

that was intended to injure or kill him. These essays had such an impact that Jefferson wrote to Madison, urging him to respond: “Hamilton is really a *colossus* to the anti-republican party. Without numbers he is a host within himself. . . In truth, when he comes forward, there is nobody but yourself who can meet him.” Madison sent a letter to Jefferson declining the challenge to confront Hamilton head-on.

Again, even if it is repetitious, it must be re-stated—so that there is no possibility of denying the consequences—that the political war launched by the Virginia Slavocracy was aimed, not at the Federalist Party, but at Hamilton, Jay, Morris, and the New York leadership. It did not begin later, after the “corruption” of the Federalist Party, but from the moment Washington was sworn in as President. And the intent was to destroy Hamilton, ruin his policy initiatives, drive the New Yorkers out of the Administration, and leave Washington isolated in the fight against the interests of the Slave Power.

As for John Jay, he would later be elected Governor of New York State twice, both times with Steven Van Rensselaer as his Lieutenant Governor, and during his second term, he would successfully steer through the legislature and sign into law a bill leading to the abolition of slavery in New York.

Part IV The Slave Power

A word of warning—or advice—is required here. It is not possible to grasp the dynamic of the battle between the young nation’s New York leadership and the Virginia-centered Slave Power, without an honest, perhaps wrenching, re-evaluation of certain accepted truths concerning the patriotic tradition in American history. That said, the rest speaks for itself.



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Thomas Jefferson’s slave Lucy, sold at auction after his death.

It is the case that at the time of the Constitutional Convention, many leading Americans expected slavery to be abolished within a relatively short period of time. Unlike in 1860, when Southern leaders would regularly invoke God to defend the morality of slavery, in 1788 even many in the South admitted to the horror of the institution, and it was apparent to the majority of Americans that the continuation of slavery and the principles of the Declaration of Independence were incompatible. Prior to 1770, slavery was legal in all 13 colonies; but by 1790 all of the states north of Maryland had either emancipated their slaves or taken steps in that direction, and this momentum was

spreading to the South. During the Revolutionary War, Hamilton’s close friend John Laurens had introduced a bill into the South Carolina legislature for statewide emancipation (for which he received a congratulatory letter from George Washington), and in the 1780s Delaware came within a hair’s-breadth of abolishing slavery.

At the same time, between 1776 and 1789 a substantial number of Southern slave-owners freed their slaves, either outright or in their wills. George Washington was one of these.²² The eccentric John Randolph of Virginia was another. John Dickinson, once Delaware’s largest slaveholder, sided openly with Gouverneur Morris against slavery at the Philadelphia Convention and freed all of his slaves by 1787. The most compelling case is that of Edward Coles, one of the largest slave-owners in Virginia, a neighbor of Jefferson, and an individual of equal social rank to that future President. Coles gathered up all of his slaves, transported them to the Northwest Territory, loaded them all out on rafts and barges in the middle of the

22. All of the New York leadership were fiercely opposed to the Slave Power. Morris had authored the first proposal for abolition of slavery in New York State in 1778, and in 1785 Hamilton, Jay, Morris, and Van Rensselaer were all founding members of the New York Manumission Society, with Jay as the first president.

Ohio River, climbed up on a crate, and announced to all of them that he was setting them free. He established a fund to aid them in getting started. Upon his return to Virginia, he wrote to Jefferson urging him to do the same thing. Jefferson replied that it was not the right time.

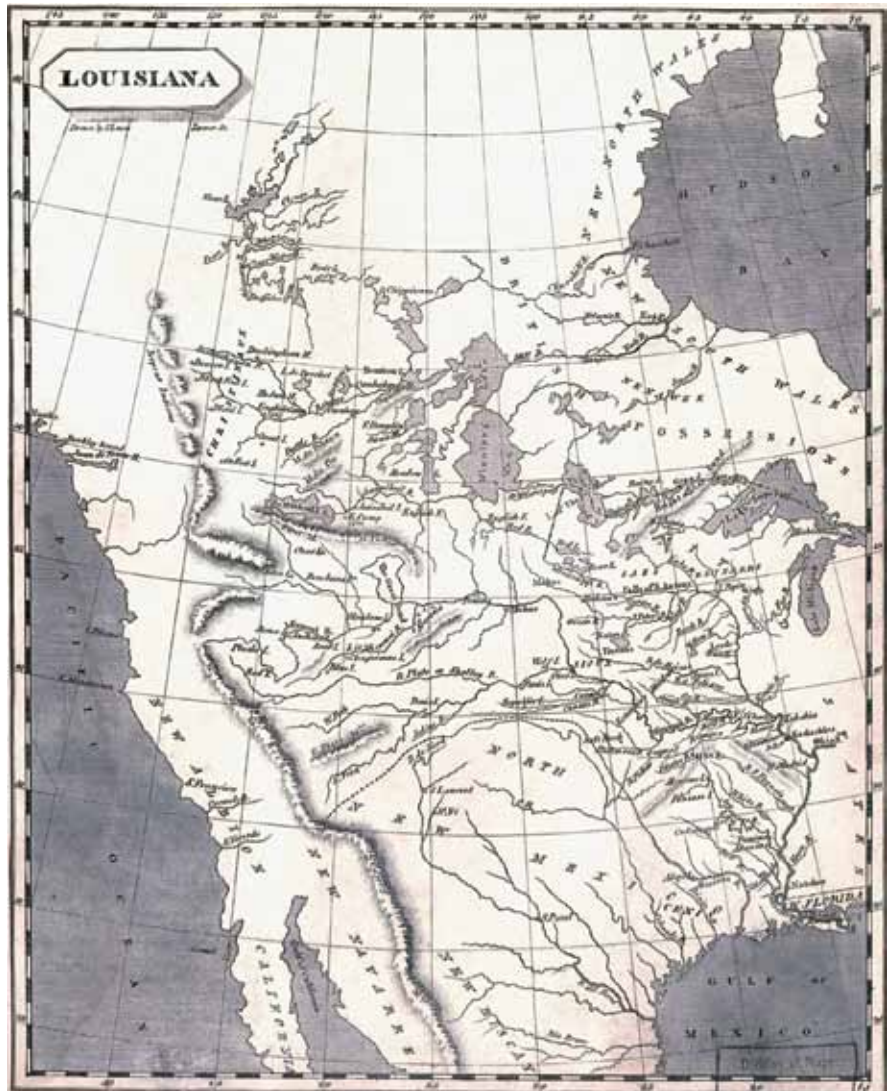
Additionally, in the North, it was believed—or at least hoped—by many anti-slavery advocates that the success of Hamilton’s economic policies and the increasing commercial and industrial prosperity of the nation, would lead to the general recognition of the counter-productive nature of slave labor as an economic system and compel the South to abandon it.

What halted this momentum, this directionality, was not the invention of the Cotton Gin, as some historians claim. *It was the election of Jefferson to the Presidency in 1800, and the iron-clad grip over the national government by the Virginia Slave Power for the next 24 years, that changed the future of the nation.* By 1824 the Slavocracy had placed itself in a position of dominant national power, and, except for the four years of the John Quincy Adams Presidency, it would retain that power until 1861.

Southern ‘Defusion’

Between 1800 and 1860, the number of slaves in the United States grew from 800,000 to 4 million.

More important than the simple numbers, was the unyielding Southern determination to spread slavery geographically. During his Presidency, Thomas Jefferson became a vocal advocate for the Southern doctrine of “defusion.” Jefferson wrote that spreading slavery into new areas, would benefit the economies of these newly settled regions, while at the same time decreasing the concentration of slaves in the South, making them more valuable as property, and resulting



1804 map of Louisiana

Library of Congress

in better treatment for the Southern slaves, thus lessening (defusing) the likelihood of slave revolts.²³

The 1787 Northwest Ordinance had banned slavery in all of the western territory north of the Ohio River. The South’s interpretation of that Ordinance was two-fold: first, that they would simply ignore it, continue to bring slaves into the Northwest, and eventually overturn the ban on slavery, and second, that since no mention was made of the area south of the Ohio River, that this area was de-facto open for slavery. Two new states,

23. The Slavocracy had been scared out of its wits by Toussaint Louverture’s successful slave revolt on the island of Hispaniola.

Kentucky and Tennessee, were carved out of territory previously claimed by Virginia and North Carolina. Almost all of the settlers were natives from those two states, and many had brought their slaves with them. Kentucky and Tennessee were admitted as new slave states in 1792 and 1796, the only alternative being to deny them admission to the Union.

In the Northwest Territory, many of the initial settlers were from Virginia and later Kentucky, and despite Article VI of the Northwest Ordinance, by the time of Ohio's admission to the Union as a free state in 1800, slavery was entrenched in much of the rest of the territory. As early as 1788, the territorial agent for the area that later became the states of Illinois and Indiana, asked Congress to modify the Northwest Ordinance to allow slavery, and his report was endorsed by James Madison. In 1802, a convention of settlers meeting at Vincennes, presided over by future President William Henry Harrison, asked Congress to repeal Article VI; and in 1806 the territory adopted a new law aptly titled "An Act concerning Slaves and Servants." This was nothing less than a full slave code. During this entire period, leading up to the admission of Illinois as a "free state" in 1818, not one action was taken in the Territory to free the slaves in the region. After 1803, under Virginia native and territorial Governor Harrison, slavery began to actually expand in the territory, and this continued after statehood. When Illinois applied for admission to the Union in 1818, DeWitt Clinton protégé James Tallmadge of New York fiercely opposed statehood, based on the fact that slavery was still rampant in the territory. Not until 1848, when Illinois adopted a new State Constitution, was slavery officially abolished in Illinois.

The Louisiana Purchase was the golden opportunity to put Jefferson's "defusion" scheme into practice. Many Federalist Party leaders opposed the Louisiana Purchase, but Hamilton and Morris were not among them. Morris wrote a letter of congratulation to his old friend Robert Livingston, and both he and Hamilton spoke out praising what this would mean for the future of the nation. But the New Yorkers were also keenly aware of the potential grave danger, and Morris and Jay both insisted that as the vast new territory was "federal land," not previously part of, or claimed by, any pre-existing state—unlike Tennessee and Kentucky—that the anti-slavery principle of the Northwest Ordinance must be imposed on the new territory. Morris in particu-

lar spoke frequently and vehemently on this theme.²⁴ It was to no avail. With Jefferson and Madison running the country, settlers from Virginia, Georgia, the Carolinas and Kentucky poured across the Mississippi River, and with them came their slaves. New Orleans was quickly transformed into the slave hub of the South,²⁵ and the State of Louisiana was admitted as a slave state in 1812, under Madison.

Following the War of 1812, the Slave Power land grab became an avalanche. Mississippi and Alabama, which were formed on land partially seized from Spain, were admitted as slave states in 1817 and 1819; Arkansas constituted as a slave Territory in 1819;²⁶ Missouri was admitted as a slave state in 1821; and in 1822, Florida was organized as a slave territory. In a mere ten years, from 1812 to 1822—under the Virginians Madison and Monroe—341,000 square miles of new territory had been brought under the control of the Slave Power.

This was the intent all along. To crush the republic of Hamilton and his allies and replace it with a Slavocracy—this was the goal of Jefferson, Madison and Monroe from no later than 1789 and probably earlier. In 1800, almost half the slaves in the United States were in Virginia. Another 35 percent were in Maryland and the Carolinas. That is the actual Jeffersonian "republican" movement.

Missouri and Afterwards

In 1819 the first move was made to spread the electoral power of the Slavocracy northward up the Mississippi River. Henry Clay supported it. Thomas Jefferson supported it. President Monroe stated publicly that he would veto any bill which admitted Missouri as a "free" state. After 18 years in power, the South was prepared

24. Morris served in the U.S. Senate from 1800 to 1803. In 1801 he attempted to ban the importation of slaves into the Mississippi Territory, and in 1803 he authored a bill to prohibit the creation of any new Slave states in the new Louisiana Territory. He was defeated in both efforts.

25. Prior to 1803 there were a sizable number of free blacks and Creoles in New Orleans. After the United States took control, efforts were made to re-enslave these individuals. In 1811 the largest slave revolt in U.S. History, the Louisiana German Coast Uprising, was brutally suppressed, and slavery was ruthlessly enforced.

26. There was fierce opposition to approving the pro-slavery territorial constitution of Arkansas, and Congress deadlocked in their vote. Henry Clay personally fought for the pro-slavery territorial constitution (the first ever allowed in the Louisiana Territory) and cast the tie-breaking vote to allow slavery in Arkansas.

to make its move.

Eventually, as most Americans know, Henry Clay's Missouri Compromise brought in Missouri as a slave state, and supposedly secured peace between the North and South for the next 30 years. But remnants of Washington's New Yorkers, now fewer in numbers and politically weakened, saw things differently. John Jay, the last still-living member of Washington's inner circle, came out of retirement and denounced Clay's plan as a plot to spread slavery, as did Elias Boudinot, Hamilton's former partner in the Society for Useful Manufactures. In the Congress, a fierce fight was launched in both houses to block the admission of Missouri as a slave state. This was led by two New Yorkers. In the Senate, Hamilton's friend Rufus King (still a Federalist), the last signer of the U.S. Constitution still serving in the Senate, single-handedly took on the Slave Interest, and he was joined, in the House of Representatives, by New Yorker and DeWitt Clinton protégé James Tallmadge (a Democrat-Republican). Tallmadge almost succeeded. His Tallmadge Amendment of 1819, which would have abolished slavery in Missouri, passed the House of Representatives on February 16, 1819, despite Henry Clay's opposition, but was then defeated in the Senate.

In the Senate, Rufus King delivered two speeches strongly opposing Missouri's admission as a slave state. These speeches infuriated Jefferson, Madison and Monroe. (Monroe had hated King for years.) John Quincy Adams states in his Diary that the Slaveholders in the Senate who listened to King, "gnawed their lips and clenched their fists in anger." King's two speeches paraphrased,—almost directly quoted,—Gouverneur Morris's anti-slavery speeches from the Constitutional Convention, particularly his attacks on the Three-Fifths clause. Later, in his 1860 Cooper Union address, Abraham Lincoln would name King twice, for his authorship of the anti-slavery Article VI of the Northwest Ordinance, and for his opposition to the Missouri Compromise, as an example of a founding father who opposed the spread of slavery into the territories.



Rufus King, in an 1820 portrait by Gilbert Stuart

Many people who recognized the evil of Missouri's admission as a slave state, individuals who should have spoken out, did nothing. Mathew Carey was silent. Carey's ally, the anti-slavery Hezekiah Niles, wrote to Carey saying, "I am rather discouraged, but frightened not. The Southern influence rules, and that is hostile to free white labor. It is great in its means, indefatigable in its exertions and united. It must be put down, or in my honest opinion, the country will literally be beggared,"—but publicly Niles endorsed the Compromise and uttered not one word of criticism of Monroe or Clay.

Perhaps the most conflicted individual was John Quincy Adams, who wrote admiringly of Rufus King's stand in the United States Senate; and when Congress passed the Missouri Enabling Act, Adams wrote, "Take it for granted that the present is a mere preamble—a title page to a great, tragic volume,"—yet Adams would not break with Monroe and the Virginia combine in 1820, and he publicly endorsed the Compromise and lobbied in Congress for its passage.²⁷

Contrary to most high-school history books, the issue of slavery did not fade into the background after the Missouri Compromise. Slaveowners and their "property" continued to pour up the Mississippi River and into the West. Arkansas was admitted as a slave state in 1836 and Florida in early 1845. In late 1845, Texas was admitted as a slave state, an action which both John Quincy Adams and Abraham Lincoln opposed as a massive expansion of the Slave Power. After the war with Mexico, the South connived to bring all of the newly acquired possessions into the Union as slave territory, including intensive nearly-successful efforts to bring in both California and Oregon as slave states.

When, in 1849, David Wilmot, a Northern congress-

27. Adams' later heroic battle against the Slave Power in the House of Representatives is well known, so there is no need to discuss it here. Clearly, by the 1830s, Adams recognized the enemy and was determined to stand against it.

man, proposed an amendment preventing the extension of slavery into any of the territory gained from Mexico,²⁸ the aging Henry Clay (now with the support of Stephen Douglas) acted for the Slave Power once again, this time with the Compromise of 1850, which allowed the expansion of slavery into the entire southwest (Arizona, New Mexico and Utah), legalized the interstate slave trade, and imposed a brutal fugitive slave law.

Then came 1854, and victory for the Slave Power was within reach. Stephen Douglas' Kansas-Nebraska Act, with its provisions for "popular sovereignty," effectively legalized the introduction of slavery into all the territory west of the Mississippi River, as Jefferson and Madison had intended in 1803. With this act, the Whig Party, after a mere 20 years of appeasement to the Slave Power, vanished. Three years later, the Dred Scott Decision *de facto* opened up the entire nation, including the Northeast, to slavery.

There are many, past and present, who defend the compromises of 1820 and 1850, proclaiming that they were the only way to prevent a break-up of the Union. As we now know, despite the "compromises" the Union did break up, and when that came in 1861 it was terrible. What almost everyone fails to recognize, is that the South never wanted to "be left alone;" that it was never the case that as long as no one interfered with their "peculiar institution" of human bondage, they would peacefully co-exist with the North. From the beginning, it was the design of the Virginia Slave Power to take over and dominate the entire nation, and over a span of 70 years their efforts were unceasing and relentless.

28. This Amendment, known today is the Wilmot Proviso, was modeled on Rufus King's Northwest Ordinance. Like the Tallmadge Amendment from 30 years earlier, it passed the House of Representatives and stood a good chance of enactment before Henry Clay intervened to kill it.

FIGURE 1:
The Mississippi/Missouri River System



Part V The Erie Canal & DeWitt Clinton

First, let us discuss the Erie Canal from the standpoint of the war between Hamilton's New Yorkers and the Slave Power. Then we will look at a little of its history and other implications.

Look at two maps. First, a map of the Mississippi-Arkansas-Ohio-Missouri River system (**Figure 1**). From New Orleans the Mississippi River stretches up through Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and into Minnesota. Of its three main tributaries, the Arkansas River reaches out to Kansas, Oklahoma and Colorado; the Missouri River flows north to Nebraska, South Dakota and Montana; and the great Ohio River extends eastward into Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and western New York State. It is a river basin that covers 50 percent of the total land mass of the continental United States.

After 1803 it became the intention of the Virginia Slave Power to transform New Orleans into the largest