The Louisiana Purchase was perhaps the greatest real estate transaction (from the perspective of the U.S.) in history. (Except of course, the land we took for free!!!) It doubled the size of the U.S. and ignited a sense of Manifest Destiny – a belief that westward expansion was the destiny of the country. The primary sources in this packet focus on the following subtopics:

1. **France.** who had their eyes on a North American empire, secretly obtaining the Louisiana territory from Spain caused great concern among Jefferson, congress, and many traders in the frontier.
2. There were issues regarding Jefferson’s views on how the Constitution should be interpreted. Basically, he was concerned whether he (as President) had the authority to buy the territory.
3. Following the purchase, Jefferson hired Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the new territory.
4. Lastly, an issue often overlooked is that of the French settlers already living within the territory. The following primary sources examine those issues.

We will read the annotation as a class. There are questions following each document. I suggest you read the questions first, and use them to add focus to your reading.

Document 1 [http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/statutes/2us245.htm]

**Annotation ➔ Jefferson’s Concerns about France acquiring the Louisiana Territory**

Remember - in 1795, Spain had granted U.S. frontier farmers the right to ship produce down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, where their cargoes of corn, whiskey, and pork were loaded aboard ships bound for the east coast and foreign ports. However, in 1800, *Spain secretly ceded Louisiana Territory to France*. France was not to gain full control of the territory for a few years, but Jefferson and the United States eventually learned of Napoleon’s plan to close New Orleans to frontier farmers. Those frontier farmers, left without a port from which to export their goods, exploded with anger. Many demanded war.

The prospect of French control of the Mississippi alarmed Jefferson. Spain held only a weak grip on the river, but France was a much stronger power. Jefferson feared the establishment of a French colonial empire in North America blocking American westward expansion *(there’s that Manifest Destiny again!!)*. The United States appeared to have only two options: diplomacy or war. In response to growing concerns from the western states, Jefferson, with Congressional approval, *called for the state governors to raise a militia of 80,000.*

**Annotation ➔ Authority Given to the President to Take Possession of the Territory of Louisiana**

Jefferson sent James Monroe (1758-1831) to France, with instructions to purchase New Orleans and as much as the Gulf Coast as he could for $2 million. Then suddenly circumstances played into American hands. In 1802, French troops seemed to be on the verge of crushing the *Haitian Revolution* when they were wiped out by mosquitoes carrying yellow fever. "Damn sugar, damn coffee, damn colonies," Napoleon reportedly exclaimed. Without Haiti, the centerpiece of France's American empire, Napoleon had little interest in keeping Louisiana.

Two days after Monroe's arrival, the French finance minister announced that France was willing to sell all of Louisiana, a territory stretching from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and westward as far as the Rocky Mountains. The negotiators agreed on a price of $15 million. In a single stroke, Jefferson doubled the size of the country.

*Since the Constitution did not give the president specific authorization to purchase land, Jefferson considered asking for a constitutional amendment. In the end, fearing that Napoleon might change his mind, Jefferson simply sent the agreement to the Senate, which ratified it.*
An Act to enable the President of the United States to take possession of the territories ceded by France to the United States, by the treaty concluded at Paris, on the thirtieth of April last; and for the temporary government thereof.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States … is hereby authorized to take possession of, and occupy the territory ceded by France to the United States, by the treaty concluded at Paris, on the thirtieth day of April last, between the two nations;

and that he may … employ any part of the army and navy of the United States, …to be applied under the direction of the President of the United States.

SEC. 2. And be it further enacted, That until the expiration of the present session of Congress…all the military, civil and judicial powers…shall be exercised … [by] the President of the United States… for maintaining and protecting the inhabitants of Louisiana in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property and religion.

APPROVED, October 31, 1803.

Analysis Questions:

1. Why was Jefferson conflicted about getting this authorization from Congress? In other words, he was glad the transaction was approved, but what about it troubled him?

2. What else was Jefferson authorized to do which troubled him and why?
Jefferson had long been fascinated with the West and dreamed of a United States that would stretch across the entire continent. Jefferson instructed Meriwether Lewis, who commanded the expedition jointly with William Clark, to seek new trade routes, to befriend the western tribes of Indians. He was more concerned than most of our past Presidents with achieving friendly relations with the natives. As you will read, his beliefs were still racist and paternalistic (i.e. “Father Knows Best – my way is better than yours!!!). He also requested Lewis and Clark to report on the geography, geology, astronomy, zoology, botany, and climate of the West. The 8,000-mile expedition provided the U.S. Government with its first glimpse of the vast lands that lay west of the Mississippi River.

President Jefferson worked closely with Meriwether Lewis to ensure that he was well prepared—anticipating what the party would need (arms, food, medicines, camping gear, scientific instruments, and presents for the Indians). They planned well. While the expedition ran out of such luxuries as whiskey, tobacco, and salt, they never ran out of rifles and powder, needed both for self-defense and food supply—and they never ran out of ink and paper, needed to record their findings.

(Information excerpted from Stacey Bredhoff, American Originals [Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 2001], p. 28.)

Confidential

Gentlemen of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives:

The Indian tribes residing within the limits of the United States, have… been growing more and more uneasy at the constant shrinking of the territory they occupy… at this time, it … [risks] their friendship [with us], and … [causes] dangerous jealouises and … (anger) in their minds … [when we] make any … [suggestion of] the purchase of … their land… In order peaceably to counteract this … and to provide an extension of [our] territory … two [proposals] are … (necessary).

First: to encourage them to abandon hunting, to [raise and domesticate] animals, to agriculture and domestic manufacture, and … prove …[to them that this is the better way] of living.

Secondly: to multiply trading … [posts] among them, and place within their reach those things which will contribute more to their domestic comfort; … In leading them to agriculture, to manufactures, and civilization; in bringing together their and our settlements, and in preparing them … to participate in the benefits of our governments, I trust and believe we are acting for their greatest good.

…An intelligent officer [Lewis and Clark], with ten or twelve chosen men… might explore the whole (territory), even to the Western Ocean, have conferences with the natives on the subject of commercial trade, get … [accepted by] them for our traders…

The interests of commerce [trade] place … [this Purchase and Expedition} within the constitutional powers … of Congress…. "for the purpose of extending the external commerce of the United States," …

TH. Jefferson
Jan. 18, 1803
Analysis questions:

1. Explain Jefferson’s two-part plan to convince the natives to agree to sell their land? (Read the entire 1st paragraph and simplify your response – It can be answered in one simple 2-part sentence)

2. Jefferson’s plan to “convince” the natives to sell more of their land reveals what about how he felt about the natives? (both good and bad)

3. What is the purpose, besides studying the land of the Louisiana Territory, for Jefferson to send Lewis and Clark on this expedition?

4. What argument does Jefferson offer as to how (as an Anti-Federalist/Strict Interpretationist/State Rights politician) this is under the authority of the President and the national government? In other words, how does he rationalize or justify doing something as President that is not stated in the constitution (i.e. against his beliefs).
Author: Pierre Derbigney
Year: 1804
Type of document: petition

**Annotation →Pierre Derbigney’s Petition to U.S. Government (1804)**

In Sec. 2 of Congress’ ratification of the Louisiana Purchase, they provided for a temporary government and militia for the new territory – which “shall be exercised in such manner, as the President of the United States shall direct” (Document 2). The following document expresses the grievances of French settlers in Louisiana after they were annexed by the United States.

**Full Text:**

We the … inhabitants of Louisiana respectfully approach the Legislature of the United States with a memorial of our rights…..

… Persuaded that a free people would acquire territory only to extend … freedom; that an enlightened nation would never destroy those principles … [of freedom], and that … [they] would … (to look down upon… oppression, we … [believe we should have the same freedoms you enjoy]....

A Governor … [has been] placed over us, whom we have not chosen, whom we do not even know, who may be ignorant of our language, uninformed of our … [way of life], and who may have no connections with … [us]

The Governor … [of the Louisiana Territory chosen by you, has all] legislative power…[such as] Taxation without representation, an obligation to obey laws, without any voice in their formation… [which were] we believe …[part of] the list of grievances complained … by the United States [in the Declaration of Independence] … the rights … [you claimed were]… self-evident, and eternal; they formed, as your country then unanimously … [claimed], the only … [real] basis … [of free] government …

These were the sentiments of your … [Founding Fathers], were they wrong?... No, they were not wrong!... We therefore respectfully pray … [that] the law mentioned above … for the temporary government of … [this territory be repealed]

**Analysis Questions:**

1. Why were the French settlers initially happy that the U.S. was buying the Louisiana Territory?

2. What are 3-4 grievances the French settlers have with the U.S. governors placed within the Louisiana Territory? (3rd Paragraph)

3. How do the French settlers, in effect, argue that Jefferson is being hypocritical? (4th Paragraph – Read the entire paragraph and simplify your answer – it can be done in 1 sentence.)