Duel of Eagles:

Conflicts in the Southwest 1820-1848

A Unit of Study for Grades 8-12

John Arevalo
James Drake
Gloria Sesso
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National Center for History in the Schools, UCLA

Series: Conflicts and Foreign Policy

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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 *Duel of Eagles: Conflicts in the Southwest, 1820–1848* 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

Introduction

Approach and Rationale

The National Center for History in the Schools has developed the following collection of lessons for teaching with primary sources. Our units are the fruit of a collaboration between history professors and experienced teachers of United States History. They represent specific "dramatic episodes" in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of these selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative. By studying a crucial turning-point in history the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic episodes that bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

Our teaching units are based on primary sources, taken from government documents, artifacts, magazines, newspapers, films, and literature from the period under study. What we hope you achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to have your students connect more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to recreate for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

Content and Organization

Within this unit, you will find: 1) Unit Objectives, 2) Correlation to the National History Standards, 3) Teacher Background Materials, 4) Lesson Plans, and 5) Student Resources. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. Although these lessons are recommended for grades 8-12, they can be adapted for other grade levels.

The teacher background section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific "dramatic moment" to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The lesson plans include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. The resources consist of primary source of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of inevitable facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories, and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction.

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.

V. Lesson Plans

1. Texas from Colonization to Revolution

2. The Republic of Texas and the Cherokee

3. The Mexican-American War

4. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

VI. Historical Background on Duel of Eagles

At the beginning of the nineteenth century armed Anglo-Americans began to migrate illegally into the Spanish province of Texas. Because they came in small numbers, these "filibusters," as they were called, posed little threat to Mexico. Indeed, the Spanish government saw advantages in the American settlement of Texas. In 1813 the Spanish cortes (parliament) instituted a policy of formally encouraging immigration to Texas. Moses Austin was among the *empresarios* (contractors) who played a critical role in encouraging American settlement of Texas. Only a few settlements had been established before Mexico claimed its independence from Spain in 1821. Independence had little bearing on the influx of Americans into the region, as Mexico continued similar policies. Mexico had hoped to solidify its claim to the region and provide a buffer against Indian raids.

He had negotiated an agreement with the Spanish government on the eve of Mexican independence; after independence his son, Stephen Austin, was awarded a similar grant to settle families in the region. The agreement required immigrants to become Mexican citizens and accept Catholicism in return for a land grant and deferment of taxes for a period of time. By 1828 Austin had encouraged 1,200 families to move to Texas. Although the Mexican policy drew a large number of Americans into the region, it failed in achieving its goal of securing the region under Mexican political authority. Instead, the region's new inhabitants became discontented with Mexican rule.

Texas was a part of the Mexican state of Coahuila, and its capital, Saltillo, was some distance from settlements in east Texas. Most of the immigrants continued to speak English, remained Protestant despite their outward acceptance of Catholicism, and were outspoken in demanding rights to which they had been accustomed in the United States. They showed little respect for Mexican law or judicial practices and became a thorn in the side of the Mexican government. In time a number of Mexi-

can residents of Texas joined them in protesting the authority of Saltillo. Adding to settler dissatisfaction, the Mexican legislature consisted of only one Texas representative and ten from Coahuila. Settlers began to clamor for the separation of Texas from the state of Coahuila.

In 1826, Haden Edwards, an empresario from Mississippi, contracted with the Mexican government to bring some 800 families into east Texas as part of the government's colonization policy. He immediately created difficulties by squabbling with existing settlers over land rights. In an effort to secure governmental authority, Edwards formed an alliance with Cherokee Indians who had recently moved across the border into Texas. Edwards proceeded to establish an independent government which he called the Republic of Fredonia. Indians, including Cherokees who had initially supported Edwards, joined with local residents and forced him to abandon his scheme in 1827. Edwards escaped before a Texas militia from the Austin colony and a company of Mexican troops arrived to put down the rebellion. Although differing factions joined to oppose the Fredonia Republic they were as contentious as ever over the political status of Texas.

Adding to the controversy in Texas, the President of Mexico emancipated all slaves in the republic on Independence Day, 1829. Steven Austin's friends in government immediately attempted to exempt Texas from the presidential proclamation. In 1830 the government put an end to further immigration into Texas and outlawed the importation of slaves.

Texans clashed with Mexican authorities in a number of spasmodic conflicts between 1830 and 1832. Texans organized a convention to draw up grievances in 1832 and demanded a change in government policy. The Mexican government in an attempt at conciliation relaxed some of its control by exempted Texans from some tariff regulations, easedthe prohibition on immigration, and permitted limited use of English. Mexico, however, refused to grant Texans' wishes to separate from Coahuila.

In 1835, President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna convinced the Mexican congress to abrogate the Constitution of 1824 making him virtual dictator. Austin, who had been imprisoned during Santa Anna's takeover, returned to Texas claiming that war was the only recourse left to Texans. When Texas declared its independence in 1836, the population was approximately 35,000, a sevenfold increase since the province had been opened to foreign settlers. The overwhelming majority of the immigrants were from the slaveholding states of the southeastern United States.

Although Texans called upon the United States for assistance, the Jackson administration took a neutral position. During the course of the war, the Mexican government criticized the United States for supporting the rebellion and charged that the administration turned a "blind eye" to the recruitment of men throughout the South to join the Texans. The Mexican ambassador to the United States, Manuel Eduardo de Gorostiza, objected to General Edmund Gaines leading a U.S. force across the Sabine River into Texas for the declared purpose of protecting the Louisiana frontier from Indian attacks. Gorostiza charged that deserters from General Gaines's militia joined the Texan at the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836 and fought against Santa Anna's forces still wearing their U.S. uniforms. Mexican authorities further charged that after the battle these very soldiers deserted again, this time rejoining the U.S. army and that General Gaines, fully aware of what had occurred, did not initiate court martial proceedings. The U.S. State Department denied the charges.

General Sam Houston's victory at the battle of San Jacinto assured the independence of Texas. Santa Anna, captured after the battle, signed a treaty recognizing the Texas Republic and ordered the Mexican army to leave the area. Santa Anna, however, was deposed as president and the Mexican government repudiated the treaty. Mexico, still technically at war with Texas, began negotiations with Cherokee Indians, trying to secure their support against the Texans. Houston, an avowed friend of the Cherokee, became first president of the Republic of Texas. During the war for independence Houston had negotiated a treaty with Chief Bowles (Duwali) of the Cherokee and their Indian allies. After winning independence, the Texas Senate, however, refused to ratify the treaty, which alienated the Cherokee. Rumors of Indian support for Mexico prompted Mirabeau Lamar, the second president of the republic, to make war on the Cherokee and drive them from Texas.

No sooner than Texas proclaimed independence, the Lone Star Republic applied for admission as a state in the Union. Public sentiment in the United States was divided over the question of annexation.

Many abolitionists, fearing that territorial expansion would lead to the expansion of slavery, opposed annexation. Others viewed expansion as the spread of a virtuous and free society that could extend its positive attributes among the other "less advanced" peoples of the continent.

In the 1840s the notion of "manifest destiny" proved a strong impetus for the annexation of Texas. The status of Texas soon became a fiery issue. During the U.S. presidential election of 1844, the Democratic candidate, James K. Polk, pledged to admit Texas into the union. Shortly after his

election and before inauguration, President John Tyler abandoned his efforts to have Texas admitted by a treaty which required a two-thirds vote of the Senate. Instead, he proposed admission by a joint resolution of Congress requiring only a simple majority. The resolution passed and Texas was admitted to the Union. Mexico, which had threatened a war if Texas was annexed, broke off diplomatic relations with the United States. As political factions in Mexico vied for power, none were willing to risk offending public opinion by even a hint of negotiations with the United States. Polk, seeking to settle disputes over Texas and purchase Mexican territory from Texas to the Pacific, sent John Slidell to Mexico to negotiate a treaty. Mexico's refusal to accept Slidell prompted Polk to prepare a call for a declaration of war. While Polk was writing his war message, news reached Washington that General Taylor's forces, which had moved into disputed territory between the Neuces and Rio Grande, had been attacked by a Mexican force. Supporting Texas's contention that its southern boundary was the Rio Grande, the U.S. argued it had been invaded by the enemy. Mexico, on the other hand, held that Neuces River was the Texas boundary and that it was simply defending its territory. On May 11, 1846 Congress declared war over strong Whig opposition.

U.S. forces under Zachary Taylor invaded northern Mexico and took Monterrey, Stephen Watts Kearny swept across New Mexico to California, and Winfield Scott landed an army at Vera Cruz and marched overland to Mexico City. At the conclusion of the war, Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceding virtually one-half of its territory to the United States.

The four lessons in this unit explore issues involved in the conflicts in the Southwest from differing points of view. Lesson One concerns immigration and settlement of the Mexican frontier by American settlers and the War for Texas Independence. Lesson Two deals with the expulsion of the Cherokee from Texas after independence. Lesson Three explores the causes of the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 from different perspectives. Students should be reminded that these opinions represent only a fraction of the wide variety of stances taken on the war. The concluding lesson in the unit examines several articles of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

VII. Using Primary Source Documents

Before beginning the unit you may wish to duplicate copies of the Document Analysis Worksheet (**Student Handout 1**) as a means of assisting students in working with the numerous documents which are included in the four lessons in this unit. Encourage students to examine the documents for bias and question the material to determine the

author's frame of reference. Caution students not to accept without question evidence presented in documents and to always examine documents in the context of the time in which they were written. Students should make a habit of testing the data presented in primary source materials with evidence gleaned from their study of history.

Battle of Buena Vista
Library of Congress

The Battle of Cerro Gordo
Lithograph, New York, 1847
Library of Congress

DRAMATIC MOMENT

Daniel Cloud, a young lawyer from Kentucky, accompanied Davey Crockett to Texas in January 1836. Cloud wrote the following letter home while on his sojourn to Texas:

The tide of emigration will be onward and irresistible and he whose life is spared fifty years will see apostles of liberty and republicanism, the sons of our blessed country descending the western declivities of the Rocky Mountains, bearing in one hand the olive branch of peace and the implements of husbandry—in the other, the weapons of defense and security to shed on that benighted region the light of Christianity and the blessings of civilization and free government, than the mighty waves of the monarch of oceans which wash the East Indies, the hoary empire of China and the islands of Polynesia on the east, shall waft all their stores of plenty into the republican ports of our mammoth confederacy of the west.

The Cloud Family Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 16, cited in Jeff Long, *Duel of Eagles: The Mexican and U.S. Fight for the Alamo* (New York: William Morrow, 1990), pp. 128–29.

Mexico's Secretary of War, José María Tornel y Mendívil, described the character and desires of the United States as he saw them in 1836.

. . . To wish, to wait, and to act describe the distinctive character of the government and the people of the United States. No nation in the civilized world can equal them in their boundless ambition. The object of their heart's desire having been determined, they lie in wait for the propitious moment, assuming a disinterested and indifferent attitude in the meanwhile which is foreign to their true feelings, until circumstances favor their designs, when they ruthlessly trample everything in the way of their desire. This is a historical truth as clear as the light of day. . . .

The Mexican Side of the Texas Revolution [1836] By the Chief Mexican Participants: General Antonio López de Santa Anna, D. Ramon Martinez Caro, General Vicente Filisola, General José Urrea, and General José María Tornel, Translated by Carlos E., Castañeda (Dallas: P. L. Turner Company, 1956), p. 294.

LESSON I
TEXAS FROM COLONIZATION TO REVOLUTION

A. LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Interpret documents in their historical context.

2. Examine the motives for and consequences of the opening of Mexico's northern frontier to American colonization.

3. Compare and contrast competing historical narratives and demonstrate how an emphasis on different perspectives contributes to different interpretations.

4. Assess the reasons for Texas War for Independence.

5. Examine the role of the United States in the Texas independence movement.

B. LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Review the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 and the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819. Use information from the lesson background to provide students with an overview and to place the readings in historical context. Emphasize the disagreements between the United States and Mexico over the boundary of Texas.

2. Using a topographical map of Mexico and southwestern region of the United States, have students examine the geographic barriers to Spanish and Mexican colonization of Texas. Discuss the motives for colonizing the northern frontier of Mexico in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Locate areas occupied by the Apache and the Comanche. What were the barriers to settling the region? What difficulties would settlers expect to endure in establishing settlements on Mexico's northern frontier.

3. Have students read "Permission for Moses Austin to Settle Colonists in Texas" (**Document 1**). Ask students to list the conditions which Spain required of colonists and discuss ways in which the Spanish government might insure that settlers adhered to these conditions.

4. Assign **Documents 2** and **3** which deal with Mexican immigration policy. What were the chief concerns of Mexican authorities regarding the open immigration policy? What was the basis for Mier y

Terán's distrust of Texans? What were the underlying factors contributing to the problems over Texas? How should the Mexican government have responded to the situation in Texas?

5. Assign *Andrew Jackson and the Proposed Acquisition of Texas* (**Document 4**). What steps did Colonel Butler propose? Why did Jackson refrain from following Butler's recommendation? You may wish to extend this reading by having students research efforts of the United States to acquire Texas before the 1830s.

6. Have students read and discuss *The Declaration of Causes for Taking Up Arms* (**Document 5**) and, working within groups, review the U.S. Declaration of Independence and compare it to the ideas expressed in the Texas declaration. Explain the similarities and differences in the two documents.

7. Read *Appeal from the Alamo* (**Document 6**) and through a class discussion, analyze Travis's appeal to patriotic fervor. Employ a short lecture or have students report on text readings to place the battle of the Alamo into the scope of the Texas struggle for independence. You may wish to use a short video clip from John Wayne's *The Alamo* (MGM, 1960) and have students assess how the Hollywood version conforms with the historical account of the Texas War for Independence.

8. Select two students to read *The Battle of San Jacinto* (**Document 7**) and *Mexico's Perspective on the Battle of San Jacinto* (**Document 8**). Summarize these readings for the class. As an alternative you may wish to conduct a "read-around" as a means of exploring the data presented in these two readings.

9. Have students read and discuss *Mexico's Perspective on Issues* (**Document 9**). Construct a chart illustrating the differences in U.S. and Mexican perspectives.

10. Conclude the lesson with a general class discussion on the question of annexation. Should the United States have annexed Texas in 1836? What factors prevented the United States from admitting Texas into the union? Would annexation have provoked a war with Mexico in 1836? What regions of the United States would have been most favorable to annexation? What regions would oppose admission of Texas? What policy should the Jackson administration have taken toward annexation? Explain.

SPAIN GRANTS PERMISSION FOR MOSES AUSTIN TO SETTLE COLONISTS IN TEXAS, 1820

Primary Source

Moses Austin wrote to the Spanish Governor in Monterrey, Mexico on December 26, 1820 requesting permission to settle emigrants from Louisiana in Texas. In his letter he promised that all colonists would be Roman Catholic and that as soon as they were settled they would "bind themselves by oath to take up their arms in defense of the Spanish government either against the Indians, filibusters, or any other enemy that may plan hostilities. . . ." In less than a month, a surprisingly short time, the Governor approved Austin's proposal and specified conditions for the settlement in a letter to the Commander-General of Texas.

Monterrey *January 17, 1821*

It will be very expedient to grant the permission asked for by Moses Austin for the removal and settlement in the Province of Texas of the three hundred families who declare that they are desirous of so doing as soon as possible under the conditions fixed in the petition which he presented to the governor of the province for this purpose. . . . It would be well also if, in addition to the first and most important conditions of being Catholics or agreeing to become so before they enter Spanish territory and that of proving their character and good conduct as is offered in the said petition, they would take the required oath to be obedient to the government in all things, to take up arms in its defense against all classes of enemies whatsoever, to be faithful to the king, and to defend the political constitution of the Spanish monarchy. Very flattering hopes may then be entertained that the province will receive a noticeable development in the branches of agriculture, industry, and the arts through the new inventions they shall bring with them.

Mattie Austin Hatcher, "The Opening of Texas to Foreign Settlement, 1801–1821," *University of Texas Bulletin,* No. 2714 (April 8, 1927), pp. 354–55.

Stephen F. Austin,
(Son of Moses Austin)
Daughters of the Republic of Texas Museum

MEXICO'S DISTRUST OF TEXANS: A LETTER FROM GENERAL MANUEL MIER Y TERÁN, JUNE 30, 1828

Primary Source

Following Mexico's independence from Spain (1821), Stephen Austin convinced the Mexican government that opening Texas to colonization was the most feasible way of converting the province from a wasteland to an economic asset. The Mexican Congress in 1824 offered free land to immigrants and granted special favors to empresarios who recruited immigrants. Each empresario was awarded thousands of acres of land by the Mexican government. Before long the Mexican government began to wonder if open immigration was a viable policy since it attracted an overwhelming number of emigrants from the United States rather than the multi-national migration Mexico had desired. Alarmed by diplomatic efforts by the United States for the purchase of Texas and the influx of migrants from the U.S., Mexico sent a Mexican official, General Manuel Mier y Terán to investigate. The following is an excerpt from Mier y Terán's letter regarding Texas.

As one covers the distance from Béxar [San Antonio] to this town [Nacogdoches], he will note that Mexican influence is proportionately diminished until on arriving in this place he will see that it is almost nothing and indeed, whence could such influence come? Hardly from superior numbers in populations, since the ratio of Mexicans to foreigners is one to ten. . . . The naturalized North Americans in the town maintain an English school, and send their children north for further education.... It would cause you the same chagrin that it has caused me to see the opinion that is held of our nation by these foreign colonists. . . . Thus, I tell myself that it could not be otherwise than from such a state of affairs would arise an antagonism between the Mexicans and foreigners, which is not the least of the smoldering fires which I have discovered. Therefore, I am warning you to take timely measures. Texas could throw the whole nation into revolution.

The majority of the North Americans established here under the Spanish government—and these are few—are of two classes. First, those who are fugitives from our neighbor republic and bear the unmistakable earmarks of thieves and criminals; . . . however, some of these have reformed and settled down to an industrious life in the new country. The other class of early settlers are poor laborers who lack the four or five thousand dollars necessary to buy a sitio [site] of land in the north,

but having the ambition to become landholders—one of the strong virtues of our neighbors—have come to Texas. Of such as this latter class is Austin's colony composed. They are for the most part industrious and honest, and appreciate this country. . . .

. . . The whole population here is a mixture of strange and incoherent parts without parallel in our federation: numerous tribes of Indians, now at peace, but armed and at any moment ready for war . . .; colonists of another people, more progressive and better informed than the Mexican inhabitants; but also more shrewd and unruly; among these foreigners are fugitives from justice, honest laborers, vagabonds and criminals, but honorable and dishonorable alike travel with their political constitution in their pockets, demanding the privileges, authority and officers which such a constitution guarantees. The most of them have slaves, and these slaves are beginning to learn the favorable intent of the Mexican law toward their unfortunate condition and are becoming restless under their yoke, and the masters, in the effort to retain them, are making that yoke even heavier; they extract their teeth, set on the dogs to tear them in pieces, the most lenient being he who but flogs his slaves until they are flayed.

In short, the growing population, its unusual class, the prosperity and safety of the nation, all seem to me to demand the placing at this point of a jéfe políticio *[political leader]* subordinate to the one at Béxar, and also a court of appeals. This done, I do not believe so radical a step as the separation of Texas from Coahuila, now desired by the inhabitants, would be necessary.

Alleine Howren, "Causes and Origin of the Decree of April 6, 1830," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XVI* (April, 1913), pp. 395-98.

General Manuel Mier y Terán
University of Texas Special Collections

ORTIZ REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT OF MEXICO ON THE COLONIZATION OF TEXAS, 1833

Primary Source

Tadeo Ortiz de Ayala filed a report appraising the situation in the frontier province of Texas in which he asserts that Texas will declare its independence if certain sets are not taken. The following is an excerpt of the Ortiz report.

February 2, 1833

As a commissioner of the Federal Union and as a Mexican, I believe that I would not be fulfilling my most sacred duty, if I did not take steps in the present difficulties, to give to your Excellency's government . . . a brief report of the deplorable condition in which I found the former Province of Texas. . . .

The class of people who have settled and who will continue to establish themselves in Texas is not unknown to your Excellency. . . . The colonists are natives of the southern states, of low morality and tend to divide the Anglo-Americans confederation; and, although in general industrious many are lazy, but nevertheless brave. At the same time they are corrupt, covetous, and aggressive; they are accustomed to pass life in absolute independence in the privations of the frontier and to enjoy an almost unlimited liberty. . . . Added to this are their unreasonable and insidious political claims, which . . . have directed and are directing the policies of the cabinet in Washington.

. . . It is believed . . . that the President of the United States *[Andrew Jackson]* and his partisans have secret views concerning Texas. . . . With the present Anglo-American minister to our government and with other persons he has an interest in a vast scheme of colonization lately granted to the empresario Austin and his company in defiance of the law of April 6, 1830. These secret views are as alarming as the policies of the government itself, which is interested in the increase of the emigration of criminals from the United States. These criminals have escaped from the courts and from the punishments which are irrevocably imposed there upon violators of the law. They have taken refuge in Texas and have formed a band of vandals who are very hard to control. They have outdone the few honest men. For this reason, Texas is likely to declare itself independent and thus endanger the integrity of the territory of the Republic. Although the United States might, by a Machiavellian policy, refuse to admit them into the Union, it would not fail to

encourage the establishment of an independent state between the two republics.

That the American government has sinister designs of Texas . . . is a truth based upon numerous authentic facts which it would be useless to relate.

I will be concrete and speak in this connection about the pernicious measure initiated a short time ago, which, on being put through by the present executive of the United States has crowded together more than 150,000 Indians who, driven from their ancient and primitive firesides without the slightest reason whatever, are now living and increasing in the most sterile region adjacent to and bordering on the very fertile lands of Mexico. These regions . . . will be occupied by them; and thanks to their abandoned condition . . . the dangers on the frontier will be aggravated to the injury of the rights of Mexico and the integrity of her territory.

. . . I venture to invoke the sacred name of my country, and I entreat Your Excellency to take this humble exposition into consideration and to present it for the deliberation of the next honorable assembly as one of the most urgent and important matters to be decided upon:

> To . . . provide for a system for the administration and settlement of the frontier territories . . . seeking after and admitting all families of foreign countries and especially attracting Mexican families with material inducements for the purpose of forming a mixed population capable of neutralizing the preponderance and influence of Anglo-American colonists.
>
> To establish a chain of colonies or military settlements of selected companies of cavalry and infantry of the regular army . . . for the security and defense of the colonists against foreign aggression and the incursions of barbarous tribes.
>
> To . . . formally wage war . . . on the savage hordes that infest the northern frontier and murder its inhabitants . . . .
>
> To invite the cooperation in this campaign of the most civilized and warlike tribes of the Cherokees and the Choctaws, enemies of the Comanches. The first named tribes have been from the United States and . . . are living on our frontiers in great numbers. They should be offered a part of the lands occupied by the Comanches . . . so that they may inhabit it as subjects of the Republic . . . .

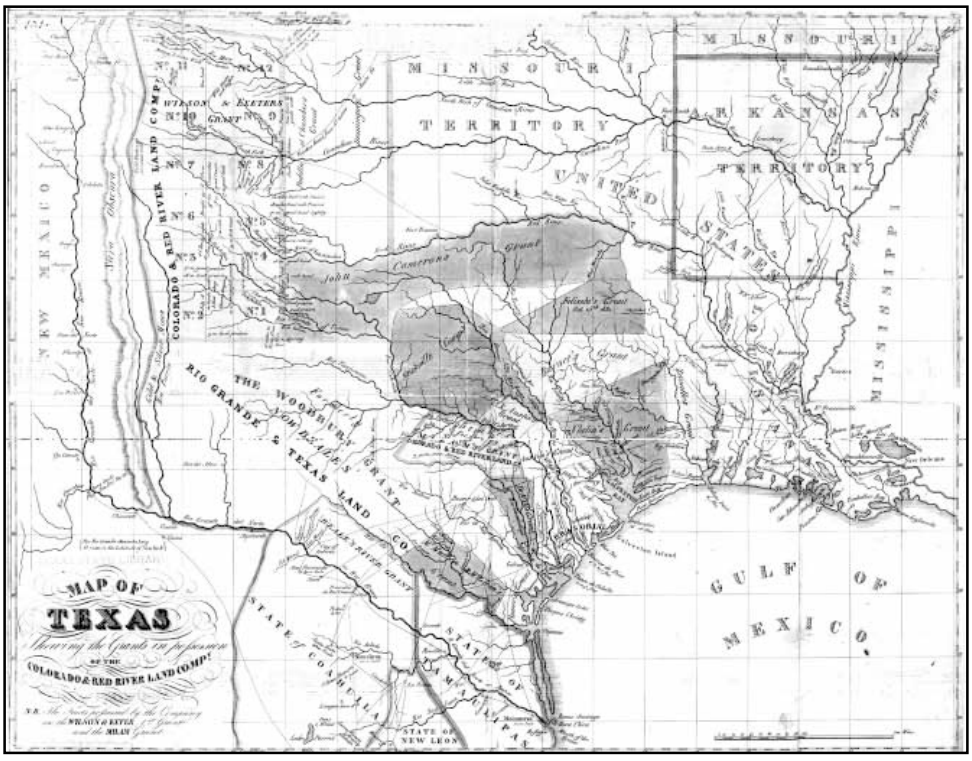
To free the territories in question from all taxes and contributions for ten years, by opening their ports for at least seven years to trade free from all general customs . . . .

To tolerate in the new frontier territories religious freedom and the introduction of individuals from all oppressed nations . . . .

To annul, without harming the established families, the concessions and prerogatives granted since the year 1827 to the national and foreign empresarios who have not respected the laws and not fulfilled their contract . . . .

These suggestions were prompted in my by the purest and most sincere patriotism in behalf of the great interests of my country . . . .These, in my judgment, are the only means of salvation . . . .

"Tadeo Ortiz de Ayala and the Colonization of Texas, 1822-1833," edited by Edith Louise Kelly and Mattie Austin Hatcher, *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly,* Vol. XXXII, No. 4 (April, 1929), pp. 311, 319–23



Colorado and Red River Land Company Map of Texas
Showing Empresario Grants and Adjoining States, ca. 1832
Texas State Library and Archives Commission

ANDREW JACKSON AND THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF TEXAS
Primary Source

President John Quincy Adams appointed Joel Poinsett as ambassador to Mexico and instructed him to negotiate a treaty with Mexico recognizing the Rio Grande as the US-Mexican boundary. Failing to win Mexico's acceptance, Poinsett negotiated a treaty recognizing the Sabine River as the boundary. Jackson was irritated believing that the Louisiana boundary extended to the Rio Grande and that the Adams administration was turning Texas over to Mexico. Since the Senate had not ratified the treaty, when Jackson became president he sought to reopen negotiations for the Rio Grande frontier and to arrange for the purchase of Texas and the acquisition of a western boundary at the 37th parallel to the Pacific Ocean. Jackson sent Colonel Anthony Butler to negotiate with Mexico. The following is an excerpt from a letter to Jackson in which Butler recommended that Texas be taken from Mexico by force.

Mexico City, October 2, 1833

My dear Sir,

A few days ago I wrote you on the subject of T. *[Texas*], and advised an immediate occupancy of the disputed Territory . . . .

There are at present in Mexico two gentlemen from T. bearers of a petition to the supreme government for permission to assume an independent state government and be separated from Coahuila *[Stephen Austin's mission to Mexico]*. It will be denied them, in which event say the agents, "we will immediately declare ourselves independent", and I know positively that one of the gentlemen, has already written to his constituents informing them of the probability of their petition being rejected, and advising that the minds of the people be prepared to hold a convention immediately on his return, and declare independence. I do not like to commit names to paper lest my letter should be intercepted, but the same individual has spoken with me freely on the subject, and I have listened to all he wished to say, without committing myself to any thing. He declares that he is decidedly for attaching that country to the U.S. and that nothing short of the desert will do as the boundary. That the application for a state government [separate from Coahuila] is all humbug. . . . [N]o one thinks of remaining connected with Mexico longer than the arrival of a convenient period for separation . . . .

Pray write me soon and fully, not only officially through the Department of State but privately and freely under your own hand. Let me know all you wish and all you intend, and rely on my efforts and cooperation with you to death. I will negotiate or fight just as you think best. I am frank and speak to you in all confidence of an old and tried friend when I say that my preference is for the latter. We have abundant cause for quarrel and it would cost less by one half, aye two thirds to take, than to purchase the territory. . . . Think well on this, and I know your decision will be right. Santa Anna is a vile hypocrite, and most unprincipled man. You can have no hold on his moral principles because he is without any. Count therefore on nothing but what we may be prepared to enforce.

Always and faithfully your friend and most obedient servant.

Anthony Butler

John Spencer Bassett (ed.), *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, Vol. V, 1833-1838* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1931), pp. 214-16.

Major General Andrew Jackson, President of the United States
Painted by Thomas Sully; engraved by James B. Longacre
Library of Congress, 1820

THE DECLARATION OF CAUSES FOR TAKING UP ARMS, NOVEMBER 3, 1835

Primary Source

Texans had met in convention on several occasions calling for changes in the administration of the government of Coahuila-Texas. Although some Texans were calling for independence, the majority sought to achieve their demands without resorting to revolution and issued a "Declaration of Causes" for defending themselves against the forces of Santa Anna. The assembly hoped to attract support from liberals in Mexico who opposed Santa Anna's dictatorship.

Whereas, General Antonio López de Santa Anna, and other military chieftains, have, by force of arms, overthrown the federal institutions of Mexico, and dissolved the social compact which existed between Texas and the other members of the Mexican confederacy; now the good people of Texas, availing themselves of their natural rights, solemnly declare,

That they have taken up arms in defense of their rights and liberties, which were threatened by the encroachments of military despots, and in defense of the republican principles of the federal constitution of Mexico, of eighteen and twenty-four.

That Texas is no longer morally or civilly bound by the compact of union; yet, stimulated by the generosity and sympathy common to a free people, they offer their support and assistance to such of the members of the Mexican confederacy as will take up arms against military despotism.

That they do not acknowledge that the present authorities of the nominal Mexican republic have the right to govern within the limits of Texas.

That they will not cease to carry on war against the said authorities whilst their troops are within the limits of Texas.

That they hold it to be their right during the disorganization of the federal system, and the reign of despotism, to withdraw from the union, to establish an independent government, or to adopt such measures as they may deem best calculated to protect their rights and liberties, but that they will continue faithful to the Mexican government so long as that nation is governed by the constitution. . . .

That she will reward, by donations in lands, all who volunteer their services in her present struggle, and receive them as citizens.

These declarations we solemnly avow to the world, and call God to witness their truth and sincerity, and invoke defeat and disgrace upon our heads, should we prove guilty of duplicity.

Eugene C. Barker, "The Texan Declaration of Causes for Taking Up Arms Against Mexico," *Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, XV (January, 1912), pp. 182-83, cited in *America's Frontier Story: A Documentary History of Westward Expansion* edited by Martin Ridge and Ray Allen Billington (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), pp. 429-30.

Antonio López de Santa Anna
Paul L'Ouvrier, New York Historical Society

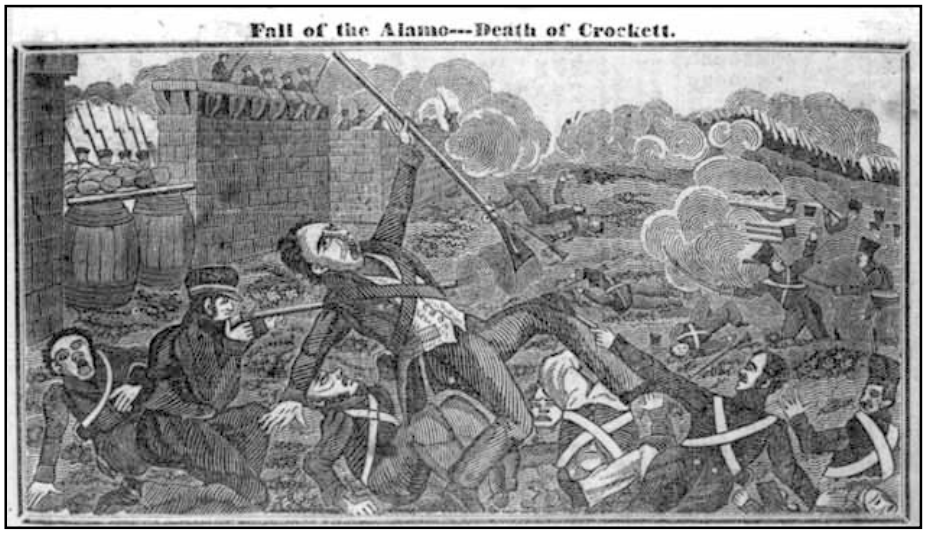
Santa Anna
Engraving, ca. 1845
The University of Texas at Arlington
Library Special Collections

APPEAL FROM THE ALAMO
Primary Source

In 1835 Colonel William B. Travis and a group of Texan volunteers seized the Alamo, an old Spanish mission which had been occupied by Mexican troops at the time of the revolt. Between February 23 and March 6, 1836 Mexican forces laid siege to the Alamo. Santa Anna had ordered no quarter for prisoners and 187 defenders perished; only one combatant survived by persuaded his captors that he had been forced to fight. A few women, children, and a black slave were also spared. "Remember the Alamo" became a rallying cry for Texans. A few days before the fall of the Alamo, Travis sent the following appeal for help.

Fellow Citizens and Compatriots:

I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continued bombardment for twenty-four hours and have not lost a man. The enemy have demanded a surrender at discretion; otherwise the garrison is to be put to the sword if the place is taken. I have answered the summons with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls.



Engraving from *Davey Crocket Almanack,* 1835–38
Library of Congress

I shall never surrender or retreat.

Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism, and of everything dear to the American character to come to our aid with all dispatch. The enemy are receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. Through this call may be neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country. Victory or death!

W. Barret Travis
Lieutenant Colonel Commanding

P.S. The Lord is on our side. When the enemy appeared in sight, we had not three bushels of corn. We have since found, in deserted houses, eighty or ninety bushels and got into the walls twenty or thirty head of beeves [beef].

Henderson Yoakum, *History of Texas*, Vol. 2 (New York: Redfield, 1856), pp. 76-77.

Ruins of the Alamo
Jacob Edmund Blake, 1845
National Archives

THE BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO
Primary Source

The Alamo fell on March 6, and later in the month Colonel Fannin, a Georgian commanding a force consisting of volunteers from the United States, surrendered his force near Goliad. Santa Anna, in order to discourage foreign support for the Texans, had ordered that all foreigners would be considered as pirates and killed. Fannin and his force of 342 were executed by a firing squad, even though they had been assured that they would be returned to the U.S. Santa Anna pursued the Texans and, in April, within a month after Fannin's surrender, confronted General Houston at San Jacinto. The following account of the ensuing battle is taken from a dispatch from General Rusk to David Burnet, President of Texas.

War Department, Headquarters, Army of Texas
San Jacinto River, April 22, 1836

To His Excellency David G. Burnet, President of Texas.

Sir: I have the honor to communicate to your excellency a brief account of a general engagement with the army of Santa Anna, at this place on the 21st. . . .

Our army, under the command of General Houston, arrived here on the 20th. . . . The enemy...were unconscious of our approach until our standard was planted on the banks of the San Jacinto. Our position was a favorable one for battle. On the noon of the 20th, the appearance of our foe was hailed by our soldiers with enthusiasm. The enemy...took a position in front of our encampment...where they panted their only piece of artillery. ...In a short time, the commenced firing upon us. . . . A charge was made on the left of our camp by their infantry, which was promptly repelled by a few shots from our artillery, which forced them to retire. . . .

The attack ceased; the enemy retired...and remained in that position, occasionally opening their cannon upon us, until just before sunset. . . .

Early next morning, about nine o'clock, the enemy received a reinforcement of five hundred men, under the command of General Martin Prefecto do Cos, which increased their strength to fourteen or fifteen hundred men. It was supposed that an attack upon our encampment

would now be made; and, having a good position, we stationed our artillery, and disposed of the forces, so as to receive the enemy to the best advantage. At three o'clock, however, the foe, instead of showing signs of attack, was evidently engaged in fortifying. We determined, therefore, immediately to assail him; and, in half an hour, we were formed in four divisions. . . . At the command to move forward, all divisions advanced in good order and high spirits. On arriving within reach of the enemy a heavy fire was opened, first with their artillery on our cavalry. A general conflict now ensued. Orders were given to charge. . . . Major-General Houston acted with great gallantry, encouraging his men to the attack, and heroically charged, in front of the infantry, within a few yards of the enemy, receiving at the same time a wound in his leg. The enemy soon took to flight, officers and all, some on foot and some on horseback. In ten minutes after the firing of the first gun, we were charging through the camp, and driving them before us. They fled in confusion and dismay down the river, followed closely by our troops for four miles. Some of them took the prairie, and were pursued by our cavalry; others were shot in attempting to swim the river; and in a short period the sanguinary conflict was terminated by the surrender of nearly all who were not slain in the combat. One half of their army perished; the other half are prisoners, among whom are General Santa Anna himself, Colonel Almonte, and many other prominent officers of their army. The loss of the enemy is computed at over six hundred slain, and above six hundred prisoners. . . . Our loss, in point of numbers, is small, it being seven slain and fifteen wounded.

This glorious achievement is attributed, not to superior force, but to the valor of our soldiers and the sanctity of our cause. . . . There was a general cry which pervaded the ranks—"Remember the Alamo! remember Bahia!" These words electrified all. "Onward!" was the cry. The unerring aim and irresistible energy of the Texan army could not be withstood. It was freemen fighting against the minions of tyranny, and the result proved the inequality of such a contest. . . .

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, yours,

Thomas J. Rusk, Secretary of War

P.S.—Since writing the above, General Cos has been brought in a prisoner by our cavalry. *T.J. Rusk*

John H. Jenkins, ed., *The Papers of the Texas Revolution, 1835-1836*, Vol. 6 (Austin: Presidial Press, 1973), pp. 10–13.

GOROSTIZA AND TORNEL Y MENDÍVIL: MEXICAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO
Primary Source

Manuel E. de Gorostiza, Mexican Ambassador to the United States, in a letter to the U.S. Secretary of State, gave his government's perspective on the importance of the battle of San Jacinto. The following is an excerpt from this letter.

Philadelphia
September 12, 1836

To the Honorable J. Forsyth, Secretary of State

. . . The undersigned will . . . remind the Secretary of State . . . that the . . . [Texans] were beaten wherever they appeared. They had, by their own confession only six hundred men under arms, commanded by General Houston. That general succeeded in surprising the vanguard of the Mexican army, and it was then only, when General Santa Anna, who, from accident or excess of zeal, was present, became the prisoner of the Texans, and was forced by them to sign an armistice, which was most improperly, and in a manner most contrary to all probability obeyed by General Filísola, that the Texans obtained the unexpected advantage of the evacuation of the territory. The undersigned conceives that none of these things indicate steadiness or consistency as yet. Had the general-in-chief President Santa Anna not been present at San Jacinto, or had General Filísola not obeyed the orders of the captive, the consequences of that battle would have been politically unimportant, and but very trifling in a military point of view. The situation of the Texans would not have been improved by the victory, as the Mexican force was still six or seven times greater than theirs. Moreover, the seasonal rains and fevers immediately afterwards, rendered the continuation of the war impossible—a circumstance which completely accounts for the subsequent inactivity.

The Mexican congress, however, has deprived the battle of San Jacinto of its political importance, by declaring null and void all acts signed by president Santa Anna during his captivity; and as the sickly season will soon have ended, the day is at hand when the Mexicans will cross the Colorado. The Texans will then have the opportunity of showing whether they possess the requisites for national freedom and independence. We shall then judge by actions, not by accidents, whether their movement assumes the

steady and consistent form which is necessary to render their ultimate success probable. . . .

—Manuel E. De Gorostiza

Senate Documents, 24th Congress, 2d Session, December 5, 1836-March 3, 1837, pp. 77-78.

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José María Tornel y Mendívil appraised the impact of the loss of Texas on Mexico.

. . . The loss of Texas will inevitably result in the loss of New Mexico and the Californias. Little by little our territory will be absorbed, until only an insignificant part is left to us. . . .

The resources of this country now available are more than sufficient to humble the pride of those who, not knowing how to defend their territory, obtained a victory at San Jacinto by a mere whim of fortune, that fickle goddess that seems to rejoice in disappointing those who place too much confidence in her favors. Five thousand infantry and 500 cavalry would be enough, more than enough, to put an end to the high hopes of the Texans, to drive them to the banks of the Sabine, and to reconquer the favors of destiny . . .

. . . The fear that we find ourselves involved in a war against the United States if we refuse to subscribe to the terms demanded is not without foundation. If their diplomacy has been dictated by a preconceived plan,—and this cannot be doubted by those who have observed the skill with which the cabinet in Washington directs its affairs—it is obvious that their aim has been to acquire possession of the disputed territory [the Nueces to the Rio Grande] by force if necessary. This will involve us in more serious difficulties than even those presented by the Texas question itself. War with the United States, however need not be feared, for our final salvation may depend upon it. . . .

Carlos E. Castañeda, trans.,*The Mexican Side of the Texas Revolution [1836] By the Chief Mexican Participants: General Antonio López de Santa Anna, D. Ramon Martinez Caro, General Vicente Filisola, General José Urrea, and General José María Tornel*, (Dallas: P. L. Turner Company, 1956), pp. 370-72.

MEXICO'S PERSPECTIVE ON ISSUES
Primary Source

In 1848 fifteen Mexican authors wrote an account of the Mexican-American War, *Apuntas para la historia de querra entre México y los Estados Unidos*, which was translated and published in English by Albert Ramsey in 1850. The following excerpt is a Mexican view of the Texas war for independence.

. . . The object which we aim at is to show that the United States intended to obtain . . . [Texas] at any price; and to accomplish it, introduced there her citizens, taking care to increase the population. . . . Their minds were prepared gradually to embrace the first opportunity that might offer to strike the blow. . . .

[Mexico] could not remain indifferent to the cry of a rebellion raised within her borders. In endeavored to have order restored in the department in a state of revolt, trying in the first place the conciliatory method of agreement. It proposed to the colonies new advantages, and franchises; among others, that of being exempt for another period of ten years from paying taxes. When it was seen only that every peaceable proposition was discarded, it was decided to declare war, and subject, by actual force, those who were not willing to hear any other argument than the roar of the cannon. . . .

The Texans, on their side, prepared to make a vigorous resistance. To sustain it they counted on effectual aid from the United States, which gave protection to them,—covert, indeed, but still decided and constant. Supplies for the war, arms, men, and whatever was requisite, left the most populous cities of the Union to assist the cause of the Texans, while it protested that it observes the most strict neutrality. . . .

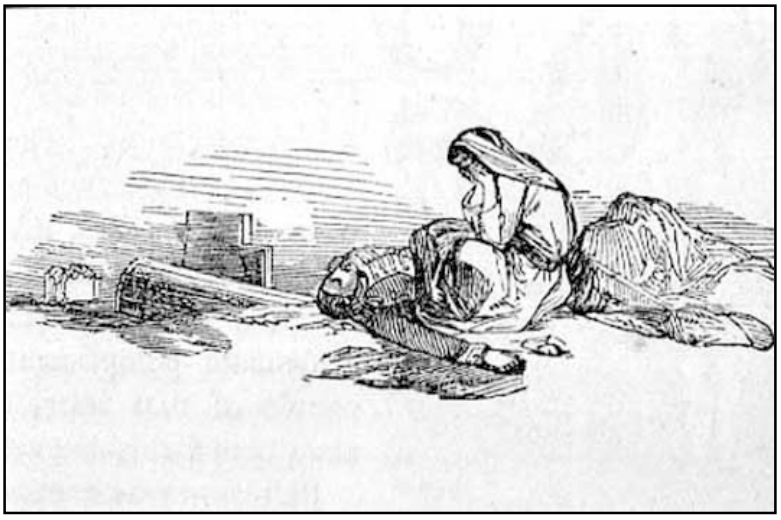
The United States, always giving out that they had no other object than to defend their threatened frontier, had sent a considerable force, under the orders of General Gaines, to the banks of the Sabine. They authorized him, if necessary, to advance to Nacogdoches, a place situated many leagues on this side of that river, and embraced, without any doubt, within the territory recognized as the Mexican. . . .

. . . The occupation of Nacogdoches by the troops of General Gaines consummated the violence to the Mexican territory. Thus in a time of peace between the two nations; when the North Americans proclaimed neutrality; when Mexico had given no offense; they penetrated into her territory armed, occupied her places, and took against her an imposing

and inimical attitude. To excuse this conduct the United States advanced nothing more substantial than that Mexico could not restrain the Indians on her territory from making hostile incursions against their citizens. This principle conflicted with the rules established for the regulation of international rights. According to these one people cannot take military possession of the territory of another under the plea of defending a frontier.

. . . The question of justice than only remained, and no doubt was entertained that forthwith we ought to declare war against the neighboring Republic. This was not done nevertheless, from the urgent reasons of the incalculable evils which would flow from an open contest with a powerful nation. We were disposed to let the cloud blow over; and even subsequently, when new causes of complaint were frequently received. Among these may be stated as the principal, the unwarrantable affair of the taking of Monterey in California, by Commodore Jones, which was passed over so as not to interrupt the peace subsisting. . . .

Albert C. Ramsey, ed. and trans. *The Other Side: or Notes for the History of the War between Mexico and the United States,* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), pp. 18–22.



La Llorona [*The Weeping Woman*]
Woodcut in *The Military Heroes of the War with Mexico*
The University of Texas at Arlington Library Special Collections

LESSON II
THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS AND THE CHEROKEE

A. LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Examine multiple perspectives by interpreting documents and explaining how different motives, beliefs, interests, and perspectives influence interpretations of the past.

2. Analyze the motives and interests expressed in primary and secondary sources, distinguishing between historical facts and interpretations.

3. Assess the role of the Cherokee during the Texas War for Independence.

4. Examine the relations between the Republic of Texas and the Cherokee.

B. LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Divide the class into cooperative learning groups and have each group read "The Texas Cherokee" (**Document 10**) and "The Cherokee Treaty of 1836" (**Document 11**). Provide groups with the map designating Cherokee land (**Document 12**) or project the map on an overhead. Have students discuss the two readings and examine the map noting the relative location of Indian lands in Texas to the western boundary of the United States. What resentment might Texans harbor toward the Cherokee? Why?

2. Have students within each group, using a jig-saw format, assume responsibility for one of the six documents: "Houston and the Cherokee," "Report of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs," "Houston's Letter to Chief Bowles," "Lamar's Letter to Chief Bowles," "Lamar's Letter to the Shawnee," and "Burnet's Address to Chief Bowles" (**Documents 13** through **18**), Distribute a copy of the timeline "A Chronology of the Texas War for Independence" (**Student Handout 2**) to each group and instruct students to refer to the timeline as they read their assigned document. Once students have read and discussed the documents within their assigned groups, select three students to assume the roles of Chief Bowles, Sam Houston, and Mirabeau Lamar. Have them prepare speeches reflecting the position of the individual they represent on the question of Cherokee rights to land within Texas. Present the speeches reflecting the three perspectives to the class.

3. Assign "An Appraisal of Chief Bowles" (**Document 19**). After reading the document students should discuss questions such as: What was Bowles' dilemma? What alternative course of action could he have taken? What logical position could the Texas Republic have taken toward the Cherokee? Conclude the lesson by having students write a character sketch of Chief Bowles assessing his leadership qualities.

Chief Bowles
Sketch by Grayson Harper

THE TEXAS CHEROKEE
Secondary Source

The following is a brief overview of the Texas Cherokee from their migration to the Texas War for Independence.

The Texas Cherokee were a branch of the Cherokee nation from the Southeastern United States. The Cherokee nation of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries faced several factional disputes made more pronounced by the pressures from the United States government for additional land sessions. One faction of the Cherokee withdrew from the nation and moved westward to Arkansas and in 1807 a delegation of Cherokee appealed to the Spanish commandant of Nacogdoches for permission to settle in Texas. Spain had adopted a policy permitting Indians from the United States to migrate to frontier regions as a means of forming a buffer against U.S. expansion west of the Mississippi. Over the next ten years other Cherokee from Arkansas migrated to the Spanish frontier. During the winter of 1819-1820, Chief Bowles [Duwali) led sixty families into Texas, first settling on the Trinity River near present-day Dallas. Prairie Indians were hostile and Bowles soon moved his settlement near (Nacogdoches (Spanish Fort) where they constructed homes, cleared the land, and planted crops. Bowles planted his colony at the time of the Mexican War for Independence in 1821.

After independence, Mexico followed Spain's example continuing the same liberal policy of opening the frontier to Indians from the United States. The Cherokee chiefs in Texas, understanding the need to secure sovereignty, negotiated with Mexican authorities to obtain guarantees to the land. In 1824 the Mexican congress approved a colonization law which opened Texas to settlers provided they met certain conditions. The law also stated that "Indians of all nations bordering on the state, as well as wandering tribes within its limits" were welcomed provided they supported the nation's religious and legal institutions. The Indian migrants were to be allotted lands equal to those of other settlers. Mirabeau Lamar, second president of the Texas Republic, later argued that neither the Spanish nor Mexican government had given Chief Bowles permission to move into Texas and therefore the Cherokee land claims were invalid.

As the United States began a policy of Indian removal in the Old Northwest other tribes began to move into Mexican Texas. As political disputes between American settlers and Mexico became more pronounced, the Mexican government cultivated Indian support as a threat to settlers who might contemplate rebellion. Texans, on the eve of their revolution, likewise sent ambassadors to the Cherokee to insure their

neutrality. Sam Houston was instrumental in gaining their promise of neutrality. Houston had lived among the Cherokee in Arkansas and, before leaving for Texas to seek his fortune, had taken an Indian wife and was adopted by the Cherokee. Houston's knowledge of Cherokee language and customs assisted him in dealing with Chief Bowles.

Mexican authorities monitored negotiations between the Cherokee and the Texans and, in an attempt to win support during the revolution, promised to recognize Indian land claims in East Texas. A militant Cherokee faction joined Mexican forces in the struggle, while the majority of the Cherokee walked a fine line between both warring parties. In February 1836, Houston completed treaty negotiations which promised the integrity of Cherokee lands. Chief Bowles was talking to both sides, taking advantage of every opportunity to play for time in order to forge the best deal for his people.

Settlers fled to the east as Santa Anna forces swept across Texas in 1836. As the refugees moved toward the U.S. border, they passed though Indian lands and vented their antagonisms against the Cherokee who they felt were aiding Mexico. Rumors of Indian massacres alarmed the residents of Nacogdoches, who called upon the U.S. Army under the command of General E. P. Gaines to assist in a defense against Indian attack. Believing that the Cherokee and their allies would cross the border into Louisiana, General Gaines ordered five companies of infantry to take up positions on the banks of the Sabine and prepare to move into Texas. Santa Anna's defeat at San Jacinto, April 21, 1836, calmed the situation and Gaines refrained from sending troops across the border. Despite Santa Anna's surrender, Mexican agents continued to work among the Indians in preparation for a counter-offensive to regain Texas. By July, General Gaines, convinced that Mexican forces were preparing to invade Texas and promote an Indian uprising, ordered three companies of dragoons and six companies of infantry into Texas. Gaines' authority rested on a treaty agreement between Mexico and the United States to protect the frontier from Indian attack. The United States argued that Gaines action was a preemptive strike permitted under the treaty.

Rumors of Cherokee support for Mexico persisted, and the Texas Republic looked upon the Cherokee as enemies of the state. They would soon expel the Cherokee from the lands that Houston had guaranteed them.

THE CHEROKEE TREATY, FEBRUARY 23, 1836
Primary Source

Sam Houston, who had considerable influence among the Cherokee, was sent to meet with Chief Bowles to insure their neutrality during the American settlers' war with Mexico. Houston and Colonel John Forbes, commissioners appointed by the provisional government of Texas, signed a treaty recognizing Cherokee land claims in Texas. Chief Bowles and seven other Cherokee chiefs negotiated on behalf of the Cherokee and their allies—Shawnee, Delaware, Kickapoo, Quapaw, Choctaw, Biloxi, Ioni, Alabama, Coushatta, Caddo of the Neches, Tahocullake, and Mataquo. The treaty designated a region of East Texas from the Sabine River south to the Old San Antonio Road and east and west between the Neches and Angelina rivers. Indians were required to cede all lands they claimed outside the territory and were obliged to relocate within the territory before November 1836. The treaty approved by a unanimous vote of the provisional government during the war for independence was rejected by the Senate of the Republic of Texas in 1837 after many of the Cherokee and their allies had moved into the region.

The parties declare, that there shall be a firm and lasting peace forever, and that a friendly intercourse shall be pursued, by the people belonging to both parties.

It is agreed and declared that the before named Tribes, or Bands shall form one community, and that they shall have and possess the lands within the . . . bounds.. . . .

It is agreed and declared, by the parties aforesaid that the Land, lying and being within the aforesaid limits shall never be sold . . . to any person or persons, power or Government, whatsoever else than the Government of Texas, and the Commissioners on behalf of the Government of Texas bind themselves, to prevent in future all persons from intruding within the said bounds . . . .

It is declared that no individual person, member of the Tribes before named, shall have power to sell, or lease land to any, person or persons, not a member or members of this community of Indians, nor shall any citizen of Texas, be allowed to Lease or buy land from any Indian or Indians.

That the Indians shall be governed by their own Regulations, and Laws, within their own territory. . . .

The Government of Texas shall have power to regulate Trade . . . but no Tax shall be laid on the Trade of the Indians.

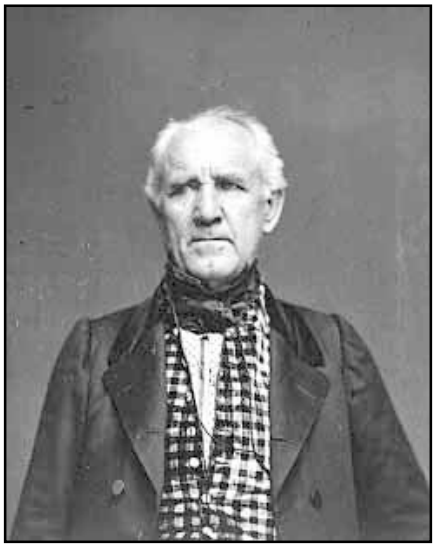
The Parties to this Treaty agree that one or more agencies, shall be created and at least one agent shall reside . . . within the Cherokee Villages, whose duty it shall be to see, that no injustice is done to them, or other members of the community of Indians.

The Parties, to this Treaty agree . . . that all the Lands and improvements now occupied by any of the before named Bands or Tribes, not lying within the limits before described shall belong to the Government of Texas and subject to its disposal.

The parties to this Treaty agree and stipulate that all the Bands or Tribes, as before recited . . . Shall remove within the before described limits, within Eight months from the date of this Treaty.

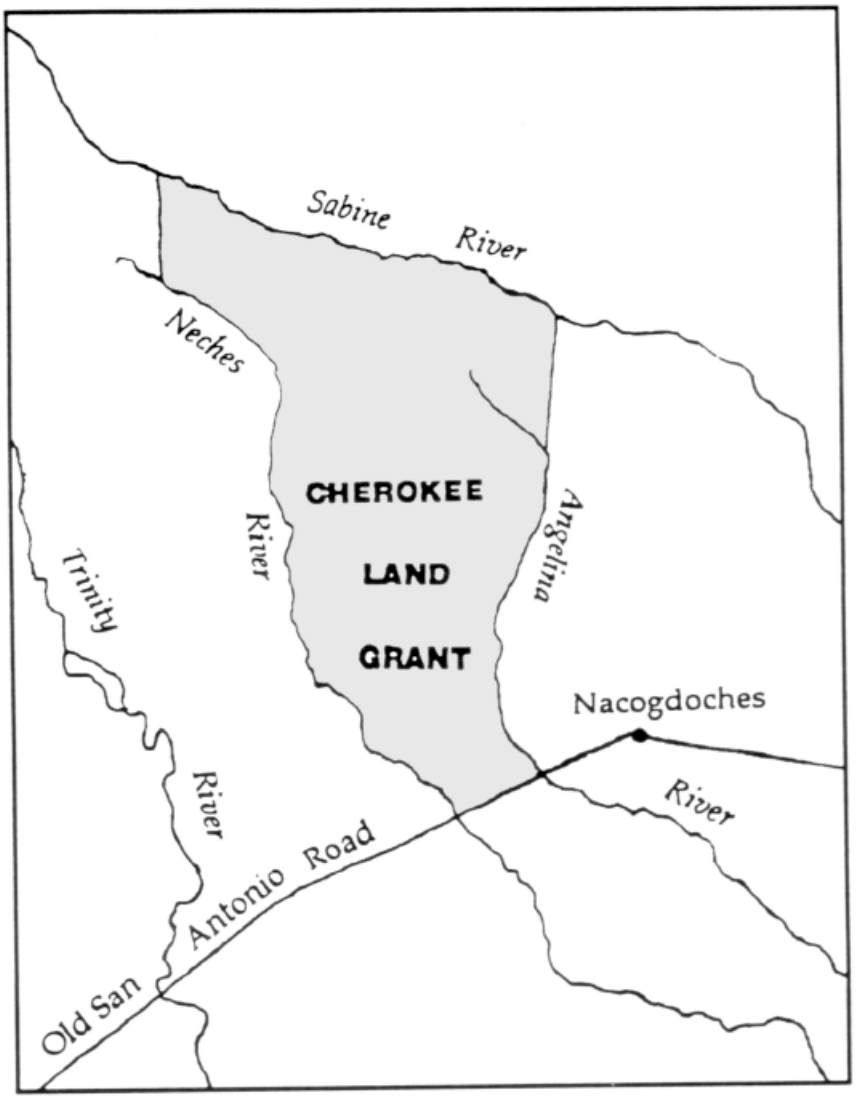
. . . Done at Colonel Bowles Village on the Twenty third day of February, Eighteen hundred and thirty six, and the first year of the Provisional Government of Texas.

John H. Jenkins (ed.), *Papers of the Texas Revolution, 1835-1836,* Vol. 4 (Austin: Presidial Press, 1973), pp. 415–18.



Sam Houston
Matthew Brady
Library of Congress

CHEROKEE LANDS: MAP OF THE CHEROKEE LANDS IN EAST TEXAS



TEXAS AND THE CHEROKEE: A CHRONOLOGY

1836

February 23	Santa Anna begins siege of the Alamo at San Antonio; Chief Bowles and Sam Houston sign a treaty recognizing Cherokee land claims in Texas
March 1	Texas proclaims its independence
March 4	Sam Houston named commander of the Texas army
March 6	Alamo overrun by Mexican forces, Captain William Travis, Davey Crockett, and other defenders of the Alamoare killed
March 27	Captain James Fannin and 300 defenders of Goliad are massacred on Santa Anna's orders
April 21	Battle of San Jacinto; Santa Anna captured
May 14	Santa Anna, while held captive, signs a treaty recognizing the independence of Texas; Mexican congress repudiates the treaty
October 22	Sam Houston inaugurated first president of the Republic of Texas

1837

August 4	Texas petitions for admission to the United States
August 25	United States officially refuses Texas annexation
October 12	Standing Committee on Indian Affairs recommends rejection of the Cherokee Treaty of 1836

1838

December 1	Mirabeau Lamar inaugurated second president of Texas

1839

June 27	President Lamar orders the removal of the Cherokee from Texas
July 14	Cherokee War begins
July 16	Chief Bowles killed while leading the Cherokee and their allies in battle
December 25	Chief Bowles's son, John Bowles, killed in battle; surviving Cherokee flee to Mexico

SAM HOUSTON AND THE CHEROKEE
Primary Source

Sam Houston was elected first president of Texas in September 1836. The following is taken from his inaugural address on October 22.

A subject of no small importance is the situation of an extensive frontier, bordered by Indians, and open to their depredations. Treaties of peace and amity, and the maintenance of good faith with the Indians, present themselves to my mind as the most grounds on which to obtain their friendship. Let us abstain on our part from aggressions, establish commerce with the different tribes, supply their useful and necessary wants, maintain even-handed justice with them, and natural reason will teach them the unity of our friendship.

—R. Earl McClendon. "First Treaty of the Republic of Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LII, No. 2 (1948-49), p. 41,

The treaty Houston signed with the Cherokee in February 1836 came before the Texas Senate met in December. The following is from the speech President Houston made to the Senate during consideration of the treaty in December 1836.

. . . [Y]ou will find upon examining this treaty that it is just and equitable and perhaps the best which could be made at the present time. It only secures to the said Indians usufructuary right to the country included within the boundary described in the treaty and does not part with the right of the soil, which is in this government; neither are the rights of any citizen of the Republic impaired by the views of the treaty but are all carefully secured by the third article of the same . . .

In considering this treaty you will doubtless bear in mind the very great necessity of conciliating the different tribes of Indians who inhabit portions of the country almost in the center of our settlements as well as those who extend along our frontier. This becomes the more judicious at present when we are at war with Mexico, the authorities of which have been laboring to engage the different tribes to war against us; and it has been confidentially stated that these Indians are among the number who have already engaged to join the Mexican army against us in the event of a second invasion, they being induced doubtless by promises of land and country; and should you ratify and confirm this treaty it doubtless would tend to secure their permanent friendship, a thing at this time much to be desired.

Ernest William Winkler (ed.), Secret Journals of the Senate, Republic of Texas, 1836-1845, pp. 35-36, cited in Chief Bowles and the Texas Cherokee by Mary Whatley Clarke (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), pp. 69-70.

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
OCTOBER 1837
Primary Source

Some ten months after the signing of the Cherokee treaty, the Texas Committee on Indian Affairs reported to the Texas Senate that the Cherokee treaty would be detrimental to the Republic and violate the legal right of many of its citizens. The Senate rejected the treaty in December 1837, over President Houston's objections. The following excerpt is taken from the report of the Committee on Indian Affairs.

. . . Your committee preparatory to investigating the Treaty concluded with the Cherokee Chiefs by Sam Houston and John. Forbes on the 23rd day of February 1836 have had under consideration the Declaration of the consultation dated 13 Nov. 1835 and which Declaration is submitted with this report.

Your Committee after mature reflection are of opinion that the Promises expressed in that declaration are false and that acknowledged rights when based of false Promises are of no effect and void, which your Committee conceived to be the case in this instance. There has been no evidence presented to us, nor do we know of any, showing that such a community exists as that recognized by the aforesaid Declaration (under the title of "Associated Bands") or that the rights therein mentioned ever did exist or were ever granted. On the Contrary there is before your Committee notorious evidence that part at least of the tribes enumerated in that list of which the Cherokee are presented as "Head Chiefs" "Elder Brothers" have been the most savage and ruthless of our frontier enemies ever since and even at the very date of the signing of this Treaty.

It is also notorious that no part of said tribes have been our friends in War.

James D. Day and Dorman Winfrey (eds.). *Texas Indian Papers*, Vol. 4 (Austin: Texas State Library, 1961), p. 22.

HOUSTON'S LETTER TO CHIEF BOWLES, AUGUST 1838
Primary Source

On hearing numerous reports that the Cherokee were supporting Mexican efforts to regain Texas, President Sam Houston wrote to Chief Bowles to advise him that his people would face destruction if they supported Mexican efforts to regain Texas.

Nacogdoches Texas
17 Aug. 1838

My Brother, when I wrote to you last I hoped that trouble would have ended. It has not been so. . . . I am told the enemy are in your village. . . . They must not stay in your country or it will make trouble. . . . Two thousand men on Red River are ordered under arms, and the united States soldiers and cannon on the Sabine are called for under the treaty [treaty between the Texas Republic and the United States], and will come. . . . In ten days we will have more than one thousand men here and I hope to the Great Spirit that my red brothers will not make war nor join our enemies, for it they gain a little now they must soon lose it all, and ruin will come upon them and their people. Remember your words spoken to me, and my words to you shall stand for I lie not to my red brothers. Be at peace and happy. General Rusk says if you are peaceful that you shall not be hurt nor your people. Remember me and my words. We have not asked you to join us to make war, but to remain at peace.

Nacogdoches
Sam Houston

Sam Houston, *Writings*, Vol. 2, p. 276, cited in Mary Whatley Clarke, *Chief Bowles and the Texas Cherokees* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 83.

PRESIDENT MIRABEAU LAMAR'S LETTER TO CHIEF BOWLES, MAY 26, 1839

Primary Source

Mirabeau Lamar did not share Sam Houston's cordial relations with the Cherokee. When he succeeded Houston as president of the Republic of Texas, he took steps to insure that the Cherokee would be expelled from the land they held in East Texas unless they submitted to the Republic. The following is an excerpt from a letter President Lamar sent to Chief Bowles explaining Texans objections to Indian-held lands within the Republic.

To Col. Bowles, and other Head men of the Cherokees:

. . . You and your People have been deceived by evil counselors. The forked tongue of the Mexicans has beguiled you; and you are running into dangerous paths, contrived by the enemies of Texas, for our injury and your ruin. ...Abandon your wicked and impotent advisers, and listen to the voice of reason and of power.

You assume to be acting under a treaty negotiated at your village, on the twentieth day of February, 1836, with commissioners appointed by the Provisional Government. No doubt there are those who would lead you to believe, that by virtue of that Treaty, you have a right to maintain, within the limits of this Republic, an independent Government, bearing no responsibility to us, as though we were a Foreign Nation. Be not deceived by this. For you may rest assured, that such counsels are fallacious and deceitful; and if you and your People shall be so unfortunate as to be guided by them, you will be led into inextricable difficulties and final destruction. The people of Texas have acquired their sovereignty by many rightful and glorious achievements, and they will exercise it without division or community with any other People. They can recognize no alien political power within their borders; and you and your tribe, having no legitimate rights of soil or sovereignty in this country, can never be permitted to exercise a conflicting authority.

The Treaty alluded to, was a nullity when made—is inoperative now;—has never been sanctioned by this Government, and never will be. It is, therefore, vain for you to build any hopes upon it. Such hope will only terminate in disappointment and despair. Even if this Government were for a moment to admit that Treaty to possess and sanctify or to convey any obligation on the part of Texas your people have defiled it by robbery and murder and have forfeited all claims which might accrue un-

der it, by leaguing with other Indians and Mexicans against our peace and safety. . . .

...[H]ow can this Government regard you in any other light than as a secret enemy or suspicious friend. Professing friendship yet in constant collusion with our foes, you cry peace, peace, when every action betrays a secret disposition to hostility. . . .

...Would it not be wise in you to say to the Government of Texas, the red man and the white man cannot dwell together? let us seperate [sic], not in wrath, but in friendship; and, on those sacred principles of generosity and virtue which the great Father of nations will approve and prosper.

I therefore, fell it to be my duty as Chief Magistrate of this Republic, to tell you, in the plain language of sincerity, that the Cherokees will never be permitted to establish a permanent and independent jurisdiction within the inhabited limits of this Government; that the...claims, which they set up to our territory now occupied by them, will never be allowed, and that they are permitted, at present, to remain where they are, only because this Government is looking forward to the time, when some peacible [sic] arrangements can be made for their removal, without the necessity of shedding blood, but that their final removal is contemplated, is certain; and that it will be affected, is equally so. . . .

. . .If you listen to the voice of reason, you may become a prosperous and happy nation; but if you follow the dictates of improper passions, your ruin is inevitable. This Government has no desire to wrong the Indian, or to shed his blood; but it will not hesitate to adopt the most vigorous and decisive measure for the defense of its rights and the protection of its people.

Your Friend
Mirabeau B. Lamar

Houston
May 26th 1839.

Gulick, Charles A., Jr. (ed.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, Vol. 2 (New York: AMS Press, 1973), pp. 590-94.

PRESIDENT MIRABEAU LAMAR'S LETTER TO THE SHAWNEE
JUNE 3, 1839
Primary Source

President Lamar urged the Shawnee to distance themselves from the Cherokee who he believed were assisting Mexico in its attempt to regain Texas. In the following letter, Lamar pledges friendship with the Shawnee and warns them not to ally with the Cherokee in the event of a war.

To Lin-nee [Sin-nee] and other Chiefs and head-men of the Shawnees.

Brothers! We have long suspected that the Cherokees were our secret enemies: that while we were treating them with kindness, and they were professing friendship for us, they were holding dark Councils with the Mexicans. These suspicions are now reduced to absolute proof. The treachery and the hostile machinations of the Cherokees have been fully discovered. They have listened to the forked tongue of the Mexicans, who are always women in war, and wily serpents in peace; and they have foolishly plighted their faith to the faithless.

The Cherokee can no longer remain among us. They must return to the land appropriated by their great father, the President of the United States for the permanent residence of their people. I hope they will go in peace, and return no more; for we have no wish to shed the blood of the red men. Brothers! You are not Cherokees; and we believe you have not participated in their crafty and treacherous devices, or mingled your voices in their wicked Councils. Be admonished, and refrain from all collusion with them, and with their impotent advisers beyond the Rio Grande. The Mexicans can render them no aid. They will fulfill no promise they may make to them or to you: for they are strong only in words. But they are willing to see the white men and the red men employed in the mutual destruction of each other. They are wolves who profit by the conflicts of nobler animals. We are much stronger now than when we conquered their best armies, headed by their greatest War Chief, and drove them from our soil. Let not the Shawnees be deceived. The Mexicans will never return in battle array to Texas. Small skulking parties may wind their way, like snakes in the grass, along our unsettled frontier where the feet of our warriors seldom come with lying tongues to beguile the red men, and to seduce them into a war with us, which they dare not encounter themselves. Brothers! Listen not to evil Council. Should the Cherokee refuse to leave our territory, force must be employed: for they must go. We can no longer permit such vipers to remain amongst us. But let the Shawnees be wise; and take no part in the

controversy. Remain at your homes: or pursue the game in peace. Let not the white Man's blood sprinkle your path: or his property be the object of your prey. And when the great Council of Texas shall assemble, about the time the leaves begin to fall...I will present your case to them, in the words of truth. Then, I trust, an amicable arrangement may be effected which will be satisfactory both to you and to us and make smooth, and pleasant the paths of the Shawnees and of our people.

Brothers! Confide in what I say to you. I speak the language of truth and have no hidden purpose to deceive.

Houston June 3d 1839.
Mirabeau B. Lamar

Charles A. Gulick, Jr. and Katherine Elliott (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, Vol. 3 (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1974), pp. 11–12.

Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar
Texas State Library

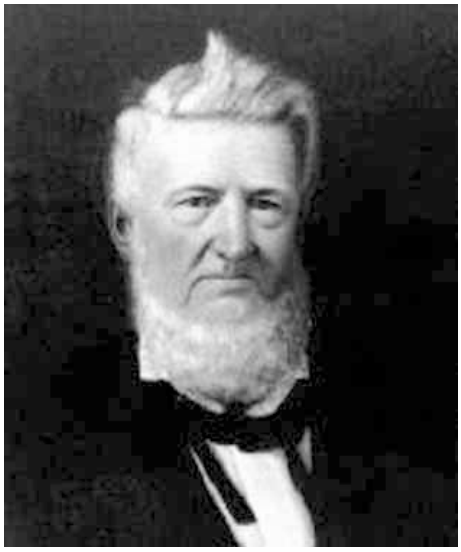
VICE PRESIDENT BURNET'S ADDRESS TO CHEROKEE CHIEF BOWLES, JULY 11, 1839

Primary Source

The Vice President of the Texas Republic shared President Lamar's views that the Cherokee were in league with Mexicans who were trying to promote internal rebellion to pave the way for a war to recapture Texas. The following is an excerpt from the Vice President's warning to the Cherokee.

. . . [W]e have conquered the country from the Mexicans. It is ours. Mexicans and our people cannot live together in peace. . . . The Mexicans are our enemies and the Cherokees are their friends. They have protected Mexican traitors. . . . For these reasons the President believes that we cannot live together in peace. Therefore the Cherokees had better go away. . . . The president desires peace but is always ready for war. The Cherokees are few whilst the Texans are like leaves on the trees, and are daily increasing from the United States. They had better go in peace to that place where they will be protected and remain at peace, then stay here where they will be destroyed.

Mary Whatley Clarke, *Chief Bowles and the Texas Cherokee* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), pp. 100–01



David Gouverneur Burnet
The Texas State Historical Association

AN APPRAISAL OF CHIEF BOWLES
Primary Source

Texas President Mirabeau Lamar commissioned John Reagan in 1839 to deliver a message to Chief Bowles instructing the Cherokee to leave Texas. Shortly thereafter war broke out between the Texans and the Cherokee and their Indian allies. In his memoirs Reagan writes about the meeting with Chief Bowles and the ensuing conflict.

. . . President Lamar said in his message that Texas could not permit such an enemy to live in the heart of the Republic, and that the Cherokees must go to the north of the Red River, peaceable if they would, by compulsion if they must. . . .

. . . Bowles stated that his young men were for war, and that they believed they cold whip the whites. He said all the council was for war except himself and Big Mush, one of his chiefs. He said he knew that in the end the whites would whip them, but, he added, "It will cost you a bloody frontier war for ten years." He also said that while he did not concur in the judgment of his tribe, he had led them many years since separating from the main tribe of the Cherokees . . . . With the consent of Mexico, he had settled near the Spanish fort at Nacogdoches. . . . He also declared that General Houston had confirmed their right to that country by treaty.

. . . Bowles said if he fought, the whites would kill him; and if he refused to fight, his own people would kill him. He added that to him personally it mattered little, that he was eighty-three years old, and by the laws of nature could live but little longer . . . . His tribe, he said, had always been true to him, and though he differed with them in opinion, he would stand by them. The council ended with the understanding that war was to follow.

. . . The two armies now began to assemble. General Rusk's regiment moved up within about six miles of where the Indians were in camp under Chief Bowles, and the leaders soon agreed on a neutral line, which was not to be crossed by either side . . . .

About sunrise on the morning of July 15, John Bowles, a son of Chief Bowles . . . rode into camp under a flag of truce, and notified General Albert Sidney Johnston, the Secretary of War of the republic, who was with us, that he was instructed by his father to report that . . . the Cherokees would break camp that day and move to the west of the

Neches River. General Johnston thanked him, observing that Chief Bowles had acted honorably in giving notice of his move, and requested him to say to his father that the Texans would accordingly give pursuit.

After the Texas forces had crossed the Neches, our officers sent forward some scouts with instructions to the effect that if they came up with the Indians they were to open fire at long range, without exposing themselves too much, so as to keep the Texans advised of the position of the enemy . . . .

When the firing of our scouts was heard, Burleson's [General Edward Burleson, commander of Texas regulars] regiment . . . moved forward to the rear of the line of the Indian . . . .

In this engagement we lost but six men killed and a few wounded. The Indian loss was much greater, and they retreated; we learned, however, that but a part of their warriors were engaged. We camped on the battlefield, and the next day again encountered the enemy in full force near the Neches.

Chief Bowles displayed great courage in these battles. In the second engagement he remained on the field on horseback, wearing a military hat, silk vest, and handsome sword and sash which had been presented to him by President Houston. He was a magnificent picture of barbaric manhood and was very conspicuous during the whole battle, being the last to leave the field when the Indians retreated. His horse, however, was now disabled, and he dismounted, after having been wounded himself. As he walked away he was shot in the back and fell. Then, as he sat up with his face toward us, I started to him with a view to secure his surrender. As the same time my captain, Bob Smith, with a pistol in his hand, ran toward him from farther down the line. We reached him at the same instant, and realizing what was imminent, I called, "Captain, don't shoot him." But he fired, striking Bowles in the head, and killing him instantly.

I had been so impressed with the manliness and dignity of Chief Bowles in the consultations which preceded the war, and with his conspicuous bravery in battle, that I did not want to see him killed, and would have saved his life if I could.

John H. Reagan, *Memoirs With Special Reference to Secession and the Civil War* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1906), pp. 29-35.

LESSON THREE
THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

A. OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the ideology of Manifest Destiny and examine how the concept influenced the westward expansion of the United States.

2. Identify historical antecedents leading to the war with Mexico.

3. Examine the arguments in support of and opposition to U.S. policy leading to the war with Mexico.

4. Compare and contrast competing historical narratives and demonstrate how an emphasis on different perspectives contributes to different interpretations.

B. TEACHING ACTIVITIES

1. Begin the lesson with a map study using a historical atlas showing Texas, Mexico, and the United States including disputed territory in the Southwest. Students should be able to locate the Sabine River, Nueces River, Red River, Arkansas River, Rio Bravo del Norte (Rio Grande), Matamoros, Corpus Christi, Santa Fe, and Monterey, Alta California and relate the importance of the relative location of these places during the course of the lesson.

2. Have two students read the excerpts from Daniel Cloud and José María Tornel y Mendívil (**Document 20**) which give different perspectives on Manifest Destiny. Assign John O'Sullivan's editorial (**Document 21**) and discuss the issues raised by the editorial and compare and contrast to Cloud's earlier expression of Manifest Destiny and Tornel y Mendívil's view of U.S. expansion. Have students assume different roles and examine attitudes towards Manifest Destiny from the perspective of an American settler, Mexican resident of California or the Southwest, and American Indians on the frontier. Students may write an editorial response to the O'Sullivan article, construct a broadside, or deliver a speech expressing one of these perspectives on Manifest Destiny.

3. Assign President Polk's State of the Union Address (**Document 22**) and his message to the Senate (**Document 23**). List and discuss the outstanding issues between Mexico and the United States and

explain how President Polk intended to resolve these differences. After discussing both readings, assign Mexico's perspective on the issues (**Document 24**) and explain the differences in the two perspectives.

4. Assign Polk's War Message (**Document 25**). Have students read the message or assign a student to deliver it as a speech before Congress. As a class activity or homework assignment, students should complete the "Reporter Dispatch Sheet" specifying the reasons for the Mexican-American War (**Student Handout 3**). Have selected students read their dispatches aloud. What were the most important aspects of the president's war message? How would you expect the public to response to the message? How would Mexican officials react to these charges?

5. Assign individual students **Documents 26–33** (**Documents 26–29** support U.S. actions while **Documents 30–33** are voices of dissent). You may wish to have students assume responsibility for each of the documents and explain the arguments presented in their assigning readings through a jigsaw approach. Conduct a general class discussion on the causes for war. Do these documents support or reject John O'Sullivan's views of Manifest Destiny? Do they confirm President Polk's conviction on the causes for war or do they support Senator Daniel Webster's assertion that they were pretexts for war? To what extent do the documents appeal to emotions?

   As an alternative strategy, conduct a Congressional Hearing on the causes of the war. Students should be divided into three groups; the congressional panel, individuals testifying before the committee, and journalists. The Congressional Panel should consist of six students each designated with the role of a Democrat or Whig representing three regions of the country: Northeast, Midwest, and South. Those testifying before the committee assume the role of the individual represented in their assigned reading (**Documents 26–33**). Depending on class size, you may wish to assign documents to more than one student. The size of the third group representing journalists should be smaller. This group is to assume the responsibility of issuing news releases on the testimony before the Congressional Committee. Their responsibilities could be expanded to include the publication of a newspaper on the war.

   Begin the activity by arranging the classroom to resemble a congressional hearing room. You may wish to have students construct

posters, banners, or displays to express their views on the causes of war and use them in their presentations before the panel. Begin the testimony with a short opening statement followed by questions from the Congressional Committee. Establish a time limit for each of the presentations.

6. Conclude the lesson with a discussion of how historians view the causes for the war. Divide the class into two groups and assign one Hubert Bancroft's views (Document 34) and the other Justin Smith's views (**Document 35**). Through a general class discussion or a dyad activity, examine the points presented in these two readings and debate the causes for the Mexican-American War. What accounts for differences in historical interpretations on the causes of the war? What evidence seemed to have the greatest impact in determining their respective views? As an extension of this activity, have students research views of other historians and speculate as to the reasons for changing interpretations.

C. EXTENSION LESSON

You may wish to extend the lesson by having students conduct independent research on topics related to the study of the Mexican- American War.

1. Construct a position paper outlining Congressman Abraham Lincoln's views on the causes of the War with Mexico and contrast them with President Polk's arguments presented in his war message. Draw evidence from Lincoln's "spot resolutions" of December 22, 1847, and his House speech on the War with Mexico, January 12, 1848. Investigate the reaction of Illinois Democrats to Lincoln's stand by examining the censure resolution passed by the Illinois legislature.

2. Investigate the mistaken adventure of Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones in Monterey, October 20-21, 1842, and prepare an oral report examining how this episode reflected U.S. interests in California. How did Mexican officials respond to the affair? What was the official U.S. response? To what extent did the Monterey Affair harden Mexico's resolve in negotiating with the U.S. and hinder future diplomatic relations?

TWO PERSPECTIVES ON MANIFEST DESTINY
Primary Source

Daniel Cloud, a young lawyer from Kentucky, accompanied Davey Crockett to Texas in January 1836. Cloud wrote the following letter home while on his sojourn to Texas:

The tide of emigration will be onward and irresistible and he whose life is spared fifty years will see apostles of liberty and republicanism, the sons of our blessed country descending the western declivities of the Rocky Mountains, bearing in one hand the olive branch of peace and the implements of husbandry—in the other, the weapons of defense and security to shed on that benighted region the light of Christianity and the blessings of civilization and free government, than the mighty waves of the monarch of oceans which wash the East Indies, the hoary empire of China and the islands of Polynesia on the east, shall waft all their stores of plenty into the republican ports of our mammoth confederacy of the west.

The Cloud Family Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 16, cited in Jeff Long, *Duel of Eagles: The Mexican and U.S. Fight for the Alamo* (New York: William Morrow, 1990), pp., 128-29.

* * * * * *

Mexico's Secretary of War, José María Tornel y Mendívil, described the character and desires of the United States as he saw them in 1836.

. . . To wish, to wait, and to act describe the distinctive character of the government and the people of the United States. No nation in the civilized world can equal them in their boundless ambition. The object of their heart's desire having been determined, they lie in wait for the propitious moment, assuming a disinterested and indifferent attitude in the meanwhile which is foreign to their true feelings, until circumstances favor their designs, when they ruthlessly trample everything in the way of their desire. This is a historical truth as clear as the light of day. . . .

Carlos E. Castañeda, trans. *The Mexican Side of the Texas Revolution [1836] By the Chief Mexican Participants: General Antonio López de Santa Anna, D. Ramon Martinez Caro, General Vicente Filisola, General José Urrea, and General José María Tornel* (Dallas: P. L. Turner Company, 1956), p.294.

JOHN L. O'SULLIVAN, MANIFEST DESTINY
Primary Source

John O'Sullivan, founder and first editor of the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, first used the expression "Manifest Destiny" in an editorial on the annexation of Texas in July 1845. O'Sullivan claimed that divine providence destined the United States to spread over the continent.

It is time now for opposition to the annexation of Texas to cease, all further agitation of the waters of bitterness and strife, at least in connection with this question, even thought it may perhaps be required of us as a necessary condition of the freedom of our institutions, that we must live on forever in a state of unpausing struggle and excitement upon some subject or party division or other. But, in regard to Texas, enough has now been given to party. It is time for the common duty of patriotism to the country to succeed; or if this claim will not be recognized, it is at least time for common sense to acquiesce with decent grade in the inevitable and the irrevocable

Texas is now ours. . . . Her star and her stripe may already be said to have taken their place in the glorious blazon [banner] of our common nationality; and the sweep of our eagle's wing already includes within its circuit the wide extent of her fair and fertile land.

. . . [O]ther nations have undertaken to intrude themselves into it [Texas annexation] . . . in a spirit of hostile interference against us, for the avowed object of thwarting our policy and hampering our power, limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions. . . .

It is wholly untrue, and unjust to ourselves, the pretense that the annexation has been a measure of spoliation . . . of territorial aggrandizement at the expense of justice. . . . This view of the question is wholly unfounded. . . .

She was released, rightfully and absolutely released, from all Mexican allegiance . . . by the acts and fault of Mexico herself, and Mexico alone. There never was a clearer case. . . . .What then can be more preposterous than all this clamor by Mexico . . . against annexation, as a violation of any rights of hers . . . ?

. . . California will, probably, next fall away from the loose adhesion which, in such a country as Mexico, holds a remote province in a slight equivocal kind of dependence. . . .

In the case of California . . . the Anglo-Saxon foot is already on its borders. Already the advance guard of the irresistible army of Anglo-Saxon emigration has begun to pour down upon it, armed with the plough and the rifle, and marking its trail with schools and colleges, courts and representative halls, mills and meetinghouses. A population will soon be in actual occupation of California, over which it will be idle for Mexico to dream of dominion. They will necessarily become independent. All this without agency of our government, without responsibility of our people—in the natural flow of events. . . .

Whether they will then attach themselves to our Union or not, is not to be predicted with any certainty. Unless the projected railroad across the continent to the pacific be carried into effect . . . ; the day is not distant when the empires of the Atlantic and Pacific would again flow together into one, as soon as their inland border should approach each other. But that great work . . . cannot remain long unbuilt.

. . . Away, then, with all idle . . . talk of balances of power on the American Continent. There is no growth in Spanish America! Whatever progress of population there may be in the British Canadas, is only for their own early severance of their present colonial relation to the little island 3,000 miles across the Atlantic; soon to be followed by annexation, and destined to sell the still accumulating momentum of our progress.

Texas Annexation March and Quick Step Composed and arranged at the request of General Taylor, n.d. The University of Texas at Arlington Library Special Collection

And whosoever may hold the balance, though they should cast into the opposite scale all the bayonets and cannon, not only of France and England, but of Europe entire, how would it kick the beam against the simple, solid weight of the 250, or 300 million—and American millions—destined to gather beneath the flutter of the stripes and stars, in the fast hastening year of the Lord 1945!

United States Magazine and Democratic Review, July 1845, cited in *Annals of America*, vol. 7 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1976), pp. 288-92.

PRESIDENT POLK'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS, December 2, 1845

Primary Source

In his first message to Congress, President James K. Polk addressed foreign policy issues relative to the annexation of Texas and diplomatic relations with Mexico. He began his speech with a recognition of foreign policy problems and spoke of his desire to preserve peace but also to be prepared to resist aggression. The following is an excerpt from this State of the Union message.

. . . I regret to inform you that our relations with Mexico since your last session have not been of the amicable character which it is our desire to cultivate with all foreign nations. On the 6th day of March last the Mexican envoy . . . to the United States made a formal protest in the name of his Government against the joint resolution passed by Congress "for the annexation of Texas to the United States," which he chose to regard as a violation of the rights of Mexico, and in consequence of it he demanded his passports. . . . Our . . . minister plenipotentiary to Mexico was refused all official intercourse with that Government and . . . returned to the United States. Thus, by the acts of Mexico, all diplomatic intercourse between the two counties was suspended.

Since that time Mexico has until recently occupied an attitude of hostility toward the United States—has been marshaling and organizing armies, issuing proclamations, and avowing the intention to make war on the United States, either by an open declaration or by invading Texas. Both the Congress and the convention of the people of Texas invited this Government to send an army into that territory to protect and defend them against he menaced attack. The moment the terms of annexation offered by the United States were accepted by Texas the latter became so far a part of our own country as to make it our duty to afford such protection and defense. I therefore deemed it proper, as a precautionary measure, to order a strong squadron to the coasts of Mexico and to concentrate an efficient military force on the western frontier of Texas. Our army was ordered to take position in the country between the Nueces and the Del Norte (Rio Grande), and to repel any invasion of the Texan territory which might be attempted by the Mexican forces. . . . The independence of Texas is a fact conceded by Mexico herself, and she had no right or authority to prescribe restrictions as to the form of government which Texas might afterwards choose to assume. But though Mexico can not complain of the United States on account of the annexation of Texas, it is to be regretted that serious

causes of misunderstanding between the two countries continue to exist, growing out of unrepressed injuries inflicted by the Mexican authorities and people on the persons and property of citizens of the United States through a long series of years. Mexico has admitted these injuries, but had neglected and refused to repair them. Such was the character of the wrongs and such the insults repeatedly offered to American citizens and the American flag by Mexico, in palpable violation of the laws of nations. . . .

. . . We have . . . borne the repeated wrongs she had committed with great patience, in the hope that a returning sense of justice would ultimately guide her councils and that we might, if possible, honorably avoid any hostile collision with her. . . . With this view I caused steps to be taken . . . to ascertain . . . what the designs of the Mexican Government were. . . . On the 9th of November an official answer was received that the Mexican Government consented to renew the diplomatic relations which had been suspended in March last, and for that purpose were willing to accredit a minister from the United States. With sincere desire to preserve peace and restore relations of good understanding between the two Republics, I waived all ceremony . . . and, assuming the initiative, on the 10th of November a distinguished citizen of Louisiana [John Slidell] was appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Mexico, clothed with full powers to adjust and definitively settle all pending differences between the two countries, including those of boundary between Mexico and the State of Texas. The minister has set out on his mission and is probably by this time near the Mexican capital. He has been instructed to bring the negotiations with which he is charged to a conclusion at the earliest practicable period, which it is expected will be in time to enable me to communicate the result to Congress during the present session. . . .

The State of the Union Messages of the Presidents, 1790-1966, vol. 1, 1790–1860 (New York: Chelsea House, 1967), pp. 636-40.

PRESIDENT POLK'S MESSAGE TO THE SENATE, MARCH 24, 1846
Primary Source

President Polk sent the following message to the Senate regarding the effects of political instability in Mexico on negotiations between the two countries and his justification for deployment of troops on the frontier.

Mexican Troops on the Move
Gleasons Picture Service, n.d.
The University of Texas at Arlington Library

The state of our relations with Mexico is still in an unsettled condition. Since the meeting of Congress another revolution has taken place in that country, by which the Government has passed into the hands of new rulers. This event has procrastinated, and may possibly defeat, the settlement of the differences between the United States and that country. The minister of the United States to Mexico [John Slidell] at the date of the last advises had not been received by the existing authorities. Demonstration of a character hostile to the United States continues to be made in Mexico, which has rendered it proper in my judgment, to keep nearly two-thirds of our Army on our Southwestern frontier. In doing this, many of the regular posts have been reduced to a small force inadequate to the defense should an emergency arise.

In view of these circumstances, it is my judgment that an increase of our naval and military force is at this time required to place the country in a suitable state of defense. At the same time, it is my settled purpose to pursue such a course of policy as may be best calculated to preserve both with Great Britain and Mexico an honorable peace, which nothing will so effectually promote as unanimity in our councils and a firm maintenance of all our just rights.

James K. Polk

James D. Richardson (ed.), *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, vol. V (NY: Bureau of National Literature, Inc., 1897), p. 2278.

MEXICO'S PERSPECTIVE ON ISSUES
Primary Source

Leading Mexican authors wrote an account of the causes of the Mexican-American War in which they argued that the United States promoted the war to acquire Mexican territory. The following excerpt is an English translation by Albert Ramsey published in the United States in 1850.

. . . While the United States seemed to be animated by a sincere desire not to break the peace, their acts of hostility manifested very evidently what were their true intentions. Their ships infested our coasts; their troops continued advancing upon our territory, situated at places which under no aspect could be disputed. Thus violence and insult were united: thus at the very time they usurped part of our territory, they offered to us the hand of treachery, to have soon the audacity to say that our obstinacy and arrogance were the real causes of the war.

To explain the occupation of the Mexican territory by the troops of General Taylor, the strange idea occurred to the United States that the limits of Texas extended to the Rio Bravo del Norte [Rio Grande]. This opinion was predicated upon two distinct principles: one, that the Congress of Texas had so declared it . . . ; and another, that the river mentioned had been the natural line of Louisiana. To state these reasons is equivalent at once to deciding the matter; for no one could defend such palpable absurdities. The first . . . would have been ridiculous in the mouth of a child. Whom could it convince that the declaration of the Texas Congress bore a legal title for the acquisition of the lands which it appropriated to itself with so little hesitation? If such a principle were recognized, we ought to be very grateful to these gentlemen senators who had the kindness to be satisfied with so little. Why not declare the limits of the rebel state extended to San Luis, to the capital, to our frontier with Guatemala?

. . . [T]o pretend that the limits of Louisiana came to the Rio Bravo, it was essential to confound this province with Texas, which never . . . had extended its territory to the Rio Bravo, being only to the Nueces. . . . Lastly, a large part of the territory situated on the other side of the Bravo, belonged, without dispute or doubt, to other states of the Republic—to New Mexico, Tamaulipas, Coahuila, and Chihuahua.

Then, after so many and such plain proceedings, is there one impartial man who would not consider the forcible occupation of our territory by the North American arms a shameful usurpation? . . . When the

question had resolved itself into one of force . . . the bloody hand of our treacherous neighbors was turned to present the olive of peace. The Secretary of State, Mr. Buchanan, on the 27th of July, 1846, proposed anew, the admission of an Envoy to open negotiations which might lead to the concluding of an honorable peace. The national government answered that it could not decide, and left it to Congress to express its opinion of the subject. . . . [T]hey ordered a commissioner with the army, which invaded us from the east, to cause it to be understood that peace would be made when our opposition ceased. Whom did they hope to deceive with such false appearances? . . . Among the citizens themselves, of the nation which has made war on us, there have been many who defended the cause of the Mexican Republic. These impartial defenders have not been obscure men, but men of the highest distinction. Mexico has counted on the assistance, ineffectual, unfortunately, but generous and illustrious, of a Clay, an Adams, a Webster, a Gallatin; that is to say, on the noblest men, the most appreciated for their virtues, for their talents, and for their services. Their conduct deserves our thanks, and the authors of this work have a true pleasure in paying, in this place, the sincere homage of their gratitude. . . .

Albert C. Ramsey, trans. and ed. *The Other Side: or Notes for the History of the War between Mexico and the United States* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), pp. 30-32.

PRESIDENT POLK'S WAR MESSAGE, MAY 11, 1846
Primary Source

President Polk was preparing a war message when he received word that Mexican troops had attacked an American force between the Nueces and Rio Grande rivers. The following war message was sent to the Congress on May 11; two days later Congress declared war.

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

The existing state of the relations between the United States and Mexico renders it proper that I should bring the subject to the consideration of Congress. . . . On the 10th of November, 1845, Mr. John Slidell of Louisiana, was commissioned by me as envoy extraordinary . . . of the United States to Mexico, and was entrusted with full powers to adjust both the questions of the Texas boundary and of indemnification of our citizens. The redress of the wrongs of our citizens naturally and inseparably blended itself without the question of boundary. The settlement of the one question in any correct view of the subject involves that of the other.

Determined to leave no effort untried to reach an amicable adjustment with Mexico, I directed Mr. Slidell to present his credentials to the Government of General Paredes and ask to be officially received by him. . . . The Government of Mexico . . . refused the offer of a peaceful adjustment of our difficulties. Not only was the offer rejected, but the indignity of its rejection was enhanced by the manifest breach of faith in refusing to admit the envoy who came because they had bound themselves to receive him. . . .

In my message at the commencement of the present session I informed you that upon the earnest appeal both of the Congress and convention of Texas I had ordered an efficient military force to take a position 'between the Nueces and the Del Norte." This had become necessary to meet a threatened invasion of Texas by the Mexican forces, for which extensive military preparations had been made. The invasion 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.

This force was concentrated at Corpus Christi, and remained there until after I had received such information from Mexico as rendered it probable, if not certain, that the Mexican Government would refuse to receive our envoy.

. . . .Instructions were issued to the general in command of the troops to occupy the left bank of the Del Norte. The river, which is the southwestern boundary of the state of Texas, is an exposed frontier. From this quarter, invasion was threatened; upon it and in its immediate vicinity, in the judgment of high military experience, are the proper stations for the protecting forces of the Government. . . .

The grievous wrongs perpetrated by Mexico upon our citizens throughout a long period of years remain undressed, 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.

. . . The cup of forbearance had been exhausted even before the recent information from the frontier of the Del Norte. But now, after reiterated menaces, Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon American soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities have commenced and that the two nations are now at war.

As war exists, and, not withstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico itself, 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. . . .

The most energetic and prompt measures and the immediate appearance in arms of a large and overpowering force are recommended to Congress as the most certain and efficient means of bring the existing collision with Mexico to a speedy and successful termination. . . .

James D. Richardson (ed.), *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, vol. V (NY: Bureau of National Literature, Inc. 1897), pp. 2287–93.

REPORTER DISPATCH SHEET

Dateline: May 11, 1846, Washington, DC

President Polk announces that a state of war exists between the United States and Mexico.

Essentials of the President's War Message:

Public Reaction to the Message:

Mexican Response:

SENATOR ROBERT J. WALKER ADVOCATES ADMISSION OF TEXAS, 1844

Primary Source

Senator Robert J. Walker of Mississippi was an enthusiastic advocate for the admission of Texas into the Union. He explained his position in a letter written as a response to a request from residents of Carroll County, Kentucky. The letter was later published in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* and in pamphlets that were used in James K. Polk's presidential campaign. Walker argued that Texas is a geographic extension of the Mississippi valley and was an integral part of the territory acquired by the Louisiana Purchase.

The reasons assigned in 1825, 1827, 1829, 1833 and 1835 for the reannexation of Texas apply now with full force. These reasons were: that the Sabine, as a boundary, was too near New Orleans; that the defense of that city was rendered insecure; and that the Arkansas and Red River, and all their tributaries, ought to be in our own exclusive possession. The present boundary is the worst which could be devised. It is a succession of steps and curves, carving out the great valley of the West into a shape that is absolutely hideous. It surrenders the Red River and Arkansas, and their numerous tributaries, for thousands of miles, to a foreign power. It brings that power upon the Gulf, within a day's sail of the mouth of the Mississippi, and in the interior, by the curve of the Sabine, within about 100 miles of the Mississippi.

. . . Such is our present boundary; and it can be exchanged for one that will give us perfect security, that will place our own people and our own settlements in rear of the Indian tribes, and that will cut them off from foreign influence; that will restore to us the uninterrupted navigation of the Red River and Arkansas. . . .

. . . The possession of Texas would insure to us the trade of Santa Fe and all the northern states of Mexico. Above all, Texas is a large and indispensable portion of the valley of the West. That valley once was all our own; but it has been dismembered by a treaty formed when the West held neither of the high executive stations of the government and was wholly unrepresented in the cabinet at Washington [Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819]. The Red River and Arkansas, divided and mutilated, now flow, with their numerous tributaries, for many thousand miles through the territory of a foreign power. . . .

This is no question of the purchase of new territory, but of the reannexation of that which once was all our own. It is not a question of the extension of our limits but of the restoration of former boundaries. It proposes no new addition to the valley of the Mississippi but of its reunion, and all its waters once more under our dominion. If the Creator had separated Texas from the Union by mountain barriers, the Alps or the Andes, these might be plausible objections. . . . He has linked their rivers with the great Mississippi, and marked and united the whole for the dominion of one government and the residence of one people; and it is impious in man to attempt to dissolve this great and glorious Union.

. . . The treaty which struck Texas from the Union inflicted a blow upon this mighty valley. And who will say that the West shall remain dismembered and mutilated, and that the ancient boundaries of the republic shall never be restored? . . . What American will say that the flag of the Union shall never wave again throughout that mighty territory; and that what Jefferson acquired . . . shall never be restored? Who will oppose the restablishment of our glorious Constitution over the whole of the mighty valley which once was shielded by its benignant sway?

. . . To refuse to accept the reannexation is to resurrender the territory of Texas, and redismember the valley of the West. Nay, more; under existing circumstances, it is to lower the flag of the union before the red cross of St. George, and to surrender the Florida pass, the mouth of the Mississippi, the command of the Mexican Gulf, and finally Texas itself, into the hands of England.

The Annals of America, vol. 7 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1976), pp. 195-97

Robert J. Walker
Dictionary of American Portraits
Dover Publications, Inc., 1967

WALT WHITMAN ON THE MEXICAN WAR AND ANNEXATION OF TERRITORY, 1846
Primary Source

The American poet, Walt Whitman, became an enthusiastic supporter of the United States war with Mexico and advocated the nation's expansion to the Pacific coast. The following are two articles excerpted from *The Brooklyn Eagle* in May and June 1846.

May 11, 1846

Yes: Mexico must be thoroughly chastised! We have reached a point in our intercourse with that country, when prompt and effectual demonstrations of force are enjoined upon us by every dictate of right and policy. The news of yesterday has added the last argument wanted to prove the necessity of immediate Declaration of War by our government towards its southern neighbor.

We are justified in the face of the world, in having treated Mexico with more forbearance than we have ever yet treated an enemy. . . . We have sought peace through every avenue, and shut our eyes to many things which had they come from England or France, the president would not have dared to pass over without stern and speedy resentment. We have dammed up our memory, of what has passed in the South years ago—of the devilish massacres of some of our bravest and noblest sons, the children not of the South alone, but of the North and West—massacres, not only in defiance of ordinary humanity, but in violation of all the rules of war. Who has read the sickening story of those brutal wholesale murders, so useless for any purpose except gratifying the cowardly appetite of a nation of bravos, willing to shoot down men by the hundred in cold blood—without panting for the day when the payer of that blood should be listened to—when the vengeance of a retributive God should be metered out to those who so ruthlessly and needlessly slaughtered His image?

That day has arrived. We think there can be no doubt of the truth of yesterday's news; and we are sure the people here, ten to one, are for prompt and effectual hostilities. . . . Let our arms now be carried with a spirit which shall teach the world that, while we are not forward for a quarrel, America knows how to crush, as well as how to expand!

June 6, 1846

The more we reflect on the matter of annexation as involving a part of Mexico, or even the main bulk of that republic, the more do doubts and obstacles resolve themselves away. . . . The scope of our government . . . is such that it can readily fit itself, and extend itself to almost any extent, and to interests and circumstances the most widely different.

It is affirmed, and with great probability, that in several of the departments of Mexico—the large, fertile and beautiful one of Yucatan, in particular—there is a wide popular disposition to come under the wings of our eagle. . . . Rumor . . . states that a mission has been, or is to be, dispatched to the United States, with the probably object of treating for annexation or something like it.

Then there is California, in the way to which lovely tract lies Santa Fe; how long a time will elapse before they shine as two new stars in our mighty firmament?

Speculations of this sort may seem idle to some folks. So do they not, we are assured, to many who look deep into the future. Nor is it the much condemned lust of power and territory that makes the popular heart respond to the idea of these new acquisitions. Such greediness might very properly be the motive of widening a less liberal form of government; but such greediness is not ours. We pant to see our country and its rule far-reaching, only inasmuch as it will take off the shackles that prevent men the even chance of being happy and good—as most governments are now so constituted that the tendency is very much the other way. We have no ambition for the mere physical grandeur of this Republic. Such grandeur is idle and deceptive enough. Or at least it is only desirable as an aid to reach the truer good, the good of the whole body of the people.

Walt Whitman, *The Brooklyn Eagle*, May 11 and June 6, 1846, cited in Archie P. McDonald (ed.), *The Mexican War: Crisis for American Democracy* (Lexington, MA: DC Heath and Company, 1969), pp. 47-48.

SAM HOUSTON ON CONTINENTAL EXPANSION OF THE UNITED STATES, MARCH 2, 1848

Primary Source

In a New York speech, Texas Senator Sam Houston expressed his views regarding the continental expansion of the United States shortly before Senate ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. The following excerpts are from the *Democratic Telegraph* and *Texas Register* of March 2, 1848.

As surely as tomorrow's sun will rise and pursue its bright course along the firmament of heaven, so certain, it appears to my mind, must the Anglo-Saxon race pervade the whole southern extremity of this vast continent and the people whom God has placed here in this land, spread, prevail and pervade throughout the whole rich empire of this great hemisphere. The manner of the consummation of this grand result, I cannot predict; but there is an instinct in the American people which impels them onward, which will lead them to pervade this continent, to develop its resources, to civilize its people and receive the rich bounties of the creating power of divine Providence. There is another consideration in this respect which is conclusive to my mind. The Americans regard this continent as their birth-right. . . .

. . . [T]hese countries will be benefited by our occupation. Look at the Californias, Sonora, Western Mexico, New Mexico, etc. All these vast regions, where only a few hundred thousand souls are living in such wide dominions—where the wild Indian extends with impunity his ravages, and, unchecked he penetrates into the heart of Mexico, even as far as Potosí, spoiling and destroying as he goes along. . . . Let the white man—let the American interpose; let him say to the Indian, "Stay, savage, we will protect thee helpless people. We will do it." We are the majority, and it must be done for the sake of humanity. I am not one of those who delight to riot in the spoils of the poor and keep the people in abject poverty and subjection. Such, however, is the condition of the Mexican people, exposed to a constant succession of revolutions. In 25 years Mexico has undergone 25 different revolutions. They are a people incapable of self-government. We are now in this war, engaged in giving peace, security and happiness to this oppressed people. . . .

Amelia Williams and Eugene C. Baker (eds.). *The Writings of Sam Houston*, vol. V (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1940), pp. 29-36.

Congressman Andrew Johnson's Speech On the Responsibility for War with Mexico, August 2, 1848

Primary Source

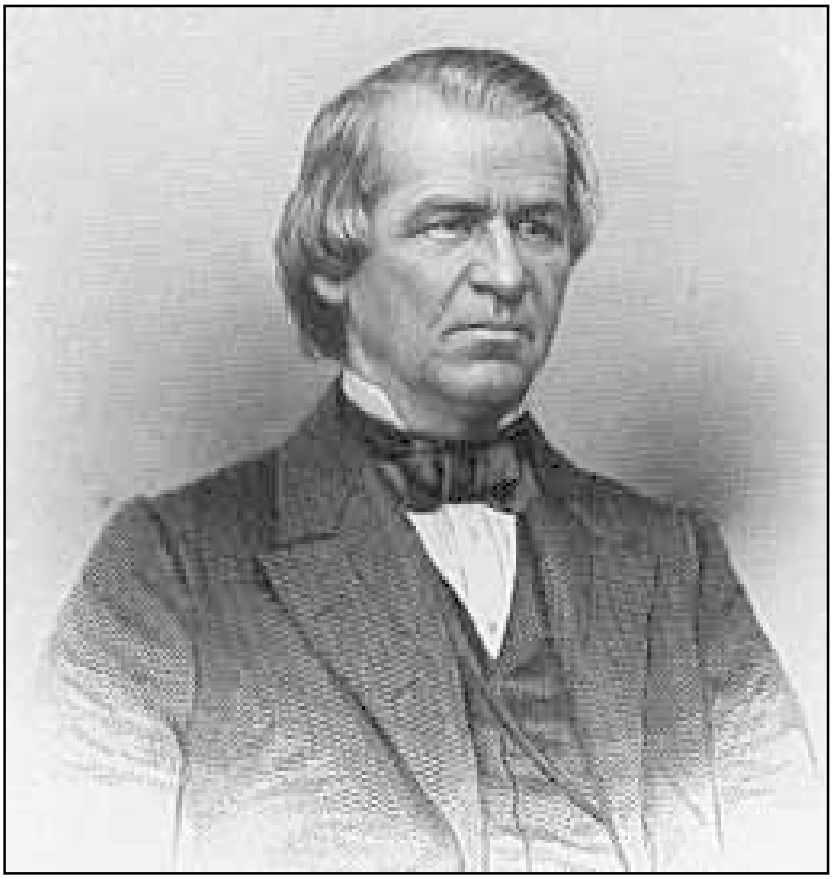
Tennessee Congressman Andrew Johnson made a number of speeches in the House of Representatives supporting President Polk and the war effort. In his August 2 speech he charged that dissenting voices of prominent Whigs was prolonging the war. The following is an excerpt from Johnson's speech in the House of Representatives.

. . . I must say a few words on the justice of the war. It has been denounced by the Opposition as unjust, unholy, and damnable. Yet we find a large portion of those who thus denounce the war, voting men and money for its prosecution. Here by their votes we give the means to prosecute the war, and by their speeches denounce it and throw their whole moral influence against it. While they were voting our men ammunition, provisions, money, and clothing, to enable them to sustain the country, they were animating the hearts of the Mexicans and strengthening their nerves by their speeches to resist unto death the advance of our troops, inspiring them with hope that ere long the peace party in this country could succeed, and that Mexico could get a treaty upon such terms as she desired; and the elections that have recently taken place giving the Whigs a majority in this House, have induced them to believe that the Mexican party had succeeded in this country. If the position assumed by them was correct, that the war was unjust, it is certain that we cannot become right by persisting in wrong. If the war is in violation of the Constitution, it cannot be repaired by widening the breach. If it is damnable, it never can be made honorable. If it is unholy, it can never be made righteous. There is but one true position to take upon this question in sound morals. If the nation is wrong, and has inflicted injury upon Mexico, as an honorable people and a Christian nation, we were bound to withdraw our troops, and indemnify Mexico for all the injury we have done. If this war is such a come as represented and denounced to be, what an awful end for our officers and soldiers who have fallen in such a contest! He that has the proper standard of morals set up in his mind must be horror-struck at the very contemplation. To think of men going from time to eternity as a mere miserable set of pirates, what an awful reflection this must be in the hour of death! To die, though, as Captain Taggart, of Indiana, did, upon the plains of Buena Vista, is inspiring to the patriot and the Christian. In that bloody and fearful conflict, after being stricken down, weltering in his blood, beneath the gory crimson spear, when in the very last throes of death, he rises upon his side and unbuckles his sword that he had gallantly wielded in vindication of his country's rights, handed it to his compan-

ion, and, with his eyes fixed upon the stars and stripes, the dying words upon his lips were, "Take this. I can use it no longer. Press on! Our cause is just, and victory ere long will perch upon our country's standard." And then he sank to rise no more. What a striking contrast this, and in what a short time were his predictions fulfilled.

Conviction forces itself on my mind that this war was just, or it could never have been crowned with such unparalleled success. Our country must have been in the right, or the God of Battles would sometimes have been against us. Mexico must be in the wrong; she is a doomed nation. The right red arm of an angry God has been suspended over her, and the Anglo-Saxon race has been selected as the rod of her retribution. . . .

Leroy P. Graf and Ralph W. Haskins (eds.). *The Papers of Andrew Johnson*, vol. 1, 1822-1851 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1967), pp. 455-56.



Andrew Johnson
Engraving, Alexander H. Ritchie, n.d.
Perry-Castañeda Library, University of Texas at Austin

"A SERMON OF WAR," THEODORE PARKER, JUNE 7, 1846
Primary Source

Theodore Parker, a prominent Congregational minister and leading Transcendentalist, was active in reform causes of the mid-nineteenth century. When President Polk called upon Congress to declare war on Mexico in May 1846, Parker objected but maintained a public silence until June 7 when he preached "A Sermon of War" from the pulpit of the Boston Melodeon Church.

I ask your attention to a Sermon of War. I have waited some time before treating this subject at length. . . . I have waited for others in the churches, of more experience to speak, before I ventured to offer my counsel; but I have thus far waited almost in vain!

. . . [I]t seems to me that we are wholly in the wrong; that our invasion of Mexico is as bad as the partition of Poland in the last century and in this. If I understand the matter, the whole movement, the settlement of Texas, the Texan revolution, the annexation of Texas, the invasion of Mexico, has been a movement hostile to the American idea, a movement to extend slavery. . . . Now the Government and its Congress would throw the blame on the innocent, and say war exists "by the act of Mexico!" If a lie was ever told, I think this is one. Then the "dear people" must be called on for money and men, for "the soil of this free republic is invaded;" and the Governor of Massachusetts, one of the men who declared the annexation of Texas unconstitutional, recommends the war he just now told us to pray against, and appeals to our "patriotism," and "humanity," as arguments for butchering the Mexicans, when they are in the right and we in the wrong! The maxim is held up, "Our country, right or wrong". . . . It seems popularly and politically forgotten that there is such a thing as Right. The nation's neck invites a tyrant. I am not at all astonished that northern representatives voted for all this work of crime. They are no better than Southern representatives; scarcely less in favour of slavery, and not half so open. They say: Let the North make money, and you may do what you please with the nation; and we will choose governors that dare not oppose you, for, though we are descended from the Puritans, we have but one article in our creed we never flinch from following, and that is—to make money; honestly, if we can; if not, as we can!

Look through the action of your Government, and your Congress. You see that no reference has been had in this affair to Christian ideas; none to justice and the eternal right. Nay, none at all! In the churches, and among the people, how feeble has been the protest against this

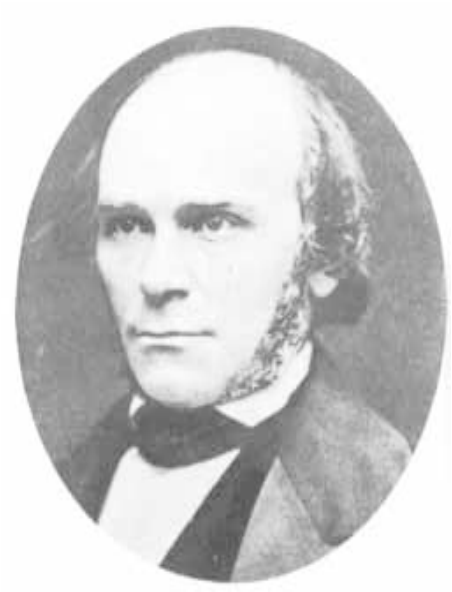
great wrong. How tamely the people yield their necks—and say: "Take our sons for the war—we care not, right or wrong." . . . We are a faithless and perverse generation. God be merciful to us, sinners as we are!

But why talk for ever? What shall we do? In regard to this present war, we can refuse to take any part in it; we can encourage others to do the same; we can aid men, if need be, who suffer because they refuse. Men will call us traitors: what then? That hurt nobody in '76! We are a rebellious nation; our whole history is treason; our blood was attained before we were born; our creeds are infidelity to the mother-church; our Constitution treason to our fatherland. What of that? Though all the governors in the world bid us commit treason against man, and set the example, let us never submit. Let God only be a master to control our conscience!

We can hold public meetings in favour of peace, in which what is wrong shall be exposed and condemned. It is proof of our cowardice that this has not been done before now. . . .

We can work now for future times, by taking pains to spread abroad the sentiments of peace, the ideas of peace, among the people in schools, churches—everywhere. At length we can diminish the power of the national Government, so that the people alone shall have the power to declare war, by a direct vote, the Congress only to recommend it. We can take from the Government the means of war, by raising only revenue enough for the nation's actual wants. . . . We can diffuse a real practical Christianity among the people, till the mass of men have courage enough to overcome evil with good, and look at aggressive war as the worst of treason and the foulest infidelity! . . .

Frances P. Cobbe (ed.), *The Collected Works of Theodore Parker* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1973), pp. 1-28.



Theodore Parker
Dictionary of American Portraits
Dover Publications, Inc., 1967

DANIEL WEBSTER'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE MEXICAN WAR, SEPTEMBER 1847

Primary Source

Senator Daniel Webster speaking to the Whig State Convention at Springfield, Massachusetts on September 29, 1847, charged that the reasons the Democratic administration gave for the war were nothing other than pretexts. He asserted that the war was unjust in the following excerpt from the Springfield speech.

. . . [W]e are engaged in a war, in my opinion unnecessary, and, therefore, unjustifiable. I hold it to be a war founded on pretexts. Sir, the law of nations, embodying the general sense of mankind, instructs us that the motives of war are good or vicious. Where war is founded on a conviction of necessity, in a sole desire to promote the public good or defend the national interest, it is a good motive. When founded in any oblique purpose, or unjust purpose, when waged only for conquest, for gain, for acquisition, for renown, to gratify private ambition, or for party purposes, the motive is vicious. . . .

I think, sir, there are three pretexts, all unfounded, upon which this war has been attempted to be justified, in various modes and on various occasions. The President of the United States, in his war message of the 11th of May, 1846, puts the ground of declaring war upon the fact that the Mexican government had invaded the territory of the United States, and shed American blood upon American soil. Now, in my judgment, this is not a correct statement of the case. The President of the United States had ordered the army of the United States, as early as January, 1846, to move beyond what Mexico insisted was the boundary of Texas, and place itself on the Rio Grande. After that position had been taken, blood was indeed shed on the left bank of that river. But was that American soil? It was soil claimed, indeed, by the United States, but which claim Congress had never asserted. It was territory claimed also by Mexico, as much and as firmly as the city of Mexico itself; and it was, at the time, in the actual possession of Mexico. The most favorable presentment, therefore, is this: that we, having a claim to territory of which the other party was in possession, marched an army into it to take possession. Is not that war upon our side? I am of the opinion, therefore, that the declaration in the message of the 11th of May, 1846, upon which the act of Congress, of the 13th, was founded, the declaration that war existed "by the act of Mexico," cannot be made out by any evidence in point of fact. And if so, then the cause assigned in the President's message was a pretext.

Now, I look upon the war as commenced when the army of the United States was ordered to advance into territory claimed by Mexico, and actually possessed by her. If it were our own case, I have no doubt that we should regard such an invasion of our possessions as an act of war.

But, although this was the main point upon which the recognition of war was placed by the President, no sooner was the war declared than further pretexts were resorted to. One was, the refusal of the Mexican government to receive our Minister; but where was that ever made a cause of war? and especially of executive war? Because a foreign government chooses not to have diplomatic intercourse with us, is it for the President to say that that is a just cause of war? It is no just cause; and, even were it just and proper, it is no sudden emergency, authorizing the executive to plunge the Government into hostilities; especially when Congress is in session, ready, at any moment, to receive official information from the president, and to act upon it. I look upon it, therefore, that this ground is a mere pretext.

Then comes another. Mexico, it is said, had declined and refused to pay the debts due from herself to citizens of the United States. I believe that is true. But that was not put forth as the cause of war in the message of the President, on the 11th of May, 1846. . . . It is not, therefore, the cause but . . . an after thought. And here, again, this matter of debts and claims of citizens of the United States and Mexico is of long standing, and was well known to Congress, to whose attention it had often been called. Yet Congress, the constitutional, and only constitutional war-making power, had never judged it proper to declare war against Mexico on this account. The conduct of Mexico was as reprehensible six months before, as on that day; but there had been manifested no disposition to make it a cause of war with her.

To say, therefore, that this war was founded upon the refusal of Mexico to pay her debts, is a pretext, and nothing but a pretext.

Well then, sir, what was, in truth, the real object of the war? If all these things were pretexts, what was, in fact, the true motive? . . .

Sir, . . . if there had been no annexation of Texas, there would have been no war. And . . . the immediate cause of war was the order for the march of our army from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande. . . . This, then, is the real ground and origin of the war, and all the rest, so far as appears to me, is mere pretext. . . .

The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster, vol. 13 (Boston: Little, Brown, & Company, 1903), pp. 346-57.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS ON THE WAR WITH MEXICO
Primary Source

Frederick Douglass reflected on the causes of the war with Mexico in an article he wrote for *The North Star*, January 21, 1848. The following is an excerpt from that article.

. . . The taste of human blood and the smell of powder seem to have extinguished the senses, seared the conscience, and subverted the reason of the people to a degree that may well induce the gloomy apprehension that our nation has fully entered on her downward career, and yielded herself up to the revolting ideas of battle and blood. "Fire and sword," are now the choice of our young republic. The loss of thousands of her own men, and the slaughter of tens of thousands of the sons and daughters of Mexico, have rather given edge than dullness to our appetite for fiery conflict and plunder. The civilization of the age, the voice of the world, the sacredness of human life, the tremendous expense, the dangers, hardships, and the deep disgrace which must forever attach to our inhuman course, seem to oppose no availing check to the mad spirit of proud ambition, blood, and carnage, let loose in the land.

. . . Our nation seems resolved to rush on in her wicked career, though the road be ditched with human blood, and paved with human skulls. Well, be it so. But, humble as we are, and unavailing as our voice may be, we wish to warn our fellow countrymen, that they may follow the course which they have marked our for themselves; no barrier may be sufficient to obstruct them; they may accomplish all they desire; Mexico may fall before them; she may be conquered and subdued; . . . her rights and powers usurped; her people put under the iron arm of a military despotism . . . but, so sure as there is a God of justice, we shall not go unpunished; the penalty is certain; we cannot escape; a terrible retribution awaits us. We beseech our countrymen to leave off this horrid conflict, abandon their murderous plans, and forsake the way of blood. . . . Let the press, the pulpit, the church, the people at large, unit at once; and let petitions flood the halls of Congress by the million, asking for the instant recall of our forces from Mexico. This may not save us, but it is our only hope.

The North Star, January 21, 1848

Philip S. Foner, *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass: Early Years, 1817-1849* (New York: International Publishers, 1950), pp. 291-96.

ULYSSES S. GRANT'S APPRAISAL OF THE ACQUISITION OF TEXAS AND WAR WITH MEXICO
Primary Source

Ulysses Simpson Grant, eighteenth president of the United States, served under Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott during the Mexican War and was promoted to captain for gallantry at the Battle of Chapultepec. In his memoirs, published shortly before his death, Grant provided a brief survey of Texas history and described his feelings regarding the Mexican War. Grant, writing about the military's role immediately before the outbreak of hostilities, stated:

. . . There was no intimation given that the removal of the 3d and 4th regiments of infantry to the western border of Louisiana was occasioned in any way by the prospective annexation of Texas, but it was generally understood that such was the case. Ostensibly we were intended to prevent filibustering into Texas, but really as a menace to Mexico in case she appeared to contemplate war. Generally the officers of the army were indifferent whether the annexation [of Texas] was consummated or not; but not so all of them. For myself, I was bitterly opposed to the measure, and to this day regard the war, which resulted, as one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation. It was an instance of a republic following the bad example of European monarchies, in not considering justice in their desire to acquire additional territory.

Texas was originally a state belonging to the republic of Mexico. It extended from the Sabine River on the east to the Rio Grande on the west, and from the Gulf of Mexico on the south and east to the territory of the United States and New Mexico—another Mexican state at that time—on the north and west. An empire in territory, it had but a very sparse population, until settled by Americans who had received authority from Mexico to colonize. These colonists paid very little attention to the supreme government, and introduced slavery into the state almost from the start, though the constitution of Mexico did not, nor does it now, sanction that institution. Soon they set up an independent government of their own, and war existed, between Texas and Mexico, in name from that time until 1836, when active hostilities very nearly ceased upon the capture of Santa Anna, the Mexican President. Before long, however, the same people—who with permission of Mexico had colonized Texas, and afterwards set up slavery there, and then seceded as soon as they felt strong enough to do so—offered themselves and the State to the United States, and in 1845 their offer was accepted. The occupation, separation and annexation were, from the inception of the

movement to its final consummation, a conspiracy to acquire territory out of which slave states might be formed for the American Union.

Even if the annexation itself could be justified, the manner in which the subsequent war was forced upon Mexico cannot. The fact is, annexationists wanted more territory that they could possibly lay any claim to, as part of the new acquisition. Texas, as an independent State, never had exercised jurisdiction over the territory between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. Mexico had never recognized the independence of Texas, and maintained that, even if independent, the State had no claim south of the Nueces. I am aware that a treaty, made by the Texans with Santa Anna while he was under duress, ceded all the territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande; but he was a prisoner of war when the treaty was made, and his life was in jeopardy. He knew, too, that he deserved execution at the hands of the Texans, if they should ever capture him. The Texans, if they had taken his life, would have only followed the example set by Santa Anna himself a few years before, when he executed the entire garrison of the Alamo and the villagers of Goliad.

In taking military possession of Texas after annexation, the army of occupation, under General Taylor, was directed to occupy the disputed territory. The army did not stop at the Nueces and offer to negotiate for a settlement of the boundary question, but went beyond, apparently in order to force Mexico to initiate war. It is to the credit of the American nation, however, that after conquering Mexico, and while practically holding the country in our possession, so that we could have retained the whole of it, or made any terms we chose, we paid a round sum for the additional territory taken; more than it was worth, or was likely to be, to Mexico. To us it was an empire and of incalculable value; but it might have been obtained by other means. The Southern rebellion was largely the outgrowth of the Mexican war. Nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions. We got our punishment in the most sanguinary and expensive war of modern times.

Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, Vol. 1 (New York: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1892), pp. 53-56.

THE UNITED STATES WAS TO BLAME FOR THE WAR
Secondary Source

Historian Hubert H. Bancroft in his multi-volume History of Mexico, published in the 1880s, argues that the United States was responsible for the war with Mexico. Bancroft blames the conflict on desires to extend slavery and the hunger for land.

It was a premeditated and predetermined affair, the war of the United States on Mexico; it was the result of a deliberately calculated scheme of robbery on the part of the superior power. There were at Washington enough unprincipled men high in office, senators, congressmen, to say nothing about the president and his cabinet, and the vast array of demagogues and politicians, who were only too glad to be able in any way to pander to the tastes of their supporters—there were enough of this class, slave-holders, smugglers, Indian-killers, and foul-mouthed, tobacco-spurting swearers upon sacred Fourth-of-July principles to carry spread eagle supremacy from the Atlantic to the Pacific, who were willing to lay aside all notions of right and wrong in the matter, and unblushingly to take whatever could be secured solely upon the principle of might. . . .

. . . Polk, had been nominated as the candidate of the democratic party, on the pledge to carry out the immediate annexation of Texas. The democrats of the north had been forced at the party's convention to accept his candidacy, and to submit to the demands of the slaveholders of the south. Polk was elected, and stood as the champion of Texas annexation, representing the national will on that point.

The former plan of annexing Texas by treaty, involving its ratification by a two-thirds vote of the senate under constitutional provision, was now abandoned, Tyler having discovered, as he and the supporters of annexation claimed, that the object in view could be accomplished by means of joint resolutions of the two houses of congress. In short, the joint resolutions had been passed on the 1st of March, 1845. . . . On the 4th of July Texas agreed to be annexed, and on the 22d of December, 1845, she formally became a member of the American Union.

. . . [T]he American government thought proper to concentrate on the frontier of Mexico all the disposable portion of the United States army. Arms, ammunition, and supplies of all kinds in considerable quantities were shipped for the same destination. A strong fleet was also dispatched to the coast of Mexico. In one word, the military and naval departments used all necessary means to guard the Texan frontier, and to intimidate Mexico. The troops, however, had orders to stand on the

defensive as long as they could fairly and properly do so, and not to commit or provoke any hostilities. General Taylor accordingly encamped in June at Corpus Christi, ready to advance on the Rio Bravo.

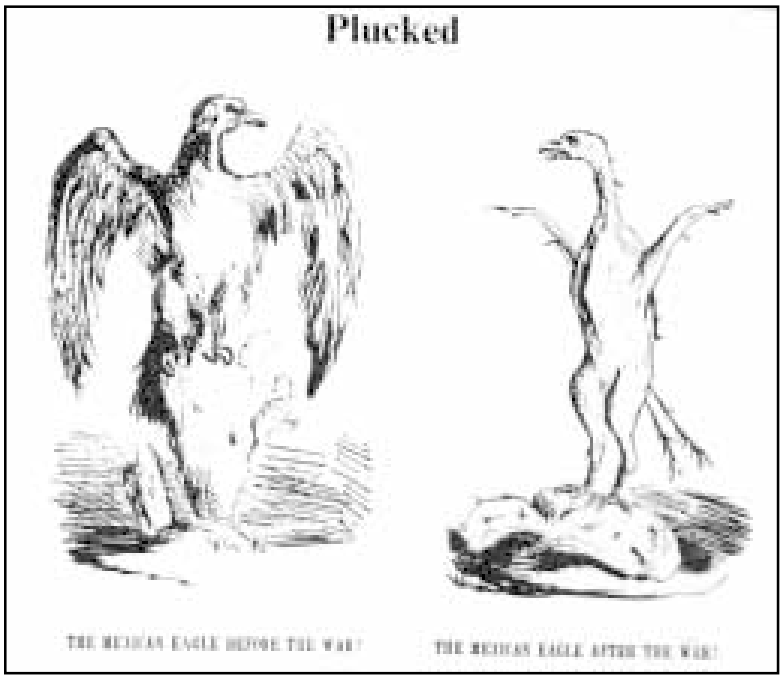
Texas secured, Mexico exasperated, and diplomatic relations at an end, everything was now favorable to secure the war determined upon, and which would result in the acquisition of more valuable territory, including much-coveted California. But such a war, to be popular or even tolerated in the northern states of the American union, must be made to appear a war by the act of Mexico. It would be a fine stroke to pretend to further negotiation, or even conciliation, howsoever hypocritical they might be, and these failing, as care should be taken that they should fail, then Mexico might easily be provoked to strike the first blow. It would then be, on the part of the United States, a war of defense, not of aggression, and the national conscience would remain satisfied. This was the policy adopted by the administration of President Polk, and it met with the most infamous success.

Now for the first step, namely, renewing the negotiations. On the 13th of October 1845, John Black, consul of the United States in the city of Mexico, confidentially apprised Secretary Peña y Peña of the desire of the American secretary of state that the Mexican government should receive an envoy clothed with powers to arrange the questions pending between the two republics. Two days afterward Peña delivered Black a written reply . . . saying that . . . his government was disposed to receive a commissioner clothed with powers to settle the present dispute in a peaceful, reasonable, and decorous manner. . . . The secretary did not agree to receive a minister fully empowered to adjust all questions in dispute. . . . Polk's government must have acted not only with its eyes open, but likewise with an ulterior and sinister design. It asked for no explanation, and hurried off John Slidell as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, and gave him full powers to discuss and settle all disputed questions. That was three weeks before the meeting of congress, and before his confirmation by the senate.

. . . [Slidell] laid stress upon other matters that the United States required a settlement of, referring specially to pending claims of American citizens. Prior to this a change of administration through revolution had occurred, and his last note . . . not having been answered, Slidell . . . tried to obtain recognition form . . . [the new] secretary of relations, and met with the same refusal as before. After some further correspondence without any change in the government's resolution, Slidell demanded his passport. . . .

Meantime, in the early part of the foregoing diplomatic imbroglio, Slidell having appraised the state department that the Mexican government would probably refused to treat with him except on the Texas question, all hope of acquiring California by peaceable negotiations now vanished, and at once orders were transmitted to General Taylor to march to the Rio Grande. The American government was bent on war, professedly for two causes: first, the injuries said to have been inflicted on American citizens, which were to be atoned for by Mexico with money; and second, the insults involved in the imputations of bad faith cast by the Mexican rulers on the government at Washington for its course in Texas. There were two other causes, which were kept in the background, the acquisition of California, and the desire to extend the area of slavery.

Hubert H. Bancroft, *The History of Mexico*, vol. V, 1821–1861 (San Francisco: The History Company, 1887), pp. 307–44.



Anonymous
Yankee Doodle, 1847

THE UNITED STATES WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WAR
Secondary Source

Historian Justin H. Smith, in a two volume work on the Mexican-American War published in 1919, disagrees with Bancroft's interpretation of events. Smith asserts that Mexico was bent on war and that " . . . the conflict with Mexico came to pass as logically as a thunderstorm."

In 1843 our decisive difficulty with Mexico began to take shape. The annexation of Texas to the United States was on legal, moral and political grounds entirely legitimate. That republic had defied the arms of the mother-country for nine years. It was recognized as an independent nation by the leading commercial powers of the world; and no well-informed person, even in Mexico, dreamed that it would return to its former connection. To be sure, her pretensions were asserted in 1845 as loudly as ever; but she made them ridiculous by declaring that never, under any circumstances, would the independence of her rebellious daughter be conceded. . . .

. . . Mexico had anticipated the final outcome of the Texan difficulties, and on August 23, 1843, Bocanegra, her secretary of relations, addressed our minister on the subject. The conduct of the United States regarding that province, he wrote, has "appeared to afford grounds for doubting the sincerity and frankness" of the American authorities, and therefore, while hoping that the republic founded by Washington may be saved "from stain and dishonor," we announce hereby, "that the Mexican Government will consider equivalent to a declaration of war against the Mexican Republic, the passage of an act for the incorporation of Texas with the territory of the Untied States; the certainty of the fact being sufficient for the immediate proclamation of war." . . .

. . . The following November Almonte, who then represented Mexico in Washington, informed our secretary of state that should Congress and the Executive decide upon annexation, he should consider his mission at an end. "My country," he stated, "is resolved to declare war as soon as it receives information of such an act." . . .

At the beginning of March, 1845, our President signed the joint resolution of Congress which provided for the annexation of Texas. Almonte . . . at once protested, giving notice that his country would maintain the claim to her ancient province "at all times, by every means . . . in her power" and although James Buchanan, . . . secretary of state under Polk, replied in a conciliatory manner, Almonte broke off diplomatic relations and left our shores. At Mexico the news produced a tremendous commotion. . . .

When it was learned, about the middle of July, that our terms of annexation had been accepted by Texas, passion burst forth again. . . . Not only Texas but all Mexico, the people were told, had been marked as its prey by American greed. . . .

. . . Turning now to the attitude of our government, we are told at once that Polk deliberately intended to attack Mexico, and are offered various reasons for so believing. One accuser says that he was ambitious for personal glory; another, that he desired to perpetuate the power of his party; a third, that he felt anxious to cover up the humiliating result of the Oregon negotiation; still another, that he wished to be re-elected; and more than one allege that he wad determined to obtain California. . . .

. . . Certain facts are cited and aligned: Polk wanted California, a war occurred, and he promptly took advantage of the war to occupy the desired territory. But the existence of several points in line does not prove the existence of a path connecting them, and there is weighty evidence against the suspicion which these facts naturally excite. While directing Slidell to obtain the cession of northern California, if he could, Buchanan intimated . . . that he should not press this matter, if so doing would prevent the restoration of amicable relations with Mexico. In other words, instead of desiring to precipitate a war for the sake of obtaining California, Polk was ready to let California go—or at least wait—for the sake of maintaining peace. . . .

The other explanations of Polk's alleged intention to fight Mexico are . . . mere conjectures, and prove nothing. . . .

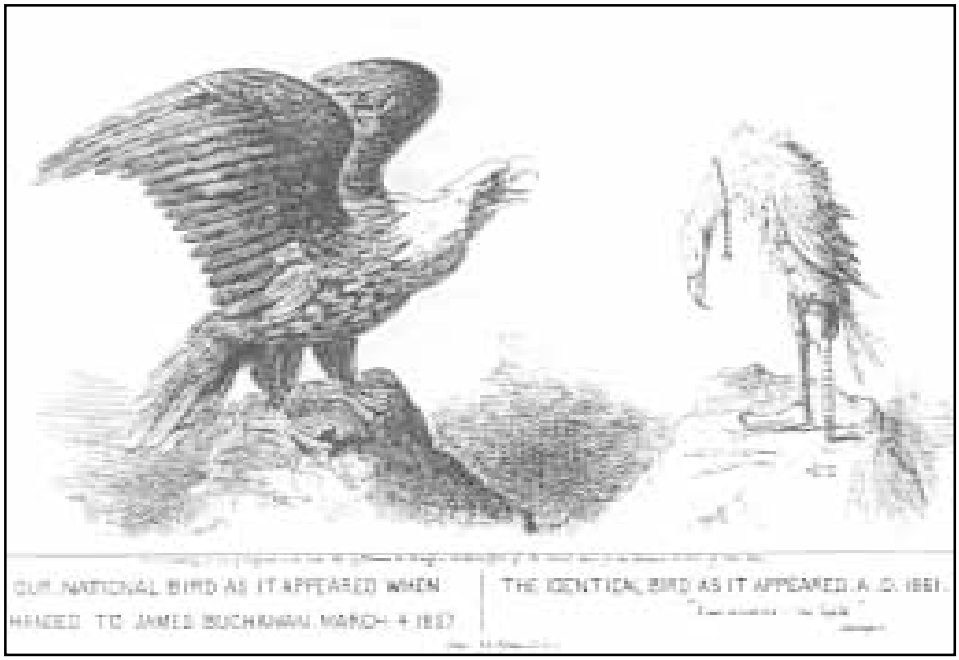
To regard . . . [Polk] as capable of playing the brilliant villain's role in a grand international tragedy, of dreaming the conqueror's dream and sacrificing his fellow-citizens on the altar of gory . . . is out of the question. It was not in him. Neither intellect, conscience nor imagination permitted it. . . .

In short . . . we find that Polk had the gravest reasons for desiring friendly intercourse with Mexico, and probably felt none for platting war; that a variety of personal and political circumstances naturally inclined him toward peace; that his declarations, both public and private, pointed consistently in that direction as long as any hope of an amicable settlement remained; and that what he did in repeated and most significant ways, as well as what he refrained from doing, had the same meaning. We must therefore give up the ideas that he desired, and from the first intended, to have a war with Mexico.

. . . 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.

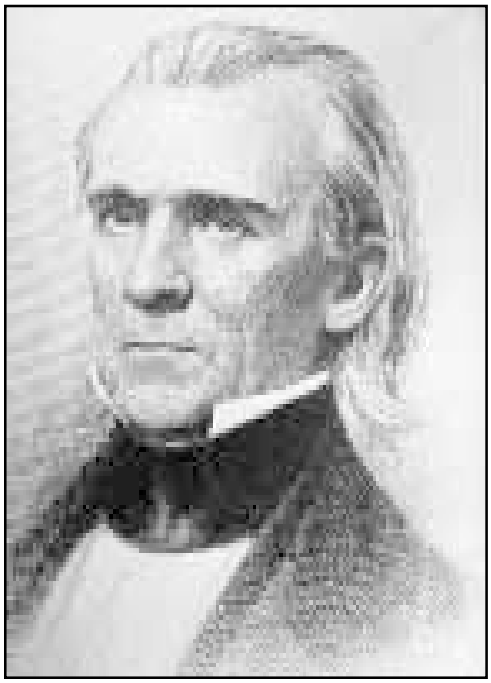
Having buried the hatchet, Scott and Trist entered upon tortuous negotiations designed to bride Santa Anna, at a cost of $10,000, into making a peace. . . . [Santa Anna] pocketed the money, and used the ensuing armistice to bolster his defenses. With the breakdown of bribery and the renewal of hostilities, 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

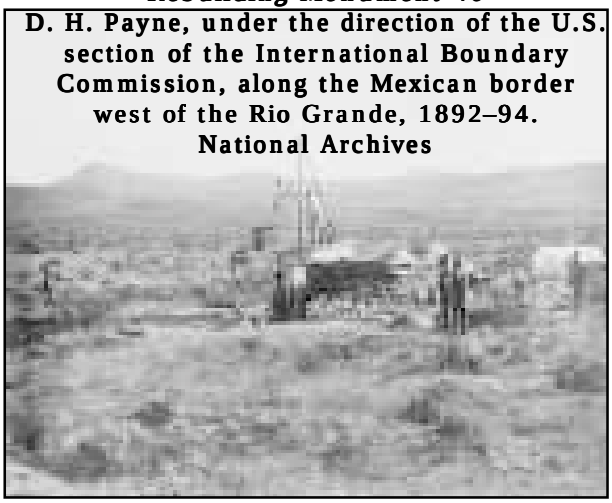
ARTICLE V, TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO
Primary Source

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

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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 Gadsen 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

ARTICLE VIII, TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO
Primary Source

Article VIII was ratified without amendment by the United States Senate.

Mexicans now established in territories previously belonging to Mexico, and which remain for the future within the limits of the United States, as defined by the present treaty, shall be free to continue where they now reside, or to remove at any time to the Mexican Republic, retaining the property which they possess in the said territories, or disposing thereof, and removing the proceeds wherever they please; without their being subjected, on this account, to any contribution, tax or charge whatsoever.

Those who shall prefer to remain in the said territories, may either retain the title and rights of Mexican citizens, or acquire those of citizens of the United States. But they shall be under the obligation to make their election within one year from the date of the exchange of ratification of this treaty: and those who shall remain in the said territories, after the expiration of that year, without having declared their intention to retain the character of Mexicans, shall be considered to have elected to become citizens of the United States.

In the said territories, property of every kind, now belonging to Mexicans, not established there, shall be inviolably respected. The present owners, the heirs of these, and all Mexicans who may hereafter acquire said property by contract, shall enjoy with respect to it, guaranties equally ample as if the same belonged to citizens of the United States.

Recuerdo de la Guerra con los Estados Unidos: Trofeos y Monumentos Existentes en México [*Memorial of the War with the United States: Victories and Monuments in Mexico Today*]
Chromolithograph from *México a Través des los Siglos* (Barcelona, España, 1883-1890), 5 vols.
The University of Texas at Arlington Library
Special Collections

Unit Evaluation

Consider one of the following as a means of assessing student learning.

1. Conduct a "Meeting of the Minds" activity in which students assume the role of different individuals and explain their position statements such as:

   - The immigration policy of the Mexican government was poorly conceived and ultimately responsible for the Texas war for independence.

   - Although Texans had grievances against the Mexican government, they had no justification for declaring independence.

   - The United States should have intervened on behalf of Texas during its war for independence.

   - The Republic of Texas acting appropriately in expelling the Cherokee.

   - Manifest Destiny was the basic cause of the War with Mexico.

   - Dissenters in the United States during the Mexican War "aided and abetted" the enemy.

   - The United States Senate should have rejected the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

2. Have students develop a rubric for evaluation based on the depth of understanding of each of the students in their assigned roles.

   Roles could include individuals such as:

   Stephen Austin
   Daniel Webster
   Frederick Douglass
   López de Santa Anna
   John O'Sullivan
   Chief Bowles
   Sam Houston
   Mirabeau Lamar
   James K. Polk

Assign students who are not participating in the activity with an essay in which they respond to a teacher-developed question or one of the above statements. Have these students write their response as a homework assignment before the performance assessment activity is conducted in class. You may consider having those students who participated in the "Meeting of the Minds" assessment score these papers using a similar rubric.

3. Have students develop a news magazine on the Causes and Consequences of the Mexican War to be included in an assessment portfolio. Students should include a "by-line" for their contribution to the magazine. The "publication" should include news articles, feature stories, editorials, and political cartoons reflecting different perspectives on the origins, conduct, and consequences of the war.

4. Have students write and produce a historical skit or television news program on the Mexican-American War for presentation to another history class at the school. Assessment may be based on:

    a) criteria you establish for the preparation of the presentation;
    b) evaluation by the teacher of the other history class; and,
    c) peer evaluations.

    A simple rubric for evaluation should be given to the students at the beginning of the activity so that they will be aware of both the methods of evaluation and the criteria used in the assessment.

Selected Bibliography

Beck, Gene M. *Mexico Views Manifest Destiny, 1821-1846*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975.

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An excellent account of Cherokee relations with the Texas, Mexican, and United States governments and their conflicts with the Texas government.

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A readable biography of Sam Houston which offers an excellent profile of Houston and his role in the gaining Texas independence.

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A teaching unit based on primary source documents.

Long, Jeff. *Duel of Eagles: The Mexican and U.S. Fight for the Alamo.* New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1990.

An examination of the Texas war for independence and the role of individuals in the struggle. Long delves into the personalities and motives of Texan and Mexican leaders and explores the diplomatic maneuvers of the Jackson administration in the independence movement.

Mico, Ted, Miller-Monzon, John and Rubel, David, eds. *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995.

An examination of the relationship of popular films to the historical record of events which they depict. One section is devoted to a study of John Wayne's "The Alamo" (MGM, 1960).

Ramsey, Albert C., ed. *The Other Side: Notes for the History of the War Between Mexico and the United States*. New York: Burt Franklin, 1970 (reprint of the 1849 edition).

Although difficult reading for most high school students, this is an excellent source for a study of Mexican reaction to the war. This is a reprint of the original work published in 1849.

Ridge, Martin and Billington, Ray Allen, eds. *America's Frontier Story: A Documentary History of Westward Expansion.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.

An exceptional collection of documents on the American frontier. The selections are preceded by a short narrative placing them in historical perspective. An excellent collection of student reading.