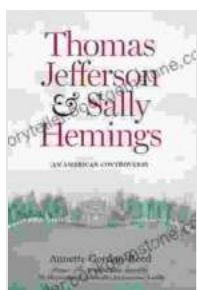


# Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy

The relationship between Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings is one of the most controversial and debated topics in American history. Was it a consensual relationship or was Hemings a victim of sexual assault? The evidence is complex and often contradictory, and there is no easy answer.



## Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy by Annette Gordon-Reed

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 1518 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 340 pages
Paperback	: 76 pages
Item Weight	: 2.89 ounces
Dimensions	: 5 x 0.18 x 8 inches



## The Evidence

The main evidence for the relationship between Jefferson and Hemings comes from the oral tradition of the Hemings family. According to this tradition, Hemings was Jefferson's mistress for over 30 years and bore him six children. This tradition is supported by the fact that Jefferson and

Hemings lived in close proximity to each other for many years and that Hemings' children bore a striking resemblance to Jefferson.

In addition to the oral tradition, there is also some documentary evidence that supports the relationship between Jefferson and Hemings. For example, there is a letter from Jefferson's daughter, Martha, in which she refers to Hemings as "my father's concubine." There is also a letter from Jefferson's grandson, Thomas Jefferson Randolph, in which he states that Hemings was Jefferson's mistress.

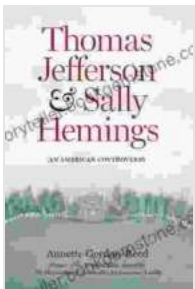
However, there is also evidence that contradicts the claim that Jefferson and Hemings had a consensual relationship. For example, there is no record of Jefferson ever acknowledging Hemings as his mistress or his children as his own. Additionally, there is evidence that Hemings was subject to physical and sexual abuse by Jefferson and his overseers.

## **The Debate**

The debate over the relationship between Jefferson and Hemings has been going on for over 100 years. In the early 20th century, most historians believed that Jefferson and Hemings had a consensual relationship. However, in the 1990s, a new wave of historians began to challenge this view, arguing that Hemings was a victim of sexual assault.

The debate over the relationship between Jefferson and Hemings is a complex one, with no easy answer. The evidence is often contradictory, and there is no clear consensus among historians. However, the debate is important because it sheds light on the complex and often contradictory nature of race and slavery in the United States.

The relationship between Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings is a reminder of the complex and often contradictory nature of race and slavery in the United States. The evidence is often contradictory, and there is no easy answer to the question of whether or not the relationship was consensual. However, the debate over the relationship is important because it sheds light on the complex and often contradictory nature of race and slavery in the United States.



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