1972

The Explorer, the United States Government, and the Approaches to Santa Fe: A Study of American Policy Relative to the Spanish Southwest, 1800-1819

Lee Francis Brown
Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation
http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/1166

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1972 Lee Francis Brown
Historical literature on the Spanish Southwest has made much of the lure which this vast region has held for Americans. It has been a lure of trade, of wealth, of adventure and of expansion. Few single places in the Southwest could rival the particular attraction of Santa Fe, variously referred to as the "gateway" to the rich mines of Mexico, and as a "port of call" on the western edge of the Great Plains. To some historians the objective of trade with Santa Fe can explain in large measure the whole Manifest Destiny movement. The fact that seventeenth and eighteenth century geographic concepts placed this village close to the Mississippi and Missouri River systems heightened American interest as well as Spanish fear of approaching foreigners.

The importance of the approaches to Santa Fe for individual Americans in the early nineteenth century cannot be denied and should not be neglected. When one examines the interests of the United States Government, however, it becomes quite obvious that the statesmen of this nation were not as vitally interested in bringing the Santa Fe region into the fold of the American system. In fact, official America, at times, discouraged and forbade its citizens to move toward...
the Rocky Mountains. Such a fact becomes all the more inter­
esting when one notes that Thomas Jefferson, is considered
this nation's first "expansionist" President.

Jefferson has been regarded often by historians as
western-minded; the evaluation has merit. His moves towards
securing the Mississippi Valley and the Territory of Orleans
following the Purchase attest to his western-mindedness. For
regions much farther west, however, Jefferson seemed less vi-
tally concerned to encourage American expansion or settlement.
His reasoning is examined in this study. He spoke with de-
termination when addressing the Spanish about America's right
to land as far west as the Rio Grande, but a closer examina-
tion of his actions would reveal a Chief Executive perhaps
more a clever diplomat playing at brinkmanship rather than an
active expansionist. James Madison was even less vitally in-
terested in the approaches to Santa Fe. Therefore, an at-
tempt is made to show that the active and positive expansion-
ist programs of the United States Government, beginning with
the military expeditions of 1819, were not a part of the pol-
icy or plans of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

Another aspect of American interest in the Southwest
which bears heavily on this study is an evaluation of the
cartographic development and the role it played in determining
outstanding issues. Accordingly the purpose of this study is
two-fold: to examine the policy of the U.S. Government rela-
tive to the Spanish Southwest during the period 1800-1819 and
to evaluate the extent to which cartography shaped America's
interest and attitudes towards this region.
VITA

Lee Francis Brown was born on October 3, 1928, in San Antonio, Texas. His parents Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Brown, Sr. are deceased, and he is single.

Lee Francis Brown graduated from Brackenridge High School, San Antonio, Texas, May, 1946. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Mary's University of San Antonio, Texas in 1960. He received his Master of Arts degree in 1963 at the same institution. He began Ph.D. graduate work at Loyola University, Chicago, in 1964.

He taught at St. Teresa's Academy, San Antonio, Texas, from 1959 to 1964. From 1964 to 1968 he held a Teaching Fellowship at Loyola University, and taught two classes each semester while working towards the Ph.D. degree. During the academic year 1965-1966, he taught at the Loyola Rome Center of Liberal Arts. Since 1968 he has been teaching in the Department of History at St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas. He presently holds the academic rank of Associate Professor.

3737 Fredericksburg Rd.
Apt. 104-A
San Antonio, Texas 78201

Mrs. Frances Bochat
583 Marquette St.
San Antonio, Texas 78228
PREFACE

The purpose of this study is twofold: to examine the policy of the United States Government relative to the Spanish Southwest during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, and to evaluate the extent to which cartography shaped America's interest and attitudes towards this region. The specific area of the Spanish Southwest which is of vital concern to this study is the Lower Rocky Mountain region, or what may best be termed, the approaches to Santa Fe. American interest in other areas of the Southwest such as California and the Texas-Louisiana border area was motivated by a different set of forces and is only of secondary concern here.

Historical literature on the Spanish Southwest has made much of the lure which this vast region has held for Americans. It has been a lure of trade, of wealth, of adventure and of expansion. Few single places in the Southwest could rival the attraction of Santa Fe. This small village, variously referred to as the "gateway" to the rich mines of Mexico, and as a "port of call" on the western edge of the Great Plains, has been the destination of many an American trader and trapper. To some
historians the objective of trade with Santa Fe can explain in large measure the whole Manifest Destiny movement.

The frontier town of Santa Fe, located well to the north and west of the more settled areas of New Spain, was also highly valued by the Spanish. They considered it necessary to protect their silver mining areas of northern Mexico from foreign encroachment. The fact that seventeenth and eighteenth century geographic concepts placed this village close to the Mississippi and Missouri river systems heightened Spanish alertness to anyone approaching Santa Fe. American and Spaniard alike obtained his concepts of the approaches to Santa Fe largely from the same cartographic sources, sources steeped in geographic myth and legend. As the nineteenth century dawned statesmen of the United States and Spain were basing their claims and making policy supported by maps generously filled with errors. The cartographer etched-in details for the Southwest that often bore little resemblance to what actually existed.

The importance of the approaches to Santa Fe for individual Americans in the early nineteenth century cannot be denied, and should not be neglected. The picture seems quite different, however, when one examines the interest of official America -- the United States Government. The Executive leadership of this country in the hands of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison did not evidence an interest or a desire to bring the Santa Fe
region into the fold of the American system equal to that of individual traders, trappers and adventurers.

Of the two Presidents examined in this study, Jefferson has been regarded by historians as the more western-minded, a man of expansion. The evaluation has merit. His desire to coordinate scientific and geographical knowledge for use in planning domestic and diplomatic programs has been the subject of considerable research. His moves towards securing the Mississippi Valley and the Territory of Orleans following the Purchase attest to his western-mindedness. For regions much farther west, however, Jefferson seemed less vitally concerned to encourage American settlement. His reasons are examined in this study. James Madison was even less vitally interested in the approaches to Santa Fe. An attempt will be made to show that the active and positive expansionist programs of the United States Government, beginning with the military expeditions of 1819, were not a part of the policy or plans of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

Very special thanks are due Dr. Robert W. McCluggage who suggested the research into the subject of this study. His interest in the topic, his patience and expert guidance, have been invaluable. A special note of gratitude must be given to the late Dr. Joseph W. Schmitz, S.M., without whose
encouragement and faith in the writer this dissertation would never have become a reality.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF MAPS</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE SPANISH SOUTHWEST BEFORE 1800</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LOUISIANA: AMERICA EXPLORES ITS PURCHASE.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE SOUTHWEST LIMITS OF LOUISIANA: HOW</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEAR TO SANTA FE?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE AMERICANS REACH SANTA FE</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE WESTERN BOUNDARY IS SETTLED</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF MAPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

THE SPANISH SOUTHWEST BEFORE 1800

Although organized and directed activity by the United States Government in the Southwest began with the advent of the nineteenth century, that vast region had drawn the attention and interests of individual Americans for many years. This was only a natural continuation of the western interests exemplified by the English settlers from the early Colonial days to the War of Independence. If one accepts the premise that exploration in colonial times was an integral part of Indian trade, the whole westward advance of the English as well as the French during their periods of colonization on the North American continent can be readily understood.\(^1\) Even if the commercial or economic thesis is denied as a sole motive for exploration; if it is placed alongside other motives such as imperial rivalry, scientific advancement, or simple adventure, a study

of the Southwest clearly indicates that all three major powers
--France, England and America--cast longing eyes towards what
Spain claimed as her own, west of the Mississippi River.

The story of Spain's conquest, exploration and settle-
ment of the Southwest (the northern provinces of the Viceroyalty
of New Spain) has been told numerous times. The names of
Coronado, Oñate, Kino, Garcés, and Escalante alone reflect
many chapters of Borderland history familiar to students of the
Southwest. While the accounts of the numerous colonization
efforts by Spain in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth
centuries are not pertinent here, it is important to consider
briefly that period of Spanish occupation when foreign intruders
first began to appear at the gates of Santa Fe, capital of the
northern province of New Spain. Not only was Santa Fe the
provincial capital, it was the key frontier outpost from which
Spanish military and commercial expeditions set forth to protect
and expand the rights of His Catholic Majesty in the Southwest.

Situated near the valley of the Upper Rio Grande, Santa
Fe had come along an arduous road since its beginnings in the
first decade of the seventeenth century. 2 In 1680 the famous

2 Hiram Martin Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the
Far West (2 vols.; New York: The Press of the Pioneers, Inc.,
1935), II, 484. France V. Scholes, "The Supply Service of the
Pueblo Revolt had forced the Spaniards to abandon the settlement and retreat to El Paso. Reoccupation took place by way of a military invasion in the 1690's, and from that time on the Spaniards preserved a durable, though at times, precarious control. The annals of New Mexican history are resplendent with accounts of daring individuals of the cross and of the sword who extended the control of Spain over vast western territory. Likewise these men added to the world's knowledge of the land, knowledge which Spain fought to keep within the confines of her own court, but which eventually helped traders and explorers of non-Spanish origin as well.

Somewhere to the east of the Spanish settlements in New Mexico were the French. Just where Spanish control ended and the French flag could be securely planted remained vague for several centuries. Spain and France were not explicit as to the boundaries separating their respective domains, and this situation caused innumerable difficulties, not only for the two respective powers, but the Americans as well at a later

I. EARLY FRENCH AND SPANISH EXPLORATION IN THE SOUTHWEST

date. From the latter part of the seventeenth century until 1762, the area generally referred to as the Mississippi Valley was under French control. During that period the French, be they voyageur, trader or explorer, had penetrated most of the country watered by the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. This had been done much to the chagrin of the Spanish. Frenchmen had set foot on most of the territory between the Mississippi and the vague border separating French Louisiana from the Provincias Internas.  

As early as 1703 some French traders, advancing south and west from their bases in Illinois, entered the present state of Oklahoma on a general line towards New Mexico. Other Frenchmen were approaching the same area from the Lower Louisiana settlements by way of the Red and Arkansas rivers. All of these traders and trappers, however, found their going difficult due to the presence of certain hostile Indian tribes. The Apaches along the Red River, and the Comanches along the Arkansas and Platte rivers posed formidable obstacles. The Spanish took advantage of any and all animosities between the

3Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark . . . , I, 55, 12. When discussing the western boundary of the Louisiana Purchase and the negotiations relative to the Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819, it will be seen that Spain and France, not being explicit, as to the boundary separating their respective domains, caused unending trouble for American statesmen.
red man and the foreigners; any tribe which would help prevent the advancement of the intruder could be assured of gifts and supplies from the Spaniards.⁴ Such a procedure did not always prove successful.

In spite of the efforts to keep New Mexico and the surrounding territory the exclusive domain of the King of Spain, in the year 1739 a party of Frenchmen led by the Mallet brothers reached Santa Fe. Pierre and Paul Mallet, with a party of eight or nine, arrived in the New Mexican capital on July 22, 1739. They succeeded in getting through the Comanche barrier, remained for about nine months and then returned.⁵ These sons of France brought back to the Illinois region news that the Spaniards in Santa Fe would welcome commerce.⁶ It is interesting to note that regardless of what the official policy of the Spanish Crown was relative to trade in the colonies, non-Spanish traders who reached Santa Fe did not always find

---


⁶ Ibid.
themselves unwelcome. The strict regulations concerning the entry of goods into New Spain set down by the Casa de Contratación was doubtless a major factor here. Goods were scarce on the frontier, and when brought in through legal channels prices were exorbitant. It is little wonder that the inhabitants of Santa Fe welcomed contraband trade.

Thus in spite of the distances which separated the Spanish northern frontier from French Louisiana, and the dangers involved, French traders were very much attracted toward contraband trade with New Mexico, as well as along the Louisiana-Texas border. The extensive French activity within the latter region is an episode in American history well investigated by others. It is believed that other Frenchmen found their way into the New Mexico region also, but the evidence is scarce. Certainly the founding of St. Louis brought to the Mississippi Valley numbers of men longing to penetrate the Spanish Borderlands. The Mallet expedition had proved the Missouri-Platte-Arkansas route a more easily traveled highway than the Red River approach, where the Spanish with their Indian allies were more successful in blocking the path of

---

7 The many works of Herbert E. Bolton and Issac J. Cox are of great benefit in relation to this subject.
intruders. In view of the fact that throughout this study much will be made of the role geographical information played in the formulation of American policy relative to the Southwest, it should be emphasized that charts and maps from French sources were most important. Since the French did, in fact, explore much of the land also claimed by Spain, and French cartographers were rather prolific in recording the information furnished by their fellow countrymen, a brief survey of French cartography in the Southwest is in order. Actually, French cartographers were at work using information acquired from other explorers long before the French were active in the Mississippi Valley and the Southwest.

The list of French cartographers is long, but one of the first whose work played a key role in mapping the Southwest was the celebrated Jean Baptiste Louis Franquelin. Of his several maps, the one published in 1688 is of prime importance. Franquelin indicated a river of great extent coming in from the west above the mouth of the Ohio, after

---

flowing through the "land of Les Panimaha [Pawnees]." The river is named "La Grande Riviere des Missourites, ou Emissourittis." In actual fact the river so named is the Platte. It seems that the Franquelin map with this major geographical error, although it remained in manuscript form, became known to numerous map makers in subsequent years; his representation of the Missouri Valley held sway with cartographers for a long period.

The outstanding work in the field of cartography for the eighteenth century was by the French and has been extolled by Carl I. Wheat in his monumental study Mapping the Transmississippi West. He considers the efforts of the Frenchman Guillaume Delisle as "towering landmarks along the path of Western cartographic development." Considering that the seventeenth century was relatively barren of cartographic progress with respect to the Southwest, his maps became even more important. The general map maker of the day simply


10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., p. 59.
exercised his imagination, and his "lack of knowledge, if fairly reflected, would have left such vast blank areas on ... maps" they would have been of little use or interest.\textsuperscript{12}

On the Delisle map of 1701, the Missouri River is indicated in a form relative to its importance. Farther to the west, just north and east of the province of New Mexico there is written, "par icy [sic] Commerce avec les Espagnols;" this gives the impression that French traders and trappers had at this very early date, penetrated the Spanish preserve.\textsuperscript{13}

Delisle's most celebrated map, and the one which was copied and reprinted throughout the century, was his Carte de la Louisiane et du Mississippi, published in 1718. On this map the Rio Grande is indicated as rising far in the north, just south of what Delisle labels the Missouri River. Legends give evidence that the Spanish had been fording the river to trade with the Indians, possibly for "yellow iron".\textsuperscript{14}

Since it is clear the Spaniards were fording the Platte and not the Missouri a repetition of Franquelin's idea of the Missouri-Platte basin is evident.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., pp. 34-35.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 56.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 66-67.
A good summary, both descriptive and informative, of Louisiana as well as the lands farther west, is the *Histoire de la Louisiane* by Le Page du Pratz published in Paris in 1758. These small volumes contain a map which is rather accurate for lower Louisiana, but as the cartographer traced his designs farther west, his accuracy declined. The Missouri River is drawn in a fashion giving the appearance that its headwaters were near the sources of the Rio Grande. Taking such indications as being accurate, it is little wonder that French traders, as well as their Spanish, English and American counterparts, saw in the Missouri-Platte system a direct highway connecting Illinois with New Mexico. Reference to a modern and accurate map of the region in question would lead one to suspect that the South Platte was the stream which probably "became" the Missouri for these early French cartographers. An accurate delineation of the South Platte, like that of the Red River of Texas, would have to wait until the nineteenth century.

With the end of the French and Indian War the Spanish borderlands were suddenly thrust eastward to the Mississippi.

---

II. SECTION OF DELISLE MAP OF 1718

In order to keep Louisiana out of British hands, France, in a treaty previous to and separate from the Treaty of Paris of 1763, ceded Louisiana to Spain. In that treaty the granting words are:

His Most Christian Majesty cedes in entire possession, purely and simply, without exception, to his Catholic Majesty and his successors in perpetuity, all the country known under the name of Louisiana, as well as New Orleans and the island in which that place stands.16

The French threat to Santa Fe thus came to an end, although rumors of French traders among the Indians continued to filter into Santa Fe. The main attention of the officials in Spanish Louisiana was now focused on the upper reaches of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers where the British were becoming more of a threat. Encroachment from Canada into Spanish Illinois and Louisiana was not a new problem for Spain, but the latter part of the eighteenth century saw renewed activity on the part of the British to spread their economic interest, operating from such towns along the Mississippi as Natchez.17 Although the British did give the

---


17 Noel M. Loomis and Abraham P. Nasatir, Pedro Vial and The Roads to Santa Fe (Norman: University of Oklahoma
Spanish just cause for alarm and did encroach upon the latter's domain, and though it was believed they might one day seek out Santa Fe as "compensation of their southern colonies, if they escaped from them," the threat of the British did not immediately concern the Lower Rocky Mountain region. 18

The transfer of Louisiana to Spain necessitated some hard thinking about the future administration of New Spain, especially the frontier region. Political organization in northern New Spain during the eighteenth century was closely linked to frontier defense, military organization, and boundary expansion. Indians had been taking advantage of the feeble presidial garrisons which could strike no effective retaliatory blows. To the Indian problems came added threats of encroachment upon Spanish territory, as indicated above, by European rivals such as England and France. The humiliating defeat which Spain suffered at the hands of the English in the Seven Years' War prompted the energetic Charles III (1759-1788) to take a closer look to the unsettled conditions in his northern borderlands and embark upon a program of re-organizing and strengthening this region.

Press, 1967), p. 93. A. P. Nasatir has written numerous articles on the Anglo-Spanish frontier in addition to his lengthy introduction to the collection of documents in his Before Lewis and Clark ... .

18 Loomis, Pedro Vial ..., p. 98.
The last detailed report of the defense system on the frontier had been made around 1730, and since that time no comprehensive inspection had been ordered by the government. The result was an expected decrease in efficiency. Accordingly, in 1765, the king commissioned the Marqués de Rubí "to report on the status of each presidio, its location, condition of its garrison, . . . and to make suitable recommendations." The Marqués de Rubí arrived in Mexico in early 1766 and immediately set out to complete his review of Spanish frontier defense from Texas to California. The report of Rubí was to have far-reaching consequences for the future development of the northern frontier. He was highly critical of existing conditions, singling out presidial commanders and accusing them of contributing largely to the poor conditions. He found the presidios to be haphazardly scattered across the frontier with no thought to a co-ordinated defense program, and among his recommendations was a proposal to reduce the northern outposts to fifteen along a line drawn from the coast of the Gulf of California to the mouth of the Guadalupe River in Texas, following the thirtieth parallel. Santa Fe was thus being left well outside the defense cordon as such; Rubí felt the cost of including the town would

be prohibitive. He obviously could not leave the town with no protection so the presidio at Santa Fe was to remain, but more than ever it would be a lone bastion far to the north of other points of military strength.

It had been indicated that Spanish officials on the frontier were continually trying to secure the area against hostile Indians. Pacification of the Indian was a major objective, and the governors in the remote town of Santa Fe did not have an easy time of it. It seems that they seldom had enough soldiers at their command. Help from Chihuahua was often slow in coming, and the territory was immense.

While the Marqués de Rubí was inspecting the military organization of the frontier provinces, Charles III dispatched a Visitador General to New Spain with authority to make major reforms in administrative and financial affairs. José de Gálvez, the man appointed by the king, came to New Spain and by 1776 major political changes had been implemented. The entire northern frontier of New Spain was reorganized into the Provincias Internas. Long recognizing that Mexico City

20 Loomis, Pedro Vial . . . , p. 64. Simmons, Spanish Government in New Mexico, pp. 4-8. A more detailed discussion on this point can be found in Alfred B. Thomas, Teodoro de Croix (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941).

21 Loomis, Pedro Vial . . . , p. 16.
could not properly handle the problems of areas so remote, and due to the multitude of duties and responsibilities of the viceroy, sweeping reforms were initiated. New Mexico was included in the western section of the Provincias Internas. There was to be a governor in Santa Fe, but he was now directly under the authority of the Commandante-General located in Chihuahua.  

It has been pointed out by one historian of the West that most American explorers of the nineteenth century had to rediscover the Southwest, as the details of Spanish exploration had been all but forgotten. As indicated earlier, one of the reasons for this was the policy of the Spanish government to keep all geographical knowledge of its territories from the public eye. Since the early American explorers did use maps and charts based in large measure on what cartographers could ultimately extract from Spanish sources as well as from French cartographers, a brief survey

---


of Spanish exploration and mapping of the Provincias Internas before the arrival of the Americans would be in order.  

Only a few of the many Spanish expeditions which set out from Santa Fe are pertinent to future American interest and advancement. Foremost among these efforts was the famous Domínguez-Escalante expedition of 1776. For a number of years previous to this date New Mexican traders had traveled from Santa Fe into present day Colorado and Oklahoma as well as into the Southern Rockies. Subsequent Spanish traders deepened the trail, not only to the north and east, but also the northwest. As tales of profit and adventure found their way to the adobe capital more traders set out. The particulars of most of these treks are unknown. The Spanish government had definite restrictions on trade, and most of the individual trappers found it better to speak little of their work when the ears of officials might be too keen. Most often details as to their respective areas of operation remained a secret.

24 Carl I. Wheat in his major work already cited above has an extensive section on early Spanish maps and cartographers.

At any rate by 1776, most of the region east of the Colorado River and as far north as the Gunnison was well known to Spaniards trading out of New Mexico. Several reasons can be cited for continued Spanish interest in this region. Continued reports of Frenchmen in the Pawnee country (present day Kansas and Nebraska), and rumored mines gave a certain impetus to trader and government official alike. Foremost among the reasons for Spanish forays, however, was the continued Indian menace.  

The road westward to the Pacific was blocked by Indian resistance, namely the Hopi and Apaches. Because of the advance of the Russians down the California coast, the Spanish had colonized Alta California. This had largely been done by a water approach around the peninsula of Baja California. Officials felt, however, that an overland route should and must be found, hence the organization of an expedition under the leadership of two Franciscan Friars—Francisco Athanásio Domínguez and Silvestro Vélez de Escalante.  

The aim of the expedition was two fold: to open communication between Santa Fe and Monterrey, California


by way of the land of the Yutes; and, as far as the two Franciscans were concerned, to find an overland route to the missions of California. The expedition was sponsored by the Governor of New Mexico and was under the military command of Don Bernardo Mier y Pacheco.28

The route of the expedition took the party into territory which had apparently never before been explored by white men -- deep into the Rockies to the White and Green rivers and into the Great Basin. It has been called "the most fantastic exploring venture of all those the Spanish conducted in the Southwest."29

It was the presence of Mier y Pacheco, a retired captain and resident of Santa Fe, that makes the expedition pertinent to this study. Experienced at mapping other portions of the frontier of northern Mexico, the Spanish gentleman charted the entire region traversed by the Escalante party. It was the first attempt by any European to map the


29 Goetzmann, Exploration and Empire . . ., p. 69.
Colorado River Basin. Unlike other early cartographers he did not have the work of others to guide him; his map was based solely upon notes and observations made by him on the journey. A quadrant was used for determining latitude, but it seems that westerly and easterly positions were calculated by distances traveled and compass observations. Carl I. Wheat believes that Mier y Pacheco scored many "firsts" on his great map, especially in his charting of the rivers and mountains near the Great Basin. William Goetzmann refers

\[30\] Bolton, "Pageant in the Wilderness . . .," p. 12. Mier y Pacheco arrived in America in 1743, and went to El Paso as a soldier; he took part in campaigns against the Apaches. In 1745 he went east from El Paso with Captain Ruben de Solís to map the banks of the Rio Grande and Conchos rivers. The young soldier arrived in Santa Fe in 1754, where he served as alcalde and captain of the frontiers of Galisteo and Pecos. He subsequently made campaigns against the Comanches on the eastern border of New Mexico and mapped the regions covered in his forays. A map which Mier y Pacheco drew in 1760 was sent to the king, who turned it over to the engineer accompanying the Marques de Rubí to America in 1766.


\[32\] Wheat, The Spanish Entrada . . ., I, 115-16. No map drawn prior to Escalante's tour de force offered even a fraction of the broad and remarkably accurate coverage the Mier y Pacheco map did. The river on which Mier placed the words "puede ser el Misuri" is in reality the south fork of the Platte, but this notation does indicate that the Spaniards had some idea that the Missouri rose from what he termed the spine or backbone of North America, not far north of the Arkansas River.
to the map as a "rather fanciful version of the country . . . ." Nevertheless this map became the basis of all maps of the New Mexican region for many years including the more famous map by Alexander von Humboldt which appeared in 1811. Authorities seem to feel that von Humboldt must have had access to the Mier map even though it remained unpublished for over a century. Pike's map of 1810 and William Clark's maps of 1810-1814 also give evidence that the Spaniards concepts had not been forgotten. Specific references to cartographic errors and geographic misconceptions will be indicated as they become relevant. It would be of interest to note here, however, that no mention is made in the Escalante journal, nor is there any indication on the accompanying map of English, French, or American settlements. No trappers, traders or explorers of these nations were apparently roaming that part of the Spanish Southwest. As observant as the members of the expedition were in relation to other matters, the absence of such references leads one to conclude that non-Spanish intruders were not yet active northwest of Santa Fe as they

33 Goetzmann, Exploration and Empire . . . , p. 69.

34 Wheat, The Spanish Entrada . . . , p. 96. The use of Mier's material by Alexander von Humboldt left a stamp on the representation of the West that was not erased until the time of Frémont.
were to the east of that Spanish outpost.

Commanches on the warpath caused another expedition to be sent north in 1779. The Governor of New Mexico, Juan Bautista de Anza, led the party. While attempting to quell the Indian disturbance he recorded some items which throw more light on geographical information for the period. 35

Concerning the Rio Grande he noted,

This river, as is known, empties into the North Sea [Gulf of Mexico] and the Bay of Espiritu Santo. It has its source fifteen leagues in the Sierra de la Grulla... The Yuta nation accompanying me, who reside at the same source... tell me it proceeds from the interior of a great swamp, which is formed... by the constant melting of the snow on some mountain peaks that are very near it. 36

His small but important map also indicated the headwaters of the Canadian and Arkansas rivers under different names. Although Anza cannot be credited with the birth of the idea, the concept of a central height of land and a "great central reservoir of snows and fountains" began early

35 Thomas, "Spanish Expeditions Into Colorado," p. 300. Hill, "Spanish and Mexican Exploration...," pp. 14-15. Anza led a military force north into the San Luis Valley and east over the mountains. The purpose was to punish some Commanches who, under their leader, Cuerno Verde (Greenhorn), had been murdering Spanish settlers.

and remained in vogue well into the nineteenth century. Even when cartography became more perfected, old myths continued to hold their own. This situation was aptly described by one writer when he asked, "Why is it that the mind of man is so constituted that when alternatives are presented he will almost always choose the one that is most incorrect?"

Thus far emphasis has been placed on Spanish activity radiating from Santa Fe to points largely within the western Provincias Internas. Such activity was natural since all official trade and communication with that frontier capital had been carried on from Mexico City through Chihuahua, headquarters of the Commandante-General. In other words Santa Fe's only official connection with the outside world was along what might be termed the Chihuahua Trail.

---

37 Wheat, The Spanish Entrada . . ., I, 12, 117-119. This map now in the Archives of the Indies is a small manuscript. It delineates the upper Rio Grande Valley to a point near 40° north latitude, and east of the mountains bordering the valley appears the R. de Mora and the Nacim.to del Rio Roxo -- actually the headwaters of the Canadian. The Arkansas and Huerfano rivers are also indicated.


39 Loomis, Pedro Vial . . ., p. xvi.
The situation was abruptly changed in the 1790's when one Pedro Vial opened new roads from Santa Fe eastward to San Antonio, Natchitoches and St. Louis. The third road he opened in the years 1792 and 1793 was to St. Louis, and it became the important connection with Santa Fe from the Mississippi-Missouri region. It could well be called the precursor of the later famous Santa Fe Trail. 40 It was the speed with which Vial made his third trip that made the Spanish officials realize Santa Fe was not as far from the restless Americans as they would prefer.

The Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Louisiana, Zenon Trudeau, informed the Baron de Carondelet, Governor and Intendant of Louisiana, that Vial was certain the journey between St. Louis and Santa Fe could be made in twenty-five days. It was only delay by hostile Kansas Indians that made his initial trip somewhat longer. 41 Three years later

---

40 Ibid., xv-xvi. Pedro Vial, or Pierre Vial, was a native of Lyons, in the southeast part of central France. Although it is not too clear it seems that he was on the Missouri River before the Revolutionary War. He appears actively on the scene in 1786 as an explorer who was directed to open a trail from San Antonio to Santa Fe. For about twenty years Vial traveled around Santa Fe, San Antonio, Natchitoches and St. Louis, quite a feat considering the hostile territory he crossed and recrossed.

41 Zenon Trudeau to Baron de Carondelet, St. Louis, October 7, 1792, Louis Houck (ed.), The Spanish Regime in Missouri (2 vols.; Chicago: R. R. Donnelley and Sons Company,
correspondence between the same two Spanish officials indicated that Vial (according to his own statement) made the trip from the New Mexican capital to the Panis towns on the Kansas River in eight days. Trudeau further stated that traders from St. Louis had made the journey to those same villages in about ten days.  Bernard de Voto in his work *The Course of Empire* is most skeptical of such statistics. Noting that Vial could not have made his journey from Santa Fe to St. Louis in less than fifty days, he attributes to this man a large responsibility of offering further evidence to the Spanish that Santa Fe was most vulnerable to foreign intrusions.

1909), I, 351. Loomis, Pedro Vial . . ., p. 90. Zenon Trudeau was born in New Orleans in 1748. He was well educated and became a lieutenant colonel in the Louisiana Regiment. He was appointed lieutenant-governor of the Upper Louisiana in 1792, serving until 1799, when he was succeeded by Carlos du Hault de Lassus. Ibid., p. 68. The Baron de Carondelet was born in 1748 in Flanders and was a colonel in the Spanish army and governor of San Salvador when he was appointed to succeed Estévan Miró as governor and intendent of the provinces of Louisiana and West Florida in 1791.

42 Trudeau to Carondelet, St. Louis, July 4, 1795, printed in Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark . . ., I, 329-30.

43 Bernard DeVoto, *The Course of Empire* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), pp. 360-61. As late as 1847 the best recorded time from Santa Fe to Independence, Mo. (250 miles west of St. Louis) was twenty-five days. This was by forced riding, which Vial would have had neither reason nor
Vial drew two maps of his wanderings that are not only documents of interest for the information they contain, but also for the fact that they stayed hidden from cartographers for so long. His first map dated October 18, 1787, purports to show the Mississippi watershed and a portion of the Rio Grande with the intervening territory. Of especial interest was his charting of the Red River. His calculations are fairly accurate for the region in which this river has its source. In view of the fact that explorers and cartographers, European as well as America, confused the sources of the Red River with those of the Canadian for the next sixty years, it would be interesting to speculate what effect accurate information of this area would have had on future Spanish-American rivalry. Somewhat of a mystery surrounds the 1787 map as to how Vial could have traced the Upper Missouri River as he did, indicating the great bend at the Mandan villages. How could this unlettered Frenchman at equipment and preparation to do. Two months from Independence to Santa Fe was good traveling time for a wagon train after the trail was well established and all the watering places known. Three men on horseback would normally take more time, not less.

Santa Fe have known of the Mandans? 45

It has been noted that pacification of the Indian tribes was a major (some say the major) concern of Spanish officials in the Western provinces. In the Provincias Internas the Spanish Government still largely used the mission system plus military expeditions to handle the problem. In Louisiana, however, the Spaniards had adopted the French policy of sending traders among the various tribes keeping the natives friendly through trade and gifts. Although the Louisiana story as such does not concern the subject under study, mention must be made of the Missouri Company. This company and the many men connected with its various enterprises continued to operate when the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory in 1803. St. Louis, the headquarters for the company under the Spanish, was also the major entrepot for the Americans. Because of its position relative to trade and defense St. Louis gained for itself a monopoly of all important activity between the Mississippi-Missouri basin and the Rocky Mountains. Hiram Chittenden states, "it is doubtful if history affords the example of another city which has been

45 Ibid., pp. 127-128. It was not until 1854 that the Red River's course was charted in detail, even though it was known after Major Long's expedition in 1820 that the Red and Canadian were different streams.
the exclusive mart for so vast an extent of country. . . ."  

The Missouri Company was a response to British competition on the Upper Missouri as well as a defense against further Anglo encroachment. Even before official sanction was received the merchants of St. Louis led by one Jacques Clamorgan, organized the Compagnie de Commerce pour la Découverte des Nations du haut de Missouri, May 12, 1794.  

The merchants later obtained the right to exclusive trade for ten years with the nations on the Missouri River living above the Poncas, who were located along the present day Nebraska-South Dakota border. Of those men who originally took part in the Company's activities, the names of Clamorgan, Charles Sanguinet, Laurent Durocher and Regis Loisel seem most prominent, and continued to be so when the Americans acquired the Louisiana Territory and began to look in earnest towards the Pacific.

The driving force of the Company in its early years was Jacques Clamorgan. His personal motives are not always clear, though it is certain the chance to get rich helped

---


drive him on. Regardless, he did have the confidence of Governor Carondelet, and managed to combine commercial and political activities for the betterment of the Spanish Empire. In addition to opening trade with the Indians and ousting the British from Spanish territory, the Company was to attempt to discover a route to the Pacific, joining the Missouri with Mexico and California. It will be remembered that a common belief of the day was that the Missouri River had its source a little to the north of the source of the Rio Grande. Such an effort as planned by Clamorgan would only help to defend "rich" Santa Fe from British and American intruders.

In the 1790's the Company sent out three important expeditions, the first being under the leadership of an ex-schoolmaster Jean Baptiste Truteau. This expedition

---

48 A. P. Nasatir, "Jacques Clamorgan: Colonial Promoter of the Northern Border of New Spain," New Mexico Historical Review, XVII (April, 1942), 106-07. Of his early life little is known; he emerges into history as a merchant in the West Indies. As early as 1780 he became associated with Thompson and Company of Kingston, Jamaica, probably in the slave trade between that island and New Orleans. He was back in Spanish Louisiana by 1783, and in the latter part of that year, or very early in 1784, he ascended to Upper Louisiana. Clamorgan himself tells us in 1793 that he had been a resident of Illinois for more than ten years. Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark . . ., I, 83. Annie Heloise Abel (ed.), Tabeau's Narrative of Loisel's Expedition to the Upper Missouri, translated from the French by Rose Abel Wright (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939), p. 19.

set out for the Mandan villages high on the Missouri River at the "great bend" located today in the state of North Dakota. Truteau was given ample authority for the regulation of trade, and was instructed to obtain information concerning the distance to the Rocky Mountains "which were located to the West of the Source of the Missouri." Another order, which was curiously struck out by Carondelet, instructed Truteau to determine the distance from the Mandan villages to the Spanish settlements of New Mexico. In actuality Truteau did not ascend the Missouri much above the Arikara villages located to the south of the Mandans, but he did manage to secure a great deal of valuable geographical information. He seems to have learned that the Comanches roamed the banks of the Platte River and south toward the Arkansas.

Trudeau . . ."

"Trudeau was born at Montreal, December 11, 1748. From the profession he afterwards adopted, it is to be inferred that he received more schooling than was usual in those days. He came to St. Louis in 1774, and was the first school master of the village. He did not find teaching a lucrative business, and when his needs began to be exigent, he replenished his finances by a trading trip to the Indians. The spelling of the name varies between "Trudeau" and "Truteau." The latter spelling is used in this text.

Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark . . ., I, 87.

Ibid.

The second expedition of the Missouri Company in 1795, early got into trouble with the Ponca Indians. Later in the same year, not being able to find a native Spaniard capable for the job, a Scotsman turned Spanish citizen led an expedition up the Missouri. James Mackay, accompanied by thirty-three men, set out from St. Louis in August. The object of the expedition was to "open commerce with those distant and unknown Nations in the upper parts of the Missouri and to discover all the unknown parts of his Catholic Majesty's Dominions... as far as the Pacific Ocean." Mackay himself was unable to complete the journey, but he sent his assistant, John Evans, overland to the Mandans. Mackay's instructions to Evans were more imaginative than those of previous Spanish explorers and were the prototype for the instructions Thomas Jefferson later issued to Lewis and Clark. On January 28, 1796, Mackay issued his lengthy instructions to Evans. The latter was to cross the continent in order to discover a passage from the source of the Missouri to the Pacific Ocean. He was to keep a daily journal making notations on latitude and longitude. Furthermore he was to "take care to mark down

53 Loomis, Pedro Vial ..., p. 107.

54 Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark ..., I, 97.
[his] route and distance each day.\textsuperscript{55}

Claiming all the land he traversed for King Charles III of Spain, Evans set out but got no farther than the Mandan villages. Mackay did keep a journal and submitted it to authorities in Louisiana. This journal was later sent to the mother country, and in light of what has been mentioned relative to geographical concepts and American interest in the Southwest, it would be advantageous to quote from the letter accompanying the journal.

The relation of Mackay confirms the previous information of the introduction of the English from Canada into the domains of the King, both among the Mandan tribe who are located on the south shore of the Missouri River ... and on the Chato River [South Platte] which flows into New Mexico, to the point where they have erected a blockhouse, in order to assure their clandestine trade with our Indian tribes, and perhaps even, with the natives of Santa Fe. The letter written to me by the Commandant of the Post of Natchitoches, ... agrees with the relation of Mackay. In respect to the fact that, notwithstanding that the said letter attributes to the Americans the construction of the blockhouse above mentioned, it is a fact that the latter have not allowed themselves to be seen as yet on the Missouri and its neighborhood.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{55} A. P. Nasatir, "John Evans, Explorer and Surveyor," Missouri Historical Review, XXV (1931), 228-29.

\textsuperscript{56} Baron de Carondelet to Prince of Peace, June 3, 1796, printed in Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark ..., I, 354-55.
The Spanish from New Mexico had explored northwest and northeast from Santa Fe, and had coursed the Missouri from St. Louis at least as far as the Mandans, but by the end of the eighteenth century most of Louisiana north of the Red River was still a vast unknown and uncharted haunt for Indians and buffaloes. The few clusters of settlements, such as St. Louis, and Natchez, clung to the banks of the Mississippi. Except for an occasional river settlement, the character of Upper Louisiana to the Rocky Mountains had changed little since the first French and Spanish explorers prodded their ways during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. New forces, however, were brewing. Americans along the eastern banks of the Mississippi were anxiously looking toward the West. Some were not just looking, but were already penetrating the Spanish Borderlands.

By the close of the War for Independence Americans had become firmly established on the east side of the Mississippi River. What had been a possible threat to Spain before now became more of a reality. The eight years of the war had given fresh impulse to the expansive tendencies of

the Anglo-Americans. One need only to look at the events of the Confederation and Early National periods for conclusive evidence of a definite westward movement. All the events surrounding the negotiation of the Jay and Pinckney treaties in the 1790's, especially the latter treaty, are indicative of the expansive nature of the young Republic. The intrigues involving Citizen Genêt and George Rogers Clark, as well as the machinations of James Wilkinson, which will be investigated later, clearly indicate that the frontiersman was (at least to some extent) turning a deaf ear to the advice of America's first Chief Executive. In his Farewell Address George Washington, after discussing the events of the preceding years relative to the so-called Mississippi Question, expressed the hope that the frontiersman would in the future be deaf "to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their brethren and connect them with aliens." 58

It has been said that the economic system and social ideals that carried the English colonists from the Atlantic coast across the mountains into the Mississippi Valley emerged

with undiminished vigor from the Revolution.\textsuperscript{59} The treaty which brought the war to a close was silent on factors vital to the two powers now facing each other. Most historians, however, see American advancement and Spanish retreat as inevitable, a mere process of destiny, no matter what treaties would have been signed or arrangements made. Some Spaniards were also fatalistic about their nation's future in America. Manuel de Godoy, the Prince of Peace, is reported to have said in relation to Louisiana, "no es posible poner puertas al campo." (You can't lock up an open field).\textsuperscript{60} Whether one accepts the fatalistic concept or not, there is little doubt that Spain had just cause to look with great alarm at her advancing neighbor.

The statement that the Mississippi had now become the "frontier between the conservative and bigoted of monarchies, and the youngest of republics,"\textsuperscript{61} is perhaps an historical view too prejudiced to be valid. It is indicative, however, of the mind-set of many Americans during the period


\textsuperscript{60} Whitaker, \textit{The Mississippi Question} . . ., p. 35.

\textsuperscript{61} Chittenden, \textit{The American Fur Trade} . . ., I, 80.
under discussion. Traders, trappers, explorers and many American government officials seldom held Spain in high regard.

Within the last decade of the eighteenth century a little known official American attempt to learn what lay beyond the river took place. The effort was secret and did not succeed, but it did result in two manuscript maps which were to prove useful at a later date. In December 1789, Secretary of War Henry Knox wrote to General Josiah Harmar at Fort Washington, a post recently constructed at the mouth of the Little Miami River, instructing him to

Devise some practicable plan for exploring the branch of the Mississippi called the Messouri [sic], up to its source and all its southern branches, and tracing particularly the distance between the said branches and any of the navigable streams that run into the Great North River which empties itself into the gulf [sic] of Mexico.62

Before this letter could reach its destination the Secretary dispatched another indicating that the party

---

62 Colton Storm, "Lieutenant Armstrong's Expedition to the Missouri River, 1790," Mid-America: An Historical Quarterly, XXV (N.S. Vol. XIV), (1943), 180. This seems to be the only study of the Armstrong expedition.
selected for this assignment should "be habited like indians in all respects, and on no pretence whatever, discover any connection with the troops . . ." General Harmar subsequently ordered Lieutenant John Armstrong to undertake the journey. Doubt as to the practicality or advisability of such a venture was present from the outset. Armstrong was carefully instructed to get the approval of Arthur St. Clair, Governor of the Northwest Territory, before proceeding upon his mission. General Harmar thought the proposal too "adventurous." In yet another letter to the Secretary of War, Harmar expressed fear it was a "very difficult dangerous undertaking." Cognizant of the caution felt by his commander, Armstrong left the Rapids of the Ohio on February 27, 1790, to undertake his assignment. Governor St. Clair, faced with serious Indian problems, could be expected to be equally cautious about such an enterprise as was General Harmar. On

---

63 Ibid., p. 181.

64 Harmar to Armstrong, Ft. Washington, February 20, 1790, ibid.

65 Harmar to Secretary of War Knox, Ft. Washington, February 20, 1790, ibid., p. 182.
May 1, 1790, St. Clair wrote to Secretary Knox,

It is, sir, I believe at present, altogether impracticable. It is a point on which some people are feeling alive all over, and all their jealousy awake. Indians to be confided in, there are none: and if there were, those who would be most proper, and others, are now at war; ... 66

A similar note to General Harmar was penned the following day. 67

In light of President Jefferson's moves at a later date, and in view of the character of the Lewis and Clark expedition, it would be of interest to quote from a portion of Lieutenant Armstrong's official Report dated June 2, 1790.

Having communicated to the Governor of the Western Territory the business on which I was detached after exercising his mind on the occasion he observed it was not only a difficult task, but one that in his opinion could be executed in the character of a trader only [italics mine] and even in that there is difficulty, as there are by Government [Spanish] fixed Posts for Traders to assemble at and a certain quantity [sic] of goods permitted to go to each Post. The Spanish commissary [sic] knows the

66 St. Clair to Secretary of War Knox, May 1, 1790, *ibid.*, p. 184.

67 St. Clair to General Harmar, May 2, 1790, *ibid.*
I have no doubt but in a Tour of eighteen months or two years the necessary information might be obtained, . . . 68

Lt. Armstrong returned to the Ohio country from St. Louis. In that city he had traced a pencil sketch of the western half of a 1750 map of French origin. On this map the Missouri River is shown coming down from the northwest passing the Panis villages which were actually to the west of the Missouri along the Kansas River. The Rio Grande is curiously extended, rising near the Padouca villages of the Upper Missouri. Carl Wheat feels that Armstrong's tracing was "undoubtedly the first map including any part of the Trans-mississippi West secured on-the-spot (so to speak) by an official of the United States." 69

Apparently the Armstrong expedition was the only official attempt made by the United States Government before the opening of the nineteenth century to see what lay beyond the Mississippi River. Individual Americans, however, were


69 Wheat, The Spanish Entrada . . ., I, 150.
far from inactive in their desire to learn more about the roads West, be they to the Pacific or Mexico. Motives varied and much of the lure of the West was tied up with events surrounding the whole Mississippi Question.

International tensions in the 1790's threatened to embroil the United States in war, and our first Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, had the difficult task of steering a safe course for the new Republic. As Dumas Malone points out, "no one was more convinced than he that his country required peace and time to grow in. He had no thought of letting it be hitched to the war chariot of any other nation." With respect to the Spanish, however, Jefferson, at times, gave the appearance of moving contrary to his peaceful intentions. It is during this period of controversy over American rights to the Mississippi that Jefferson displayed an attitude toward Spain that was typical of his dealings with that country throughout his public career. Moving cautiously and weighing every word when dealing with the French or English he was seldom hesitant to sound bellicose when addressing the Spanish.

It seems clear Jefferson always considered Spain a waning power that could be challenged with little danger, provided she was not allied with one of the major powers of Europe. More will be made of this idea later. For the moment the year 1793 affords an excellent opportunity to view Jefferson's moves in relation to Spain, and to obtain an early glimpse of his interest in exploring the land west of the Mississippi River, an interest which became more intense as the years progressed.

Thomas Jefferson as a member of the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, like his fellow members, was deeply interested in the Western wilderness. Acting in the capacity of a member of the organization (not as Secretary of State) he helped organize an expedition to explore Louisiana in April, 1793. 71 The expedition was to be under the direction of the French scientist (botanist) André Michaux, who had been in America some nine years and had already made scientific journeys from Florida to Canada. 72 Unfortunately for the

71 DeVoto, The Course of Empire, p. 344.

72 Ibid., p. 345. A talented botanist, Michaux had been a resident of the United States for nine years and of South Carolina for seven. He had made wilderness journeys in the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains and the Florida swamps. In 1792, entering another wilderness, he had followed
scientific and geographical advantages this expedition may have
given the world, the proposed journey became involved with the
web of espionage being spun by that impetuous Frenchman,
Edmond Genet, and the whole project was aborted.

When Genêt reached Philadelphia and found a fellow
countryman who, in the confidence of high American officials,
was about to enter the region where plans were already well
underway to "liberate" the Spanish possessions west of the
Mississippi, he could not let such a golden opportunity be lost.
By the latter part of June Michaux had been selected by Genêt
to be a French agent in the West. On July 12, 1793, Genêt
wrote to his American partner George Rogers Clark

It is time that the citizens of Louisiana,
the descendants of France, enjoy the
blessings of liberty, . . . It is
to you General that this honorable
mission is confided, you will cover
yourself with glory and will merit
the thanks of the great number of
people you will have delivered from

his botanical specialties through northeastern Canada to the
vicinity of Hudson Bay. , Malone, Jefferson and the Ordeal of
Liberty, p. 104. He was a French botanist who had been sent
to America by the royal government years earlier (1785) on
an exploring expedition with a view to the introduction into
France of American trees, shrubs and plants.

Malone, Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty, p. 104.
Tyranny. . . . Citizen Michaux will be commissioned as agent for the French Republic for the administrative part of this affair. He is a prudent man, reliable, active, intelligent and a friend of Liberty and Equality.74

Meanwhile Genêt tried to persuade Jefferson to appoint Michaux as a consul in Kentucky, but to no avail. The most he could obtain from the Secretary of State was a letter of introduction for Michaux to Governor Issac Shelby of Kentucky. Jefferson further warned Genet that enticing officers and soldiers from Kentucky to war on Spain was actually putting a rope around their necks, for they would certainly be hung if they commenced hostilities against any nation with which we were at peace.75 Such warnings did little to deter the Frenchman.

Michaux set out for the West on July 15, 1793; he eventually reached Kaskaskia but got no farther. The details

74 Genêt to Clark, Philadelphia, July 12, 1793, "Correspondence of Clark and Genet," American Historical Association, Annual Report, 1896 (Washington, 1898), I, 986. These documents are selections from the Draper Collection in the possession of the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

of the whole Genêt-Clark effort do not concern this study, but the original instructions to Michaux, when his journey had the character of a scientific endeavor, are of importance. According to Jefferson's instructions Michaux was to

find the shortest and most convenient route of communication between the United States and the Pacific Ocean, within the temperate latitudes. . . . The Missouri, so far as it extends, presents itself under circumstances of unquestioned preference. It has, therefore, been declared as a fundamental object of the subscription (not to be dispensed with) that this river shall be considered and explored as a part of the communication sought for.76

When Michaux reached the Missouri he was to "pursue such of the largest [tributaries] as shall lead by the shortest way and the lowest latitudes to the Pacific ocean."77 Success of course depended upon the reaction of the Spanish.

In analyzing these instructions Bernard DeVoto notes that in the thinking of Jefferson as well as his fellow scientists, two problems remain that are unchanged since the discovery of the Missouri.


77 Ibid.
The possibility that the height of land may be wide or may consist of difficult mountain ranges is not imagined, and the Atlantic and Pacific watersheds are assumed actually to interlock.78

Thus we have Jefferson, a full decade before the purchase of Louisiana desiring to learn about territory which lay well within the domain of Spain. The nineteenth century arrived, however, with no real American penetration or encroachment (depending on one's viewpoint) into the Spanish Southwest. No doubt individual American trappers and traders had already penetrated the vast territory of the Spanish Borderlands, just as their French counterparts had done at an earlier date. They did not represent "official" America, however, and historical evidence of their deeds remains scarce.

As the year 1800 approached two "empires" faced each other across the Mississippi; one determined to prevent encroachment upon its domain, the other looking with longing eyes toward the Pacific. Spain had the very difficult task of defending such a long frontier -- perhaps an impossible task. Spanish ministers sensed the danger of the situation and tried to shape their policy accordingly. They turned deaf ears to

78 DeVoto, The Course of Empire, p. 348.
French assurances that the "bucolic Americans would never be
dangerous neighbors." If the idea that His Catholic Majesty
considered Louisiana as a barrier to his more precious
possessions of New Spain is accepted, it would seem that
Spain's immediate concern for the former territory rather than
New Mexico was well founded. Constant warnings were coming
from all sources. For example, the Bishop of Louisiana
reported in 1799 that emigration from the western part of
America was bringing a "mob of adventurers . . . who know not
God or religion." He further reported that these "adven-
turers" had spread throughout the territory and into Texas.
"They are furnishing their hunters and Indians with arms; they
hold conversations . . . in accord with their restless and
ambitious character, . . . saying [to their listeners], 'You
eil [sic] go to Mexico'." It has already been noted that
Baron Carondelet, Governor of Louisiana, warned his home

79 Whitaker, Spanish-American Frontier . . ., p. 9.

80 José Antonio Caballero to Antonio Coruel, San
Lorenzo, November 13, 1799, printed in James Alexander
Robertson (ed.), Louisiana Under the Rule of Spain, France,
and the United States, 1785-1807 (2 vols.; Cleveland: The

81 Ibid.
government of the danger of the approaching Americans. He feared the intruders would not stop at the Mississippi or Missouri.

On the other hand, if the Spanish had such a fantastic fear of military action against Santa Fe as most historians indicate, their lack of immediate plans to defend that region seems questionable. True there was a cordon of military posts from Texas to Alta California, but it will be recalled that Santa Fe remained outside this line of defense. Perhaps the Spanish figured they could halt any American advance before it reached the Lower Rocky Mountains. When one considers the size of the military contingents the Spanish maintained, and the fact that foreign traders had slipped into the environs of Santa Fe for years, such a hope seems ill founded.

Foreign economic infiltration would no doubt have been impossible to shut out completely. Efforts to eliminate illicit trade obviously had not succeeded. Spain had to act. The Americans were at the gate to the "open field." To many the whole West was fair game. Fur bearing animals were waiting to be trapped; vast herds of wild horses were there to be tamed -- and horses were negotiable. And, of course, Santa Fe was rising in the distance. The major question is: did Santa Fe and the Lower Rocky Mountain region have the lure
for the United States Government as it did for individual adventurous trader and trapper? Were the riches which Santa Fe supposedly guarded the primary objective of all Americans who went West and South? In 1800 the people of the United States elected to the office of President the man Bernard DeVoto has called our "first geopolitician." To many historians the election of Thomas Jefferson ushered in the period of imperial rivalry between Spain and the United States for the Southwest.

---

CHAPTER II

LOUISIANA: AMERICA EXPLORES ITS PURCHASE

Whereas by the article of the third of
the treaty concluded at St. Ildefonso the
9th Vendemiaire, an 9 (October 1, 1800)
between the First Consul of the French
Republic and His Catholic Majesty, it
was agreed as follows: His Catholic
Majesty promises and engages on his part,
to cede to the French Republic, . . . the
colony or province of Louisiana, with
the same extent that it now has in the hands
of Spain, and that it had when France pos­
sessed it, and such as it should be after
the treaties subsequently entered into
between Spain and other States. And, where­
as, in pursuance of the treaty, and partic­
ularly the third article, the French
Republic has an incontestable title to the
domain. . . . The First Consul of the French
Republic desiring to give to the United States
a strong proof of his friendship, doth here­
by cede to the United States, in the name
of the French Republic, forever and in
full sovereignty, the said territory, . . .

1

The above passage is from the treaty which signifi­
cantly altered the course of American history. It was a

1Charles W. Eliot (ed.), American Historical Docu­
treaty which had particular importance for the course of westward expansion. The Louisiana Purchase, considered by many to be the crowning achievement of the Jeffersonian administration, was accomplished within a few years after our third President assumed office. An event of such magnitude did not come about overnight, however, and the background to this acquisition is detailed and complex. As several historians have so aptly pointed out, the Louisiana Purchase was the result of an attempt to settle America's domestic tensions as well as finding solutions to vexing foreign problems.  

When Thomas Jefferson began his term as President in March, 1801, any thoughts he might have had relative to the vast Louisiana territory would have been considered in light of that territory being under the flag of Spain. France had ceded Louisiana to Spain in 1762. Jefferson considered Spain a weak power and had no cause for immediate alarm. Unknown

---

to him at the moment, however, was the fact that on October 1, 1800, under pressure from Napoleon, the Spanish monarch had retroceded the Louisiana territory to France by the treaty of San Ildefonso. French possession of Louisiana made the entire situation more pressing for America. The United States had agreements with Spain concerning the use of the Mississippi River and the right of deposit at New Orleans since 1795. How were these agreements to be affected by the transfer to France? Spain was obviously less than a potent force on our western border. France would be quite a different story. No one more than the President knew what the change of sovereignty meant to the United States. Reliable but unofficial news of the transfer began to reach Washington, D.C. in May, 1801.

Considering the strategic location of New Orleans and the tense European situation Jefferson could only wish that Spain would hold on until the United States was in a better position to bargain for Louisiana or possibly take over. Retrocession to France altered the situation substantially. The presence of French troops at New Orleans foretold trouble. Jefferson expressed his reaction quite vividly in the often quoted passage from his letter to James Monroe following the latter's appointment as plenipotentiary to France, --
If we cannot by a purchase of the country insure to ourselves a course of perpetual peace and friendship with all nations, then as war cannot be distant, it behooves us immediately to be preparing for that course, without, however hastening it, and may be necessary (on your failure on the continent) to cross the channel.3

An alliance with England was certainly not Jefferson's fondest desire, but pragmatic decisions were sometimes necessary, and he was not reluctant to make them. Then in October, 1802, the Spanish officials at New Orleans forced the President's hand by suspending the privilege of deposit. As Bernard DeVoto has so tersely remarked, Jefferson would not "become the prisoner of events."4 He acted.

As to the details surrounding the Purchase, more will be said later. It is of more immediate concern to examine the extent of knowledge and general concepts respecting Louisiana at the time Jefferson took over the reins of government and

---

3 Jefferson to Monroe, January 13, 1803, Ford, The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, IX, 419. This is only one such statement which shows Jefferson's realist or pragmatic approach to diplomacy. One may also cite the often quoted statement of Jefferson to Robert Livingston in April, 1802: "The day that France takes possession of N. Orleans . . . we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation." See Ford, VIII, 145.

4 DeVoto, The Course of Empire . . ., p. 393.
was faced with the problems mentioned above. These ideas had a direct bearing on the Purchase negotiations as well as subsequent government policy and plans relative to the more western reaches of the newly-acquired territory. As indicated earlier, Jefferson had been interested in the Transmississippi region for quite some time, and had gathered to his library all the books, maps, charts and miscellaneous information he could acquire. While in Europe he had purchased everything he could lay his hands on concerning America. By his own admission he had "a pretty full collection of English, French and Spanish authors on the subject of Louisiana." 5 Nevertheless, factual knowledge of what lay beyond the Mandan villages on the Upper Missouri, the true location of the headwaters of that river, the Platte, Arkansas and Red rivers, or the tribes and actual number of Indians roaming the Plains, were facts still largely hidden from the minds of official America.

Information forthcoming from the Michaux and Armstrong efforts added little to what was already "known" about the Southwest. The journals and sketches of Evans and Mackay would be furnished to Lewis and Clark at a later date, but

even these bits of information were vague when one looked westward past the waters of the lower Missouri. It was still generally believed that the Missouri took its rise in the "Stony Mountains" from which location it would be relatively easy to descent to New Mexico. The Missouri thus constituted a highway between St. Louis and Santa Fe. Such a concept struck fear in the minds of the Spanish to the same extent it must have kindled hope in the minds of American traders, trappers and fortune-seekers. Therefore, when Thomas Jefferson began contemplating the Lewis and Clark expedition the whole Southwest remained much of a terra incognita, although it had witnessed "almost unbelievable feats of discovery by small parties of clanking Spanish knights and zealous hard-bitten missionaries," not to mention traders and trappers, for over three centuries. In a real sense William Goetzmann is correct when he speaks of Anglo-American exploration in the Southwest as a "Rediscovery."

Whether or not the determination to send an exploring party overland to the Columbia was fully matured in

6 See Chapter I.

7 Goetzmann, Exploration and Empire . . ., p. 37.

8 Ibid.
Jefferson's mind when he entered the office of President is a question subject to some historical debate; the fact does remain that his message to Congress asking for funds for such an expedition was presented less than a week after the letter he penned to Monroe cited above. It was in July, 1802, that Jefferson asked Meriwether Lewis, his private secretary, to lead the expedition, and on January 18, 1803, he secretly asked Congress for an appropriation of $2,500 to further the cultural and scientific knowledge of the Missouri. 9

Meanwhile Jefferson sounded out the Spanish on their possible reaction to such a venture. Jefferson knew, as did the Spaniards, that American territory stopped at the Mississippi. Spanish reaction to the proposed expedition can be seen in a letter from Carlos Martinez de Yrujo, the Spanish Minister to the United States, to his superior in Madrid, Don Pedro Cevallos, dated December 2, 1802,

The President asked me the other day in a frank and confident tone, if our Court would take it badly, that the Congress decree the formation of a group of travelers, who would

form a small caravan and go and explore the course of the Missouri River in which they would nominally have the objective of investigating everything which might contribute to the progress of commerce; but that in reality it would have no other view than the advancement of the geography. He said they would give it the denomination of mercantile, inasmuch as only in this way would the Congress have the power of voting the necessary funds; it not being possible to appropriate funds for a society, or a purely literary expedition, . . . 
I replied . . . that I persuaded myself that an expedition of this nature could not fail to give umbrage to our Government. [Italics mine]10

Jefferson explained to the Spanish envoy that he could not understand the concern of His Catholic Majesty's Government that any such expedition could pose a danger to the interests of Spain since the object would be an examination of territory found between 40° and 60° north latitude to ascertain a continuous communication to the Pacific. To this Yrujo, exhibiting geographic knowledge beyond his actual ability to know at that moment, remarked that the question of a continuous communication was a point already determined by fruitless attempts made with this objective by the Jesuits

in Northern California, "as by surveys later made by the captains Cook, Maurelle, Martínez, Vancouver and Cuadra."\textsuperscript{11} All their examinations proved there "does not exist this passage of the Northwest."\textsuperscript{12}

An interesting characterization of Jefferson is made by Yrujo. This Spanish diplomat, who was apparently on intimate terms with the President and helped stock Jefferson's wine cellar with fine wines and champagne, officially found him to be "very speculative and a lover of glory."\textsuperscript{13} Yrujo noted Jefferson might attempt to perpetuate the frame of his administration not only by the measure of frugality and economy which characterize him, but also by discovering or attempting at least to discover the way by which Americans may some day extend their population and their influence up to the coasts of the South Sea.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{11}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{12}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{13}Yrujo to Jefferson, February 9, 1801, March 18, 1801, November 20, 1802, December 30, 1802, Jefferson Papers MSS, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Mo.

\textsuperscript{14}Yrujo to Cevallos, Washington, December 2, 1802, printed in Nasatir, \textit{Before Lewis and Clark . . .}, II, 737-40.
Hoping against hope Yrujo expressed doubt that the Congress would approve the President's request. Congress did approve the expedition, and by June, 1803, Meriwether Lewis had his official instructions. Meanwhile, the diplomatic scene had changed greatly with the purchase of Louisiana; Jefferson would now have more reason than ever to pursue his desire to explore what lay beyond the Mississippi River. The details leading up to the Purchase and Napoleon's true reasons for selling Louisiana have been discussed in numerous works on the subject and are not of prime concern here. In light of the Spanish fear of American advancement into the Southwest and the actual American desire to explore the region, the immediate reaction of Spain to the purchase and subsequent American activity do need examination.

Slowness of communication played a key factor relevant to Spanish reaction concerning the Louisiana question. News of the retrocession to France had hardly reached Spanish authorities on this side of the Atlantic when the sale of that land to the United States also became known to them. A

---

fear had now become a reality. For the United States the early months of 1803 proved to be tense. Spanish garrisons still occupied New Orleans, and the "right of deposit" question was as yet unsettled. In fact, President Jefferson had initiated measures to alert American troops along the Mississippi in the event relations with Spain worsened. Even a cursory examination of the documents would clearly indicate that Spain did not take the sale of Louisiana to America lightly. Whether her reluctance to accept a fait accompli was a move to "save face," delay the inevitable, or truly prevent the transaction is now a matter of academic debate. To those officials involved at the time, however, the probability of trouble seemed quite real. Secretary of State James Madison was polite but firm in his correspondence with Spanish officials. Charles Pinckney, our Minister at Madrid, was likewise directed to present our response to that nation's protestations in a most straightforward manner. Pinckney was to indicate the "absolute determination of the United States to maintain their right, with the propriety of avoiding

16 Secretary of War to Wilkinson, March 7, 1803, National Archives, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107, Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Military Affairs, 1800-1889 (Microcopy 6), Roll.1. Future references will be cited as WD. Letters Sent-Military Affairs.
undignified menace and unnecessary irritation."\(^{17}\) To further emphasize the position of the United States, Madison proposed to question -- What is it that Spain dreads?

She dreads, it is presumed, the growing power of this country, and the direction of it against her possessions within its reach. Can she annihilate this power? No. Can she sensibly retard its growth? No. Does not common prudence, then, advise her to conciliate, by every proof of friendship and confidence, the good will of a nation whose power is formidable to her; instead of Yielding to the impulses of jealousy, and adopting obnoxious precautions which can have no other effect than to bring on, prematurely, the whole weight of the calamity which she fears? Reflections such as these may, perhaps, enter with some advantage into your

\(^{17}\) Madison to C. Pinckney, October 12, 1803, U.S., Congress, American State Papers: Documents Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States (38 vols., Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1832-1861), Foreign Relations, II, 571. The correspondence between the Spanish Minister in Washington and James Madison was quite heavy and heated during the latter part of 1803. The perfidy of Napoleon and the illegality of the sale of Louisiana to America were points continually stressed. It is interesting to note that while Yrujo was protesting loudly to Madison about the injustice that had been dealt to Spain, he was assuring Cevallos in Madrid that he really didn't consider the alienation of Louisiana as too much of a loss to Spain. The colony had cost heavily and produced little. See especially Yrujo to Cevallos, August 3, 1803, Robertson, Louisiana Under Spain, France, and the U.S., II, 69-77. The correspondence between our Secretary of State and Yrujo may be found in the American State Papers: Foreign Relations.
communication with the Spanish Government; . . . you will make that use of them.\textsuperscript{18}

It is interesting to note that while Madison was extolling the growth and power of America as a formidable adversary, Yrujo was explaining to his government that the purchase of Louisiana would actually produce a diversity of local interests which would ultimately have ill effects upon the future growth of the United States. He stated his ideas thusly:

This diversity of local interests, which manifests itself daily in the Congress of the United States, will probably be the germ of the dismemberment and division of those states. So much the greater as is the progress in each one of those states, so much the greater will be felt the results of those jealousies. One does not need extraordinary wisdom to anticipate that the acquisition of Louisiana, far from consolidating the strength and vigor of this nation, will rather contribute to weaken it by its greater extension, . . . \textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{18} Madison to C. Pinckney, October 12, 1803, \textit{American State Papers: Foreign Relations}, II, 571.

\textsuperscript{19} Yrujo to Cevallos, August 3, 1803, printed in Robertson, \textit{Louisiana Under Spain, France, and the U. S.}, II, 72.
Meanwhile the arrival of French troops in conjunction with the formal take-over by that country of Louisiana could pose a more formidable problem, especially if Monroe and Livingston failed in their efforts on the Continent. Accordingly, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn sent appropriate instructions to his military commanders along the Lower Mississippi, among whom was the controversial James Wilkinson.20

As yet unaware of the retrocession, the Spanish commander of Upper Louisiana at St. Louis, Carlos du Hault de Lassus, was attempting to stave off continued threats to Spanish authority by both the English and the Americans. In April, 1803, de Lassus asked Regis Loisel, an experienced traveler and trader in the upper Missouri region to give him a report respective to foreign intrusions in that region, as well as the state of Indian relations.21 Although the report was not

20 Secretary of War to Wilkinson, March 7, 1803, WD. Letters Sent-Military Affairs. See also letters dated October 31, 1803, July 19, 1803, November 29, 1803 and January 16, 1804, ibid.

21 Regis Loisel first came upon the scene in partnership with Jacques Clamorgan on the Upper Missouri. He ascended the Missouri with Tabeau in 1802, and apparently reported disconcerting things to de Lassus, which led to a commission in 1803-1804 to undertake a thorough investigation. See Abel, Tabeau's Narrative of Loisel's Expedition . . .
submitted until May, 1804, after the Americans had formally assumed control of Upper Louisiana, Loisel's concepts about geography and the relative ease of travel toward the Southwest reflect ideas current in the minds of both Spaniard and American at the time. Noting how exposed the domains of the King of Spain were to the undertakings of foreigners, and how the Indians were being continually bribed to draw them away from Spanish influence, Loisel further stated,

I have discovered, . . . that one may travel by water in a certain manner, from Hudson Bay to the chain of mountains in Mexico which surrounds Santa Fe, with the exception of one-half league, in order to cross the small tongue or isthmus which separates the river Blois Blanc [James or Dakota] from the River Qui Parle [Cheyenne] which empties into the Colorado [Red River of the North], . . . The Rio Chato [Platte] which empties into the Missouri at a distance of two hundred leagues from the Mississippi must not be passed in silence. It rises west of Santa Fe, and flows between two mountains bordering the new Kingdom of Mexico. . . . It is impossible to open navigation with the Mexican territory by means of its channel, but there is no necessity for it, for transportation overland is easy and the distance but slight, and the road which is open so far as the savages are concerned, assures the American of ease of penetrating without any trouble. [Italics mine]22

Such information, while largely in the realm of fanciful geography, could only add to Spanish apprehension for the safety of its Mexican "treasures." Loisel also drew attention to another point, being somewhat prophetic in the process. Noting that the Americans accompany their "insidious steps" with presents to bribe the Indian tribes, he advised that no other means present themselves to the Spanish than "the resistance of the tribes." He continued,

It is important that they be not allowed to be bribed by a new people of whom they know nothing more than the name; . . . Let the government cultivate their affection by the means by which men of all sorts may not be separated if they are employed suitable, and it may then immediately count on their fidelity.

Loisel considered the Americans as enterprising and ambitious, and would avail themselves of every means to win the minds of the savages. This became especially dangerous considering the American claim to the sources of all the rivers which flowed into the Mississippi. How concerned de Lassus must have

---

23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., p. 739.
been when Lewis and Clark arrived in St. Louis in December, 1803, armed with French passports to ascend the Missouri River.

Having acquired the whole of the Louisiana territory by treaty dated April 30, 1803, Jefferson set about to organize his expedition. The President's instructions to Lewis are dated June 20, 1803, and are quite detailed. The object of the mission was

to explore the Missouri river, and such principal streams of it, as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado or any other river [Italics mine] may offer the most direct and practicable water communication across this continent for the purpose of commerce. . . .

Within this directive so carefully spelled out for Meriwether Lewis was one item which is of special interest to this study. Jefferson drew the attention of the explorer

26 De Lassus to Juan Manuel Salcedo and Casa Calvo, St. Louis, December 9, 1803, printed in Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark . . ., II, 719. Jefferson's Instructions to Meriwether Lewis, June 20, 1803, Jackson, Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition . . ., p. 61. Louisiana, having been ceded by Spain to France, Jefferson did not believe a Spanish passport would be necessary.

27 Ibid., p. 62.
III. EARLY AMERICAN EXPLORATION OF THE FAR WEST

to the fact that although your route will be along the channel of the Missouri, yet you will endeavor to inform yourself, by inquiry, of the character and extent of the country watered by its [sic] branches, and especially on its Southern side. The North river or Rio Bravo which runs into the gulph [sic] of Mexico, and the North river, or Rio Colorado which runs into the gulph [sic] of California, are understood to be the principal streams heading opposite to the waters of the Missouri. . . .

Lewis was also told that the character of the terrain between these rivers and the Missouri would be well worth enquiry. In these instructions Jefferson reflects the geographical concepts current for his day.

Armed with his instructions Lewis contacted William Clark, and began the organization of his exploring party. The Secretary of War attempted to facilitate preparations, and Jefferson set about to gather any information which would possibly prove useful. Among the items furnished to the

---

28 Ibid., p. 63.

29 Ibid.

30 Lewis to William Clark, Washington, June 19, 1803, William Clark Collection, MSS, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Mo.
explorers was a copy of Truteau's Journal, and a map first made by the explorer Evans.31 With such material, in addition to a letter of introduction from the President to a M. Henri Peyroux (the man whom Jefferson thought had taken command of Upper Louisiana after the transfer to France) Lewis set out for St. Louis, arriving there in December.32 From this moment it seems the major objective of the Spanish officials in New Spain was to stop "Captain Meri." Could the Americans be prevented from becoming the "perfect masters of the river [Missouri], and its navigation and traffic, and the wealth of Sonora and Sinaloa?"33

Subsequent events in and around St. Louis assured the Spanish commandant that his worst suspicions were proving true. With the purchase of Louisiana Americans turned toward

---


33 Juan M. Salcedo and Casa Calvo to Cevallos, August 20, 1803, printed in Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark . . ., II, 720.
the West as never before, and St. Louis became a natural emporium for perspective traders and trappers. All trading parties were organized and all outfits were made up there. The beginnings of several American ventures into the fur trade and other trading activities with Santa Fe as their goal were witnessed by the last of the Spanish governors. De Lassus was also in a position to listen, record and forward to his superiors much information relative to American activity, a goodly portion of which was little more than gossip. Since he remained in St. Louis until late 1804, he was in a favorable position to keep Spain well advised and alert to the moves of her new neighbors.

It was in the Spring of 1804, just at the time when Spanish officials were becoming intensely alarmed over the Lewis and Clark expedition, that yet another move by the Americans compounded Spanish concern for United States' designs on her northern frontier. Particular concern was expressed relative to Santa Fe and the mines of Northern Mexico. As it turned out, however, the move had little or nothing to do with official America. A merchant of Kaskaskia,


35 Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark. . ., I, 113.
Illinois, William Morrison, sent Baptiste La Lande, a French Creole, in the direction of the Pawnee villages on the Platte. La Lande was to see what kind of trade could be developed with the Indians, and, hopefully, find his way to Santa Fe to ascertain the market there. The Frenchman ascended the Platte River to the mountains, made his way some distance south and then sent a delegation of Indians into Santa Fe to seek permission to enter. As a result the Spanish Commander dispatched a few men to escort La Lande into the Capital. 36

The goods which he carried with him found a ready market, but La Lande decided not to return to St. Louis. The distance was great, but perhaps the offer of land by the Spanish Government had something to do with his decision to remain. No doubt the Spanish were just as happy to have him stay rather than return with reports that would bring still more Americans. There seems to be some confusion as to whether another Frenchman, one Laurent Durocher, accompanied La Lande or was sent out later by Morrison. Nevertheless, both men were sent to Chihuahua by Governor Real Alencaster.

If the frontier governor in Santa Fe hoped his superior in Chihuahua would relieve him of the responsibility for the two "Americans" his hopes were soon dashed. In September, 1805, after interrogating La Lande and Durocher, who decided to remain in Mexico, Commandante Nemesio Salcedo y Salcedo returned them both to Santa Fe with the following directive:

I have instructed them to return and arrange with you in this matter, since, in conformity with the Royal decisions, I have authorized you to hear, consider, and decide all cases of like nature which may occur of inhabitants of said places in Ylinois who, without violating the constitution, may ask to continue subjects of the Spanish Government within the limits of that Province.38

Departures from St. Louis like those of La Lande and Durocher did not cease; neither were they ignored by Spanish


38 N. Salcedo to Alencaster, Chihuahua, September 9, 1805, State of New Mexico Records Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico, The Spanish Archives of New Mexico, 1621-1821. Microfilm Roll 16.
officials remaining in that city until the final transfer negotiations had been completed. In a situation such as this rumors abound. Enough was true, however, to cause the Spanish justifiable concern. Pedro Vial had proven a "road" to Santa Fe was practicable. From trading in furs and other merchandise might not the adventurers seek more alluring traffic, silver and gold? There were, in fact, other traders, merchants and adventurers striking out from St. Louis for the Southwest. It should be noted again, however, that none of these efforts were being carried out under the direction of the President of the United States, the Secretary of War, or any other official of the American Government.

To save France the expense of sending a special agent to St. Louis for a mere formality, Captain Amos Stoddard received Upper Louisiana from Spain in the name of the French. Subsequently, as the American Commissioner, he received the territory from France. Following this final phase of the transfer, de Lassus noted:

It is clearly to be seen that the general opinion of [the United States] is that its limits will extend to Mexico itself, extending their boundary lines to the Rio Bravo, penetrating into the said kingdom at different points [following] other small rivers. So general is this persuasion that I believe that beforehand many are thinking of obtaining a great advantage from those lands, and,
as I see it, they are already calculating the profit which they will obtain from the mines.  

De Lassus further noted that American officials who "are commanding here" were continually acquiring information about the Indians and the "shortest routes to New Mexico or to Santa Fe."  

I believe one can go from here to Mexico in less than two months. This can be done it is true with hard work and is exposed to meeting with various Indian Nations, . . . but by taking arms and some presents one can succeed.  

Rumors were about to the effect that the real aim of the Lewis and Clark expedition was to enter Mexico; the announced plan to discover a route to the Pacific Ocean was a mere pretext. De Lassus doubted such rumors, but perhaps Lewis, himself, helped give credence to an idea which would be so readily accepted by minds already suspicious. In October, 1803, while preparations were being made to depart  

39 De Lassus to Casa Calvo, St. Louis, August 10, 1804, printed in Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark . . ., II, 743.  

40 Ibid. De Lassus does not identify the American officials.  

41 Ibid.
St. Louis on the trek across the continent, Lewis sketched a plan he had been considering to the President. Noting that he had been delayed somewhat in the preparations for his major expedition, and not wanting to waste time, Lewis proposed a tour on horseback of some one hundred miles "through the most interesting portion of the country adjoining my winter establishment." He indicated that his route would be "toward Santa Fe," in any event on the south side of the Missouri. Perhaps too much has been made of this plan as a desire to reach Santa Fe; nevertheless, Jefferson vetoed the whole idea before it could ever get off the ground. In answer to Lewis' despatch the Chief Executive responded,

One thing . . . we are decided in. That you must not undertake the winter excursion which you propose in yours of October 3. Such an excursion will be more dangerous than the main expedition up the Missouri and would, by an accident to you, hazard our main object which, since the acquisition of Louisiana, interest everybody in the highest degree.44


43 Ibid.

No more was made over this affair by Meriwether Lewis or the President. Preparations for the expedition to the Columbia continued and by May, 1804, the American party left St. Louis on its way up the Missouri toward the Mandan villages. Meanwhile the Spanish officials in Mexico City, Philadelphia, Chihuahua and Santa Fe, spurred on by Casa Calvo in New Orleans, planned and plotted the disruption if not the outright capture of the Lewis and Clark expedition. The question of the western boundary of the Louisiana territory played an important role in regard to Spain's immediate concern over this expedition; since it will become a major issue in itself subsequent to the American expedition, the whole subject of boundaries will receive separate treatment in the next chapter. Meanwhile Spanish officials concentrated on the activities of that small band of men crossing the continent towards the Pacific.

The principal Spanish official who aroused his countrymen to the dangers posed by the Lewis and Clark expedition was the Marqués de Casa Calvo, newly appointed boundary commissioner in New Orleans. Fearing that any

---

45 Loomis, Pedro Vial . . ., pp. 105-106, 181. Sebastian Calvo de la Pue rta y O'Farrill, Marqués de Casa Calvo, was acting military governor of Louisiana from Gayoso's
expedition to the headwaters of the Missouri would bring the participants into the immediate neighborhood of the New Mexico settlements, Casa Calvo began a letter campaign which eventually brought him the odium of fellow government officials in the New World. It seems that his desire was to bring fame to himself by impressing his superiors with his diligence.

As early as January, 1804, Casa Calvo informed the Spanish Foreign Minister, Pedro Cevallos, that Meriwether Lewis had presented himself in St. Louis armed with a French passport to ascend the Missouri River. The immediate action on the part of the commander in that city was to detain Lewis, but within a month de Lassus was told to put no obstacle in the way of the American expedition as the purchase of Louisiana by the United States was a reality. Even Casa Calvo, while hoping that the Americans could be stopped, knew they could not be, and remarked,

death in 1799 to Manuel Salcedo's arrival in 1801. He was appointed to the U. S.-Spanish boundary commission after the transfer of Louisiana, but was looked on by the Americans as a spy, and finally was asked to leave New Orleans.

we cannot now prevent their expeditions, which it is beyond question they will repeat, in order to make themselves perfect masters of the river, and its navigation and traffic, and of the wealth of Sonora and Sinaloa. . . . 47

Casa Calvo solicited the support of Manuel Salcedo, the Governor of Louisiana, and the two men dispatched a message to Nemesio Salcedo in Chihuahua. In their letter the two Spanish officials tried to impress upon the commandante-general the pressing danger to Spain's northern frontier. Nemesio Salcedo was told that it was necessary to "cut off the gigantic steps of our neighbors if we wish . . . to preserve intact the dominions of the King. . . ." 48 It is believed that only very decisive and determined action would prevent the encroachment into New Spain by the Americans. "The only means which presents itself is to arrest Captain Merry Weather [sic] and his party, which cannot help but pass through the nations neighboring New Mexico, its presidios or rancherías." [Italics mine] 49

47 Ibid.

48 Casa Calvo and Manuel Salcedo to N. Salcedo, March 5, 1804, printed in Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark . . ., II, 731.

49 Ibid.
It was not until May, however, that Salcedo answered the letter from Casa Calvo and initiated correspondence to warn the appropriate officials on the frontier. After informing the Viceroy of the correspondence he had received from New Orleans, the commandant-general addressed a dispatch to the Governor of New Mexico at Santa Fe, who would have immediate jurisdiction over the territory Lewis and Clark were supposedly traversing. The Governor was advised that it might prove very prudent to impede the expedition, or at least gain knowledge of its progress and state of being.

Nemesio Salcedo's major advice to the New Mexico official was to use the Indians to do the Spaniard's work for them. In this manner two things of some importance could be achieved simultaneously -- keep the Indians allied to Spain and stop American intrusion. The commandant-general put it so,

... it is important under the circumstances that the force of that province [New Mexico] occupy itself in continuing to punish the barbarous Navajo nation; that Your Excellency, making use of the friendship and

---

50 N. Salcedo to the Governor of New Mexico, May 3, 1804, printed in Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark ..., II, 734. N. Salcedo to Don Joseph de Yturriagaray, May 3, 1804, ibid. 729. It is interesting to note that the Viceroy merely informed N. Salcedo that he had received his correspondence.
difference towards us in which the other
gentile nations find themselves, come to an agreement with the chief of the Co-
manches or with the Chief of any other [nation] . . . to send a party of indi-
viduals which you may collect to reconnoitre the country which lies between those villages as far as the right bank of the Missouri, with instructions and necessary provisions so that they examine if there are traces or other vestiges of the expedition of Merry and so that they acquaint themselves with the direction that it has taken and of their operations upon the territory . . . 51

In addition to using the Indians, Salcedo suggested that Pedro Vial, being the man most knowledgeable of the geography of the territories in question, would prove most helpful in locating the Americans. 52 In what many would describe as typical of Spanish bureaucratic administration, months of indecision and "buck-passing" ensued; meanwhile, the Lewis and Clark expedition continued on its way across the continent to the Pacific. Only in September, 1805, did the commandant-general issue definite instructions to Governor Real Alencaster in Santa Fe. Again the Indians were to be drawn into close alliance with the Spaniards, especially those tribes along the Platte and Arkansas rivers. Alencaster was ordered

51 N. Salcedo to the Governor of New Mexico, May 3, 1804, ibid.

52 Ibid.
to instill in them an "extreme dislike for the English and the Americans."\textsuperscript{53} The natives were also to be persuaded to openly refuse any communication to the Americans as these "foreigners" were only making friendly advances for the ultimate purpose of throwing the Indians off their land. Of specific importance for the Spanish Governor was a request for him to make it most plain to the Indian chiefs that they were to intercept the Lewis and Clark expedition, seize its individuals and "to do everything possible to take away any boxes or papers that the same expedition carries."\textsuperscript{54} Such work would result in considerable advantages for Spain without the necessity of supporting troops among the Indian tribes.

Of particular interest is the section of this important letter of September 9, 1805, referring to the extent of Alencaster's geographical jurisdiction. A map "drawn up to the minute" was included to instruct your Excellency of the territory that your province encompasses; of its distance to the establishments at Illinois and to the English possessions on the course of

\textsuperscript{53} N. Salcedo to Alencaster, September 9, 1805, printed in Loomis, \textit{Pedro Vial} . . ., pp. 192-94.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, those that bear the name Colorado, Arkansas, or Napestle, that enter the first, and those known as Coas, or Cancer [Kansas], Chato, Osages, and the others that enter the said Missouri . . .55

Nemesio Salcedo was certainly attributing to Alencaster a territory much larger than the Americans would accede to, and definitely much larger than the frontier governor could control given the small number of troops under his authority. There seems to be little doubt that Salcedo was telling the New Mexico governor to approach Indian tribes in a spirit of friendliness, especially those well within United States jurisdiction. Even if one accepts the paucity of geographic information then available to the Spanish on the frontier, Nemesio Salcedo could hardly have been so completely ignorant of the retrocession and subsequent sale of Louisiana by the fall of 1805. The motivation behind the actions of Spanish officials is not the subject of investigation here, and would certainly fill volumes in itself, but some attention should be given to the status of geographic knowledge current at the time, for it definitely had a bearing on Spanish-American relations.

55 Ibid.
It will be recalled that Casa Calvo, in his original dispatch to the commandant-general in Chihuahua, noted that the Lewis and Clark expedition could not but help pass near New Mexico. In reply, Salcedo noted that Casa Calvo's noticias (maps and charts) did not jibe with the only maps he had before him. In fact, one wonders if Spanish officials not only withheld their cartographic findings from the non-Spanish world, but also from themselves; Casa Calvo, the boundary commissioner in New Orleans, seemed to be much more certain that the Americans were penetrating the neighborhood of Santa Fe than did the officials on the frontier. In yet another dispatch to the Spanish Foreign Minister in Madrid in September, 1804, Casa Calvo, after complaining about the lack of interest evidenced by Salcedo, noted that he could not ascertain news as to the course of the Lewis and Clark expedition because he had no planos of the upper part of the Missouri River. He only calculated its proximity to New Mexico from what the Indians tell us, and from the landmarks and the signs which are observed by the Indians of the Upper Missouri, which manifest

56 N. Salcedo to Casa Calvo, May 3, 1804, printed in Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark . . ., II, 733.
clearly their traffic with Spaniards. . . . the writers have decided that the origin of that river is to the northwest. This in the general plan of the maps should bring it very near to the capital of the aforementioned Kingdom of New Mexico. 57

Later in the same month Casa Calvo noted that Lewis and Clark were by that time probably some 300 leagues up the Missouri, "quite advanced into the Provincias Internas." 58 Another letter penned by the boundary commissioner noted that there was "easy and continuous communication by water from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico." 59

Given the fact that Casa Calvo as Boundary Commissioner for Spain relative to the Louisiana territory and his American counterpart were located in New Orleans, one might conjecture that the same published maps of the day were available to both. If that were the case it is little wonder that Casa Calvo was as confused as the Americans concerning the true nature of the Southwest. The famous

57 Casa Calvo to Cevallos, September 15, 1804, ibid., II, 750.

58 Casa Calvo to N. Salcedo, September 20, 1804, ibid., II, 753.

59 Casa Calvo to The Prince of Peace, September 30, 1804, ibid., II, 754.
Arrowsmith map of North America published in 1802 was still largely unmarked in the areas of the Rocky Mountain region, Great Basin and the southern tributaries of the Missouri. 60 In the very year that Upper Louisiana was being formally turned over to the Americans, Aaron Arrowsmith and Samuel Lewis' New and Elegant General Atlas for 1804 was published in Philadelphia. About this set of maps Carl Wheat notes that "they dramatize both the paucity of reliable geographic information available at the time, and the many erroneous assumptions concerning the Western country. . . ."61 There seems to be some question as to why Arrowsmith and Lewis included in this Atlas a map of the Louisiana territory which was actually a version of the Soulard map of 1795 (which itself was a French version of a map ordered made by Baron de Carondelet, the Governor of Louisiana under the Spanish). On this map, which had great influence on current cartographic thought until the publication of Lewis and Clark's own map in 1814, there is no hint of the Colorado (of the West), and streams which Soulard had originally shown as branches of the Arkansas are now unlabeled and shown flowing south into

60 Wheat, The Spanish Entrada . . ., I, 183

the Colorado of Texas instead of the Mississippi. The entire region of the Platte and Upper Missouri river basins is stretched westward out of proportion.62

On another map in the Atlas entitled "Spanish Dominions in North America," the Arkansas River is drawn heading just east of Santa Fe; the Red River appears almost correctly, but there is no Canadian. The cartographer Carl Wheat has drawn a most interesting conclusion about these Arrowsmith maps,

If [these maps do] in fact represent enlightened geographic thought in England and the United States as of the nineteenth century, one must admire the success of Spanish efforts to withhold knowledge of her colonies from the rest of the world. (Baron von Humboldt's great map of New Spain, though already drawn, was not yet publicly available).63

It was precisely because the available geographic information about the Louisiana Territory was so lacking that President Jefferson began immediately upon the Purchase to


63 Wheat, From Lewis and Clark . . ., II, 10.
IV. SECTION OF LEWIS MAP OF 1804

rectify the situation. If he was to bargain intelligently with the Spanish about boundaries, rights to navigable streams, control over Indian tribes and numerous other points, he had to have facts, not myths, to back up America's claims. Furthermore, if he were actually interested in the approaches to Santa Fe would not considerably more knowledge of that region be required? The Lewis and Clark expedition was, of course, a part of the effort to extend knowledge of the western reaches of the American continent. As far as the Southwestern portions of Louisiana are concerned, however, other efforts at exploration became more important. It was in July, 1803, that Jefferson sent a list of seventeen questions pertaining to geography, population, laws, and the extent of the newly acquired land to important governmental and scientific figures. Thus began an intensive effort by the American Government to secure the Southwestern reaches of her recently acquired territory, whatever they might be. United States-Spanish relations were deeply affected.
CHAPTER III

THE SOUTHWEST LIMITS OF LOUISIANA:

HOW NEAR TO SANTA FE?

Settlement of the eastern boundary of the Louisiana Purchase, although tedious, time-consuming and involved with political and diplomatic complexities, was relatively easy to determine with geographic accuracy. The question of western boundaries, on the other hand, was complicated by a morass of cartographic legend, myth and fanciful geography. The lands along the Mississippi River and Gulf Coast had been accurately charted by eighteenth and nineteenth century map makers. The Mississippi River had been generally recognized as a major boundary line by all parties concerned with the Louisiana territory during the past two centuries.¹ West of that major

¹A full treatment of the East and West Florida controversy can be found in Issac Joslin Cox, The West Florida Controversy, 1798-1813 (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1967), in addition to numerous other articles by the same author. One may also refer to the works of Arthur P. Whitaker previously cited as well as Philip Coolidge Brooks, Diplomacy
river, however, the story was quite different. Thomas Jefferson was surely not guilty of understatement when he told Congress shortly following the Purchase that "the precise boundaries of Louisiana, westward of the Mississippi, though very extensive, are at present involved in some obscurity."²

When questioned about the vagueness of the western limits of Louisiana Napoleon supposedly answered, "If an obscurity did not already exist, it would perhaps be good policy to put one there."³ Doubtless the failure to indicate exact


³Thomas M. Marshall, A History of the Western Boundary of the Louisiana Purchase, 1819-1841 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1914), p. 8. Such a statement shows that Napoleon could play the role of a fox as well as that of a lion. The French, for reasons of their own, would not pin themselves down on agreeing to any specific boundaries. When asked for clarification of boundaries by Livingston, Talleyrand retorted, "you have made a noble bargain for yourselves, and I suppose you will make the most of it." See Dumas Malone, Jefferson the President, First Term, 1801-1805, Vol. IV of Jefferson and His Time (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), pp. 302-10 for a good summary of the diplomatic negotiations relative to indecisive boundaries.
boundaries could prove advantageous for either Spain or America. Valuable time would be gained whereby more exact information could be gathered and evaluated, not to mention the possibility of enlarging a claim by occupation. Nevertheless, as far as Jefferson was concerned the days of guesswork and conjecture had to be brought to a close. The United States should know the extent of what it had purchased; relations with Spain relative to this matter had to be determined. For such reasons, as well as the necessity of providing Congress with an accurate account of what America had acquired, Jefferson queried a number of men who were to take up positions of responsibility in New Orleans. He also summoned the Congress to a special session for October, 1803. Included among the persons from whom he was seeking information was Ephraim Kirby, the American Boundary Commissioner, Daniel Clark, the United States Consul at New Orleans, William Dunbar, scientist, and William C. C. Claiborne, the Acting Governor of the Louisiana Territory.

To each of these men the President sent a list of some seventeen questions. A few examples would serve well to illustrate what Jefferson was attempting to ascertain. Among other things he asked,

1. What are the boundaries of Louisiana, and on what authority does each portion of them rest?
2. What is the distance from New Orleans to the nearest point of the western boundary?

3. Into what divisions is the province laid off?

4. What are the best maps, general of particular, of the whole or parts of the province: Copies of them if to be had in print.4

It was not until the latter part of August and into September that Jefferson began receiving some answers to his pointed inquiries. Due to statements made by Thomas Jefferson during these months of investigation, and later, relative to the western reaches of Louisiana, some historians have concluded that our first "geopolitician" desired to expand deep into Spanish-held territory. A good case for the American Government's interest in continental expansion at this early date can be and has been made using ideas expressed at this time. Perhaps a closer examination of Jefferson's statements and actions during the years of his presidency would reveal a Chief Executive who was more a clever diplomat playing at brinkmanship rather than an active expansionist. Jefferson the man was also a person with the curious mind of a scientist, a characteristic which would certainly come to

---

the fore now that a vast new land awaited examination. That he necessarily desired or expected to acquire territory reaching to the gates of Santa Fe within the span of his political career does not appear to be so evident.

Early in August, 1803, while waiting for replies from New Orleans, Jefferson penned a letter to his friend John Dickinson concerning the subject of western boundaries. In this letter the President spoke of the "unquestioned" eastern boundaries of Louisiana, but in reference to the western limits he noted, "we have some pretensions to extend the western territory . . . to the Rio Norte, or Bravo, . . ."5 In yet another letter, this one to John C. Breckenridge, Jefferson stated, "we have some claims to extend on the sea coast Westwardly to the Rio Norte or Bravo, . . ."6 To William Dunbar, the man who was later to attempt an expedition up the Red River, Jefferson insisted that "however we may compromise on our Western limits, we never shall on the Eastern."7 What

5Jefferson to Dickinson, August 9, 1803, *ibid.*, 261.

6Jefferson to Breckenridge, August 12, 1803, *ibid.*, 242.

claims the Chief Executive did make regarding the western limits of Louisiana seem to have been based almost exclusively on French sources. Such a basis would naturally accord to the United States an area much more extensive than Spain would be willing to accept. Ever since the days of La Salle's ill-fated landing on the coast of Texas, the French had considered their claims to extend inward from the Gulf Coast to the Rio Grande (Rio Bravo, Rio del Norte). Spain had never accepted this theory and was not about to now. Jefferson was well aware of the century-long controversy between Madrid and Paris and intended to use it to his advantage. This was his custom; he would use Spain's distress to work to America's advantage.8

Meanwhile the answers to his inquires began to arrive. On August 24, 1803, Jefferson received a communication from Governor Claiborne answering many of the questions earlier posed by the President. As to maps and boundaries, however, the Governor was of little help. He did promise to forward

8Jefferson, both as Secretary of State and as President, operated on the premise that we could eventually achieve what we wanted from Spain if we just waited long enough and took advantage of Spain's precarious European situations. He was also prone to stress the concept of "natural rights" in reference to rivers, their navigation and sovereignty of the land through which they flow.
at a future time some maps he had heard about, but at the moment "none extant can be depended upon." On the subject of boundaries Claiborne could again offer only the vaguest of information. One interesting and, as it turned out, prophetic point (a point neglected by the American statesmen for some time) was Claiborne's remark,

It is related to me, on the authority of the oldest Settlers in this Territory, that some time previous to [the Treaty of 1763] a design was formed of running a Boundary Line, on the West of Louisiana, between the French possessions and those of Spain; and that the Mouth of the Sabine River . . . was fixed upon, as the point from which the Line should set out.

Although no evidence of a formal boundary survey can be found, the Sabine River, as a boundary between French and Spanish territory, seems to have been accepted, though unofficial, line by the colonial settlers based upon the extent of actual

---


10 Ibid. There is evidence of a map by Don Juan de Langara published in 1799, which gives the Sabine as the boundary between Spanish and French settlements. The map seems to have been purely a maritime effort and executed at a time when limits were of no interest. See Issac J. Cox, The Early Exploration of Louisiana (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati Press, 1905), p. 37.
settlement by each nation during the preceding century. The most eastern settlement made by the Spanish during the entire colonial period was among the Adaes Indians at a point some fifteen miles west of Natchitoches.

Daniel Clark, the American Consul still residing in New Orleans until the formal transfer took place, informed Secretary of State James Madison, "I know of no good maps in print of the Western part of the province, ..." 11 William Dunbar's reply added little knowledge to the situation except to verify the fact that the Spanish considered the Sabine to be the more accurate boundary to separate their territories from those of the United States than any river farther to the west. 12

Only John Sibley, the controversial Indian agent at Natchitoches, gave encouragement that the true western border of Louisiana reached to the environs of Santa Fe. His information, as the President was to learn, was not based on personal exploration or concrete knowledge, but on hearsay

11Daniel Clark to James Madison, September 8, 1803, Carter, Territorial Papers, IX, 29.

12William Dunbar to Jefferson, September 30, 1803, ibid., 67-68.
of elderly, long-time residents of the Natchitoches and surrounding area. Sibley, when queried by Governor Claiborne, regretted that he could not supply a map but none were available to him. He had often seen good charts of the Gulf Coast, but none of the interior. The Indian agent had gathered some information about the rivers west of the Mississippi and took the liberty of sketching a map, admittedly inaccurate, for the enlightenment of the Governor and ultimately for President Jefferson. A portion of this information would prove quite interesting when compared to an accurate modern map. Sibley's geographical sketch read in part as follows,

the first River West of Red River is the Quel queshoe. . . . The Next in Order is the Sabine, . . . The Next River is the Angalena or Snow River . . . The Next is Trinity River, the next the Braces [Brazos], then the Colorado or Red River, then the little River St. Antoine [San Antonio] on which the Town or Station of St. Antoine is Situated, then a little River called Guadelope [Guadalupe], then the Nuces [Nueces] or Walnut River which is a Brance of the River Grand [Rio Grande], it is a fine Country all the Way from Natchitoches to St. Antoine, the distance is about four hundred Miles, . . . 13

---

13 John Sibley to Claiborne, October 10, 1803, ibid., 72-74. Dr. John Sibley who had left the East because of marital difficulties was very effective at publicizing himself. He was appointed surgeon for the army post at
It was largely from the above replies that Jefferson formulated his report to Congress in November, 1803. From a geographical standpoint the information furnished by the gentlemen he had contacted was meager; it certainly was not enough data to support a claim to the western reaches of the Rio Grande. As Jefferson told Congress in November, 1803,

Of the province of Louisiana no general map, sufficiently correct to be depended upon, has been published, nor has any been yet procured from a private source. It is, indeed, probable that surveys have never been made upon so extensive a scale ... .14

Under the circumstance Jefferson decided to somewhat avoid the question of limits for the time being. He knew well that of more immediate concern was the need to win Congressional approval of his purchase, and to secure American occupation of the Louisiana Territory from a rather perplexed and unhappy Spain. Therefore, his statement about the boundaries being

Natchitoches and was acting Indian agent. He served in these capacities for a number of years, and he gained the reputation, among the Spaniards, of being a revolutionary. His reports were important because they stirred Jefferson to go ahead with plans for exploration.

involved in "some obscurity" was deemed sufficient on the subject for the moment. He did not intend to have the situation remain thus for long.

Similar to the events surrounding the Lewis and Clark expedition, the problem of boundaries became intricately bound to the whole problem of Spanish reaction to the Purchase; more accurately, it was the reluctance of Spain to accept a fait accompli. The Spanish argument that France did not have the right to sell Louisiana to any other nation has been previously discussed. Concurrent with this argument was Spanish insistence that "if" America did truly occupy Louisiana the western boundary was to be nowhere near the Rio Grande. Recognition of such a boundary would, of course, mean giving up Texas. On this point Spain held firm.

The negotiations relative to the matter of boundaries (a discussion which continued until 1819) point up several interesting features. First, there was the lack of accurate knowledge on the part of all parties concerned as to what Louisiana included; second, there existed the lack of a real determination on the part of the United States to include the approaches to Santa Fe as a sine qua non in its dealings with Madrid. It is believed that the latter point can be adequately substantiated, even though the diplomatic moves and public
statements during the years of negotiation might appear to indicate otherwise.

The prime basis for all the obscurity about boundaries can be traced to earlier treaties between France and Spain, particularly those of 1763 and 1800. For example, Article III of the Treaty of San Ildefonso expressly stated,

His Catholic Majesty promises and pledges himself on his part to retrocede to the French Republic . . . the colony or the Province of Louisiana with the same extension that it now has in the possession of Spain, and that it had when France owned it . . . 15

This same vague statement was again used when America purchased Louisiana from France in 1803. Now the need for being more explicit could no longer be avoided, and the American Government naturally turned to French sources for clarification. To the extent that France wanted to keep both the United States and Spain happy she resorted to the old game of diplomatic double-talk.

There was no doubt that the French claimed as far to the west as their traders and explorers had penetrated. French cartographers were prone to extend the western limits

15 See Chapter II, footnote 1.
of Louisiana to the Rio Grande. The important map found in the equally important work *Histoire de La Louisiane* by Le Page du Pratz gave the French this western limit. The Le Page du Pratz volumes were available and known to American officials as well as the statesmen of Europe.

As early as October, 1802, Talleyrand, that most shrewd and clever of statesmen, noted that the boundaries of New Mexico and Louisiana had been determined at least up to the thirtieth degree of latitude on the Rio Bravo, which is somewhat above the Big Bend of Texas but well below El Paso. From that point, however, the line was less exact. The Frenchman further noted, "it does not appear that any convention of boundaries was ever held for that part of the frontier. The farther north one goes, the more vague is the

---

16 Le Page du Pratz, *Histoire de la Louisiane*. The importance of this work has been discussed in Chapter I. Also see Marshall, *A History of the Western Boundary . . .*, chapters I and II.

demarcation."18 In some secret instructions to the Captain-
General of Louisiana, dated November 26, 1802, and approved
by Napoleon, mention was made that Louisiana must now be
"restored with the same extent that it had when France owned
it, ... ."19 According to the directive such limits included
the "Rio Bravo, from its mouth to the thirtieth degree, its
line of demarcation has not been traced beyond ... and it
appears no convention has ever been held concerning this
point of the frontier."20 As might be expected, the French
Commissioner in New Orleans followed this line of reasoning
when queried by both American and Spanish officials. 21

It is quite obvious from the documentation that the
French believed the United States favored the view of the
Rio Bravo constituting the western boundary of Louisiana,
and they were of no mind to cast any doubt on the matter.

18 Talleyrand to Decres, October 2, 1802, Robertson,
Louisiana Under Spain, France and the U.S., II, 141.

19 Secret Instruction for the Captain-General of
Louisiana. Approved by the First Consul, November 26, 1802,
ibid., I, 361-62.

20 Ibid.

21 Laussat to Salcedo and Casa Calvo, January 18, 1804,
ibid., II, 171. Madison to Robert R. Livingston, January 31,
1804, American State Papers: Foreign Relations, II, 574.
Consequently, the American statesmen diligently pressed their claims with the Spanish for the next several years. Secretary of State James Madison kept Robert Livingston in Paris abreast of our moves and instructed Charles Pinckney and James Monroe in Madrid to press the Spanish government for a settlement according to theories we felt had French backing. 22

To rely on French support proved to be a mistake, for Talleyrand also wished to appease Spain at this crucial time. While assuring the United States that Louisiana was indeed quite vast he was concurrently informing Señor Gavina, the Spanish Ambassador at Paris, that the intention of the French King was "to assure by all friendly means the good relations of two powers which have so much interest in remaining united, . . ." 23 Accordingly, the Spanish Ambassador was informed that

since the western boundary of Louisiana was not fixed in so precise a manner by the treaties preceding that of [San Ildefonso] . . . the uncertainty

22 Ibid. Madison to Livingston, March 31, 1804, ibid., 575.

23 Talleyrand to Señor Gavina, August 30, 1804, Robertson, Louisiana Under Spain, France and the U.S., II, 195-96.
that could exist on the direction of its frontiers must have still remained since the cession of the United States. France even could not take it upon itself to indicate to the United States what that precise boundary must be. 24

To the French Minister in the United States Talleyrand wrote,

If the Mississippi and Iberville Rivers mark precisely the eastern limits of that colony, toward the west its boundaries are less precise. 25 There are often such wide expanses, that it may be difficult to agree on a line of demarcation.

The minister was further urged to dissuade the United States from attempting to extend its boundaries westward in such a way to "cause annoyance to the court of Madrid." 26 Talleyrand continued,

24 Ibid.

25 Talleyrand to General Louis Marie Turreau, August 8, 1804, ibid., 193-95.

26 Ibid.
Whatever exaggeration there be in the anxiety of the court of Madrid, it was my duty General, to inform you of it, so that you may judge by the mutual inclinations of the two governments how necessary it is for you to employ all your care, . . . for the maintenance of a system of reliable information . . . 27

Spanish protestations to both the United States and France over the basic purchase itself are well known, and Spain finally, though reluctantly, accepted the fait accompli. The boundary question, once the transfer of territory had been accepted, continued for years to be a point of bitter argument. Perhaps the Spanish view of American claims to the Rio Grande was best expressed by Casa Calvo when he referred to the matter as a "classic absurdity." 28 Spain may have had to give-in on the Purchase but she was determined not to lose Texas and New Mexico, or have her northern frontier fall into the hands of the greedy Americans. Spanish determination in this matter can be readily seen by the fact that the dispute remained unsettled until the year 1819. When the Transcontinental Treaty was signed .

27 Ibid.

28 Casa Calvo to Cevallos, January 13, 1804, ibid., 163.
in that year, Texas and the remainder of the Southwest continued under the flag of Spain, albeit not for long.

As indicated earlier, from the time of the earliest discussions between the American and Spanish officials the latter insisted upon the Sabine River (the present-day boundary between Texas and Louisiana) as the line of demarcation between Louisiana and the Province of Texas. Every lengthy argument on the part of Monroe and Pinckney to push the American claims was met with equal verbosity on the part of the Spanish ministers who felt the utmost need to "combat the sophistries of the Americans." From New Spain warnings and pleas were reaching Madrid stressing how imperative it was to keep the ambitious Americans as far as possible from the Provincias Internas, especially from luring the Indian tribes away from Bourbon influence.


30 Cevallos to Casa Calvo, April 2, 1804, Robertson, Louisiana Under Spain, France and the U.S. . . ., II, 177.

31 Salcedo to Cevallos, August 20, 1804, Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark . . ., II, 745-50.
Through 1804 and into 1805 the argument continued; correspondence mounted and the Spanish remained determined. Several interesting developments occurred over the question of boundaries in early 1805. Acting upon the directives of the Secretary of State, Pinckney and Monroe began taking a firmer stand with the Spanish government. In a dispatch dated March 30, 1805, the American Ministers indicated to Cevallos that his continual delays could only lead the former to "suspect that his silence is intended as an intimation of his desire that negotiation should cease."\(^3\) The message continued,

> But, if it is still his Excellency's desire to continue the negotiation, they have to request that he will be so obliging as to give them the sentiments of His Majesty's Government respecting the western limits of Louisiana . . .\(^3\)

Cevallos, of course, evidenced shock at this line of approach. It was not until Mid-April, however, that any

\(^3\)Pinckney and Monroe to Cevallos, March 30, 1805, American State Papers: Foreign Relations, II, 657.

\(^3\)Ibid.
answer worthy of the label was forthcoming from the Royal Court. On April 13, 1805, Cevallos submitted to the American envoys a most lengthy discourse on the necessity of gathering material from many sources not readily available. The Spanish Foreign Minister began his argument with the often cited phrase, "the western limits of Louisiana never having been fixed in [an] exact manner, . . ." 34 Basing his case on the facts of discovery, exploration and colonization Cevallos attempted to illustrate that the French could never, under any pretext, have considered Texas or any land west of that Province to have been theirs. He continued,

that claim must be extremely illusory and unfounded which shall attempt to carry the western limits of Louisiana to the Rio Bravo, including therein a great part of the interior provinces of New Spain, acquired and established at the cost of the treasures of Spain and the blood of her subjects, . . . 35

Lengthy and detailed as it was, this explanation was apparently not accepted by the American envoys. The United States was continuing to base its claims on French sources.

34 Cevallos to Pinckney and Monroe, April 13, 1805, ibid., 660-62.

35 Ibid.
Basic to this stand was the idea that when a nation takes possession of any seacoast, it is understood that this possession extends into the interior country, to the sources of rivers emptying within that coast, "to all their branches and the country they cover, ..." 36 This was an argument Jefferson had also previously used in justifying America's claim to the Rio Grande. And so the argument continued. On the surface it appeared that the American Government was determined to have Santa Fe.

Concurrent with these developments, however, was the evolvement of another approach towards some kind of solution. As early as 1804, Madison stated that he might suggest a line not far west of the Mississippi River be drawn leaving a wide unoccupied tract of land between the possessions of Spain and American settlements. He was actually suggesting a type of buffer zone. In early 1805 when, as indicated above, negotiations were heavy, Madison again suggested the

36 Pinckney and Monroe to Cevallos, April 20, 1805, ibid., 664. Jefferson, still basing his claims on French sources, argued that because of the explorations and settlements made by La Salle and Iberville, France had actual possession of the coast from St. Bernard Bay (Matagorda Bay) to Mobile.
establishment of a neutral ground for twenty years. 37 Secretary of State Madison was closely following President Jefferson's thinking on the subject. Although Jefferson would hold to the concept of our "right" to the country from the Rio Bravo east, as early as July, 1804, he was considering the idea of a tract of land to be laid off in which no further settlement was to be made by either country for "say thirty years." 38 The tract of land as envisioned by Jefferson and Madison would have lain between the Rio Grande and the Rio Colorado of Texas, an area some 250 miles in breadth. 39 Although criticized by his contemporaries Jefferson defended the move to relinquish land to the westward in proportion to what could be obtained east of the Mississippi. He further believed "successive sacrifices were marked out, of which

37 Monroe and Pinckney to Cevallos, January 28, 1805, ibid., 637. Marshall, A History of the Western Boundary, pp. 32-33. This work, although emphasizing the Treaty of 1819 and subsequent events, has an excellent summary of the issues and negotiations prior to the actual treaty. There are also a number of maps illustrating the various "neutral ground" propositions.


39 Ibid.
even the Colorado was not the last." 40

It is important to remember that in all the negotiations surrounding the boundary question the matter of Western and Eastern Florida was of prime concern. Madison held the Floridas to be of much greater importance than the Western Boundary issue. He considered West Florida "essential" and East Florida "important" and, as time proved, he was willing to yield if necessary on western claims to obtain the Floridas. When James Monroe and Charles Pinckney left Spain in the Summer of 1805, the new American diplomat to Madrid, James Bowdoin, was instructed to continue pressing his country's cause along the same line. Political as well as diplomatic considerations are at the bottom of America's views concerning the Floridas. The basic question can again be found in geographic obscurities. Whether or not the Floridas, or as least West Florida, was originally a part of the Louisiana Territory was not clear to either the French or the Spanish, and was not specified in either the cession of 1762 or the retrocession of 1800. It should also be borne in mind that the original move on the part of Jefferson to acquire

40 Jefferson to W. A. Burwell, September 17, 1806, ibid., 469.
New Orleans included the idea of purchasing West Florida. It was felt the area was needed to assure the security of Americans' use of the Mississippi River. The fact that America's population was rapidly expanding in the old Southwest towards the Floridas must also be considered.41

Meanwhile, the increasingly close relationship between France and Spain, in addition to a growing Spanish reluctance to retire beyond the Sabine, caused Jefferson and Madison to walk cautiously regarding a boundary settlement. France had made it clear she would support her neighbor south of the Pyrenees in any conflict which may be forthcoming. French interest in the well-being of the Spanish Bourbons did not stem from altruistic motives. It was all part of Napoleon Bonaparte's grand design. On the throne of Spain was the easily duped Charles IV. The heir to the throne

41 For a full discussion of the relationship between the Floridas and the Louisiana Purchase see, Cox, The West Florida Controversy . . ., pp. 64-101. Jefferson's concern over the right of Americans to use the Mississippi can be traced back to the treaties of 1763 and 1783. Under the earlier treaty British colonists had the right to navigate that river, and when they became American citizens they did not lose this right! Jefferson also asserted that inhabitants on the upper course of a river had the right to pass in and out of its mouth. He cited a case in International Law (Antwerp on the Scheldt) to substantiate his case, see, Cox, The West Florida Controversy . . . , pp. 27-28. The importance of the Floridas will again receive attention in Chapter V.
was Prince Ferdinand who was in his early twenties; the actual ruler of the country, however, was the ambitious Manuel de Godoy, the Prince of Peace. He is viewed by most historians as being a vain and grasping adventurer who understood little of the New World situation.

The situation in Spain enabled the clever Napoleon gradually to reduce that state to a position of vassalage. Meanwhile Jefferson, as was his custom, preferred "time to await and avail ourselves of events." The increasing control over Spanish affairs by Napoleon led Jefferson to inform Madison,

Yet these acts shew a purpose both in Spain & France against which we ought to provide before the conclusion of a peace. I think therefore we should take into consideration whether we

42 The Napoleonic involvement in Spain has been the subject of numerous works including biographies, monographs and national histories. Two reliable works in which one may conveniently find brief but excellent accounts are: Charles E. Chapman, A History of Spain, Founded on the Historia de España y de la Civilización Española of Rafael Altamira (New York: Macmillan Company, 1918), and Jean Descola, A History of Spain (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).

ought not immediately to propose to England an eventual treaty of alliance. . . . 44

In addition to the tense European situation the President was also keeping abreast of Spanish activity in Texas relative to their blocking any American advance in that direction. Jefferson did not intend to be caught unprepared in an emergency. 45

Jefferson's patience with Spain must have worn thin during the years of his second administration. In November, 1805, he presented the whole picture to his Cabinet. The decision of his official family was, in part,

44 Jefferson to Madison, August 4, 1805, ibid., 374.

45 Jefferson to Madison, September 16, 1805, ibid., 379. In this dispatch to the Secretary of State Jefferson put forth the suggestion that should Spain continue to block America's move west the Congress should authorize the Executive to suspend intercourse with Spain at discretion and to dislodge the new Spanish establishments between the Mississippi and the Rio Grande. He concluded, however, that "these ideas [are] merely for consideration." Governor Claiborne was also alert to the need for military preparedness in case a move against the Spanish was necessary. See the correspondence between Claiborne and The Secretary of War, The Secretary of State and General James Wilkinson in Dunbar Rowland (ed.), Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-1816 (6 vols.; Jackson: State Department of Archives and History, 1917).
1. Spain shall cede & confirm to the US. East & West Florida with the islands & waters thereon depending & shall deliver possn. immedly.

4. The boundary between the territories of Orleans & Louisiana on the one side & the domns. [sic] of Spain on the other shall be the river Colorado from its mouth to its [sic] source then due N. to the highlands inclosing the waters which run directly or indirectly into the Missouri or Misipi [sic] rivers, & along those highlands as far as they border on the Span. domns.

5. The country between the Western boundary of the territories of Orleans on the one side - & Louis. on the other (the Rio Bravo & Eastern or Salt river branch thereof Rio Colorado) from its main source & by the shortest coast to the highlands before ment. as the sd. Western boundy shall remain unsettled for 30 years from the date of this treaty.

7. . . . the US. shall permit no settlem. within the sd. country for the term of 30. years before mentioned. 46

46 Cabinet Decision on Spain, November 14, 1805, Ford, The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, VIII, 383-84.
An interesting note relative to point number 5 above is that the manuscript for this document indicates that Jefferson originally intended the statement to read "Guadaloupe, if to be cbtd, Colorado if not." Why he struck the line is not readily discernible.

Thus the negotiations over the western limits continued for many years. Jefferson continued to assert America's "right" to the Rio Grande, but, if actions speak louder than words, he was more realistic and concentrated on exploring the Sabine and Red River areas. The Red River seemed to have been gradually accepted by both Spain and the United States as their common boundary, although neither nation would openly admit as much for a number of years. Meanwhile Thomas Jefferson, the perennial student of scientific advancement, as well as the dedicated statesman, set about to organize more expeditions for the purpose of exploring the Louisiana Territory.

Lewis and Clark were tracking the upper reaches of the Missouri and to the Pacific Coast. Someone was needed to venture up the Red and Arkansas rivers. As early as March, 1804, President Jefferson contacted William Dunbar in New Orleans. This scientist was asked to lead an expedition

47 Ibid.
to the headwaters of the aforementioned rivers. Dunbar was told that Congress would probably authorize an exploration of "the greater waters on the western side of the Mississippi and Missouri to their sources." 48 "In this case," the President continued,

I should propose to send one party up the Panis river to its source, thence along the highlands to the source of the Radoncas river and down it to its mouth, . . . These several surveys will enable us to prepare a map of Louisiana, . . . and will give us a skeleton to be filled up with details hereafter. 49

A chemist from Philadelphia, Dr. George Hunter, was also assigned to the expedition. The doctor was quite delayed in arriving at New Orleans. Because of his delay and other problems of supply and manpower, by the time the expedition was ready to get under way circumstances caused a major change in plans. The Osage Indians had taken to the warpath, and, as a reaction to the Lewis and Clark expedition, the Spanish evidenced a great reluctance to permit any American on any


49 Ibid.
pretext to approach the Texas frontier. Dunbar and Hunter did conduct an expedition of some four months, but the direction was changed to the Washita River and Ozark Plateau, an area less in controversy at the moment. Though of more limited value Jefferson accepted the change in plans as some compensation for the postponement of his more extensive plans. 50

During the winter of 1804, Jefferson received information about the Red River region from Dr. John Sibley who soon would be appointed Surgeon and Indian Agent at the Natchitoches Post. As indicated earlier Sibley's information was based more on hearsay than fact. Regardless, this man's correspondence spurred Jefferson on to order another expedition up the Red River in May, 1805. Congress appropriated additional money, and William Dunbar received his orders. Because of the Osage danger and possible difficulty in transferring baggage from the headwaters of the Red to the Arkansas River, it was decided to ascend the Red River to its source and descend the same stream. Jefferson deemed

this a better opportunity to ascertain "that which, in truth, next to the Missouri, is the most interesting water of the Mississippi." 51 Dunbar was instructed to await orders from the Secretary of War; meanwhile, a Spanish passport was to be obtained from Casa Calvo. In concluding his letter Jefferson advised the leader of the expedition that,

In the present state of things between Spain and us, we should spare nothing to secure the friendship of the Indians within reach of her. 52

In his letter to Governor Claiborne concerning acquisition of a passport for the Dunbar party, Jefferson stressed the fact (a fact subsequently stressed to the Spanish) that the object of the mission was to ascertain the geography of the country -- a purely scientific expedition. The members were expressly forbidden to venture beyond the headwaters of the Red River, but as they might come upon some Spanish subjects along the way a passport was deemed advisable. In order to ease the suspicions or fears of the Spanish Jefferson suggested to Claiborne that he encourage Casa Calvo to send


52 Ibid.
V. THE EXPLORER'S ROAD TO SANTA FE

"one or two persons of his own choice as witnesses of our proceedings, . . ." The President further confided to the Governor,

as we have to settle a boundary with Spain to the Westward they cannot expect that we will go blindfold into the business. Both parties ought to be free to make surveys of experiment preparatory to settlement, and each having a certain claim to the country must have equal right to procure the information necessary for elucidating their right.

When Claiborne approached Casa Calvo on these matters, the latter was more than a little embarrassed to know what to do. Earlier, when the first Dunbar expedition was preparing to advance up the Red River, Casa Calvo had advised the Governor of Texas to take measures to either impede or destroy the expedition. Now in his perplexity the Marqués


54 Ibid.

decided to grant the passport and appoint someone to represent Spain. At the same time, Casa Calvo concluded that since the upper part of the Red River "runs into the Province of Texas and perhaps into another Province more remote, it seems to me prudent to communicate intelligence [of the expedition] to the Commandant-General in Chihuahua." The Spanish Boundary Commissioner was trying to avoid offense to the American authorities who were already suspicious of him. At the same time he was striving to remain in good standing with his superiors in Madrid, and throw the responsibility for a final decision about the expedition on Nemesio Salcedo. In other words the Spanish officials were reacting to the proposed Dunbar venture in a manner quite reminiscent of their reaction to Lewis and Clark.

The Commandant-General was not reluctant to take a firm stand against the Dunbar party just as he had previously done relative to the Lewis and Clark expedition. He saw the present effort to explore the Red River as simply an attempt to gain military knowledge of the country or to tamper with the allegiance of the Indians. Salcedo saw no

---

56 Casa Calvo to Claiborne, July 5, 1805, Rowland, Claiborne Letter Books, III, 129.
need in further geographical exploration, especially by Americans. If the United States wanted geographical information, he surmised, all they had to do was apply through proper channels. 57

Meanwhile preparations continued. Records indicate that William Dunbar was having a difficult time finding capable men of suitable character for taking observations. 58 Finally a Lieutenant Thomas Freeman was selected to head the expedition under the general supervision of William Dunbar. 59 Following more delays, however, it was not until April 19, 1806, that the expedition set out for Natchitoches on the Red River. This was actually a most inauspicious moment for the party of thirty-seven to set-out from Fort Adams on the Mississippi just above the mouth of the Red River. 60 It was

57 Salcedo to Casa Calvo, October 8, 1805, cited in Cox, "Exploration of the Louisiana Frontier . . .," p. 163.

58 Dunbar to Henry Dearborn, June 8, 1805, National Archives, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Main Series, 1801-1870 (Microcopy No. 221). Future references will be cited as WD. Letters Received. Dunbar to Henry Dearborn, October 8, 1805, ibid.


during the early part of 1806 that General James Wilkinson was so actively engaged in meeting Spanish reluctance to move back to the west side of the Sabine. The crisis was finally settled by Wilkinson and the Spanish commander, Simon de Herrera, in the field by November, but the whole atmosphere at the time was definitely not conducive to an attitude of friendliness on the part of Spain. 61

Nevertheless Freeman led his group up to Natchitoches where Sibley gave warning that Spanish soldiers might intercept them should they continue up that river. The warning was prophetic, for some 200 miles above Natchitoches a Spanish garrison under the command of Don Francisco Viana met the Americans and insisted they burn back. Following the President's instructions and realizing the superior force of the Spanish, Freeman acceded to the demand. 62

61 A discussion of the Neutral Ground Agreement may be found in various works on Texas History. One excellent account may be found in Odie B. Faulk, A Successful Failure (Austin: Steck-Vaughn Company, 1965), pp. 189-96.

Thus by the end of 1806, Jefferson's plans for exploring the Southwestern reaches of Louisiana had apparently failed. The immediate results of several years of planning and expense were rather meager on the surface. Freeman had penetrated the Red River some 635 miles above its mouth, but this was no further than French and Spanish traders and explorers had ventured years earlier. Furthermore, knowledge of the head waters of the Red River and the Arkansas River continued to remain in the area of fanciful geography. The long-range results, however, were to be more fruitful.

Not unmindful of the need to obtain the good will of the Indians, Jefferson gathered to his library the reports of Dr. John Sibley. The President used these reports, in addition to the more official accounts coming in from Dunbar, Lewis and Clark, to impress upon Congress the need to continued exploration of Louisiana. Given the paucity of accurate geographical knowledge of the Southwest, Sibley's inaccurate and exaggerated reports of the road to Santa Fe only further confused the picture. For example, Sibley, using information supplied to him by a man himself relying on forty years of memory, put the Panis towns (in present-day Nebraska) some 300 miles from Santa Fe.  

---

63 Message From the President of the United States
Cartographic efforts during 1805, although benefiting from the reports sent back by Lewis and Clark, remained little improved where the Southwest was concerned. Jefferson's friend Nicholas King prepared several maps in 1805 based on information furnished by the above duo, but the maps were still quite vague when depicting the Rocky Mountain region; the Rio Grande was confused with the Green River extending north meeting the headwaters of the Snake. The geography in these maps is quite reminiscent of Arrowsmith's 1802 efforts. 64

In connection with the events thus far discussed there remains a need to elaborate somewhat on the idea that President Jefferson and the United States Government were not particularly determined to push to the gates of Santa Fe. The willingness of the President and his Secretary of State to bargain with the Spanish over various river boundaries

Communicating Discoveries Made in Exploring the Missouri, Red River and Washita, By Captains Lewis and Clark, Doctor Sibley and Mr. Dunbar: With a Statistical Account of the Countries Adjacent, February 19, 1806 (Washington, 1806), pp. 110-11. Considering that Zebulon Pike encountered the Pawnees at the Republican Fork of the Kansas River (in eastern Nebraska) that same year, Sibley's information seems a bit inaccurate.

64 Wheat, From Lewis and Clark . . . , II, 43-44.
from the Rio Bravo eastward to the Sabine has been pointed out. Likewise, the idea of creating a "buffer-zone" has been discussed. These approaches certainly indicate no intense drive to "take-over" key Spanish posts in the Southwest. Perhaps much of the "wait-and-see" policy of Jefferson stemmed from his concept of what Louisiana was in a physical sense and how it could best serve the needs and security of the nation. As early as July, 1803, Jefferson stated,

> I presume the island of N. Orleans
> and the settled country on the
> opposite bank will be annexed to
> the Mississippi Territory . . .
> The rest of the territory will
> probably be locked up from
> American settlement, and under
> the self-government of the native
> occupants.65

The matter of what to do about the populace already living in Louisiana, and regulations concerning future American settlement had come up during the debate over ratification of the Purchase Treaty. The Federalists voiced opposition to the Purchase on many points, but were particularly accusatory on Constitutional items as they knew

how scrupulous Jefferson was on such issues. They also knew he had some qualms about the constitutionality of the basic treaty itself. Citizenship by incorporation was, or could be, a complex constitutional problem in relation to the acquisition of Louisiana, and the opposing Federalists well knew it. Such a method of naturalization had never been used before and would certainly take a broad interpretation of the Constitution to carry out. Jefferson used the doctrine of implied powers, and all the Federalist bombardment about the "great waste, a wilderness unpeopled with any beings except wolves and wandering Indians," did little to dim the success of the Republican President. 66

The problem of what to do with the territory acquired remained. As indicated earlier the President had his own ideas, but he also sought advice, and the advice was forthcoming. Thomas Mann Randolph, a Senate friend of the Chief Executive, informed Jefferson that the Senate would no doubt ratify the treaty, but he stressed it would be absolutely

necessary to prevent Americans from settling on the west bank of the Mississippi, by force if persuasion was not sufficient. He further observed,

we cannot in any other way quiet Spain; she is jealous of her Mexican subjects and so fearful lest our people should hold intercourse with them, . . . our peace would be in danger unless we can satisfy her by obliging ourselves to let all the country over the river remain in the hands of the Indians for a considerable time. 67

Randolph, like the President, knew that numbers of people would be anxious to get into Louisiana, but as there were "so many great reasons for shutting up the country," he would support the President along these lines. 68 Accordingly, no land office had been opened in Upper Louisiana, and no one was permitted to settle on the public lands there. The military was to insure compliance. 69 Jefferson saw to it that knowledge of his sentiments reached the eyes and ears

67 Thomas M. Randolph to Jefferson, October 29, 1803, Jefferson Papers MSS, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Mo.
68 Ibid.
69 Jefferson to Lewis Waugh, January 6, 1805, ibid.
of the Spanish. Some of the Spanish officials, however, had also seen the acquisition of Louisiana as a possible force to contain the American population rather than provide an area of immediate settlement. Shortly after the Purchase had been concluded Casa Yrujo, the Spanish Minister in Washington, D.C., brought to the attention of his country that the United States Government was well aware of "the evils that will follow . . . from colonizing Louisiana."70 Continuing, he noted,

All their efforts will be directed on the contrary to concentrate their population in the lands that they actually occupy, regarding as necessary the acquisition of Louisiana only in so far as it excludes the French whom they feared as neighbors. . . .71

A few months later Yrujo again wrote to his superior in Madrid that American ownership of Louisiana would provide Spain with

70 Casa Yrujo to Cevallos, November 5, 1803, Robertson, Louisiana Under Spain, France and the U. S., II, 118-20.

71 Ibid.
a natural and powerful barrier between
the population of the American citizens
and our possessions of New Mexico, . . .
in addition to the settlements of the
Indians, an immense desert which will
serve us equally for protection.72

Many factors -- administrative, military, diplomatic --
led Jefferson to follow a particular course. The vastness of
the territory alone was enough to make any responsible of-
official proceed with caution. Historians continually credit
the "Great American Desert" myth to explorers such as Zebulon
N. Pike and Stephen H. Long, but one wonders if this concept
formalized at a later date by these men was not actually given
birth by the earlier explorers. The concept definitely
colored the thinking of Jefferson and his official family.
From Sibley, Freeman and Dunbar the President, when comparing
their accounts with the French and Spanish sources, could have
easily drawn a picture of a vast inhospitable land; land fit
for little more than to house the roaming tribes of Indians.
The "Great Prairie" was seen by many travelers as a dry,
broken and hilly region where scarcity of water could easily
force one back. The country extending between the Panis

72 Casa Yrujo to Cevallos, January 17, 1804, Nasatir,
Before Lewis and Clark . . ., II, 723.
towns and Santa Fe was described as all "country, prairie, a few scattering cedar knobs excepted." 73

As late as June, 1807, Jefferson talking about the expeditions of the past few years concluded,

For the day must be very distant when it will be either the interest or the wish of the United States to extend settlements into the interior of that country. 74

The more immediate issue confronting the President was military in nature. It was necessary that the United States make some display of authority over the new land and its inhabitants. Frontier defense, of course, necessitated some type of Indian policy. The frontier disturbances in the Northwest Territory and south of the Ohio during the 1790's indicated that as the white man advanced westward the confrontations with the Indians would only increase unless some better policy could be advanced. The Indian was not accepting the white man's civilization as readily as many wished or

73 Message From the President . . ., February, 1806, p. 111.

expected. Therefore, some men were suggesting that the two races be kept apart until some kind of adjustment program could be formulated. When the Louisiana Purchase was concluded many thought the answer had arrived. All the lands east of the Mississippi could be reserved for white settlement, and the Indians could be relocated in the vast territory west of the river. The process of "removal" was thus born. Francis Prucha, in his recent work, The Sword of the Republic, gives Thomas Jefferson credit for originating "this noble dream of moving the Indians to a permanent reservation west of the Mississippi . . . ." 75

Throughout his adult life Jefferson had always been prone to extol the virtues of the Indian. Thomas Jefferson, the rationalistic product of the Enlightenment, let sentimentalism blur his scientific vision when his thoughts turned to the "noble savage." Taking into account the differences in environment between the Indian and the white man, and recognizing that the former were still barbarians, Jefferson defended them against charges of "deficiency in sexual ardor and lack of domestic affection," and praised them "for

75 Prucha, Sword of the Republic, p. 74.
courage and fortitude." 76

Now as President of the United States he had the obligation to defend his nation's borders. He was forced to divest himself of the sentimentality he had previously manifested toward the Indian and remove him from the east bank of the Mississippi. Typical of his character, Jefferson felt a need to rationalize his deeds; therefore, one can see a stress on the humanistic factor of seeking to lead the Indian into "the paths of peace and blessings of agricultural society." 77 The fraternal addresses to the Indians came forth from the White House as never before.

Previous to informing Congress of his plans for the Indians, Jefferson outlined his ideas to Secretary of War Dearborn. Hoping to establish a strong line of American settlements along the Mississippi Jefferson suggested that,

Our proceedings with the Indians should tend systematically to that object [procuring Indian lands] leaving the extinguishment of title in the interior country to fall in as occasion may arise.


77 Malone, Jefferson the President . . . , p. 273.
The Indians being once closed in between strong settled countries on the Mississippi & Atlantic, will, for want of game, be forced to agriculture, will find that small portions of land well improved, will be worth more to them than extensive forests unemployed, and will be continually parting with portions of them, for money to buy stock, utensils & necessities for their farms & families. 78

Despite all that he had said in the past about the aborigines, he now felt a paternalistic authority must be imposed upon them for their own good. To William Henry Harrison, Governor of the Indiana Territory he wrote:

In this way our settlements will gradually circumscribe & approach the Indians, & they will in time either incorporate with us as citizens of the U.S. or remove beyond the Mississippi. . . . As to their fear, we presume that our strength & their weakness is now so visible that they must see we have only to shut our hand to crush them, & that all our liberalities to them proceed from motives of pure humanity only. 79

78 Jefferson to Henry Dearborn, December 29, 1802, cited in ibid., p. 274.

79 Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, February 27, 1803, ibid., p. 275.
As noted above the military situation necessitated some display of authority. It was here that differences of opinion loomed forth. By the end of 1804, a survey of the troop distribution in the Mississippi Valley showed the following:

Fort Massac 61, Kaskaskia 80, St. Louis 57, New Madrid 16, Arkansas Post 16, Ouachita 19, Attakapas 14, Opelousas 47, Natchitoches 75, New Orleans 375, Fort St. Philip 67, Fort Adams 4, Fort Pickering 16.  

Wilkinson was calling for more posts especially on the upper Mississippi and Missouri rivers, but the War Department felt the establishment of trading posts with garrison support was sufficient for the moment. Were military preparations on the frontier adequate or not? The answer depends upon one's analysis of the whole Indian problem facing the Jefferson Administration, as well as the potentially explosive diplomatic situation. In 1805, however, General James Wilkinson felt a need to expand military posts. He had been appointed Governor of the Territory of Louisiana (Upper Louisiana) in March, 1805, and was charged to "conciliate the friendship &

80 Prucha, Sword of the Republic, p. 73.
esteem of the Indians generally of that extensive country, &
to produce peace & harmony . . . between them & the white
inhabitants." 81 After surveying the situation Wilkinson
observed to the Secretary of War,

When I estimate the number and force
of the Indian nations, who inhabit
the Country watered by the Missouri
and the Mississippi, and who if not
made our friends will become our
enemies -- when I survey the
Jealousies and the rivalry which
exist on the side of Canada, --
When I anticipate the fears,
alarms and counteractions, which
must necessarily be exerted on the
side of New Mexico, -- When I cast
my eyes over the expanse of Terri-
tory to be occupied or controled, and
glance at futurity, I hope you will
pardon me Sir for observing, with all
due deference and respect to my
superiors, that we are not in suf-
ficient strength, of men or means,
to meet the occasion and profit by
the favourable circumstances of the
moment -- 82

The Secretary of War did not share Wilkinson's con-
cern for immediate precautions. James Wilkinson had a very

81 Secretary of War to Wilkinson, April 19, 1805,
Carter, Territorial Papers, XII, 116-17.

82 Wilkinson to Secretary of War, September 22,
1805, ibid., XIII, 230.
personal interest in the Southwest; doubtless this interest colored his professional attitude. His role in affecting Governmental policy will be discussed in the following chapter. For the moment, however, it seems to be well established that as Jefferson ended one term and advanced deep into his second administration, the Federal Government was not anxiously pressing at the doors of the rich (?) mines of Northern Mexico.
CHAPTER IV

THE AMERICANS REACH SANTA FE

It is impossible to discuss any phase of Southwestern history for the early nineteenth century without mentioning the name of James Wilkinson. Few Americans in an official capacity were more directly tied to the destinies of United States-Spanish relations than this controversial figure. Due to his military and civilian administrative positions, which he held concurrently for a period of time, Wilkinson was able in a large way to direct American involvement in the trans-Mississippi West. The fact that this "backstairs Brigadier" was also on the Spanish pension rolls as Agent Number 13, only complicates any evaluation of the man and his activities. His nefarious activities as a spy and double agent, as well as his attachment to the unsavory machinations of Aaron Burr, are only too well known. The man that John Randolph described as "from the bark to the very core a villain," has been the subject of numerous
biographies, monographs and other studies. When all is said and done, however, one still finds it most difficult to label Wilkinson with the onerous title of "traitor." True, he did sell information to the Spanish, true, he did cavort with Aaron Burr in some type of intrigue which probably called for the invasion of Mexico, or the separation of the Ohio Valley region from the United States, or both. The exact nature of the intrigue has never come to light. Yet it is difficult to deny that as an American military officer he served his country well on more than one occasion. Perhaps Marshall Smelser expresses this man's career well when he states, "Wilkinson panned the dregs of international intrigue for easy money, which he used for inconspicuous consumption. Quite inadvertently, his humbug and avarice may have saved his country."  


2 Smelser, The Democratic Republic . . ., p. 112.
No attempt will be made here to convict Wilkinson of malfeasance in office or acquit him of all charges. His biographers have been trying to do both for many years, albeit inconclusively. He will be evaluated in light of his positions as General of the United States Army and Governor of the Territory of Louisiana, two positions from which he actively contributed to America's official stand relative to the Spanish Southwest, and, in a very special way, affected United States-Spanish diplomacy.

James Wilkinson was trusted by several Presidents and numerous other officials including his immediate superior, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn. While Dearborn and Jefferson may have disagreed with the strategy of General Wilkinson, they felt his judgement to be in the best interest of the nation. It is only years after the events described here that the questionable aspects of Wilkinson's life became a topic

---

3 General Dearborn cast his fortunes with the party of Jefferson, and was regarded as a leading representative of the Republicans in New England for many years. On the accession of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency in March, 1801, Dearborn was appointed Secretary of War, a position which he occupied for the following eight years. There seems to be no reason to question his honesty or ability, but he was definitely susceptible to Wilkinson's slyness. Interesting comments on his penchant for details may be found in Prucha, The Sword of the Republic, pp. 172-74.
of official investigation and public scandal. The Federal Government accepted Wilkinson's plans and moves at face value, and any analysis of his role vis-à-vis this nation's official position must take such a fact into consideration. Therefore, while taking note of questionable motives where pertinent, Wilkinson's official acts will be discussed primarily on the basis of his official correspondence and public records.

James Wilkinson, of course, had been personally interested in the Spanish Southwest for many years. His journey down the Mississippi in the late eighteenth century to confer with high ranking Spanish officials was the beginning; his tenuous partnership with Aaron Burr, in what is now known as the "Burr Conspiracy," furthered his

The trial of Aaron Burr brought to light many of General Wilkinson's machinations and certainly placed a cloud over his name, but he was able to explain away most of what he had done. He did not satisfy all present, however, and in December, 1807, John Randolph asked for an investigation of the rumors that Wilkinson had received money from the Spanish while an officer of the United States Army. Wilkinson, in turn, asked the President for a court of inquiry. In July, 1808, the court made its findings public. It declared that no evidence had been discovered of corruption and Wilkinson had behaved "with honour to himself and fidelity to his country." Several more investigations and a second court martial faced the General before the end of his career, but no convictions were obtained. Details of the various investigations may be found in Jacobs, Tarnished Warrior.
involvement, and Zebulon Pike became his instrument to penetrate the Spanish bastion of Santa Fe. When appointed Governor of the Louisiana Territory in the Spring of 1805, Wilkinson had the perfect opportunity to further any design he may have had relative to the penetration of Northern New Spain, be it military or commercial penetration. Nevertheless, he also had a difficult legitimate task to master.

As noted in the previous chapter he was charged with the pacification of the Indians and responsibility for carrying out the Indian policy of the Jefferson administration. It has already been noted that the General did not see eye to eye on military strategy with the Executive Department, particularly Secretary of War Dearborn. But a point well worth emphasizing is that General Wilkinson had been on the Louisiana frontier from the time of the Purchase and even before. He had first-hand knowledge of the politics, military defense, social matters and diplomatic activities, knowledge he put to good use.

Shortly following the formal transfer of Upper Louisiana, Wilkinson began pressuring the War Department for more troops and more posts. The Jefferson administration, on the other hand, was pledged to a regular military force of
the bare minimum necessary to police the frontier.\textsuperscript{5} Given the precarious situation between the United States and Spain at the moment, and possibly for reasons of self interest, Wilkinson worked diligently to impress upon Dearborn the need for extended military posts. Citing the views of another military officer, Major James Bruff, who had previously served as commander of Upper Louisiana, the General noted that the militia was poorly armed and organized, "nor even rolls of companies taken or the number ascertained. . . ."\textsuperscript{6} The General further stated,

Suffer me now to suggest, that if a Military Post was established on the Missouri at the mouth of the river Platt [sic] between whose waters and those of the del nord [Rio Grande] there is but a short carrying place; where Traders from Santa Fe meet ours -- as is absolutely the case at this moment. . . . They


\textsuperscript{6}Wilkinson to Dearborn, November 2, 1804, Carter, Territorial Papers, XIII, 59.
might check; if not prevent; the
depredations of Indians . . .

Relations with Spain during the months subsequent
to the Louisiana Purchase were most precarious; the national
government was quite aware of the situation. In early Feb-
uary, 1805, Wilkinson received an interesting missive from
the Secretary of War. Given the General's personal interest
in the Southwest and the tone of later directives from the War
Department, this letter takes on added importance. Drawing
attention to Spanish military activities in the Texas-
Louisiana region Dearborn instructed Wilkinson to alert his
officers,

as will result in satisfactory
intelligence as to what move-
ments are in operation, or have
been effected, within the boundaries
of Louisiana, between the Rio Bravo
and our advanced posts to the West-
ward of the Mississippi; from the
Red River to the borders of the Bay
of Mexico. . . . It will be particu-
larly desirable to know what is
doing at St. Antonio. . . .

Individuals in the character
of hunters or traders may probably

7Ibid. This information is actually taken from the
enclosure Wilkinson included in his letter to Dearborn: Bruff
to Wilkinson, September 29, 1804.
be employed with secrecy and success.8

Was this directive not encouraging to a man who was already busily engaged in "sounding out" the situation on the frontiers of New Spain? For some sixteen years Wilkinson had studied the strategic value of Santa Fe and New Orleans as approaches to Mexico. The adventurer and trader Philip Nolan served as a source of information for many years but his untimely death in 1801 deprived the General of a valuable agent.9 A few years later Wilkinson's interest again became active when he received an invitation from Jefferson to come to Washington and meet Baron Alexander von Humboldt. This eminent scientist had concluded his now famous expedition throughout much of Spain's New World empire, and was visiting

8Dearborn to Wilkinson, February 26, 1805, WD. Letters Sent-Military Affairs, Roll. 2.

9Loomis, Pedro Vial . . ., pp. 206-25. Issac J. Cox, "Opening the Santa Fe Trail," Missouri Historical Review, XXV (1931), 36. Philip Nolan was an associate of Wilkinson, on good terms with Miró and Carondelet, and an adviser at one time to Thomas Jefferson. He was a prodigious adventurer, daring and ambitious, but apparently without deep loyalty to anybody but himself. Like his associate Wilkinson this mustanger was able to work both sides of the road at once, although he proved to be less clever than the American General.
Washington, D. C., on his way back to Europe. The Baron gave Jefferson a nineteen-page "tableau statistique," reporting population and other data on Mexico. The information was submitted by von Humboldt upon request of the American President who was obviously interested in all data relative to the area of the disputed western boundary of Louisiana. 10

Wilkinson was unable to accept the President's invitation at the moment and lamented the fact that the Baron would have to depart the United States before a meeting could be arranged. Wilkinson related to the President, "I feel a strong Interest in having [sic] his answers to the queries which I take the liberty to inclose you, because by such answers [I] shall be able to determine the accuracy of his information." 11 The

10 Donald Jackson (ed.), The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike With Letters and Related Documents (2 vols.; Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), II, 370. Humboldt visited Washington in June, 1804. He loaned Albert Gallatin a copy of his map (yet to be published), and submitted the "tableau statistique" to Jefferson in response to a request made on June 9, 1804. Contrary to what others have said about Humboldt presenting a copy of his map to the President, Donald Jackson cites evidence to support his claim that a copy was merely loaned for a brief period of time to the Secretary of the Treasury; a copy which Humboldt received back on June 27, 1804. During the time the map was in Washington, however, Aaron Burr secured it for a brief time and had it copied. This map, or portion thereof, found its way to Wilkinson and subsequently to Pike.

11 Ibid.
"queries" in Wilkinson's letter, however, suggest that he was asking for information he already possessed, such as the population of the province of Nueva Leon.\textsuperscript{12}

Meanwhile, following his appointment as Governor of the Louisiana Territory and initiating his plans with Aaron Burr, Wilkinson headed for St. Louis to take up his new administrative duties. Upon reaching the city General Wilkinson first met and dined with Auguste Chouteau, instead of Major Bruff, the more logical person to contact according to military protocol. Chouteau was a leading civil figure in the city, being a magistrate. The Chouteau family had been leading and influential traders out of St. Louis for several generations.\textsuperscript{13} Wilkinson was not unaware of Chouteau's position in the community and knew the latter had received trading rights from the Spanish government before Upper Louisiana

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid. The above incident is also described in Issac J. Cox, \textit{The Early Exploration of Louisiana} (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati Press, 1905), p. 91, but the author gives no explanation or analysis concerning the queries of Wilkinson.

\textsuperscript{13}Loomis, Pedro \textit{Vial . . .}, p. 62. At the age of fourteen Chouteau had been sent by Laclede (his stepfather) to help in the building of St. Louis. He early gained experience in dealing with the Indians, and had a monopoly on Osage trade from 1794 to 1802. He was one of the first three judges of Louisiana under the United States, and in 1808 was made colonel of the St. Louis militia.
became American territory. Chouteau was also one of the chief promoters of the local fur trade in which Governor Wilkinson would demonstrate more than a passing interest.

By the end of July, 1805, the clever Wilkinson had already made use of his successful overtures to Chouteau and had arranged for a Lieutenant George Peter with a military escort to accompany Chouteau to the Osage country. The declared purpose of the expedition was to invite some of the Indians to visit the nation's capital and meet their new "Chief," but the trader was also to direct his attention to gathering geographical information, particularly about the distances to Santa Fe. Wilkinson could thus carry out the wishes of the President and at the same time serve his own ends, whatever they might be. Perhaps it was Auguste Chouteau who convinced Wilkinson, however unwittingly, that a road to Santa Fe was actually in the making.

Not satisfied with this sole effort, Wilkinson, around the same time, dispatched Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike to the source waters of the Mississippi. This was the first

---

14 Wilkinson to Chouteau, July 30, 1805, Carter, Territorial Papers, XIII, 183.

15 Cox, "Opening the Santa Fe Trail," p. 41.
"errand" the young army officer was to perform for his commander. Pike was to note geographical and scientific information, and ascertain key locations for military posts between St. Louis and Prairie du Chien. He was likewise to arrange settlements of land acquisition from the Indians for the proposed military installations. Pike left St. Louis in July, 1805, and was back by the end of October. The details of his Mississippi adventure are not of immediate concern here. Whether the expedition was successful or not remains a debatable question, but it did serve to give the young lieutenant some experience before his major trek west. As General Wilkinson later phrased it, "they [the expeditions of George Peter and Zebulon Pike] serve to instruct our young officers and also our soldiery, on subjects which may hereafter become interesting to the United States."\(^{17}\)

Meanwhile Wilkinson continued his efforts to convince a frugal administration to expand its military budget. The

\(^{16}\) A brief description of the Mississippi expedition can be found in Prucha, *Sword of the Republic*, pp. 88-91. The full Journals and related documents can be located in Jackson, *Journals of Pike*, I.

Secretary of War had left no room for doubt as to projected military spending when he informed the frontier commander in early 1805 that "as no permanent Military Posts, can, with propriety, be immediately established, it will be improper to incur any considerable expense, for works or buildings at present."¹⁸ Leonard White in his work, the Jeffersonians, aptly describes the situation when he states, "the election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800 and the appointment of Albert Gallatin as Secretary of the Treasury . . . foretold little glory for the professional soldier. . . ."¹⁹ Undaunted, Wilkinson wrote Dearborn shortly after taking over his new position,

On the Subject of Indian affairs in this New World, it must occur, that to extend the name and influence of the United States to the remote Nations, will require considerable disbursements: our relations to Spain & Britain on our Southern, Western and Northern unexplored frontiers Suggest the expediency of attaching to us, all the Nations who drink of the waters which fall

¹⁸Dearborn to Wilkinson, April 19, 1805, Carter, Territorial Papers, XIII, 116.

¹⁹White, The Jeffersonians, . . ., p. 211.
into the Gulph of Mexico; . . .
The Commanches, who resort the
ttract of Country between the
Osages and S. Afee [sic], during
the temperature Seasons, merit
particular attention, because they
. . . have it in their power to
facilitate or impede our march to
New Mexico, should such a move-
ment ever become necessary . . . 20

Wilkinson further informed the Secretary that he intended to
hold a conference with both the Osages and Comanches, who
were usually warring factions, by the following Spring.21

The phrase, "our march to Santa Fe," in the above
letter has been cited often to emphasize the personal am-
bitions of Wilkinson. Could the remark not be in line with
military preparedness for a potentially explosive border war?
Even Dearborn, whose parsimony has already been noted, saw
the strategic value of a "Santa Fe highway" stretching forth
from St. Louis.22 In fact, according to the official


21 Ibid.

22 Wilkinson to Dearborn, September 8, 1805, Jackson, Journals of Pike, II, 100. This letter clearly indicates that Wilkinson and Dearborn had discussed the military value of a road to New Mexico. In a letter to General Wilkinson dated October 16, 1805, Dearborn states "I am more fully convinced, by your communication, of the practicability, if necessary,
correspondence, it was not until late 1805 that Wilkinson, himself, considered any land expedition from St. Louis to Santa Fe practical. In a letter to the Secretary of War in September Wilkinson stated,

I recollect having once disagreed with you as to the Practicability of carrying an expedition from this point into New Mexico, and my objections were founded on the length of the March, and the difficulty of Subsisting the Troops -- but these Obstacles have vanished, before the information I have obtained since my arrival here; for I find we may derive abundant supplies of meat from the fields and Forests . . . and that the practicable distance does not exceed 900 miles, over a surface in general Smooth . . .

Meanwhile Wilkinson had informed the Government about the expeditions up the Mississippi and to the Osages, flattering himself that the results would "justify the toil and

of a military movement, either by the Platt, the Osage or the Arkansas, to the Eastern part of Mexico; -- and I am not sure that a project of that kind may not become necessary." See Carter, Territorial Papers, XIII, 240.

23 Wilkinson to Dearborn, September 8, 1805, Jackson, Journals of Pike, II, 100-01.
expense." 24 He then proceeded to draw up a detailed project for military deployment throughout the territory:

Taking it for granted, that we shall not be able to control the Indians, before we get possession of the interior of their Country, I beg leave to submit to your consideration, the expediency of making enquiry, for the most critical points of occupancy, on both Rivers. . . . I would recommend a Position on the River plate [Platte] . . . at the Panis Towns on the right bank of the said River, fifty leagues (French computation) from its confluence with the Missouri, and Thirteen Days moderate walk, from the Settlements of New Mexico -- 25

Later the same month Wilkinson again brought the Secretary of War's attention to the strategic importance of Santa Fe. Obviously quoting from various bits of information brought to St. Louis by traders and trappers, Wilkinson informed Dearborn that he had discovered a "most direct route to St. Afee [sic]." 26 Perhaps the most interesting and curious

24 Wilkinson to Dearborn, August 10, 1805, Carter, Territorial Papers, XIII, 183.

25 Ibid. The actual distances involved to New Mexico obviously remain vague in the mind of Wilkinson.

item in this letter of August 25, 1805, was the General's statement concerning geography. Referring to the famous map of Baron von Humboldt, Wilkinson noted that the river "of which the mouth is said to be unknown, is the Arkansaw [sic] which gives also the small branch marked R. Rouge near to St. Afee." Wilkinson is saying here that the river rising in the vicinity of Santa Fe, believed to be the Red by von Humboldt, was actually a branch of the Arkansas. The German scientist had relied extensively on the earlier maps of Mier y Pacheco for his delineation of Northern New Spain, which meant that all of the cartographic errors of the eighteenth century were perpetuated by the influential Humboldt map. The Baron showed the Red River rising in the mountains east of Taos, a mark which he borrowed from Mier y Pacheco, and merged it with the Pecos calling the result "The Rio Rojo de Natchitoches ou Rio de Pecos." As Donald Jackson so cogently points out, Wilkinson's statement to

---

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., 455. Although not published until 1812, the map was actually drawn in 1803, and von Humboldt had it with him when he visited President Jefferson in 1804. The facts are not clear, but somehow the information on the Humboldt map found its way to General Wilkinson and was transmitted to the charts carried by Pike. See footnote #10.
Dearborn mentioned above was a correction on the Humboldt map. If the General truly knew what he had corrected from Humboldt's map and passed this information on to Pike, the whole motive factor of the Pike "mistake" would have to be taken in a different light.\textsuperscript{29} To rely upon Donald Jackson once more, he believes that the confused wanderings of Pike "are ample proof he accepted Humboldt."\textsuperscript{30}

Throughout the months of August and September Governor Wilkinson continued to dwell upon the same ideas of needed posts on the frontier and an increased Indian pacification program. He felt the two points were inseparable. Until peace could be restored between the Osage and the Comanches, and an understanding reached with the Pawnees, no allegiance could be counted upon. Our military preparedness would also be jeopardized. The single best summary of Wilkinson's defense plans can be found in his letter of September 8, 1805, to Secretary of War Dearborn. Due to the subsequent actions of Wilkinson this letter becomes quite important and should be quoted at some length.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., I, 456-57. Donald Jackson does not believe Pike knew of or accepted Wilkinson's "corrections," but accepted Humboldt's notations.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
The nearest water approach from the Missouri to St. Afee, will be found by the superior right branch of the Osage River, which is navigable in general from the 1st March to the 10th of June, to a village of traders & hunters, standing about fifteen leagues above the fork, called Choeatou [Chouteau] -- from this place to the crossing of the Arkansas river in the route, is five days easy march. I have not been able to ascertain the distance from this [place] to the Mountains but the Mountain is refuted [sic] to be, about 100 miles [from] St. Afee where you cross it, the country campaign &c. abounding with sheep, cattle, and horses. . . .

It appears from my information, that the Arkansaw river is navigable, far above the crossing to light Batteaux, and of course should there be no obstructions below, that river will furnish us the nearest water approach to New Mexico. It therefore becomes extremely desireable it should be reconnoitred, and this cannot be done, with any prospect of safety, or Success, before we have brought the numerous Erratic nation of Y,a, tans, or Commanchees to a conference, because they reign the uncontroled Masters of that Country. . . .

Should We be involved in a War, (which Heaven Avert) and it should be judged expedient to take possession of New Mexico, magazines of flour, ammunition and arms, particularly Cavalry equipment with ten field Pieces, should be dispatched up the Arkansaw or Osage River about the 1st of March, and a Corps of 100 Artillerists, 400 Cavalry, 400 Riflemen and 1100 Musquetry, should move from this place about the 20th of April. . . . These dispositions with judicious and rapid movements, . . .
and we should take possession of the Northern Province without opposition... The uncertainty of human life and the instability of political affairs, induce me to lodge this information with you in its present crude State... 31

Wilkinson felt that Spain, especially in a hostile situation could employ the Indians "to obstruct our enterprises and to harass our frontiers." 32 He knew the Spaniards were just as well aware of their potential advantage and he wanted to forestall any headway they might be making. 33 It was in this same letter that the Secretary of War was given notice of Wilkinson's plans to send out an expedition to the River Platte in the fall to construct a military post.

The result of these plans was an expedition headed by the General's own son, Lieutenant James B. Wilkinson, up the Missouri to the mouth of the Platte in October, 1805.

31 Wilkinson to Dearborn, September 8, 1805, ibid., II, 100-102.

32 Wilkinson to Dearborn, September 22, 1805, Carter, Territorial Papers, XIII, 229.

33 Ibid. Wilkinson to Dearborn, October 8, 1805, ibid., 235.
The expedition failed to reach its destination. About 300 miles up the Missouri a clash occurred with Indians, and the encounter was sufficient to check the enterprise. The group was back in St. Louis by December. 34

The United States Government was not particularly happy with what James Wilkinson was doing, and by October, 1805, the General knew it. Even before Lt. Wilkinson had started to ascend the Missouri, the Secretary of War had penned a directive (which did not reach St. Louis before the expedition had set out) again emphasizing the government's policy of consolidation rather than dispersal. 35 The directive was followed a few weeks later by another "reminder" of the current sentiment of the administration. There was no excuse for any misunderstanding on Wilkinson's part when he read the following:

no detachment should be made, to any distant new post, at present. And, as the establishment of new & distant posts will, at all times, be a proper subject for Executive discretion, the approbation of the President of the United States, should, be considered necessary

34 Cox, "Opening the Santa Fe Trail," 43-44.

35 Dearborn to Wilkinson, October 10, 1805, Carter, Territorial Papers, XIII, 239.
previous to any actual arrangements for such objects.

I hope you have not made any detachments or taken steps, which may not accord with the foregoing observations. 36

Interestingly enough, in light of the above, the Secretary also informed Wilkinson that relations with Spain were very cloudy and he was becoming more convinced that in the event of a rupture a military movement by the Platte or Arkansas rivers to New Mexico would be advisable. 37 Nevertheless the operations by the General out of St. Louis were being officially frowned upon. A rather stinging reprimand was forthcoming in the latter part of November. Secretary Dearborn wrote General Wilkinson,

Sir, Your ordering a detachment to the River Plat [sic] especially with a view of establishing a Military Post at a distance from 600 to 800 miles from St. Louis, is very much to be regretted. Indeed, it was not believed you would undertake the execution of

36 Dearborn to Wilkinson, November 2, 1805, ibid., 251-52.

37 Dearborn to Wilkinson, October 16, 1805, ibid., 239.
such distant projects without the express approbation of the President of the U.S. . . . 38

Wilkinson was further instructed to recall his expedition and take no such further moves unless directed by the President. 39 As already mentioned, other factors had caused the return of the General's son and his men. Wilkinson did not let the reaction of the War Department hinder his future plans concerning investigation of the West. In fact, he penned a lengthy defense of his actions to the Secretary of War strongly emphasizing the necessity of making American strength visible to the Indians between the Missouri and the Spanish settlements in New Mexico. He saw a definite need to draw the natives away from Spanish influence; to Wilkinson the need was imperative. 40 Official Washington apparently was not impressed, and with trouble increasing on the Texas-Louisiana frontier troops were being concentrated in that area. By May of the following year Wilkinson himself was in command

38 Dearborn to Wilkinson, November 21, 1805, ibid., 290.

39 Ibid.

40 Wilkinson to Dearborn, December 30, 1805, ibid., 355-56.
along the Sabine. The military emergency, however, did not deter this army commander from setting afoot one of the most famous and controversial of all western expeditions.

Zebulon Pike had barely returned from the upper reaches of the Mississippi when Wilkinson dispatched him to the Southwest. Exactly what part the Pike expedition played regarding the General's personal ambitions is not readily discernable. The Burr Conspiracy was well underway at this time, and Wilkinson was a major figure in it. Any information he could obtain about Spanish strength in the Santa Fe region could only prove advantageous. From a military point of view, however, the Pike expedition could not be considered out of line with military preparedness. The Indian problem did not need attention, and the explosive military situation was real.

In light of the above the question arises, did the General purposely set the stage? Again, the answer is not easily found. What role did Zebulon Pike play in the drama? To his dying day Pike would contend that his expedition to the west had no connection with the Burr Conspiracy. If the explorer's words may be accepted at face value, one can refer to his Account published in 1810, where he states,

The great objects in view by this expedition (as I conceived) in addition to my instructions, were
to attach the Indians to our government, and to acquire such geographical knowledge of the south-western boundary of Louisiana as to enable government to enter into a definitive arrangement for a line of demarkation [sic] between that territory and North Mexico.41

The official correspondence of the Pike expedition tends to support this statement completely, but many historians have a strong suspicion that the Lieutenant received additional secret instructions of a less savory nature. What about the personal character of Zebulon Montgomery Pike? Here again there is little agreement among historians. One respected author describes Pike as an "ambitious young officer, who was looking forward to a captain's commission."42 Another writer states that Pike's actions were "prompted by selfishness and vanity and carried out in stupidity -- on which last count, certainly it would not be hard to sustain a conviction."43

---


42 Cox, "Opening the Santa Fe Trail," 47.

43 Loomis, Pedro Vial . . ., p. 235.
"innocent pawn." Donald Jackson, the foremost present-day scholar on the Pike expeditions, believes the young junior officer to have been basically honest and loyal, a "rather simple soldier." Jackson concludes that Pike was guilty of nothing more than attempting to explore the West and spy for his country. He was a spy and proud to be one. The fact does remain, however, that General Wilkinson ordered the Pike expedition on his own authority without seeking prior authority from Washington, D.C. -- a point on which he had been carefully briefed.

Pike received his orders in June, 1806. By this date Lewis and Clark were back on the upper reaches of the Missouri on their return trek and the Freeman expedition up the Red River had been turned back by the Spanish. At the moment there were legitimate reasons existing for sending Pike west.

44 Smelser, The Democratic Republic, p. 131.


46 Donald Jackson, "How Lost was Zebulon Pike?" American Heritage (February, 1965), 75-80.
Some Osage Indians needed to be escorted back to their villages; the Kansas had sought American aid in making peace with the Osages, and, as no successful contact had been made with the Comanche tribes, the General felt the time was appropriate. To these duties Wilkinson added instructions for Pike to explore the headwaters of the Arkansas River. Upon the completion of this reconnaissance he was to proceed to the Red River and descend that river to the United States post at Natchitoches. This part of the expedition could easily have been scientific and military purposes to benefit the nation, Wilkinson's personal ambitions notwithstanding.

The instructions to Pike read in part,

As your Interview with the Cammanchees [sic] will probably lead you to the Head Branches of the Arkansaw [sic], and Red Rivers you may find yourself approximate to the settlements of New Mexico, and therefore it will be necessary you should move with great circumspection, to keep clear of any Hunting or reconnoitring parties from that province, & to prevent alarm or offense because the affairs of Spain, & the United States appear to be on the point of amicable adjustment, and more over it is the desire of the President, to cultivate the Friendship & Harmonious Intercourse of all the Nations of the Earth, & particularly our near neighbors the Spaniards. . . .
It is an object of much interest with the Executive, to ascertain the direction, extent, & navigation of the Arkansaw, & Red Rivers; as far therefore as may be compatible with these instructions and practicable to the means you may command, I wish you to carry your views to those subjects, . . . 47

Additional instructions were issued to Pike on July 12, 1806, informing him that a Dr. John Hamilton Robinson was to join the party as a volunteer surgeon. 48 It is this move that greatly increases the factors of intrigue and espionage surrounding the motivation of Wilkinson and the whole Pike expedition. In addition to his stated duties, Robinson was entrusted with the ostensible mission of collecting the monetary claims that the St. Louis merchant William Morrison had against the trader Baptiste La Lande, who had departed for Santa Fe in 1804 and had never returned. 49 Many works on the Pike expedition, including the

47 Wilkinson to Pike, June 24, 1806, Jackson, Journals of Pike, I, 285-87.

48 Wilkinson to Pike, July 12, 1806, ibid., 288-89.

49 The Morrison-Lalande incident was developed in Chapter II, above.
dated but respected edition of Pike's Journals by Elliot Coues, see the addition of Robinson to the expedition as proof that Santa Fe and not the Red River was the primary objective of the venture. Wilkinson's motives remain a question mark.

Zebulon Montgomery Pike with his detachment of one lieutenant (James B. Wilkinson, the General's son), nineteen men, an interpreter and a volunteer surgeon, set out on July 15, 1806. They headed up the Missouri to the Osage River, following that river to its source and continuing to the Kansas, on whose Republican Fork they held council with the Pawnees. They then turned southwest, crossing the branches of the Kansas River including Smokeyhill Forks, to the Arkansas. It was here that Lt. Wilkinson was sent down

50 Goetzmann, Exploration and Empire . . . , p. 47. Professor Goetzmann relies on Coues for most of his conclusions about the Pike expedition. Issac J. Cox believes Robinson's real purpose for being a member of the expedition was to carry out Wilkinson's object of exploring a trail directly to Santa Fe. See Cox, "Opening the Santa Fe Trail," 48. In his two volume work on the fur trade Chittenden notes that "every circumstance of the expedition indicates that it was all a scheme to get into Santa Fe . . .," The American Fur Trade . . ., II, 493. Donald Jackson disagrees completely. He notes that Robinson brought no private communications from Wilkinson to Salcedo, and that the former was not a party to "the General's shadowy intrigues with Spain." See Jackson, Journals of Pike, II, 206.
river with despatches and a map of the region thus far traversed.\textsuperscript{51} The remaining group, alarmed somewhat by evidence that a large Spanish party had recently visited the area (a point discussed below), turned west rather than continuing in a southerly direction. The Rockies were first sighted in mid-November which Pike described as

\begin{quote}
a spur of the grand western chain of mountains which divide the waters of the Pacific from those of the Atlantic oceans, ... they appear to present a natural boundary between the province of Louisiana and New Mexico and would be a defined and natural boundary. \textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

This statement by Pike seems to be further evidence that he was relying on the Humboldt map. It has been indicated above that Baron von Humboldt relied heavily upon Mier y Pacheco's map of the famous Escalante expedition for his "Map of the Kingdom of New Spain." By his own admission the German scientist noted that most of the western part of North America was "still but very imperfectly known,"\textsuperscript{53} and,


\textsuperscript{52} Journal Entry for November 15, 1806, \textit{ibid.}, I, 345.

\textsuperscript{53} Wheat, \textit{The Spanish Entrada} ..., I, 132-33.
although he was reluctant to "draw from suspicious sources," he incorporated the cartographic efforts of the Spanish for the entire northwestern third of his famous map published in 1811. Since Mier y Pacheco (and Humboldt) had pictured the Rocky Mountains as the spine or backbone of North America in which all the major rivers of the continent had their source, it is little wonder that Pike came to his geographical conclusions.

To continue with the expedition, the remainder of November and December were spent exploring the Rockies north to the sources of the South Platte and as far south as the Sangre de Cristos Mountains of southern Colorado and New Mexico. It was during these weeks that Pike came to the conclusion that the sources of the Platte and Arkansas came from "that grand reservoir of snows and fountains," a

54 Ibid., 134. Humboldt's "Map of the Kingdom of New Spain," was published in two large sheets and extends from Natchitoches on the east to the head of the Gulf of California on the west, and from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec on the south, to the "Lac de Timpanogos" on the north.


reservoir which also fed the other major rivers flowing forth from the Rocky Mountain chain, including the Red River. Carl Wheat calls this idea the most forceful expression to date of the long-held hypothesis of a common continental river source. William Clark swallowed this notion lock, stock, and barrel, and added the information later to his famous manuscript map of the Western country. Yet another step in the perpetuation of mythical geography.

In mid-January, after leaving some of his men in a small fort on the Fountain river, a tributary of the upper Arkansas, Pike set out with Dr. Robinson and twelve men toward the south. Two weeks later the party reached the Rio Grande which Pike believed (?) to be the Red River. On the Rio Consejos, a small branch of the Rio Grande, the

57 Wheat, From Lewis and Clark . . . , II, 18.

58 Ibid. Some inferences about Western geography indicate that Pike may have seen a copy of William Clark's map of 1805. This map was drawn while Lewis and Clark were wintering with the Mandans in 1804-05 and was sent down the Missouri in the spring. For the country west of the Mandan villages, Clark relied wholly upon second-hand knowledge and legend. On this map the headwaters of the Yellowstone and the South Platte intertwine, and the sources of the Arkansas, Rio Grande and the Colorado are close by. Donald Jackson notes that Pike himself "could hardly have drawn a better representation of his reservoir of snows and fountains."

Jackson, Journals of Pike, I, 461.
half-frozen party constructed a rude stockade. It was here on February 26, 1807, that a detachment of Spanish soldiers arrived to "escort" Pike and his men to Santa Fe. When told he was on the Rio Grande, Pike's retort was simply "is not this the Red River."\footnote{59 Journal Entry for February 26, 1806, \textit{ibid.}, 384.}

Whether he was truly lost or not has remained a controversial point among historians. Given the state of geographic knowledge and cartographic accuracy at the time, one could easily agree with Carl Wheat's evaluation of Pike's geographic conclusions. He contends that Pike, using the maps available to him, should hardly be condemned for not recognizing the distinction between the various rivers, none of which he had seen. Pike's confusion regarding the rivers of the West and his "reservoir of snows" idea were both "part and parcel of the ideas of the age."\footnote{60 Wheat, \textit{From Lewis and Clark . . .}, II, 26-27.}

Accident or no, Pike and his men were on Spanish soil and were escorted to the New Mexican Capital as closely guarded "guests" of the Spanish government. If he were a spy he surely had an opportunity seldom afforded men in that
profession. Before his sojourn was complete he had ample time to observe everything about New Mexico, and, as it turned out, much of Northern New Spain. By the second of March the American party was in Santa Fe. From there Pike and his group were escorted to Chihuahua where the Commandant-General could make a final decision on the future of the expedition. Although his notes and papers were confiscated, Pike was treated in a manner befitting his rank and position. After several weeks at the Provincial headquarters of Nemesio Salcedo, the Americans were escorted across Texas to Natchitoches, reaching that post on July 1, 1807. Back on American soil Zebulon Pike had completed what one writer describes as the most successful espionage operation ever conducted in recorded American history.

---

61 For an interesting description of Santa Fe see Pike's Journal Entry for March 2, 1806, Jackson, Journals of Pike, I, 391-92. Among his other impressions of the town he noted, "Its appearance from a distance, struck my mind with the same effect as a fleet of the flat bottomed boats, which are seen in the spring and fall seasons, descending the Ohio River. There are two churches, the magnificence of whose steeples form a striking contrast to the miserable appearance of the houses." For information regarding the trip to Chihuahua and reception in that city see Alencaster's Memorandum, April 10, 1807, and Pike to Nemesio Salcedo, April 14, 1807, ibid., II, 193-97.

62 Goetzmann, Exploration and Empire ..., p. 50. Professor Goetzmann no doubt bases his remark on the fact that Pike returned to the United States able to give
Another aspect of the Pike expedition which only further confuses the issue was the fact that General Wilkinson, knowing the mistrust and fear of the Spaniards to American encroachment, seems to have warned them that Pike was coming. Historians generally accept that Wilkinson had now decided to abandon Aaron Burr and used Pike and his men as hostages to assure the Spanish of his good faith, and, at the same time, Pike could act as a spy for the General's own personal gains. It was thus to prevent a border clash that Wilkinson probably leaked the secret of Pike's mission, even before the young officer departed St. Louis.63

Regardless of how the Spanish were alerted they acted; almost simultaneously with the departure of Pike, the greatest expedition the Spanish had ever sent out from New Mexico left American officials much information about the Spanish in the Southwest.

63 Writing after his return to the United States, but included as a footnote to the journal entry for September 25, 1805, in the 1810 edition of his Journals, Pike states that the news of his expedition was furnished Salcedo through Captain Stephen Minor of Natchez. Minor was the last Spanish commandant at Natchez and was an associate of Wilkinson. In fact, when the General was ordered from St. Louis to the border at Natchitoches in 1806, Mrs. Wilkinson lodged with the Minor family. See Jackson, Journals of Pike, I, 323.
Santa Fe to detain this latest American effort to reach the Rockies. The expedition that the Spaniards dispatched consisted of regular troops from Nueva Vizcaya to which were added 400 militia and 100 Indians at Santa Fe. The commander, Lieutenant Facundo Melgares, led this number, plus 2000 horses and mules and supplies for six months, down the Red River for several hundred leagues. They then turned to the Republican River and the Pawnee country of Kansas. Melgares had a multiple mission to accomplish: explore the territory between New Mexico and the Missouri, intercept the American party coming up the Red River (Freeman expedition), and intercept the Pike expedition. In retrospect the Spanish endeavor did not accomplish too much. Another Spanish force had already met and turned back Freeman, and Melgares preceded the Pike group to the Pawnees by about a month. He did make a show of strength to the Indians, but the effort did not prove long lasting. Taking into custody a few traders he found along his route, Melgares returned to Santa Fe. His were the Spanish troops reported by Pike in September, 1806.64

64 Ibid., 323-25. Clark to Dearborn, May 18, 1807, William Clark Collection, MSS, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Mo.
To say that the Spanish were disturbed by the Pike mission would greatly understate the case. Beginning in April, 1807, the correspondence between the various Spanish frontier officials, and between Salcedo and Wilkinson mounted. Early in April the Commandant-General vigorously protested to Wilkinson about American projects into territory "unquestionably belonging to his majesty."\(^65\) Salcedo informed the American commander that Pike's papers would be retained, and further stressed that

the documents contain evident, unequivocal proofs, that an offense of magnitude has been committed against his majesty, and that every individual of this party ought to have been considered as prisoners on the very spot, notwithstanding such substantial and well grounded motives that would have warranted such a measure.\(^66\)

Before two more months had passed every Spanish frontier official, the Viceroy in Mexico City and the Spanish Minister in Washington had been well apprised of the Pike

\(^65\) Salcedo to Wilkinson, April 8, 1807, Jackson, Journals Of Pike, II, 185.

\(^66\) Ibid., 185-86.
expedition. 67 Real Alencaster, the Governor in Santa Fe, was naturally the most concerned should Pike's venture be followed by other Americans. In fact a rumor had been "planted" by men in the Pike group that several thousand troops would soon be on their way to rescue the Americans. Accordingly, in the months following the presence of the Pike party in Santa Fe, Governor Alencaster sent out several parties to reconnoiter the areas of possible American approach. 68

James Wilkinson actually "directed" the Pike expedition from his headquarters in New Orleans and on the Sabine. It will be recalled that the Summer of 1806 was a most trying period along the Texas-Louisiana border. The Spanish were determined to establish a garrison on the east side of the Sabine, and America would not allow such a move. The danger of war was great. Governor Claiborne of the Orleans Territory called for more troops as his military strength was weak. Responding to the plea, Secretary of War Dearborn ordered

67 Donald Jackson prints a number of these letters in his two volume edition of Pike's Journals.

68 Loomis, Pedro Vial . . ., pp. 241-42. Alencaster must have had little knowledge of America's actual military strength along the frontier.
Wilkinson to proceed without delay to the troubled area. "You will . . . take upon yourself the command of the Troops in that quarter," the Secretary directed, "and you will, by all the means in your power, repel any invasion of the Territory of the United States, East of the River Sabine . . ." 69 The order was dated May 6, 1806, but Wilkinson did not reach the trouble spot until September. In typical Wilkinson fashion his delay was explained away in official correspondence with the Secretary of War, but the Pike endeavor and the Burr conspiracy probably figured large in his itinerary. In all fairness to the General, however, it should be mentioned that his wife was suffering a terminal illness in St. Louis. She did eventually accompany Wilkinson as far as Natchez. 70

Actually Jefferson was thankful for an opportunity to remove Wilkinson from the Governorship in St. Louis. The latter had alienated both the military and civilian factions in the city because of his rather stringent regulations. He

69 Dearborn to Wilkinson, May 6, 1806, Carter, Territorial Papers, XIII, 505-07.

70 See footnote number 63.
had become quite unpopular. Jefferson could see no reason to keep an unpopular governor in the Territory of Louisiana, but he did need a competent general along the Sabine; hence the order from Dearborn. 71

There is yet a major point about the whole Pike enterprise which needs some examination. Zebulon Pike was ordered to the headwaters of the Arkansas by General Wilkinson, not by the War Department or by the President. What reaction did the officials in Washington have to this move by their frontier general and governor, a type of activity about which he had been so earnestly cautioned? It is here that the records provide little. As the Pike expedition was not a secret mission in the strictest sense, Secretary of War Dearborn was obviously informed, but to what extent? The Register of Letters Received by the Secretary of War contains an entry for a letter from Wilkinson dated June 28, 1806; the notation reads: "Mode proposed to send the Indians &c. to their Villages," but the letter has not survived. 72 Later


72. Wilkinson to Dearborn, June 28, 1806, National Archives, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107, Registers of Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Main Series, 1800-70 (Microcopy 22), Roll 3. The Wilkinson Papers, MSS, Chicago Historical Society,
statements, however, clearly indicate that the administration gave its approval if not always officially so stated. Jefferson, in his annual message to Congress in December, 1806, had only praise for Pike's Mississippi exploration.

Very useful additions have also been made to our knowledge of the Mississippi by Lieutenant Pike who ascended to its source, and whose journal and map, giving the details of the journey, will shortly be ready for communication to both houses of Congress. Those of Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, and Freeman, will require further time to be digested and prepared. These important surveys, in addition to those before possessed, furnish materials for commencing an accurate map of the Mississippi, and its western waters. Some principal rivers, however, remain still to be explored, . . . 73

In the Summer of 1807, when the correspondence between the Spanish and Americans over the Pike expedition was rather

Chicago, Illinois, do not throw any light on this matter. In fact, the Wilkinson Papers are very limited in their value for this investigation; the greater part are written to Wilkinson, but the letters from Pike are conspicuous by their absence.

73 Sixth Annual Message to Congress, December 2, 1806, Ford, The Writings of Jefferson, VIII, 315. A search of the correspondence between the President and his Secretaries of War and State reveal no comments on the Pike expedition prior to the above.
heavy, the President, in a communiqué to Dearborn, suggested some ideas that Wilkinson might use in answering Commandant-General Salcedo. Re-stating this nation's argument that the land to the Rio Grande was included in the Louisiana Purchase, President Jefferson was quite emphatic that there could be no question about the Red River of Texas. Spain had never made a settlement on that river, whereas the French had made several. Jefferson also defended the scientific purpose of Pike's mission and seems to have been fully convinced that the American explorer must have been lost when he "got on the waters of the Rio Norte, instead of those of the Red River." That Jefferson also saw the diplomatic advantage of such an argument may be prudently inferred. Nevertheless he maintained this stand throughout the years of Spanish protestations.

In 1808, when Pike's Journals were sent to the President by Dearborn, the latter suggested that it might be proper to give Pike some "extra compensation, or other notice," for

74 Jefferson to Dearborn, June 22, 1807, Ford, Writings of Thomas Jefferson, IX, 85-86.

75 Jefferson to Madison, August 30, 1807, Jackson, Journals of Pike, II, 268. Madison to Foronda, September 2, 1807, ibid., 269. Valentin de Foronda was consul general and chargé d'affaires to the United States from Spain, April 17, 1805 - September 26, 1809.
his efforts. The following month Pike received a letter from the Secretary of War which clearly stated the attitude of the administration. Henry Dearborn had the following to say to the young explorer:

I . . . can with pleasure observe that altho' the two exploring expeditions you have performed were not previously ordered by the President of the U.S. there were frequent communications on the subject of each, between Genl. Wilkinson & this Department, of which the President of the U.S. was acquainted from time to time, and it will be no more than what justice requires, to say that your conduct in each of those expeditions met the approbation of the President and that the Information you obtained and communicated to the Executive in relation to the sources of the Mississippi & the natives in that quarter, and the country generally, as well on the upper Mississippi as that between the Arkansas, & the Missouri, and on the borders of the latter extensive river to its source and the adjacent country, has been considered as highly interesting in a political, geographical, & historical view. And you may rest assured that your services are held in high estimation by the President of the U.S., and . . . I consider the public much indebted to you . . .

---

76 Dearborn to Jefferson, January 29, 1808, ibid., 289.

77 Dearborn to Pike, February 24, 1808, ibid., 300-01.
The above letter made it quite obvious that, given the boundary question, the Indian problems and the diplomatic situation faced by his administration, Jefferson was fully aware of the value of Pike's ventures, and was not going to quibble over discrepancies in protocol no longer pertinent.

Before leaving the subject of the Pike expedition it would be well to look briefly to some of the longer range effects of this mission. Pike's report, compiled largely from memory, came out in 1810 (several years earlier than the published Lewis and Clark journals), and was the most significant work on the Southwest up to that date. Several things he had to say affected American attitudes towards the Great Plains and the Spanish Southwest for many years. In describing the "internal deserts" over which he had traveled to Santa Fe, Pike noted,

These vast plains of the western hemisphere may become in time equally celebrated as the sandy deserts [sic] of Africa; for I saw in my route, in various places, tracts of many leagues, where the wind had thrown up the sand, in all fanciful forms of the ocean's rolling wave, and on which not a speck of vegetable matter existed.

---

78 Pike's Dissertation on Louisiana, ibid., 27.
Pike continued his description emphasizing an idea that would have certainly appealed to President Jefferson.

But from these immense prairies may arise one great advantage to the United States, viz: The restriction of our population to some certain limits, and thereby a continuation of the union. Our citizens being so prone to rambling and extending themselves, on the frontiers, will, through necessity, be constrained to limit their extent on the west, to the borders of the Missouri and Mississippi, while they leave the prairies incapable of cultivation to the wandering and uncivilized aborigines of the country. 79

It is largely because of the above statements that historians see Pike as one of the early promoters of the Great American Desert idea; an idea which was perpetuated for a number of decades by other explorers and traders. 80

The maps published by Zebulon M. Pike were the first maps of the Southwest to be derived from actual exploration

---

79 Ibid., 27-28.

by Americans, and in that sense are of great historic value. The Red and Canadian rivers were still confused, but the lower Arkansas region was charted with much more accuracy than on previous maps. The Provincias Internas, however, were still largely a plagiarism of the Alexander von Humboldt map of New Spain, which was likewise, as indicated earlier, based on other cartographic efforts. Despite the errors and misconceptions prevalent at the time, Carl Wheat sees the Pike maps as "milestones in the mapping of the American West." 81

The return of Zebulon Pike in July, 1807, just as the return of Lewis and Clark the previous September, opened the flood gates to adventurous traders and trappers. Trade with the Indians up the Missouri and the western rivers was nothing new, but the return of these two major expeditions encouraged adventurers that the prospect for vast sources of fur bearing animals and profitable markets were better than they had ever hoped. Trade was the chief occupation on the frontier; even General Wilkinson, while directing the Pike mission, engaged in a trading venture. It was not successful, but the organization of trading companies in St. Louis

was a favorite occupation, and Wilkinson, with an eye for
easy money, let no opportunity pass him by. 82

Except for the fact that the Federal Government had
set down specific rules and regulations concerning the
licensing of traders, and determined the areas of exclusive
trading rights, the many trading expeditions out of St. Louis
and other points were private in character -- a number being
clandestine ventures to evade government restrictions. Many
of the traders directed their efforts to the upper Missouri
and into the area watered by the Yellowstone, Big Horn and
Snake rivers. Their adventurers, while interesting and of
great importance to the history of the American West, are
not of immediate concern here. The lure of Santa Fe also
attracted more than a few traders and trappers; the names of
Jacques Clamorgan (a name already noted in earlier trader
activity) and Manuel Lisa being only two of the better

82 Very soon after the departure of Zebulon Pike,
Wilkinson sent a John McClallen to the Platte with goods to
trade. McClallen was an army captain who had come west with
Wilkinson in 1805. He brought several thousands of dollars
worth of goods with him to use in the Indian trade after
resigning his commission. This is the man Wilkinson was
referring to in a letter to Secretary of War Dearborn when
he stated that he had "engaged a bold adventurer, who
served under me during the late Indian War . . . to look at
St. Afee in person pending the Winter . . ." Wilkinson to
Dearborn, September 8, 1805, Carter, Territorial Papers,
XIII, 199. Lewis and Clark met McClallen on September 17,
VI. SECTION OF IKE'S MAP OF THE INTERIOR PROVINCES

known. In fact, these two figures were secret partners for a time. In the game of trading and trapping, partners today could easily become competitors tomorrow.

In the very year of Pike's return Chamorgan, now well advanced in age, with money and goods furnished by Lisa, made a trip to Santa Fe, arriving in that city on December 12, 1807. He had earlier received a license to trade with the Pawnee Republic, and this served as a ruse for his larger schemes. He reached Santa Fe, but did not find the warm welcome he possibly expected and was quickly escorted to Chihuahua as Pike had been. In that city he sold his goods and returned to St. Louis the following year. Clamorgan has the distinction of being the first American to earn profits on a trip to Santa Fe. He did not repeat his venture, but the information he offered to the public about trade possibilities no doubt whetted the appetite of many. 83

1806, and he told them that he was on "reather"[sic] a speculative expedition to the confines of New Spain with the view to entroduce [sic] a trade with those people." Journal Entry for September 17, 1806, Bernard DeVoto (ed.), The Journals of Lewis and Clark (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), p. 474. There is no evidence that McClallen ever reached Santa Fe.

The more important and controversial trader to appear on the scene at this time was Manuel Lisa. His activities were many and varied, being the subject of several scholarly studies. Hardly anyone engaging in merchandizing and trade, including Auguste Chouteau, had not worked in partnership with Lisa, only to find in him a bitter competitor a short while later. He was one of the most dynamic men in the Missouri country, having been active in and around St. Louis for years. One historian describes him thusly: "He made the wild Missouri River his highway, and the savages along its shores were his suppliers and his customers. He was a schemer and a driver. . . ." 84 Chittenden, in his famous work on the fur trade, remarks that in boldness of enterprise and restless energy Lisa was "a fair representative of the Spaniards of the days of Cortez." 85

84 Loomis, Pedro Vial . . ., pp. 246-47. For an excellent detailed study of this controversial figure who seemed to be always present and active when there was a profit to be made, and far away when bills were to be collected, one may refer to Walter B. Douglas, Manuel Lisa, Edited by A. P. Nasatir (New York: Argosy Antiquarian Ltd., 1964). Another excellent study is Richard Edward Oglesby, Manuel Lisa and Opening of the Missouri Fur Trade (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963).

Although Lisa's major activity was to the north of the Santa Fe region, the possibility of lucrative connections with that Spanish outpost was given more than a passing thought. The Pike expedition interested him very much. In August, 1806, while tracking the Great Plains, Pike received a message from Wilkinson warning him that Manuel Lisa was contemplating some type of commercial venture with the Spanish in Santa Fe. Wilkinson noted that such a contract would be "injurious to the United States." 86 The General further commented,

I understand [the project] will be attempted without the sanction of Law, or the permission of the executive, you must do what you can consistently to defeat the Plan. No Good can be derived to the United States from such a project, because the prosecution of it will depend entirely on the Spaniards, & they will not permit it unless to serve their political as well as personal Interests. 87

86 Wilkinson to Pike, August 6, 1806, Jackson, Journals of Pike, II, 134.

87 Proclamation Against Burr's Plot, November 27, 1806, Ford, The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, X, 301-02.
Lisa apparently dropped the plan at this time only to revive it more forcefully in 1812.

The years following the Clamorgan and Lisa attempts to interest the Spanish in American trade saw many more individual traders and trappers head for Santa Fe; the long list includes such names as María Raphael Henderson, Joseph McLanahan, Reuben Smith, James Patterson and Emanuel Blanco, to name a few of the better known. The exact number of fearless men who tracked the vast American West can only be speculated, for documentary evidence is slim. Following the Pike expedition and the trouble along the Sabine, most of these men were not welcomed by the Spanish at Santa Fe, and only served to further alarm His Majesty's frontier officers. To distinguish clandestine from legitimate enterprises became an almost impossible task for the Spaniards.

Meanwhile other events began to occupy the minds and efforts of American officials. The problems with England and France were mounting. These two nations were once again at war, and the United States as a neutral nation was finding it more difficult each month to maintain its neutrality. The British Orders in Council and the Continental System laid down by Napoleon made it quite unsafe for American ships to ply the Atlantic Ocean. Impressment of American seamen by
the British was an especially thorny issue.

In an attempt to meet these problems Jefferson drew up his famous Embargo which was implemented in 1807. The soundness of this boycott is still a subject of debate among historians. The immediate effects of the Embargo Act were less than Jefferson had hoped for, as neither England nor France substantially changed their tactics relative to American shipping and maritime rights. Meanwhile a domestic crisis developed because of the embargo, and Jefferson was faced with a barrage of criticism. The Federalists made political capital out of the misfortunes consequent on the embargo. Much of their case was manufactured, for the embargo did not cause all the harm they claimed, but actual damage was sufficient to further their political hopes for a victory in 1808.

With the nations of Europe again forming alliances, the opportunity for Jefferson to take advantage of Europe's "distress," at least in regard to Spain, once more presented itself. The diplomatic problems between the United States and Spain during the years 1806 and 1807, such as the Texas-Louisiana border dispute and the Pike expedition, have received mention. It should be kept in mind that these were also the years of the Burr Conspiracy, as well as the continued negotiations between America and Spain over the Floridas
and the over-all western boundary settlement. It is interesting to observe how all these questions became intertwined, and how President Jefferson attempted to make the most out of each situation to the advantage of his nation.

The Burr Conspiracy caused Jefferson many agonizing months, and the great (one might even say exaggerated) desire on the part of the President to see Burr convicted of treason is well known. It was on November 27, 1806, that Jefferson issued a proclamation prejudging Aaron Burr guilty of crime and ordering his arrest. In the proclamation the President enjoined and warned

all faithful citizens who have been led to participate in the sd [sic] unlawful enterprises without due knolege [sic] or consideration to withdraw from same without delay . . . to cease all further proceedings therein as they will answer to the contrary at their peril, and will incur prosecution with all the rigors of the law. 88

In the above proclamation, as well as in subsequent communiques, the Governors of Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio and

88 Proclamation Against Burr's Plot, November 27, 1806, Ford, The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, X, 301-02.
Mississippi, and General Wilkinson, were expressly enjoined to search-out and bring to account anyone attempting to conduct or join any type of filibustering expedition into Spanish territory. At the same time Jefferson made it perfectly clear that Spanish activity on the western side of the Mississippi made it necessary for all governors of the aforementioned states and territories to keep their respective militias in readiness. The men would not be called upon unless there was some form of aggression, but when called "it will not be for a lounging, but for an active, & perhaps distant, service."89

Jefferson used the fact that he took such stern action in the case of Aaron Burr as a lever to indicate to the Spanish that he was sincere in wanting to arrive at an amicable settlement with them. At the same time, knowing the predicament she was in vis-à-vis France, the President wanted to impress upon Spain the power of America and what this nation was capable of doing if it so desired. It was now that Jefferson followed a line of argument which lends credence to those historians who like to see an expansionist-minded American President. In directives to the United States Minister in

89 Circular Letter to the Governors of Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi, March 21, 1807, ibid., IX, 34-35.
Spain Jefferson does outline a rather bellicose approach that our minister should follow in his discussion with the Spanish. After noting that the Spanish should realize our good faith by the "vigor with which we have acted, & the expense incurred in suppressing the enterprise meditated lately by Burr against Mexico," he further implied that should she so desire, the United States could "be in possession of the city of Mexico" in but one month. 90

In another letter in August of the same year referring to "western intrigues" by the Spanish, Jefferson noted,

Our southern defensive force can take the Floridas, volunteers for a Mexican army will flock to our standard, and rich pabulum will be offered to our privateers in the plunder of their commerce & coasts. Probably Cuba would add itself to our confederation. 91

The above remarks by President Thomas Jefferson do indeed smack of the concepts of Manifest Destiny; yet when put in their proper perspective they lose some of the character of

90 Jefferson to the U.S. Minister to Spain, April 2, 1807, ibid., 40-41.

91 Jefferson to Madison, August 16, 1807, ibid., 124-25.
a consciously thought-out plan of action, and assume more the flavor of diplomatic pressure.

Thus with the political and diplomatic situations in such a precarious state during the last months of his administration, Jefferson's attention was understandably focused on matters of more immediate concern than exploring a road to Santa Fe. He did not ignore the western fringes of Louisiana, nor did he forget about the Indian problems facing the government. In fact, the trouble between the United States and England was directly related to our Indian policy. The British were still in Canada, and British traders were quite active along the Upper Mississippi and Missouri rivers as well as along the rivers of the Pacific Northwest. The influence of British traders among the American Indians had given United States officials concern for a number of years.

It is interesting to note that the bulk of correspondence between Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, who had been appointed Governor and Indian Agent for the Territory of Louisiana respectively, was concerned with the danger of British traders among the Indian tribes of Upper Louisiana.  

---

92 M eriwether Lewis became Governor of the Territory in March, 1807; William Clark was appointed Indian Agent in the same month. Carter, Territorial Papers, XIV, 107-09.
Governor Lewis drew attention of the War Department to the situation and informed Dearborn that he had dispatched spies to learn the designs of the Indians;

The design of the indians are soon changed by interest; the Spaniards have no merchansize to attach them firmly to them -- the british have, [sic] and it is to them that I look more particularly for all our pending evils on the frontier, and I sincerely hope that the general government in their philanthropic feelings towards the indians will not loose [sic] sight of the safety of our defenceless [sic] and extended frontiers.93

Again, Dearborn and the President were being reminded that the defense of the frontier was inadequate. An examination of the correspondence of both Lewis and Clark to the Secretary of War reveal that they stressed the same points urged so often by James Wilkinson. In June, 1807, Clark informed the Secretary of War that,

the Militia (when organized) are so scattered that they will afford but a feeble defence to extensive frontiers of this Territory against the Indians. . . . To prevent the

93 Lewis to Dearborn, July 1, 1808, Carter, Territorial Papers, XIV, 200.
probability [sic] of an Indian war
(which can only be effected by Spanish
or British influence and intreague [sic]
it will in my oppinion [sic] be neces-
sary to have some establishments of
troops in the Indian Country; . . . 94

Men on the frontier were also in line with Jefferson's
idea of concentrating the white population east of the Mis-
sissippi River. One official suggested to the President that,

transfer [of the] inhabitants of a
great portion of this upper Terri-
tory to some other part of the Union
or territory, say New Orleans or the
east side of the Mississippi, there-
by making the settlements more compact,
facilitating the administration of
justice and making us more strong in
those parts where we are the most ex-
posed and vulnerable from the attacks
of foreign enemies . . . 95

Meanwhile the Spanish were reverting to an "iron
curtain" frontier policy and continuing to protest the Pike

94 Clark to Dearborn, June 1, 1807, ibid., 126-27.
Other than the two letters cited above, Lewis and Clark do
not seem to express concern for the Spanish in any of their
correspondence.

95 Edward F. Bond to Jefferson, October 17, 1806,
Jefferson Papers, MSS, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Mo.
expedition including the motives behind it. The position of the Spanish government relative to its New World colonies was also quite unsettled at the moment; Napoleon's march into Spain did little to better the situation. When Napoleon's brother Joseph was placed on the throne of Spain, the people did not accept him and continued to resist the imperial army until it was forced to return to France in 1813. During the period of French occupation the Spanish Cortez declared for Ferdinand VII, and the governments throughout the Spanish colonies largely followed suit. The vacillating Ferdinand, however, soon caused disillusionment among colonial leaders and the groundwork for the independence movement was laid, destined to break forth in 1810. The movement would grow during the next decade until the cry for independence spread throughout Spain's entire colonial empire.

Amidst the precarious political and diplomatic situations facing the United States, spoken of earlier, the country was witness to another constitutional change of government. In the election of 1808, Thomas Jefferson chose not to run for office and the Republican mantle fell to James Madison. Jefferson retired to Monticello and the problems of state were then taken up by President Madison who defeated his Federalist opponent in the election. The approaching War of 1812
occupied the attention of Madison to a greater degree than any other matter, but the frontier problems remained and the interest of Americans in the Southwest continued to grow.
CHAPTER V

THE WESTERN BOUNDARY IS SETTLED

When the Marques de Casa Yrujo left the United States in 1807, effective representation of Spain in this country came to an end for several years. It is true that Valentín de Foronda and Jose Ignacio Viar, were left behind as chargés d'affaires, or, more properly, encargodos de negocios, but these two men seemed to have spent more time arguing among themselves than representing their home government. At this same time the relations between the United States and England were deteriorating and Spain was placed in a rather precarious position should war break out between these two nations. Accordingly the encargodos stopped bickering long enough to pressure their government to appoint a minister of sufficient rank and powers to adequately represent Spain in America. The result of their plea was the appointment of Don Luis de Onís by the Junta Central in 1809.¹

¹Foronda to Consul of Baltimore, September 18, 1809, National Archives, Records of the Department of State, Record 200
It was essential for Spain to have accurate information concerning the ambitions of American relative to westward expansion. Likewise, every effort had to be made to influence the United States Government on all matters touching Spain to the advantage and well-being of the latter. The appointment of Onís did not immediately rectify the situation, however, for the United States declined to acknowledge the monarchy of Joseph, Napoleon’s brother, or the Junta Central. Therefore, Onís was not officially received by President Madison. George W. Erving, our representative in Madrid, was officially in much the same position as Onís was in this country; that is, he was little more than an observer. Erving finally gave up even that position and left Spain in August, 1810.2

Group 59, Notes From the Spanish Legation in the United States (Microcopy 59), Roll 4. Future references will be designated as SD, Notes From the Spanish Legation. Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands . . ., pp. 8-13. Luis de Onís had been chosen as minister to the United States in 1792, but the fall of the Floridablanca cabinet prevented his serving in this capacity. He was active in the Peace of Amiens in 1802, and went to Bayonne at the request of Cevallos from where he wrote his opinion of Ferdinand’s renunciation of the Spanish crown. Onís felt the King neither could nor should make such a concession; this stand made it necessary for him to flee Spain and he joined the Junta Central. He arrived in the United States on October 4, 1809.

2 Ibid., p. 13.
Meanwhile, Luis de Onís made friends, listened, communicated and traveled. He distrusted the Republican Party, and seems never to have become friendly with either President Madison or James Monroe, who took up the duties of Secretary of State in 1811. Onís made the most of his friendships among the Federalists using them as sources of information as well as of influence. Failing to receive official recognition, the Spanish Minister retired to Philadelphia, where he found more convenient channels of communication, especially through his association with Alexander J. Dallas, the United States district attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

The troubled Spanish Government faced another grave crisis in the opening guns of violent revolutions in the Western Hemisphere which were eventually to tear her colonial empire to shreds. It was September 16, 1810, in the village of Dolores that Father Miguel Hidalgo sounded his Grito for Mexican independence. True, the Hidalgo uprising was soon quelled, and the priest himself faced a firing squad the

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 17.\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
following July. The flames of revolution had been ignited, however, and the independence movements throughout Mexico and the rest of Spain's colonial empire did not come to a rest until their goals had been reached.

Of especial interest to this study would be the course of the Mexican revolutionary movement, particularly as it affected those areas adjacent to United States territory. Spanish subjects in Texas and New Mexico, attempting to free themselves from the yoke of the mother country, could not but give added encouragement to Americans already eyeing the vast Northern Provinces of New Spain. Possible wealth in the form of silver, furs, or trade seemed ready at hand to adventurous souls. Again one can find a decided difference in the attitudes of individual Americans and the United States Government. Even among key governmental officials there were variant ideas and plans relative to the Spanish Southwest.

These variant ideas and plans were not enhanced by advances made in geographic knowledge of the approaches to Santa Fe, the expedition of Zebulon Pike notwithstanding. As noted in the previous chapter, Pike's Journals and maps were published in 1810, but his cartographic efforts gave America's officials little more accurate information of the Provincias Internas than they had up to that date. True, his route up
the Missouri and Osage rivers to the Pawnee villages on the Republican are fairly accurate, but farther west he relied on earlier maps from various sources. Since all of Pike's sketch maps from the Great Bend of the Arkansas westward were taken from him by the Spaniards, it was obviously necessary for him to rely on other than personal observations for his published maps. 5

The year 1810 also saw another major cartographic work published. In that year Aaron Arrowsmith brought out an imposing map entitled "A Map of Mexico and adjacent provinces compiled from original documents." This map was actually a composite of the just-published Pike effort and Baron von Humboldt's famous cartographic work, although neither gentleman's name appeared on it. 6 Thus the two important geographic publications of 1810 added little to accurate scientific knowledge of the vast Spanish Southwest.

Returning to the Latin American revolutionary movements, when news of the Hidalgo uprising reached San Antonio, the principal Spanish bastion in Texas, the local officials

5 Jackson, Journals of Pike, I, 457-64.

declared their loyalty to Ferdinand VII. By January, 1811, however, a revolt against royal authority was led by one Juan Bautista de Casas, who captured Governor Manuel Salcedo and had himself elected to the position of governor ad interim. The revolutionists enjoyed a short-lived power, for royal authority was soon restored, only to be challenged once more in 1812 by filibustering expeditions from the Louisiana-Texas frontier. Thomas Jefferson, in retirement at Monticello, viewed the happenings in Latin America and observed prophetically,

Another great field of political experiment is opening in our neighborhood, in Spanish America. I fear the degrading ignorance into which their priests and kings have sunk them, has disqualified them from the maintenance or even knowledge of their rights, and that much blood be shed for little improvement in their

7 An excellent account of the early revolutionary activities in Texas may be found in Rupert N. Richardson, Texas The Lone Star State (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1967). More specialized studies include, Julia Kathryn Garrett, Green Flag Over Texas (Dallas: Cordova Press, 1939). Mattie Austin Hatcher, The Opening of Texas to Foreign Settlement, 1801-1821 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1927). Issac Joslin Cox, "The Louisiana-Texas Frontier," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, X, No. 1 (July, 1906), and XVI, No. 4 (April, 1913), and XVII, No. 1 (July, 1913), and XVII, No. 2 (October, 1913).
condition. Should their new rulers honestly lay their shoulders to remove the great obstacles of ignorance, and press the remedies of education and information, they will still be in jeopardy until another generation comes into place, and what may happen in the interval cannot be predicted, nor shall . . . I live to see it.8

In Santa Fe there was no open revolt against Spanish authority as in San Antonio, but the people of that city were definitely affected by the political crisis in Spain and the New World. The Junta Central in Spain issued its decree on January 22, 1809, recognizing the Spanish dominions in America as integral parts of the Spanish nation and declaring their right to representation in the Cortes. Representatives to the Spanish congress were to be selected in each provincial capital by the local ayuntamiento (municipal council) from a list of names of the leading citizens. Santa Fe elected its representative in August, 1810. Pedro Bautista Pino, the man chosen, embarked for Spain in October, 1811.9 Historians

8Jefferson to Dupont de Nemours, April 15, 1811, Ford The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, IX, 322.

will be eternally grateful to Pino for the lengthy report or Exposición he prepared for the Cortes. This document provides one of the best sources extant for New Mexican history at the end of the Spanish period. For example, one can learn that New Mexico was still a rather "poor" province with no physician, surgeon or pharmacist for its citizens; agriculture, furnishings and clothing were as yet in a primitive state. According to Pino the state of education was pitiful, and he bemoaned the fact that "for a period of more than two hundred years since the conquest, the province has made no provision for [its citizens] in any of the literary careers."¹⁰ Loomis concludes that it was the lack of artisanship that created the great demand for goods in Santa Fe and was the real reason for the continual attempts at penetration by non-Spaniards.¹¹

¹⁰ H. Bailey Carroll and M. Villasana Haggard (eds. and trans.), Three New Mexico Chronicles (Albuquerque: The Quivira Society, 1942), p. 94. It should be borne in mind that Pino was attempting to make the government of Spain pay more attention to his province; therefore, he did tend to exaggerate to some extent the poor conditions in New Mexico. The poor state of education was also noted by various Spanish officials in New Mexico. See Simmons, Spanish Government, pp. 172-74.

¹¹ Loomis, Pedro Vial, p. 7.
In light of the continual Spanish fear of American encroachment the observations of Pino in his *Exposición* on the subject are of interest here. Under the section entitled "Legal and Judicial Affairs" he had the following to say,

> these official instructions will prove to your majesty the imminent danger of these provinces' falling prey to our neighbors, thus leaving the other provinces to the same fate, one after another. I trust your majesty may become aware of this fact, because the purchase of Louisiana by the United States has opened the way for the Americans to arm and incite the wild Indians against us; also the way is open for the Americans to invade the province. Once the territory is lost, it will be impossible to recover it. Since there is still time to prevent this disaster, your majesty should take advantage of this warning, which incidentally has been brought over by me, because a delay in furnishing remedial relief may permit the development of the evils which are feared by the one who has the honor of making them known to your majesty.12

The warning by Pino was not news to the ears of Spanish officials in Madrid; they had been aware of foreign

---

12 Carroll and Haggard, *Three New Mexico Chronicles*, p. 59.
penetration of their northern frontier for many years. The unrest in Mexico at this time, however, caused renewed alarm, especially since more than a few Americans were ready and willing to aid the revolutionaries by joining filibustering expeditions. The interest of Anglo-Americans in Mexican affairs only proved to Spanish authorities that their fear of many years was justified. The greedy American was only waiting his opportunity.  

Statements by United States officials such as Governor William C. C. Claiborne of the Territory of Orleans could easily convince the Spanish that "official" America was encouraging the activities of its adventurous citizens. Governor Claiborne was a known expansionist, and was not reluctant to voice his ideas relative to United States occupation of Spanish colonial territory. In a letter to the Secretary of the Navy in December, 1811, Claiborne pointed out that if the "Friends of Independence" in Mexico needed money they should turn to America for help. Land as a compensation for aid

---


would be our reward. In another letter the following month the energetic young governor said,

Mexico is again represented to be in a State of Revolution, it would not be difficult to give such direction as might accord with the views & Interests of the United States. Five thousand Regular Troops marched to St. Antoine & fifty thousand stand of Muskets would give Independence to Mexico, & banish forever European Influence; —15

Yet another letter of the same tenor went to a Congressman in January, 1812. The gentleman was informed,

It is indeed time for the Nation & Government to unite in avenging our wrongs... The Canada's surely will present no serious obstacles to our Northern Brethren -- and in this quarter the Florida's will be an easy acquisition. -- Cuba, Mexico, and the Spanish American possessions generally deserve our particular attention. The occasion is favorable to free them from all European Influence either Commerical or Political, & to effect whatever else, the Interests of the United States may suggest.16

15 Claiborne to Hamilton, January 23, 1812, ibid., p. 38.

16 Claiborne to Senator Varnum, January 26, 1812, ibid., p. 40.
During the latter part of 1812, and into 1813, the Gutiérrez-Magee filibustering expedition was making headway in Texas; Governor Claiborne wanted his government to take advantage of the situation and not let a golden opportunity slip through its fingers. To the Secretary of State he wrote on June 21, 1813,

the movements in the Neighbouring Province of Texas, Deserve the attention of Government. The Revolutionists have got possession of the Capitol of their Province, St. Antonio and are likely for the present to maintain their possession. Their Chiefs manifest no disposition to be Dependent upon the American Government, or to grant any peculiar privileges to the American people; . . . They may become useful Neighbours, -- but as we have no certainty of it, I wish sincerely, it comported with the Policy of the American Government to take possession of the country as far as the River Grande. -- Under the Louisiana Convention, we claim the tract extending from the Sabine to the River Grande, or River Bravo, as it is sometimes called.17

Thus as late as 1813 the long-held American claim to the Rio Bravo as the western boundary of the Louisiana

17 Claiborne to the Secretary of State, June 21, 1813, ibid., pp. 227-29.
Purchase was still being cited as justification to move west. Such a boundary would, of course, bring Santa Fe within the orbit of American control as the Rio Grande flows just west of that Spanish village. Zebulon Pike had brought this fact home several years earlier. So strong were Claiborne's feelings on the subject that he penned a letter very similar to the above to President Madison the following month. 18 The response Governor Claiborne received from the President and his Secretary of State were assuredly not to the Governor's liking.

It has been indicated earlier (Chapter III) that James Madison, when Secretary of State, held the Floridas to be of more importance than the western boundary question. His attitude apparently did not alter when he became President. Here again the records show that President Madison demonstrated grave concern over the East and West Florida questions, while giving only scant attention to the expansionist potential west of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Furthermore, the Indians of the Plains gave Madison less concern than they did Thomas Jefferson. Obviously the deteriorating relations with England and the forthcoming War of 1812 occupied

18 Claiborne to Madison, July 9, 1813, ibid., IV, 236.
the greater part of the Chief Executive's attention. Given his intense concern for the Floridas, their strategic location relative to military and commercial interests of both England and the United States, the President could keep his eye on English maritime depredations while not losing sight of the Floridas as land for possible American expansion. The Spanish to the west of the Mississippi did not seem to pose an immediate threat to the well-being of the United States.

A thorough search of the writings of President Madison as collected and edited by Gaillard Hunt, and Richardson's Messages of the Presidents reveal that Madison gave little if any attention to the Spanish, the Indians, trade routes, or military expeditions, between the American settlements along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and the Spanish outpost of Santa Fe. Likewise the records of the War Department reveal that the Secretary of War, during the eight years of Madison's administration, focused his attention relative to military matters and Indian affairs to the geographical area east of the Mississippi from the Great Lakes south to New Orleans.19

Given the real and fancied influence which the British exercised among the Indian nations of that general region, such an outlook is easily understood.

When Madison did speak of a southwest frontier problem, he thought more in terms of the Territories of Orleans and Mississippi, as well as the Floridas. The other frontier region which concerned the President was the Old Northwest. It was there that the white man continued to covet the tillable soil and was continuing to press upon the lands of the Miami, Shawnee, Winnebago, Pottawattomie and other tribes indigenous to the land north of the Ohio River. It seems that Madison did not share Thomas Jefferson's desire to move the Indians across the Mississippi into land largely uninhabited by the white man. The President was more concerned with the manner of purchasing land from the Indians. Madison was not to fare well in his attempt to keep on amicable terms with the red man. As Irving Brant so cogently points out, "had he wished to stop the purchases he could not have stood against the torrential drive of the westward flowing masses." 20

Indian hostility on the frontier, heightened by the actions of William Henry Harrison in such engagements as the Battle of Tippicanoe, made the Indian problem an integral part of the worsening relations between this country and England. The war fever quickened. Here again President Madison's major biographer captures the predicament of the Chief Executive:

He desired friendship and peace with the Indians but continued a long-established land policy which made the first unattainable and the second depend on the degeneration of the dispossessed tribes and the weakness of despair in those more distant. 21

Throughout most of the War of 1812, the administration's attitude toward the Indian as far as any over-all policy went, may be seen in the statement by the President in his Second Annual Message to Congress, December 5, 1810, a sentiment which he echoed many times during the following years.

With the Indian tribes also the peace and friendship of the United States are found to be so eligible that the general disposition to preserve both continues to gain strength. 22

---

21 Ibid., p. 388.

22 Madison's Second Annual Message, December 5, 1810, Hunt, The Writings of James Madison, VIII, 126. In Madison's
Of course, those Indian tribes aiding the British cause were considered enemies of the United States and were approached as any enemy would be.

As noted previously, the Jefferson administration frowned upon any type of filibustering activity originating within the United States for the purpose of harassing the Spanish colonies. Madison continued to support such a policy. As Secretary of State under Jefferson he was largely responsible for transferring the President's policy into action in such matters, and he came to the Presidency with much experience along these lines.

The early Latin American revolutionary movements seem to have received little attention from President Madison. The major edition of Madison's writings indicates that the President penned one letter to Joel Barlow, Minister to France, on November 17, 1811, concerning the independence movement which had broken out in the Spanish colonial empire. In this letter Madison refers to the movements in Venezuela and Mexico, noting that the former country had asked for United States recognition. As for Mexico, "according to our intelligence, which is difficult & obscure, [she] is still in the struggle between

Third Annual Message there is no mention of the Indians, and his Fourth Message echoes the one quoted above.
the revolutionary & royal parties."\textsuperscript{23} Even here, however, Madison's major concern seems to be how the Latin American situation will aid or hinder the power of Great Britain, given her commercial interests in that region of the world.\textsuperscript{24} The fact that some of these early attempts at independence were largely quelled by royal force as in Mexico, and that others were not successful until Madison had left office, can offer some explanation for his less than avid interest in them. It should be specifically noted, however, that Madison's policy relative to the areas immediately adjacent to American territory, was the same as his predecessor.

The enthusiastic Governor Claiborne was not encouraged in his dreams of American expansion at the expense of Spain. In fact, he was expressly reminded that any activity on American soil for the purpose of invading Spanish-held land would be considered as treasonous. A case in point was that of Dr. John Robinson, the controversial gentleman of the Pike expedition. Robinson had remained in Spanish territory following the aforementioned expedition. His motives are still

\textsuperscript{23} Madison to Joel Barlow, November 17, 1811, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 171-72.

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Ibid.}
somewhat of a mystery. Nevertheless he later became involved in a crusade to liberate Mexico from Spanish rule. Seeking aid in the United States he evidently returned to Natchez. Lacking everything except nerve Robinson contacted Secretary of State James Monroe about his proposed plans to help liberate the people of Mexico from monarchial tyranny with the help of willing Americans. Monroe's reply could have left little doubt in the mind of the ambitious doctor as to the official attitude of the United States Government. In his answer to Robinson on February 14, 1814, Monroe stated,

The measures in which you are engaged being contrary to law and wholly unauthorized, have excited no little surprise, especially as you knew this to be the case from your instructions while acting under the authority of the government on the recommendation of the late general [sic] Pike. Your conduct is the more reprehensible from the circumstance that as you were employed some time past in making friendly communication to the governor of the internal provinces of Spain it may be inferred that you are still in the service of the government, and acting in conformity to its views, and by its authority. [italics mine] . . .

---

25 Monroe to Dr. Robinson, February 14, 1814, National Archives, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, Domestic Letters, Roll 14. Future references will be cited as SD, Domestic Letters.
I now write to inform you that if you do not immediately desist from your illegal measures and pursuits, the most decisive steps will be taken to give effect to the legal restraint applicable to them.26

On the very same day the Secretary of State wrote to Governor Claiborne briefing him on the situation. Again emphasizing the fact that Robinson's activities could be easily construed by the Spanish to represent the official position of the United States due to his former connection with the government, Monroe pointed out that Robinson's activities were "repugnant to the views of the government, and contrary to law."27 Furthermore, the Secretary impressed upon Claiborne that,

While at peace with Spain, whatever may be the injuries heretofore received from her government, it is highly improper for any of the citizens of the U.S. to violate that relation. The president therefore expects that you will take the necessary and proper steps to prevent any measures of the kind imputed to Dr. Robinson being carried into effect.28

26 Ibid.
27 Monroe to Governor Claiborne, February 14, 1814, ibid.
28 Ibid.
Claiborne had actually written the Secretary of State the previous November that he was concerned with some filibustering plans which were rumored to be afoot in Louisiana. Monroe believed these preparations to be a part of the Robinson endeavor and instructed the Governor to let his [Monroe's] letter of February 14, 1814, apply to that case as well.29 The desire to help the people of Mexico liberate themselves from the yoke of Spain continued, but the Madison administration maintained its policy, at least officially, of "hands-off." The matter of Latin American independence was a problem between the New World colonies and the mother country. That most Americans were sympathetic to the cause of the colonials cannot be denied. The official policy of the nation, however, was one of non-interference. It might be interesting to note here that during the period 1809-1815 there were no official attempts to explore or chart the approaches to Santa Fe. While that may have been the story for the United States Government as such, the private trader and adventurer had other ideas.

29 Monroe to Governor Claiborne, February 17, 1814, ibid. In yet another letter the following August the Secretary of State reiterated his concern that any and all attempts to invade Spanish territory by filibustering parties must be stopped.
As mentioned earlier the Missouri Fur Company underwent reorganization in 1809. The new company's roster included the names of Manuel Lisa, as might be expected, and William Clark, Auguste and Pierre Chouteau, Major Andrew Henry and many other leading traders of St. Louis. The company's first expedition towards the Lower Rockies was in the spring of 1809. This particular expedition was rather interesting in that it was, in part, tied-up with a government contract. When Lewis and Clark had returned to St. Louis several years earlier they had brought with them a Mandan Chief, Shehaka. It was the responsibility of the Federal Government to return this warrior to his people once the Chief had completed his visit. All previous attempts had failed due to the warlike activity of the Arikaras, who were located along the Missouri just south of the Mandan villages. Now the Secretary of War contracted with the Missouri Fur Company to do the job for the United States Government.

Governor Meriwether Lewis of the Territory of Louisiana was the official who carried out the actual contracting procedures. The contract was made with M. Pierre Chouteau, Indian trader and Agent, in the amount of seven thousand dollars. With this money Chouteau was to "raise, organize, arm & equip at their own expense one hundred and
forty Volunteers and to furnish whatever might be deemed necessary. This all seemed innocent enough, but the personalities involved and the lure of profits resulted in a rather different situation than officials in Washington envisioned. By July, 1809, it can be seen that the War Department had become quite disturbed over this enterprise, questioning the additional monies requested by Governor Lewis for Chouteau. The motives of the traders were definitely under suspicion. The letter from the Secretary of War clearly illustrates that the Government's attitude toward expenditures on the frontier had not changed substantially since the days of Jefferson.

After informing Governor Lewis that a draft for an additional five hundred dollars to purchase "Tobacco, Powder, &c. intended as Presents for the Indians, through which this expedition is to pass," had not been honored, the Secretary went on to say,

> It has been usual to advise the Government of the United States

---

30 Secretary of War to Governor Lewis, July 15, 1809, Carter, Territorial Papers, XIV, 285.

31 Ibid.
when expenditures to a considerable amount are contemplated in the Territorial Governments. In the instance of accepting the volunteer services of 140 men for a military expedition to a point and purpose not designated, which expedition is stated to combine commercial as well as military objects, and when an Agent of the Government appointed for other purposes is selected for the command, it is thought the Government might, without injury to the public interests, have been consulted. As the object & destination of this Force is unknown and more especially as it combines Commercial purposes, so it cannot be considered as having the sanction of the Government of the United States, or that they are responsible for consequences.32

The letter further stated that since Chouteau accepted the command of the expedition his position as Indian Agent would automatically become vacant, and Governor Lewis should recommend someone else for the position.33

Meriwether Lewis was quite upset at the above letter, and on August 18, 1809, penned a most direct reply. Lewis went into some detail trying to explain that his motives had

32 Ibid., p. 286.
33 Ibid.
always been of the highest order, and flatly denied any charges that his financial situation was not in good order. Referring specifically to the Chouteau case Lewis stated explicitly,

I do most solemnly [sic] aver, that the expedition sent up the Misoury [sic] under the command of Mr Pierre Chouteau, as a military Command, has no other object than that of conveying the Mandane [sic] Chief and his Family to their Village. -- and in a commercial point of view, that they intend only, to hunt and trade on the waters of the Misoury [sic] and Columbia Rivers within the Rocky-Mountains [sic] and the Planes [sic] bordering those Mountains on the east side -- and that they have no intention with which I am acquainted, to enter the Dominions, or do injury to any foreign Power. 34

He then requested that Chouteau be able to retain his post as Indian Agent, as the latter had now been ordered to return to St. Louis as soon as the military part of the expedition was over. 35 Lewis felt written explanations would not be sufficient, however, and it was over this matter that he

34 Governor Lewis to Secretary of War, August 18, 1809, ibid., p. 290.

subsequently set out for Washington, a trip which he would never complete due to his untimely death at a roadside inn. 36

Another member of the Missouri Fur Company, and a man well known to students of western history, was Manuel Lisa. When last mentioned, Manuel Lisa, the controversial and energetic trader, had apparently dropped active participation in any kind of Santa Fe adventure. He became no less active in trading activity per se, however, turning his attention north and west from St. Louis. With great intensity he set out to expand his control over the fur trade of the Upper Missouri and into the Great Basin. With the help of experienced men such as John Colter and George Drouillard, both of the famous Lewis and Clark expedition, he engaged in a series of expeditions which by the War of 1812 brought him much personal prestige and influence. Lisa was ultimately recognized by the American Government in an official capacity in 1814, when he was made Indian Agent for the tribes of the Upper Missouri. 37

36 Ibid. Lewis undoubtedly took the remarks of the Secretary as personal affronts to his honesty. In this same letter Lewis stated that the United States could never make "A Burr" out of him.

37 Goetzmann, Exploration and Empire . . ., p. 29.
Lisa's general plan was to set up a series of trading posts which would serve as permanent bases of operation. From these posts traders could move out in every direction at all times of the year, and would always be able to keep an eye out for competitors. Returning to an area a year or so later only to find your caches destroyed or your influence superseded by another trader would be largely eliminated. Operating on this premise Lisa made his way far up the Missouri and down the Yellowstone into virtually unknown territory as far as the junction of the Big Horn River. It was in this locale, in present-day Montana, that Lisa had Manuel's Fort constructed. Manuel's Fort became the focal point for many important trading expeditions in the early and mid-nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{38}

It could be expected that a man of Lisa's enterprising nature would attempt once more to contact the Spanish who, he believed as did most other traders of the time, were located only a short distance to the south of the Yellowstone region. The Spanish themselves had been trading far to the north of Santa Fe for several decades. It is possible they were active

\textsuperscript{38}Lisa's activity can be traced in detail by referring to one of several scholarly studies such as Walter B. Douglas, Manuel Lisa, edited by Abraham P. Nasatir (New York: Argosy Antiquarian Ltd., 1964), and Richard Edward Oglesby, Manuel Lisa and the Opening of the Missouri Fur Trade (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963).
along the Green and Snake rivers as well as reaching the Yellowstone. Lewis and Clark had reported in their journal that the Shoshones had horses and mules obtained from the Spaniards via the Yellowstone River. In his journal entry for August 20, 1805, Lewis noted,

They [the Shoshones] informed me that they could pass to the Spaniards by the way of the Yellowstone [sic] river in 10 days. I can discover that these people are by no means friendly to the Spaniards. Their complaint is, that the Spaniards will not let them have fire arms and amunition, that they put them off by telling them that if they suffer them to have guns they will kill each other, thus leaving them defenceless and an easy prey to their blood-thirsty neighbours to the East of them, . . .


40 DeVoto, Journals of Lewis and Clark, p. 213.
There seems to be some evidence that the famous John Colter's treks out of Manuel's Fort were, at least in part, for the purpose of opening trade with Spanish settlements. In 1808, George Drouillard conducted two expeditions south of Manuel's Fort. Historians recognize that one of the most important results of these explorations was the crude map that Drouillard made, a map later used by William Clark in compiling his maps of the West. An examination of the Drouillard map reveals several interesting notations. Primarily, the Spanish settlements are mentioned as being accessible by way of the Big Horn River, and the "number of days" distance as figured by the Indians is also recorded. One scholar notes that the estimates of travel time quoted from the Indians are hardly accurate, or at least confusing, for a day's travel might be based upon the distance covered by an entire band moving at a leisurely pace, or a forced march of a war party.


42 Ibid. The author draws a question as to whether Drouillard actually ascended the Big Horn to anywhere near these settlements. The marks on the map that appear to be a continuation of his route, could simply have been placed there to indicate that a trail was extant rather than to indicate an actual itinerary of the trapper. See Also Burton Harris, John Colter, His Years In the Rockies (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 97.
This hardly seems a vital question at this point; the fact remains that the proximity of Spaniards to the American trading posts was believed to exist, and the idea that a few day's ride from the Upper Missouri or Yellowstone would put American traders in the heart of the Spanish Empire was real. It is interesting to note here that the geography furnished by Drouillard was used in both the manuscript and published maps of William Clark, and would thus perpetuate the misconceptions about the geography of the West for years to come. 43

With such attractive news even a man of lesser imagination and energy than Manuel Lisa would have been encouraged to attempt once more to open trade with the Spanish. Trade with the Spanish had never been far from Lisa's thoughts, and by 1810, he felt it was time to again seek rewards to the south. Sometime during the summer of that year the trapper Jean Baptiste Champlain and a party of some twenty-three hunters returned to Fort Mandan from an expedition to the Arapaho nation on the headwaters of the Platte. The Arapahos, Indians of the Algonquin language group, were

43 Wheat, From Lewis and Clark ..., II, 54.
located generally between the hunting grounds of the Northern and Southern Cheyennes, in the eastern part of the present-day state of Colorado.  

Champlain advised that the Spaniards made contact with the Arapaho for trade at least once each year. This was exciting news to Lisa and he immediately determined to contact his former countrymen. If a trading connection could be made with Spanish subjects, thought Lisa, his trading company, the Missouri Fur Company, would possibly be able to succeed. He figured this would happen even if the shaky relations between the United States and England led to a war. Accordingly, Lisa outfitted Champlain and sent him back to the Arapaho nation with instructions to open trade with the Spanish if possible, and, at least according to what he later told the Spaniards, if the trade would "not be to the prejudice of the government [of Spain]."  

---


By August, 1812, no word had been received from the Champlain party. No one knew if they had reached their destination or had been killed. The loss of Champlain would certainly have been a personal blow to Lisa for the two men were long-time associates. More than that, however, with the loss of Champlain went Lisa's immediate hopes of opening a connection between the Upper Missouri country and the Spanish to the south. The Indians becoming more hostile at this time further dampened any hopes of success. Meanwhile the McKnight expedition, which will be discussed below, had been outfitting in St. Louis and was heading in the direction of Santa Fe. These factors made it imperative for Lisa to act immediately or face the loss of any potential Santa Fe trade. With this situation in mind Lisa made what has been described as a last-ditch attempt to secure ingress to Spain's northern bastion. But first, another member of the Champlain party deserves examination.

One of the men accompanying Champlain on his attempt to open trade with the Spanish was Ezekiel Williams. The particulars about this man and his activities are still somewhat clouded, but there is sufficient historical evidence

to fix him in time and place as a member of the party Manuel Lisa sent out in 1810 to open trade negotiations with the Spanish on the approaches to Santa Fe. 47 Apparently the Champlain party broke up on the upper Platte River, Williams and a small group continuing on to the Arkansas. According to what Williams later told the United States Indian Agent at Fort Osage on the Missouri, he was robbed and kept prisoner by a band of Kansas Indians who found him in June, 1813. He was kept prisoner until mid-August and then released. The weary traveler arrived at Boon's Lick trading post on September 1, 1813. 48 According to Professor Goetzmann the Williams incident furnished authorities with important geographical information. It established the existence of the Central Rockies which form most of the state of Colorado. Thus it clearly showed that "the Spanish settlements of New Mexico and Manuel's Fort on the Yellowstone did not . . .

47 "Ezekiel Williams' Adventure in Colorado," Missouri Historical Society Collections, IV, No. 2 (1913), 194-95. There is another work extant concerning the trek of Williams. It is David H. Coyner, The Lost Trappers: A Collection of Interesting Scenes and Events in the Rocky Mountains (Cincinnati: J.A. & U.P. James, 1847). This account is considered to be a very exaggerated and inaccurate account.

lie on opposite sides of a single mountain ridge." 49 Santa Fe was obviously not a "few days ride" from the nearest western outpost of the Americans.

Now back to Manuel Lisa and his last attempt to gain inroads to Spanish trade. Not having heard from the Champlain party (including Williams) for many months Lisa dispatched another trader, Charles Sanguinet, one of his most trusted and able lieutenants, to the Spanish in the name of the Missouri Fur Company. Sanguinet was armed with a most interesting letter. The letter explained that Sanguinet's trip was necessary as no word had been received from Champlain, and it was clearly a proposal for trade. 50

In September, 1812, Charles Sanguinet with over $1,000.00 in merchandise, set out for Santa Fe from Fort Manuel. The letter he carried was of immense importance because of what it tells concerning Lisa's ideas about trade, as well as the activity in the fur trade by the Spaniards. Thus it should be quoted at some length. Lisa told the Spaniards,

49 Goetzmann, Exploration and Empire . . . , p. 27.

Ever since my first journey among the forks of the Missouri, nine hundred leagues from my domicile, I have desired to find an opportunity to communicate with my [com]patriots, the Spaniards. I have had hunters to the number of twenty-three who have gone to the Arapaho nation. Last year they came to my Fort Mandanne [sic] where I equipped them anew to return to the place whence they had come. They are the ones who informed me that the Spaniards of Mexico were coming every year to trade with the Arapahoes. Therefore I gave to a certain Juan Bautista Champlain, an honorable young man, and Juan Bautista Lafarque, some goods for the purpose of trading with you, . . . since up to the present I have not had any news [of them], I have decided to send one of my trusted servants, Don Carlos Sanguinet, with two engages to let them know they should come out with their peltry; . . .

I have especially instructed Don Carlos Sanguinet to arrange that this letter of mine should fall into the hands of some Spaniard who may be worthy to communicate with me [sea digno de comunicar conmigo] on those honorable principles, and in no other manner, my desire being to engage in business and open up a new commerce which might easily be done. With this in view, and as directory of the Missouri Fur Company, I propose to you gentlemen that if you wish to trade and deal with me, for whatever quantity of goods it may be, I will obligate myself to fill each year any bill of goods which shall be given me, and all shall be delivered [as stipulated] both as to
quality and as to quantity, at the
place nearest and most convenient
for both parties, to your satis-
faction, after we shall have agreed
on the chosen place.

In case any of you should wish to
come with Don Carlos Sanguinet to
this my establishment to com-
municate and trade with me, you
will be received and treated with
great pleasure and satisfaction,
and assured to a sufficient escort,
agreeable to you, up to the time of
your return to your country. . . .51

While Lisa waited for news from Sanguinet he directed
the completion of Fort Manuel. The news that did finally
arrive in December was all bad. Lisa was informed from the
land of the Arapaho that Champlain had been killed by the
Blackfeet, that Lafargue and five others had run off to the
Spaniards, and that eight more had run off to the Crows. Never
having reached Santa Fe, Sanguinet, himself, was back at Fort
Mandan by January, 1813, with some thirty horses for which he
had bartered. No trade agreement with the Spaniards had been
made, and Sanguinet had no Spanish official with him to dis-
cuss the matter with Lisa.52 This incident drew Lisa's

51 Manuel Lisa to the Spaniards of New Mexico,
September 8, 1812, Lisa Papers.

52 Richard Dillon, "Meriwether Lewis, Manuel Lisa, and
the Tantalizing Santa Fe Trade," Montana, the Magazine of
efforts to contact Santa Fe to a close. The War of 1812 now
interrupted the activities of the Missouri Fur Company and
it fell on hard times.

Another incident whereby individual Americans sought
their fortunes on the roads to Santa Fe, and involved the
United States Government, was the effort by Joseph McLanahan,
Reuben Smith, James Patterson and Emanuel Blanco. These
traders left St. Genevieve in November, 1809, and reached
Santa Fe in the latter part of February the following year.
The Spanish Governor of New Mexico did not buy their story of
an intention to settle in that region, and had them im-
prisoned. Colonel José Manrrique, the ad interim governor,
became quite alarmed at the ease with which Spain's pos-
sessions were being encroached upon by foreigners. He
encouraged the New Mexicans to open trade arrangements with
the surrounding Indian tribes in order to secure the red
man's friendship and use them as sources of information
relative to the activity of intruders. 53

Western History, XVII, No. 2 (April, 1967), 51-52.

53 Loomis, Pedro Vial . . ., p. 249. Detailed
information on their route is scarce.
The imprisonment of McLanahan, Smith and party caused some consternation among citizens in the United States when they became aware of the fate of their fellow Americans. Once the American newspapers took up the story the issue became one of Spanish oppression versus the "innocent" traders. To capitalize on such an emotional issue was not difficult; an excerpt from the Louisiana Gazette would point this out well:

Mark the pretended ignorance of these bloodhounds, they knew these gentlemen were from St. Geneviève in the Territory of Louisiana, . . .

Vermin! what a prostitution of language! Messrs. Smith M'Clanahan and Patterson strangers to the policy of Mexico and the monkish barbarism of the natives, they conceived they would visit white men clothed with the Christian name; unhappy incredulity! They would have found more generosity in the breast of an Arab, more hospitality in the den of a Hiena. -- The assassins of Mexico have ere this butchered three respectable inhabitants of Louisiana! . . . 54

Appeals were made to the State Department by some leading Americans including General Andrew Jackson to pressure the Spanish Government for the immediate release of

54 Ibid., pp. 249-50.
these "three respectable inhabitants of Louisiana," or take stern action if the traders were no longer alive. In December, 1810, Secretary of State Robert Smith did instruct Governor Benjamin Howard of the Louisiana Territory to write Nemesio Salcedo, the Commandant-General of the Provincias Internas, in behalf of the prisoners attesting to their character and citizenship. Official correspondence surrounding this issue mounted. Salcedo was informed that a number of men in high places of government had "interested themselves warmly in behalf of the sufferers."

The McLanahan party was finally released after a year in the Santa Fe prison and returned to Louisiana in June, 1812. The three men, McLanahan, Smith and Patterson, celebrated their return from the "assassins of Mexico" by informing the Governor in St. Louis that they intended to join a filibustering expedition into Texas to help liberate that

55 Ibid.

56 Robert Smith to Governor Benjamin Howard, December 11, 1810, Carter, Territorial Papers, XIV, 426-27. This letter indicates that Governor Claiborne had also attempted to intercede for the traders a few months earlier.

57 Ibid.
land from the yoke of Spain. The United States Government's attitude toward such projects has already been discussed, but it might be of merit here to include a portion of what Secretary of State Monroe wrote to Governor Howard upon learning of the plans afoot.

If the projected visit contemplates any measure of hostility to Spain it is repugnant to the policy of the United States. It is also positively prohibited by law. 58

Yet another private trading venture forced the American Government to become involved diplomatically with Spain at a time when it would have much preferred that relations with His Catholic Majesty remain tranquil. Sometime during 1811 and 1812, James Baird, a personal friend of Zebulon M. Pike, joined with Robert McKnight and Samuel Chambers in an effort to open trade relations with the Spanish in New Mexico. The feasibility of overland contact with Santa Fe had been established by the journey of Pike as well as others. In fact, Pike's Journals were published by this time and their impact upon the people of the United States

58 Monroe to Governor Howard, September 3, 1810, SD, Domestic Letters.
including trader, trapper and government official, cannot be over emphasized (See Chapter IV). Baird and his party used the Journals as a guide book.  

There can be little doubt that these men were aware of the way Spanish officials frowned upon foreign intrusion as of late. News of the Hidalgo uprising in Mexico and the subsequent independence activity doubtless gave encouragement to such traders. It was hoped that the new revolutionary governments would look with more favor upon trade with their neighbors to the east. Unknown to the Baird-McKnight-Chambers party before they departed on their long journey, the Hidalgo movement had been short-lived and the leader had been executed. Given the suspicion on the part of the Spanish that Americans aided in the recent uprisings and were constantly threatening New Spain with filibustering activities, a favorable reception in New Mexico could hardly be expected.  

59 Frank B. Golley, "James Baird, Early Santa Fe Trader," Missouri Historical Society Bulletin, XV, No. 3 (April, 1959), p. 179. Family tradition suggests that Baird and the famous explorer, Zebulon Montgomery Pike, became friends during their stay at Pittsburgh, and that it was through Pike that Baird first became cognizant of the possibilities of the Mexican trade.  

60 Chittenden, The American Fur Trade ..., II, 495-96.
Nevertheless mules, horses, provisions and trade goods were gathered, and the expedition left St. Louis for the northern frontier of New Spain sometime in April, 1812. The complete cargo, consisting of such things as silk, muslin, calico, cotton, gun powder, knives, jackets and purses, was valued at approximately $10,000.00. After several months of exhausting travel they arrived at Taos, using the route recommended by Pike on his map -- up the Arkansas River to the Purgatory River, then to the mountains and finally to Taos. It was in Taos that the party learned of the failure of the Hidalgo uprising. They were subsequently arrested and escorted to Santa Fe. In spite of sufficient documentation and trade goods to verify their status as legitimate traders, Governor Manrique had the Americans placed in jail and their goods were applied to the cost of maintaining the prisoners. Just how long they remained in jail in Santa Fe is not known, but from that town the Americans were taken to Chihuahua by way of Albuquerque and El Paso. While in Chihuahua the prisoners were at liberty under bond and restricted to the confines of the city limits. Sometime in 1815 they were tried for their part in a supposed conspiracy and confined in the

Military Hospital. 62

News of the capture and imprisonment of the Baird party reached St. Louis in early 1813, and it opened a storm of protest from members of the traders' families, newspaper editors and Congressmen. It was demanded of the Spanish that they release their prisoners immediately. Due to the efforts of Baird's wife and McKnight's brother, the case was laid before the Department of State in 1813. This move brought little success until 1817; for until that time Luis de Onís, the only Spanish official in the United States of sufficient rank and power to do anything about the situation, was not credited by the American Government. 63

In February, 1817, Secretary of State Monroe initiated a series of letters to Minister Onís, who had finally been recognized officially as the Spanish Minister to the United States. The correspondence relative to the imprisonment of Baird, McKnight and Chambers continued for several years to no avail. In a bureaucratic and procrastinating fashion

62 Ibid., pp. 179-81.

63 Ibid., pp. 180-83. Baird apparently wrote his wife during his stay in Chihuahua.
reminiscent of earlier times, the Spanish colonial officials wrote and forwarded letter after letter between each other and the Crown relative to the imprisonment and release of the Americans, all to no positive result.64 In justice to the Spanish it must be pointed out here that the period 1818-1820 was a most trying one for them. Both at home and in the colonies revolution was the byword; frantic efforts were being made to hold on to their colonial empire. Ferdinand VII was struggling to maintain his throne. In such a situation the fate of several American trappers languishing in a Chihuahuan jail would not hold a place of prime importance for the troubled Spanish officials. This would be all the more true due to the continued reluctance of the United States Government to involve itself diplomatically with Spain over the activities of individual American citizens in the territory of a foreign power.

64 Monroe to Onís, February 8, 1817, ibid., p. 183. Onís to J. Q. Adams, February 13, 1817, ibid., p. 184. John Scott, Delegate to Congress from the Missouri Territory to J. Q. Adams, December 29, 1817, ibid., p. 185. J. Q. Adams to Onís, January 7, 1818, ibid., p. 185. Onís to J. Q. Adams, January 12, 1818, ibid., p. 186. Onís to Don Ruiz de Apodaca, Viceroy of New Spain, January 12, 1818, ibid., p. 187. The correspondence of the American officials can also be found in Carter, Territorial Papers, XV.
The prisoners were eventually set free in 1821 by the revolutionary government of Augustin Iturbide. In the interim, however, the inability of the United States to secure any redress from the Spanish provoked a storm of protest from some American citizens, especially those living in the more western states and territories. The inability of the American government to effect the release of the prisoners was easily translated by the populace into the lack of desire to do so, the press playing a large role in this aspect. Records indicate that official channels were used albeit to no avail. 65

The latter days of Madison's administration witnessed another attempt by several Americans to open a trade route to Santa Fe, an attempt which was not well received by officials in that city. Auguste Pierre Chouteau had continued active trading out of St. Louis following the War of 1812. In his position as Agent to the Osage Indians he likewise continued to hold a place of influence in government circles. Governor William Clark of the recently created Territory of Missouri, was especially complimentary of the Frenchman's

---

service to the American nation. In the summer of 1815, Chouteau formed a partnership with Jules de Mun of St. Louis for the purpose of trading on the Upper Arkansas with the Arapaho and other Indian tribes of that region.

These two men actually arrived at the idea for such a trading enterprise when another trader, James Philibert, returned to St. Louis in 1815 for more supplies in order to rendezvous on the Upper Arkansas with members of a party he had led there the previous year. The new team received a license to trade from Governor Clark and set out on September 10, 1815. On the way across the Plains, De Mun and Chouteau bought out Philibert, expecting to acquire the services of his men when they would rendezvous on Huerfano Creek near Pueblo, Colorado. Huerfano Creek was a fork of the Arkansas called El Haerfano by the Spanish. On arriving at the appointed spot December 8, 1815, the men Philibert had left behind were nowhere to be found. Inquiry among the Indians established that the men, thinking Philibert

66 Clark to William H. Crawford, December 11, 1815, Clark Papers, MSS, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Mo. Appointment of William Clark as Governor of the Missouri Territory by President Madison, June 16, 1813, ibid.
lost or dead, had gone over to the Spaniards at Taos. 67

It was decided that Chouteau would remain on the Huerfano and De Mun would go into Taos to inquire about the trappers. He would also speak to the Spaniards about future trapping in the region. De Mun found the trappers in Taos apparently well and happy. Proceeding to Santa Fe De Mun also found the Spanish Governor, Alberto Maynez, rather well disposed toward American traders. De Mun gives the following account:

Having seen on my way to Santa Fe that the rivers abounded with beaver, I asked the Governor the permission of coming, with a fixed number of hunters, to catch beaver in the rivers which empty themselves into Rio del Norte. This he could not take upon himself to grant, but had the goodness to write on that subject to the commandant General. As I could not wait for the answer, Don Alberto told me to come back . . . to know the General's answer. 68

What De Mun had to say next is of interest in light of the geographic concepts held at the time. It should be


68 Ibid., p. 173.
kept in mind that the western boundary dispute between Spain and the United States was as yet unsettled, although progress was being made. De Mun continued,

I must not omit to say that the Governor did not seem a moment to doubt that we had a right to frequent the east side of the mountains, and there to trade or catch beaver if we could; for he advised me not to go to the south of Red River of Natchitoches, but from that river to the northward we might trade and hunt as we pleased. 69

Here was one Spaniard whose concept of what the Americans had purchased in 1803 came close to matching that of the Americans themselves.

De Mun subsequently returned to Taos, picked up his trappers and returned to Chouteau on the Huerfano. It was then decided De Mun should return to St. Louis for additional supplies; accordingly, he set out at the end of February, 1816, and reached St. Louis some forty-six days later. Being well supplied De Mun once more turned west and made rendezvous with Chouteau at the mouth of the Kansas River as previously arranged. The two men then started for the Rocky Mountains, where De Mun once again left Chouteau at camp and sought out

69 Ibid.
the Spanish authorities to see if word had been received from
the Commandant-General in Chihuahua. 70

To De Mun's consternation there had been a change in
Governors at Santa Fe. The new official, Pedro Maria de
Allande, was not well disposed towards Americans. In fact,
the Governor would not even allow De Mun to enter the city,
and ordered him out of Spanish territory immediately. Ac-
cordingly, the De Mun-Chouteau trading party recrossed the
mountains and wintered on the east side of the Arkansas
River. 71

Not willing to give up so easily, De Mun decided to
make one more trip back to Taos and see if the climate had
improved to any degree. Upon his arrival at this small village
he was told that there were "very unfavorable reports."
72

The Spanish authorities confronted him with the story that they
had news of an American fort with some 20,000 men being built
on the Arkansas at the Rio de las Animas (located in the

70 Ibid., pp. 175-76.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid., p. 177.
southeastern corner of the present-day state of Colorado). De Mun offered himself as a hostage while the Spaniards searched out the rumors. Several days later there arrived in Taos a force of Spanish militia under the command of Lieutenant Don Francisco Salazar who proceeded to take De Mun back to his companions, raised all their caches, and escorted the whole party back to Santa Fe. The provincial Governor was most angry because the Americans had not taken heed of his first orders and left Spanish territory. Governor Allande did not hold the same concept as to where American territory extended and Spanish domain began expressed by his predecessor. He would not accept the traders' explanation of their right to trap along the Arkansas and into the mountains. According to De Mun,

I replied . . . that we were taken on American territory, where our Governor had given us a license to go. At this he got into a violent rage, saying that we should pay for our own and our Governor's ignorance; using all the time very abusive language; repeating several times that he would have our brains blown up . . .73

73 Ibid., pp. 178-80.
The trappers were subsequently imprisoned for forty-eight days after which they received a court martial composed of six members and a president — Governor Allande. Once again the question of boundaries came up. De Mun insisted that he was not on Spanish soil while on the Arkansas, because that river was within United States territory since the purchase of Louisiana. In addition, Governor Clark had issued them licenses to trap in the area.  

It has been noted earlier that Governor Clark maintained a manuscript map on which he continually made changes and notations as more knowledge became available. This map covers much more territory than the engraved map which came out in 1814, and is of more value in determining what concepts Clark held relative to the Southwest. On the manuscript map the Nebraska and Kansas country is carefully charted; Governor Clark definitely used Pike's map for the approaches to Santa Fe. Clark continually made revisions and notations. For example, high along the third fork of the Arkansas [Huerfano] he now added "Chouteau & Dumen [sic] taken by Spaniards."  

74 Ibid.  
75 Wheat, From Lewis and Clark . . ., II, 51.
VII. SECTION OF WILLIAM CLARK'S MANUSCRIPT MAP

Rockies, however, he continued to rely upon inaccurate Spanish maps which had in turn been relied upon by the famous Baron von Humboldt. Thus imaginary geography continued to prevail. Given the other information he had received from "mountain men" such as Colter and Drouillard, it would not be unusual to find Governor Clark issuing licenses to trap along the Arkansas River.\(^7^6\)

Governor Allande denied that the United States had the right to issue such licenses and permit trappers "to go as far as the headwaters of said river."\(^7^7\) Furthermore, the Spaniard spoke much about a big river that was the boundary between the two countries but did not know its name. When De Mun suggested it might be the Mississippi, Allande "jumped up saying, that that was the big river he meant; that Spain had never ceded the west side of it."\(^7^8\)

The sentence of the court martial was that the Americans leave the dominions of Spain which they did, returning to St. Louis in early September, 1817. De Mun

\(^7^6\)Ibid.


\(^7^8\)Ibid.
figured the loss of the trapping venture to the tune of over $30,000.00. There now remained the question of whether the United States Government could or would demand satisfaction of the King of Spain "for outrages committed by his ignorant Governor on American citizens."79 The State Department, now under the leadership of John Quincy Adams, did initiate a claim against the government of Spain, and a settlement was finally reached years later.80

Meanwhile, in November, 1816, the people of the United States elected another Chief Executive. Following the precedent set down by the nation's first President, Madison decided not to run for a third term and the Jeffersonian-Republican mantle fell to another Virginian, James Monroe. Monroe was certainly no newcomer to the field of national politics or international diplomacy, having held several ministerial posts in Europe under both Jefferson and Madison, as well as Cabinet positions under the latter statesman.

79 Ibid. Statement and Proof in Case of Chouteau and De Mun, of Their Loss and Treatment by the Spaniards, ASP, Foreign Relations, IV, 209-10.

Although the pending negotiations and problems with Spain would not be settled until several years after Monroe assumed the office of President, his election, in many ways, marked the end of one period of United States-Spanish relations and the opening of a new era. The new period would see a decided quickening of pace respective to concluding unsettled issues with Spain, and a definite interest on the part of government to sponsor expeditions to the Rocky Mountain region. The scientific aspect of such expeditions was obvious, but much of the new approach had to do with military reorganization and defense. Indian policy was also a major factor. The man largely responsible for this reorganization, and the administrative force behind a more vigorous approach to the west, was Monroe's Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun.

The War Department was responsible for the management of army business and the conduct of Indian Affairs. In both areas there was a mixture of civilian and military influence that proved difficult to reconcile at times. Great distances and poor roads did little to facilitate administration, and the absence of a true quartermaster corps during the time of Jefferson and Madison added to faulty management. As Leonard White points out in his work on the Jeffersonians, "Army organization before 1813 ... was extremely simple."
The army consisted of small self-sufficing scattered posts mostly on the frontier under the control of local commanders.\textsuperscript{81} The War of 1812 forced the Congress to act and in 1813 some reorganization took place, and a General Staff was created. Once the war was over, however, there was an immediate cry for reduction of the armed forces. By an act of Congress within two months of the Battle of New Orleans, Congress passed a bill which read in part,

That the military peace establishment of the United States shall consist of such proportions of artillery, infantry, and riflemen, not exceeding in the whole ten thousand men, as the President shall judge proper, and that the corps of engineers as at present established, be retained.\textsuperscript{82}

When James Monroe took the oath of office in March, 1817, the state of the military and its management were not such that anyone would volunteer to have the chance to put them in order. Monroe had difficulty in persuading someone

\textsuperscript{81} White, The Jeffersonians . . ., p. 236.

to accept the post of Secretary of War. Finally, in October, 1817, the position was accepted by John C. Calhoun. Although without military experience he attacked his duties with a determination and vision that made him "one of the remarkable cabinet members of his age." 83

Part of his task was the formulation of a defense policy for the western frontier, and here he differed extensively with many high ranking army officers who were thinking more in terms of a limited advance on the frontiers. The famous Yellowstone Expedition of 1818, and the first expedition led by Stephen H. Long in 1819, were the earliest efforts in what Francis Prucha describes as Calhoun's "dreams of national grandeur." 84 Although not completely successful due to a still cautious Congress, the aforementioned expeditions signaled a new dawn in army exploration of the West and in cartography of the Southwest. The Indians were to find in Calhoun a man who strongly believed that any type of independent status for Indians within state limits should be abolished; furthermore, if the red man opposed the process of civilization into the white man's world, removal to the West was the only

83 Prucha, Sword of the Republic . . . , p. 135.

84 Ibid., p. 140.
answer. 85

Thus after 1818, the approaches to Santa Fe were becoming attractive to the United States Government as well as to the individual trader or trapper. In fact, the attempts of individual Americans to seek fortunes in the West began to rapidly increase, culminating in what has been described as the most significant trip ever made in the West -- the opening of the Santa Fe Trail by William Becknell in 1821. 86 By that time, however, the independence movement in Mexico had succeeded and Santa Fe was no longer under the control of His Catholic Majesty. The new Mexican officials viewed trade with the United States, at least in the beginning, in a different light than did the Spanish. Within a few short years visions of trade with New Mexico loomed forth in the minds of men too numerous to count.

Meanwhile, the western boundary question was being brought to a conclusion by the diligent efforts of John Quincy

85 Ibid., p. 254. Ingersoll, A History of the War Department ... , p. 461.

Adams and Luis de Onís. Once he had been officially recognized by the United States Government in December, 1815, Onís had considered the solution of territorial problems with the United States vital to the larger scope of Spanish colonial policy. He hoped a well-defined border would aid in defending the colonies and deter restless adventurers from east of the Mississippi. Furthermore, a settlement of the boundary dispute would ease the diplomatic tension between his country and the United States. 87

The final delineation of a common western boundary between United States and Spanish territory was integrally tied to settlement of the Florida question. As noted several times above the settlement of the Florida issue was foremost in the minds of American statesmen; such was also the case with Spanish diplomats. Spain's inability to control Florida in the waning years of her colonial empire is well known, but she still valued the territory and wished to hold on to it. The Americans had been pushing into West Florida for some time, and the War of 1812 all but secured the entire area for the United States. President Madison evidenced full support for the American urge to make West Florida a part of

87 Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands... pp. 1-2.
the Union. East Florida also had its allure.

The strategic value of East Florida during the War of 1812 gave justification to American statesmen to consider annexing the area. Following the war the inability of Spanish officials to restrain the Indians from raiding into American territory, and the inability, if not reluctance, of these same officials to return the hundreds of runaway slaves, kept the lure for possession of East Florida in American sights. Little more than verbosity occurred over the Floridas between the end of the War and the year 1818 however, until General Andrew Jackson made his famous move into the area and stirred up a veritable "hornet's nest" of diplomatic haranguing.

Another vital factor to the outcome of the Adams-Onís negotiations was the explosive situation facing Spain in the form of renewed independence movements spreading throughout her New World possessions. Actually this situation could be considered the key issue which eventually forced Spain to give in to the United States on the question of the Floridas, and

---

88 American interest in and occupation of West Florida is discussed fully in Issac J. Cox, The West Florida Controversy, 1798-1813: A Study in American Diplomacy (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1967). See especially Chapters X-XVII.
make concessions on the western boundary. Spain feared United States active support of the insurgent governments, and, as it proved, was willing to go to great lengths to prevent such aid. The active sympathy of the American populace permitted the outfitting of privateers in our ports under the flags of the belligerent countries. Too often these privateers were manned by American crews in violation of neutrality laws. Faced with the rising power of the insurgents and the swelling tide of opinion in the United States, the Spanish Foreign Minister, José García de León y Pizarro, feared a recognition by Washington of the independence of the rebel states. He thus grew increasingly alarmed at the precarious condition of the indefensible borderlands. 89

Pizarro tried in vain to enlist the support of England in his nation's negotiations with the United States. He wished England to assume responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the Spanish Empire and to mediate directly in the affairs of Spain with America. This England would not do. Between

England and the United States at the moment there were too many diplomatic bargainings in process which had grown out of the Treaty of Ghent to allow for an added complication. Besides mediation by the British was flatly refused by the American Government. Therefore, alone, and in serious trouble with her colonial subjects, Spain had to tackle the Florida and western boundary questions with one of the ablest statesmen America could put forth. Many historians consider John Quincy Adams to have been one of America's finest statesmen in diplomacy. 90

John Quincy Adams's first major proposal to Onís was made on January 16, 1818. It called for a line north from the source of the Colorado River of Texas to the northern limits of Louisiana; the line would run across the prairies just to the east of the Rocky Mountains. This proposal was actually the offer that James Monroe had made to the Spanish in 1816, when he was Secretary of State. Such a boundary would save the Louisiana Purchase for the United States but it would cut the nation off from the Pacific. 91 One can

90 Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands . . . , p. 115.

91 Bemis, John Quincy Adams . . . , p. 309.
only conclude that such an offer was made with full knowledge that Santa Fe and all of New Mexico would be well outside United States territory. While the cartography of the Southwest was still primitive, that Santa Fe was some distance to the west of the Colorado River of Texas was common knowledge given the events of the previous decade. Here was a golden opportunity for Onís to take advantage of a rather carelessly made offer and lock-up the Americans east of the Rockies. Such an opportunity quickly calls to mind the time, not too many years earlier, when Spain attempted to restrict the United States to an area east of the Alleghenies. Onís apparently did not see his opportunity. It would have done him little good even if he had for his instruction of the moment did not allow for him to agree to a boundary for the United States even that far west: In answer to Adams's January proposal the Spanish minister offered the customary boundary between Spanish Texas and French Louisiana; a point half-way between the Mermentau and Calcasieu Rivers, two small parallel streams flowing into the Gulf of Mexico entirely within the State of Louisiana. 92

---

92 Ibid., p. 310.
President Monroe would not accept any line that cut the State of Louisiana. He did offer, however, to bring America's proposal eastward to the Trinity River. Monroe told Adams,

We may agree to fix the boundary by the Trinity, from its mouth to its source, then to the Arkansas at its nearest point, and along the Arkansas to its source, thence due West to the Pacific, or to leave the limit in the latter instance to be settled by commissioners. If this is done, and Florida, west, to the Perdido, is ceded, and the Convention of 1802 ratified, the U States will undertake to pay, in satisfaction of claims, on account of the French spoliations, and condemnations in Spanish ports, ... .93

This is the first recorded suggestion of carrying the boundary line through to the Pacific. Whether it was Monroe's idea or the suggestion of John Quincy Adams is not clear.94

93 Memorandum, Monroe to J.Q. Adams, cited in ibid. Bemis notes that this memorandum is found between two documents dated February 5 and 23, 1818, in a volume of letters from James Monroe to J.Q. Adams, 1798-1831, Adams MSS.

94 Philip C. Brooks feels that John Jacob Astor prompted Adams to include Oregon in the treaty line, although there is no certain record of Astor's intervention. John Astor's interest in the Pacific Northwest needs no comment; he did assemble a dinner party of a hundred persons to welcome J. Q. Adams home from England in 1817, and perhaps he planted
In February, 1818, the whole diplomatic situation received a sudden jolt when Andrew Jackson, the Napoleon des bois, marched into Florida to "punish" the renegade Indians, Spanish and English. Now, added to the problems of boundaries and spoliation claims was the hue and cry from the Spanish that their sovereignty had been violated by this aggressive act. The invasion of Florida by General Jackson also precipitated a serious debate within President Monroe's Cabinet. Outside the official family, Henry Clay and his cohorts saw a chance to use Jackson's actions to levy criticisms against the Administration. Monroe was worried about political opposition, but he feared more the diplomatic effect if he disavowed Jackson's moves. Privately the President deemed Jackson's actions in Florida to be well beyond what he was authorized to do, and stated as much to the General. 95 Publicly, however, Monroe, with the support of Adams, felt

the idea of obtaining Oregon in the mind of that statesman at that time. See Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands, pp. 151-52. Adams will later claim the whole idea was his own; see below.

he must take a different stand. As he told Jefferson a few months after the event, "his [Jackson's] trial, unless he should ask it himself, would be the triumph of Spain, & confirm her in the disposition not to cede Florida." Rather than apologize Monroe desired to use the situation to press Spain into a settlement of the outstanding issues without driving her to the brink of war.

As expected Luís de Onís announced he could negotiate no treaty until the United States restored Florida to Spanish authority and paid suitable indemnity for the outrages committed against his country. In Madrid, Pizarro ceased communications with the American Minister, George Erving. In actuality, however, Adams and Onís continued to hold meetings and pursue an amicable settlement of the boundary question. It was during these meetings that the two diplomats agreed to use John Melish's "Map of the United States with the contiguous British and Spanish possessions." This map

96 Monroe to Jefferson, July 22, 1818, ibid., 63. Jackson insisted until his death that he had orders to proceed as he did in Florida; likewise President Monroe swore he never so commissioned the General.

97 Wheat, From Lewis and Clark . . ., II, 62. Melish was praised by former President Jefferson for producing a map which gave a "luminous view of the comparative possessions of different powers in our America," ibid., p. 64. Wheat also notes that the Melish map was used to settle boundary disputes with Mexico in 1828 and with the Republic of Texas in 1838.
originally had been published in 1816, but the two statesmen were making use of a later edition. The map had been received well and included the information furnished by the previously published efforts of Pike, Lewis and Clark and von Humboldt. It should be noted, however, that none of the above as yet depicted the Southwest with accuracy. Although Onis complained somewhat over the cartographic authority of the Melish map he agreed to use the map for negotiations. Try as they may the two negotiators could arrive at no workable solution.

The Foreign Minister in Madrid now faced with loss of his British mediation scheme, and extremely fearful that the United States would extend recognition to the revolutionary movements in South America, began to alter his hard line. Onis, in early April, was instructed to place the Spanish offer of a western boundary at the Sabine. Later the same month, Pizarro wrote that Onis could offer the cession of the Floridas and cancellation of all claims, if the United States was to promise no recognition or aid to the insurgents.

98 Ibid., p. 63.
99 Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands . . ., p. 141.
100 Ibid., p. 134.
It was during the crisis caused by the Jackson move into Florida, a time when both America and Spain were not officially negotiating, that the French Minister to the United States, Hyde de Neuville, offered his services to mediate the outstanding issues and prevent a break between Spain and the United States. His motives are not clear; regardless, Monroe and Adams were happy to avail themselves of the Frenchman's services. From July, 1818, to the conclusion of the treaty, the negotiations between Spain and the United States were channeled through this gentleman.101

On July 16, 1818, Adams submitted another major proposal to the Spanish which yielded more of Texas than the original Colorado River offer, but included more of the Oregon Territory. The offer read in part,

101 Bemis, John Quincy Adams . . ., p. 320. Bemis has the following to say about the motives of the French Minister: "In his sketchy Mémoires, Hyde de Neuville reveals a deep-seated fear of British intrusion in the Caribbean area. Undoubtedly he wanted to strengthen Spain's position there by composing all her differences with the United States on the Continent of North America. It is also quite possible that he felt the establishment and enforcement of an agreed boundary between the two countries in North America would discourage the filibustering plots of the Napoleonic exiles. Certain it is that the French Government feared the United States might recognize the independence of the new states of Latin America; perhaps here was a way of staving off such a calamity."
the Trinity, from its mouth to its source, thence a line due north to the Red River, following a course of that to its source, then crossing to the Rio del Norte, and following the course of it, or the summit of a chain of mountains northward and parallel to it; there stop, or take a line west to the Pacific. 102

On the Melish map the Rio Grande appears to rise in about 41° 30' N.L. By October, 1818, Adams and Onis had agreed to the Sabine River north to the Red River, but from this point north and west the two diplomats were far from agreement. Again whether the idea to give up most of Texas was conceived by Adams or Monroe may never be known. Several years after the treaty was concluded, John Quincy Adams declared that he was the last man in the Administration to agree to the Sabine for the western boundary. 103 To put it in his own words, "I was the last who had consented to take the Sabine for our western boundary." 104 Samuel Flagg Bemis feels that

102 Ibid., p. 321.


104 Ibid.
ever since Monroe had anything to do with the Spanish negotiations he had been willing to give up Texas for the Floridas; therefore, it was he that commanded the steps to retreat eastward from the Colorado. "Adams followed his chief with no great if any protest." The "stair-step" boundary line from the Texas-Louisiana border needed much more refining. It is of interest to note that none of the subsequent proposals made by either the United States Government or the Spanish were of such design as to include Santa Fe or any of New Mexico.

It was years after the conclusion of negotiations that John Quincy Adams learned that by November, 1818, Onís had received instructions from Pizarro to yield on a boundary west of the Sabine if necessary to prevent a break, even as far west as the Colorado. Adams could have had Texas, or most of it, but Onís kept these latest instructions to himself and continued his hard bargaining for the Sabine. It was during the first two months of 1819 that the two diplomats concluded their arduous task. They had ceased to wrestle "back and forth across the Continent."

106 Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands . . ., p.146.
107 Bemis, John Quincy Adams . . ., p. 329.
The final stages of the negotiations hinged around the degree of north latitude on which the line to the Pacific would be drawn. Adams held out for 41° N.L., and Onis would not come further south than 43° N.L. In early February, 1819, President Monroe was inclined to accept the Spaniards' latest offer and settle the matter once and for all. He indicated some concern over political harassment from Clay because of the relinquishment of Texas, but wanted the matter closed. The President directed Adams to get General Jackson's opinion on giving up Texas. Accordingly, the Secretary of State called upon General Jackson on February 2, 1819, and asked his opinion of the negotiations with Spain thus far. Adams noted that Jackson felt the friends of the Administration would be satisfied, but their adversaries would be severe in their censure. According to Adams the General said,

there were many individuals who would take exception to our receding so far from the boundary of the Rio del Norte, which we claim, as the Sabine, and the enemies of the Administration would certainly make a handle of it to assail them: but the possession of the Floridas was of so great

108 Diary Entry for February 1, 1819, LaFeber, Adams's Letters, Papers and Speeches, p. 80.
importance to the southern frontier of the United States, and so essential even to their safety, that the vast majority of the nation would be satisfied with the western boundary as we propose, if we obtain the Floridas. 109

President Monroe called a Cabinet Meeting to consider Onis's latest offer and all except Adams felt agreement was so near it would be senseless to jeopardize a treaty at this time. The Floridas had been secured; the Sabine would secure Louisiana on the west. Adams brought up to the President that public opinion and political criticism would be bitter over the loss of Texas, but Monroe assured the Secretary that his political opponents would be troublesome whether a treaty was signed or not, and the acquisition of Florida and title to the Pacific would offset any popular opposition to the loss of Texas. 110

On February 22, 1819, John Quincy

---


110 Diary Entry for February 2, 1819, LaFeber, Adams's Letters, Papers and Speeches, p. 81. One must rely
VIII. MAP OF THE 1819 BOUNDARY SETTLEMENT

Adams and Luis de Onis affixed their signatures to a monumental document. In his diary that evening Adams wrote,

The acquisition of the Floridas has long been an object of earnest desire to this country. The acknowledgement of a definite line of boundary to the South Sea forms a great epoch in our history. The first proposal of it in this negotiation was my own, and I trust it is now secured beyond the reach of revocation.111

Adams was convinced that the United States should obtain more by adhering to our demands, but he seems to have maintained that stand almost alone. President James Monroe was never disposed to endanger the United States by making a determined effort to get Texas or draw a line westward to the Pacific bringing Santa Fe within the American orbit. He wanted Florida, and he got it. In later years Adams would receive more than a little criticism for relinquishing Texas; politics have a strange way over the memories of men. Actually in 1819, Texas and New Mexico were theoretically

on the Diary of John Quincy Adams for the details of this important period of negotiations; neither the papers of Adams or Monroe as edited by Ford and Hamilton throw any light on the subject.

111 Diary Entry for February 22, 1819, Nevins, Diary of John Quincy Adams, pp. 211-12.
available for American expansion, at least in a commercial way; trade was the byword. The flood of immigrants which began after 1820 could not be foreseen, nor could the desire for cheap land and agricultural pursuits be predicted. The Florida situation was much more immediate and in tune with the expansionist ideas holding forth in Washington. Thus one period of United States-Spanish relations came to a close, which in itself signaled the opening guns of a new and more vigorously aggressive period to follow.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that the preceding chapters have shed a bit more light on the many faceted story of American interest in the Spanish Southwest during the better part of the first two decades of the nineteenth century. It has been seen that during the administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison many American citizens demonstrated more than a little concern for penetrating Spanish-held territory beyond the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Such was especially the case with the trader and the trapper. Their concern represented, for the most part, a desire to make quick and sizable fortunes; some men, of course, were drawn to the Southwest by the lure of simple adventure or power. Were it up to these individuals, the United States flag would have been flying above the government buildings in Texas, New Mexico and California years before it actually did. These people did, in fact, represent an aggressive, expansionist-minded America to the Spaniards.
When one looks to the interests and attitudes of the American Government during these same years, however, it becomes quite obvious that the officials and statesmen of this nation were more cautious than many an individual citizen. The diplomatic consequences of any move toward land claimed by Spain could easily prove serious and were weighed carefully. In fact, the United States Government, at times, discouraged and forbade its citizens to move toward the Rocky Mountains. Such a fact becomes all the more interesting when one notes that Thomas Jefferson, President from 1801 to 1809, is considered this nation's first "expansionist" President.

Using various statements made by Thomas Jefferson, and considering the fact that he negotiated the Louisiana Purchase, historians have continually played upon Jefferson's idea to build an "Empire of Liberty." There is little doubt that Jefferson, statesman and man of science, cast eyes towards the West. Were his thoughts any part of a systematic plan to bring what was then Spanish under the control of the United States? It is hoped that the foregoing chapters have proven such an argument weak indeed.

As early as 1786 Jefferson remarked that the American Confederation was a "nest from which all America,
North and South is to be peopled." Referring specifically to Spanish-held territories he expressed hope that His Catholic Majesty would hold on to them until "our population can be sufficiently advanced to gain it from them piece by piece." Such remarks, made during the trying times of the Confederation, and in particular reference to the question of the use of the Mississippi then under discussion, can hardly be considered part of a serious expansionist or imperialistic plan in the true sense.

Another statement by Thomas Jefferson that historians are wont to quote indicating an expansionist-minded President, are his words to James Monroe in November, 1801. In a letter to Governor Monroe of Virginia, Jefferson noted,

On our western and southern frontiers Spain holds an immense country, the occupancy of which, however, is in the Indian natives, except a few insulated spots possessed by Spanish subjects. It is very questionable, indeed, whether the Indians would sell? whether Spain would be willing to receive these people?

---


2 Ibid.
and nearly certain that she would not alienate the sovereignty. . . . However our present interests may restrain us within our own limits, it is impossible not to look forward to distant times, when our rapid multiplication will expand itself beyond those limits, and cover the whole northern, if not the southern continent, with a people speaking the same language, governed in similar forms, and by similar laws; . . .

The action of President Jefferson which has most branded him an expansionist, of course, was the Louisiana Purchase. As developed in Chapters I and II Jefferson had been interested in the vast Louisiana territory for many years before the famous Purchase. The Purchase did, in fact, extend the boundaries of America far to the west of the Mississippi. Perhaps Gilbert Chinard, in his dated but excellent biography of Thomas Jefferson comes close to the accurate evaluation of the Purchase vis-à-vis expansionism when he notes that Jefferson's desire for Louisiana was not so much a desire of expansion or imperialism as the conviction that colonies such as Louisiana were only pawns in the game of European politics. Thus he concluded that there

existed a "permanent danger of seeing France recover some day her former colonies or, still worse, to have them fall into the hands of the British." 4

When the necessity for determining the western boundary of the Louisiana Purchase presented itself it is true that President Jefferson, using the more advantageous French maps as his source of authority, claimed the Rio Grande. Such a limit would have immediately brought Santa Fe within the confines of the United States. Although he doubtless had little idea of the relationships between the several major river systems of the Plains such as the Arkansas and the Platte and their proximity to Santa Fe, he knew well that the Rio Grande would extend American territory west of the province of Texas and into New Mexico. The early French maps upon which he was relying indicated this. Certainly after the return of Zebulon Pike the President knew that Santa Fe would be ours if the Spanish would only agree to the Rio Grande as a boundary. 5 Yet, as we have seen, the President


5 John L. Allen, "Geographical Knowledge & American Images of the Louisiana Territory," The Western Historical Quarterly, II (April, 1971), 154-58. Allen points out that while information on Louisiana was voluminous following the
was not prone to insist upon the Rio Grande as a sine qua non in our negotiations with the Spanish Government. He was more than a little willing to move the boundary line immediately to the Colorado of Texas, and further east if necessary. Although Jefferson would continually hold to the idea that America had "some pretensions" to a more westerly border he put no barriers in the way of his negotiators by insisting upon such limits. There is the strong possibility that the President figured the land would come to us sooner or later as Spain lost control, so why fight for it. Again such conjecture, while plausible, does not give us a picture of an active expansionist government greedy for access to the rich mines of northern New Spain.

That there is early evidence of a type of thinking which burst forth in the Manifest Destiny movement of mid-nineteenth century America should perhaps be mentioned. Chinard has again captured the mood of the times when he sees Jefferson as laying down the moral foundation of American imperialism which the biographer calls "a curious mixture of

Purchase, most was copied and reprinted from the same few sources of English, Spanish and French origin, all inaccurate in varying degrees. Of the Western rivers the Platte and Arkansas were seldom mentioned or described.
common sense, practical idealism, and moralizing not to be found perhaps in any other people, but more permanently American than typically Jeffersonian."  

Following the Presidency of Thomas Jefferson, remarks of an expansionist nature can be found in the writings of other leading statesmen of the early nineteenth century. Nevertheless it is proposed that such remarks were made more in the line of future hopes and possibilities, than as part of any systematic plan by the United States Government to possess what belonged to Spain. What plans there were seem to have been in regard to the Floridas. The whole Florida issue was in turn directly tied to the Mississippi Question and the security of America's Gulf Coast. Santa Fe and the remainder of the Spanish Southwest were not of immediate concern to official America. The words and actions of James Madison and James Monroe offer adequate testimony to this stand. Given the problems between the United States and Great Britain during the administration of James Madison, it is quite understandable that his attention was turned more to the Atlantic coast than to lands west of the Mississippi. President Monroe's role during the final days of the Adams-

---

Onís negotiations clearly indicate that he would not let individual Americans' desires for New Mexico and Texas hinder or delay the final boundary settlement with Spain. Although the evidence is not conclusive, it seems likely that Monroe would not have even insisted on an access to the Pacific had it not been for his shrewd and able Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams.

Another aspect of the United States-Spanish diplomacy, and American interest in the Southwest, which has borne heavily on this study has been an evaluation of the cartographic development and the role it played in determining outstanding issues. At the beginning of the nineteenth century American statesmen had to rely on maps of Spanish and French origin to gain any sort of picture of what lay beyond the Mississippi and Missouri river basins. The Spanish and French themselves were relying in large measure on their own cartographic efforts of earlier times. Given Spain's proclivity to keep her cartographic findings a secret from the outside world, and noting the geographic concepts evidenced by frontier officials, the Spanish seemed to have done a very good job of keeping their findings from each other as well. The maps of Spanish origin on which American and English map makers later based their own work declined in accuracy as they illustrated areas west
and south of the Lower Missouri River. The Arkansas and Platte river systems were often confused; the headwaters of the Red and Canadian rivers were continually interchanged, if not ignored, by the early cartographers. Descriptions of the interior mountain ranges were most indefinite. By the opening of the nineteenth century, as far as territory west of the Mississippi was concerned, American (and Spanish) officials could rely with confidence only on geographic delineations of the Missouri River up to the Mandan Villages, the Sabine River course, and the Red River of Texas from its mouth for a distance of some 300 miles. While much of the Great Plains had been charted, details remained quite inaccurate.

Following the Louisiana Purchase President Jefferson preferred to use maps of French origin in stating his claims to western limits. These maps obviously gave him a stronger arguing point. The French claimed westward to the Rio Grande, including the outpost of Santa Fe, based upon the La Salle landing on the Texas shore and the distances traveled by their various explorers and trappers. The Spanish would never accept such claims; nevertheless Jefferson, in his report to Congress following the Purchase, based his claims almost entirely on the statistics of the Frenchman Le Page
du Pratz.

The expedition of Lewis and Clark, followed by the onrush of traders and trappers, greatly reduced the amount of geographic guesswork as far as the Upper Missouri region and Pacific Northwest were concerned. The famous and controversial expedition of Zebulon M. Pike gave the United States a more accurate view of much of the Great Plains. This endeavor did not, however, alter the paucity of accurate geographic knowledge of the Lower Rocky Mountain region or the remaining land of the Spanish Southwest. As we know Pike's papers were confiscated by Spanish officials and the maps in his Journals made use of the famous von Humboldt map for depicting the approaches of Santa Fe and environs. It has been indicated several times in this study that Baron von Humboldt did not personally make observations in this region; he relied on earlier and inaccurate maps of Spanish origin. Accordingly, geographic misconceptions continued well into the nineteenth century.

Thus when Spaniards were accusing Americans of encroaching upon their lands, and when Americans were asserting their rights to explore or trap rivers well into the Lower Rocky Mountains, both people were supporting their claims with shaky authority. That Spanish officials truly feared
American settlements on the Upper Missouri as being dangerously close to Santa Fe, indicates well their concepts of the geography of the region. That American traders and trappers were of the same thinking is also significant. Other misconceptions such as the notion of a "grand reservoir of snows and fountains" from which all the major rivers of the continent flowed was held by all -- Spaniard and American. When nations try to determine boundaries and spheres of authority erroneous geographical concepts become quite significant.

In the decade following the expeditions of Lewis and Clark and Pike, the many American traders and trappers that set out for Santa Fe, some reaching their destination, added considerably to America's knowledge of the approaches to that attractive region. By the administration of James Monroe the river and overland routes from the Upper Missouri and St. Louis to Santa Fe became better known and more accurately charted. The Arkansas and Platte river highways were no longer confused; the Red and Canadian rivers, however, still remained obscure. They would remain so until the mid-1800's.

The Melish map used by John Quincy Adams and Luís de Onís in the final days of their deliberations was considerably more accurate as far as the areas north of the Red River of Texas, the Great Plains and the Upper Rocky Mountains.
were concerned. That Santa Fe did, in fact, lie quite a distance from American settlements in the above-mentioned regions had been determined. As mentioned in Chapter V, at no time during the Adams-Onís negotiations did the American diplomat propose a western limit which would have encompassed any part of the present-day state of New Mexico. The long-standing claim of the Rio Grande had disappeared from the hard dealing of the negotiating table; it doubtless remained in the minds of some Americans as a goal we would some day realize.

It has been pointed-out that the whole attitude of the United States Government vis-à-vis the Spanish Southwest took a more active, and, if you will, more aggressive turn following the Transcontinental Treaty of 1819. The coming of John Calhoun to the War Department, his subsequent military and Indian policies, as well as the successful opening of the Santa Fe Trail in 1821, were most significant in this more positive approach. What might be termed latent feelings of Manifest Destiny were awakened, never to come to rest until America had extended to the Pacific.

It is felt that many historians have taken the period following the administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, with all the positive moves by the United States
Government directed towards the Spanish Southwest, and have concluded that such was the attitude from the beginning days of this nation. Quite a case may be made along these lines for individual Americans desiring land, trade, wealth or power. The Florida issue fits well into the expansionist mold. It is strongly contended, however, that the United States Government, especially the executive leadership, did not as policy systematically press along the roads to Santa Fe. The type of Manifest Destiny so prevalent in mid-nineteenth century America, when Government officials such as James K. Polk took an active role in expansion, cannot be read back into the first two decades of the country and applied to men like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Manuscript Material:


Delassus, Charles D. Charles Delassus Papers. Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.


National Archives. Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107.

Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Military Affairs, 1800-89 (Microcopy 6).

Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Main Series, 1800-70 (Microcopy 221).

Registers of Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Main Series, 1800-70 (Microcopy 22).

Letters Sent to the President by the Secretary of War, 1800-63 (Microcopy 127).
National Archives. General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59.

Domestic Letters, 1784-1866.

Notes From the Spanish Legation in the United States to the Department of State, 1790-1906 (Microcopy 59).

Dispatches From United States Ministers to Spain, 1792-1906 (Microcopy 31).

Spanish Archives of New Mexico, 1621-1821. Archives Division of the State of New Mexico Records Center, Santa Fe (Microfilm).


Government Documents:


Message From the President of the United States Communicating Discoveries Made In Exploring The Missouri, Red River and Washita, By Captains Lewis and Clark, Doctor Sibley and Mr. Dunbar; With a Statistical Account of the Countries Adjacent, February 19, 1806. Washington, 1806.


Published Material:


### Secondary Sources

**Cartographic and Bibliographic Sources:**

Arrowsmith, Aaron. *A New General Atlas Constructed From the Latest Authorities, Exhibiting the Boundaries and Divisions Also the Chains of Mountains and Other Geographical Features of All the Known Countries of the World*. Edinburgh: A. Constable & Co., and Longman & Company, 1823.

. *A New Map of Mexico and Adjacent Provinces, 1810*. A large map in four separate sections in the collection of Newberry Library, Chicago.


Books:


**Articles:**


Auerbach, Herbert S. "Father Escalante's Route," *Utah Historical Quarterly,* IX (1941), 73-80.


---. "Opening the Santa Fe Trail," Missouri Historical Review, XXV (1931), 30-66.

---. "The Louisiana-Texas Frontier," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, X, No. 1 (July, 1906); XVI, No. 4 (April, 1913); XVII, No. 1 (July, 1913); XVII, No. 2 (October, 1913).


Folmer, Henri. "Contraband Trade Between Louisiana and New Mexico in the Eighteenth Century," New Mexico Historical Review, XVI, No. 3 (July, 1941), 249-74.


---. "An Unknown Expedition to Santa Fe In 1807," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, VI, No. 4 (March, 1920).

Jackson, Donald. "Zebulon M. Pike 'Tours' Mexico," The American West, III (Summer, 1966), 67-71 and 89-93.


Lindley, Harlow. "Western Travel, 1800-1820," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, VI, No. 2 (September, 1919), 167-91.


--- "John Evans, Explorer and Surveyor," Missouri Historical Review, XXV (1931), 219-


Thomas, Alfred B. "Documents Bearing Upon the Northern Frontier of New Mexico, 1818-1819," New Mexico Historical Review, IV, No. 2 (April, 1929), 146-63.


THE EXPLORER, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, AND THE APPROACHES TO SANTA FE: A STUDY OF AMERICAN POLICY RELATIVE TO THE SPANISH SOUTHWEST, 1800 - 1819

APPROVED:

(Dean of the Graduate School)

Date: 5/22/74