

The Louisiana Purchase changed the size and shape of the nation and helped hasten westward expansion.

Westward, Ho!

SS.8.A.3.14, SS.8.A.4.3, SS.8.A.4.12

How did Spain and France play a role in Americans moving west?

In 1800 the territory of the United States extended as far west as the Mississippi River. The area west of the river—known as the Louisiana Territory—belonged to Spain. The Louisiana Territory was an enormous area of land, stretching south to the city of New Orleans and west to the Rocky Mountains. Its northern boundaries remained undefined.

During the early 1800s, Americans moved west in search of land and adventure. Pioneers, many of them farmers, traveled over the mountains into Kentucky and Tennessee. Many also set out for the less settled areas of the Northwest Territory. They made a long and exhausting journey over the Appalachian Mountains. Pioneers heading to the western lands had to travel along rough, muddy roads or cut their way through thick forests.

These westward-bound pioneers loaded their household goods into Conestoga (kah • neh • STOH • guh) wagons, sturdy vehicles topped with white canvas. The settlers traveled with their two most valued possessions: rifles and axes. They needed rifles for protection and to hunt animals for food. They used axes to cut paths for their wagons through the dense forests.

Many of the pioneers set up farms along rivers that fed into the Upper Mississippi River. Farmers needed access to the Mississippi to transport their crops to markets. Their goods traveled down the Mississippi to New Orleans, where workers loaded them onto other ships bound for markets on the East Coast. The Spanish controlled the region, but they allowed the Americans to sail on the Lower Mississippi and trade in New Orleans. For the western farmers, this agreement was vital to their economic survival.

The French Threat

For some years, the Spanish allowed American goods to move freely in their territory. In 1802, the Spanish suddenly changed their policy, no longer allowing American goods to move into and beyond New Orleans. President Jefferson learned that Spain and France had secretly agreed to transfer the Louisiana Territory to France. Jefferson believed that France had also gained Florida in its secret agreement with Spain.

This news alarmed Jefferson. The agreement between Spain and France posed a serious threat to the United States. France's leader, Napoleon Bonaparte, had plans to create empires in Europe and the Americas. French control would put American trade along the Mississippi River at risk. Congress authorized Robert Livingston, the new minister to France, to offer as much as \$2 million for New Orleans and West Florida in order to gain control of the territory.

Napoleon and Santo Domingo

Napoleon dreamed of a Western empire. He saw the Caribbean island of Santo Domingo as an important naval base from which he could control such an empire. Events in Santo Domingo, however, ended Napoleon's dream. Inspired by the ideas of the French Revolution, Toussaint L'Ouverture (too • SAN loo • vuhr • TOOR) led enslaved Africans and other laborers in Santo Domingo in a revolt against the island's plantation owners. After fierce fighting, the rebels won and declared the colony an independent republic. L'Ouverture established a new government.

In 1802, Napoleon sent troops to regain control of Santo Domingo, but they were not successful. By 1804, the French were driven out of Santo Domingo. The country took its original name, Haiti.

Explaining Explain why French control of the Louisiana Territory worried Jefferson.

An Expanding Nation

SS.8.A.3.14, SS.8.A.4.3, SS.8.A.4.12, SS.8.G.3.1, SS.8.G.5.1, LA.8.1.6.1, LA.8.1.6.3

How did the Louisiana Purchase open an area of settlement?

Napoleon had a problem: he needed money to finance his war against Britain. Without Santo Domingo, Napoleon had little use for Louisiana. In order to solve his money problem, he decided to sell the Louisiana Territory. A French official told U.S. representatives Robert Livingston and James Monroe that the entire Louisiana Territory was for sale. The offer took Livingston and Monroe by surprise. They did not have the **authority** to accept such an offer.

The deal, however, was too good to pass up. The new territory would provide plenty of cheap land for farmers for future generations. It would also give the United States control of the Mississippi River, which would protect domestic shipping interests. These benefits

convinced Livingston and Monroe to close the deal, even though they did not have authorization to buy the whole territory. After a few days of negotiation, the parties agreed on a price of \$15 million.

Jefferson worried that such a large **purchase** might not be legal. The Constitution said nothing about acquiring new territory. By what authority could he buy the land? He thought of seeking a constitutional amendment, but he realized there was no time for such a step. Jefferson decided the government's treaty-making powers allowed the purchase of the new territory. The Senate approved the purchase in October 1803. The purchase of the Louisiana Territory doubled the size of the United States.

Florida **CONNECTION**

West Florida

The Louisiana Purchase treaty did not set the boundaries of the Louisiana Territory. Some Americans declared that the purchase included West Florida, a strip of land between present-day Louisiana and Florida. The Spanish, however, continued to govern this region until 1810, when American settlers there rebelled and proclaimed an independent republic. Spain formally gave up West Florida—and all of Florida—to the United States in 1819.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition

Americans knew little about the land west of the Mississippi, and Jefferson wanted to learn more about the new territory he had just acquired. He persuaded Congress to sponsor an expedition to gather information about the new land. The expedition would document findings about the territory's people, plants, and animals and recommend sites for future forts.

The expedition had another goal: finding and mapping the fabled Northwest Passage, a water route across North America. In order to trade with Asia, Europeans had to sail around Africa. Because the trip was long and costly, European explorers searched, unsuccessfully, for a more direct route. Once the Americas were colonized, Americans and Europeans continued to sail around Africa or around the tip of South America in order to reach Asia. Finding a water route across North America became more important than ever.

Jefferson chose Meriwether Lewis, his 28-year-old private secretary, to head the expedition. Lewis joined the militia during the Whiskey Rebellion and had been in the army when Jefferson hired him as his private secretary in 1801. Jefferson apparently looked forward to one day sending out an expedition to explore the continent, and hired Lewis with that in mind. William Clark was co-leader of the expedition. Clark was 32 years old and a friend of Lewis's. Clark also brought along York, an enslaved African American and lifelong companion of Clark's. York was a key member of the expedition. He was especially helpful building ties with Native Americans, many of whom had never before seen an African American and were drawn to him.

Lewis and Clark were well-informed, amateur scientists. They also had experience doing business with Native Americans. Together they assembled a crew of expert sailors, gunsmiths, carpenters, scouts, and a cook. Two men of mixed Native American and French heritage served as interpreters.

In the spring of 1804, the expedition left St. Louis and worked its way up the Missouri River. On May 5, 1805, Lewis described what they encountered along the trail in his journal:

"Buffalo Elk and goats or Antelopes feeding in every direction . . . [T]he buffalo furnish us with fine veal and fat and beef. . . . We have not been able to take any fish for some time past. The country is as yesterday beautiful in the extreme."

—from the journals of Lewis and Clark

The expedition encountered many Native American groups on the journey. A Shoshone woman named Sacagawea (SA • kuh • juh • WEE • uh) joined their group as a guide.

After 18 months and nearly 4,000 miles (6,437 km), Lewis and Clark reached the Pacific Ocean. They spent the winter there. Then they headed back east, returning in September 1806. The explorers had collected valuable information about people, plants, animals, and the geography of the West. Perhaps most important, their journey inspired people to move westward.

Pike's Expedition

Lewis and Clark were not the only people Jefferson sent to explore the wilderness. Lieutenant Zebulon Pike led two expeditions west between 1805 and 1807. He traveled through the Upper Mississippi River valley and into present-day Colorado. In Colorado, he found a snowcapped mountain he called Grand Peak, known today as Pikes Peak.

From Pike's travels, Americans learned about the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains. Pike also mapped part of the Rio Grande and traveled across northern Mexico and what is now southern Texas.

A Federalist Plan to Secede

The Louisiana Purchase troubled Federalists in the Northeast. They feared the westward expansion would weaken New England's power in political and economic affairs. A group of Federalists in Massachusetts plotted to **secede** (suh • SEED), or withdraw, from the Union. New England would become the "Northern Confederacy."

The plotters realized that if the confederacy were to last, it had to include New York as well as New England. The Massachusetts Federalists needed a powerful friend in New York who would support their plan. They turned to Aaron Burr.

Hamilton and Burr Duel

Alexander Hamilton was concerned about rumors of secession. He had never trusted Aaron Burr, and now he heard that Burr had secretly agreed to lead New York out of the Union. Hamilton accused Burr of plotting treason. Meanwhile, Burr was suffering setbacks in his political career. Blaming Hamilton for these troubles, Burr challenged him to a duel.

The two men—armed with pistols—met in Weehawken, New Jersey, in July 1804. Hamilton hated dueling, which was illegal but popular among upper-class Americans at the time. Hamilton pledged not to shoot at his rival, but Burr took no such pledge. He aimed to shoot Hamilton, and he was successful. Seriously wounded, Hamilton died the next day. Burr fled to avoid arrest.

Drawing Conclusions Why was the Louisiana Purchase important for the United States?

LESSON 2 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. Identify a word that means the opposite of *secede*.

LA.8.1.6.1, LA.8.1.6.3

Answer the Guiding Questions

2. **Explaining** How did the secret agreement between Spain and France over Louisiana affect American trade in the West?

SS.8.A.3.14

3. **Identifying Cause and Effect** Name two effects of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

SS.8.A.3.14

4. **Summarizing** How did the Federalists react to the Louisiana Purchase? Explain.

SS.8.A.3.14, SS.8.A.4.3

5. **PERSONAL WRITING** Write a one-paragraph journal entry from the perspective of a participant of the Lewis and Clark expedition, explaining your feelings and expectations as you set out on your journey.

SS.8.A.4.3