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# Thomas Jefferson Randolph, democratic leader

Jerome A. Hurwitz

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## PREFACE

There has been considerable time spent in writing the life and accomplishments of Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson, although he had several children, never had a son. Therefore, Thomas Jefferson Randolph, the son of Martha Jefferson Randolph, was the most direct male descendant of the second President.

However, no one has made an attempt to write the biography of the grandson. It is particularly appropriate to write his life not only because of Thomas Jefferson Randolph's famous lineage but because he was an ardent adherent to the Democratic principles of his illustrious grandfather.

I would like to express my great indebtedness to Dr. Maude Woodfin, Professor of History at Westhampton College for her valuable guidance in the research work and to Dr. R.C. McDanel, Professor of History at Richmond College for his invaluable aid in the construction of the paper.

Jerome A. Hurwitz

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## EARLY LIFE AND RELATIONS WITH THOMAS JEFFERSON

Thomas Jefferson Randolph was the son of Governor Thomas Mann Randolph and Martha Randolph, the daughter of Thomas Jefferson. He was born in the county of Albemarle on September 11, 1792. Most of the years of his boyhood and early manhood were spent at Monticello in the company of his grandfather, who superintended his education and bestowed upon him his fullest affections.<sup>1</sup> He was Jefferson's oldest grandson and occupied the place in his affections and fulfilled the duties in his house of an eldest son. In later years he was, as Jefferson himself expressed it, the "staff of his old age."<sup>2</sup>

Thomas J. Randolph's entire life was influenced by this early contact with his illustrious grandfather and this fact cannot be over-emphasized. He had a distinct recollection of starting, when only five years old, on a run-away excursion down one of the shaded roads of Monticello to the river at its base with his elder sister, and being met by

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1. Richmond Dispatch, "By Telegraph - Death of Colonel T.J. Randolph, Saturday, October 9, 1875"
  2. Charlottesville Chronicle, "AMemorial of Col. T.J. Randolph," October 22, 1875

Jefferson and the French philosopher, Volney, on horseback, who picked the little truants up, and each taking one before him on his horse carried them back home in safety. During the exciting times which followed Jefferson's first election as President, when the whole country was thrown into a fever of excitement - by Burr's effort to have himself declared by Congress President instead of Vice-President, Randolph was a little boy of eight years, and he remembered a courier dashing up one night to his father's door at Edgehill and calling him out to announce that the decisive vote had been taken in Congress, and resulted in Jefferson's favor, when, turning his horse's head, the courier dashed on in the darkness of the night to spread the news throughout the country.<sup>3</sup>

At Madison's first inauguration he was a lad of 17 years, and was his grandfather's sole companion as he rode, in those days of republican simplicity, up Pennsylvania Avenue on horseback from the President's house to the Capitol, where, grandson and grandfather, dismounting, hitched their horses to the paling, and the latter went into the Congressional halls to watch his friend take the oath of office.

His early training and education deserve notice as an illustration of the manners of that day. From the time he was five or six years old he walked from one to five miles to what was then called an old-field

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3. Charlottesville Chronicle, op. cit.

school. He never wore shoes, and rarely a hat, until he was twelve; and his friends have often heard him say, with a smile, that he had a watch in his pocket before he had shoes on his feet. An old gentleman used to tell of coming upon him when he was about twelve years old with his shoes in his hands, having broken through the ice on a river he had just waded across, and trudging along from school to his home seven miles off, blithe and cheery, through a snow <sup>4</sup> three or four inches deep.

In the year 1807 Jefferson decided it was time for his favorite grandson to receive more formal education and so he wrote to Dr. Casper Wistar in reference to Randolph's secondary education. In this letter <sup>5</sup> Jefferson once again displayed his keen interest in Randolph.

Whether he possesses that lively imagination, usually called genius, I have not had opportunities of knowing. But I think he has an observing mind and sound judgment. He is assiduous, orderly, and of the most amiable temper and disposition. As he will be at ease in point of property, his education is not directed to any particular possession, but will embrace those sciences which give to retired life usefulness, ornament, or amusement.

Jefferson goes on to explain that his grandson was brought up in a mountainous and healthy country but he feels that his education can only be completed in the city. Thus, Randolph spent the next two years, studying in Philadelphia under the careful supervision of Jefferson's friends.

Jefferson was not satisfied by having his friends keep constant watch over Randolph and so he wrote his grandson many letters in which were advice. This advice may well be read today by many young students.

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4. Charlottesville Chronicle, op. cit.

5. Paul Leicester Ford, Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Vol. IV, pp. 78-80. G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, 1898.

There is one letter in particular that presents a summation of this advice and I am tempted to quote a few phrases.

But thrown on a wide world, among entire strangers, without a friend or guardian to advise, so young too and with so little experience of mankind, your dangers are great, and still your safety must rest on yourself. A determination never to do what is wrong, prudence and good humor, will go far towards securing to you the estimation of the world.

Good humor, one of the preservatives of our peace and tranquillity. Politeness helps to make it successful.

But in stating prudential rules for our government in society, I must not omit the important one of never entering into dispute or argument with another. Nothing is gained by argument. Use conviction.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout Jefferson warned Randolph to be very selective in choosing company, to avoid taverns, drinkers, smokers, idlers and dissipated persons generally. They were the source of broils and contentions.

As soon as he attained the age of manhood, he not only took charge of his grandfather's affairs, but, to relieve him as far as possible from all cares, assumed many of his debts. When, after Jefferson's death it was found the sales of his property of every description still left debts unpaid to the amount of 40,000, though not bound legally to pay them, Randolph did so with the fruits of his own labor - being determined, as he said, that no man should say that he had lost a dollar by his grandfather. But his generosity did not end here, for he fulfilled

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6. Paul Leicester Ford, op. cit. Vol. IX, pp. 230-234



to his brothers and sisters the duties of a father in educating them and making his home theirs - as it was always that of a member of a large and extensive family connection who was without one - his life being spent in bearing other people's burdens.<sup>7</sup>

Thomas Jefferson was always aware of the devotion of his grandson and made reference to his loyalty in expressions of gratitude frequently in his writings. Two sentences taken from Jefferson's letters may well illustrate the point,<sup>8</sup> "Yourself particularly dear Jefferson,"<sup>9</sup> I consider as the greatest of the Godsend's which heaven has granted me. Without you what could I do under the difficulties now environing me?" "Be assured my dear Jefferson that I have a just sense of the part you have contributed to this, and that I bear to you unmeasured affection."

These fine statements of gratitude were written directly after Randolph had sent words of cheer and consolation to Jefferson during his last hours. Jefferson in his will made Randolph his sole executor, exemplifying once again his endless faith in his grandson and gave to him his favorite watch.<sup>10</sup>

Randolph married a daughter of Governor Nichols, by whom he had several children. One of his daughters, Martha Jefferson, married John

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7. Charlottesville Chronicle, op. cit.
  8. Paul Leicester Ford, op. cit., Volume X, pp 374-375
  9. Thomas Jefferson incessantly addressed and referred to Randolph as "my dear Jefferson."
  10. Paul Leicester Ford, op cit., Vol. X

Charles Randolph Taylor of Albemarle county.<sup>11</sup> Another of his daughters,  
 Eleanor Wayles, married William B. Harrison.<sup>12</sup>

Randolph's home in Edgehill was the abode of an elegant and re-  
 fined hospitality. He was six feet four inches tall, well proportioned,  
 very imposing in appearance, and the very finest specimen of the grand  
 "Old Virginia Gentleman." He was pleasant, genial, polished and kind and  
 considerate to all. His memory was excellent, and his acquaintance with  
 public men and political measures was very extensive.<sup>13</sup>

Randolph exerted himself in order to immortalize his beloved  
 grandfather. Not a single line written by Jefferson was to be lost. He  
 first proceeded to publish "The Writings of Thomas Jefferson." Realizing  
 that acting by himself would not be most effective he appealed to the  
 thirtieth Congress to purchase and publish the manuscripts of Thomas  
 Jefferson. In his petition he made it clear that he was the sole devisee  
 of Jefferson's manuscript papers and that his fortune was inadequate for  
 their publication. In order to prevent their liability to mutilation,  
 destruction, and loss he was induced to offer them to the Congress of the  
 United States for a consideration they might deem adequate. He asked the

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11. The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography. Vols. XXIV, p. 213
  12. The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography. Vol. XXXVII, p. 81
  13. Richmond Dispatch, op cit.

consideration of the subject, with the accompanying papers a part of his  
<sup>14</sup>  
 memorial.

Mr. Brodhead, from the Committee on the Library made the report  
 "that these papers consist, in part, of official, political, scientific,  
 and miscellaneous letters, amounting, as it appears from a well kept and  
 perfectly preserved journal in the handwriting of Mr. Jefferson himself."<sup>15</sup>  
 He continued that "it is fit and right that the Government should possess  
 itself of all his unpublished papers, and thus forever preserve them  
 against any danger of misapplication and loss."<sup>16</sup>

A bill was passed by Congress carrying out the views of the com-  
 mittee. The sum of \$25,000 was appropriated and paid to Randolph for all  
 the papers and manuscripts of his said grandfather, provided, that Ran-  
 dolph should deposit all the papers and manuscripts of a public nature in  
 the State Department, and execute a conveyance to the United States there-  
 for. Another provision of the bill appropriated the sum of \$6,000 in  
 order to enable the joint committee on the library to have the writings  
<sup>17</sup>  
 printed and published.

There is a portrait of Thomas Jefferson in the collection of the

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14. Journal, First Session of Thirtieth Congress of House of Representa-  
tives. Miscellaneous, Number 7.
  15. These papers numbered about 42,000; approximately 16,000 written by  
 Thomas Jefferson himself, many of which were written to and received  
 from the most distinguished men of his time and country.
  16. Congressional Journal. Op. cit.
  17. Congressional Journal. Op. cit.

Virginia Historical Society, a copy by Guillaume from an original by Stuart, formerly in the possession of President Jefferson. This was given in 1858 by Randolph and his brother, George W. Randolph. <sup>18</sup> This was another of the innumerable expressions of Randolph's profound love for Jefferson.

Another striking expression of his devotion to his grandfather was his preventing the proposed removal of Mr. Jefferson's remains from Monticello to Hollywood in 1858. This was supposed to be a testimonial of respect to the memory of Jefferson by George W. Randolph and the Governor but Randolph opposed the move on the basis that Jefferson expressed a wish to be buried by the side of his wife and daughters and had an understanding with his brother-in-law and intimate friend, Mr. Carr, <sup>19</sup> that they should both be buried at Monticello. As a result, to this very day, the remains of Jefferson, buried at Monticello, have not been disturbed.

After this brief survey of the personal contact of Randolph with Jefferson one may readily recognize why Randolph could speak with most authority about Jefferson's views and feelings on all subjects and was best qualified to advocate the democratic principles of Jefferson that were yet to be adopted.

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18. The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography. Vol. XXXV, p. 60
19. Calendar of State Papers, Vol. 11, p. 67. A letter written from George W. Randolph to the Governor, June 30, 1858.

## Chapter II

## EDGEHILL

Home of Col. Thomas J. Randolph

This present mansion near Charlottesville was erected in 1828 according to plans drawn for Randolph's sister by Thomas Jefferson a few years earlier.

It was named Edgehill because the view is said to be very

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similar to that at Edgehill, Warwickshire.

The Home of Governor Thomas Mann Randolph



Edgehill, Albemarle county, was erected in 1790 by Thomas M. Randolph. This old house was moved back to the position it now occupies in order to permit the new mansion to be built.

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20. Mary Rawlings, The Albemarle of Other Days, pp. 24, 25. The Michie Company, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1925

21. Rawlings, op. cit., pp. 24, 25

In 1836 Mrs. Jane Nicholas Randolph, wife of Col. T.J. Randolph, established her school for her children, relatives, and friends. This was one of the first girls' boarding schools in the State. This building was used as the school.



Front entrance to the new mansion at Edgehill. The door knob contains the coat-of-arms of the Randolph family.



This is a picture of the "dairy," where foodstuff was kept and milk was churned into butter.





This is the "ice house" of the new mansion, serving a purpose similar to that of the "dairy" of the old mansion.

## Chapter III

## RELATIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Randolph, following the footsteps of his grandfather, was profoundly interested in the State University and did everything within his power to foster its cause. He shared similar views concerning education with Jefferson and hoped to see the day when the University of Virginia would be the greatest seat of learning and would provide Virginia with well trained, able leaders.

Randolph was the last rector of the University prior to the War of Secession. He was elected to this most responsible position as a token of esteem that the University held for his commendable work. One may become even more cognizant of the honor bestowed upon Randolph if he were to glance over the list of his predecessors as rectors of the University, namely, Jefferson, Madison, Cabell, Chapman Johnson, and Andrew Stevenson. <sup>23</sup>

He was a member of the Board of Visitors from 1829-1853 and from

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23. Philip Alexander Bruce, History of the University of Virginia, 1819-1919, p. 194

1857-1864.<sup>24</sup> This period covers thirty-one years and further attests to the confidence that the University of Virginia had in Randolph.

Despite the fact that Randolph was never a man of considerable wealth, the University of Virginia trustees frequently turned toward him in times of financial distress. For example, in 1826 twenty-five thousand dollars was needed to complete the buildings and to create a permanent water supply. In July, 1827 the Board of Visitors authorized the proctor to borrow a large sum from Randolph, as trustee for his mother. Actually<sup>25</sup> the loan amounted to twenty thousand dollars.

Again when the question of improving the library reached a climax the officials and members of the faculty turned toward Randolph to exert his active cooperation for the effecting of the object of improvement. The library had received no important additions since the year 1825, and no periodical literature since the year 1827, which made the University<sup>26</sup> incapable of affording to the students the best of facilities. Randolph, aided by his able fellow legislator from the county of Albemarle Thomas W. Gilmer, immediately proceeded to bend every effort for the attainment of the desired goal.

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24. Rosewell Page, University of Virginia, Vol. I, p. 330. Lewis Publishing Company, New York, 1904

25. Philip Alexander Bruce, op. cit. Pp; 183, 184

26. Calendar of State Papers, Vol. V. Pp 582, 583

Randolph was keenly interested in the type of architecture to be used in the construction of the new annex. The need of more lecture rooms and more laboratories had become very acute.

A committee, composed of Andrew Stevenson and Randolph, was appointed in 1850, to contract for the erection of an edifice that would supply all the additional facilities for lecture rooms and laboratories which were now so pressingly demanded; and they were also authorized to engage the services of a supervisory architect.

They hired Mills and Kenwick as the architects and the annex was built. Mr. Randolph, loyal to the artistic spirit of his grandfather, objected to the addition in the ugly and incongruous form adopted. But the desire to economize in space overruled all aesthetic suggestions.<sup>27</sup>

Randolph was not necessarily a militarist but he did believe that proper military training should be given the students at the University. One may notice in his letter to the Governor<sup>28</sup> on June 1, 1861 his solicitation "for a supply of muskets for the class of Tactics, and for one or more cannon for use of school in artillery drill." This was the common trend of opinion in Virginia with a war just a few weeks off.

The conscientious efforts of Randolph to further the University

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27. Philip Alexander Bruce, op. cit., pp. 22-23

28. Calendar of State Papers, Vol. XI, p. 143

of Virginia are another step toward proving that Randolph truly carried on the principles of Jefferson after his death.

## Chapter IV

## ROLE PLAYED IN THE ASSEMBLY OF 1831-1832

The General Assembly met at the Capitol, in the City of Richmond on Monday, December 15, 1831. It was the fifty-sixth year of the Commonwealth. This assembly was destined to witness one of the most notable legislative debates of the nineteenth century.

Albemarle county elected Rice W. Wood and Thomas Jefferson Randolph as their two representatives.<sup>29</sup> This was to prove a most excellent choice as the latter was to become the foremost advocate of gradual emancipation in the Virginia Legislature of this session.<sup>30</sup>

The older leaders had given way to a younger group who were not lacking in ability.<sup>31</sup>

Speaker Linn Banks, nominated by Randolph to that office,<sup>32</sup>

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29. House Journal, 1831-1832, p. 1
30. Beverley B. Munford, Virginia's Attitude Toward Slavery and Secession, p. 51. Longmans, Green and Company, New York, 1909
31. T.M. Whitfield, Slavery Agitation in Virginia, 1829-1832, p. 65. The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1930
32. House Journal, p. 3

appointed him to the committee for schools and colleges and on the committee to examine the public library in joint action with a committee of the senate.<sup>33</sup>

First, I will attempt to trace the actions of Randolph in the assembly concerning slavery and devote the second part of the chapter to his dealings with other problems.

The representatives were not elected on their stands toward slavery but in Governor Floyd's message the gravity of the question of the slave population was brought to attention and it immediately became the leading issue.<sup>34</sup> Speaker Banks appointed a Committee of the Coloured Population to consider the part of the Governor's message referring to slaves and free negroes.<sup>35</sup> It is notable that Randolph was not named on the original committee<sup>36</sup> nor on the Coloured Population Committee.<sup>37</sup>

William O. Goode fired the first bolt when he seized the floor and made a tirade in favor of slavery and proved himself to be its leading defender. He ended his speech by resolving that "the select committee raised on the subject of slaves, free negroes and the melancholy occur-

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33. Ibid., p. 8

34. Whitfield, op. cit., pp. 66, 67

35. Ibid., pp. 67, 68

36. House Journal, p. 8

37. Ibid., p. 15

rences growing out of the tragical massacre in Southampton, be discharged from all duties... and that it is not expedient to legislate on the subject."<sup>38</sup>

Randolph, the leader of gradual emancipation, accepted the challenge and moved that the resolution be amended by excising all after the word "Southampton" and substituting therefor:

be instructed to enquire into the expediency of submitting to the vote of the qualified voters the propriety of providing by law, that the children of all female slaves who may be born in this state on or after the fourth day of July, 1840, shall become the property of the commonwealth, the males at the age of twenty-one years, the females at the age of eighteen if detained by their owners within the limits of Virginia until they shall respectively arrive at the ages aforesaid; to be hired out until the net sum arising therefrom shall be sufficient to defray the expenses of their removal beyond the limits of the United States.<sup>39</sup>

The debate was on with Samuel Moore defending Randolph's proposal and James H. Gholson and General Brodnax bitterly denouncing it.

The next step was the report submitted by the committee assigned to investigate. They reported that having taken the matter into careful consideration they had come to the following resolution: "Resolved as the opinion of this committee that it is inexpedient for the present to make any legislative enactments for the abolition of slavery."<sup>40</sup>

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38. House Journal, p. 93

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p. 009



Mr. Preston suggested that the word "expedient" be substituted for the word "inexpedient."<sup>41</sup> Mr. Witcher proposed indefinite postponement of the question but was rejected by a count: Ayes 60; noes 71. Then Mr. Preston asked for adoption of said amendment, and it was determined in the negative:<sup>42</sup> Ayes 58; noes 73.

Randolph then favored a resolution that it was inexpedient for the present to make any legislative enactments for the abolition of slavery.<sup>43</sup> He realized the great evils arising from the condition of the coloured population but felt that a more definite development of public opinion was needed. The resolution was carried ayes 65; noes 58.<sup>44</sup> It opened the way for future legislation which never materialized.

On January 2, smouldering under the direct attack which representative Brown launched upon him, Randolph arose in his own defense and proceeded to deliver his famous oration.<sup>45</sup>

A few of the salient points will be presented in the following paragraphs.

In his opening sentences Randolph made it clear that he was not a professional speaker but merely an agriculturist at heart. The defense

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41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43,44. Ibid., p. 110

45. Much of this speech may also be attributed to the conversations and inspirations of Edward Coles to Randolph. Coles was a leader for the emancipation of slaves. One of the letters urging Randolph along may be found in the Virginia Historical Register, Vol. 3, p. 237.

of his honor, however, prompted this speech.<sup>46</sup> He wishes time to survey the entire question of the expedience of legislation.

Randolph had been accused by Rives that his plan for the emancipation of slaves was the plan of Thomas Jefferson. On the other hand, Brown made the accusation that this was not the plan of Jefferson. Randolph explained that he had formed the plan from Jefferson's published works and from the impressions of social intercourse. If it proved worthwhile, he wanted Jefferson to receive the credit; if it proved a failure, he was ready to assume the disgrace.<sup>47</sup>

Randolph then began to prove the practicability of the plan. He pointed to the fact that the master was allowed eighteen and twenty-one years after birth of each to remove the slave and that it would take twenty-six years before the first slave would be removed. By the time the plan went into effect three-fourths of the present generation would be dead and the new generation would be acclimated to the plan. In convincing style he argued that it would take eighty years to complete the plan which would provide ample time for the gradual removal of the coloured and the introduction of free labor.<sup>48</sup>

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46. Thomas Jefferson Randolph, Speech Delivered in the House of Delegates of Virginia on the Abolition of Slavery, p. 4. Thomas W. White,

47. Ibid., pp. 4, 5

48. Ibid., p. 5

It was contended that the slaves preferred Virginia and bondage to transportation to the Coast of Africa. It was not up to them but up to the people to decide their safety as it was jeopardized by their retention.<sup>49</sup>

Randolph suggested that Louisiana and the newly opened west would provide a haven for the blacks. To quote him: "Here the African will find boundless forests to fell with his forced and reluctant labor. He will find the wide expanse of varied soils to desolate. Here he will pass away from the wasted lands of Virginia and from a people whose only curse was to have him thrust upon them."<sup>50</sup>

He disagreed with the proposal to deny non-slave owners the right to vote on the issue. This was the wrong attitude as their children might be the future slave-owners and the children of the present slave-owners might not. It was also a question of the safety of the people at large,<sup>51</sup> making it vital to the entire population of Virginia.

It was argued that if the state could not handle an insurrection the United States could quell it with her troops. Randolph granted this point but drew attention to the fact that by the time the federal troops

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49. Ibid., pp. 5, 6

50. Ibid., pp. 6, 7

51. Ibid., p. 8

succeeded "she might reclaim a county smoking with the blood of its population." It was here that he injected his memorable prediction that "be this as it may, there is one circumstance to which we are to look as inevitable in the fullness of time; a dissolution of the Union." It was inevitable and the negro troops would be used against Virginia. Now was the time to remove the evil.<sup>52</sup>

Some one had objected to the western section of the state participating in the issue. Randolph maintained that the issue was so engrossing that all sections of the state were vitally concerned.<sup>53</sup>

Randolph turned his attention to Mr. Gholson from Brunswick, who had mentioned the popular voice and spoke of the meeting held by the citizens of Albemarle on this subject in derision. He was corrected by Randolph who had been informed that this was a meeting of the respected citizens of Albemarle and that they sided with his resolution, including many who owned numerous slaves.<sup>54</sup>

He reiterated the promising prospect Louisiana furnished for a solution.<sup>55</sup>

The gentleman from Dinwiddie had inferred that men should not

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52. Ibid., p. 9

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., pp. 10, 11

55. Ibid., p. 11

propose things they were not prepared to vote for. He corrected this erroneous impression by saying, "I was prepared to vote for the submission of this plan to the people... that I was not prepared, and that I would not vote for any legislative act upon this subject which was not to be submitted to the people."<sup>56</sup>

He frequently expresses his great faith in the electorate of Virginia and believed that they should be consulted on all matters.<sup>57</sup>

Randolph continued to prove that the slave-owners were in just as precarious a position as the rest of the people. They were just as much involved and actually had more at stake.<sup>58</sup>

The poor man was worse off than the slave. In hard times the slave could turn to his master for shelter and food. Where could the poor white turn?<sup>59</sup>

Randolph opposed the idea that the slave should be treated like capital. Was not the slave, labor? This being ture, he should be treated more humanely. This treatment of the black was a stain on Virginia.<sup>60</sup> He admitted that slavery existed elsewhere. It existed in the uncivilized regions but not in progressive, civilized Europe. He pointed

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56. Ibid., p. 12

57. Ibid., p. 13

58. Ibid., p. 14

59. Ibid., pp. 14, 15

60. Ibid., pp. 15, 16

out that the United States was the only Christian nation with slavery.<sup>61</sup> There was even a more fundamental argument. The pro-slavery defenders argued that slavery existed in ancient times. The difference was that in former ages the slave could rise by merit or even inter-marry. No racial distinction existed. But in what a different predicament the present slave found himself. Barred forever by color he had no hope of becoming a respected member of society.<sup>62</sup>

Randolph closed with a burst of oratory which stamped him as a true statesman and concluded with this ringing sentence, "I am a democrat; my highest wish would be to have the name inscribed upon my tomb."<sup>63</sup>

James McDowell immediately supported his speech and re-emphasized the points, but to no avail.

The emancipators did manage to have a bill passed requesting the general government to procure a territory or territories, beyond the limits of the United States, to which the several states might remove their free coloured population.<sup>64</sup>

Legislation having been declared inexpedient, slavery had a firmer grip on Virginia. Little did they realize that this firmer grip would lead ultimately to conflict and ruin.

Randolph's activities in the assembly were by no means confined

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61. Ibid. p. 16

62. Ibid., pp. 16, 17

63. Ibid., p. 17

64. House Journal, p. 120

entirely to the slave question! He was intensely interested in having carried a plan that either the bank of Virginia or the Farmers Bank of Virginia might be authorized to establish an office of discount and deposit, or an agency in Scottsville. <sup>65</sup> Throughout the entire assembly he fought for this bill and eventually had it passed in the house only to be defeated in the senate. <sup>66</sup>

He was added to the committee on Agriculture and Manufacturers and played a leading role. <sup>67</sup> He was also made a member of the committee to help counties of the commonwealth bordering the Ohio River to repair roads and bridges injured by the Ohio River.

The James River Company was incorporated by this assembly and Randolph supported this move, as his policy of internal improvement coincided with this company's destiny. <sup>68</sup>

In reference to internal improvements Randolph voted for appropriation for opening a road from Monroe to the Kentucky line in Cabell county. <sup>69</sup>

In this stormy session of 1831-1832 Randolph demonstrated definitely that he was a man of great foresight and worthy of bearing the name

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65. Ibid., p. 38

66. Ibid., p. 223 and p. 247

67. Ibid., p. 80

68. Ibid., p. 225

69. Ibid., p. 244

of his famous grandfather. His fight for gradual emancipation of the coloured population will forever be one of the highlights of Virginia history.



## Chapter V

## ROLE PLAYED IN THE ASSEMBLY OF 1832-1833

After making such a spectacular showing in the previous assembly, Randolph was returned to office by a large margin of votes. However, his fellow member of the Democratic party was defeated and the other seat in the assembly was awarded to Thomas W. Gilmer, an outstanding member of the Whig Party.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, Randolph and Gilmer represented Albemarle County in the fifty-seventh assembly of the commonwealth. It met at Richmond on Monday, December 3, 1832.<sup>71</sup>

Because of Randolph's interest and experience in affairs of education, he was placed on the committee of schools and colleges. To add to this, he was placed on a joint committee of the two houses to examine the public library.<sup>72</sup>

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70. Journal of the House of Delegates of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1832-1833, p. 1. In the future this journal will be referred to as the House Journal.

71. House Journal, p. 1

72. Ibid., p. 6

Continuing to recognize the ability of one of their members, Randolph was placed on the powerful committee on agriculture and manufactures.<sup>73</sup> This committee was the most potent one and through the entire session Randolph played a dominant part.

Randolph's first move was to have all matters pertaining to the University of Virginia referred to the schools and colleges committee.<sup>74</sup> This provided Randolph with an excellent opportunity to advance the cause of the state university.

Randolph displayed not only interest in the military affairs of the state but demonstrated such ability and knowledge in this field that he was placed on the committee on the militia laws.<sup>75</sup>

At this time South Carolina and the Federal Government were involved in disputes over distribution of rights and the disputes had assumed such proportions that South Carolina was contemplating secession. Virginia was not prepared for such drastic actions and so it was vital that she step in and attempt to settle the issue.

Thus, a committee was appointed to investigate the grave situation between South Carolina and the Federal Government in order to determine what was the appropriate action Virginia should take and how to

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73. Ibid., p. 21

74. Ibid., p. 23

75., Ibid., p. 28

restore harmony and preserve the Union. Randolph was honored by being  
<sup>76</sup>  
 placed on this committee.

After careful deliberation and investigation, the committee re-  
<sup>77</sup>  
 commended to the house twelve resolutions, all of them reflecting the  
 belief and principles of Randolph.

Briefly, one may sum them up as follows:

1. Resolve to bend every effort to arrest the impending danger and to allay the storm which threatens to sweep from the earth the fairest fabric of human liberty ever exhibited to an admiring world.
2. Virginia appreciates the blessings and advantages of the Union, but the powers should be regulated by the constitution.
3. Virginia does not favor the high tariff laws. They foster particular industries and are inexpedient and contrary to the spirit of the federal compact.
4. The duties are too high. A gradual abolition would be the solution.
5. Virginia agrees with South Carolina but admits that she acted too hastily. Virginia is tied up with South Carolina and has much in common with her.
6. President Jackson has assumed too much power.
7. Virginia favors conciliation and not arms to settle the dispute. Arms lead to Civil War and the destruction of the Union.
8. Instruct the representatives in Congress to procure the reduction of tariff.

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76. Ibid., p. 31

77. Ibid., p. 79

9. A general convention of the states should be called if Congress does not take reasonable actions.
10. Send a committee of two to South Carolina to appeal to her to be less radical in her actions.
11. Have the resolutions made public to the President, Congress and legislatures.

A close scrutiny of the resolutions shows that they bear out Randolph's principles of the value of the Union provided it does not usurp too much power, defending rural sections and opposing discriminating tariffs and duties, proceeding cautiously in all disputes, resorting to war only as a last measure, the finality of power of the states over the federal government and appealing to the public.

Randolph favored the principle that "when any one state in this Union, shall for any cause, attempt to secede without the consent of the other states, the sole arbiter of the question as to the right of such secession, is the sword."<sup>78</sup> This resolution was decidedly voted down in the assembly.

Favorable debate in the assembly led to the appointment of a committee to bring in a bill concerning the construction of a road from Charlottesville to Harrisonburg. Randolph, qualified by his familiarity with this region,<sup>79</sup> was appointed on the committee.

Randolph, continuing to play a dominant role in the assembly,

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78. Ibid., p. 89

79. Ibid., p. 109

was appointed to the committee on banks.<sup>80</sup> His ability in the financial field was forceably made evident in his brilliant discourse on "Sixty Years' Reminiscences of the Currency of the United States."<sup>81</sup>

He then turned his attention toward the financial end of the legislature and favored an act authorizing the bank of Virginia and the Farmer's Bank of Virginia to subscribe for stock of the James River and Kanawha Company.<sup>82</sup> It is striking that a man of as high intellectual caliber as Randolph was did not realize the futility of this project.

When the time came to vote on the bill authorizing a subscription by the State of Virginia to the stock of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company,<sup>83</sup> Randolph supported it<sup>84</sup>, and it was passed.

Randolph ardently believed in the building of railroads and supported the measures in the assembly aiding them.

His only opportunity in this assembly to express his feelings toward slavery came when a bill making appropriations for the removal of free persons of color was voted and passed.<sup>85</sup> The strength was, however, sapped out of the bill as numerous rider bills were passed along with it.

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80. Ibid., p. 150

81. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography. Vol. 5, p. 426

82. House Journal, p. 131

83. Ibid., p. 159

84. Ibid., p. 177

85., Ibid., p. 226

In this assembly Randolph, spurred on by the recent occurrences in the previous assembly, took the leading role and demonstrated his versatility by participating in every field of legislation irrespective of its nature.

## Chapter VI

## ROLE PLAYED IN THE ASSEMBLY OF 1834-1835

Randolph was elected to a seat in the fifty-ninth assembly after an absence of one year. It seemed as if the citizens of Albemarle were very much in favor of the Democratic Party's platform for they also elected by a landslide margin Randolph's fellow partyman, Alexander Rives.<sup>86</sup> Sharing similar principles, it was only natural that these two representatives were to cooperate throughout the entire session.

Randolph was appointed to the standing committee to examine the executive expenditures for the current years. He was also reappointed to the powerful agriculture and manufactures committee on the strength of his excellent showings in previous assemblies.<sup>87</sup>

It seems as if in this assembly Randolph considered his support of the James River and Kanawha Company of paramount importance and incessantly forwarded its cause. It was through his influence that "an

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86. House Journal, 1834-1835, p. 1

87. Ibid., p. 17

act to authorize the common council of the City of Richmond to make an additional subscription to the stock of the James River and Kanawha Company,"<sup>88</sup> was passed.

He was placed on the committee to enquire into the expediency of increasing the banking capital of the state, and if expedient, whether by one or more independent banks with branches, or branches of those now chartered.<sup>89</sup>

Following this up Randolph made a motion asking for the establishment of a bank at the town of Charlottesville. He was supported by a petition of sundry citizens of the county of Albemarle. The motion was referred to the committee on banks.<sup>90</sup>

He did succeed in having an office of discount and deposit of the bank of Virginia established in the county of Botetourt.<sup>91</sup>

The building of railroads was still in full force as this was a period of great internal improvement. Always foresighted in his views, Randolph was a strong friend to the cause of the railroads. "An act to authorize the board of public works to subscribe on behalf of the commonwealth for two-fifths of the stock of the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and

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88. Ibid., p. 80

89. Ibid., p. 84

90. Ibid., p. 100

91. Ibid., p. 159



Potomac railroad company" was passed with Randolph voting in favor.<sup>92</sup>

The only instance in this assembly where Randolph played an enthusiastic part was his vain attempt to secure the position of Senator for his fellow countryman, William C. Rives. The vote was close in the house, and Randolph served on the joint committee of the two houses to determine the final vote. B.W. Leigh was nominated by an 85 to 81 margin.<sup>93</sup>

A petition of sundry citizens of the county of Albemarle, asking that permission might be granted to Yarico, a man of color, when emancipated by his owner, to remain within the commonwealth<sup>94</sup> was drawn to his attention. Randolph defended the issue, but it was referred to a committee which was a means of destroying it.

The construction of turnpike roads were frequently brought before the assembly and received support from Randolph.

With the progressive leadership of Randolph, the committee on agriculture and manufactures presented many reports encouraging industry and business. Two examples of these reports were the ones on a bill extending the corporate privilege of the Lynchburg Manufacturing Company<sup>95</sup> and a bill to incorporate the Aqueduct Iron Manufacturing Company.

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92. Ibid., pp. 89, 90

93. Ibid., p. 110

94. Ibid., p. 113

95. Ibid., p. 140

Little good developed from these reports as most of them were referred back to the committee.

In contrast to the stormy sessions of the immediately preceding assemblies, this one was dull and vapid. Issues of national consequence or resounding state consequence were few. Randolph was tired of the whole proceeding and so, weeks before the assembly adjourned sine die, he asked for leave of absence from the service of the house for the remainder of the session. It was granted.

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96. Ibid., p. 199

## Chapter VII

## ROLE PLAYED IN THE ASSEMBLY OF 1836-1837

Once again Albemarle was united in its political convictions and nominated to the sixty-first assembly of the commonwealth her two veteran Democratic Party leaders, Thomas Jefferson Randolph and Alexander Rives.<sup>97</sup> The Assembly met in Richmond on the fifth day of December, 1836.

In this assembly Randolph again was one of the foremost figures inasmuch as several national issues were at atake in which Randolph was deeply interested.

Randolph was placed on the committee of schools and colleges. This appointment was rapidly becoming a customary procedure. In close connection with this he was again placed on the committee to act jointly with a committee of the senate to examine the public library, of which he was elected chairman.<sup>98</sup>

With Randolph at its helm, the committee on schools and colleges

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97. House Journal, 1836-1837, p. 1

98. Ibid., p. 17

played a very active part introducing numerous measures. It was in this assembly that a resolution was brought forward to authorize the establishment of a medical school at Richmond.<sup>99</sup> The resolution got to the stage where a bill was ordered to be brought in.

At this time Randolph clearly re-echoed two of Jefferson's most vital theories concerning education. First, Randolph defended the plan to divide the counties into school districts, or hundreds, for the purpose of education.<sup>100</sup> One can readily see that this plan was a step toward universal education. Second, that free schools should be substituted for the poor school system. That the assembly should enquire into the necessary modification of the laws relating to primary schools consequent thereon and the additional appropriations to effect that object.<sup>101</sup> One may aptly visualize Jefferson arguing and defending the same principles.

Of lesser consequence in relation to the schools and colleges committee was its securing for the library of the state a full length portrait of the late Chief Justice John Marshall.<sup>102</sup>

A bill for increasing the banking capital of the commonwealth

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99. Ibid., p. 64

100. Ibid., p. 89

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid., p. 206

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was seriously debated in the assembly. Eventually, ideas were formulated and it was decided to place the matter in the hands of a select committee. Randolph was included on the committee inasmuch as he favored the plan. The plan called for an increase in the banking capital of the commonwealth providing for the establishment of an independent bank at Petersburg, to be called the Union Bank of Virginia, with a capital of \$500,000 at that place, with branches at Farmville and Clarksville, having a capital of \$200,000 each, and any other branch which might be deemed necessary. <sup>104</sup> The plan was in accord with Randolph's theory of sound banking under the jurisdiction of the state.

The treasury of the United States had gathered a large surplus fund and it was necessary to divide this sum and allow the states to be the depositories. Randolph was in favor of Virginia receiving her share, for after all the surplus was a fait accompli, but feared that this sum would be drawn into a precedent to sanction any system of taxation by the federal government and lead to both extravagant expenditures by Congress and the spirit of overtrading by the banks. <sup>105</sup> Randolph favored the resolution that "Virginia protests against the exaction by the general government of other and greater taxes than those which may be

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103. Ibid., p. 278

104. Ibid., pp. 283-285

105. Ibid., pp. 37, 38

necessary for the just expenses thereof economically administered." <sup>106</sup>

By favoring such a Resolution Randolph clearly demonstrated that he was profoundly interested in the financial soundness of the government. He favored a cautious economic policy and certainly would not support a policy of excessive taxation and extravagant expenditure.

Randolph continued to defend states rights in this session when he argued ardently that United States senators are responsible to their state legislatures and that the state legislatures may instruct <sup>107</sup> them. He also advanced the principle that a representative cannot rightfully resign when the true motive would be to defeat the instruc- <sup>108</sup> tions of his constituents, either directly or indirectly.

A committee was appointed to have a geological survey of the state made. Realizing the versatility of Randolph and that he favored <sup>109</sup> internal improvement and development of the state he was made chairman. Randolph assumed his duties and went to work. He had Professor Rogers, an outstanding geologist, give a report and had a bill passed authorizing <sup>110</sup> such a survey.

This was not the limit to his accomplishments concerning in-

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106. Ibid., p. 35

107. Ibid., pp. 254, 255

108. Ibid., p. 263

109. Ibid., p. 112

110. Ibid., p. 134

ternal improvement in the house. He caused a bill to be passed authorizing a subscription in behalf of the state to the stock of the Louisa Railroad Company.<sup>111</sup> He also favored the construction of a road from the Pound Gap of Cumberland Mountain, on the Kentucky line, to the Fincastle and Cumberland Gap road.<sup>112</sup>

His only opportunity to express his views on slavery was presented when he was put on the committee to consider "the resolution of the state of Vermont on the subject of the abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia."<sup>113</sup> However, nothing developed from this committee.

This was one of Randolph's most successful participations in an assembly and reminds one of his achievements and spirit displayed in the sessions of 1831-1832 and 1832-1833.

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111. Ibid., pp. 183, 184

112. Ibid., p. 242

113. Ibid., p. 236, 237

## Chapter VIII

## ROLE PLAYED IN THE ASSEMBLY OF JANUARY, 1838

Albemarle, delighted over the excellent showing of Randolph in the session of 1836-1837, reelected him to the Assembly which met in January 1838. Alexander Rives also was renominated,<sup>114</sup> and they were once again in the Assembly leading an attack for democracy.

The Speaker of the House again placed Randolph on both the schools and colleges committee and the agriculture and manufactures committee.<sup>115</sup> He was made chairman of the second committee. Randolph had served frequently on these two committees in previous sessions and was quite capable of doing justice to his duties.

In the realm of education Randolph continued to display his liberality and advance forethought. For instance, he was very much interested in having the committee of schools and colleges enquire and report to the House whether any, and if any, what legislation was expedient and necessary in aid of the regulations of the university and colleges

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114. House Journal, January 1838, pl

115. Ibid., p. 14



designed to restrain the extravagant expenditure of students there.<sup>116</sup>  
No phase of education, not even the expenditure of the students, escaped the watchful and observant eyes of Randolph.

Randolph introduced one resolution which could well be attributed to Jefferson: "that the committee of schools and colleges be instructed to enquire into the expediency of adopting some general system of education by which every free white child in this commonwealth may obtain a liberal education at the expense of the government."<sup>117</sup> This is a truly remarkable resolution when one considers the predominant attitude toward universal education that existed in the minds of the well-to-do Virginian of that period. This far reaching proposal to establish some form of public education was made some ten years before the first laws were passed. However, even these laws, passed in the late forties, merely established the beginnings of a public school system and did not carry out the proposal of Randolph. His proposal was not fully executed until as late as the beginning of the twentieth century.

His committee presented a bill to incorporate the Scottsville lyceum.<sup>118</sup> He lent his support to an act to provide for the establishment of the Virginia asylum for the education of the deaf and dumb and of

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116. Ibid., p. 71

117. Ibid., p. 109

118. Ibid., p. 94

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 the blind. He considered it the duty of the State to educate not only the normal but also the subnormal. Randolph also presented a bill to incorporate the Parkersburg academy and a similar bill for the Peters-  
 120  
 burg Classical Institute. He was a tireless worker fighting against supreme obstacles.

Equally vigorous was his conduct on the agriculture and manufactures committee. Invariably, Randolph would report bills and ardently support their passage. Some of these bills were bills to incorporate  
 121  
 the Mansfield Manufacturing Company, the Buchanan Manufacturing Company,  
 122  
 the National Dry Dock Company, the Shamondale Springs Company in the  
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 county of Jefferson and the Tredegar Iron Company, and the Hudson  
 124  
 Mining Company; and a bill to establish an inspection of tobacco at  
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 Charlottesville. Unfortunately most of these proposals were laid on the table, which is usually an efficient means of disposing of bills.

Closely related to agriculture and manufactures were his inter-

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119. Ibid., pp. 131, 132

120. Ibid., p. 151

121. Ibid., p. 63

122. Ibid., p. 89

123. Ibid., p. 123

124. Ibid., p. 168

125. Ibid., p. 86

ests in internal improvement. He introduced bills to improve the roads, canals and railroads. As examples, one of each will be cited. As for canals, he favored a canal to connect the James River canal with the Rivanna River.<sup>126</sup> He voted for a bill to provide for the construction of a turnpike road from Staunton to Parkersburg.<sup>127</sup> The most significant proposal in the category of internal improvements was his continued support of the Louisa railroad. He preferred that the board of public works subscribe to the stock of the Louisa railroad.<sup>128</sup> Also he voted for the defeated bill providing for construction of a railroad from the Tennessee line to New River.<sup>129</sup>

Randolph played a very active part in the dealings with the financial and banking end of the legislature. He was particularly anxious that the banks of the commonwealth be compelled to make to the house a statement showing their debts, loans and the duration of the loans.<sup>130</sup> Randolph believed that the legislature should inspect the banking system with emphasized attention on the types of credit allowed. He was a thorough financier believing that the banks should be forced to

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126. Ibid., p. 168

127. Ibid., p. 189

128. Ibid., p. 243

129. Ibid., p. 249

130. Ibid., p. 49

meet their obligations and that they should not become too involved  
with Federal banks even though they might offer better inducements.<sup>131</sup>

This was another display of Randolph's policy of financial integrity. He sincerely believed in constant observation over the financial system so as to avoid an unsound situation.

This session was severely held back by the time consumed on contested elections. Randolph being of a practical nature, had passed a resolution which did much to do away with this situation. The resolution<sup>132</sup> called for a select committee to enquire into the expediency of an explanatory declaration of the right of suffrage as existing under the constitution, or of any change in the existing laws relating to elections which might tend to lessen the number or facilitate the decision of contested elections. The committee included on its list the name of Randolph.

Randolph did not accomplish anything of great moment, in this assembly. It seems as if the issues may be classified as rather petty, in the main. In fact, one might add that although he introduced many bills toward the end of the session, he participated only to a very limited extent.

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131. Ibid., pp. 186, 187

132. Ibid., p. 93

## Chapter IX

## ROLE PLAYED IN THE ASSEMBLY OF 1842-1843

The names of Thomas Jefferson Randolph and Shelton F. Leake appeared on the list of representatives of the sixty-seventh assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia from Albemarle.<sup>133</sup> They were both members of the Democratic Party. The Assembly met in Richmond on the fifth of December, 1842.

Randolph was made chairman of the committee of finance<sup>134</sup> by Speaker Joel Holleman, who was nominated to his office by Randolph. Randolph was also placed on the committee on banks where he was soon to distinguish himself.<sup>135</sup>

In the election of governor, Randolph supported James McDowell. McDowell was the candidate from the western section of the state and was particularly interested in internal improvement and redistricting of the

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133. House Journal, 1842-1843, p. 1

134. Ibid., p. 12

135. Ibid.

state. Randolph, sympathetic with McDowell's point of view, voted for his election. McDowell was elected,<sup>136</sup> the first and only Governor from the western portion of the state prior to the War of Secession.

Early in the session Randolph opposed a bill extending the authority of banks to issue small notes.<sup>137</sup> Randolph was a sound financier and believed a further extension would mean inflation.

He took it upon himself to further the interests of the Rivanna Navigation Company. He applied for more liberal amendments to its restrictions and permission for the company to purchase slaves to be employed in repairing their works.<sup>138</sup> Randolph realized that slave labor could be used to great advantage in building up the internal conditions of the state.

Randolph's first act as chairman of the committee on finance was to introduce a measure requiring the commissioners of revenue to be paid out of the county levy.<sup>139</sup> This measure was referred to the committee for courts and justice where no more was heard of it.

Much more success was experienced by Randolph in his two measures concerning the James River and Kanawha Company. He had a bill

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136. Ibid., p. 32

137. Ibid., p. 35

138. Ibid., p. 52

139. Ibid., p. 54

passed, 59-42, instructing the committee of finance to enquire into the expediency of requesting the treasurer of the commonwealth to withhold his signature from any other of the guaranteed bonds authorized by the act passed March 23, 1839 until the investigation of the circumstances of the company by a committee of the house or a joint committee with the

<sup>140</sup> senate. This was a continuation of Randolph's policy of sound finance which included careful observation of all financial dealings. Closely related to this was his bill requesting the president of the company to delay the presentation to the treasurer of the commonwealth for his signature to additional certificates of debt until the concerns of the company could be investigated by either a joint committee or a <sup>141</sup> separate committee from the house.

Randolph favored a tax on spiritous liquors among the new subjects of taxation to help to provide for the payment of the interest upon certain bonds guaranteed by the commonwealth for the James River and <sup>142</sup> Kanawha Company. It was ordered to be read a second time and later to <sup>143</sup> be engrossed. It was never passed.

On January 13 the report of the committee of finances upon the debt, liabilities and resources of the commonwealth was submitted by Ran-

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140. Ibid.

141. Ibid., p. 56

142. Ibid., p. 62

143. Ibid., p. 65

dolph and was embodied in Document Number 20.<sup>144</sup>

Although he was not on the schools and colleges committee, Randolph still played an important part in matters pertaining to education. It was he who presented a communication from the rector and visitors of the University of Virginia, showing the increase in numbers of students from its commencement, which was order to be printed.<sup>145</sup> He also desired a loan to Emory and Henry College from the uninvested capital of the Literary fund.<sup>146</sup>

Randolph was very much interested in the public debt of the state and his interest lead to two resolutions. First, that a sinking fund should be created to pay the principal of the public debt in thirty years. Second, that taxes on existing subjects be raised for that purpose if necessary and that the taxation of the state be equalized by a graduation of merchants' licenses and by including capital which had hitherto been exempted, and requiring proportionate contributions from persons not possessed of capital but enjoying incomes from other sources.<sup>147</sup> Remarkable foresight and sound judgment was displayed by Randolph in arguing for a more equally distributed burden of taxation.

Randolph argued for the principle that the representative is

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144. Ibid., p. 70

145. Ibid., p. 74. Document Number 3

146. Ibid., p. 135

147. Ibid., p. 80



bound to obey the will of his constituents or resign his seat.<sup>148</sup> Randolph wanted this understood, believing that this was a means of retaining popular control over representatives. Randolph denounced Senator William S. Archer as a violator of the above principle. Archer had voted in favor of the United States bank and did not try to procure the repeal of the tariff passed at the last session of Congress. He also had failed to oppose and vote against any tariff which was not solely for revenue. In the same breath Randolph requested that the Senators be instructed to endeavor to procure the repeal of the Act of Congress directing the distribution of the proceeds of the sale of the public lands among the several states of the Union.<sup>149</sup> His ideals were embodied in resolutions and passed.<sup>150</sup>

One of the most difficult problems that this assembly had to solve was the demand of the representatives of the western counties for a redistricting of the state. Randolph as well as many others submitted plans. A close analysis of his plan will reveal its liberality in affording to all sections equal representation based on universal suffrage.<sup>151</sup> Once again Randolph brought forward and defended a Jeffersonian principle.

Randolph had passed a bill concerning inheritance which bears

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148. Ibid., p. 90

149. Ibid.

150. Ibid., pp. 91-93

151. Ibid., p. 123

remarkable similarity to the theories shared by present day economists. It read that real estate and personal property, inherited by or devised or bequeathed to others than the linial descendants of an intestate should pay a tax to the commonwealth upon such inheritance, devise or be-  
152  
quest.

The tax bill for that year was quite a problem as the two houses could not pass similar bills. In order to settle the differences, a joint committee of the two houses was appointed. Randolph was one of  
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the five from the house and was made the spokesman. However, no agreement was forthcoming, and they had to adjourn without settlement.

The assembly was the last one of which Randolph was a member. His tireless efforts in it and the five others that he attended have created a record which will endure throughout the ages and set up a standard that future representatives will have to be guided by.

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152. Ibid., p. 197. Bill Number 183

153. Ibid., p. 259

## Chapter X

## VIEWS ON AGRICULTURE

Thomas Jefferson Randolph, born in a rural civilization, never forgot that he was at heart an agriculturist. Throughout his entire life he derived most enjoyment out of his successes pertaining to agriculture. Supreme peace of mind was his at his handsome estate of Edgehill. Randolph constantly referred to the fact that he was an agriculturist. In his opening sentences in his memorable speech on slavery in the assembly of 1831-1832 he made it clear that he was an agriculturist and not a professional speaker.

Randolph considered agriculture the most essential field for prosperity and success of a nation. This is stated vividly in his opening paragraph in one of his essays.

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154. Speech by Thomas Jefferson Randolph, op. cit., p. 4

The importance of agriculture to all the substantial interests of mankind has justly placed it among the most useful avocations and necessary arts for the well being and prosperity of nations. No people have preserved a permanent power and wealth whose agriculture has not advanced, and prospered with that power.<sup>155</sup>

He was ready to admit that the life of a farmer is 'one of toil  
<sup>156</sup>  
 and exposure. Yes, that was true but it was a life in the open spaces where one is away from the distress and vices of the city. In fact, a considerable number of our most successful men were born and raised in the country and after having formulated good morals and habits had  
<sup>157</sup>  
 ventured into the cities.

The farmer never worries about his independence. Unlike the lawyer, the merchant and the mechanic, the farmer lives a life of independ-  
<sup>158</sup>  
 ence, not fearing individual rivalry or public favor.

The farmer had been educated and had created an interest for intellectual enjoyment. And yet the progress made in the equipment and principles of agriculture had been painfully slow. In fact, it had been  
<sup>159</sup>  
 stationary and even regressive. Randolph emphasized the fact that in order to maintain our pace in the improvement of civilization and its

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155. T.J. Randolph, An Essay, p. 3. James Alexander, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1842. This essay was delivered before the Agricultural Society of Albemarle.

156. Ibid.

157. Ibid., p. 4

158. Ibid.

159. Ibid., pp. 4, 5

consequences it was necessary that "the snail pace of agricultural improvement should be accelerated by all the appliances which lie within our reach."<sup>160</sup>

Although Randolph considered Albemarle and that region of Virginia the garden spot of America with its rich, fertile soil he warned the people to guard against misusing the soil. The richness was all the more reason why the people should take care of the soil as it was so vital to the very existence of the people. "By all means," he suggested, "graze cattle as it will not destroy the grass and impoverish the land and will enhance the value of it."<sup>161</sup>

Randolph equalled the heights attained in his speech on slavery in this essay and the closing lines will bring this out vividly:

The cultivation of poor land is an employment the most hopeless and discouraging; it is literally to sow without reaping, and to toil without reward. And it is to this, that large portions of the agriculturists of Virginia have doomed themselves, by a system of husbandry which has exhausted the lands by drawing everything from them, without returning any thing to them. Grass, plaster, the manures of the stable and farm yard, and the resources of the forest are all within their reach. They will say they have not money for the one or time for the other. But time will teach them without these aids they will be without money and without bread. With them they will be laying up riches which moth and rust doth not corrupt and where thieves break not through and steal. They will be using and not marring the earth which God has given them, as a habitation, and will reap their reward.<sup>162</sup>

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160. Ibid., p. 8

161. Ibid., p. 12

162. Ibid., p. 16

In October 1817 the Agricultural Society of Albemarle was organized with a very wide membership among the planters. In 1820, Randolph was made a member of the important committee of accounts. He remained a devoted member of the society for the rest of his life.

No one man played a more leading part in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the county. He was a magistrate, a member of the Legislature, member of the County Agricultural Society, and President of the Farmers' Bank.

Even in the field of agriculture one may continue to see the direct and similar attitudes of Jefferson and Randolph. Both were members and defenders of rural society.

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163. Mary Rawlings, The Albemarle of Other Days, p. 120. The Michie Company, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1925

164. Reverend Edgar Woods, Albemarle County in Virginia, p. 302. The Michie Company, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1901

## Chapter XI

## CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF 1850-1851

The Constitutional Convention assembled at Richmond on Monday, the fourteenth of October, 1850. After a few days it adjourned so as to derive the benefits from the new year's census and to give the members more time to prepare themselves. <sup>165</sup> According to one writer, however, <sup>166</sup> the delay merely served to create a dilatory spirit.

Randolph was selected as one of the four representatives from <sup>167</sup> the district of Nelson, Amherst and Albemarle.

It was the period when the west was clamoring for a revision of the Constitution of 1829-1830, when the east realized that most of the western claims were valid and concessions were necessary to preserve the

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165. Journal, Acts and Proceedings of a General Convention of the State of Virginia, p. 1. William Culley, Richmond, Virginia, 1851
166. John P. Little, History of Richmond, p. 258. The Dietz Printing Company, Richmond, Virginia, 1933
167. Convention Journal, op. cit., p. 4. The other three members from the district were Samuel M. Garland, V.W. Southall, and Littlebury N. Ligon.

unity of the state. Thus, the convention was called.

The Convention of 1829-1830 had assembled men of outstanding reputation, men of international consequence and fame. In direct contrast, the Convention of 1850-1851 was composed of lesser known men, men who were more youthful but who were vigorous, well informed, patriotic and who had a knowledge of the defects in the existing system of govern-  
168  
ment. It was a strange assemblage of different opinions, varying from high conservatism to the extreme of infinite radicalism, with all the variations and shades that it is possible for the mind of man to conceive. 169

In his description of the outstanding men of the Convention, Little speaks of Randolph as "a grandson of Thomas Jefferson, who led off that small body of eastern men who left their own party and gave power into the hands of the west. His course and speeches exhibit a striking  
170  
example of the well known axiom, that talent is not hereditary." The author was correct in saying that Randolph did frequently vote for measures enhancing the powers of the west, but Little was blinded by sectionalism and did not realize the pertinent fact that the west, growing rapidly in wealth and population, deserved more power and rights.

Randolph was selected by the president of the convention, John

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168. Little, op. cit., p. 254

169. Ibid., pp. 255, 256

170. Ibid., p. 280



Mason, as a member of the committee of thirteen. This committee was ap-<sup>171</sup>  
pointed to formulate the method of procedure in amending the Constitution.  
It was destined to guide the convention throughout its entire session.

After careful deliberation the committee of thirteen recom-  
mended the appointment of various committees. Randolph was placed on the  
committee on the Legislative department of the government where he was to  
<sup>172</sup>  
be of great service.

Randolph proposed several amendments to the constitution and  
they may be summed up as follows: First that slaves over the age of  
twelve and under sixty years shall be taxed, each in an amount equal to  
the tax levied on land of the assessed value of three hundred dollars.<sup>173</sup>  
He realized that one of the burning issues between the members of the  
Tidewater section and the west was over the exemption of slaves from tax.  
Randolph in a compromising fashion wanted slaves taxed to a limited ex-  
tent.

Secondly, that free males over the age of twenty-one and under  
sixty years shall pay a capitation tax equal to the tax levied on land  
of the assessed value of four hundred dollars and no other tax shall be  
levied upon slaves or capitation tax on white titheables for the revenue

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171. Journal, op. cit., p. 31

172. Ibid., p. 33

173. Ibid., section 13 of proposed amendments

of the commonwealth.<sup>174</sup> It was a principle of universal taxation and yet limiting the powers of the state.

Thirdly, that all taxation, ither than the above, shall be uniform according to value; but the Legislature may impose license taxes on itinerant venders, exhibitors, etc."<sup>175</sup> Randolph not only favored universal representation but also that the tax burden be shared equally. He realized that if the western counties were to continue to pay their share of taxes they should receive their proportion of representation.

Fourthly, that taxation for county purposes shall be levied in an equal per centum on the subjects taxed for the revenue of the common-<sup>176</sup>wealth in the counties respectively. This was an extension of Randolph's policy of fair and just taxation.

The larger portion of the time was consumed in discussing the basis of representation and when this was finally adjusted the other important discussions had to be hastily made. The finished product was<sup>177</sup> closely modeled after the Constitution of the State of New York.

The new Constitution contained many of Randolph's views. The increase in suffrage was truly a democratic step greatly favored by him.

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174. Ibid.

175. Ibid.

176. Ibid.

177. Little, op. cit., p. 288

An elective judiciary was to be established. Randolph, having endless faith in the electorate, favored this amendment. In like manner, the articles calling for justices of peace, sheriffs and attorneys for the commonwealth to be elected by the people of the counties or districts was in accord with the principles. The election of the Governor and lieutenant-governor by the people instead of by the legislature was a continuation of his faith in the electorate. The constitution put at rest the question of slave emancipation, a question of long and vital interest to Randolph. One provision in particular practically quoted Randolph who had for a considerable length of time in the assembly appealed for a sinking fund. It directed that whenever a debt was created, a sinking fund should be provided by taxation at the time to pay the interest and slowly redeem the principle of this debt.<sup>178</sup> It was a valuable expedient, for preventing excessive expenditures and consequent loss of state honor through fear of repudiation.

The convention overturned the Constitution of 1830. Randolph, realizing the shortcomings of the old constitution, played the role of conciliator - bringing together the extreme conservative viewpoints of the east and the radical viewpoint of the west in a compromise. Few writers devote much time to the role that Randolph played at the Convention, paying more attention to the leaders who presented extreme views. But, without the steady, understanding influence of men of Randolph's type a Constitution would never have materialized in 1850.

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178. Ibid., p. 291

## Chapter XII

## CONVENTION OF 1861

South Carolina had passed an ordinance of secession on the twentieth of December in 1860. Other states were headed in the same direction. On the fourteenth of January, 1861, the General Assembly of Virginia, by an act, authorized a convention which met in Richmond on the following February, 1861.<sup>179</sup> The name of Randolph was not listed the opening session. It adjourned on May 1, 1861 and reassembled on the twelfth of June.<sup>180</sup> Randolph was not a member as yet. A recess was taken on July 1, 1861 until the thirteenth of November.<sup>181</sup>

Valentine W. Southall's death was announced on the floor of the convention November 18, and Randolph was elected to succeed him and took his seat on the following day.<sup>182</sup> Randolph was in the convention

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179. J.N. Brenaman, A History of Virginia Conventions, p. 53. J.L. Hill Printing Company, Richmond, Virginia, 1902

180. *Ibid.*, p. 63

181. *Ibid.*, p. 64

182. Journal of Convention, 1861, p. 322. Wyatt M. Elliott, Richmond, Virginia, 1861

only twenty-two days before it adjourned sine die. The act of secession and most of the drawing up of the new constitution was completed. However, Randolph did take some part in the time allotted him.

Several of his proposals and views may be expressed here, and one can realize that Randolph, at the age of sixty-nine, was displaying some signs of reactionary views. As great and true a leader of Democracy as he was in his older days, nevertheless one may see his philosophy changing ever so slightly to the right.

He believed that the constitution of 1851 should be amended but did not believe it was expedient that this convention should submit amendments thereto for the ratification or rejection of the people. This point of view was carried out when the people rejected the proposed amended constitution.

His reaction was demonstrated when he favored a defeated resolution that, "who shall <sup>not</sup> after the close of the existing war become a citizen of this or any of the Confederate States under any naturalization law, unless such citizen shall have served in the Confederate States during the existing war in a civil or military capacity and in the latter case, shall have been honorably discharged." <sup>185</sup> Certainly, this was no prerequisite for naturalization.

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183. Ibid., pp. 329, 330

184. Brenaman, op. cit., p. 69

185. Journal, p. 338

Closely correlated with the above resolution was the one he favored permitting no citizenship rights to those who fought against the Confederate States until they had resided in a Confederate State for a period of years. This was just as reactionary. Randolph also advocated that no natural rights were to be granted unless one had an acquired interest in real estate or slaves.

For further restriction of the right of suffrage Randolph adhered to the resolution that no person should vote at any election who had not paid, within the year they were assessed, all state and county or corporation taxes assessed on him in the county in which he resided for the year preceding that in which he offered to vote.

It is quite a shame that Randolph had to present such a viewpoint at the convention. The explanation lies in the fact that he was loyal to the state and threw all his power toward the success of the state in the Civil War. However, after the war, Randolph, quick to sum up the situation, threw his entire support toward building up the Union and his native state.

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186. Ibid., pp. 346, 347

187. Ibid., p. 348

188. Ibid., p. 402

## Chapter XIII

## NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION OF 1872

This National Democratic Convention assembled in Baltimore, Maryland on July 9, 1872. Randolph was a delegate from the State of Virginia and had by this time attained the ripe age of eighty years. He was entirely too old to take an active part. This was a characteristic of the entire Convention. It was too old to make any constructive contribution. The Convention was dull and listless from the start. As one author described it, "The Baltimore Convention is a short horse, soon curried."<sup>189</sup>

Randolph was made temporary chairman and was soon replaced by James R. Doolittle of Wisconsin.<sup>190</sup>

Horace Greely of New York was nominated as candidate for president on the first ballot and B. Gratz Brown, of Missouri was nominated

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189. Everett Chamberlin, The Struggle of '72, p. 524. Union Publishing Company, Chicago, Illinois and Philadelphia, 1872
190. Thomas Hudson McKee, The National Conventions and Platforms of All Political Parties, 1789-1901, p. 143. The Friedenwald Company, Baltimore, Maryland, 1901

191

as candidate for vice-president.

There was not much work to be done by the convention. Practically all of the delegates had been instructed to vote for Greely and Brown and so they rather perfunctorily went through with the nomination. There was some question as to whether to nominate formally or simply to endorse the Cincinnati nominations and platform, of the Liberal Republicans. They could not swallow their pride completely so they decided to  
192  
formally nominate.

The delegates considered Greely the best man to nominate inasmuch as the democratic platform was based on the policy "anything to beat Grant and reverse his policy." Greely heartily subscribed to this  
193  
policy which made him the logical selection.

The convention met at twelve o'clock in Ford's Opera House. Fiery and zealous speeches were made denouncing Grant and his administration.  
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Then came the vote to adopt the Cincinnati philippic as a platform. It was carried through 662-70 with only delegates from Delaware,  
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Mississippi and Georgia voting in the negative. Randolph endorsed the

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191. Ibid.

192. Everett Chamberlin, op. cit., p. 524

193. Ibid., pp. 524, 525

194. Ibid., p. 525

195. Ibid., p. 528



platform because it contained many of his principles of democracy. 196

A newspaper correspondent wrote a paragraph which clearly summed up the spirit of the convention.

A significant feature in the convention today was the manner in which the popular airs were received. Previous to opening the convention this morning the band played "Yankee Doodle," "Red, White, and Blue," "Marching through Georgia," etc., but they received no notice. Finally, however, when "Dixie" and "The Bonnie Blue Flag," were performed, the audience broke out in a most violent manner and cheered the airs to the echo. In fine, the convention did not display enough enthusiasm over anything of a national character to charge a bottle of pop. But all allusions to the south and southern soldiers were loudly applauded showing clearly enough the composition and spirit of the convention.<sup>197</sup>

In reiteration, Randolph, far past his prime, quite reflected the spirit of the convention. It was strictly sectional and accomplished little. It adjourned after a painfully short and embarrassed session.

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196. This platform may be found on p. 145 in Thomas Hudson McKee, *op. cit.*

197. *Ibid.*, p. 529-530. The author had failed to list the correspondent or the newspaper in which the paragraph appeared.

198  
HIS LAST DAYS

In his devotion to the Union Randolph was unswerving until the John Brown raid, when, startled by the feeling of the North against the South, which it revealed, he announced his determination to cling to his state should she see fit to withdraw her allegiance to the Union. When the breach between the North and South came, he embraced the cause of the latter with the most patriotic devotion, giving the best proof of it by investing all the money he could raise in Confederate bonds. The rank of colonel in the Confederate army was conferred on him, but he was too old to take the field.<sup>199</sup> But when all was lost at Lee's surrender, without one instant's repining he accepted the situation and devoted his time and thoughts to restoring, politically and financially, the prosperity of the state with energy and earnestness.

His health gave first signs of declining in the spring of 1874 when fatigue from a long ride was followed by pain in his limbs and feet. In July after a long walk this pain returned. He was rushed to Hot

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198. This section is taken in the main from a memorial of Col. T.J. Randolph from the Charlottesville Chronicle of October 22, 1875.

199. Philip Alexander Bruce, op. cit., p. 197

Springs, but it was obvious that recovery was out of the question. Thus, he was taken home and on this trip an accident occurred which greatly hastened the invalid's death.

Physicians were called to his home and after a careful examination they decided he was suffering from senile gangrene. He was quite aware of his plight and received the verdict with the utmost composure. The serenity of his countenance and manner was undisturbed, and the sweetness of his conversation and the tender expressions of affection for those around him made impressions never to be effaced.

In his last days he was visited by many friends who were profoundly impressed with the calmness and serenity of the dying man.

Throughout his latter days he talked about religion, proving how seriously he had considered the subject.

He died October 7, 1875.

After death the tributes of respect paid him were very touching. A committee of citizens was sent from Charlottesville to Edgehill to join his funeral procession, which, as it moved along the beautiful road to Charlottesville, was swelled by persons coming on foot, on horseback, and in carriages to meet it. Old men came and uncovered their heads as the remains of their revered friend passed through. The church was crowded and the stores all closed. A hymn was sung by the former slaves of the good man, and his grave was covered by flowers placed there by young girls, who as scholars in his daughter's school, had found a happy home in his house, and a kind and affectionate friend in him.

He had been lately spoken to on the subject of attendance at the National Centennial at Philadelphia, and as the grandson of Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, there were gentlemen high in official position who thought he should have been given a prominent place in the program of opening ceremonies. No doubt had he lived he would have been so honored, and in turn honored the Centennial.

200

The parallel between the lives of Jefferson and Randolph may be drawn in endless fashion. Randolph resembled his grandfather in the imposing dignity of his bearing. Randolph was an ardent democrat and devoted much of his life to the principles formulated by Jefferson. One of the most striking coincidents is the fact that both died at the ripe old age of eighty-three.

Jefferson went on to win important offices; Randolph, truly great within his own confine, made the emancipation of slaves his paramount objective and facing insurmountable odds was defeated.

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200. Richmond Dispatch, "Death of Randolph," October 9, 1875

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