In 1800, the young republic faced another crucial test: Whether national leadership could pass peacefully from one political party to another. Once again, the nation faced a choice between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson.

Deep substantive and ideological issues divided the two parties. Federalists feared that Jefferson would reverse all the accomplishments of the preceding 12 years. A Republican president, they thought, would overthrow the Constitution by returning power to the states, dismantling the army and navy, and overturning Hamilton's financial system. The Republicans charged that the Federalists, by creating a large standing army, imposing heavy taxes, and using federal troops and the federal courts to suppress dissent, had shown contempt for the liberties of the American people.

The contest was one of the bitterest in American history. Jefferson's opponents called him an "atheist in religion and a fanatic in politics." They claimed he was a drunkard, an enemy of religion, and the father of numerous mulatto children. Jefferson's supporters called President Adams a warmonger, a spendthrift, and a monarchist who longed to reunite Britain with its former colonies.

The election was extremely close. Because of the three-fifths representation of Southern slaves, the final outcome hinged on results in New York. Rural New York supported the Federalists and Republican fortunes therefore depended on voting in New York City. There, Jefferson's running mate, Aaron Burr, created the first modern political organization, complete with ward committees and rallies. Then known as the Tammany Society, this organization would later be known as Tammany Hall. With Burr's help, Republicans won a majority in New York's legislature, which gave the state's 12 electoral votes to Jefferson and Burr.

Jefferson appeared to have won by a margin of eight votes. But a complication arose. Because each Republican elector cast one ballot for Jefferson and one for Burr, the two men received exactly the same number of electoral votes. Under the Constitution, the election was thrown into the Federalist-controlled House of Representatives. Instead of emphatically declaring that he would not accept the presidency, Burr failed to say anything. So Federalists faced a choice: they could elect the hated Jefferson, or they could throw their support to the opportunistic Burr.
In this private letter to Harrison Gray Otis, a Federalist Representative and Senator from Massachusetts, Hamilton urges Federalists in the House of Representatives to support Jefferson. Hamilton considers Burr too power-hungry and personally ambitious for public service.

Document:

My opinion, after mature reflection, that if Jefferson and Burr come with equal votes to the House of Representatives, the former ought to be preferred by the Federalists. Mr. Jefferson is respectably known in Europe--Mr. Burr little and that little not advantageously for a President of the United States.--Mr. Jefferson is a man of easy fortune.--Mr. Burr, as I believe, is bankrupt beyond redemption unless by some coup at the expense of the public and his habits of expense are such that Wealth he must have at any rate,--Mr. Jefferson is a man of fair character for probity.--Very different ideas are entertained of Mr. Burr by his enemies and what his friends think, you may collect from this anecdote--A lady said to Edward Livingston ironically "I am told Mr Burr will be President. I should like it very well if I had not learned that he is a man without property."--"Let him alone for that," replied Edward.--"If he is President four years, he will remove the objection."--Mr. Jefferson, though too revolutionary in his notions, is yet a lover of liberty and will be desirous of something like orderly Government.--Mr. Burr loves nothing but himself-Thinks of nothing but his own aggrandizement--and will be content with nothing short of permanent power in his own hands.--No compact, that he should make with any passion in his breast except Ambition, could be relied upon by himself.--How then should we be able to rely upon our agreement with him? Mr. Jefferson I suspect will not dare much. Mr. Burr will Dare every thing in the sanguine hope of affecting every thing in the sanguine hope of affecting every thing.

If Mr. Jefferson is likely from predilection for France to draw the country into war on her side--Mr. Burr will endeavor to do it for the sake of creating the means of personal power and wealth.

This portrait is the result of long and attentive observation of a man with whom I am personally well-acquainted and in respect to whose character I have had peculiar opportunity of forming a correct judgment.

By no means, my Dear Sir, let the Federalists be responsible for his Elevation.--In a choice of Evils, let them take the least--Jefferson is in my view less dangerous than Burr.

But we ought--still to seek some advantages from our situation. It may be advisable to make it a ground of exploration with Mr. Jefferson or his confidential friends and the means of obtaining from him some assurances of his future conduct. The three essential points for us to secure is. 1 The continuance of the neutral plan bona fide towards the belligerent powers 2 The preservation of the present System of public credit--3 The maintenance & gradual increase of our navy. Other matters may be left to take their chance....
In response to two abolitionists, who had sent him an antislavery pamphlet by a Quaker reformer, Warner Mifflin (1745-1798), President Adams expresses his views on slavery, the dangers posed by abolitionists (who at the time were mostly Quakers and unpopular religious radicals), and emancipation. This letter is particularly revealing in what it discloses about Adams's sense of priorities.

In his letter, Adams mistakenly concludes that slavery was an institution in decline. The 1790 census counted almost 700,000 slaves. According to the census of 1800, the year before Adams wrote this letter, that number had grown to almost 900,000.

Although I have never sought popularity by animated Speeches or inflammatory publications against Slavery of the Blacks, my opinion against it has always been known...and never in my life did I own a Slave. The Abolition of Slavery must be gradual and accomplished with much caution and Circumspection. Violent means and measures would produce greater violations of Justice and Humanity than the continuance of the practice. Neither...[of you], I presume, would be willing to venture on exertions which would probably excite Insurrection among the Blacks to rise against their Masters.... There are many other evils in our Country which are growing, (Whereas the practice of slavery is fast diminishing) and threaten to bring punishment on our Land, more immediately than the oppression of the blacks. That Sacred regard to Truth in which you and I were educated, and which is certainly taught and enjoyed from on high seems to be vanishing from among us. A general Dereliction of Education and Government. A general Debauchery as well as dissipation, produced by pestilent philosophical Principles of Epicurus infinitely more than by Shews and theatrical Entertainments. These are in my opinion more serious and threatening Evils, than even the Slavery of the Blacks, hateful as that is.

I might even add that I have been informed that the condition of the common sort of White People in some of the Southern states particularly Virginia, is more oppressed, degraded and miserable than that of the Negroes...I wish you success in your benevolent Endeavours to relieve the distresses of our fellow Creatures, and shall always be ready to co-operate with you, as far as my means and Opportunities can reasonably be expected to extend.
Jefferson's First Inaugural Address
Digital History ID 4037

Date: 1801

Annotation: Thomas Jefferson became the third president of the United States on March 4, 1801, after being elected in one of the nation's closest presidential contests. In this, his first inaugural address, Jefferson sought to reach out to his political opponents and heal the breach between Federalists and Republicans. Jefferson also strongly states his belief in the importance of religion in the address.

Document: FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

Called upon to undertake the duties of the first executive office of our country, I avail myself of the presence of that portion of my fellow-citizens which is here assembled to express my grateful thanks for the favor with which they have been pleased to look toward me, to declare a sincere consciousness that the task is above my talents, and that I approach it with those anxious and awful presentiments which the greatness of the charge and the weakness of my powers so justly inspire. A rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land, traversing all the seas with the rich productions of their industry, engaged in commerce with nations who feel power and forget right, advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of mortal eye -- when I contemplate these transcendent objects, and see the honor, the happiness, and the hopes of this beloved country committed to the issue and the auspices of this day, I shrink from the contemplation, and humble myself before the magnitude of the undertaking. Utterly, indeed, should I despair did not the presence of many whom I here see remind me that in the other high authorities provided by our Constitution I shall find resources of wisdom, of virtue, and of zeal on which to rely under all difficulties. To you, then, gentlemen, who are charged with the sovereign functions of legislation, and to those associated with you, I look with encouragement for that guidance and support which may enable us to steer with safety the vessel in which we are all embarked amidst the conflicting elements of a troubled world.

During the contest of opinion through which we have passed the animation of discussions and of exertions has sometimes worn an aspect which might impose on strangers unused to think freely and to speak and to write what they think; but this being now decided by the voice of the nation, announced according to the rules of the Constitution, all will, of course, arrange themselves under the will of the law, and unite in common efforts for the common good. All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal law must protect, and to violate would be oppression. Let us, then, fellow-citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and even
life itself are but dreary things. And let us reflect that, having banished from our land that religious intolerance under which mankind so long bled and suffered, we have yet gained little if we countenance a political intolerance as despotic, as wicked, and capable of as bitter and bloody persecutions. During the throes and convulsions of the ancient world, during the agonizing spasms of infuriated man, seeking through blood and slaughter his long-lost liberty, it was not wonderful that the agitation of the billows should reach even this distant and peaceful shore; that this should be more felt and feared by some and less by others, and should divide opinions as to measures of safety. But every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists. If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it. I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a republican government can not be strong, that this Government is not strong enough; but would the honest patriot, in the full tide of successful experiment, abandon a government which has so far kept us free and firm on the theoretic and visionary fear that this Government, the world's best hope, may by possibility want energy to preserve itself? I trust not. I believe this, on the contrary, the strongest Government on earth. I believe it the only one where every man, at the call of the law, would fly to the standard of the law, and would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern. Sometimes it is said that man can not be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question.

Let us, then, with courage and confidence pursue our own Federal and Republican principles, our attachment to union and representative government. Kindly separated by nature and a wide ocean from the exterminating havoc of one quarter of the globe; too high-minded to endure the degradations of the others; possessing a chosen country, with room enough for our descendants to the thousandth and thousandth generation; entertaining a due sense of our equal right to the use of our own faculties, to the acquisitions of our own industry, to honor and confidence from our fellow-citizens, resulting not from birth, but from our actions and their sense of them; enlightened by a benign religion, professed, indeed, and practiced in various forms, yet all of them inculcating honesty, truth, temperance, gratitude, and the love of man; acknowledging and adoring an overruling Providence, which by all its dispensations proves that it delights in the happiness of man here and his greater happiness hereafter -- with all these blessings, what more is necessary to make us a happy and a prosperous people? Still one thing more, fellow-citizens -- a wise and frugal Government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government, and this is necessary to close the circle of our felicities.

About to enter, fellow-citizens, on the exercise of duties which comprehend everything dear and valuable to you, it is proper you should understand what I deem the essential principles of our Government, and consequently those which ought to shape its
Administration. I will compress them within the narrowest compass they will bear, stating the general principle, but not all its limitations. Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none; the support of the State governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns and the surest bulwarks against antirepublican tendencies; the preservation of the General Government in its whole constitutional vigor, as the sheet anchor of our peace at home and safety abroad; a jealous care of the right of election by the people -- a mild and safe corrective of abuses which are lopped by the sword of revolution where peaceable remedies are unprovided; absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority, the vital principle of republics, from which is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism; a well-disciplined militia, our best reliance in peace and for the first moments of war till regulars may relieve them; the supremacy of the civil over the military authority; economy in the public expense, that labor may be lightly burthened; the honest payment of our debts and sacred preservation of the public faith; encouragement of agriculture, and of commerce as its handmaid; the diffusion of information and arraignment of all abuses at the bar of the public reason; freedom of religion; freedom of the press, and freedom of person under the protection of the habeas corpus, and trial by juries impartially selected. These principles form the bright constellation which has gone before us and guided our steps through an age of revolution and reformation. The wisdom of our sages and blood of our heroes have been devoted to their attainment. They should be the creed of our political faith, the text of civic instruction, the touchstone by which to try the services of those we trust; and should we wander from them in moments of error or of alarm, let us hasten to retrace our steps and to regain the road which alone leads to peace, liberty, and safety.

I repair, then, fellow-citizens, to the post you have assigned me. With experience enough in subordinate offices to have seen the difficulties of this the greatest of all, I have learnt to expect that it will rarely fall to the lot of imperfect man to retire from this station with the reputation and the favor which bring him into it. Without pretensions to that high confidence you reposed in our first and greatest revolutionary character, whose preeminent services had entitled him to the first place in his country's love and destined for him the fairest page in the volume of faithful history, I ask so much confidence only as may give firmness and effect to the legal administration of your affairs. I shall often go wrong through defect of judgment. When right, I shall often be thought wrong by those whose positions will not command a view of the whole ground. I ask your indulgence for my own errors, which will never be intentional, and your support against the errors of others, who may condemn what they would not if seen in all its parts. The approbation implied by your suffrage is a great consolation to me for the past, and my future solicitude will be to retain the good opinion of those who have bestowed it in advance, to conciliate that of others by doing them all the good in my power, and to be instrumental to the happiness and freedom of all.

Relying, then, on the patronage of your good will, I advance with obedience to the work, ready to retire from it whenever you become sensible how much better choice it is in your power to make. And may that Infinite Power which rules the destinies of the universe
lead our councils to what is best, and give them a favorable issue for your peace and prosperity.

**Document 4**

**Draft Changes to the Constitution**

Digital History ID 1092

Author: Thomas Jefferson
Date: 1803

**Annotation:** In 1795 Spain granted western farmers the right to ship their 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. In 1800 Spain secretly ceded the Louisiana territory to France and closed the port of New Orleans to American farmers. Westerners, left without a port from which to export their goods, exploded with anger. The prospect of French control of the Mississippi alarmed Jefferson. Spain had held only a weak and tenuous grip on the Mississippi, but France was a much stronger power. Jefferson feared the establishment of a French colonial empire in North America blocking American expansion. The United States appeared to have only two options: diplomacy or war.

The president sent James Monroe to join Robert Livingston, the American minister to France, with instructions to purchase New Orleans and as much of the Gulf Coast as they could for $2 million. Circumstances played into American hands when France failed to suppress a slave rebellion in Haiti. One hundred thousand slaves, inspired by the French Revolution, had revolted, destroying 1200 coffee and 200 sugar plantations. In 1800 France sent troops to crush the insurrection and reconquer Haiti, but they met a determined resistance led by a former slave named Toussaint Louverture. Then, they were wiped out by mosquitoes carrying yellow fever. “Damn sugar, damn coffee, damn colonies,” Napoleon exclaimed. Without Haiti, which he regarded as the centerpiece of an American empire, Napoleon had little interest in keeping Louisiana.

Two days after Monroe’s arrival, the French finance minister unexpectedly announced that France was willing to sell not just New Orleans but all of Louisiana Province, a territory extending from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and westward as far as the Rocky Mountains. The American negotiators agreed on a price of $15 million, or about 4 cents an acre.

Since the Constitution did not give the president specific authorization to purchase land, Jefferson considered asking for a constitutional amendment empowering the government to acquire territory.

**Document:** The province of Louisiana is incorporated with the U. S. and made part thereof. The rights of occupancy in the soil, and of self-government, are confirmed to the
Indian inhabitants, as they now exist. Pre-emption only of the portions rightfully occupied by them, and a succession to the occupancy of such as they may abandon, with the full rights of possession as well as of property and sovereignty in whatever is not or shall cease to be so rightfully occupied by them shall belong to the U. S.

The legislature of the Union shall have authority to exchange the right of occupancy in portions where the U. S. have full right for lands possessed by Indians within the U. S. on the East side of the Mississippi, to exchange lands on the East side of the river for those on the West side thereof and above the latitude of 31 degrees; to maintain in any part of the province such military posts as may be requisite for peace or safety; to exercise police over all persons therein, not being Indian inhabitants; to work salt springs, or mines of coal, metals and other minerals within the possession of the U. S. or in any others with the consent of the possessors; to regulate trade and intercourse between the Indian inhabitants and all other persons; to explore and ascertain the geography of the province, its productions and other interesting circumstances; to open roads and navigation therein where necessary for beneficial communication and to establish agencies and factories therein for the cultivation of commerce, peace and good understanding with the Indians residing there.

The legislature shall have no authority to dispose of the lands of the province otherwise than is hereinbefore permitted, until a new Amendment of the constitution shall give that authority. Except as to that portion thereof which lies south of the latitude of 31 degrees; which whenever they deem expedient, they may erect into a territorial Government, either separate or as making part with one on the eastern side of the river, vesting the inhabitants thereof with all the rights possessed by other territorial citizens of the U.S.

**Document 5**

**Fear of a French Empire in North America**

*Digital History ID 247*

*Author: Thomas Jefferson*

*Date: 1803*

**Annotation:**

In 1795, Spain granted Western 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. In 1800, Spain secretly ceded Louisiana Territory to France, and closed the port of New Orleans to American farmers. Westerners, 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 and tenuous 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 expansion. 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 men in preparation for a possible war with France.

**Document:**

...I take the liberty of urging on you the importance and indispensable necessity of vigorous exertions, on the part of the State Governments, to carry into effect the militia System adopted by the national legislature, agreeably to the power reserved to the states respectively by the constitution of the United States, and in a manner the best calculated to ensure such a degree of military discipline and knowledge of tactics, as will, under the auspices of a benign providence, render the militia a sure and permanent bulwark of national defence.

None but an armed nation can dispense with a standing army. To keep ours armed & disciplined, is, therefore, at all times, important, but especially so at a moment when rights the most essential to our welfare have been violated, and an infraction of treaty committed without colour or pretext.... While, therefore, we are endeavoring, of with a considerable degree of confidence, to obtain, by friendly negotiation, a peaceable redress of the injury and effectual provision against its repetition, let us arrange the Strength of the nation, and be ready to do with promptitude and effect whatever a regard to justice and our future security may require.

**Document 6**

**The Slave Trade**  
*Digital History ID 196*

Author: James Monroe and James Fox  
Date:1803

**Annotation:**

It is a striking historical irony that some slaveholders were at the forefront of efforts to suppress the African slave trade. While partly reflecting humanitarian motives, efforts to restrict the slave trade also expressed a variety of other economic and political interests.

For example, in 1774, the First Continental Congress prohibited the importation of slaves into the United States and banned American participation as a way of asserting the colonists' economic independence and attaching the moral stigma of slavery to Britain. In 1787, South Carolina temporarily prohibited the slave trade in order to prevent debtors from purchasing slaves rather than repaying creditors. Some Virginians feared that continued imports threatened to reduce their slaves' value and diminish the profitable export of Virginia's surplus slaves to the Deep South and West.
The invention of the cotton gin in 1792 had stimulated demand for slaves to raise short-staple cotton. By 1825, field hands, who brought $500 apiece in 1794, were worth $1500.

James Madison, who was serving as Secretary of State at the time he wrote this letter, regarded the African slave trade as America's original sin, but anticipated horrendous upheavals if slaves were emancipated.

Document:

It has unfortunately happened, that at no period since the slave-trade was prohibited, have all our citizens abstained from a traffic, deemed worthy of the anxious solicitude of Congress to restrain, as manifested in the several highly penal laws passed on the subject, and alike discountenanced by the regulations of every state in the Union. Now when peace has turned the attention of several nations of the settlement and extension of their colonies, there is danger of the evil increasing, and I must recommend earnestly to the Consuls, especially to those in America, to exert a steadfast vigilance respecting all such infractions of the laws, which may be attempted and to report them, with due precision, to the Department of State.

Document 7

Jefferson's letter to Meriwether Lewis

Date: 1803

Annotation: To gather information about the geography, natural resources, wildlife, and peoples of Louisiana, President Jefferson dispatched an expedition led by his private secretary Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, a Virginia-born military officer. For 2 years Lewis and Clark led some 30 soldiers and 10 civilians up the Missouri River as far as present-day central North Dakota and then west to the Pacific. The following letter was written by Thomas Jefferson for Meriwether Lewis.

Document: "To Meriwether Lewis, esquire, captain of the first regiment of infantry of the United States of America:

"Your situation as secretary of the president of the United States, has made you acquainted with the objects of my confidential message of January 18, 1803, to the legislature; you have seen the act they passed, which, though expressed in general terms, was meant to sanction those objects, and you are appointed to carry them to execution.

"Instruments for ascertaining, by celestial observations, the geography of the country through which you will pass, have already been provided. Light articles for barter and presents among the Indians, arms for your attendants, say from ten to twelve men, boats, tents, and other traveling apparatus, with ammunition, medicine, surgical instruments and provisions, you will will have prepared, with such aids as
the secretary at war can yield in his department; and from him also you will receive
authority to engage among our troops, by voluntary agreement, the attendants
abovementioned; over whom you, as thier commanding officer, are invested with all
the powers the laws give in such a case.

"As you movements, while within the limits of the United States, will be better
directed by occasional communications, adapted to circumstances as they arise, they
will not be noticed here. What follows will respect your proceedings after your
departure form the United States.

"Your mission has been communicated to the ministers here from France, Spain, and
great Briton, and through them to their governments; ans such assurances given
them as to its objects, as we trust will satisfy them. The country of Louisana having
ceded by Spain to france, the passport you have from the minister of France, the
representative of the present sovereign of the country, will be a protection with all its
subjects; and that from the Minister of England will entitle you to the friendly aid of
any traders of that allegiance with whom you may happen to meet.

"The object of your mission is 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, Oregan, Coloardo, or any other river, may offer the
most direct and practible water-communication across the continent, for the
purposes of commerce.

"Beginning at the mouth of the Missouri, you will take observations of latitude and
longitude, at all remarkable points on the river, and especially at the mouths of
rivers, at rapids, at islands, and other places and objects distinguished by such
natural marks and characters, of a durable kind, as that they may with certainty be
recognised hereafter. The courses of the river between these points of observation
may be supplied by the compass, the log-line, and by time, corrected by the
observations themselves. The variations of the needle, too, in different places,
should be noticed.

"The interesting points of the portage between the heads of the Missouri, and of the
water offering the best communication with the Pacific ocean, should also be fixed by
observation; and the course of that water to the ocean, in the same manner as that
of the Missouri.

"Your observations are to be taken with great pains and accuracy; to be entered
distinctly and intelligibly for others as well as yourself; to comprehend all the
elements necessary, with he aid of the usual tales, to fix the latitude and longitude
of the places at which they were taken; and are to be rendered to the war-office, for
the purpose of having the calculations made concurrently by proper persons within
the United States. Several copies of these, as well as of your other notes, shoule be
made at leisure times, and put into the care of the most trust worthy of your
attendants to guard, by multiplying them against the accidental losses to which they
will be exposed. A further guard would be, that one of these copies be on the
cuticular membranes of the paper-birch, as less liable to injury from damp than
common paper.

"The commerce which may be carried on with the people inhabiting the line you will
pursue, renders a knowledge of those people important. You will therefore endeavour
to make yourself acquainted, as far as a diligent pursuit of your journey shall admit, with the names of the nations and their numbers;

"The extent and limits of their possessions;

"Their relations with other tribes or natins;

"Their language, traditions, monuments;

"Their ordinary occupations in agriculture, fishing, hunting, war, arts, and the implements for these;

"Their food, clothing, and domestic accommodations: "The diseases prevalent among them, and the remedies they use;

"Moral and physical circumstances which distinguish them from the tribes we know;

"Peculiarities in their laws, customs, and dispositions;

"And articles of commerce they may need or furnish, and to what extent. "And, considering the interest which every nation has in extending and strengthening the authority of reason and justice among the people around them, it will be useful to acquire what knowledge you can of the state of morality, religion, and information among them; as it may better enable those who may endeavour to civilize and instruct them, to adapt their measures to the existing notions and practices of those on whom they are to operate.

"Other objects worthy of notice will be;

"The soil and face of the country, its growth and vegetable productions, especially those not of the United States;

"The animals of the country generally, and especially those not known in the United States;

"The remains and accounts of any which may be deemed rare or extinct;

"The mineral productions of every kind, but more particularly metals, lime-stone, pit-coal, and saltpetre; salines and mineral waters, noting the temperature of the last, and such circumstances as may indicate their character;

"Volcanic appearances;

"Climate, as characterized by the thermometer, by the proportion of rainy, cloudy, and clear days; by lightning, hail, snow, ice; by the access and recess of frost; by the winds prevailing at different seasons; the dates at which particular plants put forth, or lose their flower or leaf; times of appearance of particular birds, reptiles or insects.
"Although your route will be along the channel of the Missouri, yet you will endeavour to inform yourself, by inquiry, of the character and extent of the country watered by its branches, and especially on its southern side. The North river, or Rio Bravo, which runs into the gulf of Mexico, and the North river, or Rio Colorado, which runs into the gulf of California, are understood to be the principal streams heading opposite to the waters of the Missouri, and running southwardly. Whether the dividing grounds between the Missouri and them are mountains or flat lands, what are their distance from the Missouri, the character of the intermediate country, and the people inhabiting it, are worthy of particular inquiry. The northern waters of the Missouri are less to be inquired after, because they have been ascertained to a considerable degree, and are still in a course of ascertainment by English traders and travellers; but if you can learn any thing certain of the most northern source of the Mississippi, and of its position relatively to the Lake of the Woods, it will be interesting to us. Some account too of the path of the Canadian traders from the Mississippi, at the mouth of the Ouisconsin to where it strikes the Missouri, and of the soil and rivers in its course, is desirable.

"In all your intercourse with the natives, treat them in the most friendly and conciliatory manner which their own conduct will admit; allay all jealousies as to the object of your journey; satisfy them of its innocence; make them acquainted with the position, extent, character, peaceable and commercial dispositions of the United States; of our wish to be neighbourly; friendly, and useful to them, and of our dispositions to a commercial intercourse with them; confer with them on the points most convenient as mutual emporiums, and the articles of most desirable interchange for them and us. If a few of their influential chiefs, within practicable distance, wish to visit us, arrange such a visit with them, and furnish them with authority to call on our officers on their entering the United States, to have them conveyed to this place at the public expense. If any of them should wish to have some of their young people brought up with us, and taught such arts as may be useful to them, we will receive, instruct, and take care of them. Such a mission, whether of influential chiefs, or of young people, would give some security to your own party. Carry with you some matter of the kine-pox; inform those of them with whom you may be of its efficacy as a preservative from the small-pox, and instruct and encourage them in the use of it. This may be especially done wherever you winter.

"As it is impossible for us to foresee in what manner you will be received by those people, whether with hospitality or hostility, so is it impossible to prescribe the exact degree of perseverance with which you are to pursue your journey. We value too much the lives of citizens to offer them to probable destruction. Your numbers will be sufficient to secure you against the unauthorized opposition of individuals, or of small parties; but if a superior force, authorized, or not authorized, by a nation, should be arrayed against you further passage, and inflexibly determined to arrest it, you must decline its further pursuit and return. In the loss of yourselves we should lose also the information you will have acquired. By returning safely with that, you may enable us to renew the essay with better calculated means. To your own discretion, therefore, must be left the degree of danger you may risk, and the point at which you should decline, only saying, we wish you to err on the side of your safety, and to bring back your party safe, even if it be with less information.

"As far up the Missouri as the white settlements extend, an intercourse will probably be found to exist between them and the Spanish post of St. Louis opposite Cahokia,
or St. Genevieve opposite Kaskaskia. From still further up the river the traders may furnish a conveyance for letters. Beyond that you may perhaps be able to engage Indians to bring letters for the government to Cahokia, or Kaskaskia, on promising that they shall there receive such special compensation as your shall have stipulated with them. Avail yourself of these means to communicate to us, at seasonable intervals, a copy of your journal, notes and observations of every kind, putting into cypher whatever might do injury if betrayed.

"Should you reach the Pacific ocean, inform yourself of the circumstances which may decide whether the furs of those parts may not be collected as advantageously at the head of the Missour (convenient as is supposed to the waters of the Coorado and Oregan or Columbia) as at Nootka Sound, or any other point of that coast; and that trade be consequently conducted through the Missour and United States more beneficially than by the circumnavigation now practised.

"On your arrival on that coast, endeavour to learn if there be any port within your reach frequented by the sea vessels of any nation, and to send two of your trusty people back by sea, in such way as shall appear practicable, with a copy of your notes; and should you be of opinion that the return of your party by the way they went will be imminently dangerous, then ship the whole, and return by sea, by the way either of Cape Horn, or the Cape of Good Hope, as you shall be able. As you will be without money, clothes, or provisions, you must endeavour to use the credit of the United States to obtain them; for which purpose open letters of credit shall be furnished you, authorizing you to draw on the executive of the United States, or any of its officers, in any part of the world, on which draughts can be disposed of, and to apply with our recommendations to the consuls, agents, merchants, or citizens of any nation with which we have intercourse, assuring them, in our name, that any aids they may furnish you shall be honourably repaid, and on demand. Our consuls, Thomas Hewes, at Batavia, in Java, William Buchanan, in the Isles of France and Bourbon, and John Elmslie, at the Cape of Good Hope, will be able to supply your necessities, by draughts on us.

"Should you find it safe to return by the way you go, after sending two of our party round by sea, or with your whole party, if no conveyance by sea can be found, do so; making such observations on your return as may serve to supply, correct, or confirm those made on your outward journey.

"On reentering the United States and reaching a place of safety, discharge any of your attendants who may desire and deserve it, procuring for them immediate payment of all arrears of pay and clothing which may have incurred since their departure, and assure them that they shall be recommended to the liberality of the legislature for the grant of a soldier's portion of land each, as proposed in my message to congress, and repair yourself, with your papers, to the seat of government.

"To provide, on the accident of your death, against anarchy, dispersion, and the consequent danger to your party, and total failure of the enterprise, you are hereby authorized, by any instrument signed and written in your own hand, to name the person among them who shall succeed to the command on your decease, and by like instruments to change the nomination, from time to time, as further experience of the characters accompanying you shall point out superior fitness; and all the powers and authorities given to yourself are, in the event of your death, transferred to, and
vested in the successor so named, with further power to him and his successors, in like manner to name each his successor, who, on the death of his predecessor, shall be invested with all the powers and authorities given to yourself. Given under my hand at the city of Washington, this twentieth day of June, 1803."

Thomas Jefferson President of the United States of America

Document 8

John Adams on Aaron Burr

Author: John Adams
Date: 1807

Annotation:

Anger over the acquisition of Louisiana led some Federalists to consider secession as a last resort to restore their party's former dominance. One group of Federalist congressmen plotted to establish a "Northern Confederacy" which would consist of New Jersey, New York, the New England states, and Canada. Alexander Hamilton repudiated this scheme, and the conspirators turned to Vice President Aaron Burr. In return for Federalist support in his campaign for the governorship of New York, Burr was to swing the state into the confederacy. Burr was badly beaten, in part because of Hamilton's opposition. Incensed, Burr challenged Hamilton to the duel in which the Federalist leader was fatally wounded.

As a result of the duel, Burr was ruined as a politician. New Jersey and New York indicted the Vice President on murder charges; the charges were later quashed. The desperate Burr then became involved in a conspiracy for which he would be tried for treason.

In the Spring of 1805, Burr and James Wilkinson (1757-1825), the military governor of Louisiana, hatched an adventurous scheme, the exact nature of which remains unknown. The British minister was told that for $500,000 and British naval support, Burr would separate the states and territories west of the Appalachians from the Union and create an empire with himself as head.

In the fall of 1806, when Burr and some 60 conspirators traveled down the Ohio River toward New Orleans, Wilkinson betrayed the former Vice President. He sent a letter to Jefferson describing a "deep, dark, wicked, and widespread conspiracy...to seize New Orleans, revolutionize the territory, and carry an expedition against Mexico." Burr fled, but was apprehended and tried for treason, with Chief Justice John Marshall presiding. Under the Constitution, each act of treason must be attested to by two witnesses. The prosecution was unable to meet this strict standard and Burr was acquitted.

Was Burr guilty of conspiring to separate the West? Probably not. The prosecution's case rested on the unreliable testimony of co-conspirator Wilkinson, who was a spy in the pay of Spain. It appears that Burr was planning an unauthorized military attack on Mexico, then under the control of Spain. The dream of creating an "empire
for liberty" appealed to many Americans who feared that a European power might seize Spain's New World colonies unless Americans launched a preemptive strike. Hamilton himself had aspired to raise a huge army to invade and conquer Spanish territories. To the end of his life, Burr denied he had plotted treason against the United States.

In this letter, former President Adams expresses his interest in the outcome of Burr's treason trial.

Document:

am anxious to see the Progress of Burr's Ttryal: not from any Love or hatred I bear the man, for I cannot say that I feel either.... But I think Something must come out of the Tryal, which will strengthen or weaken our Confidence in the General Union. I hope something will appear to determine clearly whether any foreign Power has or has not been tampering with our Union.... [Burr's actions] could be instigated only by his own ambitious avarice or Revenge. But I hope his Innocence will be made to appear, and that he will be fairly acquitted....

Document 9

Outrage over Impressment

Author: John Adams
Date: 1807

Annotation: Outrage over the British practice of impressment reached a fever pitch in 1807, when the British man-of-war Leopard fired three broadsides at the U.S. naval frigate Chesapeake, which had refused to stop at the order of the Leopard's commander. The blasts killed three American sailors and wounded eighteen more. British authorities then boarded the American ship and removed four sailors, only one of whom was a British subject.

The country clamored for war. Even some Federalists joined in the anti-British outcry. Said one, "Without substantial reparation for the crying offense against our honor, rights and independence, we must go to war." "Never," wrote President Jefferson, "since the battle of Lexington have I seen this country in such a state of exasperation."

In this letter, former President Adams discusses the clamor for war and the irony of Americans, who were unconcerned about fugitive slaves, being almost obsessively concerned about fugitive British sailors. Note how Adams parodies the voice of "a zealous Republican," attacking, as he was constantly attacked, a "Monarchical, Anti-republican administration."
War? or No War? That is the question. Our Monarchical, Anti-republican administration conceal from us, the People, all that Information which I a zealous Republican was always prompt to communicate.... If an express stipulation is demanded...that our Flag on board Merchant as well as Ships of War shall protect all British subjects; Deserters from their Navy and all others, I will apprehend the English will not agree to it.... Prudence would dictate that our government should forbid all its Naval offices to recruit a Deserter from any Nation, in any case; and if the President has not the power to enact it, Congress should enact it. But our People have such a Predilection for Runaways of every description except Runaway Negroes that I suppose Congress would think it too unpopular to abridge this right of man. How we will get out of this Scrape I know not...tho' I carry the Principle by the Law of Nations, to as great an extent as Mr. Jefferson does. If the English fly into a Passion and with or without declaring War Seize every ship and Cargo we have at Sea, I don't believe our present Congress would declare War against them. I am sure they cannot consistently, with their avowed system...defend Nothing but our Farms....

Document 10

The Embargo of 1807

Author: Thomas Jefferson
Date: 1808

Annotation: Jefferson believed that Americans would cooperate with the embargo out of patriotism. Instead, smuggling flourished, particularly through Canada. To enforce the embargo, Jefferson took steps that infringed on his most cherished principles: individual liberties and opposition to a strong military. He had to mobilize the army and navy to enforce the blockade, and in April 1808, he declared the Lake Champlain region of New York, along the Canadian border, in a state of insurrection.

Early in 1809, three days before Jefferson left office, Congress repealed the embargo. In effect for 15 months, it had exacted no political concessions from either France or Britain. But it had produced economic hardship, evasion of the law, and political dissension at home.

In this broadside, the President defends the embargo as "the only honorable expedient for avoiding war."

Document:

I have duly received the address of that portion of the citizens of Stockbridge [Massachusetts] who have declared their approbation of the present suspension of our commerce, and their dissent from the representation of those of the same place who wished its removal. A division of sentiment was not unexpected. On no question can a perfect unanimity be hoped, or certainly it would have been on that between war and embargo, the only alternatives presented to our choice; for the general capture of our vessels would have been war on one side, which reason and interest would repel by war and reprisal on our part.
Of the several interests composing those of the United States, that of manufactures would of course prefer to war, a state of non-intercourse, so favorable to their rapid growth and prosperity. Agriculture, although sensibly feeling the loss of market for its produce, would find many aggravations in a state of war. Commerce and navigation, or that portion which is foreign, in the inactivity to which they are reduced by the present state of things, certainly experience their full share in the general inconvenience: but whether war would to them be a preferable alternative, is a question their patriotism would never hastily propose. It is to be regretted, however, that overlooking the real sources of their sufferings, the British and French Edicts, which constitute the actual blockade of our foreign commerce and navigation, they have, with too little reflection, imputed them to laws which have saved them from greater, and have preserved for our own use our vessels, property and seamen, instead of adding them to the strength of those with whom we might eventually have to contend.

The Embargo, giving time to the belligerent powers to revise their unjust proceedings and to listen to the dictates of justice, of interest and reputation, which equally urge the correction of their wrongs, has availed our country of the only honorable expedient for avoiding war: and should a repeal of these Edicts supersede the cause for it, our commercial brethren will become sensible that it has consulted their interests, however against their own will. It will be unfortunate for their country if, in the mean time, these, their expressions of impatience, should have the effect of prolonging the very suffering which have produced them, by exciting a fallacious hope that we may, under any pressure, relinquish our equal right of navigating the ocean, go to such ports only as others may prescribe, and there pay the tributary exactions they may impose; an abandonment of national independence and of essential rights revolting to every manly sentiment: While these Edicts are in force, no American can ever consent to a return of peaceable intercourse with those who maintain them.

Document 11

The Meaning of the French Revolution
Digital History ID 226

Author: Thomas Jefferson
Date:1811

Annotation:

After receiving a history of the French Revolution, Jefferson reflects on the meaning and implications of that epochal historical event. During the early 1790s, Jefferson had been a strong supporter of the revolution, which he viewed as part of a broader struggle to overthrow monarchical tyranny. In 1793, the year Louis XVI was executed, Jefferson had gone so far as to write that he was willing to see half the earth drenched in blood if this was necessary to bring about human freedom. In retrospect, however, he expresses his misgivings about the revolution's outcome.

Pagenel, the author of the history book, was a member of the Committee of Public Safety and served as secretary to the National Convention. The first edition of his 1810 book was almost completely destroyed by Napoleon's censors. Later, Louis XVII exiled Pagenel, who died in 1826, the same year as Jefferson.
I received through Mr Warden the copy of your valuable work on the French revolution, for which I pray you to accept my thanks. That its sale should have been suppressed is no matter of wonder with me. The friend of liberty is too feelingly manifested, not to give umbrage to its enemies. We read in it, and weep over, the fatal errors which have lost to nations the present hope of liberty, and to reason the fairest prospect of its final triumph over all impostures, civil & religious. The testimony of one who himself was an actor in the scenes he notes, and who knew the true mean between rational liberty, and the frenzies of demagogy, are a tribute of inestimable value. The perusal of this work has given me new views of the causes of failure in a revolution of which I was a witness in its early part, & then augured well of it. I had not means afterwards of observing its progress but the public papers, & their information came thro channels too hostile to claim confidence. An acquaintance with many of the principal characters, & their fate, furnished me groups for conjectures, some of which you have confirmed, & some corrected. Shall we ever see as free & faithful a tableau of the subsequent acts of this deplorable tragedy? Is reason ever to be amused with the hochets [disturbances] of physical sciences, in which she is indulged merely to divert her from solid speculations on the rights of man, and wrongs of his oppressors? It is impossible. The day of deliverance will come, altho' I shall not live to see it. The art of printing secures us against the retrogradation of reason & information, and the examples of its safe & wholesome guidance in government, which will be exhibited thro' the wide spread regions of the American continents, will obliterate in time the impressions left by the abortive experiment of France. With my prayers for the hastening of that auspicious date....<