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# Science and technology

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## **A Companion to the History of American Science**

*Edited by Georgina M. Montgomery and Mark A. Largent*  
Wiley Blackwell

Malden, MA and Oxford

2016

xvii + 692 pp.

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Wiley Blackwell Companions to American History

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*A Companion to the History of American Science* offers 44 chapters covering both disciplines and topics relating to the history of science in the US. The text is split evenly between disciplines, which range from astronomy to computer science to sociology, and topics, which cover subjects such as science education, gender and science and science policy. The text's editors, Georgina M. Montgomery and Mark A. Largent, the former an Assistant Professor of science history at Michigan State University and the latter an Associate Professor and Associate Dean of science history and medicine at Michigan State University, introduce the volume by providing a brief history of the origins of the field and listing three key texts influential to the creation of the volume. They conclude the introduction by touching on several themes that appear through the work, such as collaboration and the applied nature of science studies in the US and touching on specific chapters that highlight these themes.

The chapters are each about a dozen pages in length. Although these entries are substantial, they are by no means comprehensive and do not aim to be. The contributing authors are skilled at quickly establishing the lay of the land in a given discipline or topic and foregrounding their particular focus within that chapter. For example, the economics chapter does an admirable job of outlining the divide between words and models and tracing the transition through the history of the discipline. The chapters should be easily understandable for readers at undergraduate level, as well as for those new to the subject. Although the subject matter is

aimed at those studying the history of science in America, many of the topics chapters touch on current debates that extend beyond the sciences, such as religion, eugenics and evolution, which would appeal to many students researching "hot topics" papers.

Each chapter concludes with a bibliographical essay that highlights the key texts to seek for a more in-depth study of the subject matter. When a complete or overarching study of the history of a given discipline is lacking, this is duly noted within the bibliographical essay. These bibliographical essays are valuable resources for beginning scholars looking to find seminal and well-respected sources for background information and further study on a topic. Although each chapter has its own bibliographical essay, there are often many sources mentioned within the text of each chapter that do not appear within the essays. These sources must be tracked down in the compiled bibliography at the end of the volume. This bibliography spans a 100 pages and is organized alphabetically, making it arguably less user-friendly than a topic-based bibliography. The compiled bibliography is followed by an index, also arranged alphabetically.

Although *A Companion to the History of Science in America* would be most useful for universities with programs in the history of science, its readable nature and the wealth of sources contained in both the bibliographic essays and compiled bibliography would make it a worthwhile resource for students in an array of science programs, too. As previously mentioned, the topics chapters would also be beneficial sources for students writing "hot topics" papers on a variety of subjects because these chapters provide easily comprehensible overviews and point to other key resources.

### **Lindley Homol**

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## **Dictionary of Inequalities (2nd edition)**

*Peter Bullen*

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Boca Raton, FL

2015

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