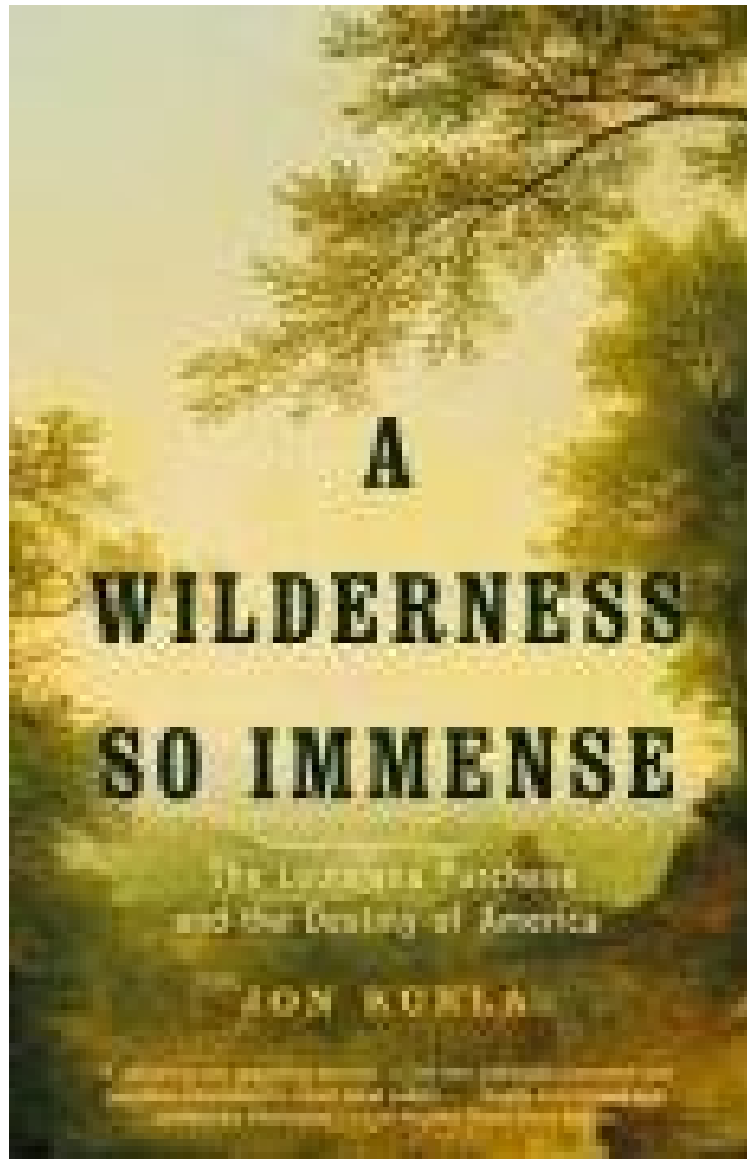


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A Wilderness So Immense: The Louisiana Purchase and the Destiny of America

Jon Kukla

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#512544 in Books Jon Kukla 2004-08-10 2004-08-10 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.98 x 1.08 x 5.201, .92 #File Name: 0375707611444 pages A Wilderness So Immense The Louisiana Purchase and the Destiny of America | File size: 19.Mb

Jon Kukla : A Wilderness So Immense: The Louisiana Purchase and the Destiny of America before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Wilderness So Immense: The Louisiana Purchase and the Destiny of America:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Total Picture on How the Louisiana Purchase Became a Possibility By Daniel Hurley For anyone fascinated with the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery, they will find this well written book an excellent precursor to that incredible exploration. The author provides fascinating detail, in easy to read style, on the major impact players involved in The acquisition of Louisiana. It all starts first with the possible separation of the New England states led by John Jay that was engineered literally under the table for an exchange of trade with Spain, sacrificing navigation and trade rights on the Mississippi. The possible road block or river tariffs enraged the Kentuckians that were ready to conquer New Orleans under the command of George Rogers Clark. Those in Kentucky were frustrated by a lack of action by the original colonial states to consider their own separation. Adding to this complication were the secret actions of General Wilkerson (U.S.) who was not only a secret agent of Spain's but entertained plans of secession first for Kentucky and later in Louisiana. In Europe, the death of the great Carlos III, King of Spain who was not only highly competent but enlisted the aid of excellent counsel, changed the entire situation. The death of his eldest son followed by the sudden death of Carlos III opened up the throne to the next in line, Carlos IV who only had hunting in common with his father Carlos IV defers the control of Spain to his wife who has intrigues, sexual favors (some historians dispute, but the author says look at the children and you'll agree with him) and political favorites of her own. The capacity of those governing the Spanish control of Louisiana is run for the most part but enter another complication, France and Napoleon. As the author explains, Napoleon's expansion into Europe, conquering Spain opens up his access by treaty to acquiring Louisiana. France's ownership is complicated by Napoleon's severe military setback in Haiti, lack of cash and the future war with England. Napoleon was also aware of the possibility of a large force of Americans were considering taking the river and ports by force. Fortunately, President Jefferson makes the famous offer of purchase made successful by his highly competent diplomat and the late arrival of James Monroe. The multiple intrigues and complications are amazingly neutralized to create a very unusual transfer over a short ceremony, Spain to France, France to the U.S. An amazing story and where diplomacy succeeded, Clark was ready to take it with a 5,000 man militia. An excellent telling of our greatest acquisition, without war. The digital version includes maps that are very good and expand to a full page.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Background on the Louisiana Purchase By P. R. Smith I purchased this book thinking it would include the experiences of Lewis and Clark. As I read further I was wondering when the author was going to get to Lewis and Clark but about a fourth of the way I realized it wasn't about them. However, I am pleased that I read this book. It is an excellent compilation of the events in the U.S., France, and Spain, along with some other matters in Europe and the Caribbean, that resulted in the U.S. purchasing the vast territory west of the Mississippi. I have read other books that touched on the French Revolution, thinking it was largely inspired by the earlier American Revolution. I learned in this book that a devastating hail storm in July followed by a drought and severe winter set conditions that brought the under current that turned into the French Revolution to fruition. Nor did I know that French efforts to rein in a slave revolt in what is now Haiti contributed to the Louisiana purchase. The author brings events to life and develops characters quite well, making the book enjoyable. If you have ever wondered what motivated Napoleon to make the sale, read this book and you will know.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Everything you wanted to know and then some about the ... By TIRE P. Everything you wanted to know and then some about the Louisiana Purchase. The sale itself was one of the far reaching results of the French Revolution and splitting up the territory became one of the causes of the US Civil War. That covers a lot of history. The intrigue that was involved in Europe shows you that many things are still the same as they are today. Jim Melvin

In *A Wilderness so Immense*, historian Jon Kukla recounts the fascinating tale of the personal maneuverings, political posturing, and international intrigue that culminated in the greatest land deal in history. Spanning nearly two decades, Kukla's book brings to life a pageant of characters from Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, and John Jay, to Napoleon and Carlos III of Spain and other colorful figures. Employing letters, memoirs, contemporary documents, and a host of other sources, Kukla creates a complete and compelling account of the Louisiana Purchase. From the hinterlands in Kentucky to the courts of Spain, France, and England to the halls of Congress, he re-creates the forces and personalities that turned a struggle for navigation rights on the Mississippi into an event that doubled the size of the country and altered the destiny of the United States forever.

From Publishers Weekly Until a better one comes along, which is unlikely, this is now the book to read of the growing crop of works on the Louisiana Purchase in this bicentennial year. It differs from Charles Cerami's *Bracing Jefferson's Great Gamble* by its deeper foundation of scholarly knowledge, from Roger Kennedy's *Overstriving Mr. Jefferson's Lost Cause* by being less idiosyncratic. Kukla (coauthor of *Patrick Henry*) offers up a splendid, beautifully written narrative focused tightly on the complex historic origins of the Purchase and on the diplomacy that pulled it off. Necessarily, his tale takes in the whole world, including the aspirations of Napoleon's failed forays into the Western Hemisphere and his resulting need for cash. But Kukla stays firmly on this side of the Atlantic. Jefferson takes center stage, but his Federalist opponents, whose sometimes disunionist machinations kept matters complex, are in the wings. Kukla's portraits of the principal diplomats—Robert Livingston and James Monroe on the American side; Talleyrand,

Francois de Barbe-Marbois and Napoleon on the French-deftly illuminate the crucial mix of personality, circumstance and skill that made the United States a continental nation so early in its existence. Unlike many other historians, Kukla favors none of the story's characters but evenhandedly gives all their due. The book lacks only a grand theme to match its grand subject-what most contemporaries and all historians since have judged to be one of the most significant events in the nation's history. Nevertheless, this judicious, aptly illustrated work will gratify all its readers. Rarely does a work of history combine grace of writing with such broad authority. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the U.S and set in motion visions of Manifest Destiny; it dramatically reshaped European influence in North America and helped preserve a tentative Union while establishing it as a territorially rich land. It was also brought about by men who had never seen the Mississippi Valley, in response to political rumblings thousands of miles away. Always controversial, its introduction would eventually force the issue of slavery in the territories. Kukla's narrative wanders slowly, tributary-like, through a formative time for young America. He tells the stories of characters famous and obscure, European and American, before arriving at the story's climax, Jefferson's deal to purchase the "immense wilderness." Readers looking for an analytical edge or historical revisionism won't find it here, and Kukla's casual language may annoy academics, but history buffs will enjoy the level of detail, and the uninitiated will enjoy the thorough explanations of background events like the French Revolution. Overall, this selection is an engaging look at a key historical event, in time for its bicentennial. Brendan Driscoll Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved A sprawling and absorbing account . . . [of] how individual characters and appetites interweave to create great events. . . . Hugely entertaining and wonderfully informative.--Los Angeles Times Book Kuklas vivid fresco . . . is peopled by a cast that includes kings, queens, ministers, adventurers, generals, politicians, presidents." The New York Times Book As exciting and readable a narrative of the Louisiana Purchase as were likely to get in the foreseeable future. The New Republic Kukla writes history that reads with the urgency of a suspense novel. . . . Best of all, his graceful prose sings with the conviction of one telling a great story. --Dallas Morning News A sweeping tale . . . [Kuklas] ability to interweave evocative anecdotes, biography and colorful asides with the complex diplomatic, military and political events that led up to the Louisiana Purchase makes A Wilderness So Immense fresh, stylish and compelling. Times-Picayune (New Orleans) A story of fascinating international intrigue and fallible human beings dealing with issues far beyond their comprehension. It is the best book on the subject yet available. The Baltimore Sun As exciting and readable a narrative of the Louisiana Purchase as we are likely to get in the foreseeable future. The New Republic Enlightening. . . Kukla is good at showing what a ferment of ideas and resultant activities the world was going through at this time. Minneapolis Star-Tribune A thoroughly readable, entertaining, and informative history of the incredible period that led to the purchase of a land that doubled the size of the United States. . . . A wonderful book, not to be missed. Decatur Daily A well-researched study. . . . Packed with fast-moving descriptions of the complicated negotiations. Kukla has a fine sense of context and detail. Roanoke Times A wonderful story, wonderfully told. W.W. Abbot, Editor Emeritus of The Papers of George Washington