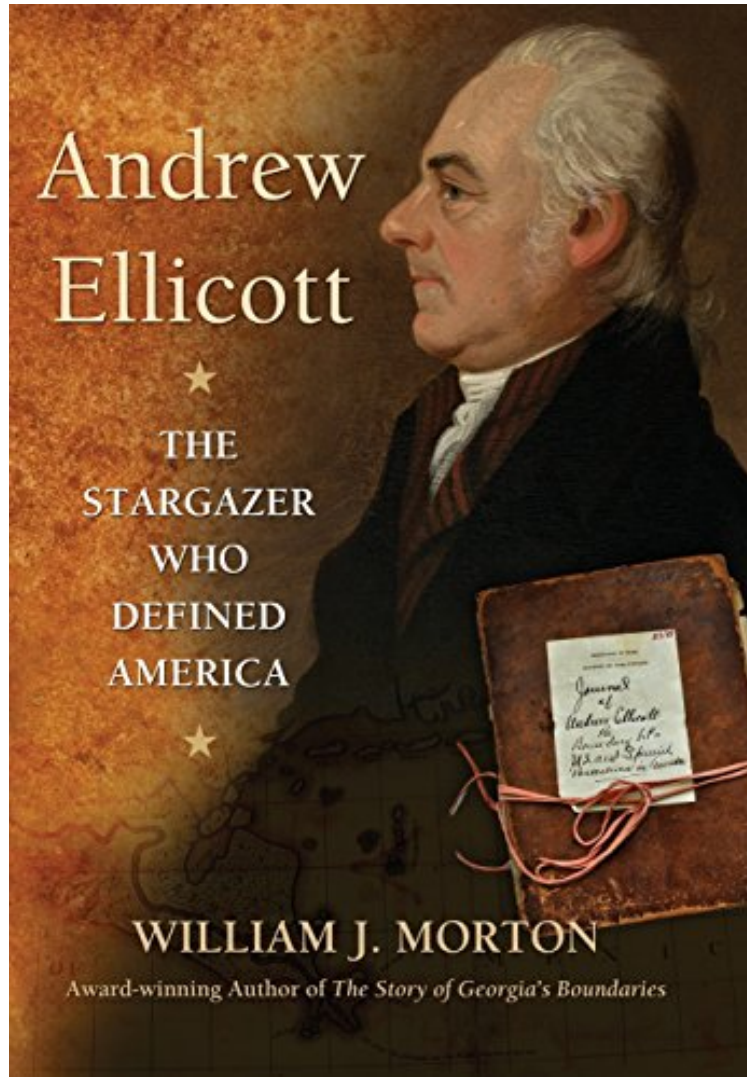


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Andrew Ellicott: The Stargazer Who Defined America

William J. Morton

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After the Revolutionary War, Spain controlled more property on the North American Continent than any other nation which included the old British colonies of East and West Florida, the lower Mississippi River and New Orleans, the huge territory known as Louisiana on the west side of the Mississippi, all the rivers draining into the Gulf of Mexico, and most of what would be California, Arizona, Texas and New Mexico. Spain? How did Spain get so powerful? Here's how. With the war over in 1783, the thirteen British colonies, now established as a confederation of states, occupied only that small part of the North American continent south of the Saint Lawrence River down to Georgia and as far west as the Mississippi River. Exhausted by the war, heavily in debt and still working to design a viable federal government, the young United States paid little attention to Spain as she quietly grew her hegemony. The biggest problem: Spain was stopping all U.S. commerce coming down the Mississippi River and passing through New Orleans to the Gulf of Mexico. Spain was a power to be reckoned with. For a dozen years Spanish emissaries and U.S. diplomats sparred over the use of the Mississippi River and the exact boundary line between the two nations. Finally, in 1795, both issues were resolved in great detail by the Treaty of Friendship, Limits and Navigation between Spain and the United States. The two major provisions of the treaty opened up the Mississippi River for free trade and delineated the boundary line between the six-year-old United States and the Spanish-held territory of East and West Florida. After the new Congress ratified the Pinckney Treaty, President Washington appointed Andrew Ellicott as commissioner for the survey and directed him to organize a team to meet the Spanish survey team in Natchez, a small village with a Spanish fort on the banks of the Mississippi River, and perform the survey of the new boundary. Washington chose Andrew Ellicott, a second-generation Pennsylvania and the most famous astronomer-surveyor in America. He had no formal education and was self-taught in astronomy, the earth sciences, mechanics and mathematics. The Pennsylvania legislature appointed him to survey all their state boundaries, and he would eventually survey the boundaries of thirteen states. Elliott was chosen by Washington and Secretary of State Jefferson to survey the ten-square-mile District of Columbia and many of the boulevards and squares in the new federal capital. Ellicott's greatest achievement was his survey of the first international boundary line of the United States dividing the thirteen states from the property owned by His Catholic Majesty, Charles V of Spain.

Dr. Morton has done it again. Taking a little known topic, he has given us a fascinating story that stands up to the drama that we associate with the great expedition of Lewis and Clark. The star of the story, Andrew Ellicott, is as fine a representative of the American Enlightenment as Jefferson and Franklin (both of whom he knew and worked with). Over time, Ellicott's star has fallen into relative obscurity and Morton now brings him back to life. Bravo for this book - a witness to the politics, science, and history of our nation's birth. --Jamil Zainaldin is the president of the Georgia Humanities Council. In his award-winning first book, William Morton provided a multi-faceted saga of explaining Georgia's borders. He now sets his sights on the longest and most critical boundary between the United States and Spain and on the remarkably accomplished man who undertook the daunting feat of surveying it over the course of four years. The result is at once a lively tale of adventure and intrigue, a significant contribution to the frontier and diplomatic history of this crucial era, and a compelling portrait of Andrew Ellicott, the man who made it all happen. --John C. Inscoe is the Albert B. Saye Professor of History, University of Georgia and Editor, The New Georgia Encyclopedia. Through his extraordinary research and writing abilities, Dr. Morton has highlighted another chapter in Ellicott's legendary exploits through a story not before heard. By focusing not only on the professional challenges faced by Ellicott, but also on the personal ones, Morton makes him come alive, while at the same time providing an important history lesson. --Curtis Sumner is a professional land surveyor and the executive director of the National Society of Professional Surveyors. Through a gripping narrative and careful analysis, William Morton has succeeded in capturing and telling the history of Andrew Ellicott's late-eighteenth century expedition to survey the southern boundary of the United States. In the course of his four year saga, Ellicott coped with the duplicitous Spanish, hostile Indians and impenetrable swamps and forests. William Morton is the first historian to chronicle in detail what Ellicott faced and accomplished. --John Ferling, award-winning author, including *Whirlwind: The American Revolution and the War that Won it* (2015). From the Author: I first learned about Andrew Ellicott about 10 years ago while doing research for a book I was writing about how Georgia's boundaries were determined. Elliott surveyed two of the corners of Georgia and I became fascinated with him. The more I learned the more intrigued I got. Who was this man? Why is he almost unknown? Why didn't previous historians write about him? I became focused on giving him a legitimate place in our nation's history. This book is not his biography but is about Ellicott's most lengthy and difficult survey, the southern boundary of the United States with Spain. Since Spain's potential to own the entire North American continent after the Revolutionary War is little understood, I prepare the reader with the history of the years leading up to the Pinckney Treaty of 1795 which turned out to be the door that opened the way to the end of Spain's hegemony west of the Mississippi River. The four year expedition tells us much about a remarkable man and an almost unbelievable story of marking and measuring a 531 mile line from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean. About the Author: William Morton had a Urological practice in Atlanta for 30 years during which time he was a member of the Georgia State Bar. Always infatuated with history, his 2010 award-winning book, *The Story of Georgia's Boundaries*, introduced him to Andrew Ellicott, the astronomer-surveyor and protagonist of this book. He and his

wife, Monna, both passionate about fly-fishing, live in Atlanta, Georgia and Whitefish, Montana.