

The robert r.
livingston, to open
negotiations to



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Louisiana Purchase was the purchase of the French province of Louisiana by the United States in 1803. The province stretched from the Mississippi River westward to the Rocky Mountains and from the Gulf of Mexico northward to Canada, covering an area equal to that of the United States, prior to the purchase. Except for the Mississippi River on the east and Canada on the north, the boundaries were indefinite. The United States also claimed West Florida between the Mississippi and Perdido rivers as part of the purchase, but Spain denied the claim. As a result of the purchase, the port of New Orleans and the entire Mississippi system were secured for American shippers, and the country was free to expand toward the Pacific Ocean. The price was \$15,000,000 for an area of 828,000 square miles (2,145,000 km²) - less than 3 cents an acre.

In 1800, Napoleon Bonaparte got Spain to return it by a secret treaty. Napoleon planned a French empire in the New World, with its center at New Orleans. President Jefferson was alert to the dangers of a powerful nation controlling the mouth of the Mississippi. He instructed the American minister to France, Robert R. Livingston, to open negotiations to buy New Orleans and some territory east of the city. A treaty would have to satisfy the financial claims that some United States citizens had against the French government.

Finally the French continued to claim that the province still belonged to Spain. Jefferson sent James Monroe to help with the negotiations, and authorized him to spend no more than \$10,000,000. Napoleon offered Livingston and Monroe the entire province of Louisiana in a treaty dated April 30, 1803. The American negotiators agreed to pay \$11,250,000 to France and \$3,750,000 for the French debts to United States citizens. The

purchase forced Jefferson to give a broad interpretation to the Constitution, which did not specifically grant authority for acquiring new territory. This interpretation set the precedent for later treaties that added to United States territory. The US Senator promptly ratified the purchase treaty, despite political opposition by the Federalists.

The area officially became United States territory on December 20, 1803. However it was 16 years before the exact boundaries were established, by the Adams-Ons Treaty with Bibliography: