

Unit 4: *Westward Expansion*

Name: _____

Lecture 4.1

Oregon, New Mexico, & California

- Starting in the 1830s and '40s, American settlers 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.



These are the flags of what two nations?

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.

Personal Reflection:

California & New Mexico

- “New Mexico” in the early 1800s included present-day Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, and parts of Colorado.
- The Spanish had been in New Mexico and California since 1542.
- In 1821, the Mexicans won their independence from Spain, and both areas became part of the new country of Mexico.
- The Mexican government welcomed American settlers, but by the mid-1840s, only 700 Americans lived in California.

Lecture 4.2 • Texas

- After the Louisiana Purchase, the U.S. government made two unsuccessful attempts to buy the state of “Coahuila y Tejas” from both Spain and Mexico.
- Despite the unwillingness of the Mexican government to sell Texas, between **1820** and **1830**, 20,000 Americans were allowed to settle there. Most of the American settlers were slave owners.
- 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.
- 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 **1835**, Mexico outlawed slavery.
- The Texans protested, and refused to free any of their slaves.
- In 1836, things in Texas really fell apart:
 - Jan. Texas declares independence from Mexico
 - Feb. The Mexican army defeats a group of Texans near San Antonio at **the Alamo**
 - Apr. Sam Houston and the Texan volunteers defeat Mex. general Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto
 - Sept. a new nation ... The **Republic of Texas** is born
- Almost immediately after gaining their independence, the people of Texas began to talk about joining the U.S.
- Similarly, the U.S. Congress began to seriously discuss whether they should **annex** Texas.



What element of the original Texas flag is evident on the modern flag?

Personal Reflection:

annex:

to acquire land by mutual agreement

Lecture 4.4 • *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 served as a training ground for a new generation of young army officers like **Robert E. Lee** and **Ulysses S. Grant**.



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

Personal Reflection:

cede:

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

