

= Sally Hemings =

Sarah " Sally " Hemings ( c . 1773 ? 1835 ) was an enslaved woman of mixed race owned by President Thomas Jefferson . She is believed to have had a long @-@ term relationship and six children of record with him , of whom four survived to adulthood ; and were given freedom by Jefferson . Hemings was the youngest of six siblings by the widowed planter John Wayles and his mixed @-@ race slave Betty Hemings ; Sally and her siblings were three @-@ quarters European and half @-@ siblings of Jefferson 's wife , Martha Wayles Skelton .

In 1787 , Hemings , aged 14 , accompanied Jefferson 's youngest daughter Mary ( " Polly " ) to London and then to Paris , where the widowed Jefferson , aged 44 at the time , was serving as the United States Minister to France . Hemings spent two years there . It is believed by most historians that Jefferson began a sexual relationship with Hemings either in France or soon after their return to Monticello . Hemings was a slave in Jefferson 's house until his death .

The historical question of whether Jefferson was the father of Hemings ' children is known as the Jefferson ? Hemings controversy . Following renewed historic analysis in the late 20th century and a 1998 DNA study that found a match between the Jefferson male line and a descendant of Hemings ' last son , Eston Hemings , there is a near @-@ consensus among historians that the widower Jefferson fathered her son Eston Hemings and probably all her children . A small number of historians , however , still disagree .

Hemings ' children lived in Jefferson 's house as slaves and were trained as artisans . Jefferson freed all of Hemings ' surviving children : Beverly , Harriet , Madison , and Eston , as they came of age ( they were the only slave family freed by Jefferson ) . They were seven @-@ eighths European in ancestry , and three of the four entered white society as adults . Descendants of those three identified as white . Hemings was " given her time " , lived her last nine years freely with her two younger sons in Charlottesville , Virginia , and saw a grandchild born in the house her sons owned .

= = Early life = =

Sally Hemings was born about 1773 to Betty Hemings ( 1735 ? 1807 ) , a biracial slave . Her father was their master John Wayles ( 1715 ? 1773 ) . Her mother Betty was the daughter of Susanna , an enslaved African , and John Hemings , an English sea captain . Susanna and Betty Hemings were first held by Francis Eppes IV , where Susanna was referred to as Susanna Epps . John Hemings tried to buy them from Eppes , but the planter refused to give them up . The mother and daughter were inherited by Francis 's daughter , Martha Eppes , who took them with her as personal servants upon her marriage to the planter John Wayles . His parents were Edward Wayles and Ellen Ashburner @-@ Wayles , both of Lancaster , England .

After Martha 's death , Wayles married and was widowed twice more . Several sources assert that the widower John Wayles took his slave Betty Hemings as a concubine and had six children by her during the last 12 years of his life ; the youngest of these was Sally Hemings . They were half @-@ siblings to his daughters by his wives ; his first child , Martha Wayles ( named after her mother , John Wayles 's first wife ) , married the young planter Thomas Jefferson .

The biracial children of Betty Hemings by Wayles were three @-@ quarters European in ancestry and very fair @-@ skinned . ( They had a white maternal grandfather and two white paternal grandparents . ) Since 1662 in Virginia slave law , children born to enslaved mothers were considered slaves under the principle of partus sequitur ventrem . Elizabeth and her children , including Sally Hemings , and all their children , were legally slaves , although the fathers were the white masters and the children were majority @-@ white in ancestry .

After Wayles died in 1773 , his daughter Martha and Jefferson inherited the Hemings family among a total of 135 slaves from his estate , as well as 11 @,@ 000 acres of land . The youngest Wayles @-@ Hemings child was Sally , an infant that year and about 25 years younger than Martha . Scholars have noted that as the mixed @-@ race Wayles @-@ Hemings children grew up at Monticello , they were trained and given assignments as skilled artisans and domestic servants , at the top of the slave hierarchy . Betty Hemings ' other children and their descendants , also mixed

race , also had privileged assignments . None worked in the fields .

= = Hemingses in Paris = =

In 1784 , the widower Thomas Jefferson was appointed the American envoy to France ; he took his oldest daughter Martha ( Patsy ) with him to Paris , as well as some of his personal slaves . Among them was Sally 's older brother James Hemings , who became trained as a chef in French cuisine . Jefferson left his two younger daughters in the care of friends in the US . After Lucy died of whooping cough in 1787 , Jefferson sent for his surviving daughter , nine @-@ year @-@ old Maria ( Polly ) Jefferson , to live with him . The teenage slave Sally Hemings was chosen to accompany Polly to France after an older slave became pregnant and could not make the journey . Originally , Jefferson arranged for Polly to " be in the care of her nurse , a black woman , to whom she is confided with safety " [ Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams , Dec. 21 , 1786 ] . According to Abigail Adams , " The old Nurse whom you expected to have attended her , was sick and unable to come . She has a Girl about 15 or 16 with her . " [ Letter from Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson , June 26 , 1787 ] .

Polly and Sally landed in London , where they stayed with Abigail and John Adams from June 26 until July 10 , 1787 . Jefferson 's associate , Mr. Petit , arranged transportation and escorted the girls to Paris . In a letter to Jefferson on June 27 , 1787 , Abigail wrote , " The Girl who is with [ Polly ] is quite a child , and Captain Ramsey is of opinion will be of so little Service that he had better carry her back with him . But of this you will be a judge . She seems fond of the child and appears good naturd . " On July 6 , Abigail wrote to Jefferson , " The Girl she has with her , wants more care than the child , and is wholly incapable of looking properly after her , without some superiour to direct her . "

Sally Hemings remained in France for 26 months ; slavery was abolished in that country after the Revolution in 1789 . Jefferson paid wages to her and James while they were in Paris . He paid Sally Hemings the equivalent of \$ 2 a month . In comparison , he paid his Parisian scullion \$ 2 @.@ 50 a month , and James Hemings \$ 4 a month as chef in training . The French servants earned from \$ 8 to \$ 12 a month . Toward the end of their stay , James used his money to pay for a French tutor and learn the language . Sally Hemings also was learning French . There is no record of where she lived : it may have been with Jefferson and her brother in the Hôtel de Langeac on the Champs @-@ Elysées , or at the convent Abbaye de Panthemont where the girls Maria and Martha were schooled . Whatever the weekday arrangements , Jefferson and his retinue spent weekends together at his villa . Jefferson purchased some fine clothing for Hemings , which suggests that she accompanied Martha as a lady 's maid to formal events .

Under French law , both Sally and James could have petitioned for their freedom , as the 1789 revolutionary constitution in France abolished slavery in principle . Hemings had the legal right to remain in France as a free person ; if she returned to Virginia with Jefferson , it would be as a slave . According to her son Madison 's memoir , Hemings became pregnant by Jefferson in Paris . She was about 16 at the time . She agreed to return with him to the United States based on his promise to free their children when they reached the age of 21 years . Hemings ' strong ties to her mother , siblings and extended family probably drew her back to Monticello .

= = Return to the United States = =

In 1789 , Sally and James Hemings returned to the United States with Jefferson . He was 46 years old and seven years a widower . As shown by Jefferson 's father @-@ in @-@ law , John Wayles , wealthy Virginia widowers frequently took enslaved women as concubines . Historian Joshua D. Rothman noted that it was not unusual for the time for Jefferson to choose to do so . White society simply expected these men to be discreet .

According to Madison Hemings , Sally Hemings ' first child died soon after her return from Paris . Those Jefferson records that have survived mutilation and purge note that Hemings had six children after her return to the US :

Harriet Hemings ( I ) ( October 5 , 1795 - December 7 , 1797 )

Beverley Hemings ( possibly named William Beverley Hemings ) ( April 1 , 1798 - after 1873 )

unnamed daughter ( or possibly named Thenia after Hemings ' sister Thenia ) ( born in 1799 and died in infancy )

Harriet Hemings ( II ) ( May 22 , 1801 - after 1863 )

Madison Hemings ( possibly named James Madison Hemings ) ( January 19 , 1805 ? 1877 )

Eston Hemings ( possibly named Thomas Eston Hemings ) ( May 21 , 1808 ? 1856 )

Jefferson recorded slave births in his Farm Book . Unlike his practice in recording births of other slaves , he did not note the father of Hemings ' children .

Sally Hemings ' documented duties at Monticello included being a nursemaid @-@ companion , lady 's maid , chambermaid , and seamstress . It is not known whether she was literate , and she left no known writings . She was described as very fair , with " straight hair down her back " . Jefferson 's grandson , Thomas Jefferson Randolph , described her as " light colored and decidedly good looking " . As an adult she may have lived in a room in Monticello 's " South Dependencies " , a wing of the mansion which was accessible to the main house through a covered passageway .

Hemings never married . As a slave , she could not have a marriage recognized under Virginia law , but many slaves at Monticello are known to have taken partners in common @-@ law marriages and had stable lives . ( No such marriage for Hemings is noted in the records . ) While Sally Hemings worked at Monticello , she had her children nearby . According to her son Madison , while young , the children " were permitted to stay about the ' great house ' , and only required to do such light work as going on errands " . At the age of 14 , each of the children began their training : the brothers with the plantation 's skilled master of carpentry , and Harriet as a spinner and weaver . The three boys all learned to play the violin ( Jefferson played the violin ) .

In 1822 at the age of 24 , Beverley " ran away " from Monticello and was not pursued . His sister Harriet Hemings , 21 , followed in the same year . The overseer Edmund Bacon said that he gave her \$ 50 ( US \$ 988 in 2016 dollars ) and put her on a stagecoach to the North , presumably to join her brother . In his memoir , published posthumously , Bacon said Harriet was " near white and very beautiful " , and that people said Jefferson freed her because she was his daughter . Madison Hemings said that Beverley and Harriet each entered white society in Washington , DC , and each married well .

Of the hundreds of slaves he owned , in his lifetime Jefferson formally freed only two slaves : Hemings ' older brothers Robert , who had to buy his freedom , and James Hemings ( who was required to train his brother Peter for three years to get his freedom ) . He freed five slaves in his will - all males from the extended Hemings family , including Madison and Eston Hemings , his two " natural " children . Harriet was the only female slave he allowed to go free . In addition to manumission for the Hemings men in his will , he petitioned the legislature to allow them to stay in the state . No documentation has been found for Sally Hemings ' emancipation .

Jefferson 's married daughter Martha Randolph informally freed the elderly Hemings by giving her " her time " . " As the historian Edmund S. Morgan has noted , " Hemings herself was withheld from auction and freed at last by Jefferson 's daughter , Martha Jefferson Randolph , who was , of course , her niece . " This informal freedom allowed Hemings to live in Virginia with her two youngest sons in nearby Charlottesville for the next nine years until her death . In the Albemarle County 1833 census , all three were recorded as free white persons . Jefferson inherited a great amount of wealth at a young age , but was bankrupt by the time he died . His entire estate , including his slaves , were sold to repay his debts . Hemings lived to see a grandchild born in a house that her sons owned .

= = Jefferson ? Hemings controversy = =

The Jefferson ? Hemings controversy is related to the question of whether , after Jefferson became a widower , he had an intimate relationship with Sally Hemings , resulting in his fathering her six children of record . The controversy dates from the 1790s . A relationship between Jefferson and Hemings was first reported in 1802 , by one of Jefferson 's enemies , a political journalist named James T. Callender , after he noticed several light skinned slaves at Monticello . However ,

Jefferson never publicly denied this accusation . In the late 20th century , historians began reanalyzing the body of evidence . In 1997 , Annette Gordon @-@ Reed published a book , Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings : An American Controversy , that analyzed the historiography of the controversy , demonstrating how historians since the 19th century had accepted early assumptions . They favored Jefferson family testimony while criticizing Hemings family testimony as " oral history " , and failed to note all the facts . A consensus began to emerge after the results of a DNA analysis in 1998 , which showed no match between the Carr male line , proposed for more than 150 years as the father ( s ) , and the one Hemings descendant tested . It did show a match between the Jefferson male line and the Eston Hemings descendant .

Since 1998 and the DNA study , many historians have concluded that the widower Jefferson had an intimate , long relationship with Hemings , and fathered six children with her , four of whom survived to adulthood . The Thomas Jefferson Foundation ( TJF ) , which runs Monticello , conducted an independent historic review in 2000 , as did the National Genealogical Society in 2001 ; scholars concluded Jefferson was probably the father of all Hemings ' children . In an article that appeared in Science , eight weeks after the DNA study , Eugene Foster , the lead co @-@ author of the DNA study , is reported to have " made it clear that the data establish only that Thomas Jefferson was one of several candidates for the paternity of Eston Hemings " .

In an interview in 2000 , the historian Annette Gordon @-@ Reed said of the change in historical scholarship about Jefferson and Hemings : " Symbolically , it 's tremendously important for people ... as a way of inclusion . Nathan Huggins said that the Sally Hemings story was a way of establishing black people 's birthright to America . "

Critics , such as the Thomas Jefferson Heritage Society ( TJHS ) Scholars Commission ( 2001 ) , have argued against the TJF report and reached different conclusions about the DNA tests . All but one of the 13 scholars expressed considerable skepticism about the conclusions . The TJHS report suggested that Jefferson 's younger brother Randolph Jefferson could have been the father , and that Hemings may have had multiple partners . Three of the Hemings children were given names from the Randolph family , relatives of Thomas Jefferson through his mother . Herbert Barger , the founder and current Director Emeritus of the TJHS and the husband of a Jefferson descendant , assisted Foster in the DNA study .

In 2012 , the Smithsonian Institution and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation held a major exhibit at the National Museum of American History : Slavery at Jefferson 's Monticello : The Paradox of Liberty ; it says that " evidence strongly support [ s ] the conclusion that [ Thomas ] Jefferson was the father of Sally Hemings ' children . "

= = Descendants = =

In 2008 Gordon @-@ Reed published The Hemingses of Monticello : An American Family , which explored the extended family , including James and Sally 's lives in France , Monticello and Philadelphia , during Thomas Jefferson 's lifetime . She was not able to find much new information about Beverly or Harriet Hemings , who left Monticello as young adults and entered the white community , probably changing their names . More documentation reveals the lives of the younger sons Madison Hemings and Eston Hemings , and of their descendants , from Madison 's memoir , a wide variety of historical records , and newspaper accounts .

Eventually three of Hemings ' four surviving children , except for Madison , chose to identify as white adults in the North ; they were seven @-@ eighths European in ancestry and this was consistent with their appearance . In his memoir , Madison Hemings said both Beverley and Harriet married well in the white community in Washington , DC . Harriet was described by Edmund Bacon , the longtime Monticello overseer , as " nearly as white as anybody , and very beautiful " . For some time Madison wrote to both his siblings , and learned of their marriages . He knew that Harriet had children and was living in Maryland , but gradually she and Beverly stopped responding to his letters and the siblings lost touch .

Both Madison and Eston Hemings married free women of color in Charlottesville . After their mother 's death in 1835 , they and their families moved to Chillicothe in the free state of Ohio . Census

records classified them as " mulatto " , at that time meaning mixed race . The census enumerator , usually a local person , classified individuals in part according to who their neighbors were and what was known of them .

A high demand for slaves in the Deep South and passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 heightened the risk for free blacks of being kidnapped by slave catchers , as they needed little documentation to claim blacks as fugitives . Legally free people of color , Eston Hemings and his family moved to Madison , Wisconsin to be further away from slave catchers . There he changed his name to " Eston H. Jefferson " to acknowledge his paternity , and all the family adopted the surname . From then on the Jeffersons lived in the white community .

Madison Hemings ' family were the only Hemings descendants who continued to identify with the black community . They intermarried within the community of free people of color before the Civil War . Over time , some of their descendants are known to have passed into the white community , while many others have identified within the black community .

Both Eston and Madison achieved some success in life , were well respected by their contemporaries , and had children who repeated and built on their successes . They worked as carpenters , and Madison also had a small farm . Eston became a professional musician and bandleader , " a master of the violin , and an accomplished ' caller ' of dances " , who " always officiated at the ' swell ' entertainments of Chillicothe " . He was in demand across southern Ohio . A neighbor described him as , " Quiet , unobtrusive , polite and decidedly intelligent , he was soon very well and favorably known to all classes of our citizens , for his personal appearance and gentlemanly manners attracted everybody 's attention to him . "

= = Grandchildren and other descendants = =

Madison 's sons fought on the Union side in the Civil War . Thomas Eston Hemings enlisted in the United States Colored Troops ( USCT ) ; captured , he spent time at the Andersonville POW camp and died in a POW camp in Meridian , Mississippi . According to a Hemings descendant , his brother James attempted to cross Union lines and " pass " as a white man to enlist in the Confederate army to rescue him . Later , James Hemings was rumored to have moved to Colorado and perhaps passed into white society . Like some others in the family , he disappeared from the record and the rest of his biography remains unknown . A third son , William Hemings , enlisted in the regular Union Army as a white man . Madison 's last known male @-@ line descendant , William never married and was not known to have had children . He died in 1910 in a veterans ' hospital .

Some of Madison Hemings ' children and grandchildren who remained in Ohio suffered from the limited opportunities for blacks at that time , working as laborers , servants or small farmers . They tended to marry within the mixed @-@ race community in the region , who became established as people of education and property .

Madison 's daughter Ellen Wayles Hemings married Alexander Jackson Roberts , a graduate of Oberlin College . When their first son was young , they moved to Los Angeles , California , where the family and its descendants became leaders in the twentieth century . Their first son Frederick Madison Roberts ( 1879 ? 1952 ) ? Sally Hemings ' and Jefferson 's great @-@ grandson ? was the first person of known black ancestry elected to public office on the West Coast : he served for nearly 20 years in the California State Assembly from 1919 to 1934 . Their second son William Giles Roberts was also a leader . Their descendants have had a strong tradition of college education and public service .

Eston 's sons also enlisted in the Union Army , both as white men from Madison . His first son John Wayles Jefferson had red hair and gray eyes like his grandfather Jefferson . By the 1850s , John Jefferson in his 20s was proprietor of the American Hotel in Madison . At one time he operated it with his younger brother Beverley . He was commissioned as a Union officer during the Civil War , during which he was promoted to the rank of Colonel and served at the Battle of Vicksburg . He wrote letters about the war to the newspaper in Madison which were published . After the war , John Jefferson returned to Wisconsin , where he wrote frequently for newspapers and published accounts about his war experiences . He later moved to Memphis , Tennessee , where he became a

successful and wealthy cotton broker . He never married or had known children , and left a sizeable estate .

Eston 's second son Beverley Jefferson also served in the regular Union Army . After operating the American Hotel with his brother John , he later separately operated the Capital Hotel . He also built a successful horse @-@ drawn " omnibus " business . He and his wife Anna M. Smith had five sons , three of whom reached the professional class as a physician , attorney , and manager in the railroad industry . According to his 1908 obituary , Beverly Jefferson was " a likeable character at the Wisconsin capital , and a familiar of statesmen for half a century " . His friend Augustus J. Munson wrote , " Beverly Jefferson [ ' s ] death deserves more than a passing notice , as he was a grandson of Thomas Jefferson ... [ He ] was one of God 's noblemen - gentle , kind , courteous , charitable . " Beverley and Anna 's great @-@ grandson John Weeks Jefferson is the Eston Hemings descendant whose DNA was tested in 1998 ; it matched the Y @-@ chromosome of the Thomas Jefferson male line .

As of 2007 , there are known male @-@ line descendants of Eston Hemings / Jefferson , and known female @-@ line descendants of Madison Hemings ' three daughters : Sarah , Harriet , and Ellen .

= = = For young readers = = =

Jane Feldman , Shannon Lanier , Jefferson 's Children : The Story of One American Family : ( Random House , 2001 ) , for ages 10 and up

Kimberly Brubaker Bradley , " Jefferson 's Sons " : ( Dial Books for Young Readers , 2011 ) , historical fiction for ages 10 and up