

## II. OUR ANNEXATIONS

"Tis a high virtue to tread in the steps of our ancestors when they have gone before us in the right path."

Pliny the Younger, BK, v ep 8.

Every effort of our government to expand its confines since the days of the Louisiana Purchase has met with bitter opposition from voices high in authority and strong in influence, and whether these annexations came voluntarily or by purchase subsequent to hostilities there has always been a strong array against their acceptance.

Without a single exception every permanent annexation has been made with the approval of the inhabitants of the territory acquired, and without a single exception, these annexations have proven elements of wealth and strength for this Nation and of satisfaction to the people concerned.

Now that High Commissioner McNutt and President Quezon are apparently engaged in a "realistic re-examination" of the present U.S. - Philippine situation, looking to the indefinite extension of U. S. sovereignty in that archipelago, let us glance over the major annexations by which we have built the present geographic edifice of our Nation.

### Synopsis of our Annexations.

The Revolution, by the close of the 18th Century, had given us the Mississippi River as our western boundary and since that time we have made six important annexations: the Louisiana Purchase, 1803; the Florida-Oregon cession by Spain in 1819; Texas and the Mexican cession 1845-1848,

and the subsequent incidental Gadsden Purchase of 1853; Alaska in 1867; and Porto Rico, Hawaii and the Philippine Islands in 1898.

Only a word need be said with reference to our northwest corner originally known as the Oregon country which now comprises Washington, Oregon and Idaho and parts of Montana and Wyoming. About half of Oregon we got from Spain with the cession of Florida in 1819 and the rest, by 1843, we had taken by right of discovery, exploration and occupation. The small items of our annexations consist of: in the Caribbean Sea; Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands; in the Pacific Ocean; Guam, Samoa, Wake, Midway, and a few other small islands.

1. The Louisiana Purchase.

On October 21, 1803 a treaty was ratified by which France ceded to the United States for the consideration of fifteen million dollars a tract of land then known as Louisiana, which today is the middle third of our country. This cession was the culmination of a series of events which began almost exactly four hundred years ago when two Spanish explorers, DeSoto and Coronado at about the same time, 1539, led expeditions from the Atlantic and Pacific coasts respectively into the heart of the Louisiana tract. Almost a century and a half was to pass before white men again came into this region of the Mississippi valley and Louisiana tract.

In 1673 the French explorers Joliet and Marquette coming from the Great Lakes region descended the Wisconsin River to the Mississippi, and nine years later in 1682 another Frenchman, LaSalle, followed the Mississippi to its mouth and claimed the entire region for France and Louis XIV.

In 1762 by a treaty not known to us publicly until seventy years later, France ceded the Louisiana tract entirely to Spain. In 1800 Spain

retroceded the Louisiana tract to France, to our great annoyance as our unpleasant relations with France at that time had led to a suspension of commercial intercourse.

Although our Western movement at the close of the 18th Century had arrived at the Mississippi, we still had in that region some sore spots of British, French and Spaniards (not to mention the Indians) on the Great Lakes, in the Mississippi valley and along the Gulf of Mexico. Particularly were we annoyed by the French control of the Mississippi at New Orleans.

Such was the situation when, in 1803, President Jefferson sent Mr. R. R. Livingston and Mr. James Monroe to France "to procure \* \* \* a cession to the United States of New Orleans and of West and East Florida or as much thereof as the actual proprietor can be prevailed on to part with." An additional clause treated the matter of equal rights of navigation of the Mississippi River for the United States and for France. The sum of money made available for this business was two million dollars. To the surprise of our Commissioners Napoleon Bonaparte at once offered France's entire holding (known as Louisiana) for 15 million dollars and the proposal was promptly accepted by our envoys on their own responsibility.

When the transaction was duly accomplished, on April 30, 1803, Livingston asked Talleyrand then Minister of Foreign Affairs of France "What are the eastern bounds of Louisiana?" and Talleyrand replied, "I do not know, you must take it as we received it" (from Spain). "But what did you mean to take" (from Spain)? persisted Livingston, to which the French official replied "I do not know." "Then you mean that we shall construe it our own way," said Livingston, and Talleyrand closed the conversation with this reply, "I can give you no direction. You have made a noble bargain for yourselves and I suppose you will make the most of it." If Talleyrand did not know the eastern bounds of Louisiana, one may hazard a guess as to

his knowledge of the other bounds. As a matter of fact, the greater the tract the greater was Bonaparte's satisfaction in the sale.

Fortune has consistently favored us from the beginning of our western expansion. Let us consider briefly the causes of this first great annexation of Louisiana. The principal cause was the imminence of the war between Great Britain and France. By this sale, Bonaparte was killing really three birds with a single stone: for a colony which he could not hold against Great Britain's naval supremacy, he was getting all that we could pay, 15 million dollars, at a time when war was again imminent and his treasury low; then, <sup>he was</sup> preventing Great Britain's expansion in North America west of the Mississippi, and last but not least, in his own words, he was providing for Great Britain a rival whose future power he clearly foresaw; and in this connection, the news of Pakenham's defeat by Jackson at New Orleans in 1814 must have been a great satisfaction for Bonaparte at a time when his satisfactions were rare.

And so our envoys, Livingston and Monroe who, with little hope of success had gone to France with two million dollars for the relatively small business of buying a city, navigating a river and acquiring a part of Florida, came home with a territory that practically doubled our national area and assured our further western movement to the Pacific.

The Louisiana purchase comprises our present states of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, two-thirds of Wyoming and half of Colorado, - approximately one million square miles, or the area of a square one thousand miles on a side, of the richest soil and most favored climate of this country - and probably of the world.

In the maze of circumstances which attended the Louisiana Purchase, the record clearly indicates that Napoleon Bonaparte was the principal agent in that transaction. The cession was opposed by some of his strongest advisers, but was as strongly urged by his special agent for this business, Barbe Marbois, Minister of Finance. Marbois had served in the United States in a diplomatic capacity during the Revolution, had married a lady of Philadelphia and was a loyal friend of our Nation.

With the victory at Yorktown in 1781 and the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 our Nation was on its way, and the role of France in these two great events will be remembered for its fundamental benefits rather than analyzed for motives under the stress of that period. While France was probably, and logically, as much interested on those occasions in injuring Great Britain as she was in aiding the United States, nevertheless her actions were those of a friend whose sympathy and confidence have remained with us to this day.

Just as the names of Lafayette, Rochambeau and de Grasse are forever associated with our initial acquisition of territory - that of our Colonies, by the Revolution - so should the names of Napoleon Bonaparte and Barbe Marbois be associated always with the Louisiana Purchase.

It would be reasonable to expect for so signal a service as the Louisiana Purchase, the appropriate approval of our people and of their representatives in Congress assembled, by the unanimous ratification of the action of our envoys, Livingston and Monroe. The record however does not bear out this expectation. The Federalist party, represented by nine out of thirty-four Senators and approximately forty Representatives out of a total of about one hundred, was almost solidly against the Purchase.

Dayton of New Jersey and John Q. Adams of Massachusetts were the only two Federalist Senators in favor of the bill. When the Senate after three days of discussion finally ratified, the House took up the bill for the payment and for twelve days, in both Senate and House there was hot debate ending, however, in the passing of the appropriation bill by large majorities in both Houses in October, 1803.

It is curious to note the reception given the Louisiana Purchase by the Opposition in Congress. From a number of documents, the following are selected as typical:

Senator Plumer, New Hampshire, October, 1803

"Admit this Western World into the Union and you destroy at once the weight and importance of the Eastern States and compel them to establish a separate, independent empire."

Senator James White, Delaware, October, 1803

"\* \* \* I believe it will be the greatest curse that could at present befall us. \* \* \* Thus our citizens will be removed to the immense distance of two or three thousand miles from the capital of the Union where they will scarcely ever feel the rays of the General Government" etc.

Representative Griswold of Connecticut

"It is not consistent with the spirit of a republican government that its territory should be exceedingly large. \* \* The vast and unmanageable extent which the accession of Louisiana will give to the United States, the consequent dispersion of our population, the destruction of that balance which is so important to maintain between the Eastern and Western States," etc.

Representative Griffin of Virginia, 1804

feared the effect of the vast extent of our empire, - the effects of the increased value of labor, the decrease in the value of lands and the influence of the climate, etc.

And throughout the land voices that were high in authority and influence had opposed this annexation and made Jefferson a target for attack and ridicule.

2. The Florida-Oregon Cession, 1819.

This cession by Spain was made necessary by the Louisiana Purchase. In 1810 the United States took over the western part of the Florida tract claimed under that Purchase, and in our 1812-1814 war with Great Britain General Jackson had invaded the western part of the Florida tract against the British and later the central region against the Seminole Indians. The pressure on Florida was such that Spain in 1819, with many troubles at home, ceded to us not only the entire Florida territory but likewise her Oregon claims west of the Rockies and north of the 42 degree of latitude.

And so ended the first two hundred and fifty years of Florida history during which Spaniards, French, English, Americans and Indians had fought each other with a ferocity unsurpassed in any other section of our country.

3. The Annexation of Texas and of the Mexican Cession, 1845, 1848.

The independence of Texas had not been recognized by Mexico at the time of our annexation of Texas in 1845 on the verge of the war which followed. Hence Texas is included in the general annexation which resulted from that war. Texas won her independence from Mexico in 1836 and at once applied to join the United States. Altho recognition was granted in 1837,

annexation did not occur until 1845 almost a decade after independence.

The voice of Daniel Webster is typical of the Opposition to the annexation of Texas, in 1837 and in 1845, - and to the Mexican cession of the New Mexico-California tract in 1848.

In an address in New York City in 1837 he said:

"I say then, Gentlemen, in all frankness, that I see objections, I think insurmountable objections to the annexation of Texas to the United States. \* \* \* \* There being no necessity for extending the limits of the Union in that direction, we ought, I think for numerous and powerful reasons to be content with our present boundaries. \* \* \* I see no political necessity for the annexation of Texas to the Union, no advantages to be derived from it, and objections to it of a strong, and, in my judgment, decisive character.

"I believe it to be for the interest and happiness of the whole Union to remain as it is, without diminution and without addition."

On the 22d of December, 1845 Daniel Webster spoke in the Senate in further opposition to the annexation of Texas:

"I have on the deepest reflection long ago come to the conclusion that it is of very dangerous tendency and doubtful consequences to enlarge the boundaries of this country or the territories over which our laws are now established. I here record my own dissent and opposition and place on record, also, the dissent and protest of the State of Massachusetts."

Texas was annexed in 1845 by a 27-25 vote in the Senate and 132-76 in the House.

In 1848 when considering the appropriation of 16 million dollars for the payment of the Mexican cession under the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty, Daniel Webster said in the Senate:

"I am against all accessions of territory to form new states. \* \* \*

"On the example of Louisiana (Purchase), Florida was admitted. There they stand as matters of political history. They are facts against which it would be idle at this day to contend." \* \* \* \* \*

"I have never heard of anything and I cannot conceive of anything more ridiculous in itself, more absurd, more affrontive to all sober judgment than the cry that we are getting indemnity by the acquisition of New Mexico (i.e., Arizona, Nevada, Utah and parts of New Mexico and Colorado) and California. I hold they are not worth a dollar and we pay for them vast sums of money!"

After lengthy and concrete attack upon the worthlessness of the whole tract from the Rio Grande to the northern limit, he concludes his opposition to this cession of practically one-third, - the final third, of our continental area -

"What sympathy can there be between the people of Mexico and California (i.e., the Mexican cession) and the inhabitants of the valley of the Mississippi and the Eastern States in the choice of a President? Do they know the same man? Do they concur in any general constitutional principles? Not at all. \* \* \* I think I see a course adopted which is likely to turn the Constitution of the land into a deformed monster, into a curse rather than a blessing. \* \* \* I know, Sir, that all the portents are discouraging \* \* \* \* I see the signs are sinister \* \* but I am sustained by a deep and conscientious sense of duty, \* \* \*" etc.

On January 12, 1848 Abraham Lincoln, then a member of the House, arraigning President Polk's policy of the Mexican War, said: "God grant he may be able to show there is not something about his conscience more painful than all his mental perplexity."

The Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty was ratified by the Senate July 4, 1848 by the vote 38-14.

And there was many a voice raised in similar bitter attack upon Polk's administration 1845-1849 which gave us the western third of our Country. But Polk did not lack support by men of the type of Thomas H. Benton, who during his thirty years as Senator from Missouri, 1821-1851, has left a consistent record of constructive public service in energetic support of the annexations and development of our West.

4. The Alaska Purchase, 1867.

"The purchase of Alaska was my most important measure, but it will take the people a generation to find it out."

W. H. Seward.

Alaska, before its annexation by us, had for more than a hundred years been the property of Russia by right of discovery, and this was a very good right in law, - but in fact, it would have meant nothing at all if Great Britain's fleet had come along with the purpose of completing her possession of that part of North America. So apparently Russia (who in those days was none too friendly with Great Britain) thought it good business to let Alaska go to a friend for \$7,200,000 rather than probably to an enemy for nothing. (The British fleet seems to have been quite helpful in our international real estate deals).

On the evening of March 29, 1867 Secretary of State Seward was having a quiet evening game of whist when his friend the Russian Minister, Mr. Stoeckl, dropped in to say that the Emperor had just cabled his assent to the cession of Alaska to the United States. Mr. Stoeckl suggested taking

up the matter the following day. Whereupon Mr. Seward said "Why wait until tomorrow. Let us make the treaty tonight." By four A.M. the next morning the treaty was finished and in a few hours was sent by the President to the Senate. The treaty was proclaimed June 20, 1867, and Seward proceeded immediately to take formal possession of Alaska, although the joint resolution appropriating for its purchase did not pass until July, 1868, a year later.

Here again we need not analyze motives, - the facts are that for Russia's reasons and for our own, the sale was satisfactory to the 'high contracting parties' and arranged in an atmosphere of friendship. It is eminently just at this point to state that Seward's enlightened statesmanship in this matter was in the highest degree due to the reports of the scientist and explorer Robert Kennicott whose accurate estimates of the value of Alaska were the cause of Seward's zealous interest in this annexation.

We have no Daniel Webster to typify the Opposition to the Alaska Purchase, so let us hear from a few of the members of Congress on this subject at the time of its consideration by that body:

Mr. Ferriss, of New York, said:

"The people of this country do not want these Russian possessions. If submitted to them they would reject the treaty by a majority of millions."

Speaking on the same bill, he moved to strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

"That the President be authorized to bind the United States by treaty to pay the sum of \$7,200,000 to any respectable European, Asiatic, or African power which will accept a cession of the Territory of Alaska."

Mr. E. F. Butler, Massachusetts, July 7, 1868, said:

"If we are to pay for her (Russia's) friendship this amount, I desire to give her the \$7,200,000 and let her keep Alaska. \* \* \* But no man, except one insane enough to buy the earthquakes in St. Thomas and the ice fields in Greenland, could be found to agree to \* \* \* its acquisition," etc.

Mr. Benjamin F. Loan, of Missouri, said:

"The acquisition of this inhospitable and barren waste would never add one dollar to the wealth of our country or furnish homes to our people. To suppose that anyone would willingly leave the mild climate and fruitful soil of the United States, with its newspapers and churches, its railroads and commerce, its civilization and refinement; to seek a home among the Aleuts \* \* \* is simply to suppose such person insane."

Mr. Washburne, Wisconsin:

"The country is absolutely without value. \* \* \* I tell gentlemen who go for Alaska that Greenland is a better purchase than Alaska. \* \* \* I defy any living man upon the face of this earth to produce any evidence that an ounce of gold was ever extracted from Alaska."

The Senate promptly passed the ratification with only 2 dissenting votes in 1867. A year later after violent opposition the House voted in favor 113 - 43, and "Seward's Folly" became part of the United States.

It seems idle to attempt to compare the vast wealth which has come to us from these annexations with the relatively trivial cost of their purchase. However, remembering that the grand total of the sums paid for all of our acquisitions of territory is \$72,200,000, a few statistics with reference to Alaska may be interesting.

We paid \$7,200,000 for Alaska: - From 1880 to 1935 Alaska has produced 435 million dollars of gold, and with silver and copper values included, the total is 679,582,000 dollars.

The fishery business between 1929 and 1935 has ranged between 25 and 40 million dollars a year.

In 1934,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million dollars of sealskins were shipped to the United States. The control of this industry has caused an increase of seals from 215 thousand in 1911 to more than a million and a half in 1935.

These are the main industries but Alaska also has vast forests and an important lumber business, land furs and certain agricultural products. Her total annual business in 1935 was approximately 68 million dollars.

From the viewpoint of strategy, Alaska is even more important, for it is the key to the North Pacific and the strong right flank of our Pacific defense; it makes Behring sea a U.S. body of water, and controls Behring Straits and the Arctic Ocean to the north.

##### 5. Hawaiian and Philippine Annexations, 1898.

"I speak not of forcible annexation for that cannot be thought of. That, by our code of morality would be criminal aggression."

President McKinley, 1897.

Hawaii had requested annexation to the United States in 1894, and had been refused, but the Spanish American War of 1898 made its acquisition most desirable and annexation occurred in July soon after the declaration of that war, but only after strong opposition had been overcome. Typical of the Opposition in both Senate and House is the statement of Mr. Dinsmore of Arkansas (H.R.) in presenting the minority report: " \* \* \* it will be the greatest blunder in our national history." The vote was, in the Senate

42 - 21, in the House 209 - 91.

The Philippines were acquired by the Treaty of Paris, December 10th 1898, which ended the Spanish-American War. By the same treaty the islands of Guam and Puerto Rico came into our possession. - And then the battle over ratification began. The Opposition brought out the old artillery against expansion, to wit: imposition of our will upon a helpless people, inconsistency with the democratic principle that government should derive its power from the consent of the governed; a war to free one people should not forcibly annex another; military expenses; probable entanglements with European nations in the Far East; violation of the Constitution which did not provide for annexation of territory, etc.

Just as Jefferson in the Louisiana Purchase, Polk in the annexation of Texas and the Mexican cession of 1845, 1848, and Seward in the Alaska Purchase in 1867, stand out clearly in the records of those great achievements, so stands William McKinley in the Pacific annexations of Hawaii, the Philippines, Guam and the Samoan Islands.

In his instructions to his delegates to the Convention of the Treaty of Paris, 1898 McKinley says: "It is my judgment, and the well considered opinion of the majority, that duty requires we should take the archipelago."  
\* \* \* \* "Incidental to our tenure in the Philippines is the commercial opportunity to which American statesmanship cannot be indifferent. It is just to use every legitimate means for the enlargement of American trade, but we seek no advantages in the Orient which are not common to all. Asking only the 'open door' for ourselves, we are ready to accord 'the open door' to others."

McKinley's successful demand on Spain for the cession of the Philippine archipelago to the United States brought heavy attacks from the Opposition. Senator Hoar, 1898, in opposing this annexation said: "When

you raise the flag over the Philippine Islands as an emblem of dominion and acquisition, you take it down from Independence Hall"; and such terms as "The great South Sea Bubble of the 19th Century," "The great aberration," "An inexcusable blunder," etc., are typical of the language used in the effort to defeat ratification. But there were likewise strong proponents of this treaty which was finally ratified by the Senate in February 1899 - by the vote of 26 - 22.

#### THE PHILIPPINES AND THE PACIFIC OCEAN

Upon the chessboard of international play, the Philippines represent an important piece, and it does not seem the part of good chess to give up such a piece before the necessity arises, and as to that necessity, there is no country in this world less liable to provocation by other nations than the United States, for many and obvious reasons.

The further we look into the future, the more reason we apparently have for holding on to every square inch of our property, on this earth in general, and in the Pacific in particular. Recent events have shown the importance in that ocean of even isolated atolls and small islands, hardly more than reefs, witness Canton and Enderbury islands in recent issue, - and as to the water, the more of it we control the better for the development of our communications and commerce and for the protection of our western coast.

In 1852 Seward, later of Alaska fame, prophesied - " \* \* \* The Pacific Ocean, its shores, its islands and the vast region beyond will become the chief theatre of events in the world's great hereafter." President Theodore Roosevelt in 1918 speaking of the shifting of commercial interest from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, subsequent to the discovery of America, is quoted as saying, " \* \* \* but the Pacific era, destined to be the greatest of all, is just at the dawn \* \* \*," and Admiral Jellicoe, in his study of the Pacific after the World War said: "The future belongs to the Pacific." These and similar

prophecies by authorities of weight seem to deserve our special attention at this time.

The Philippines represent the last step in a series of annexations that have extended our confines from the Atlantic coast of North America to practically the Pacific coast of Asia. The Philippine question, then, should be considered in the general plan of our Nation's development as one of the principal elements of our Pacific situation. Our policy in that ocean is rapidly increasing in importance and as yet remains to be decided and consolidated.

And so ends the series of our annexations, whose story is the building of our empire. And to those men, from Thomas Jefferson to William McKinley, to whose vision, energy and courage we are indebted by these annexations for the Nation's physical greatness and strength wherein and whereby we have been able to live in freedom and happiness, we owe the tribute of a mindful and grateful memory and the obligation of a faithful stewardship of their legacies.