



2 The Louisiana Purchase and Exploration

TERMS & NAMES

Louisiana Purchase
Meriwether Lewis
William Clark
Lewis and Clark expedition
Sacagawea
Zebulon Pike

MAIN IDEA

Jefferson purchased the Louisiana Territory in 1803 and doubled the size of the United States.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Thirteen more states were eventually organized on the land acquired by the Louisiana Purchase.

ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

In 1790, Captain Robert Gray became the first American to sail around the world. Two years later, Gray explored a harbor in what is now Washington state. This harbor was later named Gray's Harbor, and Washington's largest river was named after Gray's ship, the *Columbia*.

New England merchants like Captain Gray had to sail all the way around South America to reach the profitable trading regions of the Oregon Country. (See the map on page 304.) In spite of the long trip, merchants from Boston soon began to appear there frequently. They appeared so often that the Native Americans they traded with began calling all white people "Bostons."

Gray's explorations helped to establish U.S. claims to the Pacific Northwest. In this section, you will learn how a lucky land purchase and a daring expedition further hastened westward expansion.



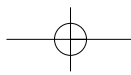
Robert Gray sailed his ship *Columbia* on trading voyages to the Northwest and China.

The West in 1800

In 1800, when Americans talked about the "West," they meant the area between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River. Thousands of settlers were moving westward across the Appalachians to settle in this region. Many moved onto land long inhabited by Native Americans. Even so, several U.S. territories soon declared statehood. Kentucky and Tennessee had become states by 1800, and Ohio entered the union in 1803.

Although the Mississippi River was the western border of the United States, there was a great deal of activity further west. In 1800, France and Spain were negotiating for ownership of the Louisiana Territory—the vast region between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains.

The Pacific coast region and the Oregon Country, as you read in *One American's Story*, also attracted increasing attention. In California, Spain had a chain of 21 missions stretching from San Diego to San Francisco. Starting just north of San Francisco, Russian settlements dotted the Pacific coast all the way to Alaska. Great Britain also claimed land in the region.



ReadingHistory

A. Reading a Map Use the map on page 304 to find the location of New Orleans.

As the number of Westerners grew, so did their political influence. A vital issue for many settlers was the use of the Mississippi River. Farmers and merchants used the river to move their products to the port of New Orleans, and from there to east coast markets. Threats to the free navigation of the Mississippi and the use of the port at New Orleans brought America to the brink of war.

Napoleon and New Orleans

“There is on the globe one single spot the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy,” President Jefferson wrote. That spot was New Orleans. This strategic port was originally claimed by France. After losing the French and Indian War, France turned over the Louisiana Territory—including New Orleans—to Spain. But in a secret treaty in 1800, Spain returned Louisiana and the port to France’s powerful leader, Napoleon. Now Napoleon planned to colonize the American territory.

Background

In 1799, Napoleon was made the top official of the French Republic. In 1804, he became emperor.

In 1802, these developments nearly resulted in war. Just before turning Louisiana over to France, Spain closed New Orleans to American shipping. Angry Westerners called for war against both Spain and France. To avoid hostilities, Jefferson offered to buy New Orleans from France. He received a surprising offer back. The French asked if the United States wanted to buy all of the Louisiana Territory—a tract of land even larger than the United States at that time.

The Louisiana Purchase

A number of factors may have led Napoleon to make his surprising offer. He was probably alarmed by America’s fierce determination to keep the port of New Orleans open. Also, his enthusiasm for a colony in America may have been lessened by events in a French colony in the West Indies. There, a revolt led by Toussaint L’Ouverture (too•SAN loo•vehr•TOOR) had resulted in disastrous losses for the French. Another factor was France’s costly war against Britain. America’s money may have been more valuable to Napoleon than its land.

Jefferson was thrilled by Napoleon’s offer. However, the Constitution said nothing about the president’s right to buy land. This troubled Jefferson, who believed in the strict interpretation of the Constitution. But he also believed in a republic of small farmers, and that required land. So, on April 30, 1803, the **Louisiana Purchase** was approved for \$15 million—about three cents per acre. The purchase doubled the size of the United States. At the time, Americans knew little about the territory. But that would soon change.

ReadingHistory

B. Making Inferences Why did Jefferson purchase Louisiana even though the Constitution said nothing about the president’s right to buy land?

Connections TO WORLD HISTORY

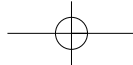
TOUSSAINT L’OUVERTURE

Toussaint L’Ouverture was born in Hispaniola, an island in the West Indies once colonized by both France and Spain. In 1791, L’Ouverture helped to lead a slave revolt against the French-controlled part of Hispaniola. A natural leader, L’Ouverture won admiration when he preached harmony between former slaves and planters.

In 1801, L’Ouverture overran the Spanish part of the island. He then freed all the slaves and put himself in charge of the entire island.

Hoping to regain their territory, the French invaded in 1802. They arrested L’Ouverture but failed to end the rebellion.





Lewis and Clark Explore

Since 1802, Thomas Jefferson had planned an expedition to explore the Louisiana country. Now that the Louisiana Purchase had been made, learning about the territory became even more important.

Jefferson chose a young officer, Captain **Meriwether Lewis**, to lead the expedition. In Jefferson's map-lined study, the two men eagerly planned the trip. Lewis turned to his old friend, Lieutenant **William Clark**, to select and oversee a volunteer force, which they called the Corps of Discovery. Clark was a skilled mapmaker and outdoorsman and proved to be a natural leader. The Corps of Discovery soon became known as the **Lewis and Clark expedition**.

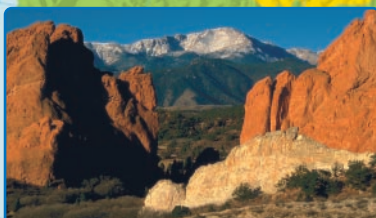
Clark was accompanied by York, his African-American slave. York's hunting skills won him many admirers among the Native Americans met by the explorers. The first black man that many Indians had ever seen, York became something of a celebrity among them.

Lewis and Clark set out in the summer of 1803. By winter, they reached St. Louis. Located on the western bank of the Mississippi River, St. Louis would soon become the gateway to the West. But in 1803, the city was a sleepy town with just 180 houses. Lewis and Clark spent the winter at St. Louis and waited for the ceremony that would mark the transfer of Louisiana to the United States. In March 1804, the American flag flew over St. Louis for the first time.

Vocabulary

corps (kor): a number of people acting together for a similar purpose

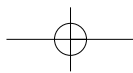
The Louisiana Purchase and Explorations, 1804–1807



The Rocky Mountain summit of Pikes Peak is 14,110 feet high.

GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER Interpreting Maps

- 1. Location** What two rivers met at the starting point of the Lewis and Clark expedition?
- 2. Movement** How were Lewis and Clark's return routes different from each other?



AMERICA'S HISTORY MAKERS

MERIWETHER LEWIS

1774–1809

Meriwether Lewis was well qualified for the first overland expedition to the Pacific Northwest. In Virginia, he had become an expert hunter. From 1801 to 1803, he worked for President Jefferson, who had him trained in geography, mineralogy, and astronomy.

The journals Lewis kept tell what the West was like in the early 1800s and are still exciting to read. In one entry, dated September 17, 1804, Lewis describes the “immense herds of Buffalo, deer Elk and Antelopes which we saw in every direction feeding on the hills and plains.”



WILLIAM CLARK

1770–1838

William Clark was an army friend of Meriwether Lewis. Lewis personally chose him to be co-captain of the Corps of Discovery.

Clark's experience in his state militia and the U.S. Army had taught him how to build forts, draw maps, and lead expeditions through enemy territory.

He had less formal training than Lewis, but with his six feet of height and muscular build, he was a more rugged explorer.

Clark's leadership skills smoothed disputes. Also, his artistic skills made the expedition's maps and drawings both accurate and beautiful.

What were the different skills of Lewis and Clark that qualified them as co-leaders of the expedition?

Up the Missouri River

The explorers, who numbered about 40, set out from St. Louis in May of 1804. They headed up the Missouri River in one shallow-bottomed riverboat and two pirogues—canoes made from hollowed-out tree trunks. They had instructions from President Jefferson to explore the river and hoped to find a water route across the continent. Lewis and Clark were also told to establish good relations with Native Americans and describe the landscape, plants, and animals they saw.

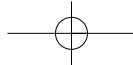
The explorers inched up the Missouri. The first afternoon, they traveled only about three miles. Sometimes the men had to pull, rather than row or sail, their boats against the current. In late October, they reached the Mandan Indian villages in what is now North Dakota.

The explorers built a small fort and spent the winter with the friendly Mandan. There, they also met British and French-Canadian trappers and traders. They were not happy to see the Americans. They suspected that the Americans would soon compete with them for the rich trade in beaver furs—and they were right.

In the spring of 1805, the expedition set out again. A French trapper, his 17-year-old-wife, **Sacagawea** (SAK•uh•juh•WEE•uh), and their baby went with them. Sacagawea was a Shoshone woman whose language skills and knowledge of geography would be of great value to Lewis and Clark—especially when they reached the area where she was born.

Reading History

C. Making Inferences Why did Lewis and Clark travel on the Missouri River?



Lewis and Clark kept beautiful journals that provided priceless information about the West.

On to the Pacific Ocean

On their way west, the expedition had to stop at the Great Falls of the Missouri. Lewis called this ten-mile-long series of waterfalls “the grandest sight I ever beheld.” He described his approach to the falls.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

I had proceeded on this course about two miles . . . when my ears were saluted with the agreeable sound of a fall of water and advancing a little further I saw the spray arise above the plain like a column of smoke. . . . (It) soon began to make a roaring too tremendous to be mistaken for any cause short of the great falls of the Missouri.

Meriwether Lewis, quoted in *Undaunted Courage*

To get around the Great Falls, the explorers had to carry their boats and heavy supplies for 18 miles. They built wheels from cottonwood trees to move the boats. Even with wheels, the trek took nearly two weeks. Rattlesnakes, bears, and even a hailstorm slowed their steps.

As they approached the Rocky Mountains, Sacagawea excitedly pointed out Shoshone lands. Eager to make contact with the tribe, Lewis and a small party made their way overland. Lewis soon found the Shoshone, whose chief recognized Sacagawea as his sister. The chief traded horses to Lewis and Clark, and the Shoshone helped them cross the Rocky Mountains.

The explorers then journeyed to the mighty Columbia River, which leads to the Pacific Ocean. In November 1805, Clark wrote in his journal, “Ocian in view! O! The joy.” They soon arrived at the Pacific Coast. There, they spent a rain-soaked winter before returning to St. Louis the following year.

The Lewis and Clark expedition brought back a wealth of scientific and geographic information. Though they learned that an all-water route across the continent did not exist, Americans received an exciting report of what lay to the west.

Pike’s Expedition

Lewis and Clark explored the northern part of the Louisiana Purchase. In 1806, an expedition led by **Zebulon Pike** left St. Louis on a southerly route. (Refer to the map on page 304.) Pike’s mission was to find the sources of the Arkansas and Red rivers. The Red River formed a boundary between Spanish territory and Louisiana.

Pike’s party of two dozen men headed westward across the Great Plains. When they reached the Arkansas River, they followed it toward the Rocky Mountains. From 150 miles away, Pike spied the Rocky Mountain peak that would later bear his name—Pikes Peak. However, he failed in his attempt to climb it. Then they turned south, hoping that they would eventually run into the Red River. Instead, they ran into the

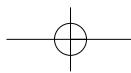
ReadingHistory

D. Finding Main Ideas

Why was the Lewis and Clark expedition valuable?

Background

The previous year, Pike had led a 5,000-mile expedition to search for the source of the Mississippi River.



EFFECTS: Exploration of the West, 1804–1807

- ▶ **1. Accurate maps**
Lewis and Clark and Pike produced the first good maps of the Louisiana Territory. Later travelers would use these maps to make their way west.
- ▶ **2. Growth of fur trade**
Exploration boosted interest in the fur trade. Hunters and trappers would add to the knowledge of the West.
- ▶ **3. Mistaken view of Great Plains**
Pike inaccurately described the treeless Great Plains as a desert. This led many Americans to believe that the Plains were useless for farming.



Compass used by Lewis and Clark

SKILLBUILDER Interpreting Charts

Why might Pike's description of the Great Plains have led to the idea that Native Americans east of the Mississippi should be moved there?

Vocabulary

Rio Grande:
Spanish for big river

Rio Grande, which was in Spanish territory. There, they were arrested by Spanish troops.

The explorers returned to the United States after being released by Spanish officials in 1807. Though Pike and his men never explored the Red River, they did bring back valuable descriptions of the Great Plains and the Rio Grande River Valley.

The Effects of Exploration

The first American explorers of the West brought back tales of adventure as well as scientific and geographical information. As the chart above shows, this information would have long-lasting effects.

Early in Jefferson's presidency, events at home occupied much of the new president's time. In the next section, you will learn about foreign affairs during the same time period.

Section 2 Assessment

1. Terms & Names

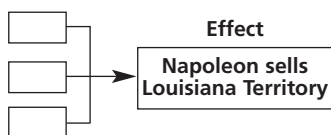
Explain the significance of:

- Louisiana Purchase
- Meriwether Lewis
- William Clark
- Lewis and Clark expedition
- Sacagawea
- Zebulon Pike

2. Taking Notes

Use a chart like the one below to record the factors that might have led Napoleon to sell the Louisiana Territory.

Causes



3. Main Ideas

- a. What groups might dispute European land claims in the West?
- b. Why was New Orleans important to Americans?
- c. How did Sacagawea help Lewis and Clark?

4. Critical Thinking

Recognizing Effects What were some of the effects of the explorations of the West in the 1800s?

THINK ABOUT

- how other people might use the information brought back by the explorers
- the economic effects of the expedition

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

**WORLD HISTORY
GEOGRAPHY**

Read more about New Orleans. Make an illustrated **time line** of the French, Spanish, and U.S. ownership of the city or create a **map** of its port.