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<http://www.npr.org/2012/11/27/166023472/puerto-rico-could-change-congress-if-made-a-state>

ROBERT SIEGEL, HOST:

Of the 50 million Hispanics in the U.S., nearly two-thirds are of Mexican origin. The second largest group - accounting for about 9 percent - are the nearly five million Puerto Ricans who live in the 50 states and the District of Columbia - that is, not on the island of Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens. The island has been a U.S. territory since the Spanish-American War.

Well, on Election Day, Puerto Rico held a vote on the island's status, and although some people dispute the meaning of the result, the winning option was statehood. Joining us now to talk about this is a statehood advocate, resident commissioner Pedro Pierluisi, who is also Puerto Rico's non-voting member of Congress. He caucuses with the Democratic Party. Welcome.

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER PEDRO PIERLUISI: Thank you. Thank you for having me here, Robert. I'll be glad to expand on what happened in Puerto Rico on November 6th.

SIEGEL: Well, let's begin with the rather controversial result. There were two questions on the ballot. First: Should the current territorial status continue? Fifty-four percent said no. And the second question was: If not, what should be the status? And of three choices offered - independence, a sovereign, free associated state or statehood - statehood got 61 percent of the vote.

Some people say, though, so many people didn't vote on question number two, it really doesn't say that much.

PIERLUISI: Yes. But let's go step by step. The first question was pretty clear, basically whether Puerto Rican should remain the way it is, a territory. And 54 percent of the voters said no.

SIEGEL: But just to pursue the result one more time, about a quarter of the people who voted on question number one didn't vote on question number two. Some people said they didn't even know they could vote, or that it made any sense to vote on question number two if they supported the status quo.

PIERLUISI: It was pretty clear in terms of the public discourse. And there was a lot of informative ads telling voters that these were two questions, separate questions, and that regardless of the answer to the first question, they should make a choice. So that's where we are.

SIEGEL: Right. All right, that's where we are. So we have a result. We have an election that's taken place, a referendum. President Obama has said - and I'm quoting now - "When the people of Puerto Rico make a clear decision, my administration will stand by you." The Republican platform of 2012 said that party supports the right of U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico to be admitted to the union as a fully sovereign state if they freely so determine.

But it then speaks of that happening by means of a general right of referendum, or specific referenda sponsored by the U.S. government. Does that mean a different kind of election than the one you just held in Puerto Rico?

PIERLUISI: The government of Puerto Rico has every right to hold a plebiscite, to consult the people of Puerto Rico regarding their wishes. But the truth is that for a change in the status of Puerto Rico to happen, you need both Congress and Puerto Rico agreeing to it.

SIEGEL: Let me ask you a couple of questions about statehood. The benefits of statehood may be self-evident. On the other hand, Puerto Rico enjoys a very unusual status. Puerto Ricans don't pay federal income tax, I understand it. You have your own Olympic team and, you know, your own baseball team in the World Baseball Classic, and you also use Spanish as an official language.

This makes you remarkably different from the other states. Would Puerto Ricans be willing to give up those privileges of the current situation in order to become a state?

PIERLUISI: Well, we would have to see if Congress imposes terms and conditions on the admission of Puerto Rico as a state. There are now over 50 million Hispanics in America. Spanish is the predominant language in many areas of the country. Now, Puerto Rico will get a lot of additional federal assistance, but at the same time, corporations and wealthy taxpayers on the island would pay federal income taxes.

Right now, we pay federal payroll taxes - Social Security, Medicare. But close to half of the households in the U.S. mainland do not owe federal income taxes. So in the case of Puerto Rico, right now, at least eight out of 10 taxpayers wouldn't be

paying federal taxes, anyway. I believe in the long run, this would be a win-win for both the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

All property values would increase, like it happened in Hawaii and Alaska. The economic growth in the island would also increase like it happened in Hawaii after Hawaii became a state. So that would offset any kind of impact that federal income taxes could have.

SIEGEL: As you know, the smart money in Washington, and certainly on the world's editorial pages, is against the prospects of Puerto Rico becoming a state. People note that unlike Alaska or Hawaii, Puerto Rico would not enter with just one seat in Congress. It would have a delegation about as big as that of Connecticut or Oregon's. Lots of people look at Puerto Rican voting in the States and say they're all going to be Democrats, and the Republicans are not going to admit that many new Democrats to the Congress.

PIERLUISI: They don't know Puerto Rico that well. Puerto Rico is predominantly Catholic but a lot of evangelical Christians in Puerto Rico right now. It is conservative on social issues. Pretty much this is like a middle-of-the-road type terrain. Puerto Rico should not continue to have the current status which is colonial in nature if the people of Puerto Rico - and on top of it, American citizens - are telling the world we don't want it anymore.

SIEGEL: Well, Representative Pierluisi, thank you very much for talking with us.

PIERLUISI: Thank you.

SIEGEL: Pedro Pierluisi is the resident commissioner and nonvoting member of Congress from Puerto Rico.

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The Washington Post

Why does Puerto Rico want statehood, anyway?

By Olga Khazan, Updated: November 7, 2012

The election ushered in a number of big changes in the states, with several for the first time legalizing gay marriage and marijuana, but one of the most dramatic shifts might be a change to the actual number of states.

Puerto Ricans voted Tuesday to change their relationship with the United States and become the 51st U.S. state in a non-binding referendum that would require final approval from Congress. The AP wrote:

The two-part referendum asked whether the island wanted to change its 114-year relationship with the United States. Nearly 54 percent, or 922,374 people, sought to change it, while 46 percent, or 786,749 people, favored the status quo.

Voters then chose among three options for their new status, and statehood won with 61 percent. “Sovereign free association,” which would have allowed for more autonomy, received 33 percent, and independence garnered 5 percent.

It’s the fourth time in 45 years that Puerto Rico has voted on changing its national status — it’s currently a territory with U.S. currency and passports. The island governs itself, but its foreign policy is dictated by Washington. Puerto Rico fell under U.S. control in 1898, and in 1917, its people became U.S. citizens, able to serve in the military but not to vote in U.S. presidential elections.

Even though a poll published last March in a San Juan newspaper estimated that just 37 percent of Puerto Ricans wanted a status change, it seems the majority now think statehood would be the more fortuitous path.

For one thing, becoming a state would allow them to benefit from an extra \$20 billion a year in federal funds – something Puerto Rico could use, given its 13 percent unemployment rate.

As a voter in the capital San Juan, Jerome Lefebvre, told the BBC:

“We’re doing okay, but we could do better. We would receive more benefits, a lot more financial help.”

Puerto Rico the state would also gain two seats in the U.S. Senate and five in the House of Representatives — a major upgrade from the one non-voting delegate that currently represents the territory.

“The case for statehood isn’t one of additional benefits and special treatment,” said William-Jose Velez, executive president of the Puerto Rican Student Statehood Association, told the Cronkite Borderlands Initiative. “It is one of equal treatment. We want the same benefits but the same responsibilities and rights.”

Outside observers also say that statehood would bolster both Puerto Rico and the United States. Puerto Rican residents currently don’t pay federal income taxes, and companies doing business there don’t pay corporate taxes — two loopholes that would be closed if the island were made the 51st state.

“Once Puerto Rico becomes a state, its fortunes could arc upward,” writes Reuters columnist Gregg Easterbrook, pointing out that Hawaii saw marked economic growth after it was made a state in 1959.

Opponents of statehood in Puerto Rico have argued that becoming part of the United States might compromise the island’s language and culture, especially if the federal government requires it to adopt English as its sole official language (right now, it’s both Spanish and English), as a condition of its accession.

That worry prompted a 2011 presidential task force on Puerto Rico to recommend:

“Providing assurances that Puerto Rico will control its own cultural and linguistic identity would reduce concern over this possibility.”

But it may not quite be time to sew another star on your flag. Puerto Rico’s political status also depends on who wins the governorship, and the pro-statehood Gov. Luis Fortuno appears to have lost to Alejandro Garcia Padilla, who opposes statehood.

The island's fate wasn't as wrapped up in the outcome of the presidential race, however: Both President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney have said they would respect Puerto Ricans' statehood decision, whatever it may be.

Reading 3

Puerto Rico Statehood: 5 Reasons Why The Island Won't Become The 51st State
The Huffington Post | By Roque Planas Posted: 11/08/2012 6:22 pm EST

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/08/puerto-rico-state-reasons-will-not-become-51st-state_n_2095366.html

THE AMERICAN TERRITORIAL SYSTEM:

Missouri's Experience

BY WILLIAM E. FOLEY



Ceremony of Territorial Transfer at St. Louis, March 1804

Missourians enthusiastically greeted the news of their long-awaited admission to statehood in 1821 as a chance to escape the confines of the territorial system that had governed them since shortly after the American acquisition of the Louisiana Territory in 1803. With few exceptions they expected equal status in the Union to provide a more satisfactory means for dealing with problems in their rapidly developing region. Yet despite the eagerness with which her residents abandoned their previous governmental structure, it would be unwarranted to conclude on the basis of Missouri's experience that the American territorial system had been overly deficient. Admittedly there had been numerous problems within the system, but under its tutelage the territory had matured sufficiently to assume full responsibility for its own government. Missouri had progressed from a sparsely settled and politically backward frontier outpost in 1804 to a reasonably well-governed region ready for statehood in 1821.¹

¹ Portions of the following article are taken from the author's forthcoming book on territorial Missouri. For a fuller treatment of various aspects of the



Thomas Jefferson

The genesis of America's territorial policy came shortly after the United States had declared its independence from Great Britain. With the memory of their own colonial experience still freshly imbedded in their minds, Americans in the 1780s sought to devise a system of territorial administration that would provide sufficient stability and local order without, at

the same time, depriving residents of their basic rights or placing them in a state of perpetual subordination.²

In response to the demands of the smaller states—Maryland in particular—the Continental Congress had called upon all states having claims to western lands to cede them to the general government to be used for the common good of all of the states. In its resolution of October 10, 1780, Congress further clarified its position and laid the groundwork for America's new colonial policy by promising the ceded lands would “. . . be settled and formed into distinct republican states, which shall become members of the federal union, and have the same rights of sovereignty, freedom and independence, as the other states.”³ Acceptance of this principle shaped all subsequent territorial legislation and gave the American system its truly distinctive feature.

Attempts to implement this new policy, however, proved to be a much more difficult task. Not until 1784 did Congress agree upon a specific plan for administering western territories. The Ordinance of 1784, largely the work of Thomas Jefferson, granted settlers residing in any territory controlled by Congress the right

topic consult William E. Foley, *A History of Missouri, 1673-1820*, scheduled for publication in August 1971 as the first volume of the Missouri Sesquicentennial History Project sponsored jointly by the University of Missouri and the University of Missouri Press.

² John M. Merriam, “The Legislative History of the Ordinance of 1787,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, V (April, 1888), 303-342, provides a detailed account of the development of America's early colonial policy. A more recent summary is provided in Jack E. Eblen, *The First and Second United States Empires: Governors and Territorial Government, 1784-1912* (Pittsburgh, 1968), 17-51.

³ Gaillard Hunt, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (Washington, D. C., 1910), XVIII (1780), 915-916.

to convene a meeting of free adult males in order to establish a temporary government based upon the constitution and laws of any one of the existing states. Whenever the population of the territory reached 20,000 the ordinance granted local residents the right to establish a permanent government and to write their own constitution, so long as it was republican in form. Admission to the Union on an equal basis with the original thirteen states was to follow whenever the total territorial population reached that of the least populous state.⁴

A growing opposition to the extremely liberal terms of the Ordinance of 1784, which permitted a high degree of local autonomy, prompted the Continental Congress to substitute the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. Although the new ordinance substantially reduced the degree of local control granted to territorial residents by the previous statute, it did retain a provision for the eventual establishment of states and for their admission to the Union on an equal footing with the original states.⁵

The ordinance empowered Congress⁶ to appoint a governor, three judges and a secretary to supervise territorial operations during the first stage of government. The governor and the three judges were authorized to adopt "such laws of the original states, criminal and civil," deemed necessary and suitable for local circumstances. The first stage of government contained no provision for any elective officials, but whenever the territory attained a population of 5,000 adult free males, it automatically was advanced to second-class status. In a territory of the second grade, residents gained the right to elect members of the lower house of the local general assembly and also to choose a nonvoting delegate to the United States Congress. The final step in the territorial process came when the population reached 60,000. At that point the territory could frame a constitution and be admitted to statehood on an equal basis with other members of the Union.

Originally intended only to apply to the region north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River, the Northwest Ordinance, nevertheless, established the basic patterns and procedures

⁴ Jefferson's original copy of the Ordinance of 1784 is reprinted in Merriam, "The Legislative History of the Ordinance of 1787," 308-310.

⁵ *Northwest Territory, 1787-1803*, in Clarence E. Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers of the United States* (Washington, D. C., 1934), II, 39-50.

⁶ The president assumed this prerogative following the ratification of the Constitution. This and other slight alterations necessitated by the change in governments were contained in a measure formally approved on August 7, 1787. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, II, 203-204.

utilized in administering subsequent American territories. In extending the territorial system to new regions, Congress occasionally modified the plan to correct certain deficiencies in the original legislation and to accommodate local needs, but in Missouri, as in other territories, it retained unchanged the essential features of the Northwest Ordinance.

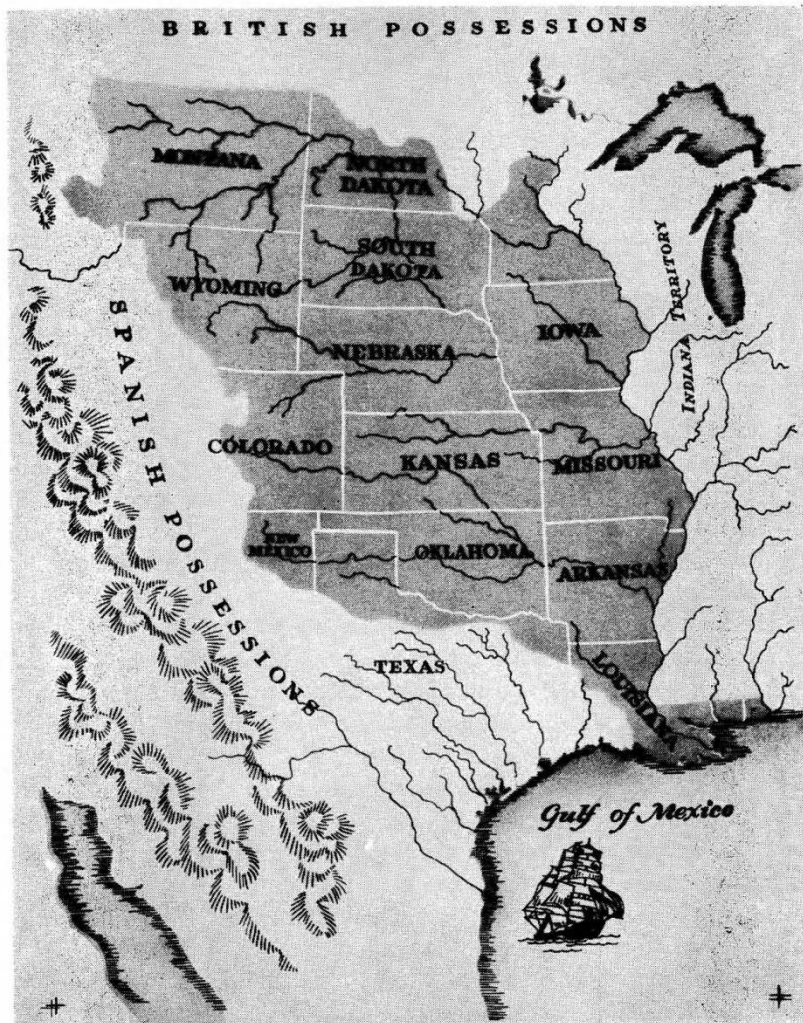
Missouri's territorial experience could be considered typical of the early nineteenth century. Its problems seem to have been quite similar to those encountered in the agricultural territories east of the Mississippi River. As in many territories, the existence of a small, well-established foreign population in Missouri produced certain ethnic tensions following the American acquisition of the region. Likewise the conflict and confusion engendered by disputes involving foreign land titles, so common on the American frontier, played a significant role in shaping territorial Missouri's political system. Since Missouri's early leaders borrowed liberally from the practices and procedures previously employed in the older territories, the similarities became even more pronounced. Consequently, a reevaluation of Missouri's territorial operations provides an excellent opportunity to gauge further the effectiveness of the American system on the early nineteenth-century frontier.

Following the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory by the United States in 1803, President Thomas Jefferson and his advisers turned their attention to the problems of occupying and governing the vast and remote frontier province. Initially the president drafted a lengthy and involved constitutional amendment authorizing the United States to take possession of the territory and closing Upper Louisiana to further settlement by whites.⁷ The president's proposed constitutional amendment, however, failed to win general support even among members of his own party, and he abandoned all efforts to secure its ratification deciding instead to defer to congressional wishes on the subject.⁸

Fearful that the French might retract their offer to sell Louisiana, Congress quickly ratified the treaty of cession and authorized the president to take possession of the newly acquired province. Acting under the authority granted him by Congress, Jefferson appointed Governor William C. C. Claiborne of the Mississippi

⁷ Amendment to the Constitution, 1803, in Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

⁸ Everett S. Brown, *The Constitutional History of the Louisiana Purchase, 1803-1812*, in *University of California Publications in History* (Berkeley, 1920), X, 28-29.



The Louisiana Purchase Territory

Territory and General James A. Wilkinson, commanding general of the United States Army to assume responsibility for the formal transfer of control from France to the United States. To oversee operations in Upper Louisiana he designated Captain Amos Stoddard acting commandant with full authority for governing the area until its future status could be determined. Although Stoddard's powers were extensive, he used them wisely and quickly won the confidence and support of most of Upper Louisiana's inhabitants.⁹

⁹ Letter of Convention of Deputies of Louisiana to Amos Stoddard, September 30, 1804, in Amos Stoddard Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.

Subsequently the president recommended the continuation of Upper Louisiana's temporary government as the most effective means to prevent new settlers from taking up residence in the province, but members of Congress balked at extending the existing government on the grounds that it infringed upon the rights of individuals already residing in the territory.¹⁰ After a lengthy debate the legislators, with the president's approval, decided to attach Upper Louisiana to the Indiana Territory for administrative purposes.¹¹ Indiana's territorial government followed the specifications established by the Northwest Ordinance for first-class territories. A governor, a secretary and three superior court judges, all appointed by the president, administered the territory, with the governor and the judges being authorized to legislate for the territory. In extending the legislative authority of Indiana's governor and judges to the District of Louisiana, Congress eliminated the restriction imposed by the Northwest Ordinance upon all previous first-class territorial legislatures, confining them to the adoption of statutes already enacted by one of the original states.¹² The bill also authorized the president to divide the District of Louisiana into several subdistricts and to appoint a commandant to direct each. Subject only to the superintendence of the governor of the Indiana Territory, the commandants were intended to be primarily responsible for local government, exercising both civil and military powers. In actual practice, however, the commandants' duties turned out to be largely military after Governor William Henry Harrison and the Indiana superior court judges approved legislation creating a separate set of local officials to handle civil matters.

The law placing the District of Louisiana under the jurisdiction

¹⁰ Thomas Jefferson to Albert Gallatin, November 9, 1803; Thomas Jefferson to John Breckinridge, November 24, 1803; and Thomas Jefferson to DeWitt Clinton, December 2, 1803, in Jefferson Papers; Everett S. Brown, ed., *William Plumer's Memorandum of Proceedings in the United States Senate, 1803-1807* (New York, 1923), 133-141.

¹¹ Congress divided Louisiana into two territories—the Territory of Orleans, located south of the thirty-third parallel, and the District of Louisiana, the remaining part of the region which it placed under the control of Indiana's territorial officials. Although the District of Louisiana officially included the territory constituting the present states of Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oklahoma, and parts of Minnesota, Montana, Wyoming and Colorado, for all practical purposes governmental authority in the District of Louisiana was confined to limited areas along the Mississippi River in Missouri and Arkansas. See Isidor Loeb, "The Beginnings of Missouri Legislation," *MISSOURI HISTORICAL REVIEW*, I (October, 1906), 57.

¹² Francis S. Philbrick, ed., *The Laws of Illinois Territory, 1809-1818*, in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library* (Springfield, 1950), Vol. XXV, cccxxviii.

of Indiana's territorial officials also nullified all Spanish land grants in Louisiana made after October 1, 1800, and sanctioned the use of force, if necessary, to remove any unauthorized persons from settling on the public lands of the United States. In addition Congress empowered the president to enter into agreements providing for the resettlement in Upper Louisiana of Indian tribes living on the east side of the Mississippi River. Following final congressional approval of the measure, President Jefferson signed the bill into law on March 26, 1804.¹³

The inauguration of Upper Louisiana's new government occurred on October 1, 1804, without fanfare. Since the governor and judges remained in the Indiana Territory, they met in Vincennes on that date and passed fifteen laws to govern the District of Louisiana. With the exception of a single statute regulating marriages, approved in April 1805, no further additions had to be made to the district's territorial laws during the period that Indiana's officials governed it.¹⁴

Although Congress failed to restrict Louisiana's administrators to the adoption of laws previously enacted by one of the original states, Governor William Henry Harrison and the judges failed to introduce any legislative innovations in the creation of Louisiana's new laws, preferring to rely instead upon established practices and customs. With the exception of an act regulating boatmen, all of Louisiana's initial statutes were based upon provisions contained in the laws of the Northwest and Indiana territories, and therefore they closely resembled those of most other early nineteenth-century territories.¹⁵

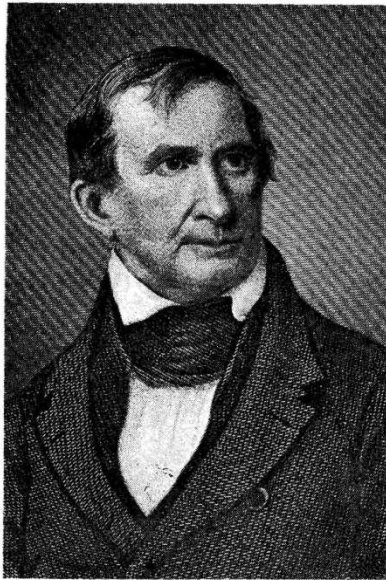
In the creation of administrative districts for the territory, the president had recommended to Governor Harrison that the existing divisions be retained, and the governor responded with a proclamation recognizing the districts of St. Charles, St. Louis, Ste. Genevieve, Cape Girardeau and New Madrid.¹⁶ Under the laws enacted for the District of Louisiana each of the territory's five districts or counties had a court of common pleas, a court of general quarter sessions of peace, a probate court and individual justices of the peace.

¹³ *U.S. Stat. at L.* (1850), 287-289.

¹⁴ Loeb, "Beginnings of Missouri Legislation," 59.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

¹⁶ Proclamation of Governor Harrison, October 1, 1804, *Louisiana-Missouri Territory 1803-1806*, in Clarence E. Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers of the United States* (Washington, D. C., 1948), XIII, 51-52.



William Henry Harrison

The justices of the peace, who were appointed by the governor, heard petty civil and criminal cases. Four times a year the justices in each district combined to form the court of general quarter sessions of peace. This court had jurisdiction in all criminal cases that did not involve capital offenses. In addition to its judicial functions, the court of quarter sessions served as the principal administrative agency in each district, handling such matters as levying local taxes, approving district expenditures, and authorizing contracts for the construction of roads, bridges, jails,

courthouses and other public buildings and works. Other district officials who assisted in local administration included the sheriff, coroner, assessor, recorder and constable.

The court of common pleas, which was organized similarly to the court of general quarter sessions of peace, had jurisdiction in civil cases involving less than one hundred dollars. In actual practice the same men served concurrently on both courts. The superior court of the territory, composed of the three territorial judges appointed by the president, met biannually to hear all civil cases. As the territory's highest judicial body it also had appellate jurisdiction in cases from the lower territorial courts.¹⁷

While still in Vincennes Governor Harrison had filled many of the newly created territorial offices. Harrison's list of appointments contained the names of virtually all of Upper Louisiana's established leaders. The governor's good judgment in selecting local men undoubtedly made the American government more acceptable to Louisiana's residents and helped diminish, at least temporarily, local uncertainties concerning the future.

After having taken the necessary steps to put the government into effect, the Indiana officials set out to visit their new jurisdiction. Accompanied by an escort of mounted regulars, Governor Harrison and a party which included the three judges of the superior court received a cordial reception upon their arrival in St. Louis on

¹⁷ Loeb, "Beginnings of Missouri Legislation," 62-65.

October 12, 1804.¹⁸ Despite the warm welcome they extended to Governor Harrison and his associates, territorial residents expressed strong opposition to the terms of the new law creating a government for the District of Louisiana.¹⁹ They disliked being governed by officials residing outside of the territory. Moreover, the sections providing for the resettlement of tribes of eastern Indians in the region and the restrictions imposed upon the confirmation of land titles added to the measure's local unpopularity.

In response to the continuing barrage of criticism against the new law from within the territory, Congress agreed to reconsider the measure and to grant Upper Louisiana its own territorial government. In creating a separate government for the area Congress contemplated advancing the territory directly to the second stage of government outlined in the Northwest Ordinance. The original Senate bill, which passed through committee without alteration, would have permitted residents to elect a ten-member general assembly. Although a subsequent amendment completely altered the character of the bill before its final passage, the original version of the measure anticipated eliminating the first stage of government from the territorial process, a policy later adopted for other territories.²⁰

The measure finally approved by Congress removed the District of Louisiana from the control of the officers of the Indiana Territory and renamed the province the Territory of Louisiana. Closely adhering to the first grade of territorial government outlined in the Northwest Ordinance, the act vested executive authority in a governor who also served as commander in chief of the territorial militia and as superintendent of Indian affairs for the territory. The law provided for a secretary, also appointed by the president, to record and preserve the papers and proceedings of the territorial government and to transmit official reports to the national government. Three superior court judges constituted the highest tribunal in the territory.

The bill authorized the territorial legislature, composed of the governor and the three superior court judges, to establish inferior

¹⁸ Anonymous letter, November 4, 1804, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIII, 70.

¹⁹ *Representation and Petition of the Representatives Elected by the Freemen of the Territory of Louisiana* (Washington, D. C., 1805). A copy of this petition is located in the library of the State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.

²⁰ Eblen, *First and Second Empires*, 147-148. The first stage was not utilized in territories created after 1819.



Courtesy Filson Club

James Wilkinson

courts and prescribe their jurisdiction, and to make all laws deemed conducive to the good government of the territory, as long as those laws did not conflict with either the provisions of the Constitution or the laws of the United States. Congress continued to exempt Louisiana's legislature from the restriction imposed upon all other first-class territories that limited them to the adoption of statutes already enacted by one of the original states.²¹ This act, approved on March 3, 1805, provided for the new government of the territory to go into effect on July 4, 1805.²²

When compared with other early nineteenth-century territories, Louisiana-Missouri seems to have been especially attractive to would-be office seekers. The territory's good climate, favorable location and acceptance of slavery accounted for much of its popularity.²³ Despite the low salaries paid territorial officials, the number of applicants for posts in Missouri always exceeded the number of positions available. Motives for seeking these offices varied, but persons who solicited territorial appointments generally looked upon them as a means to improve their circumstances. Not only did these offices provide limited financial security, but aspiring politicians believed that they also would open the way for rapid political and economic advancement.

As a rule, both presidents Jefferson and James Madison followed a policy of appointing well-known and successful westerners to govern the frontier territories. Consequently, all of Louisiana's governors were reasonably capable men, familiar with frontier problems. With the exception of Governor James Wilkinson, who alienated a large portion of the territory's American residents, they

²¹ Although territorial legislators did not always rigidly adhere to this restriction, it had greatly hampered legislation during the first-stage government. Eblen, *First and Second Empires*, 87-113, *passim*.

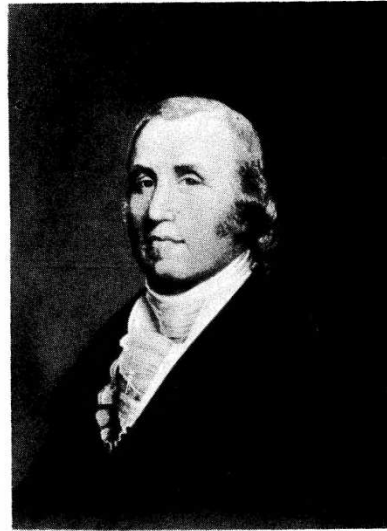
²² 2 *U.S. Stat. at L.* (1850), 331-332.

²³ The files of Letters of Application and Recommendation located in the National Archives, Washington, D. C., contain numerous letters from individuals requesting that they be assigned in the Missouri Territory for one or more of the above reasons.

enjoyed relatively harmonious relations with the local populace.

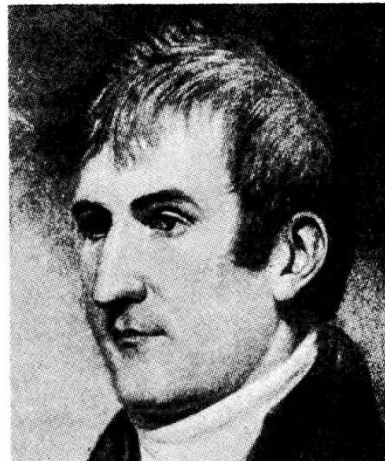
However, knowledge of frontier conditions and camaraderie with the local citizenry did not in themselves guarantee successful territorial administration. Preoccupation with personal advancement, lack of interest in civil administration and excessive absenteeism often lessened the governors' effectiveness. As a group Missouri's territorial governors were comparable to their contemporary counterparts and probably superior to the average territorial executive who served in the latter part of the nineteenth century, yet none could be classified as outstanding. Of Missouri's territorial governors William Clark was probably the most successful. Although Clark exerted little influence in shaping governmental policy, he carried out orders from his superiors in Washington efficiently and he kept them reasonably well informed about local conditions. His intimate knowledge of Indian affairs, acquired through long years of service, made him one of the most successful Indian agents in the history of the United States. Unfortunately Clark's close identification with national Indian policies, not always popular locally, lowered his standing among many rank and file frontiersmen and probably cost him the governorship upon Missouri's admission to statehood.

Missouri's territorial government functioned like most other first-class governments and experienced many of the same problems that lessened the effectiveness of the first stage elsewhere. Disagreements between territorial officials sometimes disrupted normal administrative practices. The most serious such incident in the Louisiana Territory involved Governor Wilkinson and the judges of the territorial court. Their continuing



William Clark

Meriwether Lewis



dispute triggered a lengthy debate concerning the governor's veto power which postponed the opening of the territorial legislature for several months and delayed action on pressing legislative matters.²⁴ A less widely publicized, but equally important division occurred during the administration of Wilkinson's successor, Meriwether Lewis. Governor Lewis and the territorial secretary Frederick Bates disagreed on most policy questions, but the governor's repeated failure to consult with the secretary on territorial matters particularly irritated the disgruntled Bates who continued to insist that in the governor's absence he should be vested with full responsibility for territorial administration.²⁵ Although these and other similar quarrels made routine governmental operations more difficult, their seriousness should not be overstated.

From an administrative standpoint, chronic executive and judicial absenteeism posed a more serious threat to efficient territorial government. The practice of appointing outsiders to fill high territorial posts made absenteeism a problem throughout the history of the American territorial system, and Missouri's experience proved to be no exception.²⁶ Since many of them had arrived only recently themselves, territorial Missourians generally did not object to the appointment of nonresidents to key territorial offices. They did, however, resent it when those officials failed to reside in the territory after their appointment.

All of Missouri's territorial executives spent some time outside of the territory, but governors Meriwether Lewis and Benjamin Howard were absent for particularly long periods of time.²⁷ Reasons for executive absenteeism varied; Lewis, who probably ac-

²⁴ William C. Carr to John Breckinridge, November 13, 1805, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIII, 270-271; John B. C. Lucas and Rufus Easton to James Wilkinson, October 12, 1805, in John B. C. Lucas Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis; James Wilkinson to John B. C. Lucas and Rufus Easton, October 12, 1805; Wilkinson to Lucas and Easton, November 2, 1805, photostatic copies in the James Wilkinson Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

²⁵ Frederick Bates to Richard Bates, April 15, 1809, in Thomas Maitland Marshall, ed., *The Life and Papers of Frederick Bates* (St. Louis, 1926), II, 64; F. Bates to R. Bates, July 14, 1809, in *ibid.*, 68-69; F. Bates to R. Bates, November 9, 1809, in *ibid.*, 108-109; and F. Bates to William Eustis, September 28, 1809, in *ibid.*, 86-87.

²⁶ Eblen, *First and Second Empires*, 72-74.

²⁷ Although he had been named governor on March 3, 1807, Meriwether Lewis did not arrive in Louisiana to take charge of the government until March 8, 1808. Howard had been commissioned governor on April 18, 1810, but he did not reach St. Louis until September 17, 1810. He left the territory on November 16, 1810, and did not return again until July 3, 1811. Howard again departed from Louisiana on September 19, 1811, and did not return until December 2, 1811.

cepted the appointment only because Jefferson had urged him to do so, had never wanted to settle permanently in Louisiana, and Howard's periodic departures apparently stemmed from his desire to be with friends and family who remained in Kentucky. Attempts to mitigate the difficulty by designating the territorial secretary to serve as acting governor in the absence of the regular executive brought only partial relief.

Absenteeism was by no means confined to the top executive post. Territorial judges often failed to establish a permanent residence in the region which they served.²⁸ In many instances judicial nonattendance created greater problems for local residents than did gubernatorial absence. Judge John Coburn provided the most notorious example of judicial absenteeism in the Louisiana Territory by continuing to reside in Kentucky after his appointment to the Superior Court.²⁹ Coburn's failure to establish a permanent residence in Upper Louisiana resulted in numerous local petitions to Congress asking that Superior Court judges be required to reside in their jurisdictions. Coburn's absenteeism also came under fire from his fellow judges who complained it imposed an added burden upon them.³⁰

Like most territorial executives, Louisiana's governors found that the demands imposed upon them by land-claims controversies, Indian problems and frontier defenses frequently left them little time to oversee routine civil administrative matters. The major burden of managing local affairs fell to the district and local officials who received their appointments from the governor. Since these posts usually went to the most influential and often the wealthiest residents of the district, local government remained the prerogative of a select territorial elite. Although the county officers did not have the power to legislate, they did assess and collect taxes, supervise the construction of public works, license businesses and administer local justice.

Government at the grass roots level generally reflected the

²⁸ Philbrick, ed., *Laws of Illinois Territory*, xxviii.

²⁹ Resolution of a meeting of the Town and District of St. Louis, November 5, 1811, in St. Louis *Louisiana Gazette*, November 9, 1811; Presentment of the Grand Jury of St. Charles, November 27, 1811, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 494-495; and Presentment of the Grand Jury of St. Louis, March 4, 1812, in *ibid.*, 525-526.

³⁰ John B. C. Lucas to James Monroe, December 15, 1811, photostatic copy in the Lucas Collection. Judicial nonattendance created similar problems in other territories as well. The prevalence of nonresident judges caused Congress to approve in 1812 a measure requiring all territorial judges to live in the district they served.

conservative outlook of the men holding the key offices. For the most part they looked after the needs of their area satisfactorily, despite their inclination to limit public expenditures in order to hold taxes to a minimum. Occasionally, as in the case of the district of Ste. Genevieve between 1805 and 1807, the system completely broke down under the stress of intense local rivalries. Fortunately, the lawlessness and chaos that temporarily gripped that district were not typical, and the vast majority of Louisiana's territorial residents initially found no serious fault with their governmental system. In view of the territory's small population, its underdeveloped economy and its limited financial resources, the first-class structure was well suited to Louisiana's needs during the early years of American control.

Between 1804 and 1808 Upper Louisiana underwent a gradual transformation which ultimately changed the local outlook. The slow, leisurely pace of the Spanish period had been replaced by an atmosphere charged with excitement, a sense of expectancy and frenzied activity. An impressive growth in the territorial population unleashed a speculative boom which substantially altered the local economy. Miscellaneous adventurers and incipient entrepreneurs came to Louisiana expecting to profit from the tremendous opportunities just then unfolding. Eager to take full advantage of the situation, they became impatient with the American government's failure to resolve perennial frontier problems—unresolved land claims, disputed mining rights, inadequate defenses, poor postal service and insufficient internal improvements. Their dissatisfaction and the growing awareness of the current system's inadequacies contributed to increased criticism of the existing territorial government, and in the years following 1808 Louisianians began to press for advancement to a second-class territory as the most promising means of alleviating their difficulties. The dual attractions of greater self-government and new opportunities for local public office brought added support to the movement.

As early as January 1808, Frederick Bates referred to local desires for a second-grade territorial government,³¹ but the campaign to advance Louisiana's territorial status began in earnest in 1809. In the ensuing debate proponents of the higher classification argued that local residents were best equipped to solve their own problems and that this measure would pave the way for even

³¹ Frederick Bates to James Abbott, February 23, 1808, in Marshall, *Bates Papers*, I, 301.

further advances in self-government.³² Opponents countered with the argument that the change would necessitate a large increase in local taxes. Whereas the territorial legislators currently received their salaries from the federal treasury, the costs of the new legislature would have to be borne by the local taxpayers, particularly the property holders.³³

While the debate continued to rage, copies of a petition favoring the higher status had been circulated throughout the territory for signatures and were forwarded to Congress in January 1810.³⁴ Since Louisiana's organic act of 1805 had not provided for automatic advancement to second-class status when the territory reached a population of 5,000 adult males, congressional authorization was necessary prior to this step.³⁵ However, a bill introduced in the House of Representatives on January 22, 1810, calling for the creation of a second-class government for the Territory of Louisiana failed to gain approval at that session.³⁶ A shortage of time rather

³² St. Louis *Missouri Gazette*, February 8, 1809.

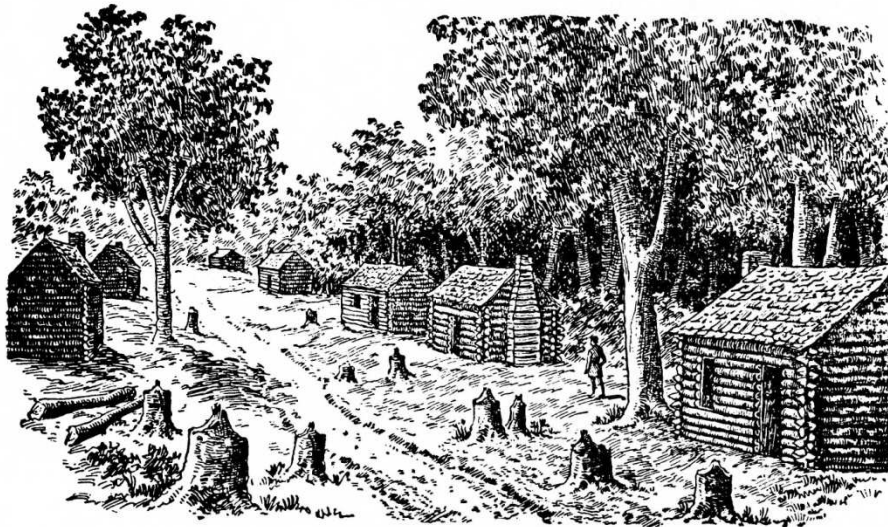
³³ *Ibid.*, March 1, 1809.

³⁴ Petition to Congress by Inhabitants of Louisiana, referred to Congress, January 6, 1810, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 357-362.

³⁵ Eblen, *First and Second Empires*, 65.

³⁶ A Bill for the Government of Louisiana Territory, January 22, 1810, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 362-364.

A Pioneer Village



than any organized opposition apparently caused Congress to postpone action on the measure.

Despite the temporary setback, most Louisianians continued to believe that the higher grade of territorial government would offer them a more satisfactory means for securing a hearing for their problems. In their renewed efforts to build popular support for the measure, proponents of the change pointed out that it would give residents a voice in making their own laws through the creation of a popularly elected territorial House of Representatives.³⁷ Other desirable features which they stressed included the right to send a delegate to Congress and the separation of legislative and judicial authority, locally.³⁸

Much of the revived impetus for a second-grade government must be attributed to the widespread belief that the national government was badly misinformed about actual conditions in the territory. Since the existing territorial government provided no means of direct contact with the government in Washington, except through appointed officials, the prospect of having a congressional delegate appealed strongly to Louisianians. They believed that their own elected representative would be able to keep Congress better informed of the actual situation in the territory, thereby enhancing prospects for the settlement of local problems.³⁹

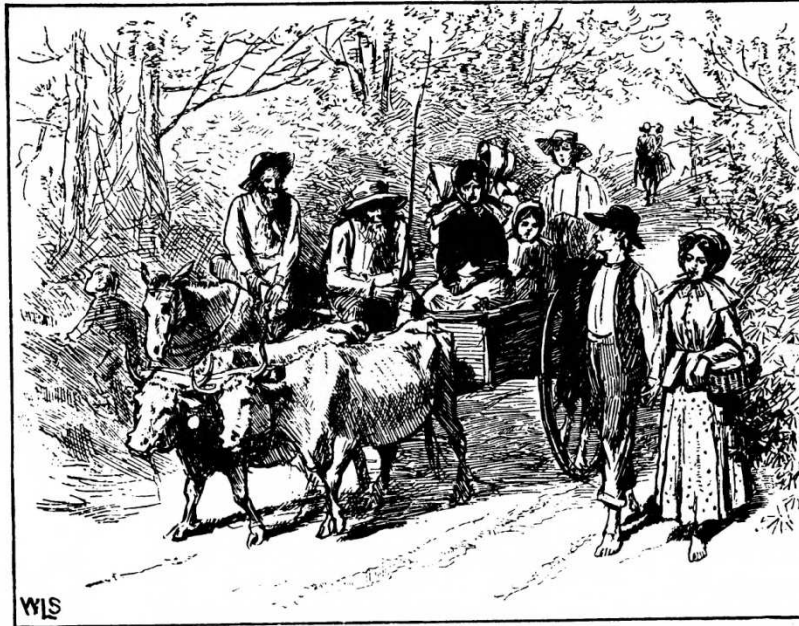
Despite the argument that the advanced status would increase the flow of federal funds into the territory, the fear of heavier tax burdens continued to generate some opposition to the proposed change. By far the most serious objections came from the local French population.⁴⁰ The extensive tracts of uncultivated lands held by many of these long-time residents accounted for much of their hostility. For the most part these large land claimants felt that the added tax burden would not be worth the benefits to be derived from having a territorial delegate in Congress. Unlike those individuals with smaller claims, the holders of extensive claims always had been successful in the past in communicating their views to Congress through private agents. Moreover, as the territorial population increased, the French minority recognized

³⁷ St. Louis *Louisiana Gazette*, August 8, November 16, 1811.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, August 8, October 3, November 9, 16, 1811; Petition to Congress by the Inhabitants of Louisiana, September 9, 1811, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 471-479.

⁴⁰ James F. Hull to William Clark, November 28, 1811, in William Clark Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis; Petition to Congress by Inhabitants of St. Louis, November 9, 1811, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 486-487.



Pioneers Going to a Meeting

that the proposed change ultimately would diminish their voice in territorial affairs. Like the French inhabitants in other territories who also opposed the second grade of government, Louisiana's leading Frenchmen clearly preferred the existing system.⁴¹

All efforts to postpone the change any longer failed. In retrospect, the American commitment to the ideal of self-government and the already firmly established pattern of territorial advancement virtually had assured the ultimate success of those seeking to raise Louisiana to the higher classification. In November 1811, Congress again took up consideration of a bill granting Louisiana a second-class government.⁴² Numerous petitions from Louisiana were introduced in support of the proposed measure.⁴³ Aside from a debate over whether the act should grant freehold or universal suffrage, the major provisions of the bill encountered little opposition.⁴⁴ Congress passed the bill, and President Madison signed

⁴¹ Charles Gratiot to John Jacob Astor, May 13, 1813, "Charles Gratiot Letterbook," 156, in Charles Gratiot Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁴² *Annals of Congress*, U.S. 12th Cong., 1st Sess. (1811-1812), 356-358.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 577, 584-585.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 356-358, 398-401.

it into law on June 4, 1812. Congress normally responded promptly to local demands for the second grade of government, and although Upper Louisiana had to wait slightly longer for the change in status than the average first-class territory, preoccupation with the ominous international situation undoubtedly accounted for some of the delay.⁴⁵

With the final approval of this act, the Territory of Louisiana became the Territory of Missouri. This change in names had been made in order to avoid unnecessary confusion with the new state of Louisiana, the former Territory of Orleans, which had been admitted to the Union in 1812.

The law which created the Territory of Missouri was based upon a combination of provisions taken from previous federal statutes for governing territories.⁴⁶ Local citizens gained the right to elect members of the territorial House of Representatives. Representation in that body was to be apportioned according to the territorial population, with one representative allotted for each 500 inhabitants. The president appointed the nine members of the Legislative Council from a list of eighteen names selected by members of the lower house of the territorial assembly. The measure also authorized territorial residents to send a nonvoting delegate to Congress.⁴⁷

Although the act made no direct reference to the Ordinance of 1787, Missouri's new government was patterned after the general form already established by that act for second-class territories. There were, however, several minor differences between the two measures. The Missouri law, like an earlier act for the Mississippi Territory passed in 1808, provided for the popular election of the territorial delegate, as opposed to the selection of that officer by the territorial legislature, which was called for in the Ordinance of 1787 and substituted a requirement for the payment of a territorial or county tax, as it had done earlier for the Indiana and Illinois territories.⁴⁸ Missouri's 1812 organic act removed for the first time in a territory most of the distinctions between qualifications for voting and for officeholding.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Eblen, *First and Second Empires*, 65.

⁴⁶ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 553n.

⁴⁷ Everett S. Brown, *The Territorial Delegate to Congress and Other Essays* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1950), 11.

⁴⁸ Max Farrand, *The Legislation of Congress for the Government of the Organized Territories of the United States, 1789-1895* (Newark, N.J., 1896), 26.

⁴⁹ Eblen, *First and Second Empires*, 185.

The new Missouri law spelled out in greater detail the powers and duties of various territorial officials than the previous territorial statutes had done.⁵⁰ Moreover, for the first time the territorial governor was not granted the power to adjourn the general assembly, although he did retain the power of absolute veto and authority to convene the legislature for special sessions.⁵¹

All of these changes reflected a persistent congressional effort to revise the original provisions of the Ordinance of 1787, making them conform more closely to territorial needs and desires. In general, between 1787 and 1812 Congress attempted to make the territorial system more democratic and to grant local officials greater freedom in dealing with unique conditions in their particular territory.⁵²

Missouri's advancement to second-class status marked an important step in its territorial history. The change had a particularly significant impact upon local political activity. Territorial residents eagerly looked forward to the territory's first general election, and aspiring young politicians took steps to secure one of the newly created elective offices. In the contests for the office of territorial delegate and for seats in the territorial legislature a coalition representing the large land claimants and the established commercial and business interests easily won. The same group that had dominated district government captured most of the seats in the territorial legislature. Even though the advancement in territorial classification had not altered the political power structure within the territory, it did give local leaders a greater voice in shaping territorial laws and policies. Between its organization in 1812 and the creation of a state government in 1820, Missouri's territorial legislators struggled with the problems of governing frontier Missouri. The territory's continued growth and expansion made it imperative to revise outdated and unworkable statutes constantly, in order to keep pace with rapidly changing conditions.

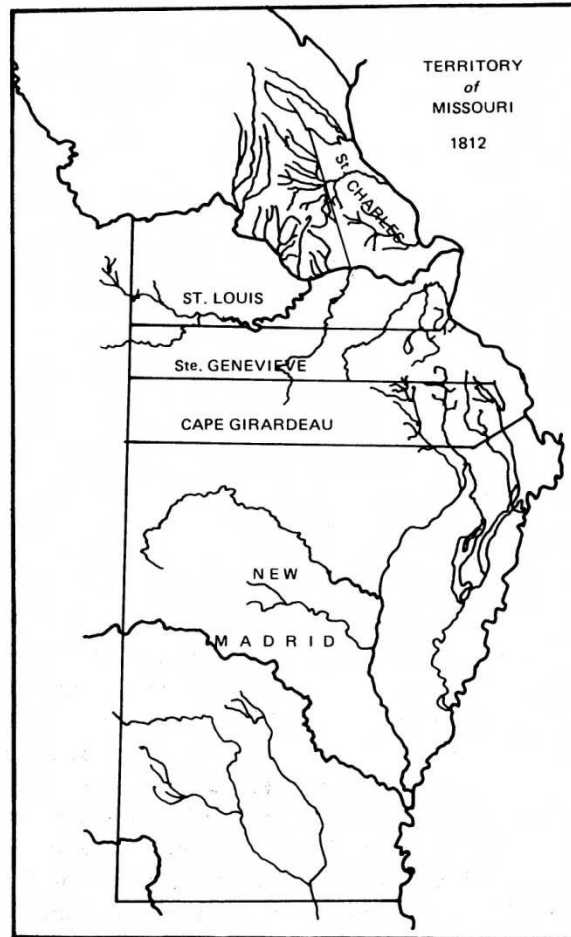
In Missouri, as in other frontier territories, the problems of securing a satisfactory system of local government occupied a disproportionate amount of the legislature's time and often aroused political controversy.⁵³ In addition to the attention which the ter-

⁵⁰ Farrand, *Legislation for Territories*, 27.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Howard Roberts Lamar, *Dakota Territory 1861-1889* (New Haven, Conn., 1956), 10.

⁵³ Clarence W. Alvord pointed out that this was a major problem in most territories. Alvord, *The Illinois Country* (Springfield, Ill., 1920), 432.



ritorial assembly gave to the structure of local government, it also enacted numerous new statutes and revised many others on such common local problems as public roads, militia, taxes, public offices, criminal punishment and the creation of political subdivisions. In their attempts to meet the needs of a rapidly growing territory, the members of the general assembly employed the same financial conservatism that previously had characterized the efforts of district officials. Since they personally represented a substantial portion of the territory's wealth, the legislators sought to minimize expenditures in order to keep local taxes as low as possible. Consequently, the territorial legislature never attempted to formulate a comprehensive program to support internal improvements, edu-

cation or poor relief. Often the assembly did little more in these areas than refer the problems back to local authorities or to petition Congress for federal assistance.

While most territorial residents looked to the territorial assembly for improved services, few wanted to bear the added costs necessary to provide them. Consequently, the local legislators found themselves in the unenviable position of attempting to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding territory with limited funds. In spite of the general assembly's conservative fiscal policies, governmental expenses increased appreciably after the change in status. Since salaries paid to officials constituted a major portion of the territorial budget, critics leveled much of their criticism at the amounts expended for that purpose.⁵⁴

Prior to this time territorial revenue had attracted relatively little local attention, but the increasing costs of government necessitated new taxes. In its search for new sources of income the territorial legislature gradually extended the list of taxable property. Fines and fees, license charges on certain occupations and activities, a bachelor's tax and taxes upon slaves, pleasure carriages, houses and other similar improvements constituted additional sources of territorial revenue.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, despite the complaints from the legislature's critics, the overall tax burden in the territory remained light, and most local residents preferred the second-stage government to its predecessor.

Since the scope of many of the most persistent territorial problems often placed them outside the jurisdiction and beyond the resources of local officials, territorial residents frequently turned to the national government for assistance. To secure a hearing for their demands they turned to their delegate in Washington. The delegate to Congress formed the most important link between the local citizen and the national government because he was the only popularly elected territorial official who maintained regular contact with federal authorities. While they could not vote or serve on standing committees, the territorial delegates enjoyed all other privileges of members of the House of Representatives. Free to express their views before the House, the delegates sometimes prepared legislation for consideration by that body, and they frequently served on select committees. Paid by the federal govern-

⁵⁴ St. Louis *Missouri Gazette and Illinois Advertiser*, May 13, 1815.

⁵⁵ Frederick C. Hicks, "Territorial Revenue System of Missouri," *Missouri Historical Society Collections*, I (1896), 25-40.



Rufus Easton

ment, delegates received the same salary as representatives and senators.⁵⁶

Missouri's delegates labored long and hard to acquaint federal authorities with local conditions and to secure favorable legislation for their territory, but the task was not always an easy one. Rufus Easton, Missouri's second territorial delegate, once lamented to his constituents that: "We cannot hope to possess the same influence

in the councils of the nations as we will when admitted as a State."⁵⁷ The normal press of national business frequently excluded any lengthy congressional discussion of predominantly local problems, and Missouri's delegates repeatedly attributed their inability to secure consideration for a particular piece of legislation to the shortness of the congressional session.⁵⁸

Territorial residents chronically complained about the inadequacy of the national government's contribution in meeting local needs. The strongest criticism of federal efforts came during the troubled years of the War of 1812, but despite the widespread belief within the territory that the national government had failed to meet its responsibilities, it is clear federal subsidies played a vital role in sustaining the local economy during these difficult years. The payment of troops always stimulated business activity in the territory, and local merchants complained bitterly when the monies were delayed.⁵⁹

During peacetime the situation was somewhat different. Federal authorities constantly sought to minimize territorial expenditures. The national government paid only the salaries of officials appointed by the president. It also paid for miscellaneous clerical and office expenses, but the combined costs of civil administration seldom exceeded ten thousand dollars a year in the Missouri Terri-

⁵⁶ Nancy Jo Tice, "The Territorial Delegate 1794-1820" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1967) provides valuable insights concerning the long neglected role of the territorial delegate.

⁵⁷ Circular Letter of Rufus Easton, April 27, 1816, Lucas Collection.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; Circular Letter of John Scott in Franklin *Missouri Intelligencer*, July 16, 1819; *St. Louis Enquirer*, July 14, 1819.

⁵⁹ Christian Wilt to Joseph Hertzog, March 20, 1815, "Christian Wilt Letterbook" in Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

tory.⁶⁰ Congress tended to be more liberal in authorizing expenditures for adjusting land claims and although allocations proved adequate for that purpose, they could hardly be termed excessive. Indian expenses and frontier defense always constituted the bulk of federal expenditures in the territory. Since the army maintained only a small number of regular troops in Missouri under normal circumstances, those expenses remained limited. William Clark estimated that the federal government spent approximately \$34,000 annually for all Indian expenses in the entire Missouri Territory.

Administration officials in Washington frequently warned territorial officers not to exceed the amounts appropriated by Congress for their expenses, and they sometimes refused to approve payment of expenditures authorized by local officials without prior clearance.⁶¹ Undoubtedly territorial residents who always overestimated the resources of the national government exaggerated the paucity of federal assistance. Nevertheless, it is clear that except during the war years, direct federal subsidies played a proportionately lesser role in the settlement and development of Missouri than in later territories where governmental expenditures sometimes became the mainstay of the local economy.⁶²

The end of the War of 1812 initiated a period of accelerated growth and expansion in the Missouri Territory which transformed the region and paved the way for eventual statehood. The territory's population increased from an estimated 25,000 in 1814 to more than 66,000 by 1820. With the danger from serious Indian depredations greatly reduced, large numbers of settlers ventured for the first time into Missouri's interior regions. Prior to 1815 most of the territory's inhabitants had chosen to live in the areas adjoining the Mississippi River between the settlements of St. Louis on the north and New Madrid on the south. Until that time relatively few persons had settled further west than the village of St. Charles, located on the Missouri River a short distance above St. Louis. Changing conditions, however, dramatically altered that situation, and by 1820 the Boonslick country in central Missouri had a population in excess of 20,000 persons.⁶³

⁶⁰ This estimate is based upon an examination of the Auditor's Reports, 1804-1820 in the National Archives, Washington, D. C.

⁶¹ William Eustis to Meriwether Lewis, July 15, 1809, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 285.

⁶² Both Lamar, *Dakota Territory* and Lewis L. Gould, *Wyoming: A Poblitical History, 1868-1896* (New Haven, 1968) demonstrated the importance of federal assistance in the development of those territories.

⁶³ Sister Chelidonia Ronnebaum, "Population and Settlement in Missouri, 1804-1820" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1936), 96.

As the steady stream of immigrants continued to pour unabated into the sparsely settled region, territorial Missourians gleefully reaped the benefits of an expanding population. Land prices soared in value; the local economy flourished. Most important of all, prospects for a speedy admission to the Union brightened with each passing day. Largely as a consequence of the rapid increase in population Congress approved the advancement of Missouri to a third-class territory in 1816. This action enabled Missourians to elect the members of the Legislative Council who previously had been appointed by the president from a list of names submitted to him by the territorial assembly. Moreover, the elevation of Missouri to the highest grade of territory represented the final step normally taken by Congress prior to granting consideration for admission to statehood.

Encouraged by the adoption of this measure, Delegate Rufus Easton reported from Washington in 1816 that the long-prevalent official disposition to discourage further settlement west of the Mississippi River and north of the state of Louisiana had at last been abandoned. "It is now admitted," he wrote, "with few exceptions that our settlements ought to be fostered to the extent of such district of territory as will form us into a State; and I rejoice that the period is not far distant, when we will form a free and independent State government."⁶⁴

Like Easton, most Missourians concluded that statehood offered the most promising answer to their needs, and by 1818 this movement overshadowed all other issues in territorial politics including the long-dominant land-claims question. Angered by the attempts to delay their admission into the Union with the effort to restrict slavery, Missourians rallied behind statehood with an unanimity which had rarely been seen in the territory previously. Undoubtedly this local consensus provided the most logical explanation for the minimum of dislocation which accompanied the final transition from territorial status to statehood. Yet in retrospect, the territorial system had served Missourians reasonably well. Under its guidance the area passed from territory to statehood in less than two decades, and although local residents were not finally satisfied until Missouri had been admitted to the Union, their struggle would have been impossible under most other systems of colonial administration.

⁶⁴ Circular Letter of Rufus Easton, April 27, 1816, Lucas Collection.