Name_____

The Louisiana Purchase

In the early 1800s, Americans were expanding westward. Pioneers such as Daniel Boone were navigating new trails and roads. Americans were moving into all areas of the continent.

At that time, the United States consisted of 17 states. The area of the Louisiana Purchase was comprised of what would eventually be 15 states and doubled the land size of the country.

Louisiana was a territory owned by the French. New Orleans may have been its biggest city, but many Americans lived in and around the city. As a result, American ships transported materials on the river. The federal government wanted to protect its citizens and settlements as well as expand the country.

France had recently been battling a revolt in Haiti that had been expensive, both financially and in loss of soldiers. Napoleon wanted to prepare for war in Europe and needed money. The Louisiana territory was far away, and France owed the United States money. President Jefferson wanted to purchase land, so the deal seemed profitable for both sides.

Initially, Jefferson sent Robert Livingston to France to buy New Orleans and the surrounding area, but Napoleon turned him down. President Jefferson then sent James Monroe as an envoy to France to complete the deal. At first, all President Jefferson wanted was to buy New Orleans for three million dollars. Napoleon offered the entire Louisiana Territory. On April 30, 1803, the deal was made to purchase the Louisiana Territory for a total of fifteen million dollars.

Of the purchase price, about 40 percent was paid. The remaining amount consisted of French debts cancelled by the United States government.

Immediately upon buying the territory, Jefferson commissioned Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the territory. The total land purchased was 828,800 square miles and remains the most extraordinary land purchase in our history.

Text Questions

1. Which of the following statements is an opinion?
   a. The area of the Louisiana Purchase was comprised of what would eventually be 15 states and doubled the land size of the country.
   b. President Jefferson wanted to purchase land, so the deal seemed profitable for both sides.
   c. On April 30, 1803, the deal was made to purchase the Louisiana Territory for a total of fifteen million dollars.
   d. At first, all President Jefferson wanted was to buy New Orleans for three million dollars.
2. What does the word *envoy* mean as it is used in the text?
   a. a diplomat
   b. an ambassador of goodwill
   c. an agent sent by a government to complete a transaction
   d. a representative
3. Which of the following is <u>not</u> a reason the United States wanted to purchase the Louisiana territory?
   a. The federal government wanted to protect its citizens.
   b. It was an opportunity to continue westward expansion.
   c. Many Americans lived in New Orleans, so President Jefferson initially focused on purchasing the city.
   d. France owed the United States money.
4. How much of the purchase price was paid in cash?
   a. less than half b. half c. more than half d. all of it
5. Based on what you read and any background knowledge you have, how would you explain the significance of Lewis and Clark being commissioned to explore the new territory?

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