

## **Thomas Jefferson**

Thomas Jefferson was born in 1743 to a Virginia planter and surveyor. In 1772 he married Martha Skelton. His mountaintop home, Monticello, was built to overlook his large Virginia plantation. Jefferson loved to read and write. He was very shy and not a good speaker, so he used his talents as a writer to further the cause of American independence. He wrote the Declaration of Independence.

Jefferson served in the Virginia government, Continental Congress, minister to France, Secretary of State for President Washington, and Vice President to President Adams before being elected our third president.

Thomas Jefferson was responsible for the Louisiana Purchase, gaining the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon in 1803.

Jefferson died on July 4, 1826, at his home, Monticello.

## **Jefferson Memorial**

Thomas Jefferson Memorial is a national memorial authorized in 1934. Located in Washington, D.C., in East Potomac Park, the memorial honors United States president Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809). The building is a graceful rotunda, or circular structure, encircled by a colonnade of 26 Ionic columns and capped with a domed ceiling. A broad flight of steps leads up to a portico, or entrance, to the memorial. The white marble building was designed by American architect John Russell Pope in the Roman style, in keeping with Jefferson's love of classical architecture. Construction began in 1939 and the memorial was dedicated in 1943. Japanese cherry trees surrounding the building decorate the memorial site with pink blossoms for two weeks every spring. The interior of the memorial features a bronze statue of a standing Jefferson facing the White House. The statue was designed by American sculptor Rudolph Evans and is 5.8 m (19.0 ft) high, resting on a black granite pedestal 1.8 m (6.0 ft) high. Jefferson's thoughts on independence and freedom are inscribed on panels of white Georgia marble. The inscriptions are from the Declaration of Independence, which Jefferson wrote, and from his personal letters and legal documents. On a circular band around the dome of the rotunda is etched the quotation, "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." Above the interior entrance to the memorial is a sculptured bas-relief by A. A. Weinman of the members of the Continental Congress committee who wrote the Declaration of Independence with Jefferson.