

DUEL OF EAGLES

CONFLICTS IN THE SOUTHWEST 1820 - 1848

A Unit of Study for Grades 8-12



JOHN AREVALO
JAMES DRAKE
GLORIA SESSO
DAVE VIGILANTE

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

DUEL OF EAGLES

CONFLICTS IN THE SOUTHWEST, 1820-1848

A Unit of Study for Grades 8-12

JOHN AREVALO

JAMES DRAKE

GLORIA SESSO

DAVE VIGILANTE

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Approach and Rationale	1
Content and Organization	1

Teacher Background Materials

Unit Overview	3
Unit Context	3
Correlation to the National Standards for World History	4
Unit Objectives	4
Lesson Plans	5
Historical Background on <i>Duel of Eagles: Conflicts in the Southwest, 1820–1848</i>	5
Using Primary Source Documents	8

Dramatic Moment	10
----------------------------------	-----------

Lessons

Lesson One: Texas from Colonization to Revolution	11
Lesson Two: The Republic of Texas and the Cherokee	31
Lesson Three: The Mexican-American War	49
Lesson Four: The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo	83

Selected Bibliography	95
--	-----------

TEACHER BACKGROUND MATERIALS

I. UNIT OVERVIEW

The history of the American Southwest is usually relegated to brief references to the Lone Star Republic, the Mexican-American War, and Manifest Destiny. Students often fail to see the “big picture” and usually have little knowledge of the issues that led to the declaration of Texas independence. Most students view the independence of Texas as a blur in their study of the Mexican-American War.

Students will be able to explore in depth the issues that were at the heart of conflicts in the American Southwest. Through the use of primary and selected secondary sources students will discover different perspectives on these issues. In addition they will compare competing historical narratives and contrast conflicting appraisals of the period by different historians.

Contemporary voices for and against U.S. foreign policy help to draw attention to public reaction to the decision to go to war with Mexico in 1846. Students are asked to grapple with issues that go beyond the scope of typical text accounts of the history of the American Southwest in the first half of the nineteenth century.

II. UNIT CONTEXT

The lessons in this unit of study deal with the period from the opening of Spanish Texas to Anglo-American colonization in the early nineteenth century through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. The lessons place this half-century of conflict between Mexico and the United States in clearer focus by exploring causes and consequences of key events from various perspectives. The unit supplements the study of Manifest Destiny and provides teachers with the opportunity of an in-depth study of the Texas War for Independence, the removal of the Cherokee from Texas, and an examination of the causes of the Mexican-American War of 1846. Lessons in the unit examine attitudes towards U.S. expansion and different perspectives on the causes which led to the Texas Independence movement and the Mexican-American War. The unit provides a variety of views on the often neglected history of the American Southwest. The lessons are most effective if placed within the context of a study of Manifest Destiny.

III. CORRELATION TO THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR UNITED STATES HISTORY

Duel of Eagles: Conflicts in the Southwest, 1820–1848 provides teaching materials that address **Standard 1C** of **Era 4**, Expansion and Reform, in the *National Standards for United States History, basic Edition* (Los Angeles: National Center for History in the Schools, 1996.) Lessons focus on an understanding of the ideology of Manifest Destiny, the causes of the Texas War for Independence and the Mexican-American War, the sequence of events leading to the outbreak of hostilities, the provisions and consequences of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and different perspectives on the war. In addition the unit offers the opportunity to elaborate on **Standard 1B** by exploring the impact of the removal of the Cherokee from Texas in conjunction with an examination of United States Indian policy in the Jacksonian era.

Lessons within this unit likewise address the Historical Thinking Standards by providing primary source materials which challenge students to analyze cause-and-effect relationships, to examine historical change and continuity, to marshal evidence of antecedent circumstances, to evaluate the implementation of decisions, to compare competing historical narratives, and to consider multiple perspectives. Students are also expected to draw evidence from historical maps and use data presented in a time line.

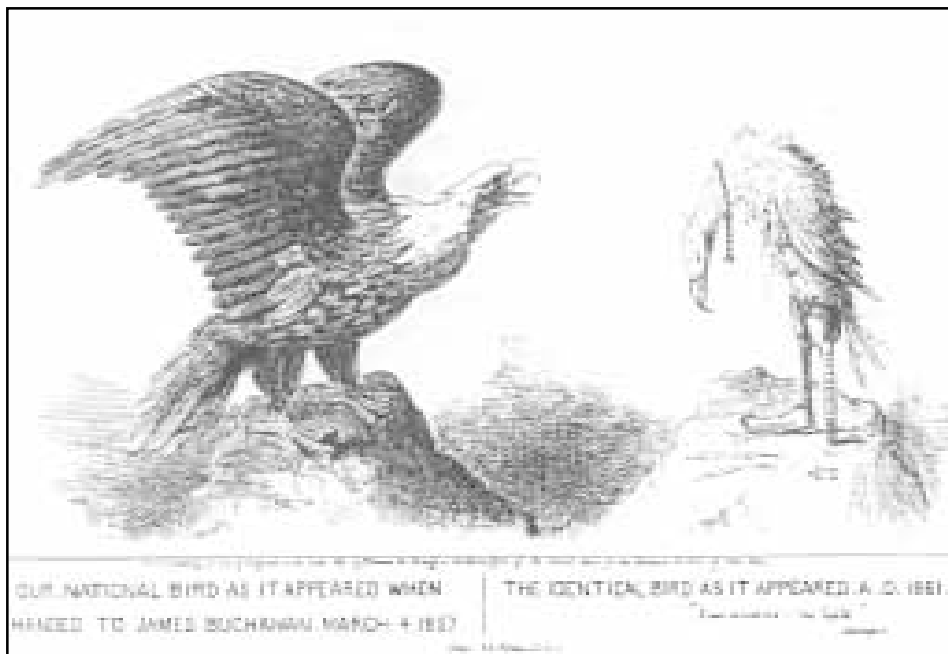
IV. UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. Interpret documents in their historical context.
2. Analyze the motives and interests expressed in primary and secondary sources, distinguishing between historical facts and interpretations.
3. Explain historical continuity and change with respect to conflicts in the American Southwest in the first half of the nineteenth century.
4. Examine multiple perspectives by interpreting documents and explaining how different motives, beliefs, interests, and perspectives influence interpretations of the past.
5. Compare and contrast competing historical narratives and demonstrate how an emphasis on different perspectives contributes to different interpretations.

. . . To sum up the case in one sentence, Mexico . . . repudiated her treaties with us, ended official relations, aimed to prevent commercial intercourse, planned to deprive us of all influence on certain issues vitally connected with our declared foreign policy, seemed likely to sell California to some European rival of ours, . . . refused to pay even her admitted debts to us, . . . claimed the right to harry Texas, a part of the Union, at will, threatened and prepared for war. . . .

It rested with our government, therefore, as the agent of national defense and the representative of national dignity and interests, to apply a remedy. . . . On April 21, 1846, after long consideration of the matter, [Polk] informed the cabinet that our relations with Mexico “could not be permitted to remain” as they were, and that he thought he should recommend to Congress the adoption of energetic measures for the redress of our grievances, which meant also of course a full settlement of our differences with that power. In truth no other course would have been patriotic or even rational.

Justin H. Smith, *The War with Mexico* (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1963), vol. 1, pp. 82-87, 127ff.



LESSON FOUR

THE TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO

A. OBJECTIVES

Students should be able to:

1. Interpret documents in their historical context.
2. Evaluate the role of Nicholas Trist in negotiating the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.
3. Draw upon data from historical maps to elaborate on information garnered from the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.
4. Analyze the underlying factors contributing to the terms of the treaty and the alterations the Senate made before ratification.
5. Assess the guarantees for Mexican residents in lands ceded to the United States.

B. LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Introduce the lesson by having students read a survey of the Trist Mission (**Document 36**). Use this reading to place the treaty negotiations in historical context and to facilitate discussion of selected articles of the treaty.
2. Have students read Article V of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo [**Document 37**] and examine a topographical map to determine the physical features of the Mexican-American frontier set by the treaty. Locate the boundaries established by the treaty on a map and compare that map to the present boundaries. Have students research the reasons for the Gadsden Purchase of 1853.
 - (a) How does the boundary established by the treaty reflect the goals of the Polk administration?
 - (b) What accounts for the changes in the boundary from the Gila River to the current boundary? Why did the United States wish to extend the boundary?

3. Discuss Mexico's position at the time of treaty negotiations. Consider questions such as:
 - (a) What alternatives did Mexico have to signing the treaty?
 - (b) What course of action do you believe the United States would have taken if Mexico had rejected Article V of the treaty? Explain your position.
4. Articles VIII, IX and X of the 23 articles of the treaty concerned Mexicans who remained in lands ceded to United States. The U.S. Senate rejected Article X and revised Article IX. Article VIII was the only one of the three to remain intact. Have students read Article X [**Document 38**] and speculate as to why it was eliminated by the Senate. Then ask them to study the revision of Article IX [**Document 39**] and determine what was left out of the version ratified by the Senate. To what extent was the ratified article a change of the original? Why were sections left out? Does the revision in any way change the "free exercise of religion"?
5. Ask the students to read Article VIII [**Document 40**] and examine its connections to Article IX. What are the guarantees to Mexican residents who wish to remain in the United States?
6. Conclude the lesson by having students write a position paper on the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo or conduct a debate on the resolution: "The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo reflected the generosity of a benevolent victor."

NICHOLAS TRIST AND THE TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO

Secondary Source

In early 1846, President Polk learned that former Mexican president López de Santa Anna, in exile in Cuba, was willing to make peace with the United States. Polk understood that Santa Anna would take control of the Mexican government, arrange for the sale of New Mexico and California, and settle the Texas boundary dispute. Polk arranged for Santa Anna to pass through the U.S. blockade. However, once he reached Mexico, Santa Anna further aroused anti-American feelings. Losing the opportunity to settle the dispute, Polk submitted his war message to Congress following the clash of Mexican and American troops in disputed territory north of the Rio Grande. As General Winfield Scott marched from Vera Cruz towards Mexico City, the president appointed Nicholas Trist to accompany the army and negotiate a peace whenever events seemed favorable.

General Scott had . . . been fighting his way toward Mexico City against serious odds. His nerves were already frayed when Polk's perambulatory plenipotentiary [roving ambassador] put in an appearance. Scott sent a heated letter to the newly arrived envoy, for he misunderstood Trist's instructions and feared that civilian interference with military operations would jeopardize his already perilous position. Trist . . . replied in a caustic thirty-page note. The rather childish quarrel was patched up when General Scott sent a jar of guava jelly to . . . [Trist] who had become ill.

Having buried the hatchet, Scott and Trist entered upon tortuous negotiations designed to bribe Santa Anna, at a cost of \$10,000, into making a peace. . . . [Santa Anna] pocketed the money, and used the ensuing armistice to bolster his defenses. With the breakdown of bribery and the renewal of hostilities, Scott captured Mexico City, on September 14, 1847, after heavy fighting. Formal Mexican resistance thereupon ended.

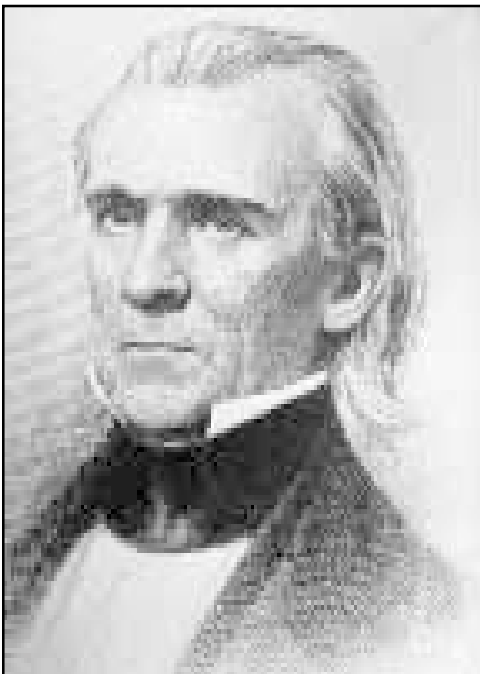
Polk was meanwhile becoming increasingly annoyed by Trist's bungling and by the awkwardness of waging war with a pen in one hand and a sword in the other. A satisfactory treaty seemed beyond reach, and the presence of the American envoy was thought to betray undue eagerness on the part of the United States to end the fighting. Early in October, 1847, therefore, the State Department sent an instruction advising Trist of his summary recall.

But Trist embarked instead upon a surprising course. Shortly before receiving notice of his recall, he had opened negotiations with the moderate Mexican faction that had recently come into power. The group, whose foothold was shaky, was evidently the only one with which a reasonable treaty could be made. In fact, the moderate Mexican leaders urged Trist to continue with the negotiations despite his instructions from Washington. Trist realized that if he did not take advantage of this opening, anarchy might result, and with it the possibility of prolonged guerrilla warfare or the conquest of all Mexico. Either eventuality would be fraught with peril. Communication with Washington was so slow, and the advantages of striking while the iron was hot were so obvious, that Trist decided to disregard his instructions and do what seemed best for his country.

. . . After prolonged negotiations, Trist signed the terms of peace at Guadalupe Hidalgo, near Mexico City, on February 2, 1848. . . . Polk was vastly annoyed when the treaty negotiated by his disavowed agent arrived posthaste from Mexico. But there were compelling reasons for accepting it as it stood. First of all, Trist had generally conformed to his original instructions. Moreover, if Polk should now repudiate a treaty made on the terms that he had authorized in April, 1847, the irate Whigs and anti-slavery agitators might get out of hand.

The growth of opposition to the war was particularly ominous. As early as May, 1846, the Boston Atlas had declared, "It would be a sad and woeful joy, but a joy nevertheless, to hear that the hordes under

Scott and Taylor were, every man of them, swept into the next world." Following the elections of 1846, the Whigs had enjoyed a majority in the House of Representatives, and in January, 1848, that body resolved, 85 to 81, that the war had been "unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President of the United States." The danger loomed that the Whig House might block further appropriations for the armies in the field. Had this happened,



President James K. Polk, circa 1840s
Copy of engraving by H. W. Smith
National Archives

the United States probably would not have acquired as much as Trist had managed to gain, and the Democratic party would have run an increased risk of repudiation during the forthcoming Presidential election.

Polk therefore grimly submitted the treaty to the Senate, urging that it be approved despite “the exceptional conduct of Mr. Trist.” The country wanted peace, and further delay might render a satisfactory peace impossible. . . .

Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1958), pp. 261-63.



General Scott Entering the City of Mexico
Felix O. C. Bradley, n.d.
Library of Congress

ARTICLE V, TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO

Primary Source

Article V of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo established the boundary between the United States and Mexico. The boundary was changed in 1853 by the Gadsden Purchase.

The Boundary line between the two Republics shall commence in the Gulf of Mexico, three leagues from land, opposite the mouth of the Rio Grande, otherwise called Rio Bravo del Norte . . . from thence, up the middle of that river . . . to the point where it strikes the southern boundary of New Mexico; thence, westwardly, along the whole southern boundary of New Mexico (which runs north of the town called Paso) to its western termination; thence, northward, along the western line of New Mexico, until it intersects the first branch of the river Gila . . . thence down the middle of the . . . said river, until it empties into the Rio Colorado; thence, across the Rio Colorado, following the division line between Upper and Lower California, to the Pacific Ocean. . . .

The Boundary line established by this Article shall be religiously respected by each of the two Republics, and no change shall ever be made therein, except by the express and free consent of both nations, lawfully given by the General Government of each, in conformity with its own constitution.

Rebuilding Monument 40

**D. H. Payne, under the direction of the U.S. section of the International Boundary Commission, along the Mexican border west of the Rio Grande, 1892-94.
National Archives**



To carry the Guadalupe Hidalgo treaty into effect, commissioner Col. Jon Weller and surveyor Andrew Grey were appointed by the U.S. and General Pedro Conde and Sr. Jose Illarregui were appointed by the Mexican Government to survey and set the boundary. The boundary between the United States and Mexico was subsequently modified by the Gadsden Purchase. A subsequent treaty of December 30, 1853, altered the border from the initial one adding 47 more boundary markers to the original six. Of the 53 markers, the majority were rude piles of stones, a few being of durable character

and providing proper inscriptions. As time passed, considerable difficulty arose regarding the exact location of the markers with both countries charging the originals had been moved or destroyed. To solve the problem, a convention between the two countries was concluded on Aug. 29, 1882, with subsequent reconnaissance verifying the necessity for definite demarkation of the boundary. The convention expired before the provisions were carried out and another was concluded to revive the provisions on Feb. 18, 1889.

TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO: ARTICLE X

Primary Source

The original Article X of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was deleted by the United States Senate. The following is Article X as originally drafted.

All grants of land made by the Mexican Government or by the competent authorities, in territories previously appertaining to Mexico, and remaining for the future within the limits of the United States, shall be respected as valid, to the same extent that the same grants would be valid, if the said territories had remained within the limits of Mexico. But the grantees of lands in Texas, put in possession thereof, who, by reason of the circumstances of the country since the beginning of the troubles between Texas and the Mexican Government, may have been prevented from fulfilling all the conditions of their grants, shall be under the obligation to fulfill the said conditions within the periods limited in the same respectively; such periods to be now counted from the date of the exchange of ratification of this treaty: in default of which the said grants shall not be obligatory upon the State of Texas, in virtue of the stipulations contained in this Article.

The foregoing stipulation in regard to grantees of land in Texas, is extended to all grantees of land in the territories aforesaid, elsewhere than in Texas, put in possession under such grants; and, in default of the fulfillment of the conditions of any such grant, within the new period, which as is above stipulated, begins with the day of the change of ratification of this treaty, the same shall be null and void.

The Mexican Government declares that no grant whatever of lands in Texas has been made since the second day of March one thousand eight hundred and thirty six; and that no grant whatever of lands in any of the territories aforesaid has been made since the thirteenth day of May one thousand eight hundred and forty-six.

Finally, the relations and communication between the Catholics living in the territories aforesaid, and their respective ecclesiastical authorities, shall be open, free and exempt from all hindrance whatever, even although such authorities should reside within the limits of the Mexican Republic, as defined by this treaty; and this freedom shall continue, so long as a new demarcation of ecclesiastical districts shall not have been made, conformably with the laws of the Roman Catholic Church.

ARTICLE IX, TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO

Primary Source

Article IX was amended by the United States Senate. The first of the two readings is the wording of the article prior to Senate amendment. The second is the ratified article.

Original Article IX

The Mexicans who, in the territories aforesaid, shall not preserve the character of citizens of the Mexican Republic, conformably with what is stipulated in the preceding article, shall be incorporated into the Union of the United States, and admitted as soon as possible, according to the principles of the Federal Constitution, to the enjoyment of all the rights of citizens of the United States. In the mean time, they shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, their property, and the civil rights now vested in them according to the Mexican laws. With respect to political rights, their condition shall be on an equality with that of the inhabitants of the other territories of the United States; and at least equally good as that of the inhabitants of Louisiana and the Floridas, when these provinces, by transfer from the French Republic and the Crown of Spain, became territories of the United States.



Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo [Exchange copy]
February, 1848
National Archives

The same most ample guaranty shall be enjoyed by all ecclesiastics and religious corporations or communities, as well in the discharge of the offices of their ministry, as in the enjoyment of their property of every kind, whether individual or corporate. This guaranty shall embrace all temples, houses and edifices dedicated to the Roman Catholic worship; as well as all property destined to its support, or to that of schools, hospitals and other foundations for charitable or beneficent purposes. No property of this nature shall be considered as having become the property of the American Government, or as subject to be, by it, disposed of or diverted to other uses.

Ratified Article IX

The Mexicans who, in the territories aforesaid, shall not preserve the character of citizens of the Mexican Republic, conformably with what is stipulated in the preceding article, shall be incorporated into the Union of the United States and be admitted, at the proper time (to be judged of by the Congress of the United States) to the enjoyment of all the rights of citizens of the United States according to the principles of the Constitution; and in the mean time shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty and property, and secured in the free exercise of their religion without restriction.



Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, signature page [Exchange copy]
February, 1848
National Archives