

SOCIAL STUDIES 1103

NATIONAL EXPANSION

CONTENTS

I. SHIP OF STATE	2
Federal Government	3
First Political Parties	5
Foreign Affairs	6
Federalist President	8
II. REVOLUTION OF 1800 AND	
WAR OF 1812	14
Revolution of 1800	15
War of 1812	19
III. NATIONALISM AND SECTIONALISM	28
Nationalism and the Monroe Administration	29
Sectionalism and the Jackson Administration	32
GLOSSARY	44

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II. REVOLUTION OF 1800 AND WAR OF 1812

In his later years, Jefferson was fond of saying that “the Revolution of 1800 was as real a revolution in the principles of our government as that of 1776 was in its form.” Jefferson and his Secretary of the Treasury trimmed the edges of Hamilton’s financial system; they left its keystone, the national bank, undisturbed. The Republicans could do little about the Federalist control of the judiciary. They had to accept Marshall’s decisions, strengthening the hand of the central government. In foreign affairs, Jefferson kept his inaugural promise of no “entangling alliances.” He showed favoritism to neither France nor Britain and managed to avoid war with both countries.

During his Presidency, Jefferson’s actions sometimes conflicted with the principles he had expounded in the 1790’s. He increased expenditures for the navy, engaged in war with the Barbary pirates, and added territory to the Union even though the Constitution did not specifically authorize him to do so. Jefferson felt justified doing such things; he felt that the nation would gain by them. “What is practicable must often control what is pure theory,” he said. Historians agree that Jefferson’s decision to sign the Louisiana Treaty, in spite of his doubts about its constitutionality, was an act of statesmanship.

President Jefferson’s hopes for “peaceful coercion” through the Embargo Act were not fulfilled. He found no formula for protecting American rights on the seas, but he did leave to his successor a country that was still neutral in the Napoleonic Wars.

James Madison came to the Presidency at a crucial moment. The struggle between Napoleon and

Great Britain was reaching a climax, and neither side felt it could afford to respect the rights of neutrals. For three years Madison pursued the Jeffersonian policy of economic **boycott**. Though he did not know it, the policy worked well against Great Britain. Parliament voted to lift its Orders in Council at the very time that Congress was voting a declaration of war against Britain.

Much of the demand for war came from the planters, small farmers, and frontiersmen of the American South and West. The motives of these men were mixed. They wanted to punish Britain for interfering with American trade and impressing American seamen. They also wanted to conquer Canada and Florida and to break British and Spanish ties with the Indians.

The War of 1812 brought none of the quick conquests predicted by the War Hawks. American efforts to invade Canada were unsuccessful. However, the American navy won several victories both on the inland lakes and at sea. At New Orleans the British suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Andrew Jackson, a frontier general who became a national hero because of this victory. The war ended with the Treaty of Ghent, which restored the prewar boundaries but said nothing about the causes of the conflict—a lesson in the futility of war.

From the standpoint of American morale, the War of 1812 was a “Second War of Independence.” Although ill-prepared for war, the United States held its own against the British army and navy. Winning the war, and increasing economic independence gave rise to a strong feeling of national pride, and spurred efforts to establish an American culture.

SECTION OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able:

6. To evaluate the extent of continuity and change in policies between the Republican Party that came to power in 1800 and the Federalist Party that preceded it.
7. To cite two examples of how President Jefferson lived up to his ideal of limited government to meet the needs of an agrarian society and to cite two instances in which he violated this ideal.
8. To discuss the factors leading to the sale of the Louisiana Territory by France and its purchase by the United States.

9. To describe the impact of the Louisiana Purchase on American political and economic growth.
10. To discuss the War of 1812 and the political problems encountered by President Madison.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.



blockade
boycott

embargo
monopoly

suffrage

REVOLUTION OF 1800

To the end of his days, Jefferson referred to his election to the Presidency as “the Revolution of 1800”; for Jefferson believed that in his struggle with John Adams, the future of the Republic was at stake.

One of his first acts as President was to release those who were still in jail as a result of the Sedition Act. Jefferson believed that the strength of a government depended upon its popularity and not upon its use of force.

Inauguration Day, March 4, 1801, dawned chilly and rainy upon the half-built capitol on the banks of the Potomac. John Adams, unable to bear his foe's triumph, slipped out of town at four o'clock in the morning. Jefferson, dressed in a plain dark suit and without badge or sword, walked down from his boardinghouse to the Capitol where he was given the oath of office.

One set of rulers had been turned out of office, and another set had been installed. Except for a salute by the Maryland militia, not a shot had been fired, not a soldier had been seen. “I have this morning witnessed one of the most interesting scenes,” wrote Margaret Bayard Smith, wife of a Republican newspaper editor. “The changes of administration, which in every government and in every age have most generally been epochs of confusion, villainy, and bloodshed, in this our happy country take place without any disorder.” The orderly transfer of power was a measure of the young republic's political maturity.

Jefferson's term of office was not quite the “revolution” that he later remembered. No widespread dismissal of Federalist officeholders occurred, nor were the Federalist programs totally removed. Jefferson kept and used the Bank of the United States; the Alien and Sedition laws had already expired. The atmosphere had changed. John Adams had considered the Federalist Party to be the

party of the “rich and well-born,” and he had stocked the government offices with people of family and fortune. Jefferson announced that the government ought to be open to all people of honesty, intelligence, and education.

Wise and frugal government. Jefferson was particularly concerned that government not be a burden. Together with his Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin, Jefferson eliminated all internal excise taxes, instead securing income for the government from customs duties and the sale of western lands. To save money, Jefferson and Gallatin reduced the army to three thousand soldiers and sold most of the navy's vessels. Jefferson's aim, stated in his inaugural address, was “a wise and frugal government” that would leave citizens alone “to regulate their own pursuits of industry and profit.”

Open, responsive, and concerned government was the essence of the “Revolution of 1800.” Jefferson's administration was also, as he had predicted, the beginning of popular government in the United States. Jefferson had swamped the Federalist opposition in the Presidential election of 1804, and his part had achieved control of Congress. However, America was not yet a democracy. Most states still had property requirements for voting and office holding, and white males over twenty-one were still the only people allowed to vote. Inspired by Jefferson's concern for the common citizen, several states began modifying their property requirements for **suffrage**.

Marbury v. Madison. During Jefferson's term of office the power of the Supreme Court was increased. William Marbury, one of the judges appointed by Adams before he left office, had not

been granted his commission of office prior to the change of administration. Marbury asked the Supreme Court to compel Secretary of State James Madison to grant him his commission. Chief Justice John Marshall recognized that if he and the justices approved Marbury's request, Madison might not follow the Court's orders, thus weakening the people's respect for the judiciary. If the justices rejected Marbury's request, however, the Republicans would have an apparent victory. Marshall managed to avoid both political pitfalls. In his decision, he stated that Marbury deserved the commission but that the Court was powerless to make the Secretary of State deliver it because of a conflict between the Constitution and the Judiciary Act of 1789.

Marshall's decision in *Marbury v. Madison* was a blow to the Republicans, but it strengthened the federal judiciary by establishing the principle that the Supreme Court could declare acts of Congress unconstitutional. This ruling was the first of many important decisions made by John Marshall during his thirty-five years as Chief Justice.

Trouble in Europe. While France and England were at war in Europe, Spain had changed sides, going back with its former ally, France. Fearing that Britain might seize Louisiana, Spain's territory west of the Mississippi River, Spain secretly gave Louisiana to France for protection. Spain expected to have the territory returned to her at the end of the war.

Knowing that the United States would disapprove of the bargain, the two countries kept it secret, and Spain continued to govern the territory. Jefferson learned of the deal, however, and exploded in anger. He did not want a strong military power like France on his nation's western border, but as long as Spanish officials remained in New Orleans he could do little about it.

In 1802, Napoleon took advantage of a truce in the European war by sending an army to America. The French army first recaptured the island of Santo Domingo, settled by black slaves who had revolted and declared their independence; and then they occupied Louisiana. Anticipating the French arrival, Spanish authorities closed the port of New Orleans to American traffic. The American reaction was violent. Cut off from its markets and threatened with economic strangulation, the West exploded in anger.

To ease the situation, Jefferson sent a special envoy to Paris. His choice was James Monroe, his friend from Virginia. Jefferson told Monroe either to buy New Orleans or to persuade Napoleon to open the port.

The Louisiana Purchase. By the time Monroe arrived in Paris, the situation had changed dramatically. Napoleon's army had not been victorious in Santo Domingo, and many of his troops

had been killed by yellow fever. He could no longer defend Louisiana. Expecting a renewal of the war with Britain, he was also in need of money. Since Louisiana seemed useless, he decided to sell it.

Napoleon summoned Robert Livingston, America's regular minister in Paris, and offered to sell not only New Orleans but the whole inland empire drained by the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. At first Livingston balked at Napoleon's price—\$15 million, which included war debts owed to France—but he ultimately agreed. The two were coming to terms when Monroe arrived. Monroe cooperated, and the treaty of purchase was signed in May of 1803.

Although Monroe and Livingston had not followed their instructions—had bought an empire rather than a city, and had paid fifty per cent more than they had been authorized to spend—Jefferson was delighted with their purchase. "An empire for liberty," he called it; it would provide room and freedom for generations to come.

Jefferson worried about whether he had the power to make the purchase. The Constitution does not specifically authorize the President either to buy or to conquer foreign territory. The Cabinet, however, persuaded him to submit the treaty to the Senate.

In Congress, New England Federalists bitterly opposed the purchase, knowing that the new territory would further weaken their influence in the Union. They argued that the Constitution did not give the federal government the power to buy territory and that new territory could be added only with the consent of the original thirteen states. Jefferson's use of executive power and the Federalists' opposition to it was a curious reversal of roles, an indication of how ideas can change when people's situations and interests change. The Senate, however, approved the treaty and the House of Representatives quickly appropriated the money required to fulfill the treaty's terms.

Re-election of Jefferson. Meanwhile, in the election of 1804, the Republican prospects for victory had been heightened by several factors: the country was prosperous, taxes had been cut, and the national debt had been reduced in spite of the Louisiana Purchase.

Although the changes had been less drastic than the Federalists had predicted, they were none the less real. The idea that the average citizen should have a share in the government was gaining acceptance and the nation was becoming more democratic.

One problem facing Jefferson during both his terms in the White House was the protection of American neutral rights on the seas. Pirates in the Mediterranean continued to plague American shipping. Washington and Adams, like the rulers of European countries, had paid tribute to the Barbary pirates. Jefferson disliked paying tribute, so he

decided to send a small American squadron to the Mediterranean in 1801. For four years the American navy **blockaded** and bombarded Tripoli, finally forcing it to sign a favorable treaty in 1805. Soon afterward agreements were reached with other North African countries. The raids of the Barbary pirates ended in 1816 with the defeat of Algeria.

Protection of American rights. When Britain and France renewed warfare in 1803, Napoleon had managed to gain control of a large part of Europe. England remained mistress of the sea. Great Britain issued orders in council declaring that if neutral ships went into European ports controlled by Napoleon, they would no longer be considered neutral by the British.

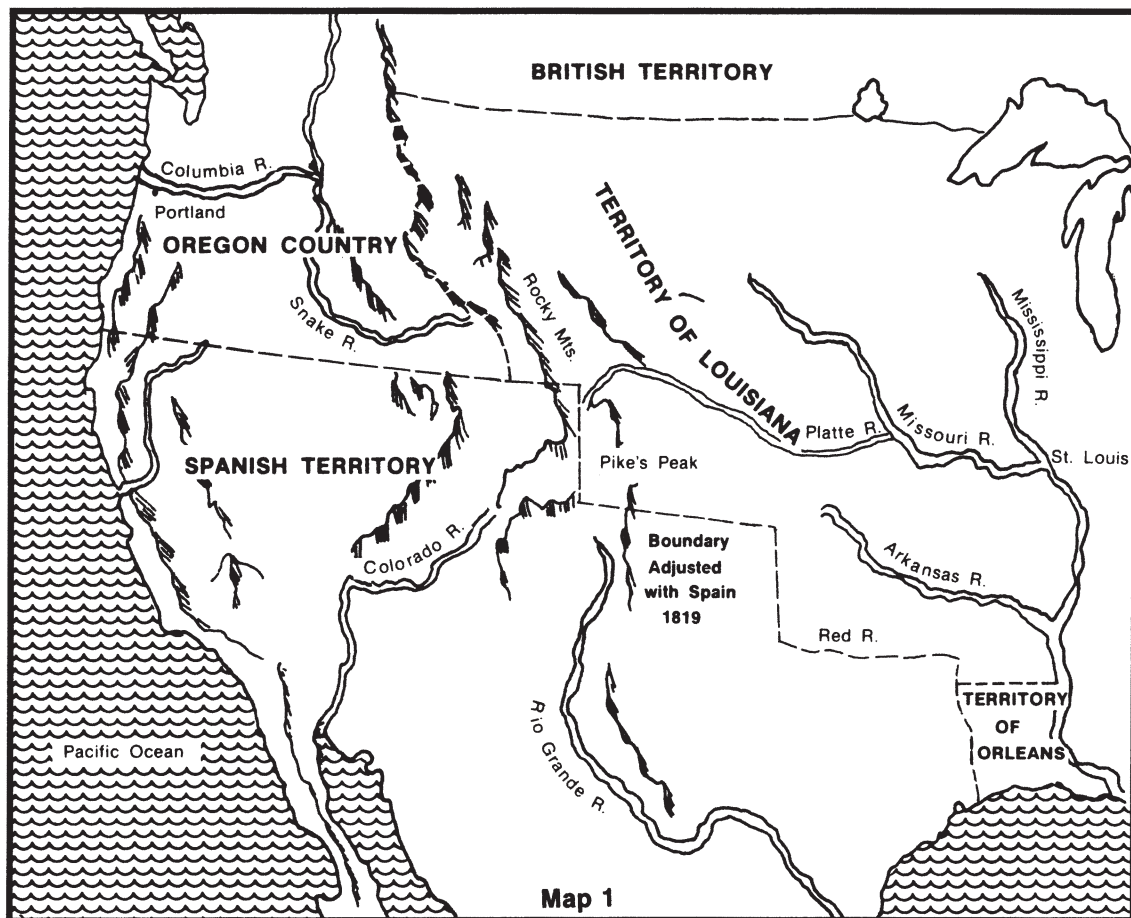
Napoleon, on the other hand, issued a number of decrees with the intention of stopping British exports from reaching European ports. Since both countries wanted to buy American foodstuffs, both encouraged American shippers to trade exclusively with them. The Americans were caught in the bewildering crossfire of British orders and French decrees. Once again, American neutral rights were in danger.

In spite of the threats, American trade prospered. High prices for merchandise brought such fantastic

profits that a merchant made money even if only a third of his ships succeeded in running the blockade and landing their cargo.

Impressment of seamen. Of greater concern to many Americans was the continued practice by the British of impressing American seamen. The British navy was always in need of seamen. One reason for this need was that hundreds of deserters from the British navy had found work on United States ships where working conditions and pay were better. The British claimed the right to stop neutral ships on the high seas, remove sailors of British birth, and impress or force them back into British naval service. The United States objected strongly to this practice because many native-born Americans were impressed "by mistake."

The matter was brought to a head by the "*Chesapeake* Affair." The *Chesapeake* was an American ship boarded by the British under false pretenses. When the American officer refused to allow a search for deserters, the British officer returned to his ship and fired on the *Chesapeake*, killing three sailors. The British commander then reboarded the *Chesapeake* and took four men he said were deserters—three of them were American citizens. Following the "*Chesapeake* Affair" many



The Louisiana Purchase

Americans demanded war. Congress appropriated funds to increase the size of the navy. Even while building the navy, Congress gave the President a chance to try “peaceable means of repressing injustice.”

Jefferson decided to try an **embargo** on trade to exert pressure on Great Britain. The idea was good, but a bumper crop in England made the embargo only slightly felt there. In America, however, the **boycott** hurt business. Warehouses were bursting with products that could not be shipped, grass began to grow on the wharfs, and shipbuilding came to a halt. In general, American economy was badly hurt by the embargo. Not wanting his successor James Madison to be saddled with an unpopular policy, Jefferson signed a law repealing the Embargo Act a

few days before he left office.

Lewis and Clark expedition. In 1803, Jefferson commissioned his private secretary, Meriweather Lewis, to explore the territory acquired in the Louisiana Purchase. With William Clark, another Virginian wise in the ways of the frontier, Lewis led an expedition to the Pacific. The pair were to trace the Missouri River to its source, find a water route to the Pacific, and record the plant and animal life found along the way. With the Indian woman Sacajawea as their guide and interpreter, they crossed the Rockies and reached the Columbia River. In July of 1805, they returned to St. Louis to find that the country had given them up for lost.



Write the letter for the correct answer on each line.

- 2.1 *Marbury v. Madison* was the first of many important decisions made by ____ during his thirty-five years as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.
 - a. Jefferson
 - b. Marshall
 - c. Adams
 - d. Monroe
- 2.2 The price paid for the Louisiana Purchase was ____ million dollars.
 - a. 5
 - b. 10
 - c. 15
 - d. 20
- 2.3 “A wise and frugal government” was the aim of ____, which he stated in his inaugural address.
 - a. Madison
 - b. Adams
 - c. Monroe
 - d. Jefferson
- 2.4 The President who referred to his election as the “Revolution of 1800” was ____ .
 - a. Adams
 - b. Monroe
 - c. Jefferson
 - d. Madison
- 2.5 Although his term of office was not quite the “revolution” that he described it to be, ____ did, among other changes, include more common people in government.
 - a. Jefferson
 - b. Madison
 - c. Adams
 - d. Monroe
- 2.6 The following item is *not* a reversal of Federalist policies by Jefferson: ____ .
 - a. eliminated excise taxes
 - b. reduced the army and navy
 - c. discontinued use of the U.S. Bank
 - d. opened the government to common people
- 2.7 Jefferson purchased ____, which he described as “an empire for liberty”—room for freedom and generations to come.
 - a. Louisiana Territory
 - b. Florida
 - c. New Orleans
 - d. Chesapeake
- 2.8 Because the Constitution did not specifically say he could do it, the ____ became a source of embarrassment to Jefferson.
 - a. the Chesapeake Affair
 - b. the Louisiana Purchase
 - c. elimination of excise tax
 - d. denial of Marbury commission
- 2.9 One problem that faced Jefferson during both terms of office was ____ .
 - a. trouble in Europe
 - b. American neutral rights on the sea
 - c. closed port of New Orleans
 - d. the Embargo Act
- 2.10 The practice by the British of impressing American seamen was brought to a head by the ____ .
 - a. Lewis and Clark expedition
 - b. Embargo Act
 - c. *Chesapeake Affair*
 - d. American blockade