This *Companion* forms an accessible introduction to the life and work of Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States and author of the Declaration of Independence. Essays explore Jefferson’s political thought, his policies towards Native Americans, his attitude to race and slavery, as well as his interests in science, architecture, religion, and education. Contributors include leading literary scholars and historians; the essays offer up-to-date overviews of his many interests, his friendships, and his legacy. Together, they reveal his importance in the cultural and political life of early America. At the same time these original essays speak to abiding modern concerns about American culture and Jefferson’s place in it. This *Companion* will be essential reading for students and scholars of Jefferson, and is designed for use by students of American literature and American history.
This series of Companions to key figures in American history and culture is aimed at students of American studies, history, and literature. Each volume features newly commissioned essays by experts in the field, with a chronology and guide to further reading.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

DOUGLAS ANDERSON is Sterling-Goodman Professor of English at the University of Georgia. He is the author of A House Undivided: Domesticity and Community in American Literature, The Radical Enlightenments of Benjamin Franklin, and William Bradford’s Books: Of Plimmoth Plantation and the Printed Word, and he has published a wide range of articles on American literature in the New England Quarterly, the William and Mary Quarterly, and elsewhere.

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DOUGLAS R. EGERTON is a professor of history at Le Moyne College. His Charles Fenton Mercer and the Trial of National Conservatism examined the career of the founder of the American Colonization Society, a group of conservative white antislavery politicians who wished to send freed slaves to Liberia. More recent books, Gabriel’s Rebellion, He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey, and Rebels, Reformers and Revolutionaries explore slave rebelliousness.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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FRANK SHUFFELTON teaches American literature at the University of Rochester. He has written two volumes of critical annotated bibliography covering writings about Thomas Jefferson since 1826. Updates to these volumes can be found online at the Portal of the Monticello Library and elsewhere. He has also written widely about American literature from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries and in 2006 was honored as the MLA Distinguished Scholar of Early American Literature.
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LUCIA STANTON directs research at Monticello, where she is the Shannon Senior Research Historian at the Robert Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies. She has co-edited, with James A. Bear, Jr., Thomas Jefferson’s Memorandum Books 1767–1826, and is the author of Slavery at Monticello and Free Some Day: The African American Families of Monticello. She continues to work on an oral history project to collect information about Jefferson’s slaves and their descendants.

TIMOTHY SWEET teaches American literature at West Virginia University, with a particular interest in literature and the environment in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. He is the author of several essays in this area and of American Georgics: Economy and Environment in Early American Literature. His earlier Traces of War: Poetry, Photography, and the Crisis of the Union attests to an additional interest in photography and literature.

RICHARD GUY WILSON holds the Commonwealth Professor’s Chair in Architectural History at the University of Virginia. A frequent lecturer and a television commentator, he has also published widely, with many articles and books on different aspects of American and modern architecture, including The American Renaissance; McKim, Mead & White, Architects; Machine Age in America; Thomas Jefferson’s Academical Village; Campus Guide: University of Virginia; and The Colonial Revival House.
CHRONOLOGY

1743 Born April 2 (os) at Shadwell, Goochland (now Albemarle) County, the plantation of his father, Peter Jefferson, and his mother, Jane Randolph Jefferson.

1752–7 Attends the Latin school conducted near Tuckahoe by the Revd. William Douglas, “a superficial Latinist.”

1757 Peter Jefferson dies.

1758–60 Enters the school of Revd. James Maury, whom he remembers as “a correct classical scholar.”

1760–2 Attends College of William and Mary, at Williamsburg, and studies with William Small, the Professor of Natural Philosophy: “[F]rom his conversation I got my first views of the expansion of science & of the system of things in which we are placed.”

1762–7 Studies law under the direction of George Wythe, one of the most learned members of the Virginia bar, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and the first Professor of Law at William and Mary.

1764 Comes of age and inherits 2,650 acres from his father and at least twenty slaves.

1767 Is admitted to the bar and begins his own law practice.

1769 Begins building the first Monticello, following his own design, on a mountain across the Rivanna River from Shadwell. He will later tear this down and build the second Monticello on the same site.

1769–76 Member of the Virginia House of Burgesses for Albemarle County.
<table>
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<th>Event</th>
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<td>1772</td>
<td>Marries Martha Wayles Skelton, a 23-year-old widow, on January 1. Their first child, Martha (called Patsy), is born on September 27.</td>
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<td>1773</td>
<td>His father-in-law, John Wayles, dies and leaves 11,000 acres of land and 135 slaves as well as debts that force Jefferson to sell over half the land. Purchasers pay in depreciated Revolutionary currency, and Jefferson struggles for the rest of his life under the burden of this debt. With four others proposes a committee of correspondence in each colony to “consider the British claims as a common cause.” Governor Dunmore dissolves the House of Burgesses.</td>
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<td>1774</td>
<td>Writes instructions for Virginia delegates to the first Continental Congress, which are subsequently published as <em>A Summary View of the Rights of British America</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1775–6</td>
<td>Elected a delegate from Virginia to second Continental Congress. Drafts a version of the Declaration on the Necessity of Taking Up Arms. In June, 1776, drafts the Declaration of Independence.</td>
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<td>1776–9</td>
<td>Member of Virginia House of Delegates. Serves on Committee of Revisors charged with drawing up a body of law for Virginia. These proposed laws, not all of which were passed, include his Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, a Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, and bills reforming laws of inheritance.</td>
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<td>1779</td>
<td>Elected governor of Virginia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>Elected a member of the American Philosophical Society, the nation’s premier society for the advancement of science. Re-elected governor of Virginia. On December 29, British forces under Benedict Arnold invade Virginia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1781</td>
<td>A second invasion of Virginia forces Jefferson and several members of the House of Delegates to flee Monticello two days after his term of office as governor expires. A subsequent inquiry on his conduct as governor unanimously absolves him of any censure. Receives a list of questions from François Marbois, secretary to the French legation, and begins to write what would become <em>Notes on the State of Virginia</em>.</td>
</tr>
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CHRONOLOGY


1783–4 Virginia delegate to Congress. Writes “Report of a Plan of Government for the Western Territory,” which becomes basis for organizing the Northwest Territory.

1784  Appointed minister plenipotentiary to join Benjamin Franklin and John Adams in Paris.


1789  French Revolution begins. Jefferson meets with Lafayette and other Patriot party leaders and supports their discussions about a constitution. Returns to the United States in November.

1790–3  Serves as George Washington’s first secretary of state. Objects to Alexander Hamilton’s plans to increase the power of the federal government, beginning with his financial system.

1791  Jefferson and James Madison persuade Philip Freneau to edit a newspaper to counter the Federalist-dominated press. Edition of Paine’s Rights of Man with Jefferson’s comments criticizing John Adams’s “political heresies” creates controversy.

1792  Hamilton attacks Jefferson in anonymous letter to the press. Jefferson begins to be seen as the leader of the opposition to Federalist interests.

1793  President Washington issues a Proclamation of Neutrality, in response to war between France and Britain. Edmond Charles Genet, the new French minister, challenges the executive’s position and creates controversy, leading to Jefferson’s drafting of papers demanding his recall. Jefferson retires as secretary of state at the end of December.

1794  Returns to Monticello, resumes active interest in farming. Whiskey Rebellion in Western Pennsylvania.

1796  Publication of letter written to Philip Mazzei claims “an Anglican monarchical, & aristocratical party has sprung up,” leading to Federalist attacks. Elected vice president in December, with Federalist John Adams as president, because
the Constitution at the time called for the candidate getting the most notes to become president, the one with the second most votes to become vice president. Assumes leadership of the opposition Republican party.

1797
Installed as president of the American Philosophical Society the day before his inauguration as vice president.

1798

1800
Publishes appendix to Notes with testimony about Logan’s speech. Republican caucus nominates Jefferson and Aaron Burr for president and vice president. Leading up to the election, vituperative attacks in the press appear from both Republicans and Federalists. Gabriel’s slave rebellion in Virginia crushed. The Electoral College receives the same number of votes for Burr as for Jefferson, and the tie sends the decision to the House of Representatives.

1801
Federalists in Congress explore the possibility of electing Burr over Jefferson, but on the thirty-sixth ballot, Jefferson is elected. Inaugurated president on March 4. Walks from his boarding-house to the Capitol to be sworn in and deliver inaugural address. After Pasha of Tripoli declares war on the United States, sends a naval squadron to the Mediterranean to protect American shipping against depredations of Barbary pirates. On December 8 sends first annual message to Congress rather than delivering an address, thus beginning a tradition of written messages that continues through the nineteenth century.

1802
Sends letter to the Danbury Baptist Association on January 1, affirming the principle of separation of church and state. Writes to Robert R. Livingston, minister to France, about concerns regarding French control of New Orleans and Louisiana. James Callender publishes accusations that Jefferson keeps a black concubine named Sally.
1803  Louisiana Purchase Treaty signed in Paris on April 20, but Jefferson had already sent to Congress on January 18 a secret message proposing an exploring expedition into the Louisiana Territory, to be led by Meriwether Lewis. Sends his “Syllabus of the Doctrines of Jesus” to Benjamin Rush.

1804  Re-elected president with an overwhelming majority of the votes. Daughter Maria Jefferson Eppes dies.

1806  Lewis and Clark expedition returns to St. Louis. Issues proclamation warning against a plot by Aaron Burr to separate western states from the union and attack Mexico.

1807  Act barring importation of slaves after January 1, 1808, is passed. Trial of Aaron Burr for treason ends in his acquittal. HMS Leopard fires upon the USS Chesapeake after demands to search the American ship for British deserters are refused. British Orders in Council and Napoleon’s Berlin Decree threaten neutral shipping. Jefferson proposes the Embargo Act, passed by Congress in December.

1809  Non-Intercourse Act, signed on March 1, repeals the Embargo Act, which had failed to have any diplomatic impact but had damaged the American economy. Retires as president on March 4.

1810  The Virginia Literary Fund established; Jefferson writes to Governor John Tyler about education.

1812  Resumes correspondence with John Adams.

1814  Becomes trustee of Albemarle Academy. Offers to sell his library to Congress, to replace the one burned by the British. Resigns as president of the American Philosophical Society.

1816  Virginia bill to establish Central College is passed. Named to the Board of Visitors.

1817  Bill embodying Jefferson’s general education plan is defeated in the legislature. Cornerstone of Central College is laid in Charlottesville.

1818  Legislature passes a bill establishing a university, chartered in the following year and located on the site of the Central College. Drafts so-called Rockfish Gap Report, resulting from a meeting of the commissioners in charge of planning the university.
1820  Denounces the Missouri Compromise, fearing it will provoke sectional hostilities and is another example of federal “consolidationism” that usurps state powers.

1821  Writes memoir later referred to as his *Autobiography*.

1823  Writes to President James Monroe about foreign relations in advance of proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine.

1824  Lafayette visits Charlottesville on his triumphal return to America, is entertained at Monticello and at a dinner in the Rotunda of the University.

1825  First students arrive at the University of Virginia. Jefferson’s health begins to decline.

1826  Dies at Monticello, July 4, 1826. John Adams dies on the same day.