

Name: _____ LOUISIANA PURCHASE: Period: _____

On April 30, 1803 the nation of France sold 828,000 square miles of land west of the Mississippi River to the young United States of America in a treaty commonly known as the Louisiana Purchase. President Thomas Jefferson, in one of his greatest achievements, more than doubled the size of the United States at a time when the young nation's population growth was beginning to quicken.

The Louisiana Purchase was an incredible deal for the United States, the final cost totaling less than five cents per acre at \$15 million (about \$283 million in today's dollars). France's land was mainly unexplored wilderness, and so the fertile soils and other valuable natural resources we know are present today might not have been factored in the relatively low cost at the time.

The Louisiana Purchase stretched from the Mississippi River to the beginning of the Rocky Mountains. Official boundaries were not determined, except that the eastern border ran from the source of the Mississippi River north to the 31 degrees north.

Present states that were included in part or whole of the Louisiana Purchase were: Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.

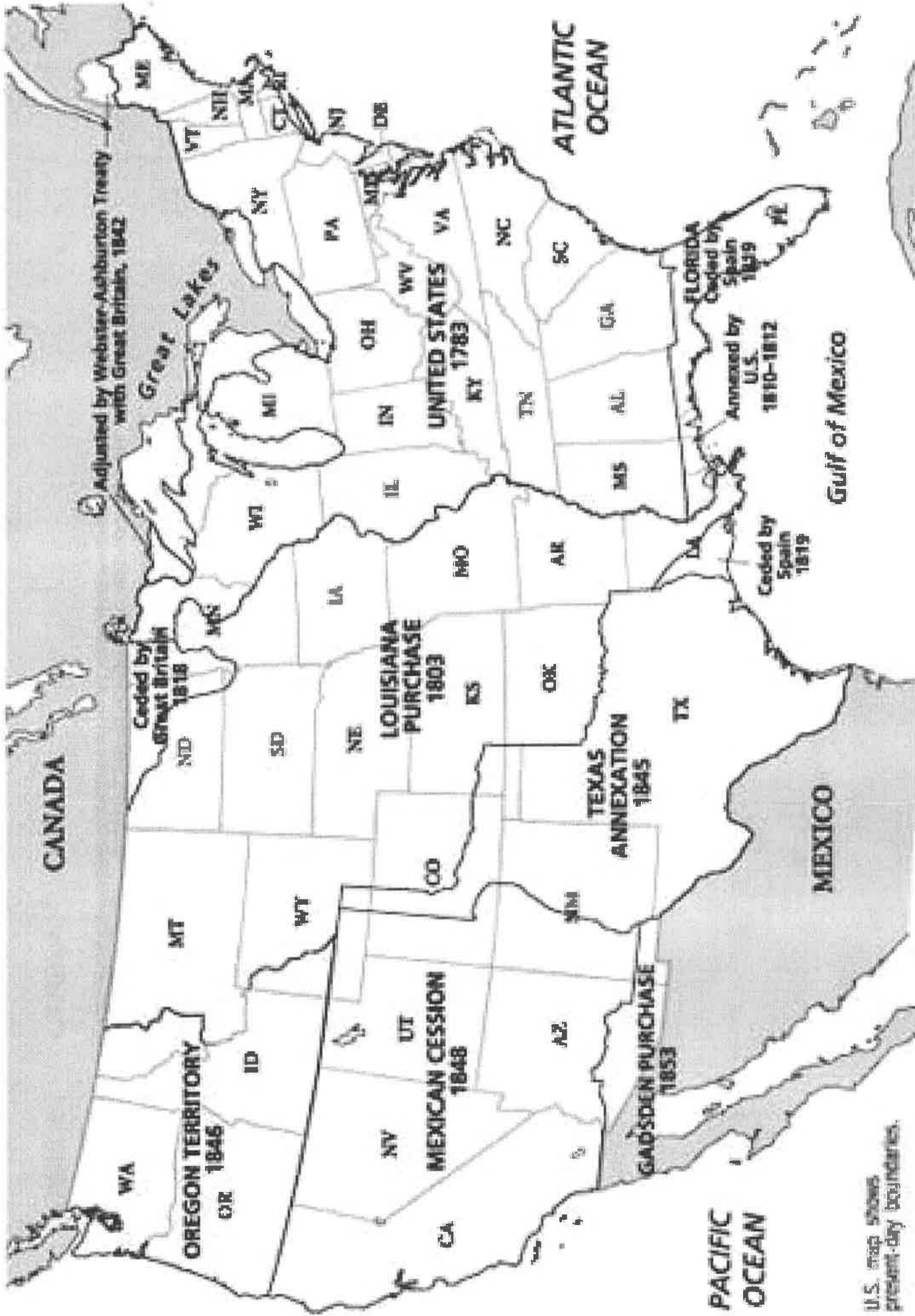
The Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Louisiana Purchase

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark led a government-sponsored expedition to explore the vast wilderness of the west soon after the signing of the Louisiana Purchase. The team, also known as the Corps of Discovery, left St. Louis, Missouri in 1804 and returned to the same spot in 1806.

Traveling 8,000 miles, the expedition gathered huge amounts of information about the landscapes, flora (plants), fauna (animals), resources, and people (mostly Native Americans) it encountered across the vast territory of the Louisiana Purchase. The team first traveled northwest up the Missouri River, and traveled west from its end, all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

Bison, grizzly bears, prairie dogs, bighorn sheep, and antelope were just a few of the animals that Lewis and Clark encountered. In total, the journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition described 180 plants and 125 animals that were unknown to scientists at the time.

The expedition also led to the acquisition of the Oregon Territory, making the west further accessible to the pioneers coming from the east. Perhaps the biggest benefit to the trip, though, was that the United States government finally had a grasp on what exactly it had purchased. The Louisiana Purchase offered America what the Native Americans had known about for years: a variety of natural formations (waterfalls, mountains, plains, wetlands, among many others) covered by a wide array of wildlife and natural resources.



Louisiana Purchase - 1803