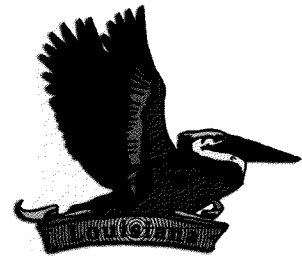


Flashback

*To know nothing of what happened before you were born
is to remain ever a child—Cicero*



Purchase Louisiana? No Thanks!

By Bill Kauffman

During last year's bicentennial hullabaloo over the Louisiana Purchase, the losing side was flushed down the memory hole. Opponents of Thomas Jefferson's French real estate steal, which doubled the American realm for a mere \$15 million, have faded to an invisibility rivaling that of contemporary Franco-American culture. (Spaghetti-Os excepted, of course.)

The Senate ratified the Louisiana Purchase by a vote of 24-7, and the House voted to pay for it by 90-25. So who were these few skinflints and skeptics?

Many had read their Montesquieu, who wrote, "It is natural for a republic to have only a small territory, otherwise it cannot long subsist." The country was already too large, they suspected, and further expansion would swell it past the point of viability. John Dawson, the law partner of James Monroe, argued that "no government, formed on the principles of freedom, can pervade all North America."

The Massachusetts Federalist Fisher Ames scoffed that Louisiana, "a great waste, a wilderness unpeopled with any beings except wolves and wandering Indians," would "be too extensive" to govern. The U.S., he marveled, was "rushing like a comet into infinite space." And for what? Ames, a first-class hater of Jefferson and "Imperial Virginia," slyly asked, "Having bought an empire, who is to be emperor?"

Foes of the Purchase were concentrated in the Northeast, where the Mississippi River was considered a parvenu not fit to wash the Hudson's banks.

The Yankees struck the occasional prescient note, warning that Louisiana would plant "the seed of division" in the American soil. The enlarged country would be too big, its sections too various, to exist under any common government beyond the loosest confederation.

As Connecticut Representative Roger Griswold asserted, "It is not consistent with the spirit of a republican government that its territory should be exceedingly large, for as you extend your limits you increase the difficulties arising from a want of that similarity of customs, habits, and manners so essential for its support."

The spirit of separation, condemned by New Englanders with bombast and cannonblast three score years later, was fanned by its representatives in the wake of the Purchase. Atrabilious Timothy Pickering, who despised "the Moonshine philosopher of Monticello," dreamed of a Northern confederacy, "exempt from the corrupt and corrupting influence and oppression of the aristocratic Democrats of the South." As Pickering predicted, "There will be—and our children at farthest will see it—a separation."

The Louisiana Purchase was one of those agenda-bending flashpoints at which the parties reverse roles with head-spinning alacrity. The Federalists, usually friends to a powerful central government, stood up for parsimony and strict construction of the Constitution, while Jefferson and the Republicans pushed through a mammoth land purchase that Jefferson privately conceded to be "beyond the Constitution."

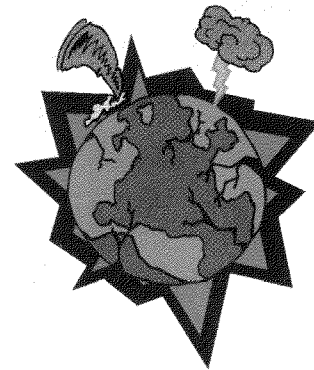
Principles were as elastic as national

boundaries. As the historian Jon Kukla writes, "Only five years earlier, Jefferson's party had championed states' rights and strict construction in the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798. Now their words could have been scripted by the Hamiltonian Federalists."

The Purchase showed Jefferson at his slipperiest. Bothered by the extra-Constitutional nature of what he had done, he fiddled with an authorizing amendment until Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin and others persuaded him that the power to acquire territory was "implied" by the power to make treaties. After a bit of throat-clearing, President Jefferson concluded that "the less that is said about any Constitutional difficulty, the better." The amendment stayed in his desk.

Two years after Mr. Jefferson and Congress bought a new America, the scheme's eloquent defender in the House of Representatives, John Randolph of Virginia, reverted to Jeffersonian principle, saying that "the Louisiana Purchase was the greatest curse that ever befell us." Though Randolph would later declare, "Louisiana is not my country," the bazaar of expansion had a no-returns policy. The thing was done.

Henry Adams wrote that "the Louisiana treaty gave a fatal wound to 'strict construction.'" Conventional historians insist that this was a case of justifiable homicide if ever there was one: An expanding nation needed an expansive Constitution. Infinite space awaited.



Wealth Makes Health

By James Glassman

Early last December, I traveled to Kenya and Uganda with a delegation of health experts to look at efforts to fight AIDS in Africa. What I saw was both depressing and inspirational: overwhelming numbers of the dying and orphaned, but impressive attempts to save them by drug companies, faith-based charities, and U.S. government agencies.

When I returned home, however, I realized that I had missed a big part of the story.

President George W. Bush has committed \$15 billion over the next five years to combat HIV and AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean, and well-meaning people are searching, through trial and error, to find the best programs to get the job done. But even if AIDS were eradicated tomorrow, Africa would still suffer terribly from disease, environmental degradation, and natural disasters.

Why do nearly half of all Africans contract malaria every year and 2 million get tuberculosis—diseases practically non-existent in the developed world? It's not the climate. Malaria and TB were horrors in the United States a few decades ago. Why these disparities?

In a word, poverty. And poverty, as we learned in the twentieth century, does not stem from a lack of natural resources (look at Singapore) or a surfeit of bad weather (look at Minnesota). No, poverty grows from bad political and economic systems, and Africa has those in abundance.

And not just Africa. On December 22,

2003, an earthquake registering 6.5 on the Richter scale struck near San Luis Obispo, between Los Angeles and San Francisco. While there was extensive damage to property, only three people were killed.

Four days later, an earthquake of similar magnitude, 6.6 on the scale, hit near the historic city of Bam in Iran. The deaths are still being counted, and about 30,000 have already been confirmed.

Again, the disparity was no accident. Two larger, more urban quakes in California—Loma Prieta in 1989, which devastated parts of San Francisco (6.9 magnitude), and Northridge in 1994, which caused about \$30 billion in damage to suburbs northwest of Los Angeles (6.7 magnitude)—killed a total of 120 people. Meanwhile, an earthquake in a far more remote region of Iran in 1997, registering just 5.5 on the Richter scale, killed 1,000.

The correlation between poverty and casualties from natural disasters is intense and glaringly obvious. Scan the database of the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (www.cred.be), maintained by the University of Louvain in Belgium, and you'll find that—in terms of loss of life in the past century—nine of the ten worst floods, eight of the ten worst wind storms, and eight of the ten worst earthquakes occurred in poor countries. In 2002, half of the 30 deadliest natural disasters occurred in Africa and nine in South Asia (India, Iran, etc.). None took place in North America or Europe.

It's not that developed nations are immune to the forces of nature. To the contrary, in 2002 CRED listed 17 natural disasters in the United States—wind

storms, earthquakes, floods, and droughts. That was twice as many as in any other country. But in most of those disasters no one was killed, and deaths overall totaled only a few dozen.

According to the Red Cross, in the last ten years “on average 13 times more people die per reported disaster in [poor] countries than in [wealthy] countries.”

Very simply, wealth makes health. Richer countries have the resources to build stronger buildings, to maintain better emergency communications, to rescue the trapped, and to prevent the injured or sick from becoming the dead. Certainly, poorer countries benefit from the wealth of richer countries (through, for example, drugs developed by pharmaceutical firms), but they require their own prosperity.

The same formula applies to the environment. In his book, *The Real Environmental Crisis*, Jack Hollander, professor emeritus of energy and resources at the University of California at Berkeley, shows the link between poverty and environmental degradation. It's obvious to anyone who sees charcoal being burned as fuel in Uganda or dried dung in rural China.

The question is how to improve the economies of poorer nations, and the answer is to end government corruption, advance democracy, and promote free-market principles. Ultimately, those measures will save more lives than noble emergency efforts to battle particular diseases and disasters.

