

Module 4: Creating a New Nation - 1788 to the 1840s

Topic 2 Content: Mexican-American War Notes

Introduction




As the numbers of settlers migrating west increased, so did the opportunities for conflict. Southern settlers were quickly expanding into Mexican controlled territory. In this interactivity, explore the conflicts that occurred between Mexico and the United States as a result of westward migration. Click **Start** to begin.

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Texas

Texas



- As the population of the United States continued to grow, the settlers pushed into Texas and began to grow cotton.
- The Mexican government tried to increase control of the area and this angered the settlers, who decided to revolt in 1836.


Next

One conflict occurred in and around what is now the state of Texas. As the population continued to grow, the demand for new lands pushed southern planters further west. Many decided to move to the area of Texas, which was under the control of Mexico, to try to grow cotton. As the number of Americans and their slaves grew, the Mexican government became increasingly concerned about its Texas lands. The Mexican government took measures to increase government control over the area. This angered the American settlers, who decided to revolt in 1836.

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Battle of the Alamo

Battle of the Alamo



- Mexican President Santa Anna surrounded 200 Texan rebels in an abandoned mission called the Alamo.
- The Texan rebels fought to the last man. This battle inspired the Texans to defeat the Mexican army in a later battle.

Next

Mexican President Santa Anna took an army of about 6,000 men north into Texas to stop the rebellion. His army surrounded about 200 Texan rebels in an abandoned mission in San Antonio called the Alamo. After a short siege, the Mexican army attacked the Texas rebels. The Texas rebels fought to the last man against the much larger Mexican army in what is now called the Battle of the Alamo.

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The War



The War with Mexico

- James K. Polk was elected President in 1845.
- When the United States incorporated Texas, the hostilities between the United States and Mexico reignited.

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The heroic fighting by the Texas men at the Alamo inspired the Texans to beat the Mexican army in a later battle, and gain independence for Texas in 1837. Eventually, because of the large group of American settlers, Texas would join the United States in December 1845, becoming the 28th state.

The presidential election of 1845 was won by slaveholder James K. Polk. Polk wanted to incorporate, or annex, Texas into the United States as soon as possible. As soon as Texas became part of the United States, the hostilities between the United States and Mexico were reignited. Mexico feared President Polk because of his interest in expanding westward. The continual expansion westward would place more settlers in Mexican controlled territory.

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New Territory



The map, titled "New Territory", illustrates the expansion of the United States. It shows the following acquisitions:

- Spanish Cession 1819:** Florida and parts of the Gulf Coast.
- Louisiana Purchase 1803 (from France):** The central United States.
- Florida Purchase 1819 (from Spain):** Florida.
- California Purchase 1853 (from Mexico):** California.
- Mexican Cession 1848:** Arizona, Nevada, and Utah.
- Texas Annexation 1845 (former Republic of Texas):** Texas.
- Spanish Cession 1819:** Florida.
- Alaska Purchase 1967 (from Russia):** Alaska.
- Hawaii Annexation 1998 (former Republic of Hawaii):** Hawaii.
- Puerto Rico Ceded by Spain 1898:** Puerto Rico.
- Virgin Islands Purchased from Denmark 1917:** The Virgin Islands.

Other labels on the map include Oregon Territory 1846 (Treaty with Great Britain), British Cession 1818, and various states like Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Hawaii.

Scale bars are provided for miles (0, 100, 200) and kilometers (0, 50, 100, 200). A "Replay" button is in the bottom left and an "Exit" button is in the bottom right.

- In 1846, war broke out between Mexico and the United States.
- After America invaded Mexico and captured its capital, Mexico surrendered.
- As a result of winning the war, America gained control of a portion of land that today includes Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah and parts of Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico.

The Mexican government was not happy with the annexation of Texas and President Polk's interest in further expansion. The tensions between the two countries led to a war that began in the spring of 1846. After America invaded Mexico and captured its capitol, Mexico surrendered. America's prize for winning the war was to gain a large chunk of land that today includes Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico.