

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

THORNTON, William

Jost Van Dyke Island, West Indies 1761 –
Washington 1828

Physician, architect and artist in miniature, watercolour, etc. He was born to English Quaker parents in the West Indies, and sent back to England at an early age. He studied medicine at Edinburgh and pursued his career in Aberdeen, London and in Paris, where a “friendship” arose with Fanny, comtesse de Beauharnais. In 1786 he moved to America, soon establishing himself in Philadelphia, later moving to New York. He copied Gilbert Stuart’s portrait of Washington in “Swiss crayon”.

Bibliography

Bolton 1923; Allen C. Clark, “Doctor and Mrs William Thornton”, *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, DC*, xviii, 1915, pp. 144–208; “William Thornton (1761–1828), physician turned architect”, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, ccvi/1, 1968, pp. 126ff