

# America in transition 1801-1848

[History](#)



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The Adams-Onis treaty was an important agreement that helped in settling some of the disputes that had persisted for a long time between Spain and the United States (Rush 2007). The boundaries in the West were clearly defined through the treaty, in regard to the Louisiana Purchase. The Mexicans living in the Southwest were affected by the U. S. annexation of the region (Junius 2002). They were compelled to change their citizenship abruptly, and became U. S. citizens with complete rights. They had only one year for them to assume the political status of Americans (Fleming 2003). President Jackson asserted that removing the Indians was necessary in order for them to maintain their culture, which could not be possible if they mixed up with the Americans. He announced that the two major tribes of the Indian community had already agreed with the terms for their removal, and supported this by saying that this was a good example to the rest, who would soon follow the same path as they sought similar compensation (Lewis 2001).

The building of the Erie Canal illustrated the confluence of a vision. It took 15 years to be completed beginning from 1817 to 1832. It was viewed by many as the dream of Washington, who is believed to have a great understanding of the significance of transport and communication in nation building.

However, he did not live to see the completion of the canal (Bernstein 2005). It created a significant landing point for the sea vessels at New York City. The river barges were used for transportation of the cargo from these vessels to far places such as Chicago. The canal facilitated growth of the New York City which became a major port in the United States. With time, Chicago also followed similar developments as in New York City. The population of the two

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cities rose as the two cities became the largest of all the cities in America. Construction of the canal received public support, notably from particular public officials who according to (Bernstein 2005) included “ people such as Morris, who represented the first Continental Congress”. Bernstein further notes that the public was excited regarding the canal as they saw it as a major step towards achieving prospects of acquiring the capability of transporting commodities which included salt and others such as gypsum to far places through it. This was not possible before the construction of the canal. There used to be no trading activities between merchants from the East and the West. On the other hand, the roads that were available then were not accessible especially during the rainy seasons. This made the traders who had to transport their products for long distances to incur heavy expenditure, and hence the increase in the cost of commodities (Sheriff 1996). This was a major reason why the public supported the construction. The labor that was engaged in the construction of the canal initially was pooled from Irish speaking people. The construction of the Erie Canal was an indicator that labor technology could be useful in such practical work. More than five hundred laborers were engaged in the construction work on day by day basis. The canal was to be constructed over a length of 360 miles. According to Sheriff (1996), “ A three-man team with mules could build a mile in a year”. This was a significant advancement in the use of labor technology. Initially, there was a problem with uprooting the huge trees, which slowed the construction process, but this was overcome later when faster means for felling the trees through the use of 3 man teams, each equipped with mules, chains and stump pullers amongst other innovative tools.

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