

**DOCUMENTS RELATING
TO THE PURCHASE &
EXPLORATION OF
LOUISIANA**

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Documents Relating to the Purchase & Exploration of Louisiana by Thomas Jefferson & William Dunbar

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THOMAS JEFFERSON & WILLIAM DUNBAR

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Documents

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DOCUMENTS
RELATING TO
THE PURCHASE
&
EXPLORATION OF
Louisiana.

- I. The Limits and Bounds of *Louisiana*. By THOMAS JEFFERSON.
 - II. The Exploration of the *Red*, the *Black*, and the *Washita* Rivers. By WILLIAM DUNBAR.
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Printed from the original Manuscripts in the Library of the *American Philosophical Society* and by direction of the Society's Committee on Historical Documents.

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THE two documents now first printed in this volume have been for nearly a century in the custody of the American Philosophical Society. The first is a paper written by Thomas Jefferson while President of the United States, which gives a summary of the various claims of France, Spain, and England to territory in the Mississippi Valley, and lays down the boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase. The original of this paper, in Mr. Jefferson's own hand, was deposited by him in the archives of the Society in Philadelphia, where it still remains. The second is the manuscript known to historians as the Dunbar Journal, the importance of which has been generally recognized, though but few have had access to it. The Journal was kept by William Dunbar of Natchez, on a voyage of exploration which, in company with Dr. George Hunter, he undertook by direction of the President in 1804, as a part of Mr. Jefferson's statesmanlike plan to survey the vast new territory just coming into the possession of the United States. This manuscript was presented to the Society by Daniel Parker, Adjutant and Inspector-General, U. S. A., on the 18th of July, 1817.

The Journal of William Dunbar is comparable to the more famous Lewis and Clark Journals, which were likewise placed in the keeping of the American Philosophical Society at the instance of Mr. Jefferson, and like them is a contribution of the first

order to the history of the earliest exploration of the country west of the Mississippi. Dunbar himself was a man of note, and has already been honored in his native state as "the first scientist of Mississippi." Born at Thunderton near Elgin, Scotland, a younger son of Sir Archibald Dunbar, he united, as so many eminent men among his countrymen have done, practical and scientific abilities of a high order. He settled in America in 1771, and became a successful planter. Later he held important trusts under the Federal government, was a correspondent of Thomas Jefferson, Sir William Herschel, David Rittenhouse, and other famous men, and made many contributions of importance to the scientific interests of the country, then in their infancy.

In addition to the Journal and the paper already mentioned on the boundaries of Louisiana, the volume includes the letter from Mr. Jefferson transmitting his manuscript to the American Philosophical Society, with some mention of the circumstances under which it was written, and an extract from Mr. Jefferson's message to Congress, transmitting a summary of the Dunbar Journal. The portrait of Mr. Jefferson is from the original by Thomas Sully, which now hangs in the rooms of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. That of Mr. Dunbar is from the portrait at "The Forest," Dunbar's estate in Mississippi. The map is a photo-lithograph from the copper-plate engraving of Nicholas King's great map in the War Department at Washington.

In printing these rare documents, care has been taken to preserve the peculiarities of spelling and the quaint abbreviations which were characteristic of the writing of the time.

The acknowledgments of the publishers are due to the American Philosophical Society for its courtesy in permitting the use of the manuscripts here printed, and also of the portrait of Jefferson by Sully; to the Secretary of the Society, Dr. I. Minis Hays, for his assiduous care in the difficult task of comparing proof, verifying names, etc.; and to Mr. William Dunbar Jenkins for the copy which he has kindly furnished of the portrait of Dunbar.

Boston, May 9, 1904.

