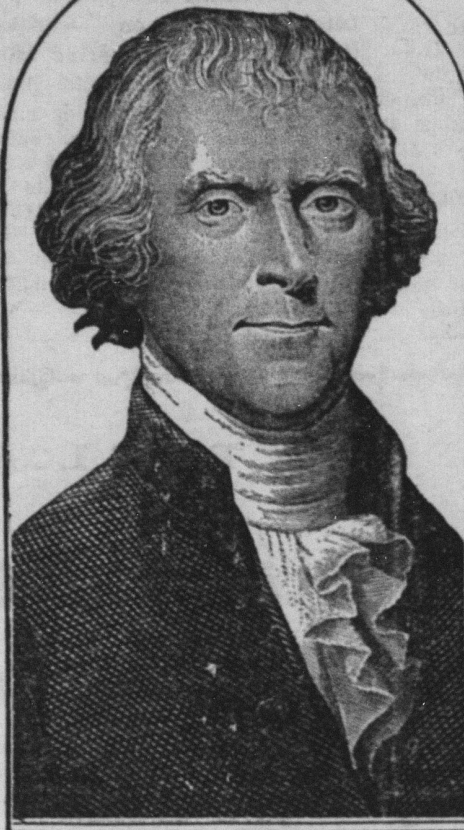
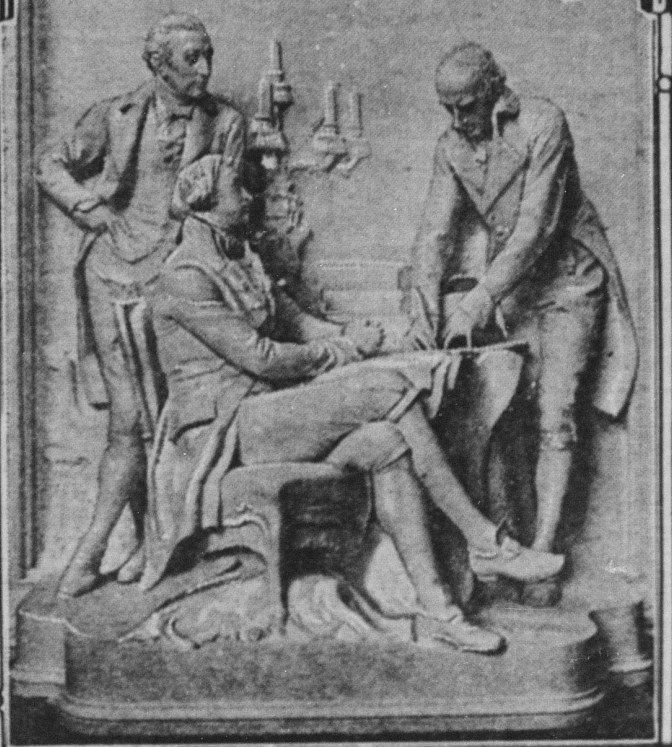


The Biggest Real Estate Deal in History



Thomas Jefferson



The Signing of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty



Napoleon

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

ONE hundred and thirty years ago the "biggest real estate deal in history" was closed in the city of New Orleans. On December 20, 1803, a crowd gathered in the historic Place d'Armes (now known as Jackson square). In the center was a tall flagpole at the top of which fluttered the Tricolor of France. Drawn up along one side of the square was a detachment of United States army troops. Facing them on the other side of the flagpole were Spanish troops and a few French officers.

A few hours before, Pierre Clement Laussat, French prefect of Louisiana, Gen. James Wilkinson of the United States army, and William C. Claiborne, former governor of Mississippi Territory, had met in the famous old Cabildo, which faces on the square. There the credentials of the two Americans were read, as was the authority of the Frenchman to hand over to them official possession of a certain tract of land; the keys of the city of New Orleans were given to Claiborne and he, dissolving the allegiance of the inhabitants of New Orleans to France, welcomed them as citizens of the United States.

Then the three men stepped out into the Place d'Armes. At a signal the Tricolor of France began to descend and the Stars and Stripes of the United States to ascend. Midway on the flagstaff the two banners met and were saluted. And when the American flag had reached the top of the staff and the French banner the bottom, it meant that the Louisiana Territory had changed hands for the sixth and last time and was henceforth American soil.

Thus the fitting climax to this "biggest real estate deal in history" in which Napoleon Bonaparte, the First Consul of France, had sold to Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, for \$15,000,000 a veritable empire of 1,171,931 square miles. It doubled the original area of the new Republic and gave to that Republic the land which in the future was to be the following states: Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, the part of Minnesota west of the Mississippi, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and most of Oklahoma, Kansas, Montana, Wyoming and a large part of Colorado. It extended our boundaries from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico and from the Rocky mountains to the Mississippi river, which henceforth was to be ours, freed forever from the menace of a foreign power holding one of our most important gateways to the sea—New Orleans.

Like so many important events in American history, the Louisiana Purchase had its origins in European politics and intrigue. The Louisiana Territory had first been claimed for France by the explorer, La Salle, who in 1682 had taken possession of it in the name of Louis XIV. In 1712 the Grand Monarch had "farmed" Louisiana to Antoine Crozat, the greatest merchant monopolist of his day, but Crozat, unable to make use of it, had turned it over five years later to John Law, the Scotch adventurer, whose bursted "Mississippi Bubble" had almost overnight transformed him from a hero in France to the most hated man in that country. So in 1731 the Louisiana Territory went back to the French crown again and in 1762 Louis XV had ceded it to Spain. Spanish territory it had remained all the time the English colonies on the Atlantic seaboard were winning their freedom from Great Britain and taking their first faltering steps as a new nation. In the meantime stirring events had been taking place in France. The Bourbons had been dethroned, the horrors of the French Revolution had run their course and a new world figure had risen above the horizon—Napoleon Bonaparte, the First Consul of France.

Within a year after, he had become virtually the master of Europe. He had crushed Austria and the states of the Italian peninsula. Peace with England was in sight and six weeks after his victory at Marengo Napoleon sent a demand to Spain to cede Louisiana back to France. The main reason back of that demand was his desire, along with his other plans to dominate the world, to rebuild the French commercial power in America and begin upon a policy of colonial expansion.

The treaty by which Spain ceded Louisiana back to France in 1802 was kept secret but soon after Thomas Jefferson became President in 1801 he suspected what was going on across the Atlantic. French control of New Orleans and French domination of the Mississippi would have a serious meaning for the United States, especially to the settlers of Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee. As early as 1790 they were sending down the river 120,000 pounds of tobacco, 10,000 barrels of flour, 22,000 pounds of hemp, 500 barrels of cider and as many more of whisky for shipment abroad.

So long as the Spanish were in control, this commerce would not be seriously affected, for even though there had been matters of annoyance between American commercial interests and the Spanish authorities, in general the Ameri-



The Place d'Armes (Now Jackson Square) in New Orleans



The Louisiana Purchase

cans had not found the restrictions of the Spanish oppressive. But with the arrogant Napoleon holding New Orleans, matters might be very different indeed.

Then Don Juan Ventura Morales, Spanish governor of New Orleans, preparatory to turning the Louisiana Territory over to France, closed the port to the Americans and the western settlers looked upon this as prophetic of what Napoleon's policy of strangling American trade and checking farther American expansion was to be. What Jefferson thought of it is reflected in the following letter to Robert Livingston, American minister to France:

"The cession of Louisiana and the Floridas by Spain to France works most sorely in the United States. . . . There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market, and from its fertility it will ere long yield more than half of our whole produce, and contain more than half of our inhabitants. . . . Spain might have retained it quietly for years. . . . Not so can it ever be in the hands of France. . . . Every eye in the United States is now fixed on the affairs of Louisiana."

He then went on to instruct Livingston and Robert Pinckney, American minister to Spain, to obtain West Florida from Spain and New Orleans from France. Congress was also fully aware of the necessity for action and it backed up Jefferson by appropriating on January 2, 1803, the sum of \$2,000,000 for the purchase of the desired territory. Jefferson also appointed James Monroe as minister extraordinary to Paris to aid Livingston in the negotiations.

In the meantime, however, events had been taking place in Europe, and also in America, which were destined to make Napoleon play squarely into Jefferson's hands. Although peace had been declared between France and England in 1802, Napoleon's belligerent attitude toward England was rapidly bringing about a state of mind which meant another war. Then, too, Napoleon's plan of colonial expansion was going none too well. The rebellion of Toussaint L'Ouverture in Santo Domingo had been crushed but at a fearful price and this made Napoleon realize the difficulties of carrying out his ambitious project for re-establishing French commercial domination in the New World.

With war with Great Britain imminent Napoleon knew that his problem was greatly increased. He was quick to see that England, mistress of the seas, could easily seize and hold Louisiana. Livingston had not had much success in his preliminary negotiations for the purchase of New Orleans with two of Napoleon's ministers, Talleyrand and Marbois. But on Easter Sunday, 1803, the First Consul announced an astonishing decision to his ministers. He would sell not only New Orleans but the whole Louisiana Territory to the United States!

A day or two after this Monroe arrived in Paris and Talleyrand told the two American ministers of Napoleon's astonishing proposal.

They could scarcely believe their ears when Talleyrand told them of Napoleon's decision. They suspected a trick. But when Talleyrand convinced them that the offer was sincere, they were more than willing to begin to talk terms.

However, their negotiations dragged on for some time, complicated by the fact that Monroe was ill and scarcely able to play his part in them. At last they began to reach a basis for agreement, and the two American ministers, unable to communicate with their government before it should be too late, took upon themselves the great responsibility of accepting Marbois' terms.

On April 30, 1803, Marbois, Livingston and Monroe signed the covenants by which the United States bound itself to pay directly to France the sum of \$11,250,000 and to assume debts owed by France to American citizens, estimated at \$3,750,000, making the total of \$15,000,000. It is said that after they had affixed their signatures, Livingston remarked, "We have lived long, but this is the noblest work of our lives. From this day the United States takes its rank among the powers of the earth."

The curious thing is that they could not realize that they had bought something of "a pig in a poke" in that the boundaries of the Louisiana Territory were not clearly defined so they had not the slightest notion of the vast extent of the territory which they had acquired for their country. Neither could they realize that no other American purchasers of territory would ever acquire so much for so little, for they got this vast domain for less than \$15 a square mile. Within a hundred years \$15 would not buy a square inch of some of that land!

In other respects it was a strange transaction. Livingston and Monroe had far exceeded their authority in buying Louisiana and, as a matter of fact, Napoleon had no right to sell it without the consent of Spain and his own assembly. Spain immediately made a protest that the sale was illegal—a protest which she did not care to maintain too stoutly, considering the nature of the First Consul. Many Frenchmen were also bitter about the sale.

Even in this country there was considerable criticism. Of course, the westerners were delighted. But the Federalists in the East, recalling how Jefferson had denounced Washington and Adams for using powers not expressly delegated to the President in the Constitution, were quick to denounce Jefferson for doing the same thing. And the President, assuming responsibility for what his envoys had done and dubious of the legality of the purchase, made the historic admission that he "had stretched his powers until they cracked."

But in October congress ratified the covenants and the next month Laussat arrived in New Orleans to assume authority over that city and Louisiana Territory, preliminary to turning both over to their new owners. The Spanish flag came down and the French Tricolor took its place, to stay there for only 20 days, then to give way forever to the Stars and Stripes.

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NO AUTOCRATIC RULE IN RUSSIA

Supreme Authority Vested in All-Union Congress.

When President Roosevelt addressed the head of the Soviet government, inviting him to designate a representative to discuss matters affecting the two countries, the attention of Americans was drawn to the unique character of the governmental system which is centralized at Moscow. Few persons had heard of Michael I. Kallinin, but it was commonly assumed that he was "President" of the Soviet republic. His office is, in fact, that of chairman of the central executive committee, which wields final authority when the all-union congress, the supreme organ of authority, is not in session.

The all-union congress is composed of about 2,000 members representing town and township soviets and provincial councils. The congress meets at least once every two years. During recess its powers are exercised by the central executive committee, composed of two chambers, the council of the union (450 members) and the council of nationalities (139 members). The committee works through a presidium of 27 members, which exercises full authority when the committee is in recess. The central executive committee elects the members of the people's council of commissars, which serves as the executive body of the Soviet union, answerable to the central committee and its presidium.

The only legalized political organization in the Soviet union is the Communist party. Its principal body is a central committee, which in turn elects a political bureau. The secretary of this bureau is Joseph Stalin. Naturally, the Communist party enjoys extraordinary powers, which are concentrated in the "Politburo" dominated by its secretary.

The constituent republics of the Soviet Union are the Russian, White Russian, Ukrainian, Transcaucasian, Turkoman, Uzbek and Tajikistan.

There are 12 additional autonomous republics, and 13 autonomous areas. The population of the entire Soviet Union is about 168,000,000, with 182 different nationalities speaking 149 languages. The Soviet Union covers an area of 8,144,228 square miles, as compared with the area of the United States, 3,738,395 square miles.

Growth Acid Everywhere

A new acid has been discovered—one that stimulates growth—by Doctors Lyman and Williams of Oregon university which they call panthothenic from the Greek because it is found everywhere. It ranks between acetic and lactic acids in strength but its potency is such that one part in a billion or say one drop in 250 gallons of water is enough to act as a stimulant to the entire body. This acid is soluble in water and while it seems to be composed of long chains of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, not a trace of either sulphur or nitrogen has been found. It affects all forms of life from the highest developed man to the lowest form of mold or bacteria. Its discovery may be a long step forward in the treatment of cancerous growths, scientists hope.—Pathfinder Magazine.

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