

Cincinnati and in New England during the 1820's, but it did not reach the intensity which appeared in the 1830-1850 decades. Much of this response of Cincinnati's citizens was, I believe, hastened by the smarting wounds left by Mrs. Trollope's pungent remarks. The affront was taken seriously by our citizens, their comments upon the "vulgar woman" were bitter, sometimes vituperative, and to a large extent unjustified. Nevertheless, it did seem to act as a "wake-up call" to the male and female inhabitants of the insulted city, and fostered the formation of the first Cincinnati Literary Society, and the meetings of the Semi-Colon Club, as we shall see in Parts Three and Four. Whatever else might be said of Mrs. Trollope, it would seem appropriate to give her credit for coming like a breath of fresh air to blow away the cobwebs of provincial narrowness.

AMERICA'S OLDEST PROFESSION

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The first American settlers to push west included land prospectors. George Washington, whose first career was as a surveyor, joined with Thomas Jefferson's father, Peter, to help establish the Ohio company to claim, subdivide and sell tracts in the wilderness. Washington owned 63,000 acres and Thomas Jefferson-21,000 acres. Robert Morris, our first Secretary of the Treasury, acquired most of western New York and northern Pennsylvania for resale. Robert Livingston, the United States Minister to France and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, owned 180,000 acres in the Hudson Valley. Aaron Burr acquired the Bistrop Tracts in Louisiana - 300,000 acres. Chief Justice John Marshall bought 50,000 acres from Lord Fairfax for resale. All of the members of the Georgia legislature, as individuals, bought from the State of Georgia the land we now call Alabama and

Mississippi for a price that gave rise to the Great Yazoo controversy.

Some people felt the Georgia legislators shouldn't be allowed to purchase most of the State of Georgia for themselves. Alexander Hamilton, a land speculator who had 160,000 acres in Oswego New York, defended the legislators' contract successfully.

In 1803, the real estate salesman was as commonplace as a log cabin, the surveyor's chain as common as the axe. Speculation in land was America's oldest profession and principal industry. Land was seldom bought for cash, but for notes or land warrants.

This paper is the story of the biggest land speculation of all time - the Louisiana Purchase. Our Federal Government bought for resale 838,000 square miles for nothing down, and no principal payments for 15 years. The Louisiana Purchase comprised what are now the states of Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, most of Montana and Wyoming and some of Colorado.

This is the story of a contract signed on April 30, 1803. The seller was not in possession of the property and the buyer didn't have the money. The negotiators were Robert Livingston of New York, United States Minister to France; James Monroe of Virginia, United States Minister Extraordinaire with Plenipotentiary Powers; Barbé Marbois, the French Treasurer. These three had only one thing in common - each had been a traitor to his king, hardly a basis for a contract requiring mutual trust.

The impetus for the purchase began in December, 1802, a time when highways of commerce were rivers. The only source of cash in the west was the shipment of bushels of corn, bales of furs, tobacco, bacon, ham, barrels of whiskey and lumber by boat down the Kentucky, the Tennessee, the Cumberland, the Ohio and the Mississippi to the port of New Orleans. The Spanish, who had controlled both river banks for the last 200 miles, effectively closed the Mississippi River to United States navigation on October the ten by

prohibiting transshipment, at the port of New Orleans. 3/8ths of the United States sent their crops to market through New Orleans. While Spain was in control, but France had the right of retrocession.

The United States treaty with Spain for free navigation rights had expired in March 1795. John Jay and the Federalists of New England had relinquished navigation rights in exchange for their desire to sell more fish to Spain duty free. With the river closed, the money flow stopped and banks began to foreclose on notes. The value of western land plummeted and many citizens faced bankruptcy. Land speculation was not without risk. Robert E. Lee's own father, General Lighthorse Harry Lee, was in debtors prison as was former Secretary of the Treasury Morris. Our own John Clives Symmes would die broke and bitter despite owning most of two million acres between the Miami Rivers.

Jefferson was beseeched by western congressmen and senators to open the Mississippi River. Without the western vote, Jefferson knew he'd have no second term. Andrew Jackson threatened that if the Federal Government failed to open the river he would march the Tennessee militia south, take New Orleans and sweep through the "dammed greasers" all the way to Mexico City. Here was war with Spain and France, a war we could not win. New Orleans, where over 3,000 ocean-going ships cleared each year, became the epicenter of American interest.

Spain, in 1803, was in decline but still a formidable power with 50,000 troops in the Americas. France was the strongest military power in the world, led by a military genius with 500,000 troops - the largest army ever assembled. In 1802 we had an army which had been cut in half by Jefferson to 3000 and no navy. More importantly, and unlike 1776, we had no allies.

In 1803, Americans in the west had little in common with what they saw as their effete federalist brothers in New England. Americans had overthrown their king only 25 years before and many thought a new nation in the west was the next step. The Union had just barely survived the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794, in

which western states threatened to secede to protest Hamilton's new federal taxes. The feeling in the west was summed up by the slogan "No protection, no allegiance."

Jefferson acted promptly to calm the westerners. He petitioned Congress to appoint his neighbor, James Monroe, Minister Extraordinaire with powers to buy New Orleans and west Florida, or at least a warehouse site with navigation rights. The westerners supported the appointment of Monroe, who owned land in the west. Jefferson received an appropriation of 11,000,000 francs. No one contemplated purchasing the entire province of Louisiana, which approximated the size of the entire United States at that time.

Robert Livingston, our Minister in Paris, had been trying for months to purchase New Orleans, but without success. Monroe sailed from Philadelphia on March 8th to join Livingston in Paris. On April 11th, unknown to the Americans and before Monroe arrived in Paris, Napoleon summoned Marbois and Foreign Minister Talleyrand to St. Cloud. He told them he had a few thoughts that morning while bathing – specifically, that he planned to invade England, embarking the Grand Army from Bologne. He declared "The power of Britain can only be broken in Britain". that would require an invasion, he added, and France would need to put every ship it owned in the channel to put the Grand Army ashore.

Talleyrand was strongly opposed, counseling "We need peace, nor war". He pleaded, "Don't press them to give us Malta under the terms of the peace treaty of Amiens". The English dubbed the treaty "The peace which passeth all understanding". Talleyrand made a strong point of France's lack of money for war. France was then spending one-half of all revenues for just the interest on its national debt, much of which arose by providing an army for our war of independence. At Yorktown, 8,800 soldiers were French; 9,500 were Americans including the continentals and the militia.

Napoleon planned to raise another 300,000 men, but France lacked the basic 19th century sinews of war – overcoats and boots. Ironically, only English mills

could provide 300,000 overcoats in a short period of time; but the British demanded silver. The French boots were glued and came apart whereas the English boots were sewn. "The Americans want to buy a city", Napoleon said "We will sell them the whole thing. They want to float down the river, so we will sell them the river". The sale of Louisiana would give Napoleon the cash to pay for the war against Britain.

Napoleon, speaking to Livingston, described Talleyrand as the only man who combines all the sins of the ancient regime with the evils of the republic. Talleyrand was amoral, a gambler, a corrupt de-frocked excommunicated bishop, a pursuer of other men's wives, a stock jobber. During the reign of terror Talleyrand spent two years in the United States doing what? Of course, land speculation!

But Talleyrand was a patriot and counseled them to keep Louisiana, which was larger than Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Portugal combined, and would be worth more than France alone in the future. In private, Talleyrand said "We are going to buy boots and overcoats for the glory of a Corsican. Two hundred years of colonization bartered for haberdashery." Napoleon saw only that he was selling land he didn't own for much more money than the Americans had and would be "giving England a rival that will humble her pride".

We read of Napoleon's maxims of war, but Napoleon was also a Dorothy Parker of the 19th century. Napoleon said of Queen Maria Louisa of Spain that she "has her past and her character written on her face and it surpassed anything you might dare imagine."

Marbois asked Napoleon where the Americans would get the silver for the purchase. Napoleon replied "We will require them to borrow it from British banks". When France conquers England and owns the banks, France would be paid twice for Louisiana. "There's a Florentine touch," he told Talleyrand.

Talleyrand was unacceptable to the Americans as a negotiator because he had asked for a bribe of \$250,000 to settle American maritime claims for three hundred

U.S. ships captured in 1797 by the French in our undeclared naval war. The Americans had refused, with Charles Pinckney crying "Millions for defense, not one cent for tribute". Napoleon, telling Talleyrand "I can understand a bribe but the Americans cannot," chose Marbois as the French negotiator. Marbois asked Napoleon the price for Louisiana. "100,000,000 francs", answered the first counsel, "in silver".

"That is more money than there is in the whole United States", Marbois exclaimed. Napoleon responded by saying he would be magnanimous and take only "50,000,000". Never in all history has a continent depreciated so rapidly.

Livingston called on Talleyrand on April 11th, hoping to buy New Orleans before Monroe arrived so he could take the credit. The foreign minister teased Livingston, who was still trying to buy only New Orleans, by asking how much would you give for the whole. Livingston, who was partially deaf, had him repeat the question. He could not believe his ears; this was the first any American knew that the French would sell all of Louisiana.

The French presence in North America dates back to the landing of a group of Breton fisherman in 1496. They gave little support to the North American colonies. In the days of Henry IV the largest export was Jesuits.

The province of Louisiana dates back to April 1584 when Robert Le Seur de la Salle nailed a proclamation to a wooden cross at the mouth of the Mississippi River. He claimed the land south of Ohio and west of the Mississippi, north of the Gulf and west to the Rio Grande for his Prince Louis XIV. It was France, not England, that under Foreign Minister Colbert first recognized the potential for a colonial empire. By 1799 France was recovering from its own revolution and had begun to rebuild its colonial empire. In that year the directorate dispatched Napoleon with an army to conquer Egypt, take Malta and secure the Levant for France. Nelson sank all but one of the sixteen French ships of the line at Abouquor Bay.

Napoleon abandoned the army and fled home on a frigate. Following his rise to First Counsel, Napoleon set his brother-in-law, General Le Clerk, with 50,000 soldiers to put down a slave rebellion in Santo Domingo. Here was the republic of liberty and equality re-establishing slavery; so much for the revolution! The army was to proceed from Santo Domingo to New Orleans and fortify the Mississippi. Fortunately for us, it was decimated by a yellow fever epidemic in 1802 and never reached New Orleans. General Clark died of the fever. Napoleon remarked "Damn the sugar, damn the coffee, damn the colonies."

Napoleon assembled another fleet of ships in the Dutch port of Heloet Sluys. He had three generals, five battalions of infantry and two companies of artillery. This force was to sail directly to New Orleans as soon as the ice broke. Such a French force could easily take Natchez, Vicksburg, Kentucky and Tennessee. To add to Jefferson's woes, in 1803 Alexander Mackenze and his Canadians laid claim to most of the northwest for Britain.

America had an added disadvantage. Jefferson appointed General Wilkinson, a Democrat, as the new head of the army. Wilkinson was secretly employed by Spain as their special agent number 13. Adams had stacked the army, as well as the courts, with Federalists before leaving office in 1801. But at least the Federalists were not foreign agents. Jefferson and Secretary of State Madison knew that should the French army land in New Orleans "We must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation". Such an alliance would be a validation of all the Federalist policies and the end of the infant Republican-Democratic party. Federalist leader Hamilton was still in the wings, not yet shot by Burr for accusing Burr of incest, so the Federalists could win the New York gubernatorial election of 1804. Hamilton was not only a bastard by birth. In 1803, Jefferson was not held in high esteem. Jefferson could not carry any states north or west of Pennsylvania in the 1796 presidential race. In 1800, he tied the electoral college with Burr, and it took thirty-six ballots in the House before he could break that tie. Jefferson was only elected when the still controlling Federalists under

Hamilton declared Jefferson was the lesser of two evils.

Jefferson didn't want war with France over Louisiana as Hamilton did and brought resolute timidity to the country, when it was much needed.

Jefferson had earlier enlisted Pierre Samuel Dupont de Namours as a private emissary to get the message to Napoleon that if he fortified New Orleans, the United States would have to ally itself with England. Dupont wrote Jefferson that the message was delivered, and added that it would be cheaper to buy New Orleans than to purchase the gun powder to take the city in a war which we would probably lose.

Monroe arrived in Paris on April 12, looking as he normally did - like a school teacher going to a funeral. He had back trouble and lay on the couch during much of the negotiations. Monroe pressed to purchase only New Orleans but finally was told by Marbois "The first counsel said you have to take all or nothing".

None of the three negotiators had seen Louisiana or ever would. In 1803 Merriweather Lewis had not been further west than Cincinnati; he came here to buy 2300 acres in Kentucky. William Clark lived in Indiana. The French could not give an adequate description of the boundaries but Marbois assured the Americans that they ran from the Mississippi River west to the Shining Mountains (wherever they were), and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border (wherever that was).

We knew precious little about the territory of Louisiana except that it was inhabited by savages, of which it was universally agreed we already had too many. France was to recover Louisiana from Spain under the secret treaty of San Ildefonso, signed September 30, 1800, which provided that France's repossession would not permit it to pass title to a third party, in which case it would revert to Spain. The Americans learned the contents of that secret treaty and its restrictions. In 1803 espionage was the principal light industry in Europe.

The Constitution of the United States did not allow the acquisition of land under Federal powers; Jefferson had waffled on many things but he was always a strict Constructionist. In this purchase he would repudiate a cardinal principle of his political life. The people and the Congress cared little for constitutional law; they wanted the one thing they didn't have enough of in the British Isles - land. Jefferson, Madison and Monroe lived in an economy based on tobacco and slaves but they needed new land as their tobacco lands were exhausted. When Jefferson died he was bankrupt, owing \$107,000, a huge sum at that time.

The three negotiators, all lawyers, would sign a contract to purchase land from a seller not in possession; land not having a good title and without an adequate description; to a buyer without authority to purchase the property and lacking the money to pay for it. Despite these seemingly insurmountable obstacles, they pressed ahead. No minutes or notes of the first meeting were kept; no protocol existed. The only accounts are from later memories of the participants.

Much time was spent trying to resolve the U.S. maritime claims. Napoleon grew restless; the winter ice was breaking in Holland and his army was ready to sail for New Orleans. Napoleon personally wrote the draft contract of sale. Marbois returned to the negotiations with Napoleon's draft and warned the Americans that they need conclude the contract for fear the First Counsel might change his mind. The Americans then offered fifty million francs, with the French to pay the reparation of twenty million francs. Marbois said Napoleon wanted one hundred million francs but he might be able to convince him to accept 60 million francs should the U.S. pay the reparations of twenty million francs. Marbois' number became the price and Marbois later would remind Napoleon that he had negotiated thirty million francs more than Napoleon originally asked.

The next day Napoleon's brothers, Lucien and Joseph, arrived at the Tuileries as he was taking his morning bath. Napoleon slept little but he took long baths heavily laced with eau de cologne. He told his brothers what they feared - he was going to war with

England. France doesn't have the money, they responded. Napoleon told them of his plan to sell Louisiana to finance the war.

Joseph was furious and threatened to oppose the plan in the chamber and lead the opposition. Napoleon went into a rage, arose in the tub and then fell back spraying the blue-green perfumed water all over his two brothers. The valet, overcome by fear, fell to the floor in a faint.

Lucien recovered his composure and, according to Henry Adams, spoke the words Virgil had put in the mouth of Neptune, exclaiming "Quos ego". Thus, at a time of great family crisis, the three Corsican brothers were knowledgeable enough in Latin to quote Virgil to one another. So much for your author's prior belief that they were Corsicans of a minor nobility, closer to Brigands with no classical education. This was the moment when Napoleon assumed absolute control of the Republic.

Joseph, we later learned, had been offered as much as two million pounds by the British Ambassador if France would drop its claim to Malta; then England wouldn't declare war on France. Perhaps this bribe is what prompted Napoleon to remark to Monroe, when he received him on April 15th, that Monroe had returned to a most corrupt world.

Monroe continued to voice opposition to the purchase, saying there was no authority, no clear title, no appropriation, no description and his mission was to buy New Orleans, the city, - not half a continent. No one on either side seemed to remember that Spain had the right to get Louisiana back, or even seemed to care. Spain was suffering from a weak incompetent monarchy that was dominated by Manuel de Godoy, who held power by the amazing feat of being the simultaneous lover of both Queen Maria Louisa and King Carlos IV.

It was up to the old patroon of the Hudson Valley to pull Monroe along. Livingston saw this as a singular lifetime opportunity, which of course it was. Anyone might recognize a bargain at four cents an acre,

but Livingston also saw more – it meant getting the world's strongest military power out of the North American continent without firing a shot.

Monroe correctly criticized Livingston for negotiating the war reparation issue first since Livingston, with a large personal stake in that settlement, had a conflict of interest. But Livingston also knew that if those claims were not resolved first, they never would be. Monroe finally concurred because Louisiana was a political necessity for the Democratic Party and particularly for Jefferson.

The risk and enormity of the purchase did not strike them till later. They were authorized to pay up to 11 million francs for a city and now were obligated to pay so for a continent. Oh well - details, details.

To borrow to buy the land was nothing new for Livingston or Monroe. They like the _____ Vice President Burr said that _____ and the Congress _____ had been done for years.

It is indeed fortuitous that we had at this time a government of men with such a _____ and _____ experience that gave them the confidence to enter into an enterprise of this _____ and magnitude.

One night, while Monroe and Livingston were dining at the Embassy, a stranger called. Introducing himself as an agent for the English and Dutch bankers – Hope and Baring – he offered to lend the Americans sixty million francs in silver at 6% for 15 years with no pre-payment rights or amortization. That was the exact price Marbois set. The offer meant the British government knew and approved of the sale; but perhaps more importantly, it shows how the English valued 6% and that they were not afraid of Napoleon. That the sixty million franc loan was equal to the price, was no coincidence since a secretary in the American Embassy in Paris was in British employ. England later granted to Banker Alexander Baring the right to move specie from London to Paris although England and France were then at war.

On April 30th the contract was signed. Livingston had accomplished more than any other U.S. minister before or since – more than Jefferson, Jay, Galletin or Harriman. The Louisiana Purchase now ranks with the Constitution in its importance to the nation.

President Jefferson received the great news on July 4th, our twenty-seventh birthday. He was ecstatic. He set out to sell the purchase to Congress and the nation. He even declared Louisiana had a mountain of salt and all you had to do was to drive your wagon up and help yourself. From that day forward Jefferson was an Imperialist.

The purchase was approved by Congress along party lines, the Federalists voting against, and signed immediately by Jefferson on October 31, 1803. The Federalist position changed: They now said "We are to give money of which we have too little for land of which we already have too much."

Jefferson and Madison recognized Livingston's success as a threat to Virginia's domination of the presidency. Livingston was a Yankee like Aaron Burr and a potential future president. Jefferson, always the skilled practical politician, presented the triumph as Monroe's deal.

Monroe went over and Monroe brought it back, he said. Never mind that Napoleon decided to sell Louisiana before Monroe landed at Le Havre. Madison and Monroe received the credit.

A description of the property was never obtained. Talleyrand told Monroe "You must take it as we received it from Spain", and said to Livingston simply: "You have made a noble bargain for yourselves and I am sure you will make the most of it". Livingston signed. Then turned to Monroe and said "We have lived long but this is the noblest work of our lives".

Historians have been slow to recognize that the invasion of England was Napoleon's passionate operation, the one he wanted most. After obtaining the silver, Napoleon personally spent much time at the channel ports, particularly Bologne. He had over two

thousand barges built for the invasion of England. He moved one hundred forty-five thousand soldiers and eight thousand horses to the channel ports.

How different our history might have been had Napoleon agreed to meet with Robert Fulton. Fulton built a steam tug in France in 1802 similar to the one he built in Scotland to pull barges on the Clyde. On a calm windless night steam tugs could have taken the Grand Army across the channel while the British navy was becalmed. Napoleon instead waited for the combined fleets of France and Spain with thirty ships of the line to clear Cadiz and make for the channel. Because of the British blockade, Admiral Villeneuve was unable to do so.

The British Admiral Sir John Jervis boasted "I don't say the French can't come. I say they can't come by sea".

For England it was just as well; their defenses on land consisted largely of local farmers armed only with pikes to face the victors of Morengo. Sir Walter Scott practiced swordsmanship by cutting turnips on the stick. The women let their fingernails grow. The most popular ballad of the day was Ann Hunter's "My Mother Bid Me Bind My Hair".

In October 1805 Nelson produced the miracle at Trafalger. The Grand Army would fight in Austria and Russia. France did not become our northern neighbor.

What happened to the primary players after the Louisiana Purchase?

In the United States:

Jefferson was overwhelmingly re-elected in 1804, and his picture was put on the \$2 bill. His great accomplishment was dimmed by the charge of miscegenation. A popular ballad began "Of all the damsels on the green, on the mountains or in the valley, a lass so luscious n'er was seen as Monticellian Sally".

Madison and Monroe were each elected to two terms as President of the United States and we were "Greater Virginia" for another twenty years.

The Federalist Party, which opposed the purchase, never regained power. Livingston organized a new business, Fulton & Livingston, to build steamships.

Vice President Aaron Burr tried to separate all of Louisiana from the nation and was indicted for treason.

His accomplice was Jefferson's commanding general, Wilkinson, who later died from a drug overdose while working for the American Bible Society.

The citizens of New Orleans petitioned Jefferson for statehood. He denied the request on the grounds "For our democracy to be successful, the citizens must speak English".

In France:

The French people never forgave Napoleon Bonapart for the sale of Louisiana.

Joseph Bonapart was exiled to Spain.

Talleyrand expanded his services to the state by procuring the Countess Walensky for Napoleon. Napoleon fathered their son, Alexandre.

Admiral Viehville committed suicide.

And what happened to the biggest land speculator of them all, the U.S. government?

In 1802 the United States, which had a national debt of one hundred million dollars, borrowed thirteen million more to finance the purchase of Louisiana. By 1836, the Federal Government had sold enough timber and land to retire all of the national debt. It was the only time in history that the U.S. was debt free.

Before the Louisiana Purchase, North America was a European side show. After 1803 it was our show, and what a show it has been!!!