

Manifest Destiny and the Growing Nation

How justifiable was U.S. expansion in the 1800s?

Introduction

More than 150 years ago, the phrase *manifest destiny* inspired great hopes and dreams among many Americans. It led to a war with Mexico, and it changed the map of the United States.

Manifest destiny means “obvious fate.” John O’Sullivan, a New York newspaper editor, first used the phrase in 1845 when he wrote that it was the United States’ “manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent.” Looking at the land beyond the Rocky Mountains, he argued that Americans had a **divine** right to settle this area and make it their own.

The fact that Great Britain claimed part of this land—a huge area known as Oregon—made no difference to O’Sullivan. After all, the United States had stood up to Great Britain in the War of 1812.

O’Sullivan was also unimpressed by Mexico’s claims to much of the West. Like many Americans of the time, he believed that the United States had a duty to extend the blessings of democracy to new lands and peoples. It was God’s plan, he believed, for Americans to expand their “great experiment of liberty.”

When Americans began their “great experiment” in 1776, the idea that the United States might one day spread across the continent seemed like a dream. By 1848, however, the dream was a reality. In this lesson, you will learn how the United States tripled its size in a little more than a single lifetime.

Manifest destiny took many forms, with the United States expanding through treaties, settlement, and war. As you read, think about how each new area was acquired and whether the decisions that led to U.S. expansion across North America were **justifiable**.

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Social Studies Vocabulary

annex

diplomacy

manifest destiny

Mexican-American War

territory

Texas War for Independence

1. The Louisiana Territory

The nation's first opportunity for expansion during the early 1800s involved the vast **territory** to the west of the Mississippi River, then known as Louisiana. The United States wanted possession of the port city of New Orleans, near the mouth of the Mississippi River. By 1800, thousands of farmers were settling land to the west of the Appalachian Mountains. To get their crops to market, they floated them down the Mississippi to New Orleans, and from there, the crops were shipped to Europe or to cities on the East Coast.

The farmers depended on being able to move their crops freely along the Mississippi. “The Mississippi,” wrote James Madison, “is to them everything. It is the Hudson, the Delaware, the Potomac, and all the navigable rivers of the Atlantic States formed into one stream.”

Louisiana Across the Mississippi River lay the unexplored territory of Louisiana. This immense region stretched from Canada in the north to Texas in the south, and from the Mississippi, it reached west all the way to the Rocky Mountains. First claimed by France, it was given to Spain after the French and Indian War, but in 1800, the French ruler Napoleon Bonaparte convinced Spain to return Louisiana to France.

Napoleon had plans for Louisiana and hoped to settle the territory with thousands of French farmers, who would then raise food for the slaves who worked on France's sugar plantations in the Caribbean. However, Napoleon's plans alarmed frontier farmers. New Orleans was part of Louisiana, and if Napoleon closed the port to American goods, farmers would have no way to get their crops to market.

“A Noble Bargain” President Thomas Jefferson understood the concerns of American farmers. In 1803, he sent James Monroe to France with an offer to buy New Orleans for \$7.5 million, but by the time Monroe reached France, Napoleon had changed his plans.

A few years earlier, a slave named Toussaint L'Ouverture (too-SAN loo-ver-TEER) had led a slave revolt in the French Caribbean colony known today as Haiti. The former slaves defeated the French troops who tried to take back the colony, and as a result, Napoleon no longer needed Louisiana.

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In addition, France and Great Britain were on the brink of war. Napoleon knew that he might lose Louisiana to the British, so rather than lose Louisiana, it made sense to sell it to the United States.

Napoleon's offer to sell all of Louisiana stunned James Monroe. Instead of a city, suddenly the United States had the opportunity to buy an area as big as itself.

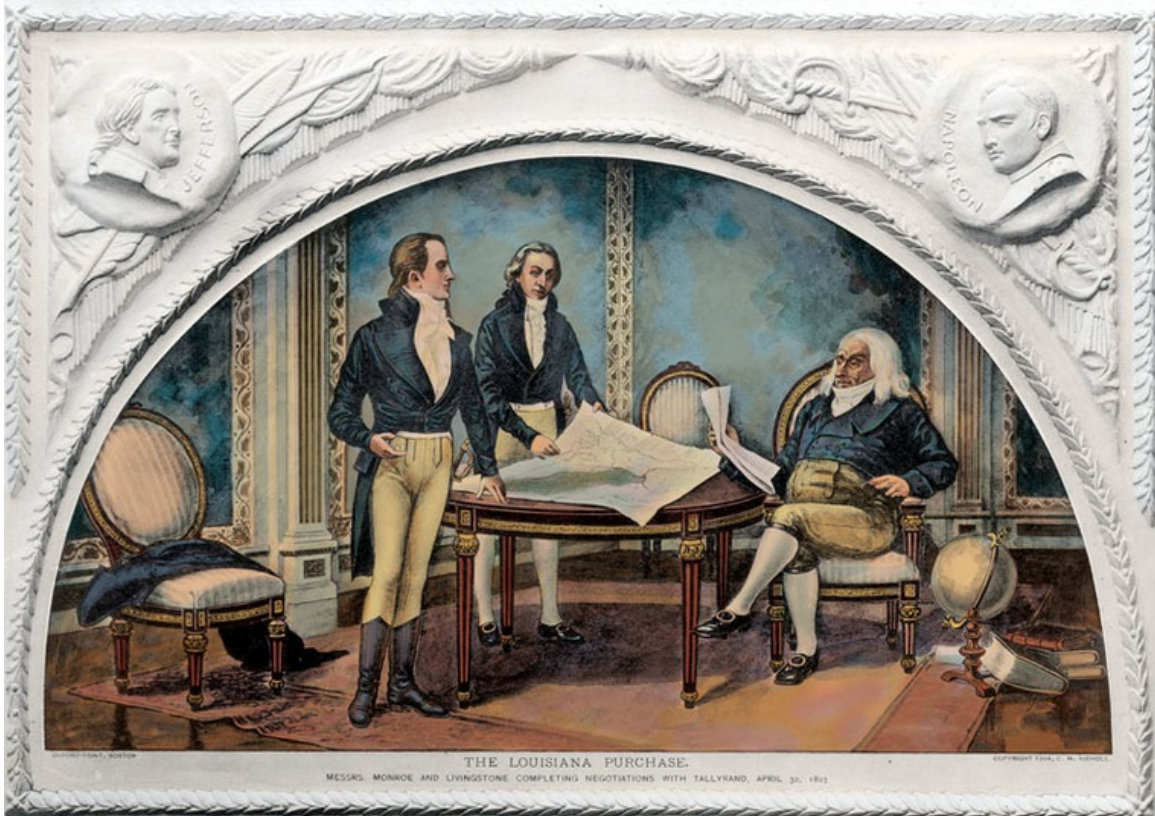
It did not take long for Monroe to agree, and on April 30, 1803, he signed a treaty giving Louisiana to the United States in exchange for \$15 million. Said the French foreign minister, "You have made a noble bargain for yourselves, and I suppose you will make the most of it."

The Purchase Debate To most Americans, the Louisiana Purchase looked like the greatest land deal in history. The new territory would double the country's size at a bargain price of just 2 to 3 cents an acre.

Still, not everyone approved. Some people worried that such a large country would be impossible to govern. Politicians in the East fretted that they would lose power and warned that, sooner or later, Louisiana would be carved into enough new states to outvote the eastern states in Congress. Others objected to the \$15 million price tag, with one Boston critic writing, "We are to give money of which we have too little for land of which we already have too much."

Opponents also accused Jefferson of "tearing the Constitution to tatters." They said that the Constitution made no provision for purchasing foreign territory. Jefferson was troubled by the argument that the Louisiana Purchase was unconstitutional, but he still believed it was better to stretch the limits of the Constitution than to lose a historic opportunity.

Late in 1803, the Senate voted to ratify the Louisiana Purchase treaty. Frontier farmers welcomed the news. "You have secured to us the free navigation of the Mississippi," a grateful westerner wrote Jefferson. "You have procured an immense and fertile country: and all these great blessings are obtained with-out war and bloodshed." In 1804, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark led an expedition to explore the newly acquired territory.





2. Florida

Having acquired Louisiana through **diplomacy**, President Jefferson turned next to Florida. Spain had colonized Florida in the late 1500s. By the 1800s, Florida had a diverse population of Seminole Indians, Spanish colonists, English traders, and runaway slaves. In 1804, Jefferson sent two diplomats to Spain to buy Florida, but Spain's answer was “no deal.”

Many white Americans in the Southeast wanted the United States to take over Florida. Slave owners in Georgia were angry because slaves sometimes ran away to Florida, where some of them were welcomed by Seminole Indians. In addition, white landowners in Georgia were upset by Seminole raids on their lands. As Spain's control of Florida weakened over the next few years, its government could do nothing to stop the raids on farms in Georgia by Seminoles and ex-slaves.

Andrew Jackson Invades Florida In 1818, President James Monroe

sent Andrew Jackson—the hero of the Battle of New Orleans—to Georgia with orders to end the raids. Jackson was told that he could chase raiding Seminoles into Florida, but he did not have the authority to invade the Spanish colony.

Despite his orders, Jackson marched into Florida with a force of 1,700 troops. Over the next few weeks, he captured Spanish military posts and arrested, tried, and executed two British subjects for stirring up Indian attacks. He also replaced the Spanish governor with an American. Spain demanded that Jackson be called back to Washington and punished for his illegal invasion.

“Govern or Get Out” Fearing war, President Monroe asked his cabinet for advice. All but one of his cabinet members advised him to remove Jackson and apologize to Spain. The exception was Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, who convinced Monroe to send a blunt message to Spain: govern Florida properly or get out.

Equally fearful of war, Spain decided to get out. In 1819, the Spanish government agreed to yield Florida to the United States. In exchange, the United States agreed to pay off \$5 million in settlers' claims against Spain and to honor Spain's longtime claim to Texas.

Not all Americans were happy about leaving Spain in charge of Texas, with one newspaper declaring Texas was “worth ten Floridas.” Even so, the Senate ratified the Florida treaty two days after it was signed.



3. Texas

There was a reason many Americans felt that Texas was so valuable. Much of this region was well suited for growing cotton, the South's most valuable cash crop. Additionally, many southerners hoped that one day Texas would become part of the United States.

Americans Come to Texas The story of Texas begins with Moses Austin, a banker and business owner who dreamed of starting a U.S. colony in Spanish Texas. In 1821, Spanish officials granted Austin a huge piece of land. After Moses Austin died that same year, his son Stephen took over his father's dream.

Stephen F. Austin arrived in Texas just as Mexico declared its independence from Spain and took control of Texas. Mexican officials agreed to let Austin start his colony under certain conditions, including that he select only moral and hardworking settlers. The settlers had to promise to become Mexican citizens and to join the Catholic Church.

Austin agreed to Mexico's terms. By 1827, he had attracted 297 families—soon known as the “Old Three Hundred”—to Texas.

Rising Tensions The success of Austin's colony started a rush of settlers to Texas. By 1830, there were about 25,000 Americans in Texas, compared to 4,000 Tejanos (tay-HA-nos), or Texans of Mexican descent, but tensions between the two groups soon arose.

The Americans had several complaints. They were used to governing themselves, and they resented taking orders from Mexican officials. They were unhappy that all official documents had to be in Spanish, a language most of them were unwilling to learn. In addition, many were slaveholders who were upset when Mexico outlawed slavery in 1829.

The Tejanos had their own complaints. They were unhappy that many American settlers had come to Texas without Mexico's permission. Worse, most of these new immigrants showed little respect for Mexican culture and had no intention of becoming citizens. The Mexican government responded by closing Texas to further U.S. immigration and by sending troops to Texas to enforce the immigration laws.

The Texans Rebel Americans in Texas resented these actions. A group led by a lawyer named William Travis began calling for revolution. Another group led by Stephen F. Austin asked the Mexican government to reopen Texas to immigration and to make it a separate Mexican state so that Texans could run their own affairs.

In 1833, Austin traveled to Mexico and presented the Texans' demands to the new head of the Mexican government, General Antonio López de Santa Anna. The general was a power-hungry **dictator** who once boasted, “If I were God, I would wish to be more.” Rather than bargain with Austin, Santa Anna had him arrested and jailed for promoting rebellion.

Soon after Austin was released in 1835, Texans rose up in revolt. Determined to crush the rebels, Santa Anna marched north with some 6,000 troops.

The Alamo In late February 1836, a large part of Santa Anna's army reached San Antonio, Texas. About 180 Texan volunteers, including eight Tejanos, defended the town. The Texans had taken over an old

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mission known as the Alamo. Among them was Davy Crockett, the famous frontiersman and former congressman from Tennessee. Sharing command with William Travis was James Bowie, a well-known Texas “freedom fighter.”

The Alamo's defenders watched as General Santa Anna raised a black flag that meant “expect no mercy.” When the general demanded that the Texans surrender, Travis answered with a cannon shot.

Slowly, Santa Anna's troops began to surround the Alamo. The Texans were vastly outnumbered, but only one man fled.

Meanwhile, Travis sent messengers to other towns in Texas to plead for reinforcements, and he vowed not to abandon the Alamo, proclaiming, “Victory or death!” However, reinforcements never came.



For 12 days, the Mexicans pounded the Alamo with cannonballs, until the first light of dawn on March 6, when Santa Anna ordered his troops to storm the fort. Desperately, the Texans tried to fight off the attackers with rifle fire.

For 90 minutes, the battle raged, and then it was all over. By day's end, every one of the Alamo's defenders was dead, and those who had survived the battle were executed on the spot by Santa Anna's order.

Santa Anna described the fight for the Alamo as “but a small affair.” However, his decision to kill every man at the Alamo filled Texans with rage.

Texas Wins Its Independence Sam Houston, the commander of the Texas revolutionary army, understood Texans' rage. However, as Santa Anna pushed on, Houston's only hope was to retreat eastward. By luring Santa Anna deeper into Texas, he hoped to make it more difficult for the general to supply his army and maintain its battle-readiness.

Although Houston's strategy was unpopular, it worked brilliantly. In April, Santa Anna caught up with Houston near the San Jacinto (san ha-SIN-to) River. Expecting the Texans to attack at dawn, the general kept his troops awake all night. When no attack came, the weary Mexicans relaxed, and Santa Anna went to his tent to take a nap.

Late that afternoon, Houston's troops staged a surprise attack. Yelling, “Remember the Alamo!” the Texans overran the Mexican camp, prompting Santa Anna to flee. However, he was captured the next day, and in exchange for his freedom, he ordered all his remaining troops out of Texas. The **Texas War for Independence** had been won, but Mexico did not fully accept the loss of its territory.

To Annex Texas or Not? Now independent, the Republic of Texas earned the nickname the Lone Star Republic because of the single star on its flag. But most Texans were Americans who wanted Texas to become part of the United States.

Despite their wishes, Texas remained independent for ten years, during which time people in the United States were divided over whether to **annex** Texas. Southerners were eager to add another slave state, whereas Northerners who opposed slavery wanted to keep Texas out. In addition, others feared that annexation would lead to war with Mexico.

The 1844 presidential campaign was influenced by the question of whether to expand U.S. territory. One candidate, Henry Clay, warned, “Annexation and war with Mexico are identical.” His opponent, James K. Polk, however, was a strong believer in **manifest destiny** and was eager to acquire Texas. After Polk was elected, Congress voted to annex Texas. In 1845, Texas was admitted as the 28th state.

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4. Oregon Country

Far to the northwest of Texas lay Oregon Country, an enormous, tree-covered wilderness that stretched from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. To the north, Oregon was bounded by Alaska, which belonged to Russia, and to the south, it was bordered by Spanish California and New Mexico.

In 1819, Oregon was claimed by four nations: Russia, Spain, Great Britain, and the United States. Spain was the first to drop out of the scramble when it gave up its claim to Oregon as part of the treaty to purchase Florida. Several years later, Russia also dropped out. By 1825, Russia agreed to limit its claim to the territory that lay north of the 54°40' parallel of latitude, the line that today marks the southern border of Alaska.

That left Great Britain and the United States. For the time being, the two nations agreed to a peaceful "joint occupation" of Oregon.

Discovering Oregon The United States' claim to Oregon was based on the Lewis and Clark expedition. Between 1804 and 1806, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark had led a small band of explorers to the Oregon coast.

Lewis thought that many more Americans would follow the path established by the expedition. "In the course of 10 or 12 Years," he predicted in 1806, "a tour across the Continent by this rout [route] will be undertaken with as little concern as a voyage across the Atlantic."

That was wishful thinking, as the route that Lewis and Clark had followed was far too rugged for ordinary travelers. There had to be a better way to cross the continent. In 1824, a young fur trapper named Jedediah Smith found that better way when he discovered a passage through the Rocky Mountains called South Pass.

Unlike the high, steep passes used by Lewis and Clark, South Pass was low and flat enough for wagons to use in crossing the Rockies. Now the way was open for settlers to seek their fortunes in Oregon.

Oregon Fever The first American settlers to travel through South

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Pass to Oregon were missionaries. These missionaries made few converts among Oregon's Indians, but their glowing reports of Oregon's fertile soil and towering forests soon attracted more settlers.

These early settlers wrote letters home describing Oregon as a "pioneer's paradise" and claiming that the weather was always sunny. Their letters also stated that disease was unknown, trees grew as thick as hairs on a dog's back, and farms were free for the taking. One man even joked that "pigs are running about under the great acorn trees, round and fat, and already cooked, with knives and forks sticking in them so you can cut off a slice whenever you are hungry."

Reports like these inspired other settlers who were looking for a new beginning. In 1843, about 1,000 pioneers headed for Oregon in covered wagons. The following year, nearly twice as many people made the long journey across the plains and mountains. "The Oregon Fever has broke out," reported one observer, "and is now raging."

All of Oregon or Half? Along with Texas, "Oregon fever" played a role in the 1844 presidential campaign. Polk won the election with such stirring slogans as "All of Oregon or none!" and "Fifty-four forty or fight!" Polk promised he would not rest until the United States had annexed all of Oregon Country.

However, Polk did not want Oregon enough to risk starting a war with Great Britain. Instead, he agreed to a compromise treaty that divided Oregon roughly in half at the 49th parallel, which now marks the western border between the United States and Canada.

The Senate debate over the Oregon treaty was fierce. Southern and eastern senators favored the treaty and saw no reason to go to war over "worse than useless territory on the coast of the Pacific." Western senators opposed the treaty and demanded all of Oregon. On June 18, 1846, the Senate ratified the compromise treaty.

Polk got neither "fifty-four forty" nor a fight. What he got was a diplomatic settlement that both the United States and Great Britain could accept without spilling a drop of blood.



5. The Mexican-American War

You might think that Texas and Oregon were sufficient new territory for any president, but not for Polk. This humorless, hardworking president

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had one great goal of expanding the United States as far as possible.

Polk's gaze fell next on the huge areas known as California and New Mexico. He was determined to have them both—by purchase if possible, by force if necessary.

These areas were first colonized by Spain but became Mexican territories when Mexico won its independence in 1821. Because both were thinly settled and long neglected by the Mexican government, Polk hoped that they might be for sale. He sent a representative to Mexico to try to buy the territories, but Mexican officials refused even to see Polk's representative.

War Breaks Out in Texas When Congress voted to annex Texas, relations between the United States and Mexico turned sour. Mexico considered the annexation of Texas an act of war, and to make matters worse, Texas and Mexico could not agree on a border. Texas claimed the Rio Grande as its border on the south and the west, whereas Mexico wanted the border to be the Nueces (new-AY-sis) River, about 150 miles northeast of the Rio Grande.

On April 25, 1846, Mexican soldiers fired on U.S. troops who were patrolling along the Rio Grande. Sixteen Americans were killed or wounded. This was just the excuse for war that Polk had been waiting for. Mexico, he charged, “has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon American soil.” Two days after Polk's speech, Congress declared war on Mexico, starting the **Mexican-American War**.

The Fall of New Mexico and California A few months later, General Stephen Kearny led the Army of the West out of Kansas with orders to occupy New Mexico and then continue west to California. Mexican opposition melted away in front of Kearny's army, and the Americans took control of New Mexico without firing a shot. “Gen'l Kearny,” a pleased Polk wrote in his diary, “has thus far performed his duty well.”

Meanwhile, a group of Americans launched a rebellion against Mexican rule in California. The explorer John C. Frémont heard about the uprising and gave his support to the Americans. The Americans arrested and jailed General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo (vuh-YAY-oh), the Mexican commander of northern California. Then they raised a crude flag

showing a grizzly bear sketched in blackberry juice and declared California the Bear Flag Republic.

When Kearny reached California, he joined forces with the rebels. Within weeks, all of California was under U.S. control.

The United States Invades Mexico The conquest of Mexico itself was far more difficult. U.S. troops under General Zachary Taylor battled their way south from Texas. Taylor was a no-nonsense general who was known fondly as “Old Rough and Ready” because of his backwoods clothes. After 6,000 U.S. troops took the Mexican city of Monterrey, their old enemy General Santa Anna stopped them by marching north to meet Taylor with an army of 20,000 Mexican troops.

In February 1847, the two forces met near a ranch called Buena Vista (BWEY-nuh VIS-tuh). After two days of hard fighting, Santa Anna reported that “both armies have been cut to pieces.” Rather than lose his remaining forces, Santa Anna retreated south, ending the war in northern Mexico.

A month later, U.S. forces led by General Winfield Scott landed at Veracruz (ver-uh-CROOZ) in southern Mexico. Because Scott was a stickler for discipline and loved fancy uniforms, he was given the nickname “Old Fuss and Feathers.” For the next six months, his troops fought their way to Mexico City, Mexico's capital.

Outside the capital, the Americans met fierce resistance at the castle of Chapultepec (chuh-PUHL-tuh-PEK). About 1,000 Mexican soldiers and 100 young military cadets fought bravely to defend the fortress. Six of the cadets chose to die fighting rather than surrender, and to this day, the boys who died that day are honored in Mexico as the *Niños Héroes* (NEEN-yos EHR-oh-ace), the boy heroes.

Despite such determined resistance, Scott's army captured Mexico City in September 1847. Watching from a distance, a Mexican officer muttered darkly, “God is a Yankee.”

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The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo In early 1848, Mexico and the United States signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (gwa-duh-LOO-pay hih-DAHL-go). Mexico agreed to give up Texas and a vast region known as the Mexican Cession. (A cession is something that is given up.) This area included the present-day states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico, as well as parts of Colorado and Wyoming.

Under this agreement, Mexico gave up half of all its territory, and in return, the United States agreed to pay Mexico \$15 million. It also promised to protect the 80,000 to 100,000 Mexicans living in Texas and the Mexican Cession. Most of these promises, however, were not kept.

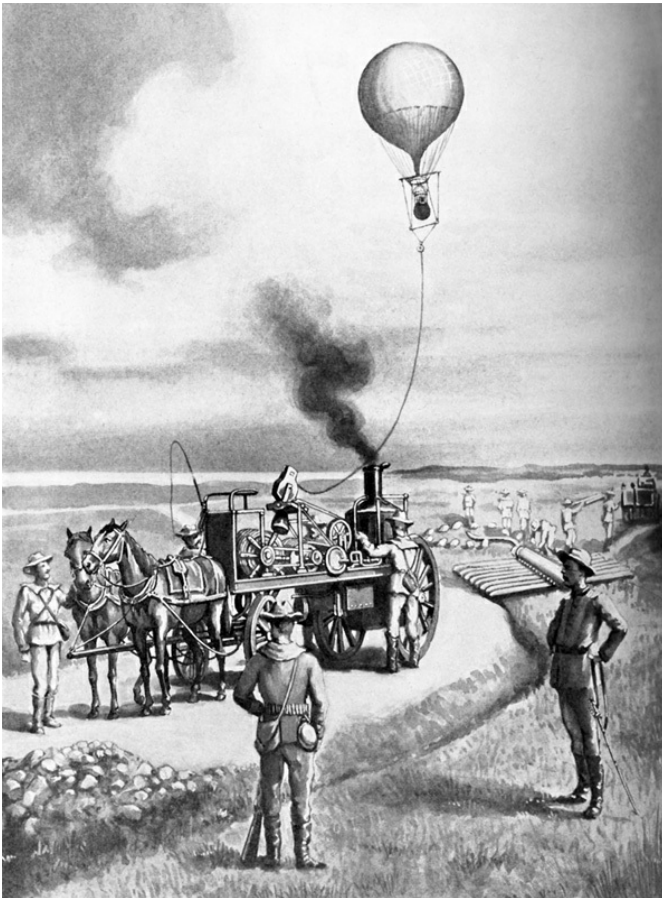
In Washington, a few senators spoke up to oppose the treaty. Some argued that the United States had no right to any Mexican territory other than Texas because the Mexican-American War had been unjust and the treaty was even more so. They said New Mexico and California together were “not worth a dollar” and should be returned to Mexico.

Other senators opposed the treaty because they wanted even more land and believed the Mexican Cession should include a large part of northern Mexico as well. To most senators, however, the Mexican

Cession was a manifest destiny dream come true. The Senate ratified the treaty by a vote of 38 to 14.

The Gadsden Purchase A few years later, the United States acquired still more land from Mexico. In 1853, James Gadsden arranged the purchase of a strip of land just south of the Mexican Cession for \$10 million. Railroad builders wanted this land because it was relatively flat and could serve as a good railroad route. The acquisition of this land, known as the Gadsden Purchase, created the present-day border of the southwestern United States with Mexico.

Most Americans were pleased with the new outlines of their country, but not everyone rejoiced in this expansion. Until the Mexican-American War, many people had believed that the United States was too good a nation to bully or invade its weaker neighbors. Now they knew that such behavior was the dark side of manifest destiny.



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Lesson Summary

In this lesson, you read about how Americans extended their nation's boundaries to the west and the south. The idea of manifest destiny fueled many of the events that led to expansion.

The Louisiana Purchase In 1803, the United States added the vast territory known as Louisiana, which doubled the nation's land area. This territory also gave the United States control of the Mississippi River and the port of New Orleans, ensuring farmers west of the Appalachians could get their crops to market.

Florida After Andrew Jackson marched into Florida and removed the Spanish governor, President Monroe gave Spain the option to govern the territory properly or get out. In 1819, to avoid going to war, Spain signed a treaty that gave Florida to the United States.

Texas In 1836, Americans in Texas rebelled against the Mexican government. After the Texans' devastation at the Alamo, the Texas revolutionary army defeated the Mexican army, leading to the creation of the Lone Star Republic. In 1845, Congress admitted Texas into the union, and in 1846, the Lone Star Republic was formally dissolved.

Oregon Country As routes westward were established, thousands of Americans settled in Oregon Country, and soon there was a drive to annex all of Oregon. In 1846, to avoid going to war, the United States signed a treaty with Great Britain and added half of Oregon Country.

War with Mexico In 1846, the United States went to war with Mexico in the Mexican- American War. In an 1848 treaty with Mexico, the United States acquired the present-day states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico, as well as parts of Colorado and Wyoming. In 1853, the Gadsden Purchase added land that completed the outline of the continental United States.



Investigating Primary Sources

What Inspired Americans to Move West?

By 1850, the United States stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Millions of Americans said goodbye to their homes and families to start a new life west of the Appalachian Mountains, in the nation's new territory. You will examine four primary sources about this movement and then

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write a claim describing what inspired Americans to move west during this historical period.

Moving west took bravery, determination, and a passion for adventure, and many Americans who took to the trails had all three. While others were fearful, they still gathered what courage they could to join family members who felt the call of the West.

On the westward trails, travelers encountered violent storms, punishing heat and insects, and American Indians who feared that their land was being invaded by strangers. Despite the hardships of the journey, by 1840 almost 40 percent of the nation's population lived west of the Appalachians.

Here is a painting created in 1861 by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze, called *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*, that portrays the powerful experience of the pioneers' westward movement. At the bottom of the picture are portraits of two men important to the pioneer spirit: Daniel Boone on the right and William Clark on the left. The body of water between them is the San Francisco Bay, which is located in California.

Describe where the people are coming from and where they are going. As you examine Leutze's artwork, describe what mood the artist conveys in the bottom of the main picture and how it compares with the mood at the top. What might be the artist's opinion about moving to the West? What do the images indicate about the actual journey west? Why might imagery like this have inspired Americans to make the difficult journey westward?

The third president, Thomas Jefferson, executed the Louisiana Purchase, which doubled the country's size, extending its borders to the Rocky Mountains. He could not wait to learn all about this new territory. Furthermore, he hoped the territory held a water route that connected the eastern United States to the Pacific Ocean.

Jefferson asked Meriwether Lewis, his former secretary and a former a military officer, to lead an expedition to the Pacific coast. Lewis chose a fellow Army officer, William Clark, to assist him, and they recruited more than 40 additional explorers. The expedition's discoveries changed the course of the nation. While the explorers found no water

route to the Pacific, they drew detailed maps of the land, interacted peacefully with the American Indians, and delivered valuable information to the scientific community.

Here are excerpts from a letter written on June 20, 1803, from President Jefferson to Lewis. The letter combines the aspirations of the new nation to spread across the continent with the spirit of discovery and exploration. Jefferson's dream for the expedition helped shape the philosophy of the westward movement for decades.

Jefferson's Instructions for Meriwether Lewis

The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river, & such principal stream of it as by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific ocean whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado or any other river may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent for the purposes of commerce.

. . . Your observations are to be taken with great pains & accuracy, to be entered distinctly & intelligibly for others, as well as yourself, to comprehend all the elements necessary, with the aid of the usual tables, to fix the latitude and longitude of the places at which they were taken . . .

. . . treat [the natives] in the most friendly & conciliatory manner which their own conduct will admit; allay all jealousies as to the object of your journey, satisfy them of its innocence, make them acquainted with the position, extent character, peaceable & commercial dispositions of the US. of our wish to be neighborly, friendly, & useful to them, & of our dispositions to a commercial intercourse with them; . . . If any of them should wish to have some of their young people brought up with us, & taught such arts as may be useful to them, we will receive, instruct & take care of them.

—Thomas Jefferson, 1803

Read the excerpts from Jefferson's letter, and answer the following questions. What three goals are mentioned in these excerpts? Why is Jefferson interested in seeking a water route west? How does Jefferson wish Lewis and Clark to treat the American Indians? Why might this document have become important to later explorers of the West?

Although Jefferson's vision encouraged many to move to the West, several other factors inspired Americans to set out on the westward trails. Some wanted to teach their religion to non-Christians in the new territory, believing that this was their God-given mission.

In 1885, Josiah Strong, a clergyman and writer, wrote a book *Our*

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Country: Its Future and Its Present Crisis. He encouraged people to travel west for several reasons. Here are excerpts from two chapters of the book, which inspired many Americans to move west.

Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis

Chapter II

... The world is to be Christianized and civilized. There are about 1,000,000,000 of the world's inhabitants who do not enjoy a Christian civilization. Two hundred millions of these are to be lifted out of savagery. Much has been accomplished in this direction during the past seventy-five years, but much more will be done during the next fifty. . . A thousand civilized men thrive where a hundred savages starved. . . And with the vast continents added to our market, with our natural advantages fully realized, what is to prevent the United States from becoming the mighty workshop of the world, and our people "the hand of mankind"?

Chapter III

The unrivaled resources of the West together with the unequalled enterprise of her citizens are a sure prophesy of superior wealth. Already have some of these young states outstripped older sisters at the East. . . The West is destined to surpass in agriculture, stock-raising, mining, and eventually, in manufacturing. . .

. . . the West is to dominate the East. With more than twice the room and resources of the East, the West will have probably twice the population and wealth of the East, together with the superior power and influences which, under popular government accompany them. . . The West will direct the policy of the Government, and by virtue of her preponderating population and influence will determine our national character, and therefore, destiny. . . Since prehistoric times populations have moved westward. . . The world's scepter passed from Persia to Greece, from Greece to Italy, from Italy to Great Britain, and from Great Britain the scepter is to-day departing. . . to our mighty West, there to remain. . .

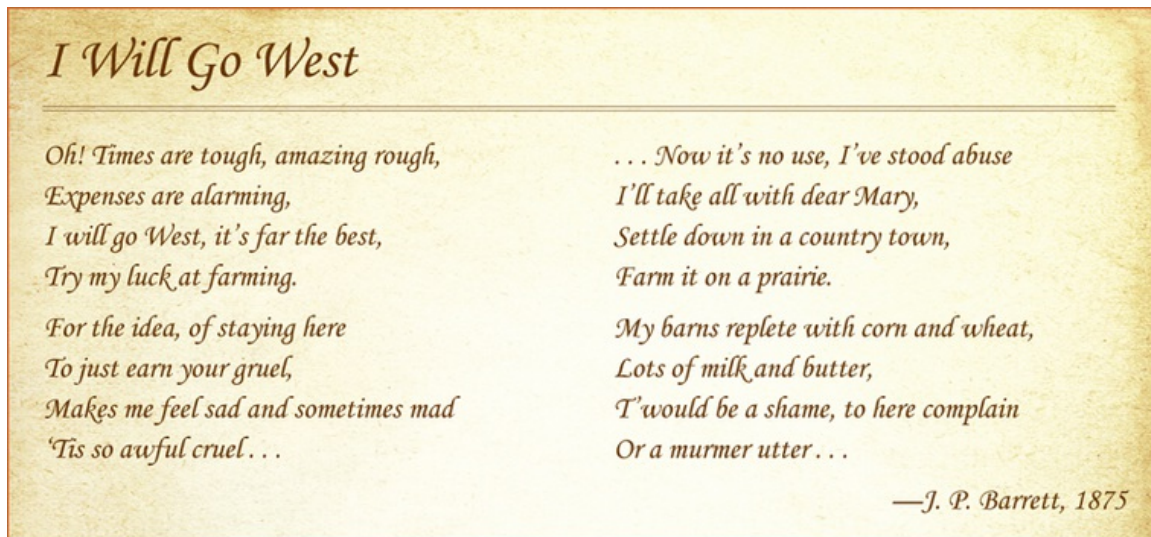
—Josiah Strong, 1885

What reasons does Strong give to persuade people to move west? Why does Strong believe moving west is a responsibility for Christians? What does Strong say people will gain by moving west? How might someone with an opposing viewpoint argue with Strong?

According to Josiah Strong and countless others, the West promised many things to many people. One of the most enticing opportunities came through the Homestead Act of 1862, which offered a chance for newcomers to become landowners in the West. The Act, signed by President Abraham Lincoln, offered 160 acres to any loyal U.S. citizen who stayed on the land for five years, built a 12-by-14-foot dwelling there, and developed it into farmland. What a way to turn around a family's life! By 1934, the U.S. government had processed over 1.6 million homestead applications and more than 270 million acres

became the property of individuals.

Cities and towns throughout the East were abuzz with talk about moving west. Horace Greeley, a spirited newspaper editor in New York, is famous for encouraging words such as these: "If any young man is about to commence in the world, with little in his circumstances to prepossess him in favor of one section above another, we say to him publicly and privately, Go to the West; there your capacities are sure to be appreciated and your industry and energy rewarded."



Other persuasive words were belted out in songs such as this one entitled "I Will Go West" written by J. P. Barrett in 1875. Read the excerpts from the song, and summarize how Jones describes living in the East. What is the image he creates about the West? How might this song have encouraged people to travel to the West?

Consider the four primary sources. According to their creators, what inspired millions of Americans to travel to the West? As you write your argument, tell whether the sources give an objective viewpoint about life in the West, or describe the limitations of each source's objectivity.



Westward on the Santa Fe Trail

“Calling all adventurers!” the signs might have said. “It’s 1821, and the Santa Fe Trail is open for business.” And business it was. Traders loaded their wagons in Missouri and crossed plains, deserts, and mountains to sell their goods in Mexico. The action lasted about 60 years before the railroads came. But in its brief history, the Santa Fe Trail became the stuff of legend.

On June 11, 1846, newlywed Susan Shelby Magoffin left Independence, Missouri. She was headed for Santa Fe, then part of Mexico. Just 18 years old, Susan Magoffin was very excited about her upcoming honeymoon adventure. “My journal tells a story tonight different from what it has ever done before. The curtain rises now with a new scene,” she wrote as she and her husband set out on their journey, part of a wagon train on the Santa Fe Trail.

Susan's husband, Samuel, was 27 years older than his bride. He had been traveling and trading on the Santa Fe Trail for nearly 20 years. The couple's honeymoon trip was also a business trip: Samuel was overseeing 14 wagonloads of American goods. He planned to sell his cargo in Mexico, at the towns of Santa Fe and Chihuahua.

Over the years, Samuel Magoffin had made a fortune on the Santa Fe Trail. Like other businessmen of his day, he had seen possibility in trading with Mexico. In search of profit, these entrepreneurs had charted a course from the western edges of what was then the United States to the lands beyond. And when Santa Fe became part of the United States in 1848, after the Mexican War, the booming business did not stop.

The trips were risky. Dust storms, illness, possible attacks by hostile Indians, and lack of water all threatened their efforts. But for nearly 60 years, men like Samuel Magoffin took those risks. In the process, they helped expand the United States' southwestern border. Fortunately for historians, people like Susan Magoffin kept detailed journals of their experiences. Their accounts bring to life a time of adventure on the American frontier.



The Path West

In the 1800s, several trails left the United States heading west. Settlers, farmers, ranchers, and miners took the Oregon Trail toward new lives in the Pacific Northwest. Families traveled along what became known as the Mormon Trail, looking for religious freedom in the desert. And across the California Trail, prospectors and others marched toward what they hoped would be great wealth.

The Santa Fe Trail was different. Its main purpose was trade. Political events made that trade possible. In 1821, Mexico won its independence from Spain. Spain had prohibited trade with the United States, but Mexico welcomed it. With the door open, American businessmen like Samuel Magoffin and his brother James headed west.

The Santa Fe Trail began in Missouri and spanned 900 miles across North America. Traders braved bad weather, hostile Indians, dangerous animals, and lack of water. They were in search of profits, and they found them. In 1822, trade on the trail totaled \$15,000. By 1860, it had reached \$3.5 million. When the railroad ended trade on the Santa Fe Trail in 1880, as many as 6,000 wagons were using the trail every year.

If money was important to Santa Fe traders, so was adventure. Many traders and other travelers loved the excitement of life on the trail. Some simply loved the beautiful outdoors. Charles Fletcher Lummis, archaeologist of the Southwest, described the area vividly: "Its very air is different from that of the eastern half [of the country]. . . . It is many times lighter and many times clearer, and incomparably drier. . . . Delicious to breathe, a real tonic to the lungs, a stimulant to the skin. . . ."

On the trail, Susan Magoffin appreciated being free from the strict rules of society. In her diary, she wrote,

There is such independence, so much free uncontaminated air, which [fills] the mind, the feelings, nay every thought, with purity. I breathe free without that oppression and uneasiness felt in the gossiping groups of a settled home.

Joy and Hardship on the Trail

When Samuel Magoffin set off to Santa Fe with his young wife, he was determined that she travel in comfort. So, he hired servants and outfitted carriages to make his first home with Susan as nice as possible. The Magoffins slept in a tent, but not in sleeping bags on the ground. No, they slept in a bed that the servants put up every night. There were sheets on the mattress, plus blankets, pillows, and mosquito netting. Tables, cabinets, and carpets added to the luxury.

Their meals were often equally elegant. Susan and Samuel brought chickens with them so that they could have fresh eggs. They also ate ham, fresh buffalo, and sometimes even one of the chickens. They might top off a good meal with gooseberry tarts. "It is the life of a wandering princess, mine," Susan wrote in her journal.

During the days, Susan wrote, sewed, studied Spanish, and knit. When she wanted flowers but didn't want to climb out of her carriage, "servants riding on mules pick them for me." Her devoted greyhound, Ring, kept her company. Ring also helped her feel protected by barking at the wolves and coyotes. "I felt safe with this trusty soldier near me," she wrote.

But life on the trail wasn't all luxury, even for wealthy travelers like Susan and Samuel Magoffin. Difficulties abounded. Dust storms and prairie fires plagued travelers. Rattlesnakes frightened them. And then, there were the mosquitoes. "Millions upon millions are swarming upon me," Susan wrote, "and their knocking against the carriage reminded me of a hard rain."

Fear of hostile Indians also troubled the travelers. At Pawnee Rock, Susan stopped to carve her name on the sandstone, as others had done. Samuel and Susan's servant, Jane, kept watch because the rock was the site of Pawnee attacks. From the rock, the hostile Indians could "dash down upon the Santa Fe traders like hawks, to carry off their plunder and their scalps," wrote one traveler.

Susan didn't encounter any Indians at Pawnee Rock, but she did have a terrible accident as the caravan moved on. The wagon she was riding in went over the edge of a river bank. She described what happened.

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*. . . we were whirled completely over with a perfect crash.
One to see the wreck of that carriage now with the top and
sides entirely
broken to pieces, could never believe that people had come
out
of it alive. But strange, wonderful to say, we are almost
entirely unhurt!*

That wasn't quite true. Susan was knocked unconscious during the crash. Pregnant at the time, she lost the baby due to the accident.

It took 11 weeks for the Magoffins to reach Santa Fe, partly because travel was difficult and partly because Susan's ill health required them to spend nearly two weeks at Bent's Fort, an important stopping point along the trail. When they arrived in Santa Fe, they met up with Samuel's brother James and joined in the high society life of the village, such as it was. Susan attended a nearby church, practiced her Spanish, and spent time with the local people.

Over the next 10 years, Susan and Samuel Magoffin had three children. Eventually, the family settled in St. Louis, where Susan Magoffin died in 1855. She was only 29 years old.

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- "The Rivers of Stone" in *Some Strange Corners of Our Country: The Wonderland of the Southwest* by Charles Fletcher Lummis, 1892, p. 183.

Entire Selection: <http://books.google.com/books?id=vaINIIY-RdUC&pg=PA183&lpg=PA183&dq>

Accessed March, 2017

- *Down the Santa Fé Trail and Into Mexico: The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin 1846-1847*, edited by Stella M. Drumm, pp. 10, 41.

Entire Selection:
<http://cdigital.dgb.uanl.mx/la/1020000885/1020000885.PDF>

Accessed March, 2017

The Power of Land: Californios and the California Constitution of 1849

Once the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848, war between the United States and Mexico ended. California was now part of the United States. A convention was held at Monterey in 1849. California needed to form a government and write a constitution so this new territory could become a state.

Forty-eight delegates, or representatives, attended the Convention. Eight delegates were native-born Californios. Californios were wealthy, Spanish-speaking people who had lived in California when it was under Spanish or Mexican rule. Spain had given people land grants in the late 1700s to encourage colonization in the area. Mexico also promoted settlement by giving out more than 500 of its own land grants after it gained independence from Spain in 1821. Over time, Californios and their families had become part of an elite and powerful social class. Many were rancheros who controlled hundreds of thousands of acres of prime ranch land.

There was a strong cultural tie between land ownership and those who were of Spanish or Mexican descent. Mexican law not only allowed both men and women to own property, but a woman's property was considered to be separate from her husband's land. The importance of land was reflected in specific language that was borrowed from Mexico and used in California's first constitution.

All property, both real and personal, of the wife, owned or claimed by marriage, and that acquired afterwards by gift, devise, or descent, shall be her separate property; and laws shall be passed more clearly defining the rights of the wife, in relation as well to her separate property, as to that held in common with her husband. Laws shall also be passed providing for the registration of the wife's separate property.

Paper Rights but Lost Status

Other delegates at the Convention were lawyers, merchants, and even soldiers. During their first meeting, the delegates decided that they needed more representatives to account for the many gold miners who were arriving in California at the time. However, during the actual Convention, the significant influence that gold miners and other groups would later have on California was not that obvious. It seemed like Californios would play a role in shaping their state's future.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had granted Californios full United States citizenship and promised that their property would be "inviolably respected." California's 1849 Constitution had guaranteed the right to vote to every white male citizen of Mexico who was at least 21 years old, had decided to become an American citizen under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and had lived in California for at least six months before an election. Convention delegates also decided that English and Spanish would both be official languages in California.

However, even with these promises and provisions, the once-elite Californios slowly lost their power, authority, and land. Mexico's land grants were very informal claims, so Californios had a difficult time when they tried to legally challenge miners, squatters, and homesteaders when they began to stream onto Californio-owned property. Even when Californio families won court battles that gave them legal ownership of their lands, many actually lost their financial fortunes because they had to pay for attorney's fees or taxes. One Californio family from the East Bay owned 49,000 acres of land, but they eventually were able to only keep control of 700 acres. The rest had been lost to lawyers, taxes, squatters, and speculators. As the years passed and the amount of land that Californios controlled continued to shrink, their political power in the state also declined.

American Perspectives on the Mexican-American War

Although Texas declared its independence from Mexico in 1836 and was admitted to the Union in 1845, questions remained about its border with Mexico. An expansionist, President James K. Polk wanted to settle these questions to continue to enlarge the country. Not all Americans agreed with him. Many perceived President Polk to be looking for an

excuse to go to war with Mexico to achieve his territorial goals.

Read these three excerpts related to the war, and consider both how and why the writers' views of events differed.

Message from the President of the United States Relative to an Invasion and Commencement of Hostilities by Mexico

President Polk's request to Congress to declare war on Mexico was delivered on May 11, 1846.

. . . The invasion [by Mexico] was threatened solely because Texas had determined in accordance with a solemn resolution of the congress of the United States, to annex herself to our Union; and, under these circumstances, it was plainly our duty to extend our protection over her citizens and soil.

. . .

The grievous wrongs perpetrated by Mexico upon our citizens throughout a long period of years remain unredressed; and solemn treaties pledging her public faith for this redress have been disregarded. A government either unable or unwilling to enforce the execution of such treaties, fails to perform one of its plainest duties.

. . . we have been exerting our best efforts to propitiate [Mexico's] good will. Upon the pretext that Texas, a nation as independent as herself, thought proper to unite its destinies with our own, she [Mexico] has affected to believe that we have severed her rightful territory, and in official proclamations and manifestoes has repeatedly threatened to make war upon us, for the purpose of reconquering Texas. In the meantime, we have tried every effort at reconciliation. . . . But now after reiterated menaces, Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States; has invaded our territory, and shed American blood upon the American soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities have commenced, and that the two nations are now at war.

As war exists, and . . . exists by the act of Mexico herself, we are called upon by every consideration of duty and patriotism to vindicate with decision the honor, the rights, and the interests of our country.

. . .

In further vindication of our rights, and defence of our territory, I invoke the prompt action of Congress to recognize the existence of the war, and to place at the disposition of the Executive the means of prosecuting the war with vigor, and thus hastening the restoration of peace. . . .

Resolutions and Preamble on the Mexican War

Representative Abraham Lincoln, a first-term congressman from Illinois who voted against the war, responded to a series of messages to Congress from President Polk with these resolutions on December 22, 1847.

. . . this House is desirous to obtain a full knowledge of all the facts which go to establish whether the particular spot on which the blood of our citizens was so shed was or was not at that time our own soil: therefore, Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the President of the United States be respectfully requested to inform this House—

[The first four resolutions ask about Mexico's historic claims to the territory between the Nueces River and Rio Grande and Mexican settlements in that area.]

5th. Whether the people of that settlement [between the rivers], . . . any of them, have ever submitted themselves to the government or laws of Texas or of the United States, by consent or by compulsion . . .

6th. Whether the people of that settlement did or did not flee from the approach of the United States army, leaving unprotected their homes . . . before the blood was shed . . . ; and whether the first blood, so shed, was or was not shed within the enclosure of one of the people who had thus fled from it.

7th. Whether our citizens, whose blood was shed, . . . were or were not, at that time, armed officers and soldiers, sent into that settlement by the military orders of the President . . .

8th. Whether the military force of the United States was or was not so

sent into that settlement after Gen. Taylor had more than once intimated to the War Department that, in his opinion, no such movement was necessary to the defence or protection of Texas.

The War with Mexico Reviewed

The War with Mexico Reviewed by Abiel Abbot Livermore critically examines the Mexican-American War, including its causes. Livermore was a Unitarian minister, an abolitionist, and a member of the American Peace Society, the anti-war organization that published his book in 1850.

. . . The idea of a “destiny,” connected with this race [Anglo-Saxons], has gone far to justify, if not to sanctify, many an act on either side of the Atlantic; for which both England and the United States, if nations can be personified, ought to hang their heads in shame, and weep scalding tears of repentance. . . .

. . .

. . . the good principles of an earlier day have lost their savor, and the way has been opened for precisely such results as have been developed during the last four years, the Annexation of Texas, a sanguinary and embittered war, and the dismemberment of Mexico. The relations of cause and effect hold true in the moral as surely as in the material world. Nations reap what they sow. . . . Our treatment both of the red man and the black man, has habituated us to “feel our power, and forget right.” . . .

. . . An incessant grasping after more territory has characterized our past poly. The god Terminus is an unknown deity in America. Like the hunger of the pauper boy of fiction, the cry has been, “More, more, give us more.” But we must confess that we have actually settled and subdued to the use of civilization only a minor part of the vast regions we occupy. . . . The history of the last few years has yielded . . . the self-deceiving justifications of ambition. Prompt excuses have been discovered for this boa-constrictor appetite of swallowing states and provinces in the glory of free institutions, the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and the extension of our industrial and commercial system. . . . Under the dominion of this lust for territory, however

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acquired, we have pushed onwards in a hot and unjustifiable invasion, and by a compulsory peace, have extorted from our neighbors more than half a million of square miles of land . . .

In a later chapter, “The Chief Motive of the War,” Livermore identifies a more specific cause: the expansion of slavery.

. . . we discern in slavery the main-spring to the war with Mexico. Had the idea of extending the “peculiar institutions of the South, and the political power resulting therefrom, been entirely excluded from the question, not a shot would ever have been fired.

. . .

. . . the scheme of Annexation was devised,—as openly declared by some of its staunchest advocates,—to give greater security to the institutions of the South. The clear and direct inference is, that slavery and the war with Mexico have had a cause-and-effect connection. Had slavery not existed in our land, there would have been no annexation; and had there been no annexation, there would have been no strife.

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- Polk, James K., Message from the President of the United States Relative to an Invasion and Commencement of Hostilities by Mexico, delivered to Congress on May 11, 1846, 29th Cong., 1st Sess. 196 (1846).
 - Lincoln, Abraham, Resolutions and Preamble Offered in Congress on the Mexican War, delivered to the House of Representatives on December 22, 1847, accessed September 25, 2020, <http://www.loc.gov/resource/mal.0007000>.
 - Livermore, Abiel Abbot, *The War with Mexico Reviewed* (Boston: American Peace Society, 1850): 8, 12–15.