

*The Squire Rides South with Thomas Jefferson
September, 1774*

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It was quite an entourage in from of Monticello; Thomas was there, dressed in a leather set of riding clothes, The Squire, James, J.J.'s main attendant, and then the two horses, Steed and Cullilan. The carriage had been with Thomas for many years and had been prepped for this trip to Williamsburg.

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Squire, I misspoke saying it takes four days to get to Williamsburg; actually it is about 120 miles, a five day trip. Does that interfere with your plans?

Not at all Thomas; I am a freeman and not on much of a schedule. I may partake of the higher education available at William and Mary but if so, not until the Spring of 1775 or later. Where are we off to today?

We are going to go down a well-traveled but mostly unknown back road towards a growing village known as Simon. We will stop at my vineyards there for a sip and a bunch and then and make our way west of Lake Monticello. There we swing east, stopping at Shepherds Store, for the night. Johan and Cristina are two W & M friends who run a mill there and have a couple of extra rooms.

Let's ride!

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After a bumpy ride down "The Little Mountain" (or Tom's Mountain), the Mountain Gulch trail became much smoother which allowed for conversation.

Thomas will you talk more about your thinking on religion?

Squire, Later, we will have much discourse on that topic, but not now. At this time in our journey we may meet Highwaymen. James, I will be very vigilant!

Oh my; I hope we aren't in too much danger?

Our lives are in no danger: at worse, they would take our possessions. However, James and I will have something to say about that!

We then rode in silence then, contemplating much.

Suddenly, James spirited on the two horse team until they were almost galloping and exclaimed to Thomas: "Sire, three horsemen are coming up quickly. I fear the worst but am ready as we planned."

James, we are ready for this. If I recon correctly, we are about a mile from a stream crossing—can you make that? You know what to do.

James urged the horses forward and Thomas prepared two pistols he took out of a satchel he was carrying. Squire, please loosen the two swords that are under the baseboard railing. Hand me one and take the other to ward off anyone trying to board our carriage on your side. Our plan should prevent that!

I looked out the carriage right side, and indeed three riders were closing, now about 100/200 yards behind. I got ready to ward off boarders.

James yelled: "Here we are—hang on tight."

With that, James began to rein in his team of horses and then veered left off the path and down a short bank, right into the stream! The horses responded, especially when their hoofs hit the water. They moved forward slowly but firmly until James pulled back on their reins and yelled: "Whoa!"

Two horses, the carriage and the two trailing riding horses ended up in mid-stream, in water about half a fathom deep and ten fathoms wide. James made sure they were some distance from the bridge that they would have crossed.

Great job James. Now we will see if these highway men are willing to get their feet wet and worse! They will pay a heavy price for what I carry!

The three masked highwaymen, went onto the bridge, conferred and then covered both banks of the stream. The Leader, remaining on the bridge yelled: "Your worldly possessions are all we seek; hand them over and you may go."

Jefferson and James whispered to each other and then Jefferson replied: "Highway gentlemen, come and get them. We have them for you."

The three then talked animatedly. They finally came to a decision, that the leader was about to share, when all looked back up the trail . . .

To Be Continued

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Famous Quotes of Thomas Jefferson

If we are to guard against ignorance and remain free, it is the responsibility of every American to be informed.

*In matters of style, swim with the current;
in matters of principle, stand like a rock.*

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A Life Insight from a Squire

Thomas's nature was to focus on the inner workings of his mind, examining a subject in detail before speaking—then only sharing his awareness when it was sought. He liked his fellow compatriots, considered himself a humanist, but was not overly social. His marriage to Martha Wayles Skelton was very important to him; he enjoyed the entirety of that relationship. He was devastated when Martha at age thirty-four, although well within her life expectancy time, died suddenly. Whether he was emotionally involved with Sally Hemmings has been examined by many with almost an equal vote 'yea' or 'nay' on that possibility. I ask; does it matter? Thomas was a widower, a devoted family man and plantation owner, before and after his wife's death. He did free some of his slaves when that became the right and present thing to do; many including James, refused to accept that way of life and stayed with Thomas Jefferson.

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