Martha Skelton, she is Thomas Jefferson's first wife. She is a delicate woman with wavy brown hair, but a fierce determination in her demeanor.

Delegate – a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, in fancy dress with white wig.

Time

The following events span a 12-month period from January, 1781 – December 1781 during the final year of the American Revolutionary War.

Location

The following events took place in Virginia in various locations near the James River and the Blue Ridge Mountains as Thomas Jefferson, the Governor of Virginia, eluded capture by the British Military by escaping to various estates including Monticello and Poplar Forest.

Settings

Settings vary in terms of geographical location, indoors or out, night or day, each of the four seasons, etc. Each will be individually clarified throughout the script.

DISPLAY SLIDE #1: Title Page

Scene 1

DISPLAY SLIDE #2: Timeline - January 4, 1781; Jefferson receives notice that the British are 35 miles from Richmond; Pause 5 seconds.

DISPLAY SLIDE #3: Map of Virginia

Setting: It is dawn in Richmond, Virginia, on a cold winter night. In the scene is a modest house among rolling hills covered with snow.

Characters: The Narrator, a Messenger, Thomas Jefferson and a Slave

Narrator

It is the 4th of January, 1781. A messenger makes his way up a road on Shockoe Hill in Richmond, Virginia and arrives at a modest house – the official residence of Governor Thomas Jefferson. Three days before, Jefferson received a cryptic letter stating “A fleet of 27 sail.” He had waited to act to avoid a false alarm. Action is now inevitable.

Messenger:

(knocks heavily and loudly on the door three times; Jefferson opens door) Governor Jefferson, I am here to report on the fleet of 27!

Thomas Jefferson:

Proceed. Am I to assume they are not the French reinforcements for which we had hoped?

Messenger:

Correct sir. It is not the French, but rather the traitor, Benedict Arnold. Word is that he has 1,600 men in his militia.

Jefferson:

That is not welcome news. Is there more information?

Messenger:

Yes, Sir. It is grave. Arnold and his men have already overtaken our forces at Hood’s Point. That’s only 35 miles away on the James River. They will arrive in Richmond within a day’s time at most.

Jefferson:

(turns toward inside of the house) Martha! Martha! Wake the children! *(turns to messenger)* Gather the militia, hurry. *(turns to slave)* Help me! We must move my documents to Westham! *(nods to the messenger to dismiss him and shuts the door. He runs off stage.)*

Narrator

Jefferson immediately sends his family 13 miles away -- to Tuckahoe. But, Jefferson does not follow them. He secretly rides back to Richmond and 6 miles up the James River to Westham.

Scene 2

Setting: It is 1 a.m. early on January 5th; dark and cold in Tuckahoe, Virginia. The scene takes place in a small room, with curtains drawn, dim light and a candle burning on a table.

Characters: Narrator, Martha Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson.

(Jefferson enters a small home and removes his coat. He is moving slowly from exhaustion, though he remains tense in posture and expression. Martha enters the room in dressing gown looking both tired and alarmed and walks to Jefferson.)

Narrator:

It is 1 a.m. on January 5th. After nearly 20 hours of travelling, Jefferson finally arrives at Tuckahoe to reunite with his family who fled there the previous day.

Martha:

(Martha walks over to Thomas Jefferson. They embrace, still holding one another, their conversation begins). I was worried about you.

Thomas Jefferson:

(speaking softly) I'm here now *(takes Martha's hand and guides her into the room)*. The documents have been saved; I must rest. *(Jefferson sits, nearly collapsing from exhaustion.)*

Scene 3

Setting: It is a cold, windy day in January, 1781. The British have taken Richmond and are closing in on Jefferson's home, the gubernatorial estate in Richmond. The scene takes place at the door and in the lobby of Jefferson's home.

Characters: Narrator, Benedict Arnold, Thomas Jefferson's Slave, British Officers #1 & #2

DISPLAY SLIDE #4: Timeline – January 5-6, 1781, British Close in on the Governor's Estate

Narrator

The British are closing in. The next morning, Jefferson again moves his family, this time 8 miles north to Fine Creek. The British capture the capital of Virginia, Richmond, on January 5th and 6th, 1781. British soldiers surround Jefferson's home and an imposing British officer, possibly Benedict Arnold himself, approaches the building.

DISPLAY SLIDE #5: Benedict Arnold

Benedict Arnold

(pounds on the door, yelling at slave inside) Where is the governor? I am not here to harm him; I am only here to have words with him. *(pulls out a pair of silver handcuffs).*

Slave

(slave opens the door a crack and peers out) He's gone to the mountains, sir.

Benedict Arnold

I am not here to harm him. *(pushing his way past the slave into the house, begins scanning the room).*

Slave

He's gone to the mountains, sir.

Benedict Arnold

(grabbing slave's collar) Where are the keys to the house?

Slave

Mr. Jefferson left with them, sir.

Benedict Arnold

Where is the silver? *(opening cabinets, crashing china onto the floor)* Where is the silver?
(charges at slave).

Slave

(cowering as officer shoves him aside) It was all sent up to the mountain, sir.

Benedict Arnold

(commanding other 2 soldiers) Go check the cellars! Search the grounds! Leave nothing in its place! Devastate this house!

DISPLAY SLIDE #6: Timeline – Mid-April, 1781, Governor's Council & Daughter Dies

Narrator

After fleeing to his Monticello estate, delegates in Virginia's government harshly criticize Jefferson's leadership and military preparedness. In the midst of this crisis, Jefferson's 18-month old daughter, Lucy, dies on April 15th. Jefferson does not attend the Governor's Council to answer his critics. He says that his wife is "in a situation in which he did not wish to leave her."

Scene 4

DISPLAY SLIDE #7: Timeline – June 3-4, 1781, Jack Jouett rides to Monticello to warn Jefferson.

Setting: The setting is 40 miles outside of Monticello, in the dark, crowded Cuckoo Tavern located in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Characters: Narrator, Soldier #1, Soldier #2, Jack Jouett, Thomas Jefferson, Jefferson's Slave

Narrator

During the first days of June, the British quickly storm Charlottesville, Virginia on their way to Jefferson's estate at Monticello – only a short distance away. They stop to rest at the Cuckoo Tavern, where Jack Jouett, a good friend of Jefferson, is hiding in the shrubbery just outside.

Soldier 1

Virginia is nearly ours, chap.

Soldier 2

Right-o. And soon we will have a very valuable prisoner to cart the rounds.

Soldier 1

(heartily laughing) The governor's house is but a short journey; I believe he will be in our employ soon.

DISPLAY SLIDE #8: Monticello and Poplar Forest Estates

Narrator

Upon hearing of the soldiers' plans to capture Jefferson, Jouett rides through the night to reach Monticello early in the morning of June 4th and warn his friend of the danger.

Jouett

(pounding on the door) Governor! Sir! Please! It's Jouett! *(door opens slightly, slave peeks through the opening.)* Please, please. Get the governor. I have most urgent news.

Slave

Yes, sir. Come in, sir. *(disappears up the stairs)*

Jefferson

(Jefferson comes down the stairs in his bedclothes) Mr. Jouett, what is it? Is there trouble? It is so early.

Jouett

You must leave sir. The British scoundrels are coming to take you captive.

Jefferson

Thank you Mr. Jouett. *(calling to slave)* Prepare the carriage. Make haste! I must send my family to safety immediately! I will leave once the state papers are safe in my possession.

DISPLAY SLIDE #9: Timeline – October 19, 1781, British are defeated at Yorktown. Pause 5 seconds.

DISPLAY SLIDE #10: British Defeat at Yorktown.

Narrator

Jefferson leaves mere minutes before the British forces arrived and takes his family to Poplar Forest, his plantation in southwest Virginia. These narrow escapes last many more months. Because of the dire situation in Virginia, Jefferson resigns as governor of the state. In October, 1781 the British are defeated at Yorktown. Jefferson's running is over, but a new battle begins.

Scene 5

Setting: The House of Burgesses in the State of Virginia.

Characters: Narrator, Delegate, Thomas Jefferson

DISPLAY SLIDE #11: Timeline – December 1781, Jefferson defends himself against accusations in the House of Burgesses. Pause 5 seconds.

Narrator

Jefferson's decision to resign outrages many Virginians who claim "Virginia is without leadership in its darkest hour." Later, an investigation is launched by the Virginia House of Delegates. They question Jefferson's conduct as governor during this critical time. Jefferson spends the summer of 1781 meticulously preparing his defense against the charges of failed leadership leveled by fellow patriots and legislative leaders. But with the British defeat at Yorktown in 1781, the mood of the state improves and the voices of Jefferson's critics fade. The Virginia House of Delegates does not want to debase the character of the esteemed author of the Declaration of Independence. They issue a formal statement clearing Jefferson of blame or wrong doing.

DISPLAY SLIDE #12: Virginia House of Burgesses.

Delegate

“A Motion was made that the House do come to the following Resolution: Resolved... The Assembly wish therefore in the strongest manner to declare the high opinion which they entertain of Mr. Jefferson’s Ability, Rectitude, and Integrity as chief Magistrate of this Commonwealth, and mean by thus publicly avowing their Opinion...”¹³

Narrator

Jefferson was not satisfied with this delayed apology. If no one would rise to question his actions as governor, he would do it himself.

Jefferson

(rises, raising his voice and pounding his fist) Enough! If no one would rise to question my actions as governor publicly, then I will have to do it myself. I have been accused in the recent past, by some among us today, of dereliction of duty for failing to mount a defense of the city. “I was never off my horse but to take food or rest, and was everywhere my presence could be of any service. I may with confidence challenge any one to put his finger on the point of time when I was in a state of remissness from any duty of my station. But I was not with the army! True; for first, where was it? Second, I was engaged in the more important function of taking measures to collect any army; and, without military education myself, instead of jeopardizing the public safety by pretending to take its command, of which I knew nothing.”¹⁴

Narrator

The accusations haunt Jefferson. After his address to the legislature, he is convinced he will never re-enter political life. But, this doesn’t last. His political ambition resurfaces in 1785 when he is named Ambassador to France. By 1800, Thomas Jefferson is sworn in as the third president of the new United States of America.

DISPLAY SLIDE #13: Epilogue; click to advance bullets as the narrator is speaking, pause to let audience read each line.

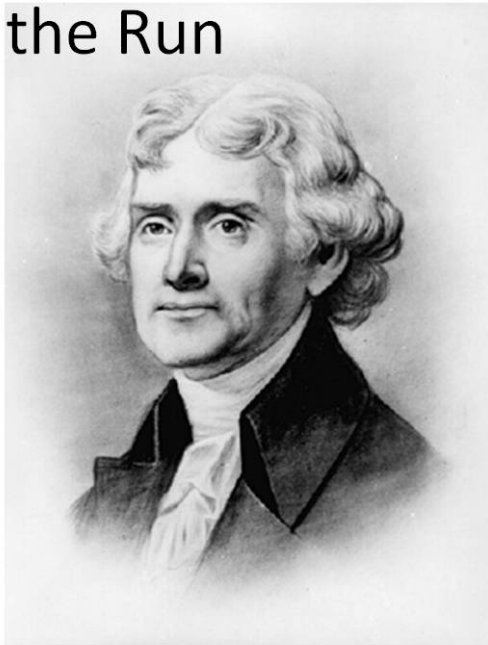
DISPLAY SLIDE #14: The End.

¹³ Virginia General Assembly, House of Delegates. *Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1781* (Richmond: Commonwealth of Virginia).

¹⁴ Kranish, Michael. “Thomas Jefferson on the Run.” *American History*, June 2010: 26-33.

Jefferson on the Run

1781



Thomas Jefferson (National Archives, Photographic Division).

SLIDE #1: TITLE PAGE

January, 1781

→ **January 4, 1781 - Jefferson receives notice that the British are 35 miles from Richmond.**

January 5 & 6, 1781 – British take Richmond and close in on Jefferson’s Gubernatorial estate.

Mid-April, 1781 – Governors Council which Jefferson does not attend; daughter Lucy dies.

June 3 & 4, 1781 – Jack Jouett rides to Monticello to warn Jefferson. Jefferson resigns as Governor, narrowly escapes capture and flees to Poplar Forrest home.

October 19, 1781 – British are defeated at Yorktown.

December, 1781 – Jefferson defends himself against accusations in the House of Burgesses.

December, 1781

SLIDE #2: JANUARY 4, 1781

January, 1781

→ **January 4, 1781 - Jefferson receives notice that the British are 35 miles from Richmond.**



Map of Virginia (<http://www.law.georgetown.edu/rossrights/chapters/images/virginia.jpg>).

December, 1781

SLIDE #3: JANUARY 4, 1781; MAP OF VIRGINIA/RICHMOND

January, 1781

January 4, 1781 - Jefferson receives notice that the British are 35 miles from Richmond.

→ **January 5 & 6, 1781 – British, led by Benedict Arnold, take Richmond and close in on Jefferson’s Gubernatorial estate.**

Mid-April, 1781 – Governors Council which Jefferson does not attend; daughter Lucy dies.

June 3 & 4, 1781 – Jack Jouett rides to Monticello to warn Jefferson. Jefferson resigns as Governor, narrowly escapes capture and flees to Poplar Forrest home.

October 19, 1781 – British are defeated at Yorktown.

December, 1781 – Jefferson defends himself against accusations in the House of Burgesses.

December, 1781

SLIDE #4: JANUARY 5-6, 1781

January, 1781

→ **January 5 & 6, 1781 – British, led by Benedict Arnold, take Richmond and close in on Jefferson’s Gubernatorial estate.**



Benedict Arnold (USHistory.org).

December, 1781

SLIDE #5: JANUARY 5-6, 1781; BENEDICT ARNOLD

January, 1781

January 4, 1781 - Jefferson receives notice that the British are 35 miles from Richmond.

January 5 & 6, 1781 – British take Richmond and close in on Jefferson’s Gubernatorial estate.

→ **Mid-April, 1781 – Governors’ Council which Jefferson does not attend; daughter Lucy dies.**

June 3 & 4, 1781 – Jack Jouett rides to Monticello to warn Jefferson. Jefferson resigns as Governor, narrowly escapes capture and flees to Poplar Forrest home.

October 19, 1781 – British are defeated at Yorktown.

December, 1781 – Jefferson defends himself against accusations in the House of Burgesses

December, 1781

SLIDE #6: MID-APRIL, 1781

January, 1781

January 4, 1781 - Jefferson receives notice that the British are 35 miles from Richmond.

January 5 & 6, 1781 – British take Richmond and close in on Jefferson’s Gubernatorial estate.

Mid-April, 1781 – Governors Council which Jefferson does not attend; daughter Lucy dies.

→ **June 3rd & 4th, 1781 – Jack Jouett rides to Monticello to warn Jefferson. Jefferson resigns as Governor, narrowly escapes capture and flees to Poplar Forrest home.**

October 19th, 1781 – British are defeated at Yorktown.

December, 1781 – Jefferson defends himself against accusations in the House of Burgesses.

December, 1781

SLIDE #7: JUNE 3-4, 1781

January, 1781



Jefferson's Estate at Poplar Forest
(<http://www.poplarforest.org/visit>).

→ **June 3 & 4, 1781 – Jack Jouett rides to Monticello to warn Jefferson. Jefferson resigns as Governor, narrowly escapes capture and flees to Poplar Forrest and Monticello estates.**



Jefferson's Estate at Monticello
(<http://www.monticello.org>)

December, 1781

SLIDE #8: JUNE 3-4, 1781; JEFFERSON'S ESTATE

January, 1781

January 4, 1781 - Jefferson receives notice that the British are 35 miles from Richmond.
January 5 & 6, 1781 – British take Richmond and close in on Jefferson’s Gubernatorial estate.

Mid-April, 1781 – Governors Council which Jefferson does not attend; daughter Lucy dies.

June 3 & 4, 1781 – Jack Jouett rides to Monticello to warn Jefferson. Jefferson resigns as Governor, narrowly escapes capture and flees to Poplar Forrest home.

→ **October 19, 1781 – British are defeated at Yorktown.**

December, 1781 – Jefferson defends himself against accusations in the House of Burgesses.

December, 1781

SLIDE #9: OCTOBER 19, 1781

January, 1781



→ **October 19th, 1781 – British are defeated at Yorktown.**

December, 1781

Battle of Yorktown (<http://library.thinkquest.org/11683/media/Yorktown.gif>).

SLIDE #10: OCTOBER 19, 1781; BRITISH DEFEATED AT YORKTOWN

January, 1781

January 4th, 1781 - Jefferson receives notice that the British are 35 miles from Richmond.
January 5 & 6, 1781 – British take Richmond and close in on Jefferson’s Gubernatorial estate.

Mid-April, 1781 – Governors Council which Jefferson does not attend; daughter Lucy dies.

June 3 & 4, 1781 – Jack Jouett rides to Monticello to warn Jefferson. Jefferson resigns as Governor, narrowly escapes capture and flees to Poplar Forrest home.

October 19, 1781 – British are defeated at Yorktown.

→ **December, 1781 – Jefferson defends himself against accusations in the House of Burgesses.**

December, 1781

SLIDE #11: DECEMBER, 1781

January, 1781

House of Burgesses (National Institute of American History & Democracy).



→ **December, 1781 – Jefferson defends himself against accusations in the House of Burgesses.**

December, 1781

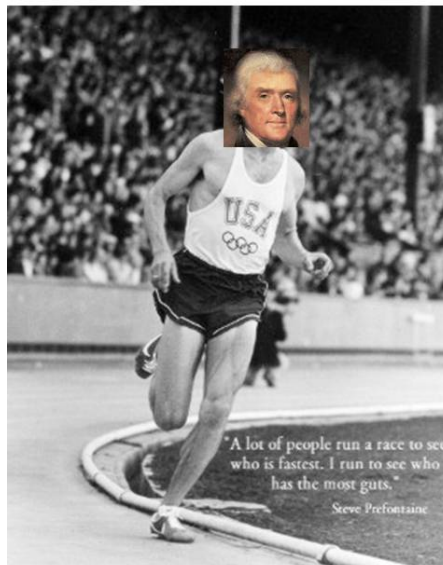
SLIDE #12: DECEMBER 1781; HOUSE OF BURGESSSES

Epilogue: Thomas Jefferson

- Though Jefferson swore off politics after this incident, he was nonetheless appointed Ambassador to France in 1785.
- In 1790, Jefferson became Secretary of State under George Washington.
- Jefferson became Vice President under John Adams in 1796.
- Jefferson then served two terms as President (1800-1808).
- Jefferson died exactly 50 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence at his home in Monticello on July 4, 1826.

SLIDE #13: EPILOGUE

“Jefferson on the Run”



Steve Prefontaine
(<http://blogs.scripps.com/abi/1/mayo/Steve-Prefontaine-Poster.jpg>).

SLIDE #14: THE END

Sources and Historiographic Essay

Archiving Early America. *Benedict Arnold's Letter to the Inhabitants of America* (London Chronicle, Nov. 11-14, 1780).

Provides a look into Benedict Arnold's thinking and why he defected to the British.

Countryman, Edward. *The American Revolution* (Hill & Wang, 2003).

Kranish, Michael. "Thomas Jefferson on the Run." *American History*, June 2010: 26-33.

Kranish, Michael. *Flight from Monticello: Jefferson at War* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Presents a secondary source view of Thomas Jefferson not well known before -- our Founding Father defending himself from accusations of ineptitude, timidity and disorganization as he fled from the turncoat Benedict Arnold and a fleet of 25 ships set to capture him, Washington or LaFayette. One of his accusers, Baron Frederick William von Steuben railed to Washington of Jefferson's and Virginia's state of unpreparedness, backed up by negative comments by General Nathan Greene. Richard Henry Lee vowed that he could have organized Virginia's militia to defeat Arnold at Richmond. The saddest quotation is found on page xii with the great Thomas Jefferson saying that only the grave could end the agony of infamy and criticism he'd endured at the hands of his critics as Governor of Virginia.

Jefferson, Thomas. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Vol. 4* (October 1780 to February 1781). Edited by Julian P. Boyd (Princeton University Press).

A collection of the writings of Thomas Jefferson including writings relating to the accusations leveled against him in the Virginia government and his response.

[The] Independent Chronicle, July 1781.

Virginia General Assembly, House of Delegates. *Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1781* (Richmond: Commonwealth of Virginia).

Provides an account of the accusations leveled at Thomas Jefferson and is used for the dialogue in the final scene.

Wilson, James Grant and John Fiske. *Appleton's Encyclopedia of American Biography, Vol. 1* (D. Appleton & Co., 1891).

Provides