

Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia Article

Thomas Jefferson

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Thomas Jefferson

1743-1826

American president, statesman and inventor who, among other things, is credited with helping to define the duties and regulations of the U.S. Patent Office. From 1790-93, Thomas Jefferson served as examiner of patents. Although he initially felt that patents would stifle national and international progress (he declined to patent any of his own inventions) he found that the availability of patents actually spurred inventions. To ensure that patents were warranted, he developed strict guidelines for patent approvals during his tenure in the office, and many of his ideas still flavor the patent process today.