

Imprint No.: **1796.011**

Short Title: **Letter on Jefferson's Collection of Virginia Laws.**

Author: Jefferson, Thomas (1743-1826).

Title: Extract of a letter from Thomas Jefferson to George Wythe. Monticello, January 16, 1796.

Place Issued: Richmond

Issuing Press: Uncertain

Description: [4 pgs.]; 31 cm. x 21 cm. (fol.).

Notes: This letter from Jefferson to Wythe was prompted by an act of Assembly from the November 1795 session "for collecting and publishing all the acts of the legislature concerning lands" (Chap. VIII, enacted December 4, 1795).

Wythe had asked Jefferson about his well-known collection of old Virginia laws and how they might assist the committee appointed to carry out the act (George Wythe, John Brown, John Marshall, Bushrod Washington, and John Wickham) in completing their charge; Jefferson responded in January 1796 with a table of all the Assembly sessions dating back to 1619 with notations of which laws promulgated by each session were in his possession. The committee published his letter in November 1796 in an apparent effort to locate copies of those laws not in Jefferson's collection; they added a comment at the end of the publication (p. 4) that suggested the compilation be expanded beyond laws concerning land, making this letter the initial recommendation for the Assembly to publish a collection of all of the colonial laws, a project that came to fruition in William Waller Hening's 13-volume *Statutes at Large* (1809-23), authorized in 1808, and Samuel Shepherd's continuation thereof (1836-37).

Some authorities report that this title constitutes a "bibliographical statement of the early laws of Virginia," even though it is a numerical inventory without titles, not a bibliography.

Title lacks printer credit; typography herein appears most like that employed by Samuel Pleasants, but its similarity to that Augustine Davis used in publishing the journals and laws of Assembly, as well as his status as the public printer, leave the origin of this title uncertain.

IVP Associated Names:

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Bibliographic Notations

Early American Imprints? Y Series: 1 Title No.: 30637

Evans, <i>American Bibliography</i> :	30637	Norona/Shetler, <i>West Virginia</i> :	---
Bristol, <i>Supplement to Evans</i> :	---	Swem, <i>Bibliography of Virginia</i> :	7871
Shipton/Mooney, <i>Imprints thru 1800</i> :	---		---
Shaw/Shoemaker, <i>Checklist...1801-19</i> :	---		---
Shoemaker, <i>Checklist...1820-29</i> :	---		---

Hummel, *Southeastern Broadsides*: ---

Hummel, *Virginia Broadsides*: ---

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