

Manifest Destiny

The divining mission to extend national power and civilization across the continent.
“From Sea to Shining Sea”

This idea was spread by:

1. Nationalism
2. Rapid Economic Development
3. Technological Advances
4. Reforms Ideals
5. Growing Population

One of the main concerns about this rapid expansion was that the North argued that it was a Southern ambition to spread slavery into the West and Far South.



A nationalistic painting portraying Manifest Destiny

There were three main areas of territorial expansion in the 1820's and 1830's

Texas (a Mexican Province)

Maine (a border dispute with Canada)

Oregon (A territory under British rule)

1. Texas

In 1821 Mexico won its independence from Spain. This attracted settlers into its northern frontier. One settler in particular was Moses Austin who had recently purchased a large land grant from the government. En route to Texas Moses died but his dream was carried on by his son, Stephen. He planned to bring 300 families with him to settle out west and the migration began. Important to note was that in 1830 white American farmers and their black slaves outnumbered Mexicans living in this area three to one. Stephen Austin's plan was to create cotton plantations on the vast Texas plains.



Stephen Austin



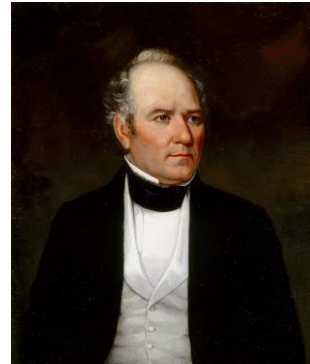
Early map of Texas

One major setback for Austin's expansion came in 1829 when Mexico outlawed slavery. In addition, the Mexican government required all settlers in the Texas region to convert to Roman Catholicism. Many of the settlers were Protestant and they refused to accept this order, subsequently causing friction between the Texans and the Mexicans.

In 1834, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna took control of Mexico and became a ruling dictator. His rule abolished the previous federal system.

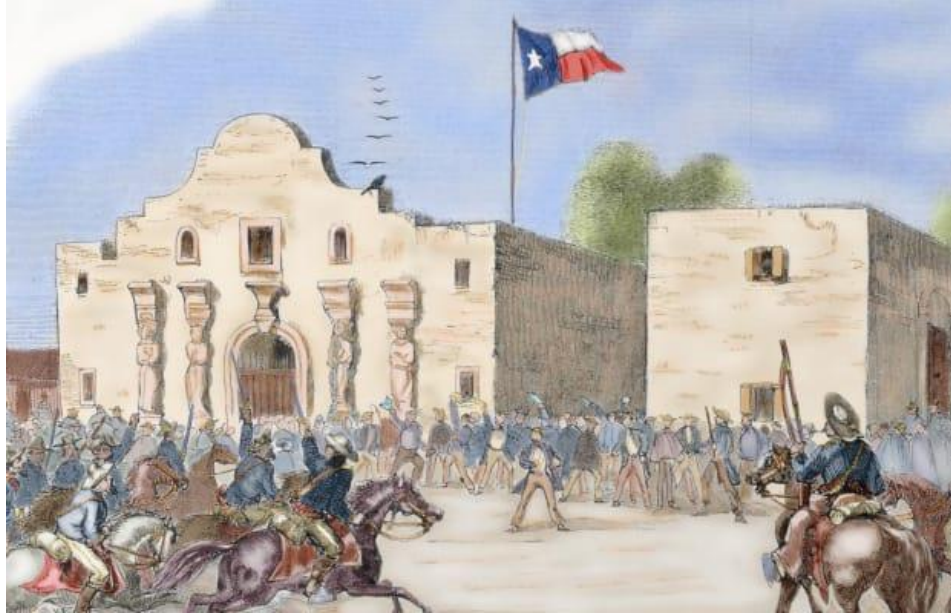


General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna



Sam Houston

Sam Houston, one of the early Texans, led a revolt against Santa Anna and in March of 1836, declared Texas an independent republic. In response, Santa Anna attacked the San Antonio region and at the Battle of the Alamo killed all of the settlers including Davy Crockett and Sam Bowie. Houston was not at the Alamo; he had left before the attack hoping to find military reinforcements.



Battle of the Alamo

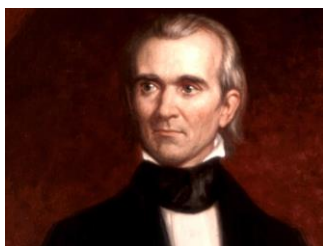
In response to the massacre at the Alamo, Houston raised and led an army against the Mexican dictator and at the Battle of San Jacinto River he defeated the Mexican army and captured General Santa Anna. Houston forced the Mexican general to officially recognize Texan independence and grant to Houston the republic territory north of the Rio Grande River.

Santa Anna was released and sent back to Mexico. The Mexican legislature rejected the treaty with Houston, and in their opinion, Texas was still a part of Mexico.

Sam Houston appointed himself the First President of the Lone Star Republic and applied to the Union for annexation. These requests were denied by both Presidents Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren due to harsh opposition from Northern States who considered Texas a “slave-state.”

Houston then applied for annexation to the new President, John Tyler [1841-1845]. His campaign for President included the term “Tyler for Texas.” Tyler feared that both the British and the French would ally and trade with Texas. Despite a hard-fought campaign, the Senate denied annexation again in 1844.

The next President, James Polk, a democrat that was pro-Texas for the Union, created a joint resolution for annexation. His bill only needed a simple majority vote in both the House and the Senate. On December 29, 1845, Texas was finally admitted as a state.



President James Polk



Lone Star State – Flag of Texas

The annexation of Texas created many diplomatic problems with Mexico. Trying to rectify the situation, President James Polk sent his envoy, James Slidell to Mexico City with the following demands:

1. Mexico was asked to sell California and the Northern territories it occupied to the United States
2. Mexico was asked to settle the old Texas border dispute, namely the use of the Rio Grande River between the two countries.

Mexico refused the U.S. demands and the meeting ended with Mexico stating that the border was now to be the Nueces River, not the Rio Grande River.



President Polk retaliated by sending General Zachary Taylor's army to the Rio Grande River where he captured a Mexican army patrol and killed 11 Mexican soldiers. Polk then sent a message of war to Congress. The Northern Whig Party (including Abraham Lincoln) opposed any war but a large majority in both houses approved Polk's war resolution. The **Mexican War** was now under way.

The American army was small in size, no more than 1500 men but most of the war was fought in Mexican Territory. In June 1840, Northern California was liberated from Mexican rule and declared itself a new, independent republic, The **Bear Flag Republic**.



General Zachary Taylor then led an army of 6,000 men across the Rio Grande River into Mexico and he won his first victory at the Battle of Buena Vista in 1847. His actions were followed by an even larger army, led by General Winfred Scott. This army marched into Vera Cruz, Mexico's largest seaport, and then into the center of Mexico City. The city surrendered in September 1847 to the American armies.

The Consequences of the Mexican War

When Mexico surrendered, it had no choice but to agree to the terms put forward by the United States.

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo also known as the Mexican Cession was signed in 1848

- 1. The Rio Grande River was the southern border of Texas and Mexico**
- 2. The United States will now take the areas known as California and New Mexico**
- 3. The United States will pay Mexico \$15 million for these lands and expansion areas**
- 4. The United States will assume claims of any American against Mexico for damages.**

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo allowed the opportunity for additional expansion by the United States. Some Whigs still opposed the treaty as it was seen as an expansion of slavery. In addition, some Democrats also opposed the treaty as they wanted the United States to take over all of Mexico.

Despite these objections, the treaty was ratified in Congress by a two-thirds majority vote.



The Wilmot Proviso – David Wilmot from Pennsylvania

His bill was to forbid slavery in any of the new territories acquired from Mexico. It passed in the House twice but was defeated in the Senate. It was to be the first round in the escalating political conflict leading up to the Civil War.

2. The Boundary Dispute in Maine (1840's)

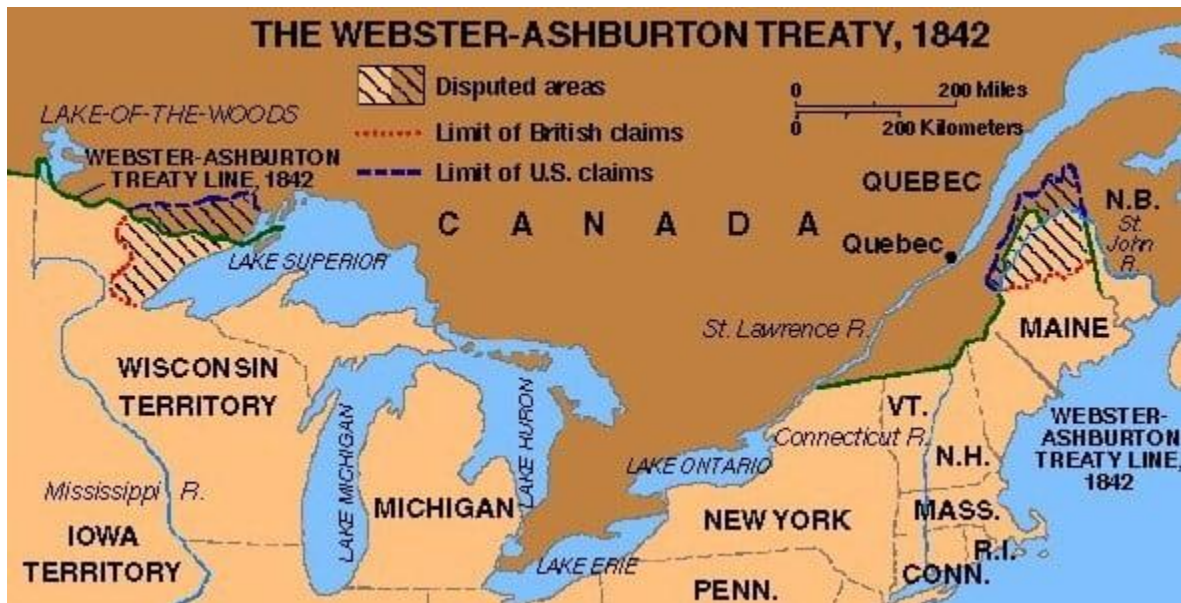
Trouble and unrest in this region of America were because of the following issues:

- The disputed border line between Maine and the Canadian Province of New Brunswick
- Anti-British sentiment by Americans as the British still controlled Canada
- Lumberjacks disputing over forest land boundaries

These disputes lead to what was to be known as the Aroostook War or the Battle of the Maps.

No real battles took place but there were many instances of lumberjacks from both sides fighting each other and the border lines were defended by troops from both sides.

The United States Secretary of State, Daniel Webster and Ambassador Lord Alexander Ashburton of Canada sat down and constructed the **Webster-Ashburton Treaty** in 1842. This agreement settled the borders between Canada and Maine and also the Minnesota Territories (the Mesabi Range which later would be a vast source of iron ore for America during the Industrial Revolution).



3. The Boundary Dispute in Oregon

Oregon was once controlled by four nations, Spain, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States. In the early 1800's Oregon included the area along the Pacific coast all the way north to Alaska. Spain gave up its rights to Oregon in 1819 as part of the Adams-Onís Treaty. Any Russian people in the region were fur trappers and fishermen so they were not seen as a major threat, just an inconvenience.

However the disputes between Great Britain and the United States remained heated over this region.

Great Britain claimed that it had the rights due to the Hudson Fur Company, even though there were only a few British citizens living there.

The United States had much stronger claims and were based on:

1. The discovery of the Columbia River in 1792 by Captain Robert Gray
2. The expeditions of Lewis and Clark in 1805
3. The trading post and Fort Astoria created by John Jacob Astor in 1811
Astor's settlements became the future home of Protestant missionaries and more than 5,000 farmers.



The 1844 election saw the Oregon Territory as a campaign issue for the nation's Manifest Destiny policy. President James Polk reached an agreement with the British after his famous campaign that led to obtaining Oregon **"Fifty-Four Forty or Fight."**

In the end Polk settled for the southern half of Oregon by using the **49th Parallel** as the boundary for the two countries of the United States and British Canada, (the same as in the Louisiana Territory Agreement of 1818). Polk granted the British Vancouver Island plus navigation rights on the Columbia River. The compromise reluctantly passed in both Houses due to the Mexican War taking place at the same time.

Manifest Destiny in the South

The Ostend Manifesto

President Polk planned to purchase Cuba from Spain for \$ 100 million, however Spain refused the deal. In 1852, President Franklin Pierce began secret negotiations in Ostend, Belgium to again purchase Cuba. Unfortunately, anti-slavery members of Congress found out about the proposed deal for Cuba as its plantation economy, especially sugarcane, was a major area for the slave trade. In the end all negotiations for the Ostend Manifesto were cancelled.

The Walker Expedition

In 1853 William Walker tried to take the Baja Peninsula from Mexico by force but his venture failed. Despite this setback, in 1855 Walker's army took over Nicaragua. The grand scheme was to create a Central American Empire that was pro-slavery. Walker came up against a Central American coalition of armies that defeated him and he was executed in Honduras in 1860.

Clayton-Bulwer Treaty

This agreement between Great Britain and the United States ensured that no one country could take full control over any Central American canal or project to build such a waterway. This treaty stayed valid until 1901 when the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty gave the United States the exclusive rights to any such canal in Central America, namely the Panama Canal.

The Gadsden Purchase

President Franklin Pierce added to the United States a strip of land in the Southwest, the reason being for expansion of a trans-continental railroad in the southern region of the country. In 1853 the United States bought from Mexico the semi-desert lands that are today the southern-most sections of New Mexico and Arizona. The purchase price for this arid land area was \$ 10 million. Anti-slavery politicians feared that the region would become another slave state but this did not happen as southern businessmen found out that the region was too arid and mountainous to farm profitably.