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**Audubon's Writing Reveals How Louisiana Influenced His Art**  
*LSU Press to publish Audubon on Louisiana by Ben Forkner in October*

**Baton Rouge**—Though we remember John James Audubon's years in Louisiana primarily for the art he produced while living there, his written references to Louisiana indicate that the region provided more than simply a locale. Louisiana itself had a profound impact on his artistic vision as he produced the magnificent collection of paintings published as *The Birds of America*.

In *Audubon on Louisiana*, Ben Forkner compiles Audubon's essential writings on the region and demonstrates the significant role it played in the painter's life. Beginning in 1810 as Audubon arrives in the upper Louisiana Territory, and continuing as he moves into southern Louisiana ten years later (and eventually brings his wife, Lucy, to join him), these writings reveal Audubon's struggles to fill his portfolio with new watercolors, his discoveries throughout the region, and the transformative impact the area had on both his art and his life.

By including Audubon's private journal of 1820–21, the *Louisiana Journal*, Forkner offers new insights into Audubon's struggles and processes and inspires a deeper appreciation of his works. The difficulty of reading Audubon's rough English has often kept readers from fully appreciating the *Journal's* significance, but Forkner removes this barrier with a detailed explanation in the headnote to guide readers through this compelling document.

*Audubon on Louisiana* also contains a selection of essays that Audubon penned about his travels down the Mississippi River. Most of these episodes he included in his *Ornithological Biography*, a massive five-volume description that complements the visual art of *Birds of America*. Forkner concludes with a selection of Audubon's letters describing his last voyage to Louisiana in 1837 and a final section that reproduces nine of Audubon's Louisiana bird biographies.

Forkner provides a detailed account of Audubon's time in Louisiana, with commentary on each selection that introduces readers to the great artist who was also a great nature writer. This magisterial work illuminates the origins of Audubon's art and offers a fascinating autobiographical record that will deepen our understanding and change our perception of one of the most significant artists of the nineteenth century.

A retired professor of English, **Ben Forkner** has published three books on Audubon: *John James Audubon: Journaux et Récits*; *John James Audubon: Selected Journals and Other Writings*; and *John James Audubon Portfolio*. He has also published *Louisiana Stories, Cajun*, and a dozen books on writers of Ireland and the American South.

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To request a review copy or set up an interview with the author,  
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