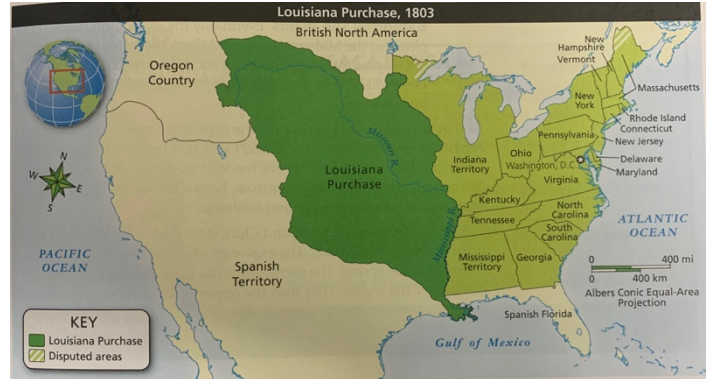




The Louisiana Purchase

By 1800, almost one million Americans lived between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River. Most were farmers. With few roads west of the Appalachians, western farmers relied on the Mississippi River to ship their wheat and corn. First, they sent their produce down the river to New Orleans. From there, ships carried it across the Gulf of Mexico, around Florida, and up to ports along the Atlantic Coast.



Spain, who controlled New Orleans, sometimes threatened to close the port to Americans. After the signing of Pinckney's Treaty, Americans were able to ship goods through New Orleans peacefully. However, shortly after, Spain gave Louisiana back to the French. President Jefferson was alarmed. He knew that the French Ruler, **Napoleon Bonaparte**, had already set out to conquer Europe. Would he now try to build an empire in North America?

Jefferson sent Robert Livingston and James Monroe to buy New Orleans and West Florida from Napoleon. Jefferson said they could offer as much as \$10 million. Livingston and Monroe negotiated with the French Prime Minister, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand. Since France needed money to help fight his costly wars in Europe, they asked if the United States wanted to buy all of Louisiana, not just New Orleans. After negotiating back and forth, the men agree to \$15 million for Louisiana.

1. Why did Jefferson want to gain control of New Orleans?

2. Why was France willing to sell the entire territory of Louisiana?

Does the President Have the Power to Buy Land?

Jefferson was happy with the outcome, but was not sure whether or not he actually had the authority to buy land. He had always insisted that the federal government had only those powers specifically spelled out in the Constitution. The document said nothing about a President having the power to buy land. In the end, Jefferson decided that he did have the authority to buy Louisiana. The Constitution, he reasoned, allowed the president to make treaties. Buying Louisiana was part of a treaty. Federalists opposed the purchase as unconstitutional and feared it would weaken other states. Democratic Republicans supported it, and the Senate approved the treaty. The **Louisiana Purchase** of 1803 nearly doubled the size of the United States.

3. How did Jefferson justify the purchase of the Louisiana Territory?

A Dangerous Journey

Few Americans knew anything about the Louisiana Territory. In 1803, Congress provided money for a team of explorers to study the new lands. Thomas Jefferson asked two men to lead this dangerous expedition. **Meriwether Lewis** and **William Clarke**.

Read the letter below, written by Jefferson to Lewis, and then answer the questions that follow.

20 June 1803

To Meriwether Lewis esq., Captain of the 1st regimt. of infantry of the U.S. of A.

The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri River and other rivers to find a water route to the Pacific Ocean for the purpose of trade. You should make detailed notes throughout your journey, and make several copies of the notes. Choose the most trustworthy individuals to care for them. Make careful observations of latitude and longitude at all points on the river, especially at the mouths of rivers and other important places. We want to make new maps of the area. Plan to meet the Indian tribes and to begin trade with them. We want to know many things about the people you meet, including their tribe names, how many people are in each tribe, their languages and traditions, their occupations, any diseases they have and remedies they use, and the things they might need or offer in trade. Be sure to treat the natives in the friendliest manner that you are able. You should also notice and record information about new plants and animals that you observe and the minerals you find. Also record what the climate and landscape are like. Return the way you came and confirm the observation that you made on the way out.

4. Where does Jefferson want the expedition to go?

5. Who have Lewis and Clarke been told to look for? How have they been told to deal with these people?

6. What information does Jefferson want the expedition to report back on?

7. Why are these things important to Jefferson?

The Expedition of Lewis and Clark



Dozens of adventurous young men eagerly competed to join the expedition. Lewis and Clarke judged candidates based on their character, strength, hunting skills and ability to survive in the wilderness. In the end, about 50 volunteers were chosen to be a part of the **Corps of Discovery**.

As the explorers traveled, they met many Native Americans. Lewis and Clarke brought many gifts for them, including peace medals, beads, knives, blankets, sewing needles and fishhooks. During the winter months, the Native people helped the explorers find food and hunt buffalo. They also traded with the explorers.

Lewis and Clarke met a native woman named **Sacajawea**. She belonged to the Shoshone people, who lived in the Rocky Mountains. She and her French-Canadian husband agreed to accompany Lewis and Clark as translators. Sacajawea carried her baby on her back throughout the

journey.

As the expedition crossed the Rocky Mountains, the landscape changed. Thorns of prickly pear cactus jabbed the explorers' moccasins. Grizzly bears posed a threat to their safety. They had approached the Continental Divide- a ridge that separates river systems flowing toward opposite sides of the continent. They would need horses to travel to the other side of the Rocky's, where they could continue to the Pacific by River. Sacajawea was able to get horses and other supplies from other Shoshone they met along the way, including her own brother whom she had not seen in years.

The return trip to St. Louis took another year. In 1806, Americans celebrated the return of Lewis and Clark. They brought back with them a wealth of important information about the land and major rivers. Before they returned, Jefferson sent another explorer, Zebulon Pike, to explore the southwestern area of the Louisiana Territory. From 1805 to 1807, he explored the Mississippi and Arkansas Rivers and parts of present-day Colorado and New Mexico. A mountain that rises above the Colorado plains was named Pike's Peak in his honor.

The journeys of Pike and Lewis and Clark excited Americans. Americans first moved toward New Orleans, and by 1812 the territory had a large enough population to apply for statehood. However, settlers did not move further into the rugged western lands for a number of years.

8. How did major western rivers play a role in the discoveries made by Pike and Lewis and Clark?

9. How did the explorers treat the natives, and why?

10. Recall what Jefferson asked Lewis and Clark to do on their expedition. Did they fulfill that request? Support your answer.

Examining Primary Sources

Read the excerpts below from William Clark and Meriwether Lewis's journals during their expedition and answer the questions that follow.

William Clark, Sunday 23 June 1804

"... I got out of the boat to walk along the shore today. I proceeded around an extensive bend in the river, observing large fish swimming upstream as I walked. I killed a deer and made a fire to keep warm as the sun went down. Today I have seen flowers in bright, rich colors, deeper than I have seen before. Some resemble flowers from home, but others are unique and I wonder what usefulness they may provide. As it grew too dark to return to the ship, I decided to build a camp for the night. I peeled some bark to lie on, which I kept near the fire to help ward off the mosquitoes and knats along the river."

Meriwether Lewis, Monday 25 June 1804

"I've observed that the prairies come within a short distance of the river on each side as we travel along. The prairies contain plumbs, raspberries, vast quantities of wild apples, etc... Great numbers of deer are seen feeding on the young willows in the banks and on the sand bars of the river. In addition, we have encountered a strange deer-like animal that appears solid and useful for eat or haul. It's very curious indeed..."

William Clark, Monday 23 July 1804

"A fair morning. Sent a party to look for timber for ores and another to hunt earlier this morning. At 11 o'clock I sent Drewey and Crouset with some tobacco to invite the Indians, if they saw them, to come and talk with us at our camp. I expect they will be interested in many of our commodities such as pots and pans and our finer spices, so I am prepared to offer these things in gift and trade with them. As one of our men killed 5 deer yesterday, we also have enough meat to offer them as well. We hope in exchange to receive more horses for our journey... that is, of course, assuming they do not respond in a hostile manner to our invitation..."

What are some things that Lewis and Clark observed in the Louisiana Territory? Pretend you are an artist hired to help Lewis and Clark document the scenery on their expedition. Use the space below to draw what they may have seen as they wrote the entries above.

