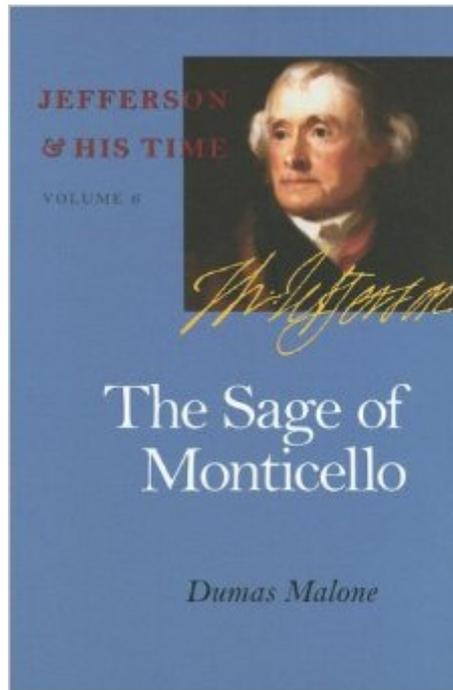


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The Sage Of Monticello (Jefferson & His Time (University Of Virginia Press))



Synopsis

Dumas Malone's classic six-volume biography Jefferson and His Time was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in history and became the standard work on Jefferson's life. Volume 6, The Sage of Monticello This final volume provides an all-encompassing account of Jefferson's accomplishments, friendships, and family difficulties in his last seventeen years, revealing his shift from the realm of politics to his roles as family man, architect, and educational enthusiast. Describing Jefferson's retirement from Washington, this volume recounts the events that formed Jefferson's final years, particularly the founding of the Library of Congress and the University of Virginia, in which he played a major role.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you love Jefferson, biography, American history, good writing in fat books and if you have world enough and time, this monumental six volume biography is calling you. Jefferson has taken his knocks recently and deservedly so, but while this is strongly sympathetic to the sage, it is not uncritical nor a whitewash. While Jefferson has earned his detractors, he deserves his admirers too, and in Malone he has found a worthy and eloquent celebrant of his genius. John Adams was right: Jefferson still lives and nowhere as happily as in this biography.

When I recently finally finished the 6th and final volume of this set, I realized that I knew more about Thomas Jefferson than I do about some of my friends. There is an incredible amount of information

here. Although the Sally Hemings story is barely mentioned in these books because so much information has come out since the books were written, everything else is covered in great detail. I reviewed the first 3 books as a whole under the third volume, and I'll do the same here on the final 3. I believed that the two hardest books to read were the volumes on Jefferson's presidency. Malone covered eight years in about 1,000 pages, and he went into such detail that it was actually hard to follow at times. By the time I finished reading about the Embargo Act, there was no way I could summarize it; he had written about it so much, and it was spread out throughout the volume. The same can be said, to some extent, with the Burr conspiracy. The final book was better, even though he exhaustingly covered the establishment of the University of Virginia, probably more than necessary. I would have preferred more on the correspondence with John Adams. And while Malone gets into Jefferson's family relationships here, he was, as a writer, a better presenter of facts than he is a story teller. Nothing about this series is "narrative." I would recommend the books to a very serious lover of history, and I suggest the audio book as a way of speeding up what will otherwise be a very slow read. But to one with casual interest in history who admires Jefferson, I'd suggest one of the many one-volume biographies.

The sixth and final volume in Dumas Malone's biography of Thomas Jefferson is its most personal and humanizing. Chronicling the final 17 years of its subject's life, it is a portrait of Jefferson in winter. Leaving the presidency in 1809 at the age of 65, Jefferson returned to his beloved Monticello for what he hoped would be a tranquil and simple twilight, spending his remaining days reading, gardening, corresponding, and in domestic bliss. His golden years were to prove considerably more trying. While his retirement brought the joy of reconciling with John Adams and the pride in fathering a new university in his own image, it was also marked by increasing financial difficulties and familial discord. Jefferson, though aged, yielded little in the way of his mental faculties to time, remained astonishingly productive as both a septuagenarian and octogenarian, and tried to weather his adversities with characteristic grace and optimism. As is true of the series as a whole, Malone is at his best when writing about Jefferson as a person, as his discussions of Jefferson's public life are often tedious and compromised by a blatant antipathy toward his subject's political opponents. THE SAGE OF MONTICELLO stands out as probably the best installment of the biography because the time frame it encompasses ensures it is primarily an exposition of the former rather than the latter, leaving Malone largely on the ground on which he is most adept. It is, nevertheless, a bit uneven. The sections covering the resumption of Jefferson's correspondence with Adams, his sale of his personal library to the government as the foundation for the Library of Congress, his planning and

managing of the University of Virginia, his family life, and his personal finances are easily the most fascinating, while those pertaining to his views on the War of 1812 and his efforts to secure a charter and funding for his new university drag and harken back to the tedium that so marred earlier volumes. On the whole, though, the SAGE OF MONTICELLO is an illuminating, intimate profile of a great and complex man at the end of a remarkable life, and a satisfying conclusion to a monumental if greatly flawed and inconsistent work of scholarship.*Can be read as a stand-alone volume with equal reward.

This book is the sixth and final volume in Dumas Malone's six volume biography called "Jefferson and His Time" covering the period from the end of Jefferson's presidency to his death (1809-1826) Mr. Malone truly saved the best for last in this series resulting in the best of the six volumes, quite an achievement considering he completed this volume when he was 89 years old. This volume successfully covers in thorough detail the most important parts of Jefferson's late life including the founding of the University of Virginia, his friendship with John Adams, his thoughts on the political issues after his presidency, and his personal and family life including his increasingly difficult situation regarding his debts. While maintaining the scholarly level of detail in the previous volumes, Malone's writing style is his most enjoyable yet. In conclusion, this volume has my highest recommendation and is perfectly suited to be read as a stand alone volume, even without reading the the rest of the series.

It is most fascinating to reach an understanding about this true American giant. The series by Dumas makes Jefferson's world a place we may truly enter!

Can't get enough books about Jefferson. This is a good book.

Fantastic continuance of the series!!

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