

Topic 2: Land -- Land Policy and the Territorial Expansion of the US

2.1 See the web page for key basic facts on US Territorial Expansion and Settlement. Be familiar these data.

2.2 Land Policy

The federal government owned something 1/2 or more of the country's land in the first half of the 19th C. What would it do with those lands?

Considering the opposing goals of Hamilton/Jefferson, what are the implications for land policy?

There are three inter-related issues to think about: **revenue**, **speed** of settlement, and **type** of settlement.

2.2.1 What would be the Hamiltonian and Jeffersonian perspectives on those three issues?

2.2.2 Refer to the web handout on land policies to evaluate the following TTQ:

t/f/o -- explain: "from the 1780s to 1860s, there was steady drift from Hamilton to Jefferson in land policy."

Note that whatever your view of the policies, the results were largely Jeffersonian -- westward expansion of family-based farming in the North; westward expansion of both family-based farming and plantation-slavery in the South.

As it turned out, the Federal Government acted as the wholesaler of US lands, with the private sector retailing the lands (private sectors being wealthy individuals in companies or as individuals).

Fun fact: The value of land given away by the Federal Government in the 19th C was about equal to all its other spending (so including the value of land give-aways would double the size of the federal budget in the 19th C).

DETAILS: land was an important part of the federal government's "budget," with large amounts given away to state governments and private companies (and also war veterans). Land for canal projects (state & private), land for railroad projects (private companies), and land for schools (land grant colleges, like MSU?)

2.3 Economic Effects

DISCUSSION: How did the expansion of the US land mass affect the economy?

-- Share your ideas on the 310 Piazza ...