The Beginning of a New Modern Age:

Major Events of 1800 Through 1820

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Rel 319 18th Century Theology: Jonathan Edwards and his contemporaries

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At the turn of the century, war, slavery, revolution, and expansion were the four hot topics on the front of countless newspaper pages and tongues. The newly begun 19th century brought with it an onslaught of world events that may, in many ways, influence the thought and reason of the ordinary people of America. With its independence established, the United States could now cast its eyes to new horizons in the West. In 1803, the unstable peace treaty between France and Britain, formed at the end of the War of the Second Coalition, fell apart. With a French population of 27.3 million compared to the population of Great Britain's 10.9 million, French armies were being reinforced and bolstered for the third European war following their revolution.[1] To do this, Napoleon Bonapart sought to sell off French-owned territory in western America to raise funds for the oncoming war. Because a sale to Great Britain would be counter-intuitive, the offer was made to the United States. President Jefferson, who had previously been interested in the Louisiana Territory, purchased the land for $15 million or three cents per acre, roughly $337 million in current money. This transaction was the Louisiana Purchase and resulted in the total acquisition of 530 million acres of property from Montana to Minnesota and down to Louisiana.[2] With this raised money, the French Empire would go to war against the United Kingdom, the Holy Roman Empire, the Russian Empire, Naples, Sicily, and Sweden. In 1813, the invasion of Russia failed due to a severe winter and an unprepared army.[3] Furthermore, in 1815, Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo on June 18th, marking the end of the Napoleonic Wars.[4]

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[1] "Napoleonic Wars - the Treaty of Amiens." n.d. Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed February 15, 2023. https://www.britannica.com/event/Napoleonic-Wars/The-Treaty-of-Amiens.
[2] "Milestones: 1801–1829 - Office of the Historian." 2019. State.gov. 2019. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1801-1829/louisiana-purchase.
"Exhibit: The Louisiana Purchase." n.d. Www.archives.gov. https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals/loupurch.html#:~:text=In%201803%20the%20United%20States.
[3] "Milestones: 1801–1829 - Office of the Historian." 2019. State.gov. 2019. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1801-1829/louisiana-purchase.
[4] "Napoleonic Wars - the Treaty of Amiens." n.d. Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed February 15, 2023. https://www.britannica.com/event/Napoleonic-Wars/The-Treaty-of-Amiens.

During this period of European conflict, the United States faced an issue regarding slavery in its newly acquired territory. With the land still heavily influenced by the anti-slavery culture of its former occupants, as well as the growing push to abolish slavery, a plea from the national abolitionist association went up to the Senate and Congress on January 13th, 1804, that they might "prohibit the importation of slaves into the territory of Louisiana, lately ceded to the United States."[5] The request was ignored. Through the immigration of pro-slavery settlers, the territory became a new capital of American slavery, particularly in New Orleans.[6] In 1804, the final results of a continual slave revolution in Haiti came to light. After nearly a decade of civil war, the slave population were the first to succeed in gaining independence and self-liberation from the French colonists. French slave owners who escaped the uprising immigrated to New Orleans to avoid war in France, and many brought their slaves. Word of this victory from the Haitian slaves soon spread through the United States and became a household story among slaves.[7] In 1811, around 124 slaves on a large plantation in Destrehan, Louisiana, rose under their leader Charles Deslondes. They proceeded toward New Orleans, burning five plantations and amassing 500 new members. The rebel forces encamped in a plantation in Edgard, where the U.S. Army and Navy militia would soon find them. The outcome was a one-sided massacre. The thirty-five-minute battle resulted in, on average, fifty rebel casualties, and the trials and executions that followed resulted in the deaths of ninety-five slaves. Deslondes was mutilated and tortured until death.

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[5] Franklin, Matthew, and Othniel Alsop. 1804. "Application to Prohibit the Importation of Slaves into the Territory of Louisiana." Memory.loc.gov. A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875. January 13, 1804.
https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsp&fileName=037/llsp037.db&recNum=393.
[6] Jefferson, Thomas. 1804. "Importation of Slaves into Louisiana."
https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsp&fileName=037/llsp037.db&recNum=397.
[7] "1811 Slave Revolt | Destrehan Plantation." n.d. www.destrehanplantation.org.
https://www.destrehanplantation.org/history/1811-slave-revolt.

The event was the most influential slave uprising in American history since Gabriel's Conspiracy and attempted to overthrow slavery in Virginia by attacking Richmond in 1800.[8] With the brutal tactics of the Military and the reimbursement of $300 (roughly 7,000 dollars in modern currency) per executed slave to the plantation owner, abolitionists were mounting in numbers.[9] Jonathan Edwards Jr. presented a sermon to his congregation in 1791 titled *The Injustice and Impolicy of the Slave Trade and Slavery of Africans.* In it, he notes the hypocrisy of the United States in its arguments for natural rights and predicts the course of slavery in later years. He writes, "These facts clearly show. What the whites in the West-Indies and the Southern States are to expect concerning their posterity, that it will infallibly be amalgamated with the slave population, or they must hitherto quit the country to the Africans who they have hitherto holden in bondage."[10] This assertion of oncoming equality was evident in the countries around the United States. By 1807, Great Britain had outlawed the trade of slaves with and between any of its colonies. By 1819, France followed suit and outlawed the slave trade in all territories.[11] With their European contemporaries pushing for abolition, anti-slavery sentiment became increasingly widespread in the Northern states of America. By 1808, all states north of Maryland were free states.[12]

Many considered the increasing withdrawal from slavery to be a step of progress in a modernizing world. However, this modernization was manifest in technological and scientific advancements as well as the political. Despite being referred to as the "Pre-industrial Age," the early 1800s produced remarkable ameliorations to the population and society of the West. By 1800, in England alone, there were 1,454 steam engines after the formula for the atmospheric

[8] Nicholls, Michael. Gabriel's Conspiracy (1800). (2023, February 07). In Encyclopedia Virginia. https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/gabriels-conspiracy-1800.

[9] "Slave Execution Reimbursement · Notable Kentucky African Americans Database." n.d. Nkaa.uky.edu. Accessed February 22, 2023. https://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/2099.

[10] Edwards, Jonathan. 1834. The Injustice and Impolicy of the Slave Trade, and of the Slavery of the Africans.

[11] The Editors of Encyclopaedia. 2022. "Abolitionism | European and American Social Movement." Encyclopedia Britannica. November 16, 2022. https://www.britannica.com/summary/Abolitionism-Key-Facts.

[12] Ibid.

engine, developed by inventor and Puritan minister Thomas Newcomen in 1712, began to be implemented in factories.[13] In 1819, a new machine beast called a "hot blast" was introduced into English factories. Within its tall brick towers, a hot blast had incorporated such engines to produce significantly higher heat levels than ordinary factory furnaces, increasing fuel efficiency by around fifty percent.[14] Furthermore, though it is debated, around this same time, the use of rolling mills in production allowed iron to be produced fifteen times faster than traditional hammering.[15] These revolutionary advances in English technology sky-rocketed the country to a seventy percent higher GDP than its long-time rival France. This economic fortitude gave England a significant advantage in their conflicts with Napoleon.

Nevertheless, despite the industrial vigor of Great Britain and due to their consistent seizure of neutral American ships trading with France, the United States was becoming increasingly aggressive towards their former colonizers. Cargo being commandeered by British blockades initiated the War of 1812, in which the United States declared war on Great Britain for "the practice of violating the rights and the peace of our coasts."[16] Many historians attribute the cause for this war also to be rooted in an underlying motivation of expansion into Canada. Regardless of this notion, no territory in Canada was acquired. Instead, over 15,000 American troops and 8,600 British troops were killed, and the war resulted in the mutual Ghent Peace Treaty signed on February 17th 1815.[17]

With such conflicts, scientific advancements, and expansions occurring in the world and America, the question of the Church presents itself. Where is the Church, and how is it affected by such radical developments politically and geographically? By 1800 the notion of Puritanism

[13] L T C Rolt, and John S Allen. 1997. The Steam Engine of Thomas Newcomen. Ashbourne Landmark.
[14] Hyde, Charles K. 2019. Technological Change and the British Iron Industry, 1700-1870. Princeton University Press.
[15] Landes, David S. 2008. The Unbound Prometheus : Technical Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[16] James, Madison. 1812. June 1, 1812: Special Message to Congress on the Foreign Policy Crisis -- War Message
[17] The Editors of ABT. 2019. "War of 1812." American Battlefield Trust. 2019. https://www.battlefields.org/learn/war-1812.

had disappeared and manifested itself in new denomination forms.[18] Such examples include the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists. With the Louisiana Purchase, new territory was being settled by people equally in need of Churches as the rest of the United States. With this mass immigration into the West by different forms of Christianity, the former norm of denominations exclusive to particular colonies or states became far less prominent.[19] The rapidly expanding issue of slavery may also have brought forth issues of both unity and contention in the American Church. Finally, the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution brought waves of economic growth and perhaps may have stimulated the building of churches by providing a higher standard of wages across the West, making available such endeavors as the Protestant missions to Levant and other middle-eastern countries.[20] However, regardless of their specific effects, these major historical events were the issues and stories that were spread from person to person throughout the Church in America. They were the conversations at dinner tables, issues worked out in Congressional chambers, and the topic of sermons preached from pulpits.

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[18] Ruland, Richard, and Malcom Bradbury. 2006. "From Puritanism to Postmodernism." https://analepsis.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/from-puritanism-to-postmodernism.pdf.
[19] Forrer, Richard. 1986. Theodicies in Conflict. Praeger.
[20] Khalaf, Samir. 2012. Protestant Missionaries in the Levant: Ungodly Puritans, 1820-1860. Routledge.

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	0the%20new%20secretary.

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