



Name: _____

Date: _____ Class: _____

EXHIBIT C

Adams-Jefferson Correspondence

When former president John Adams saw an article about the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence in the *Essex Register*, he immediately mailed a copy with this letter to his friend and fellow former president Thomas Jefferson.

Quincy June 22^d 1819—

my dear Sir.

May I inclose you one of the greatest curiositys and one of the deepest Mysterys that ever occoured to me—It is in the Essex Register of June the 5th 1819.—it is entitled from the Raleigh Register Declaration of Independence—How is it possible that this paper should have been concealed from me to this day—had it been communicated to me in the time of it—I know, if you do not know, that it would have been printed in every Whig News-paper upon this Continent—you know if I had possessed it—I would have made the Hall of Congress Echo—and re-echo, with it fifteen months before your Declaration of Independence—

What a poor ignorant, malicious, short-sighted, Crapulous Mass, is Tom Pains Common Sense; in comparison with this paper [the MeckDec] —had I known it I would have commented upon it—from the day you entered Congress till the fourth of July 1776.—

The Genuine sense of America at that moment was never so well expressed before nor since... I am my dear Sir your invariable friend—

John Adams

Analyze Adams's credibility as a witness.

Analyze Adams's letter as evidence.

Thomas Jefferson, 3rd president of the U.S., was the primary author of the American Declaration of Independence. He quickly responded to Adams's letter.

Monticello July 9.19

Dear Sir

...what has attracted my peculiar notice is the paper from Mecklenburg county of N. Carolina, published in the Essex Register which you were so kind as to inclose in your last of June 22. and you seem to think it genuine. I believe it spurious...if this paper be really taken from the Raleigh Register, as quoted, I wonder it should have escaped Ritchie, who culls what is good from every paper, as the bee from every flower; and the National Intelligencer too, which is edited by a N. Carolinian. and that the fire should blaze out all at once in Essex, 1000. miles from where the spark is said to have fallen. but if really taken from the Raleigh Register, who is the Narrator, and is the name subscribed real, or is it as fictitious as the paper itself? it appeals too to an original book, which is burnt, to mr Alexander who is dead, to a joint letter from Caswell, Hughes and Hooper, all dead, to a copy sent to the dead Caswell, and another sent to Doct^r Williamson, whose memory, now probably dead, did not recollect, in the history he has written of N. Carolina, this Gigantic step of it's county of Mecklenburg...this flaming declaration...the independance of Mecklenburg county of N. Carolina, absolving it from British allegiance, and abjuring all political connection with that nation, altho' sent to Congress too, is never heard of. it is not known even a twelve month after when a similar proposition is first made in that body. armed with this bold example, would not you have addressed our timid brethren in peals of thunder, on their tardy fears? would not every advocate of independance have rung the glories of Mecklenburg county in N. Carolina in the ears of the doubting Dickinson and others, who hung so heavily on us? yet the example of independant Mecklenburg county in N. Carolina, was never once quoted. I must not be understood as suggesting any doubtfulness in the state of N. Carolina. no state was more fixed or forward. nor do I affirm positively that this paper is a fabrication: because the proof of a negative can only be presumptive. but I shall believe it such until positive and solemn proof of its authenticity shall be produced. and if the name of M'Knitt be real, and not a part of the fabrication, it needs a vindication by the production of such proof. for the present I must be an unbeliever in this apocryphal gospel...I am and shall always be affectionately & respectfully Your's.

Th: Jefferson

Is Jefferson more credible than Adams as a witness or less? Why?

John Adams completed the correspondence on this issue with another letter to Jefferson, July 21, 1819.

Dear Sir.

Quincy July 21st 1819—

I am greatly obliged to you for your Letter of the 9th

It has entirely convinced me that the Mecklenburg Resolutions are a fiction, when I first read them in the Essex Register, I was struck with astonishment—It appeared to me utterly incredible that they should be genuine; but there were so many circumstances calculated to impose [on] the public; that I thought it my duty to take measures for the detection of the imposture—for this purpose I instantly inclosed the Essex Register to you; knowing that if you had either seen, or heard of these resolutions you would have informed me of it. —as they are unknown to you, they must have been unknown to all mankind—

I have sent a Copy of your letter to Salem, not to be printed—but to be used as decisive authority for the Editor to correct his error, in the Essex Register. —

But who can be the Demon to invent such a machine after five and forty years, and what could be his motive—was it to bring a charge of Plagiarism against the Congress in 76, or against you; the undoubted acknowledged draughtsman of the Declaration of Independence—or could it be the mere vanity of producing a jeu d'esprit, to set the world agape and afford a topic of Conversation in this piping time of Peace—

Had such Resolutions appeared in June 75. they would have flown through the Universe like wild fire; they would have Elevated the heads of the inhabitants of Boston—and of all New-England above the Stars—and they would have rung a peal in Congress—to the utter Confusion of Tory 'ism and timidity, for a full year before they were discomforted—

I wish you a pleasant tour to your second home— and remain your friend and
Humble Servant —

John Adams

What changed for Adams between his first and second letter?

What made Adams believe the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence was a fiction?