

**ALEXANDER I 1801-1825:** At the very beginning of the 1800's Alexander I came into power. Here is a short overview of his ruling period (wikipedia):

*Alexander I;* 23 December [O.S. 12 December] 1777 – 1 December [O.S. 19 November] 1825) reigned as Emperor of Russia from 23 March 1801 to 1 December 1825. He was the first Russian King of Poland, reigning from 1815 to 1825, as well as the first Russian Grand Duke of Finland.

He was born in Saint Petersburg to Grand Duke Paul Petrovich, later Emperor Paul I, and succeeded to the throne after his father was murdered. He ruled Russia during the chaotic period of the Napoleonic Wars. As prince and emperor, Alexander often used liberal rhetoric, but continued Russia's absolutist policies in practice. In the first years of his reign, he initiated some minor social reforms and (in 1803–04) major, liberal educational reforms. He promised constitutional reforms and a desperately needed reform of serfdom in Russia but made no concrete proposals and nothing happened. In the second half of his reign he was increasingly arbitrary, reactionary and fearful of plots against him; he ended many earlier reforms. He purged schools of foreign teachers, as education became more religiously oriented as well as politically conservative.

In foreign policy, he changed Russia's position relative to France four times between 1804 and 1812 among neutrality, opposition, and alliance. In 1805 he joined Britain in the War of the Third Coalition against Napoleon, but after the massive defeat at the Battle of Austerlitz he switched and formed an alliance with Napoleon by the Treaty of Tilsit (1807) and joined Napoleon's Continental System. He fought a small-scale naval war against Britain between 1807 and 1812. He and Napoleon could never agree, especially about Poland, and the alliance collapsed by 1810. The tsar's greatest triumph came in 1812 as Napoleon's invasion of Russia proved a total disaster for the French. As part of the winning coalition against Napoleon he gained some spoils in Finland and Poland. He formed the Holy Alliance to suppress revolutionary movements in Europe that he saw as immoral threats to legitimate Christian monarchs. He helped Austria's Klemens von Metternich in suppressing all national and liberal movements.

His reign also saw the conquering and forced cession of what is now Georgia, Dagestan, and much of Azerbaijan from Persia into the Russian Empire, following the Russo-Persian War (1804–1813) and the out coming Treaty of Gulistan.

Alexander died in December 1825, but soon rumors circulated that he had not died but had become a hermit or a monk...

Alexander I died without any surviving children and after a period of great confusion that included the failed Decembrist revolt of liberal army officers, he was succeeded by his younger brother, Nicholas I.