

## The Louisiana Purchase

### Reading and Discussion

After the presidential campaign of 1800, **Thomas Jefferson's** goal was to reconcile the colonies and restore the principle of the Revolution of 1776. In many ways, Thomas Jefferson was the complete opposite of the president before him, **President Adams**.

Thomas Jefferson was unlike the Federalist leaders of the time. The Federalists supported big business and big cities. Jefferson believed in an agrarian society and wanted strong local governments. He thought that farming was a noble thing to do because it kept men away from the temptations that were present in large cities. He thought that farming was honest work, and he favored informal government.

Jefferson was busily trying to downsize the federal government while also stimulating the economy. While he was pursuing these goals, **Napoleon Bonaparte** was trying to revive French Imperialism in the New World. Spain agreed to give Louisiana back to France. This was problematic for the Americans. The **Pinckney Treaty** provided the Americans with free access to the Mississippi River. Jefferson feared that Napoleon would try to control the American frontier by forbidding Americans access to **New Orleans**. New Orleans was the most important shipping port in the south. The notion that Americans could lose access to the **Mississippi River** and New Orleans was alarming because it would limit the plans for western expansion. It could also have threatened the American economy.

In 1802, Jefferson sent **Robert Livingston**, who was the minister to France, to negotiate with the French. He also later sent **James Monroe** to Paris as well. Jefferson was trying to purchase New Orleans and Florida. At the time, Jefferson did not even know if Spain had also given Florida to France or not. He just realized that both Florida and Louisiana were crucial to America's success and wanted to purchase both territories.

Jefferson was a pacifist, which means that he did not like war, and he tried to maintain peace. Even though he was a pacifist, he warned France that the United States may be forced to find a military solution if France took possession of New Orleans.

By 1803, French forces suffered from a defeat during a revolt in **Saint Dominique**, which is present day **Haiti**. Napoleon's plans to conquer Europe meant that he now needed more money for weapons and the military. Napoleon decided to focus on his plans for Europe and no longer sought additional property in the New World. As a result, Napoleon withdrew his troops from America and had Talleyrand negotiate the sale of New Orleans to the Americans.

Livingston and Monroe were told that they could spend up to \$10 million in order to purchase New Orleans. They never actually thought that the French would offer them the opportunity of purchasing over 800,000 square miles. Napoleon demanded an immediate reply to his offer of selling the territories. Livingston and Monroe did not have enough time to receive approval from Jefferson. They negotiated to buy all of the Louisiana Territory for **\$15 million**. This deal more than doubled the size of the United States.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Many Americans supported the purchase because it meant that they would be able to expand the country by moving further west. There were several Federalists that disagreed with the purchase and said that Jefferson was undermining the Constitution. The Constitution did not mention the purchase of territory. Even Jefferson questioned if the Constitution allowed the government to add territory and grant citizenship to the roughly 50,000 people that lived in the Louisiana Territory. Previously, Jefferson supported a strict interpretation of the Constitution. Jefferson and Congress both believed that the Louisiana Purchase was beneficial to the country, so they agreed not to worry about any constitutional difficulties.

There were some Federalists, like **John Adams** and **John Marshall**, who supported the purchase of Louisiana, but many viewed the purchase as problematic. Some Federalists feared that their political power would be threatened because an expanded United States would dilute their power. They thought that the inhabitants of Louisiana would be more likely to agree with the Republican Party, which promoted class equality and an agrarian life.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Activities

### Activity A: Fill In the Blanks.

1. Thomas Jefferson was unlike the \_\_\_\_\_ leaders of the time.
2. Jefferson believed in an \_\_\_\_\_ society.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ Treaty provided the Americans free access to the Mississippi River.
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ is someone who does not like war and tries to maintain peace.
5. By 1803, French forces suffered a defeat during a revolt in Saint Dominique, which is present day \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Jefferson questioned if the \_\_\_\_\_ allowed the government to add territory and grant citizenship to people in the added territory.
7. In 1802, Jefferson sent \_\_\_\_\_, who was the minister to France, to negotiate with the French.
8. Some Federalists thought that the inhabitants of Louisiana would be more likely to agree with the \_\_\_\_\_ Party.

### Activity B: True or False?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The United States bought all of the Louisiana Territory for \$15 million.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. New Orleans was just an unimportant shipping port in the south.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Louisiana was given to France by Germany.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The Louisiana Purchase included over 800,000 square miles of territory.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Jefferson feared that Napoleon would try to control the American frontier by forbidding Americans access to New Orleans.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Many Americans did not like the purchase of Louisiana because they thought they would now have to move.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Napoleon withdrew his troops from America and had Talleyrand negotiate the sale of New Orleans to the Americans.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## Answer Key

### Activity A

1. Thomas Jefferson was unlike the Federalist leaders of the time.
2. Jefferson believed in an agrarian society.
3. The Pinckney Treaty provided the Americans with free access to the Mississippi River.
4. A pacifist is someone who does not like war and tries to maintain peace.
5. By 1803, French forces suffered from a defeat during a revolt in Saint Dominque, which is present day Haiti.
6. Jefferson questioned if the Constitution allowed the government to add territory and grant citizenship to people in the added territory.
7. In 1802, Jefferson sent Robert Livingston, who was the minister to France, to negotiate with the French.
8. Some Federalists thought that the inhabitants of Louisiana would be more likely to agree with the Republican Party.

### Activity B

- T 1. The United States bought all of the Louisiana Territory for \$15 million.
- F 2. New Orleans was just an unimportant shipping port in the south.
- F 3. Louisiana was given to France by Germany.
- T 4. The Louisiana Purchase included over 800,000 square miles of territory.
- T 5. Jefferson feared that Napoleon would try to control the American frontier by forbidding Americans access to New Orleans.
- F 6. Many Americans did not like the purchase of Louisiana because they thought they would now have to move.
- T 7. Napoleon withdrew his troops from America and had Talleyrand negotiate the sale of New Orleans to the Americans.