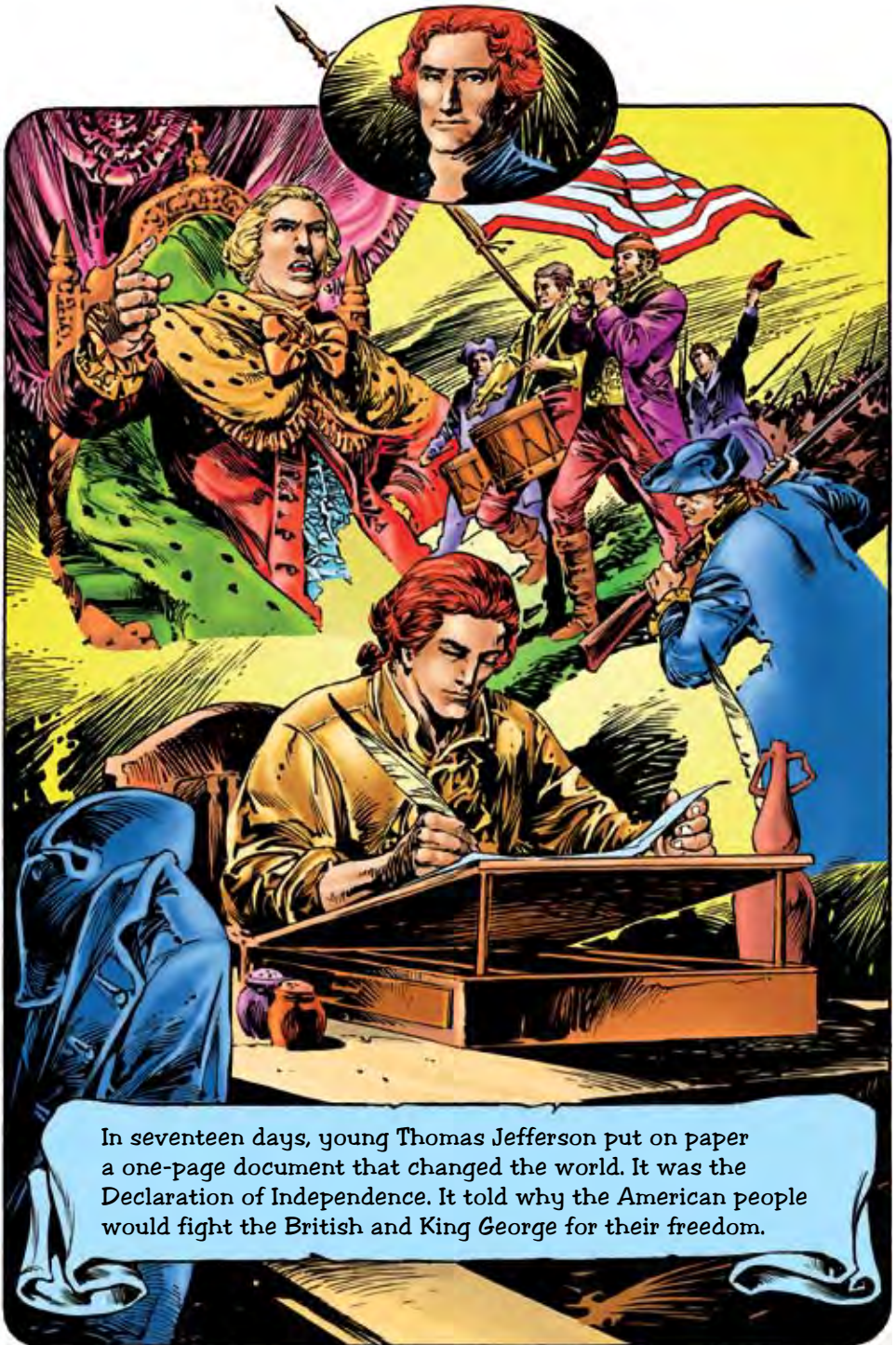


GRAPHIC
BIOGRAPHY

Thomas Jefferson





In seventeen days, young Thomas Jefferson put on paper a one-page document that changed the world. It was the Declaration of Independence. It told why the American people would fight the British and King George for their freedom.



On July 4, 1776, the Liberty Bell rang out from Independence Hall in Philadelphia, where the Continental Congress was meeting.

Bong, Bong

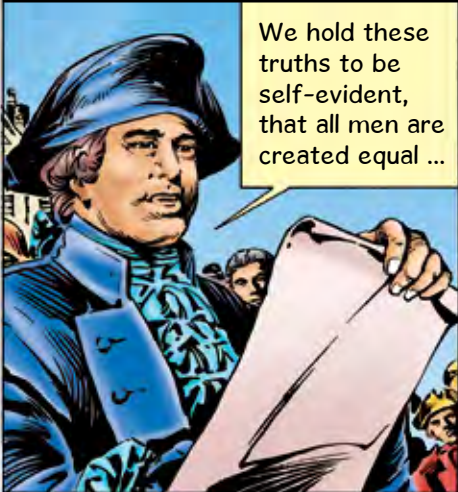
Listen! They've passed the Declaration of Independence.

We'll fight for our freedom. It's official!



Post riders rode away, north and south, to carry copies to every American colony.

In every town the paper was read aloud.



We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal ...



It has a fine sound. Who wrote it?

Thomas Jefferson, a red-headed 33-year-old Virginian, they say.



The first thing Tom Jefferson remembered was a day when his family moved from one plantation home to another one.

Here you go, Tom! This will be a long horseback rider for a two-year-old.



Before long, his father taught him to be a good rider.

Good work, son! Soon I'll enter you in a real fox hunt.



He taught Tom to befriend the Native Americans who sometimes camped nearby.

Chief, this is my son, Thomas.

How kolah.



Peter Jefferson was a surveyor as well as a farmer. Tom loved to hear about his trips into the wilderness.

Yes, there are mountains and cliffs and swamps and wild animals beyond counting!

I'd like to explore the whole country someday.

When Tom was fourteen, his father died suddenly. Tom was the man of the family. He was helped by his teacher, the Reverend James Maury.

I am afraid I don't know enough to run a big plantation.

You will find your father has taught you well. And his executors will help you.



Under Tom's management the plantation continued to support the family comfortably.

When Tom was seventeen, they talked of his future.

Tom, I've taught you as much as I can. You have a fine mind. You should go to college.

Things are running smoothly. You have good overseers. Your mother feels she can manage.

Then I'll do it! I want to learn about everything.



There were three colleges in America. Tom went to the nearest one, William and Mary. It was several days ride from Shadwell.



I'd like that! And it's what my father wanted. But what about Shadwell?

I'll reach the Dandridge's home tonight. I'm sure they'll give me a bed.



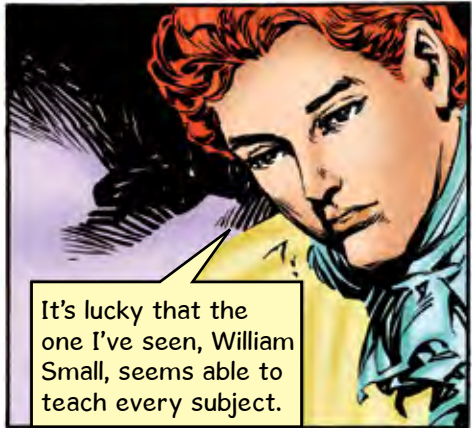
William and Mary was in Williamsburg, the capital of Virginia and a town of two or three hundred houses.

Why, it's a big city!

Tom took an examination and entered college as a junior. He talked to other students.

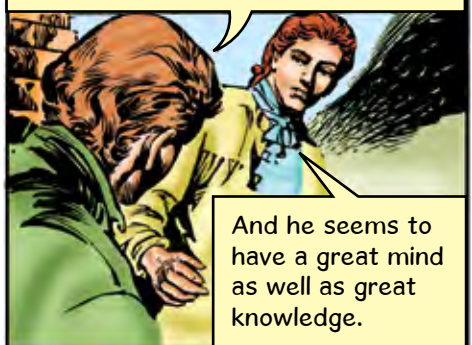
I thought there were seven professors but I've seen only one.

Two of them were fired for fighting. Two or three others are in England suing the college trustees. And the president himself has become a drunkard.



It's lucky that the one I've seen, William Small, seems able to teach every subject.

Yes, the great Scot knows everything from mathematics and physics to grammar and astronomy!



And he seems to have a great mind as well as great knowledge.

And William Small was favorably impressed by his new student. He spoke of him to his close friends, George Wythe and Francis Fauquier, the royal governor of Virginia.

He has a fine mind. He will become a great man!

Very well, bring him to dine with us!

Tom became a friend of all three, sharing their dinners and their conversations.

And someday you must visit London and Paris, of course.

Later, Tom would say that at Fauquier's dinner table he heard more good sense, more rational and philosophical conversations than at any other time in his life. He learned facts and ideas, manners and morals.

Also he played the violin with an amateur music group.

He danced at many balls.

He went to many plays.

At the end of the year, he was not satisfied. He talked to his friend, Dabney Carr.

I wasted too much time and money. Next year, I'll study fifteen hours a day.



And that is what he did, getting up at dawn each morning.



Until eight o'clock I will study agriculture, chemistry, anatomy, zoology, botany, ethics, and religion.

From eight to twelve he read law; from twelve to one he read politics; and in the afternoon he studied history.

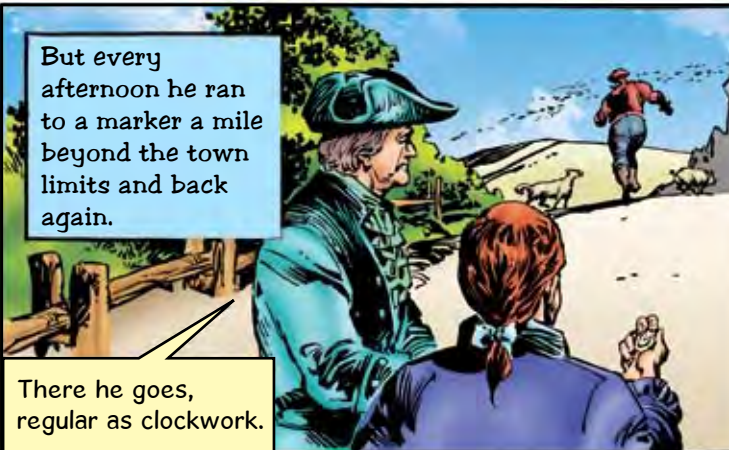
Come hunting with me, Tom!



Sorry, Dabney, my schedule won't allow it.

But every afternoon he ran to a marker a mile beyond the town limits and back again.

There he goes, regular as clockwork.



From dark until bedtime he spent his time reading poetry, drama, and literary criticism. At the age of nineteen, he was one of the best educated men in Virginia.

After he graduated from college, he went home to Shadwell. He talked with Jane, his favorite sister.

What will you do next?

Become a lawyer, I suppose.



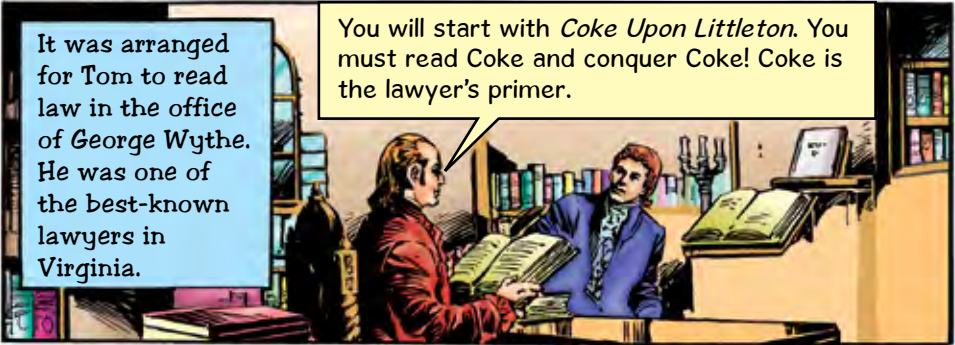
Will you go to law school?



There are none. One goes to work for a lawyer, reads his law books, helps with his cases until one day one knows enough about it to pass the bar examination!

It was arranged for Tom to read law in the office of George Wythe. He was one of the best-known lawyers in Virginia.

You will start with *Coke Upon Littleton*. You must read Coke and conquer Coke! Coke is the lawyer's primer.



For five years, Tom studied hard. But he found time for fun, too. He danced, played his fiddle, fell in love.

Rebecca is so wonderful! Perhaps tonight at the dance I will propose marriage, and ask her to wait for me.

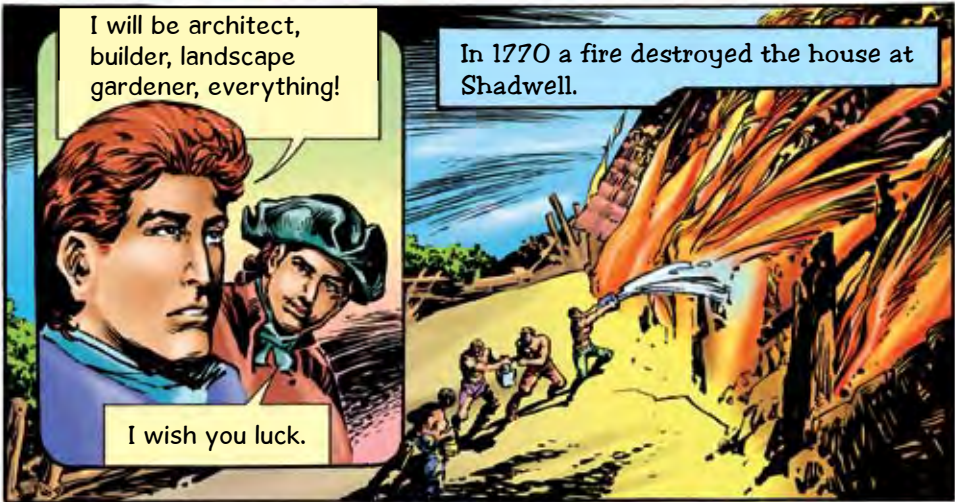
I don't think Rebecca wants to wait. She has just become engaged to marry Jacquelin Ambler.





In 1767 at the age of twenty-four, Tom became a lawyer himself. He also began another project.

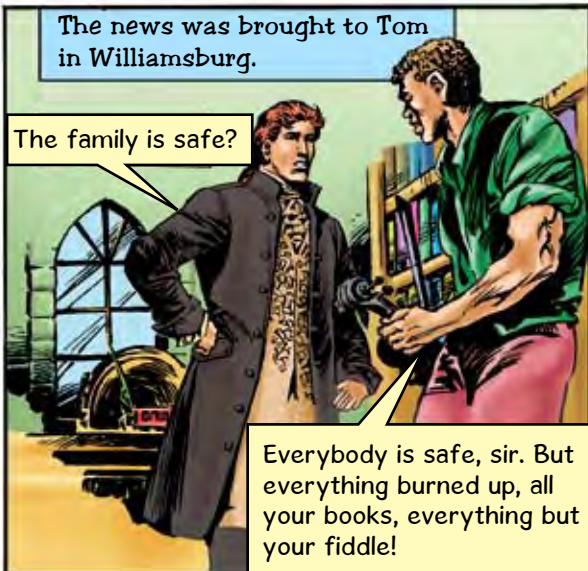
Here, on the highest point of my land, I plan to build the perfect house! I will call it Monticello.*



I will be architect, builder, landscape gardener, everything!

In 1770 a fire destroyed the house at Shadwell.

I wish you luck.



The news was brought to Tom in Williamsburg.

The family is safe?

Everybody is safe, sir. But everything burned up, all your books, everything but your fiddle!



I won't rebuild Shadwell. I'll put my time and money into building Monticello.

* *monticello* means "hillock" or "little mountain" in Italian