Our Nation Grows

The United States Doubles Its Size

Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, became our third President. He made many good decisions for our country. One decision had to do with the city of New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Jefferson knew how important this city could be to the United States. American ships could load and trade here freely if the city belonged to them.

The land surrounding New Orleans was called the Louisiana Territory. It had belonged to Spain, but Spain gave the land to France. Jefferson quickly asked the French ruler if he could buy New Orleans for two million dollars. The French decided to sell not only New Orleans, but also all of the Louisiana Territory. The price for all this land would be fifteen million dollars. This may seem like a large amount of money, but it was a small price to pay for so much land. Thomas Jefferson gladly accepted France's offer, and bought the Louisiana Territory in 1803.



Brave pioneers traveled west to settle the wilderness. This painting shows a group of pioneers traveling west to the Oregon Territory.

The **Louisiana Purchase** more than doubled the size of the United States. *In*





the years to come, the Louisiana Purchase was to provide all or part of the land for fifteen new states.

Exploring the Louisiana Territory

Hardly anything was known about the land that made up the Louisiana Territory. President Jefferson chose to have this land explored. For this job, he chose two young men, **Captain Meriwether Lewis** and **Captain William Clark.**

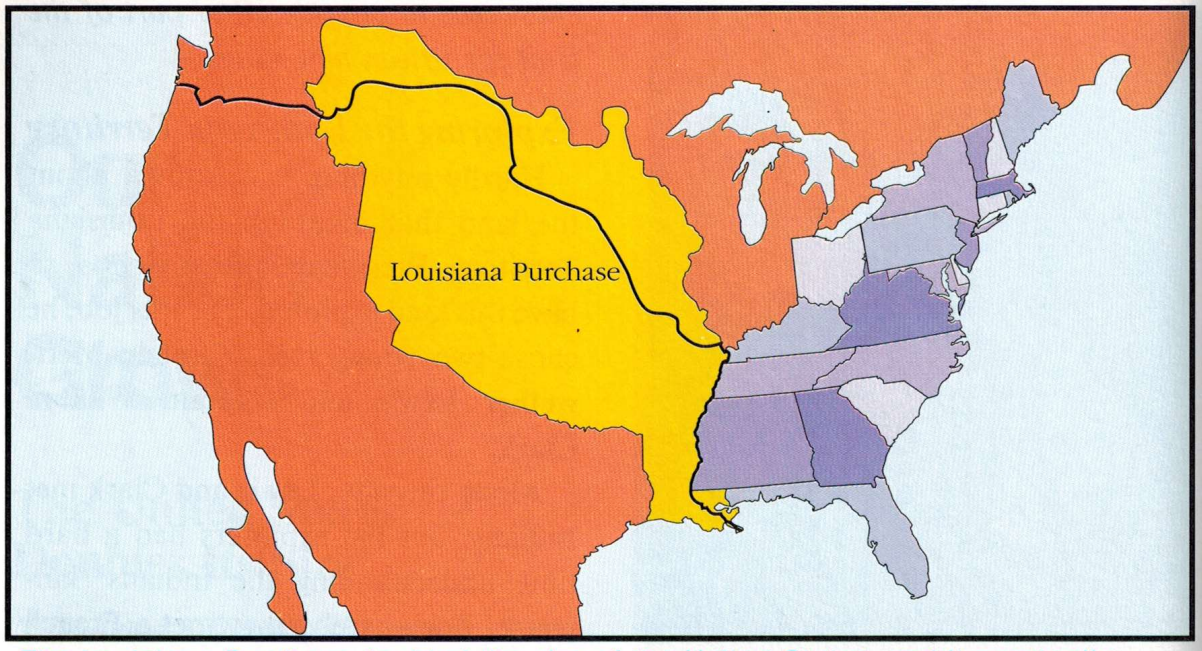
Along the way, Lewis and Clark met Indians, but the explorers had a hard time understanding the Indians' language. Fortunately, they met a French trapper whose wife was an Indian. Her name was **Sacagawea.** Both agreed to go with Lewis and Clark to translate the Indian language for them.

Together they climbed over mountains. When they came to rivers, they built boats. At last they saw the Pacific Ocean. When they finally returned to Washington, D.C., they had important reports to make to President Jefferson.

Americans heard about Lewis and Clark's exciting trip to see the West. Many people from the original thirteen states in the East became eager to move West. As a result, pioneers began pushing their way West to make new homes.

This painting shows the Indian guide Sacagawea showing the way for explorers Lewis and Clark.

Map Study: The Louisiana Purchase



The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States, and it eventually provided all or part of the land for fifteen new states. Lewis and Clark were sent out to explore the country's new territory.

The War of 1812

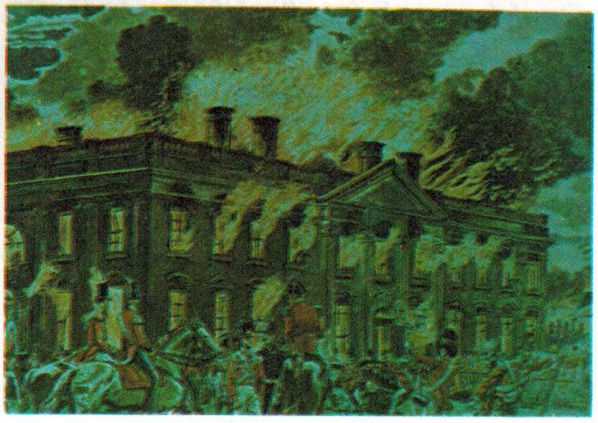
The French Purpose in Selling Louisiana

At the time the French were being governed by a very powerful soldier, **Napoleon Bonaparte.** Napoleon sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States, but he was not selling it to be generous to us. At the time, he was trying to become the ruler of all Europe. He needed money to carry on his wars in Europe. Selling Louisiana was a good way to get the money he needed. Although America was certainly far away from Europe, she became a part of the war between France and England.

Problems Arise for American Ships

France and England both had powerful navies, and both were fighting each other. If an American ship tried to sail with goods to England, France tried to prevent the American ship from reaching England. On the other hand, if an American ship tried to take goods to France, England did her best to prevent the ship from reaching France.

Then English warships began stopping American ships. The British would go on board the American ships and force some of the American sailors to board the English ships. These Americans were then forced to fight in the British navy. This happened so often



During the War of 1812, British soldiers set fire to Washington, D.C. Many important government buildings were destroyed in the fire. Here, the White House is seen going up in flames.

that hundreds of American sailors were kidnapped and forced to serve in the British navy.

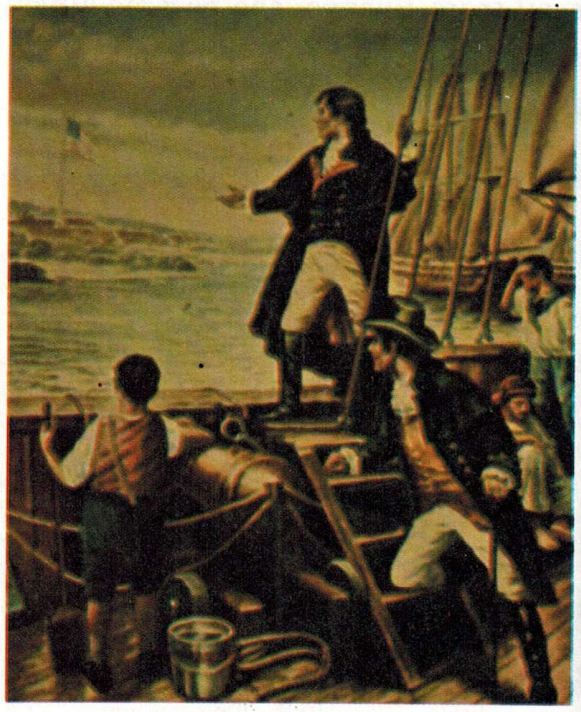
There was no respect for American ships on the seas. Since England was causing most of the problems, *the United States declared war on England in 1812.* This is known as the **War of 1812.**

The British and the Americans fought for over two years. The American army and navy were still new and weak. In 1812, the British marched into Washington, D.C., where they burned the Capitol building and the President's house.

Our National Anthem

The British next planned to capture Baltimore, Maryland. During this battle, **Francis Scott Key** of Baltimore was visiting an American prisoner on board one of the English warships. The battle of **Fort McHenry** in Baltimore continued during the night.

As the bombs burst and the rockets gave off a red glare of light, Key had enough light to see that our flag was still flying over the fort. When the dawn finally came, he saw plainly that our flag was still there. The British had failed to capture Baltimore. The sight of our battle-torn flag inspired Francis Scott Key to write our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."



During the battle at Ft. McHenry, Francis Scott Key was inspired to write "The Star-Spangled Banner." His poem became our national anthem.

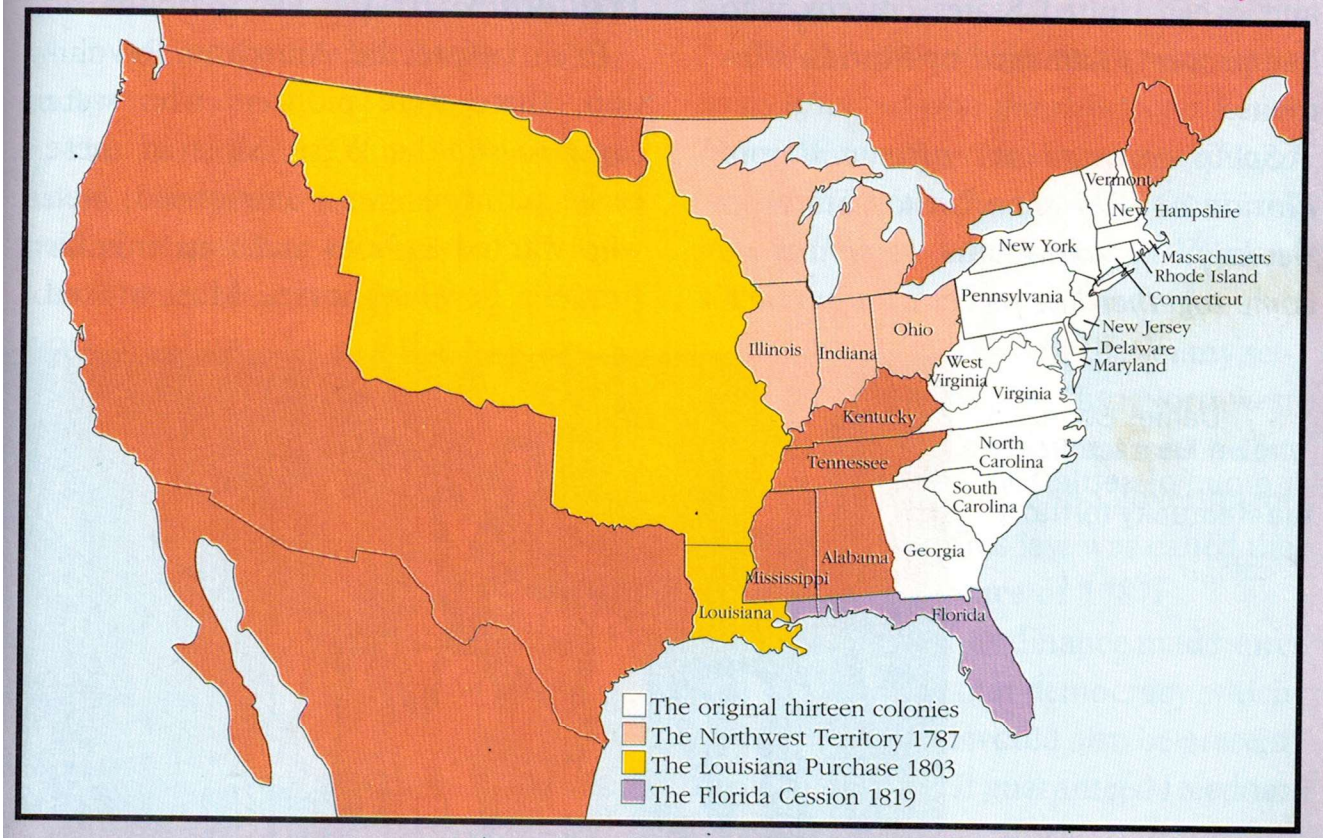
The Results of the War of 1812

The last battle of the War of 1812 was fought in 1815. The Americans soundly defeated the British at this battle, but neither side won the war. After three years of war, each side gladly made peace. England finally respected our ships on the seas. We also gained the respect of other countries who were watching to see what the outcome would be. The United States proved to herself and others that she was strong enough to protect herself. The people of the United States became prouder than ever of being Americans.

The Purchase of Florida

You will remember that Florida belonged to Spain. However, Spain did not rule Florida well. Men who had broken the law often ran to Florida to hide, and Spain did little to stop them. Many Indians of Florida were warlike.

Map Study: The United States and Its Territories 1819



Can you name some of the states that had not become a part of the sections that made up the United States in 1819?

Spain did nothing to control these Indians from crossing over Florida's border into Georgia, where they terrorized the settlers. After burning and killing, these Indians would run back to Florida. Florida was not a safe place to live in the early 1800's.

The United States had enough of Spain's poor control. The United States President at that time was **James Monroe.** He offered to buy Florida from Spain for five million dollars. However, this money would not be paid to Spain. Instead, the United States planned to use it to pay back the people of Georgia and other United States citizens who had property damaged by Florida's Indians.

Spain accepted our offer and sold Florida in 1819. The United States as we know it today was beginning to come together like pieces of a puzzle.