NO. 10.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI SOCIETY,

FOR THE

ACQUIREMENT AND DISSEMINATION

OF

USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

Instituted October 1, 1803.

CITY OF WASHINGTON:

Printed by SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH,

1804.

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY

JACKSON, MISS.
CITY OF NATCHez,
Saturday, October 1, 1803.

ELEVEN PRESENT, viz.

1. ISAAC BRIGGS,
2. W. C. C. CLAIBORNE,
3. WILLIAM DUNBAR,
4. JOHN HENDERSON,
5. JESSE GREENFIELD,
6. DAVID LATTIMORE,
7. FERDINAND L. CLAIBORNE,
8. JOHN GIRAULT,
9. BENJAMIN FARAR,
10. ISRAEL E. TRASK,
11. LEWIS KERR.

W. C. C. Claiborne, at the request of the persons present, takes the chair.

The form of a constitution as previously prepared by Isaac Briggs, W. C. C. Claiborne, William Dunbar, John Henderson, David Lattimore, John Girault, and Lewis Kerr, is presented.

Several amendments are thereto proposed and adopted.

On motion,

Resolved, That the constitution as presented and amended, be, and is hereby declared to be a constitution for the purposes therein set forth in the words following, viz.
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
MISSISSIPPI SOCIETY.

PREAMBLE.

WE whose names are hereunto subscribed, being desirous of aiding, as much as may be in our power, the advancement of agriculture and other useful arts in this country, do hereby associate ourselves for that purpose. We contemplate with respect and admiration the success of the several societies in Europe and America, which have been established for the improvement of mankind in the arts and sciences; but we have at the same time to lament the distance at which we are placed from those societies, and the extreme improbability of our deriving at least any local advantages from their valuable labors. Of the nature of our climate and the capabilities of our soil most of the inhabitants have had but short experience; and it is therefore reasonable to presume that their knowledge in general on those heads is imperfect.

The various other natural resources of human convenience also, in which the country is supposed to abound, have never been systematically explored.

The discoveries hitherto made have been for the most part accidental, and the knowledge obtained has seldom been satisfactorily detailed, and never yet collected into a body for general information: And being duly impressed with this truth, that, by science only can mankind attain any certain or perfect enjoyment of the munificence of nature, we propose to employ our joint efforts with assiduity and zeal, in learning how to smooth some of those paths which lead to true national wealth and individual comfort, and in which the hand of labor is at the same time released from more than half its toil. The acquisition of useful knowledge and its dissemination among our fellow citizens, therefore, constitute our primary object. The collection of useful books accordingly presents itself first among the means of accomplishing the grand ends of our institution; and we confidently rely on the early establishment of a public library, under the direction of our Society. In our records likewise we trust will be found at least a faithful repository for such communications in natural science and the useful arts, as the learned, the curious, or the industrious may contribute.

Among our principal objects we also pledge ourselves mutually for the sincere cultivation of social harmony, and therefore declare all inquiries or discussions involving religious or political controversy to be foreign to the principles of our association; and hold it a sacred duty to ourselves and the country for whose benefit we associate, to guard with unceasing vigilance against those feuds which are too well known to have an unhappy tendency to disorganize all human institutions. By these means and a faithful discharge of the duties which we have hereby voluntarily undertaken, we indulge an humble expectation, that under the protection of Divine Providence and the auspices of patriotism, the Society may ere long become essentially instrumental to the general welfare.

And we do hereby publish and declare the following articles as composing the constitution of the Society.
ARTICLE I.
The Society shall be entitled “The Mississippi Society, for the Acquirement and Dissemination of useful knowledge.”

And the objects of the institution are hereby declared to be: the cultivation of social harmony, and the acquirement and dissemination of useful information in natural science, and primarily agriculture.

ARTICLE II.
The Society shall consist of the undersigned members, and such others, as shall hereafter be admitted according to the constitution and laws of the Society; and from among the members there shall be elected annually, and as often at other times as vacancies shall respectively occur, a President, and at least one Vice-President, a Treasurer and a Secretary, to serve for one year, and such other officers as the Society shall from time to time appoint by law.

ARTICLE III.
Persons residing at such a distance from the place where the Society shall meet, that their personal attendance would be impossible or inconvenient, but who may nevertheless contribute by useful communications or otherwise to promote any of the objects of the institution, may be admitted under the denomination of “Corresponding Members,” to enjoy all the privileges of members save that of voting or balloting.

ARTICLE IV.
All officers shall be elected by ballot, and a concurrence of a majority of the members present shall be necessary to the election of every officer.

ARTICLE V.
Persons hereafter to be admitted members or corresponding members shall be previously balloted for, and the concurrence of three fourths of the members present shall be necessary to the admission of any candidate.

ARTICLE VI.
On a motion to expel any member, or corresponding member, the sense of the Society shall be taken by ballot, and the concurrence of three fourths of the members present shall be necessary to such expulsion, and no motion of that nature shall be introduced by less than three members.

ARTICLE VII.
The meetings of the Society shall be held at such place and places within the present limits of the county of Adams, as the Society shall appoint by law: And there shall be held one annual meeting on the first Saturday in October, when such officers as are to be elected annually shall be chosen, and three other meetings quarterly on the days following, viz. the first Saturday in January, the first Saturday in April, and the first Saturday in July, in each year, and such other meetings as the Society shall by law otherwise appoint or provide for.

ARTICLE VIII.
Each member shall be assessed to contribute annually to the support of the institution a sum not exceeding six dollars, to be paid in four equal instalments at each annual and quarterly meeting. And any member who shall become in arrear to the Society in the amount of one whole annual contribution, shall forfeit all the privileges of a member of the Society and all right and interest which he shall or may have acquired in any proper-
ty attached to the same, provided such delinquent shall have been previously notified in such manner as shall be prescribed by law of such impending forfeiture, and shall nevertheless neglect to pay up his arrears.

ARTICLE IX.

The Society shall have full power at all times hereafter to make such byelaws as to them shall appear necessary from time to time, to carry into effect the objects of the institution according to the principles contained in this constitution.

ARTICLE X.

These articles may be amended on the motion of not less than three members, provided that the same be concurred in by at least two thirds of the members present at an annual or quarterly meeting, and likewise sanctioned by the concurrence of at least two thirds of the members present at the next ensuing annual or quarterly meeting (as the case may be) and in no other manner and at no other times or meetings whatsoever.

1. ISAAC BRIGGS,
2. WILLIAM C. C. CLAIBORNE,
3. WILLIAM DUNBAR,
4. JOHN HENDERSON,
5. JESSE GREENFIELD,
6. DAVID LATTIMORE,
7. FERDINAND L. CLAIBORNE,
8. JOHN GIRAULT,
9. BENJAMIN FARAR,
10. ISRAEL E. TRASK,
11. PHILANDER SMITH,
12. ADAM TOOLEY,
13. JOSEPH MACREARY,
14. SAMUEL BRIGGS, JUNIOR,
15. JOSEPH BRIGGS,
16. HORE BROWSE TRIST,
17. LEWIS KERR,

On motion,

Resolved, That the Society do proceed to elect a president, two vice-presidents, a treasurer, and a secretary to serve for the ensuing year.

A ballot is accordingly held and the following members are elected, viz.

ISAAC BRIGGS, President.
WILLIAM C. C. CLAIBORNE, Vice-President.
WILLIAM DUNBAR, Secretary.
JOHN HENDERSON, Treasurer.
LEWIS KERR, Secretary.

October 8th, 1803. Ordered, That the society do proceed to ballot for the election of an assistant secretary, and a librarian and curator. A ballot is accordingly held, and the following members are elected, viz.

JOSEPH BRIGGS, Assistant Secretary.
JOHN GIRAULT, Librarian & Curator.

BYE-LAWS.

Passed 8th October, 1803.

I.

Each member of the society shall subscribe six dollars yearly, to be applied by the society to such purpose as they shall direct; and no member shall be entitled to a vote on any occasion who shall be in arrears to the society.

II.

Every member hereafter to be chosen agreeably to the laws of this society, shall pay ten dollars admission-money, and also subscribe for the yearly payment of six dollars before he is entitled to any vote in the business of the society at their meetings.
III.

No person shall be hereafter admitted a member or corresponding member of the Society, unless he shall be proposed at one meeting and balloted for at some ensuing meeting, and unless there be at least eight members present at the time of such proposal as well as at the ballot; and there shall intervene at least six days between such meetings.

IV.

There shall be the following officers of the Society, viz. one President, two Vice-Presidents, one Treasurer, one assistant Secretary, and one Librarian and Curator, who shall be elected on the first Saturday in October in every year, and as often at other times as vacancies shall occur, between the hours of 2 and 6 in the afternoon, and no election shall be held unless eight members be present.

V.

The President is to preside at all meetings, to preserve order, to regulate the debates, and to state and put questions agreeably to the sense and intention of the members; he is authorised to call by public notice extra meetings of the Society, when he shall conceive them expedient; he shall nominate and appoint the members to compose all standing and other committees; and he shall, as far as may be in his power, superintend the affairs of the Society generally, and encourage the several officers and other members of the Society in all things to obey the laws and zealously to promote the objects of the institution.

VI.

The Vice-Presidents shall, in the absence of the President, execute all the duties of the office.

VII.

The Treasurer shall receive the subscriptions of the members and all other monies which shall become due to the Society, and shall pay the same agreeably to their orders certified to him by the President, or other member, who was in the chair when the order was made.

The Treasurer shall keep a regular account of all monies received and paid by him as aforesaid; and once in every year or oftener if required by the Society, he shall render an account to them of the stock in his hands and the disbursements made by their order, and shall deliver to his successor the books and all papers belonging to them, together with the balance of cash in his hands.

VIII.

The Secretary shall, with the aid of the assistant Secretary, take the minutes, and read all letters and papers, and copy into the proper books all such letters, papers and essays as the Society may think fit to preserve on record; and the Secretary or assistant Secretary is to give notice to new members of their election, and agreeably to the direction of the Society to write and answer letters, and in general to manage all matters of correspondence.

IX.

The Librarian and Curator shall receive and keep in good order at such place as shall be prescribed by law or otherwise, all books, manuscripts, maps, draughts, drawings, paintings, engravings, papers, mathematical and other instruments and apparatus, specimens of natural productions of the animal, vegetable or fossil kingdom, antiques, coins, medals and all other mat-
ters and things belonging to the Society, which shall be committed to his care, to class and arrange them in their proper order, and keep an exact list of them with the names of the respective donors in a book provided for that purpose.

X.

The Society shall meet on the first Saturday of every month at the hour of 10 in the forenoon, or such other hour as may be appointed by the last adjournment, and at such other times as the Society may by adjournment appoint or the President direct in virtue of his power; but no meeting shall have a power to proceed to any business unless at least five members be present, and the place of meeting shall always be where the last preceding meeting shall have been held, unless changed by a resolution of the Society.

XI.

No part of the Society's stock shall be disposed of nor shall any new laws hereafter be made, until the same have been proposed at one meeting and agreed to by two thirds of twelve or more members present at the next meeting. And no motion to alter the constitution of the Society shall be proposed at any meeting unless there be at least twelve members present.

XII.

No question shall be put on a motion unless it be seconded, and the determination of any question shall be by ballot if requested by three members. In case of an equality of votes on any question, the same shall be referred to another meeting.

MEMBERS elected since the institution of the Society.

1803.

STEPHEN MINOR,
G. E. PENDERGRASS,
JOHN ELLIS,
SAMUEL POSTLETHWAIT,
ABNER GREEN,
ANDREW MARSHALK,
WILLIAM CONNER,
WILLIAM SCOTT,
ALEXANDER ROSS,
JOSEPH PANNILL,
GEORGE POINDEXTER,
SETH LEWIS,

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

1803.

WILLIAM LATTIMORE,
JAMES MADISON,
ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON,
SAMUEL L. MITCHELL,
THOMAS MOORE,
HENRY TOOLEY,
JOHN SIBLEY,

1804.

SILAS DINSMORE,

AN ACT

To incorporate the Mississippi Society for the Acquisition and Dissemination of Useful Knowledge.

WHEREAS certain persons lately associated themselves in this Territory, for the laudable pur-
poses of cultivating harmony, and of acquiring and disseminating useful information in natural science, and primarily agriculture; and whereas the members of that society have presented a petition to the Legislature, setting forth the nature and views of this institution, and praying that the same may be incorporated by law.

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the Legislative Council and House of Representatives of the Mississippi Territory in General Assembly convened, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That Isaac Briggs, William C. C. Claiborne, William Dunbar, John Henderson, John Girault, Lewis Kerr, Joseph Briggs, David Latimore, Joseph Macrery, Jesse Greenfield, Ferdinand L. Claiborne, Benjamin Farrar, Israel E. Trask, Philander Smith, Adam Tooly, Samuel Briggs, junior, Hore Browse Trist, John Ellis and William Connor, members of the said society, and such other persons as shall from time to time hereafter become members of the same, according to the constitution and laws thereof, as the same may have already been, and shall hereafter be ordained or enacted, shall be and are hereby constituted and declared to be one body corporate and politic in fact and name, by the title of "The Mississippi Society for the Acquisition and Dissemination of Useful Knowledge," and by that name they and their successors aforesaid shall have perpetual succession: and they shall have a common seal which they may change and alter at their pleasure; and that by the same name they and their successors aforesaid shall be persons capable in law, to purchase, take, receive, hold and enjoy to the use of them and their successors, all manner of real estate in fee simple, or lesser interest in real estate, and the same to lease, release, sell, alien and convey at their pleasure; and all manner of goods, chattels and personal estate in like manner, to purchase, receive and enjoy, and at their pleasure sell or otherwise dispose of, and that by the same name they and their successors aforesaid, shall be persons capable and liable in law of suing and being sued, pleading and being impleaded, in all manner of actions, suits and controversies in law, equity or otherwise, as far as corporations from their nature may be so capable and liable, according to the usual course of law.

Sec. 2. And be it further enacted, That the said Society shall be in all things governed by such constitutions, bye-laws and resolutions as may have already been, and shall hereafter be ordained, enacted, made or passed for that purpose in and by the said Society. Provided, That such constitutions, bye-laws, rules and resolutions be not repugnant to the constitution of the United States, or the ordinance or laws of this territory, or of such state as may hereafter be erected, wherein the said Society shall be.

Sec. 3. And be it further enacted, That this shall be, and be deemed a public act, and notice shall be taken thereof as such in all courts of justice and elsewhere, and it shall and may be given in evidence on the trial of any issue or otherwise, in any cause without being specially pleaded.

WILLIAM CONNOR,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

JOHN ELLIS,
President of the Legislative Council.

APPROVED, November 18, 1805.

WILLIAM C. C. CLAIBORNE,
Governor of the Mississippi Territory.