

# Unit 4: *Westward Expansion*

## Lecture 4.1 • *Texas*

- In 1821, the Mexicans won their independence from Spain, and became a the new nation called Mexico.
- By the 1830s, Mexico was a strong nation. Mexico was larger than the U.S., and their army was equal to the American Army.
- The original Spanish settlers of Texas were the “**Tejanos**”. Texas was the far frontier of Mexico, and the Tejanos were used to living independent lives, far from the control of Mexico City.
- Between 1820 and 1830, Mexico welcomed 20,000 Americans, led by **Stephen Austin** and **Sam Houston** to settle in Texas. Most of the settlers — including Austin & Houston — were slave owners.
- Naturally, the American settlers were required to obey *Mexican* law, and follow Catholic church practices. Some settlers complained that they were being denied their religious freedom.
- As the American began to speak up, the Tejanos began to realize that maybe they had more in common with the gringos from the North, than with their own government in Mexico City.
- By **1830**, with increasing complaints from the American settlers, the Mexicans stopped all immigration to Texas, and sent in troops to enforce Mexican laws and Catholic customs.
- In 1833, **General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna** took control of Mexico, and made himself the president and generalissimo of the nation.
- Mexico abolished slavery in 1835, but still let the Americans keep the slaves that they had.
- All across Texas, a new wave of more militant settlers began arriving, and started organizing armed militias.
- As rumors of a possible Texas uprising spread across America, many famous Americans like **Jim Bowie**, **Davy Crockett**, and **William Travis** went to join in...
- Throughout **1835**, there were small clashes between the Texas militias and the Mexican military.
- Predictably, President Santa Anna led the Mexican Army north to “deal” with the upstart Texans.
- In October, of **1835** the Mexican Army clashed with the Texas revolutionaries at the **Battle of Gonzales**; the first battle of the Texas Revolution.



**How does this modern flag relate to the Texas revolution?**

## Lecture 4.2 • *The Lone Star Republic*

- In January of 1836, Texas officially declared its independence from Mexico.
- Many Tejanos also joined the revolution. The most famous was **José Navarro** and **Juan Seguín**.
- In February, in the first major clash of the revolution, Santa Anna and the Mexican army easily defeated the Texans at the famous **Battle of the Alamo** near San Antonio.
- One month later, Mexican troops executed 425 Texan prisoners at the **Goliad Massacre**.
- The losses at the Alamo, and Goliad galvanized the Texas revolutionaries, and all across Texas “**Remember the Alamo**” became the battle cry of the revolution.
- After Goliad, and the Alamo, Sam Houston led the Texans on a fighting retreat which allowed them to reform their army.
- In April, the reformed Texan army defeated a small advanced unit of the Mexican army under Santa Anna’s command at **The Battle of Jacinto**.
- Santa Anna himself was captured, and in order to secure his own release, the Mexican president secretly agreed to recognize Texas as an independent nation.
- The **Treaties of Velasco** ended the fighting, the Mexican army returned to Mexico... .. and the Republic of Texas was born!
- Not surprisingly, Sam Houston was chosen as the first president.
- The Tejanos, who had fought side-by-side with the Americans, were almost entirely shut out of the new government.
- Almost immediately after gaining their independence, the people of Texas began to talk about joining the U.S.
- They were wise to seek an alliance with the U.S. For eight years the Mexican army sent expeditions into Texas to test it’s military capabilities. Mexico definitely wanted Texas back one day!
- In Washington D.C. many American politicians began to discuss whether they should try to annex Texas.



**Based in Dallas,  
this is the shield  
of what semi-pro  
soccer team?**

**annex:**  
to acquire land by mutual  
agreement

## Lecture 4.3 • *Oregon, New Mexico, and California*

- Starting in the 1840s, American settlers & pioneers began heading to the Far West.
- Very few of them stopped on the dry plains, and instead kept moving ahead for the west coast where they could find a mild climate, good farm land, and a new life for their families.

### *Oregon*

- In the 1820s, the Oregon Country was ruled jointly by both the U.S. and the British.
- In 1843, the first wagons bound for Oregon left Missouri. The 2,000-mile wagon trip would take them four to five months.
- There were many dangers and risks on the trip:
  - floating the wagons across rivers
  - heat & drought
  - snow & blizzards
  - and disease (esp. measles, dysentery, cholera, & typhoid)
- Despite the dangers, between 1840 and 1860, 50,000 Americans made the journey to Oregon.
- Far from being enemies, the western Indians were valuable trade partners to the settlers.
- In 1846, the U.S. and Britain divided Oregon into two halves.



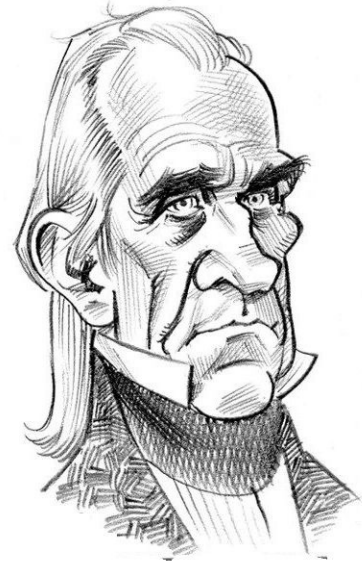
**These are the flags of what two nations?**

### *California & New Mexico*

- Recall that *Neuvo Mexico* and *Alta California* had been part of the colony of *New Spain* since **1542**... that 230 years *before* the American colonies declared their independence from Britain!
- *Alta California* included California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and parts of Wyoming & Colorado.
- *Nuevo Mexico* included New Mexico, and parts of Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas.
- After the Mexican Revolution of 1821, both California, and *Nuevo Mexico* became part of new nation of Mexico.
- The Mexican government welcomed American settlers, and by the mid-1840s, over 700 Americans had moved to California and New Mexico.

## Lecture 4.4 • “*Manifest Destiny*”

- After the surprising victory of Texas over Mexico, many American officials began to think that maybe the U.S. should **annex** not only Texas, but also California and all of the New Mexico Territory, and expand the country all the way to the Pacific Ocean.
- The government’s feelings were shared by many average Americans who felt that our form of government was the best in the world, and that it should control the entire continent.
- Some people even believed that Americans had a **god-given responsibility** to expand the nation to the West.
- A New York newspaper called this idea ...



**Who is this?**

### “**Manifest Destiny**”

- This idea was so strong in the minds of Americans that it even reshaped the nation’s political landscape:
  - The old Democratic-Republic Party split into the **Democratic Party** and the **Whig Party**. The Democrats favored expansion, while the Whigs opposed expansion.
  - In **1844**, **James K. Polk** was elected president almost exclusively on the promise that the country would expand to the West and fulfill its destiny.
  - In **1845**, Congress decided to risk war with Mexico, and reluctantly voted to annex Texas ... making it the 28th state.
- Sadly, many Americans used the idea of **manifest destiny** to support their own racist views that Mexicans and Indians were inferior people, and that it was perfectly OK to sweep them aside and claim their lands for the U.S.

## Lecture 4.5 • *War with Mexico*

- **1846:** Mexico and the U.S. are on the brink of war because ...
  - (a) Mexico is upset that the U.S. annexed Texas
  - (b) many Americans think that Mexico is standing in the way of our manifest destiny
- That same year, President **James K. Polk** convinces Congress to declare war on Mexico.
- However, the nation as a whole, already divided by the issue of slavery, is split on whether there should be war.
- Seeing the opportunity to expand the “cotton kingdom” and further their wealth and political influence, most *Southern* states supported the war.
- Most *Northern* states opposed the war because they wanted the West kept open for wage labor and expansion of industry, or because they didn’t want slavery to expand.
- Once Congress declared war against Mexico, the U.S. military moved quickly to win the war.
- In **1847**, two American armies cut off California and New Mexico Territory from Mexico.
- At the same time, a combined navy-army force drove into, and captured, Mexico City.
- By **1848**, the war was over, and Mexico **ceded** California and New Mexico to the U.S.
- Importance of the Mexican-American War:
  - It was America’s second invasion of a foreign nation.
  - 1,700 U.S. soldiers die in combat; another 11,000 die from diseases like yellow fever
  - Over 20,000 Mexicans (mostly civilians) are killed.
  - The war “professionalized” the Army, and served as a training ground for a new generation of young career army officers like Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant.



**Which branch of the U.S. military was created in 1834?**

**cede:**  
to give up land as part of the terms of surrender in a war

## Lecture 4.6 • *For God & Gold*

### *The Mormons*

- In **1830**, **Joseph Smith** founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The Latter Day Saints are more commonly known as the **Mormons**.
- The targets of religious persecution, the Mormons were forced to move from New York to Ohio ... then to Missouri ... and then again to Illinois.
- Smith was murdered in 1844, and three years later, the new church leader, **Brigham Young** decided to lead all 15,000 of the Mormons to a new home in the West.
- After a two year trip by foot and cart, the Mormons founded Salt Lake City in a territory that they called “**Deseret**”.
- In 1850, the U.S. govt. created the territory of Utah, even though the Mormon church refused to recognize U.S. authority in their land.
- For years, politicians in Washington compared Mormon **polygamy** to slavery, and the Army was even sent to Utah to “remind” the Mormon that they weren’t their own nation.
- The tension reached a peak in 1857 when a group of Utah militiamen killed over 100 non-Mormon pioneers at the **Mountain Meadow Massacre**.



**What do the B and Y”  
stand for in BYU?**

### *Gold Fever*

- In 1848, a workman named James Marshall discovered gold while digging a ditch at Sutter’s Mill near Sacramento, CA.
- Within days, word went out that there was gold in California!!
- In **1849**, 80,000 people flooded into California seeking their fortunes.
- These “**49ers**” came from everywhere: the U.S., Europe, Australia, China, South America. Even runaway slaves came west during the California gold rush.
- Very few people struck it rich in California, but the Gold Rush did attract people, and by **1850** the population was large enough that Congress made CA the 31st state.

**polygamy:**  
the practice of a man having  
more than one wife