

**A MEMOIR OF
WILLIAM MACLURE**

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A memoir of William Maclure by Samuel George Morton

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SAMUEL GEORGE MORTON

**A MEMOIR OF
WILLIAM MACLURE**



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MEMOIR

OF

WILLIAM MACLURE, Esq.

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA.

BY

SAMUEL GEORGE MORTON, M. D.

ONE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE INSTITUTION.

READ JULY 1, 1841,

AND PUBLISHED BY DIRECTION OF THE ACADEMY.

SECOND EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:
MERRIHEW AND THOMPSON, PRINTERS,
No. 7 Carter's Alley.

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1844.

TO

ALEXANDER MACLURE, Esq.

AND TO

MISS ANNA MACLURE,

THIS MEMOIR

OF THEIR

ILLUSTRIOUS BROTHER,

IS

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

Hall of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia,

July 1, 1841.

At a special meeting of the Society held this evening, Dr. Morton, pursuant to appointment, read a Memoir of Wm. Maclure, Esq., late President of the Academy: whereupon it was unanimously

Resolved, That the members of the Academy have listened with deep interest and entire satisfaction to the Discourse which has just been pronounced.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Academy be presented to Dr. SAMUEL GEORGE MORTON for the able, faithful, and eloquent memoir of our late lamented President, WILLIAM MACLURE, this evening read to the Society, and that he be requested to furnish a copy of the same for publication.

Resolved, That Prof. Walter R. Johnson, John Price Wetherill, Esq., and Dr. Robert Bridges be a committee to communicate to Dr. Morton the foregoing Resolutions.

Philadelphia, July 2, 1841.

TO SAMUEL GEORGE MORTON, M. D.

Dear Sir—We have been directed by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia to present you with a copy of the foregoing Resolutions, and perform a duty equally grateful to our own feelings and expressive of the unanimous sentiments of the Society, in tendering to you the thanks of the Institution for your admirable performance commemorative of our late lamented President.

While the friends and cultivators of Science mourn their recent loss and pay homage to departed worth among its patrons, they will not fail to recognize in such a tribute to the memory of the dead, a vigorous surviving spirit of scientific devotion—a pledge that the generous aspirations in our cause which ceased only with the life of Maclure, will find an ample fulfilment among the living recipients of his munificence.

Accept sir, with the thanks of the Academy, the assurance of our individual esteem and sincere regard.

WALTER R. JOHNSON, }
JOHN P. WETHERILL, } *Committee.*
ROBERT BRIDGES, }

Philadelphia, July 3, 1841.

GENTLEMEN—In reply to your note of yesterday, and the accompanying Resolutions, permit me to express, through you, my grateful acknowledgments to the members of the Academy for the flattering manner in which they have received my memoir of the late William Maclure.

During a connection of many years with our Institution, it has been my constant aim to advance its interests, which are strictly identified with those of Science; and if my efforts have been in any degree successful, I shall ever find an ample reward in the approbation of my Associates.

I remain, gentlemen, with sincere esteem,

Your very obliged friend and servant,

SAMUEL GEORGE MORTON.

To Prof. WALTER R. JOHNSON,
JOHN PRICE WETHERILL, Esq., and } Committee.
ROBERT BRIDGES, M. D.,

MEMOIR

OF

WILLIAM MACLURE, Esq.

THE most pleasing province of Biography is that which commemorates the sway of the affections. These, however variously expressed, tend to the diffusion of religion, of virtue and of knowledge, and consequently of happiness. He who feeds the hungry, or soothes the sorrowful, or encourages merit, or disseminates truth, justly claims the respect and gratitude of the age in which he lives, and consecrates his name in the bosom of posterity. The benefactions of a liberal mind not only do good of themselves, but incite the same spirit in others; for who can behold the happy results of useful and benevolent enterprise, and not feel the godlike impulse to participate in and extend them?

The study of Natural History in this country, though late in attracting general attention, has expanded with surprising rapidity. Thirty years ago all our naturalists were embraced in a few cultivators

of Botany and Mineralogy, while the other branches were comparatively unheeded and unknown. The vast field of inquiry was devoid of labourers, excepting here and there a solitary individual who pursued the sequestered paths of Science, filled with an enthusiasm of which the busy world knew nothing. How widely different is the scene which now presents itself to our view! We see the unbounded resources of the land brought forth to the light of day, and made to minister to the wants and the intelligence of humanity. Every region is explored, every locality is anxiously searched for new objects of utility, or new sources of study and instruction.

In connection with these gratifying facts, it will be reasonably inquired, who were they who fostered the early infancy of Science in our country? Who were they who stood forth, unmindful of the sneer of ignorance and the frown of prejudice, to unveil the fascinating truths of Nature?

Among the most zealous and efficient of these pioneers of discovery was **WILLIAM MACLURE**.

This gentleman, the son of David and Ann Macclure, was born at Ayr in Scotland, in the year 1763; and he there received the primary part of his education under the charge of Mr. Douglass, an intelligent teacher, who was especially reputed for classical and mathematical attainments. His pupil's strong mind readily acquired the several branches of a liberal