

Early Government

CHANGING BOUNDARIES. Spain protested *vigorously* the sale of Louisiana, reminding France that Napoleon had given his word that the land would not be sold. In no position to go to war, however, Spain was eventually silent, and the transfer was completed.

On December 20, 1803, thirty-year-old William C.C. Claiborne became the governor of Louisiana, the largest single territory ever owned by the United States. In an official ceremony in New Orleans, the French flag was lowered as the American flag was raised. Midway, the operators paused and the banners waved side by side momentarily, emphasizing the brotherhood of nations. Seconds later, the Stars and Stripes were flying over New Orleans, and thus over all Louisiana.

Some 20,000 non-Indian Americans lived in Louisiana Territory, most of them in or around New Orleans and St. Louis, with a few scattered settlements in between. In March, 1804, Congress passed an act which created two territories in the West — the Territory of New Orleans, south of the 33rd *Parallel*, and the District of Louisiana, or “Upper Louisiana,” north of it.

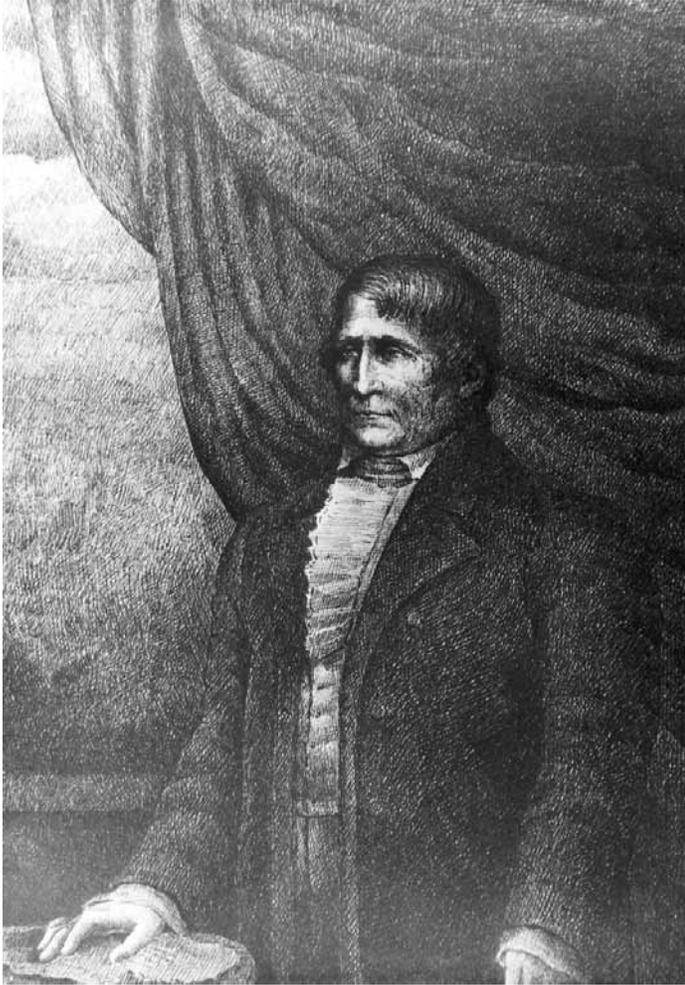
Temporarily, the District of Louisiana was attached to Indiana Territory, under Governor William Henry Harrison, who became the ninth President of the United States, serving a brief term in 1841. In March, 1805, the district was separated from Indiana Territory and became the Territory of Louisiana. General James Wilkinson, the father of Lieutenant James Wilkinson, became governor of the Territory of Louisiana in St. Louis.

In 1812, the Territory of New Orleans was admitted to the Union as the state of Louisiana. The Territory of Missouri was created and included the area that is now Oklahoma. William Clark, the famous explorer, was appointed governor of Missouri Territory.

In 1819, Missouri Territory was divided, and the Territory of Arkansas was created. Governor James Miller *established* Arkansas Post as the seat of government for Arkansas Territory. Its northeastern and southern boundaries matched those of today’s state of Arkansas, but its western boundary extended all the way to the Spanish holdings on the west, in-

cluding Oklahoma.

Also in 1819, the southern and western boundaries of the area of the Louisiana Purchase were finally *established*. The Adams-Onís Treaty, an agreement between Spain and the United States, set the following as the absolute boundary between American and Spanish holdings in the West:



Jean Pierre Chouteau

...along the west bank of the Sabine River from its mouth to the 32nd *Parallel*; thence, due north to the Red River; thence, westward along its south bank to the 100th *meridian*; thence, north along that *meridian* to the Arkansas River; thence, up the south bank of that stream to its source; thence, due north to the 42nd *Parallel*; thence, westward along that *Parallel* to the Pacific Ocean. . .

By the same treaty, Spain gave up all claims to both Florida and Oregon, and the United States *relinquished* any claims to Texas as part of the Louisiana Purchase. Further, two future boundaries were *established* for the state of Oklahoma — the Red River and the 100th *Meridian*.

THE CHOUTEAUS. As the nation grew in the East, more and more settlers began to spill into the West, and more people began to come to Oklahoma. The first to come were the traders.

The Chouteau family were among the first of the traders.

Auguste Chouteau and his partner, Pierre Laclede Ligest, founded St. Louis in 1764 as a trading port. Auguste's brother, Jean Pierre, *established* a healthy trade with the Osages, the Omahas, the Otos, the Kaws, the Poncas, and the Quapaws, all of whom were enemies of the Pawnees and moved about the Central Plains area.

Much of Chouteau's business with these tribes was in guns and *ammunition* for their wars with the Pawnees, and he often took Pawnee captives back to St. Louis to be sold as slaves.

Auguste Pierre Chouteau, son of Jean Pierre and nephew of Auguste, *established* a trading post in 1817 near the site of present-day Salina, Oklahoma, on the Grand River, in the Three Forks area. Some 2,000

hunters and trappers, both Indian and European, traded with A.P. Chouteau, and the trading post shipped a huge volume of furs and *pelts* to New Orleans and St. Louis. There were hides of bear, beaver, buffalo, deer, otter, raccoon, rabbit, skunk, and many others, all of which were sold on eager markets in the more “*civilized*” areas of the country.

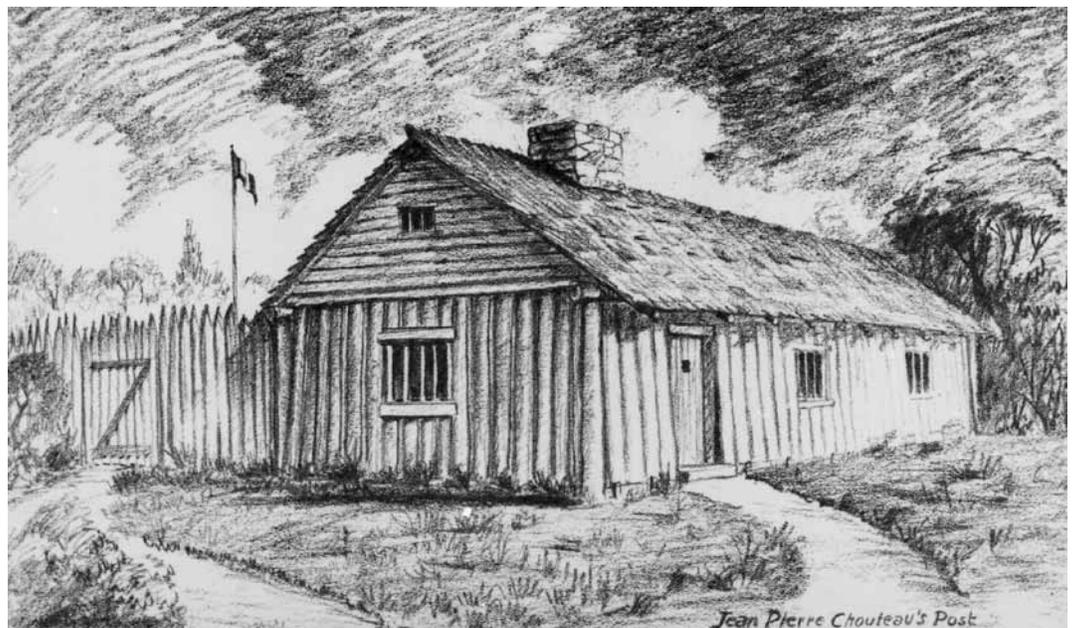
Chouteau himself lived *luxuriously* in the wilderness. He built a home described by a friend as a “two story log palace,” in which he entertained many travelers. Among those were the famous writer Washington Irving and Sam Houston, who later became the President of the Texas Republic. A.P. Chouteau married Sophie Labbadie, and the couple had six children — five daughters and a son. He also had four Indian wives and several children by them.

OTHER TRADERS. When Colonel Hugh Glenn opened up trade with Santa Fe, it became an important piece of business for both parties. There were no manufacturing centers in northern Mexico, so dry goods and hardware were especially valuable trade items there. Bolts of fabric, barrels of nails, horseshoes, and tools were shipped regularly. On return trips, horses, mules, and raw materials were transported for the eastern market. Glenn’s trading post on the Verdigris River thrived, and it became a regular stopover for wilderness travelers.

Other trading posts in the Three Forks area were owned by partners Brand and Barbour, by Nathaniel Pryor, the veteran of two exploring *expeditions*, and by Ben Hawkins. All these posts became stopping-off places, and traders became as deft at trading tales and *hospitality* as they were at trading goods.

Trading posts and merchandise were swept away in the greatest flood ever to hit that region. The Three Forks trading center began to decline after 1833 and the big flood. Chouteau alone suffered \$10,000 in damages. The traders rebuilt and made improvements, only to

Chouteau’s trading post was the hub of commerce in the early 1800s.



have them destroyed again in a fire a short time later. The trading center never fully recovered after that.

Not many miles away, however, Bean's Salt Works had also become a favorite tourist spot in the early nineteenth *century*. *Established* in the spring of 1820 on the Illinois River, the salt mining business did well. Bean lived in a "comfortable log house," did some *subsistence* farming, and raised some livestock. He used large kettles for mining salt by evaporation, in much the same way as had the prehistoric people of the same region. Saltwater was collected from a saline spring near the house.

FRONTIER FORTS AND ROADS. In addition to problems in the territories, the government had its eye on problems of its southern neighbors. In 1809, Mexico revolted against Spain. The southern boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase were only vaguely *established*. A series of forts was planned by the American government to protect the southern border, to protect white settlers in Indian country, and to deal with the Indians in the Far West.

The first fort, of course, was Fort Smith, *established* in 1817. The next fort, *established* after boundaries were set and Spanish control ended in North America, was Fort Gibson. *Established* in 1824, Fort Gibson stood between the Arkansas and Grand rivers and was named for General George Gibson, who served in the Revolutionary War.

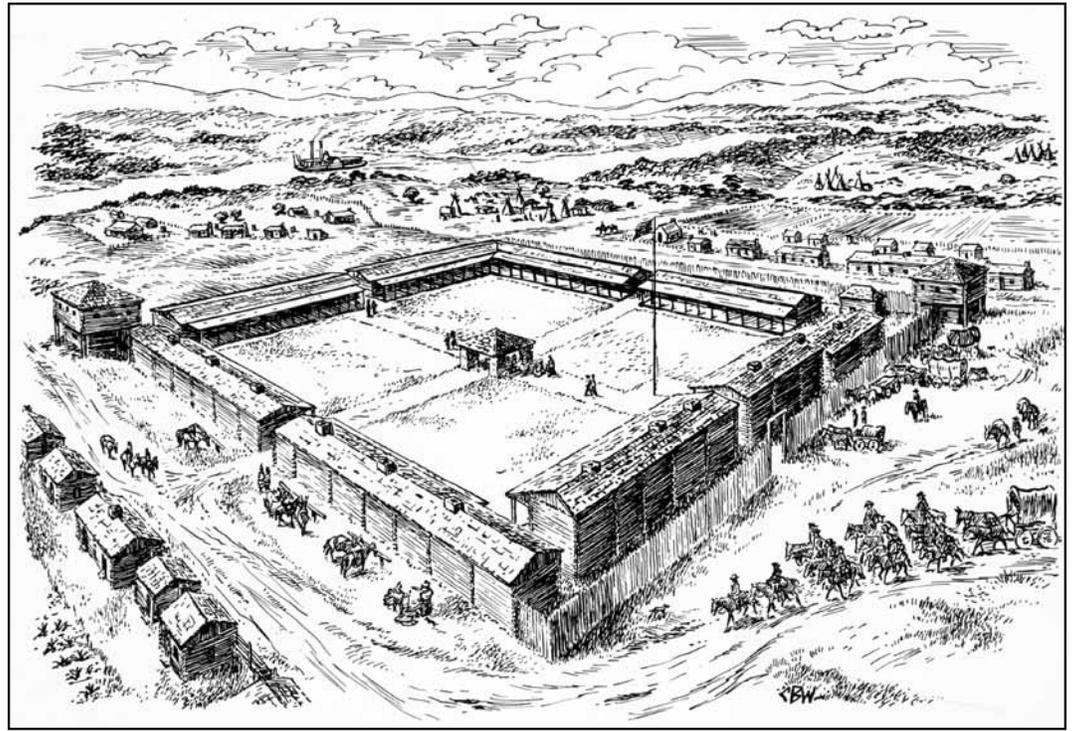


Also in 1824, Fort Towson was constructed near the mouth of the Kiamichi River, some 120 miles south of Fort Gibson. This fort was named for Brigadier General Nathan Towson,

who had won national recognition in the War of 1812.

These three were the most active forts built in the frontier days of Oklahoma, but others also were important. Fort Coffee was built in 1834 near present-day Spiro. Fort Holmes was constructed the same year near the mouth of Little River. Fort Washita was built in southern Oklahoma, near the present town of Madill, in 1842.

The first roads in the territory were constructed to connect the forts. The first to be surveyed, between Fort Smith and Fort Gibson, ran approximately the same course as today's Highway 64. Thorough exploration of most of present-day Oklahoma was finally accomplished through the building of military posts, the surveying of roads, and the movement of troops and military supplies.



Ft. Gibson was located between the Arkansas and Grand rivers. Indians, fur traders, soldiers and travelers were frequent visitors.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Give four important facts about the Adams-Onis Treaty.
2. Discuss the establishment of forts in the area (give names) and explain the effects the forts had upon completing the exploration of Oklahoma.
3. Describe the ceremonies that took place when the Louisiana Territory was transferred from France to the United States.
4. Name the son of an early family of traders and tell how he succeeded in establishing a trading post in Oklahoma.
5. Why was Glenn's trade with Santa Fe important?
6. Describe the Osage Indians as a tribe (culture, reputation, general appearance, etc.)
7. Describe the typical Osage warrior.