

## *Preface and Acknowledgments*

My fascination with Thomas Jefferson began when, as a graduate student newly arrived in the United States from England, I read for pleasure Adrienne Koch and William Peden's *The Life and Selected Writings of Jefferson* in the Modern Library series. My interest was rekindled when, as president of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, I became the nominal custodian of Jefferson's fossil collection and attended his 250th birthday celebration at Monticello in 1993. Ten years later, when Andrew O'Shaughnessy nominated me to become a visiting fellow at the International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello and to write a book on Jefferson and natural history, I jumped at the chance. (The book, *A Passion for Nature*, was published in 2008.) In the wonderfully supportive atmosphere of the center, it seemed only natural to fill a gap in the otherwise extensive literature on Jefferson by expanding that work into a volume on Jefferson and science.

My first duty is to thank Andrew O'Shaughnessy and the entire Monticello staff for their warm and generous hospitality over the past few years, extended both to me and to my wife, Linda. Under his leadership, the center provides an exceptionally supportive environment for scholars. At Monticello, I must also single out for special thanks the staff in the library—Anna Berkes, Endrina Tay, Eric Johnson, and head librarian Jack Robertson—for their aid, along with Jefferson Looney, Ellen Hickman, and Julie Lautenschlager at the Jefferson Retirement Papers Project. I thank others at Monticello—Peter Hatch, Gaye Wilson, Mary Scott-Fleming, Leni Sorenson, Cinder Stanton, Susan Stein, Elizabeth Chew, Sarah Allabach, Sara Bon-Harper, Leah Stearns, and William Beiswanger—who generously shared their expertise and unstintingly helped even when they really did not have time. Leah Stearns helped find images from Monticello for reproduction.

Successive stays at Monticello brought me to meet a whole range of other Jefferson scholars who generously shared both their friendship and