

The westward expansion of the United States made it highly desirable to have American ports on the Gulf of Mexico; consequently, the acquisition of West Florida as well as of New Orleans was one of the aims of the negotiations which resulted in the purchase of Louisiana in 1803. After the cession of Louisiana to the United States, the people of West Florida feared that the province would be seized by Napoleon. They, therefore, through a convention at Buhler's Plains (July 17, 1810), formulated plans for a more effective government. When it was found that the Spanish Governor did not accept these plans in good faith, another convention was held on September 26th which declared West Florida to be an independent state, organized a government and petitioned for admission to the Union. On October 27th, President James Madison, acting on a theory of Robert R. Livingston that West Florida was ceded by Spain to France in 1800 along with Louisiana and was therefore included by France in the sale of Louisiana to the United States in 1803, declared West Florida to be under the jurisdiction of the United States.

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