

# A Guide to the Merrill D. Peterson Papers

Merrill D. Peterson Papers 1852-1993

1852-1993

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A Collection in the Special Collections The University of Virginia Library 12807

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1997

## History

**Processed by:** Special Collections Department Staff

**Date Completed:** 1997

**Encoded by:** Elizabeth Slomba

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Merrill D. Peterson Papers

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**Collection:** 12807

**Author:** Processed by Special Collections Dept. staff; machine-readable finding aid created by Elizabeth Slomba

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## Profile Description

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## Revision Description

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## Descriptive Summary

**Collection Number**

12807

**Language**

English

**Creator**

Merrill D. Peterson

**Extent**

ca. 16,000 items

**Repository**

University of Virginia. Library. Special Collections Dept.

Alderman Library  
University of Virginia  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903  
USA

## Administrative Information

**Access Restrictions**

Collection is open to research.

**Use Restrictions**

See the [University of Virginia Library's use policy](#).

**Acquisition Information**

The collection is a gift from Professor Emeritus Merrill D. Peterson

**Funding Note**

Funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities

**Preferred Citation**

Merrill D. Peterson Papers, Accession 12807, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library

## Biographical Sketch

Merrill Daniel Peterson, one of the nation's most honored and respected historians on the age of Jefferson has been Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation Professor Emeritus at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville since his retirement in 1987. He was born on March 31, 1921, the son of William Oscar and Alice Dwinell (Merrill) Peterson in Manhattan, Kansas. Peterson received his bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas in 1943 and earned a Ph.D. in the history of American civilization from Harvard in 1950. He taught at Harvard, Brandeis and Princeton Universities. At Brandeis, he was the Harry S. Truman Professor and dean of students before he joined the University of Virginia faculty in 1962, succeeding another noted Jefferson scholar, Dumas Malone, as Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation Professor of History. He later served as chairman of the University's Corcoran Department of History and dean of the faculty of arts and sciences.

Peterson is the author of *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, for which he won the Bancroft Prize in American History and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation's gold medal in 1961. His other publications include: *Major Crises in American History*; *Democracy, Liberty and Property: The State Constitutional Conventions of the 1820's*; *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography*; *James Madison: A Biography in His Own Words*; *Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue*, which resulted from his Lamar lectures delivered at Mercer University in 1975; *Olive Branch and Sword: The Compromise of 1833*, from his Fleming lectures at Louisiana State University in 1980 and *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay and Calhoun*, from his work as a National Endowment for the Humanities fellow at Chapel Hill, North Carolina in 1980-1981. Peterson is also editor of six books in American History including: *Thomas Jefferson: A Profile*; *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*; *Thomas Jefferson Writings*; *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*; *The Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom: Its Evolution and Consequences in American History* and *Visitors to Monticello*.

In 1976, Peterson received a doctor of humane letters degree from Washington College and was named a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1980. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the American Historical Association and the University of Virginia's honorary Raven Society. He has served on the board of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy for whom he planned a major symposium commemorating the bicentennial of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. In 1987, he was project director for a year-long colloquium on the humanities and the American people in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Humanities. Other organizational memberships and fellowships include: the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, the Virginia Historical Society, the Southern Historical Association, the Society of American Historians, the American Antiquarian Society and the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Guggenheim fellowship, the Center for Advanced Studies in Behavioral Sciences fellowship and the Poynter fellowship at Indiana University. In 1974, Peterson served as scholar-in-residence at the Bellagio Study Center in Italy and, in 1975, on the faculty of the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies in Vienna,

Austria. In 1988-1989, he lectured on U.S. History at the National University of Ireland in Dublin as a Fulbright Scholar and in 1993, President Clinton named him chairman of the Thomas Jefferson Commemoration Commission.

## Scope and Content

The collection contains ca. 16,000 items (15 shelf feet) consisting of department and personal communications with historians, university colleagues, students, friends and academic organizations throughout the United States and from around the world (grouped under *Correspondence*); academic, lecture and professional organization records associated with Peterson's activities while at Harvard, Brandeis and the University of Virginia (grouped under *Academia*); writings, including TMss, drafts, notes and communications with publishers relating to the books and articles Peterson authored (grouped under *Publications*) and an assortment of newsclippings; pamphlets; photographs (14 items); reprints; unpublished MDP writings and background material including, MDP notes, bibliographical listings and items relating to the alleged Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings relationship (grouped under *Miscellany*).

In addition, outside of this collection under related accessions, are a collection of photocopied letters of Calhoun, Clay and Webster which Peterson used in his research for The Great Triumvirate [Mss #10718] and a tape recorded lecture "Jefferson, the Enlightenment and the Revolution" which he delivered at a University of Virginia student forum on October 8, 1973 [Mss #8033-b,-c].

## Container List

### Group I: Correspondence

#### **Correspondence**

**Unit Date** 1949-1967

**Container** Box 1

**Extent** (6 folders)

#### **Correspondence**

**Unit Date** 1968-1972

**Container** Box 2

**Extent** (6 folders)

#### **Correspondence**

**Unit Date** 1973-1974

**Container** Box 3

**Extent** (6 folders)

#### **Correspondence**

**Unit Date** 1975-1976

**Container** Box 4

**Extent** (7 folders)

#### **Correspondence**

**Unit Date** 1977-1979

**Container** Box 5

**Extent** (7 folders)

#### **Correspondence**

**Unit Date** 1980-1981

**Container** Box 6

**Extent** (6 folders)

## **Correspondence**

**Unit Date** 1982-1984

**Container** Box 7

**Extent** (7 folders)

## **Correspondence**

**Unit Date** 1985-1986

**Container** Box 8

**Extent** (6 folders)

## **Correspondence**

**Unit Date** 1987-1989

**Container** Box 9

**Extent** (7 folders)

# **Group II: Academia**

## **Brandeis University**

### **American Civilization Committee (Merrill D. Peterson)**

**Unit Date** 1958-1962

**Container** Box 10

### **American Civilization Course Lecture Notes**

**Unit Date** 1953-1955, n.d.

**Container** Box 10

**Extent** (2 folders)

### **"American System, 1815-1832"**

**Unit Date** 1959

**Container** Box 10

### **Applications and Grants**

**Unit Date** 1954-1962

**Container** Box 10

### **Course Material and Reprints**

**Unit Date** 1951

**Container** Box 10

### **History Department--Memoranda**

**Unit Date** 1959-1962

**Container** Box 10

### **History Department--Personnel**

**Unit Date** 1958-1962, n.d.

**Container** Box 10

### **"Perspectives in American History" (Merrill D. Peterson and L.W. Levy)**

**Unit Date** 1951-1952

**Container** Box 10

**Speech Material**

**Unit Date** ca.1960's

**Container** Box 11

**Teaching Appointments**

**Unit Date** 1954-1963

**Container** Box 11

**Harvard University****Ph.D. Thesis--"The Jefferson Image in the American Mind, 1826-1861"**

**Unit Date** 1950

**Container** Box 12

**Student Class Notes**

**Unit Date** 1946

**Container** Box 12

**University of Virginia****American Council of Learned Societies (James Settle)**

**Unit Date** 1968-1970

**Container** Box 13

**American Historical Association (Nominating Committee)**

**Unit Date** 1967-1969

**Container** Box 13

**"American Revolution", Oxford History of the United States**

**Unit Date** 1963-1965

**Container** Box 13

**Assembly of Professors**

**Unit Date** 1964-1976, n.d.

**Container** Box 13

**Extent** (2 folders)

**Bicentennial of the American Revolution--Classroom Project**

**Unit Date** 1974-1975

**Container** Box 13

**Bicentennial of the American Revolution-- Federalist, 1976**

**Unit Date** 1971-1975

**Container** Box 13

**Bicentennial of the American Revolution--National Committee**

**Unit Date** 1971-1976

**Container** Box 14

**Extent** (3 folders)

**Bicentennial of the American Revolution--National Gallery of Art Exhibit**

**Unit Date** 1971-1974

**Container** Box 14

**Bicentennial of the American Revolution--Organization of American Historians (Bicentennial Committee)**

**Unit Date** 1973

**Container** Box 14

**Bicentennial of the American Revolution--Personal Memorabilia**

**Unit Date** 1971-1979, n.d.

**Container** Box 14

**Extent** (2 folders)

**Bicentennial of the American Revolution--Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery**

**Unit Date** 1968-1970

**Container** Box 15

**Bicentennial of the American Revolution--Virginia Bicentennial Booklets**

**Unit Date** 1970-1971

**Container** Box 15

**Center for Advanced Studies in Behavioral Sciences**

**Unit Date** 1966-1968

**Container** Box 15

**Colloquium on the Humanities and the American People**

**Unit Date** 1987-1988, n.d.

**Container** Box 15

**Extent** (3 folders)

**Conferences--American Philosophical Society (November, 1972)**

**Unit Date** 1972

**Container** Box 16

**Conferences--Historians and Teachers of Social Studies (February, 1971)**

**Unit Date** 1970-1971

**Container** Box 16

**Conferences--National Archives (November, 1973)**

**Unit Date** 1972-1973

**Container** Box 16

**Conferences--National Center for Scientific Research (February, 1978)**

**Unit Date** 1978

**Container** Box 16

**Conferences--National Historical Society (November, 1970)**

**Unit Date** 1970

**Container** Box 16

**Conferences--Virginia State Department of Education (March, 1970)**

**Unit Date** 1969-1970

**Container** Box 16

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**National Endowment for the Humanities**

**Unit Date** 1966-1983

**Container** Box 19

**Extent** (3 of 3 folders)

**National Trust for Historic Preservation--Montpelier**

**Unit Date** 1986-1988

**Container** Box 19

**Notes on VirginiaProject**

**Unit Date** 1981-1982

**Container** Box 19

**Organization of American Historians**

**Unit Date** 1968-1975

**Container** Box 19

**Extent** (2 folders)

**Papers of James Madison**

**Unit Date** 1971-1987

**Container** Box 19

**Papers of James Madison--Editor Applicants**

**Unit Date** 1986-1986

**Container** Box 19

**Extent** (2 folders)

**Papers of John Marshall--Advisory Committee**

**Unit Date** 1966-1970

**Container** Box 19

**Pine Knot--Theodore Roosevelt's Virginia Retreat**

**Unit Date** 1907-1992

**Container** Box 19

**Phi Beta Kappa Book Awards--Emerson Award Committee**

**Unit Date** 1982-1984

**Container** Box 19

**Reviews--Merrill D. Peterson**

**Unit Date** 1951-1964

**Container** Box 20

**Extent** (2 folders)

**Reviews in AmericanHistory--Editorial Board (Merrill D. Peterson)**

**Unit Date** 1972-1975

**Container** Box 20

**Rockefeller Foundation--Bellagio Study and Conference Center**

**Unit Date** 1973-1977

**Container** Box 20

**Salzburg Seminars in American Studies**

**Unit Date** 1973-1975

**Container** Box 20

**Simkins Prize in Southern History**

**Unit Date** 1972-1974

**Container** Box 20

**Speech: remarks at "sympathy for Selma" event at the Rotunda**

**Unit Date** 1965 March 17

**Container** Box 20

**"Three Revolutions of Thomas Jefferson"--Film Documentary**

**Unit Date** 1974-1976, n.d.

**Container** Box 20

**Extent** (1-3 of 6 folders)

**"Three Revolutions of Thomas Jefferson"--Film Documentary**

**Unit Date** 1974-1976, n. d.

**Container** Box 21

**Extent** (4-6 of 6 folders)

**Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation and The Jefferson Foundation**

**Unit Date** 1972-1991

**Container** Box 21

**Extent** (2 folders)

**United States Information Agency (USIA)**

**Unit Date** 1974-1976

**Container** Box 21

**University Press of Virginia**

**Unit Date** 1977-1988

**Container** Box 22

**Extent** (3 folders)

**Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom--Virginia Foundation for the Humanities**

**Unit Date** 1983-1985, n.d.

**Container** Box 22

**Williamsburg International Assembly**

**Unit Date** 1962-1967

**Container** Box 22

**Group III: Publications**

**Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue**

**Unit Date** 1976-1981, n.d.

**Container** Box 23

**Extent** (4 folders)

## **Articles (by Merrill D. Peterson)-- Encyclopedia of the American Constitution**

**Unit Date** 1979-1984, n.d.

**Container** Box 23

## **Articles (by Merrill D. Peterson)-- Encyclopedia of World Biography**

**Unit Date** 1969-1970

**Container** Box 23

## **Articles (by Merrill D. Peterson)-- World of Jefferson, Weidenfeld and Nicolson**

**Unit Date** 1972-1973, n.d.

**Container** Box 23

## **Democracy, Liberty and Property: The State Constitutional Conventions of the 1820's**

**Unit Date** 1963-1969, n.d.

**Container** Box 23

**Extent** (1-2 of 3 folders)

## **Democracy, Liberty and Property: The State Constztutional Conventions of the 1820's**

**Unit Date** 1963-1969, n.d.

**Container** Box 24

**Extent** (3 of 3 folders)

## **Great Triumvirate--Correspondence**

**Unit Date** 1973-1979, n.d.

**Container** Box 24

## **Great Triumvirate--Illustrations**

**Unit Date** 1986, n.d.

**Container** Box 24

## **Great Triumvirate--Ms**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 24

**Extent** (1-3 of 4 folders)

## **Great Triumvirate--Ms**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 25

**Extent** (4 of 4 folders)

## **Great Triumvirate--Notes**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 25

## **Great Triumvirate--Notes on Calhoun**

**Unit Date** 1985, n.d.

**Container** Box 25

## **Great Triumvirate--Notes on Clay**

**Unit Date** 1978-1989, n.d.

**Container** Box 25

### **Great Triumvirate--TMs**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 25

**Extent** (1-3 of 9 folders)

### **Great Triumvirate--TMs**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 26

**Extent** (4-9 of 9 folders)

### **Great Triumvirate--TMs and Proof**

**Unit Date** 1989

**Container** Box 26

**Extent** (1-2 of 7 folders)

### **Great Triumvirate--TMs and Proof**

**Unit Date** 1989

**Container** Box 27

**Extent** (2-7 of 7 folders)

### **James Madison, A Biography in His Own Words**

**Unit Date** 1971-1974, n.d.

**Container** Box 28

**Extent** (2 folders)

### **Jefferson Image in the American Mind**

**Unit Date** 1954-1974, n.d.

**Container** Box 28

**Extent** (3 folders)

### **Major Crises in American History: Documentary Problems**

**Unit Date** 1959-1975

**Container** Box 29

**Extent** (3 folders)

### **Olive Branch and Sword: The Compromise of 1833**

**Unit Date** 1980-1984, n.d.

**Container** Box 29

**Extent** (2 folders)

### **Portable Thomas Jefferson**

**Unit Date** 1972-1980, n.d.

**Container** Box 29

### **Thomas Jefferson: A Profile**

**Unit Date** 1967-1979, n.d.

**Container** Box 29

### **Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography**

**Unit Date** 1981-1987, n.d.

**Container** Box 30

**Extent** (2 folders)

## **Thomas Jefferson and the American Revolution-- TMss with annotations**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 30

## **Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation**

**Unit Date** 1961-1977, n.d.

**Container** Box 30

**Extent** (3 folders)

## **Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation-- Ms**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 31

**Extent** (1-6 of 13 folders)

## **Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation-- Ms**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 32

**Extent** (7-13 of 13 folders)

## **Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation--TMs with annotations**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 33

**Extent** (1-6 of 8 folders)

## **Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation--TMs with annotations**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 34

**Extent** (7-8 of 8 folders)

## **Thomas Jefferson, the Founders and Constitutional Change**

**Unit Date** 1979-1985, n.d.

**Container** Box 34

## **Visitors to Monticello**

**Unit Date** 1989-1990, n.d.

**Container** Box 34

## **Visitors to Monticello--TMs with annotations**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 34

**Extent** (2 folders)

## **Writings**

**Unit Date** 1979-1985, n.d.

**Container** Box 35

**Extent** (4 folders)

## **Group IV: Miscellany**

### **Background Material--Bibliographical Items**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 36

## **Background Material--Merrill D. Peterson Notes**

**Unit Date** 1971-1989, n.d.

**Container** Box 36

## **Background Material--Sally Hemings**

**Unit Date** 1971-1991, n.d.

**Container** Box 36

**Extent** (2 folders)

## **Newsclippings**

**Unit Date** 1948-1993, n.d.

**Container** Box 36

**Extent** (2 folders)

## **Pamphlets and Conference Handouts**

**Unit Date** 1971-1987, n.d.

**Container** Box 36

## **Photographs**

**Unit Date** 1971-1986, n.d.

**Container** Box 37

## **Reprints**

**Unit Date** 1852-1981, n.d.

**Container** Box 37

**Extent** (2 folders)

## **Unpublished Merrill D. Peterson Writings**

**Unit Date** 1946-1948, n.d.

**Container** Box 37

**Extent** (2 folders)