

THE WAR OF 1812



President James Madison

As US settlers moved west, they often encountered resistance from Native Americans. Native Americans had lived in regions beyond the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers for generations. They were not happy about white settlers suddenly trying to lay claim to these lands. Many US settlers blamed the British for encouraging this resistance in order to protect their own interests in Canada. By the early 1800s, many leaders in Congress demanded war with Great Britain. They tended to represent western and southern farmers who often experienced violent conflict with Native Americans along the frontier. Meanwhile, Federalists in New England opposed the war. They represented merchants and traders in established urban areas. These merchants and traders did a great deal of business with Great Britain and other nations. They did not

want their trade disrupted by an international conflict. Eventually, the “war hawks” (those in favor of war) won. **President James Madison** called for war on the grounds that Great Britain both encouraged Native American attacks against US citizens and continued to interfere with US shipping by impressing sailors. On June 18, 1812, Congress officially declared war.

The **War of 1812** began with many in the US hoping to win land from the British in Canada and the Spanish in Florida (Spain was a British ally). At times, it appeared that the US was in trouble, especially when the British invaded and burned Washington, DC. New England actually considered seceding (leaving the Union) over its opposition to the war. The US persevered, however, winning an important victory at the battle of Fort McHenry. The bravery of the US soldiers who held the fort inspired Francis Scott Key to write *The Star-Spangled Banner* (today’s US national anthem). Eventually, with Andrew Jackson’s victory at the Battle of New Orleans, the US secured a treaty ending the war. The Treaty of Ghent did not grant any official land gains to the US, but it did keep the Mississippi River and the frontier open, encouraging further western migration. It also showed that the United States could defend itself and protect its interests. Due to its opposition to the war, the Federalist Party lost its credibility and faded from importance in national politics.



War of 1812

THE MONROE DOCTRINE

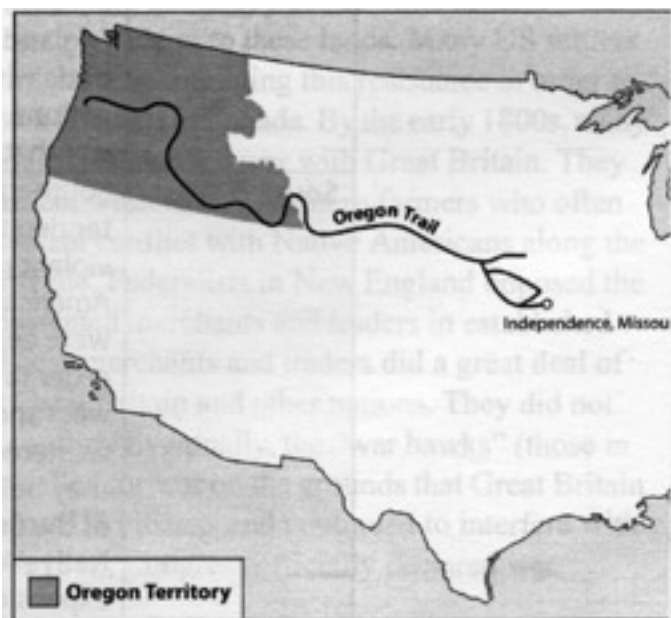
After the War of 1812 and the end of the Federalist Party, the United States entered a period of national pride and political unity known as the Era of Good Feelings. It was during this period that President James Monroe issued the **Monroe Doctrine** in 1823. Monroe proclaimed that the United States would not tolerate European intervention in the Western Hemisphere (North and South America). He also declared that the American continents were no longer open to European colonization. The US would view any future attempts at colonization as threats. Finally, the president promised that the United States would not interfere in the affairs of other countries. In reality, the US was not militarily prepared to enforce Monroe's stances. Fortunately for the president, however, Great Britain backed the policy for economic reasons. Britain used its powerful navy to keep routes of trade open and discourage any European intervention in the Americas.



Map of the Western Hemisphere

THE OREGON TRAIL

In the early 1800s, Great Britain, the United States, Russia, and Spain all claimed portions of the **Oregon Territory** (region that now makes up the northwest United States and parts of southwestern Canada). None of the four countries gave any consideration to the Native Americans who had lived in the region for centuries. In 1818, the US and Great Britain signed a treaty agreeing to share custody of the land. Soon afterwards, Russia and Spain withdrew their claims. (See next section entitled "Relations with Spain.")



The Oregon Trail

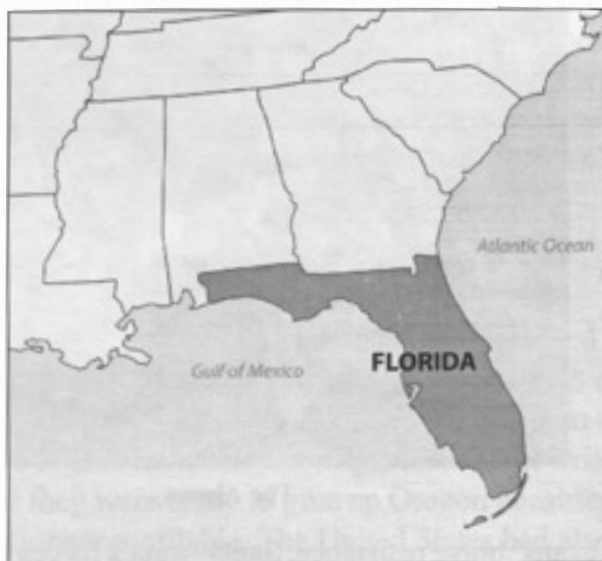
Following the Lewis and Clark Expedition (review chapter 1, section 1.2), more settlers headed west. Mountain men soon lived throughout the Oregon Territory, opening paths for those who would come after them. Some settlers migrated west for land. Others searched for gold. A number of missionaries moved west to convert Native Americans to Christianity. Eventually, a number of trails developed. These trails were simply well-traveled routes used by settlers to head west. Perhaps the most famous was the **Oregon Trail**. The Oregon Trail started in Independence, Missouri, and ran west into the Oregon Territory.

Thanks to the Oregon Trail, the Oregon Territory became home to a growing number of US citizens. As the territory's population grew, so did cries for the United States government to lay claim to the entire region.



Pioneers on the Oregon Trail

RELATIONS WITH SPAIN



Map of Florida



Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams

In 1817, conflict arose between white settlers and Native Americans along the Georgia-Florida frontier. The president responded by ordering his famed military leader, Andrew Jackson, to put an end to the fighting. Without permission, Jackson went further and tried to drive the Spanish out of Florida. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams supported Jackson's aggressive actions. He told Spain that if it could not maintain order in Florida, then it should cede the land to the United States. In 1819, Spain and the United States signed the **Adams-Onís Treaty**. Under the treaty, Spain ceded Florida and any claim it laid to the Oregon Territory to the US. In return, the United States gave up any claim to the Texas Territory and agreed to a border between the Louisiana Territory and Spanish territory in the North American southwest.

MANIFEST DESTINY



Manifest Destiny

As the United States approached the middle of the nineteenth century, many leaders and citizens believed it was God's will for the US to expand west. They felt that white Americans were destined to spread "civilized democracy" and possess territory all the way to the Pacific Ocean. People who shared this belief considered it the nation's destiny to conquer the West. Their ideology became known as **Manifest Destiny**.

TEXAS: INDEPENDENCE AND ANNEXATION

In 1821, Mexico gained independence from Spain. Mexico also gained control of Texas. **Texas** was home to a large number of US settlers. In 1834, General Antonio Santa Anna assumed power over the Mexican government and tightened his control over Texas. In response, Texans under the leadership of Sam Houston launched a rebellion. On March 2, 1836, a convention of Texas delegates declared the territory to be an independent republic. Santa Anna answered with military force. On March 6, a small group of Texans took their stand against the Mexican leader at an old mission called **The Alamo**. Despite the Texans' brave resistance, Santa Anna's forces were too strong. Every Texan who fought at the Alamo died in the battle or was executed after being captured (among them, the famed Davy Crockett of Tennessee). After a series of battles, the Texans defeated Santa Anna and took him hostage. In exchange for his freedom, the Mexican leader promised to give up Texas. Wanting to become part of the United States, Texans asked to be annexed (made part of the US). President Andrew Jackson wanted to annex Texas, but northerners in Congress did not. Because of its southern location, northerners knew that Texas



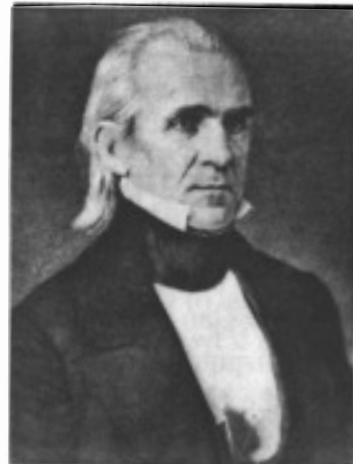
The Alamo

would be admitted as a slave state. They also feared that, because of its large size, the area might be divided into *several* slave states. If this happened, it would give slave states an advantage in Congress. Texas remained an independent nation until 1845.



Texas Territory

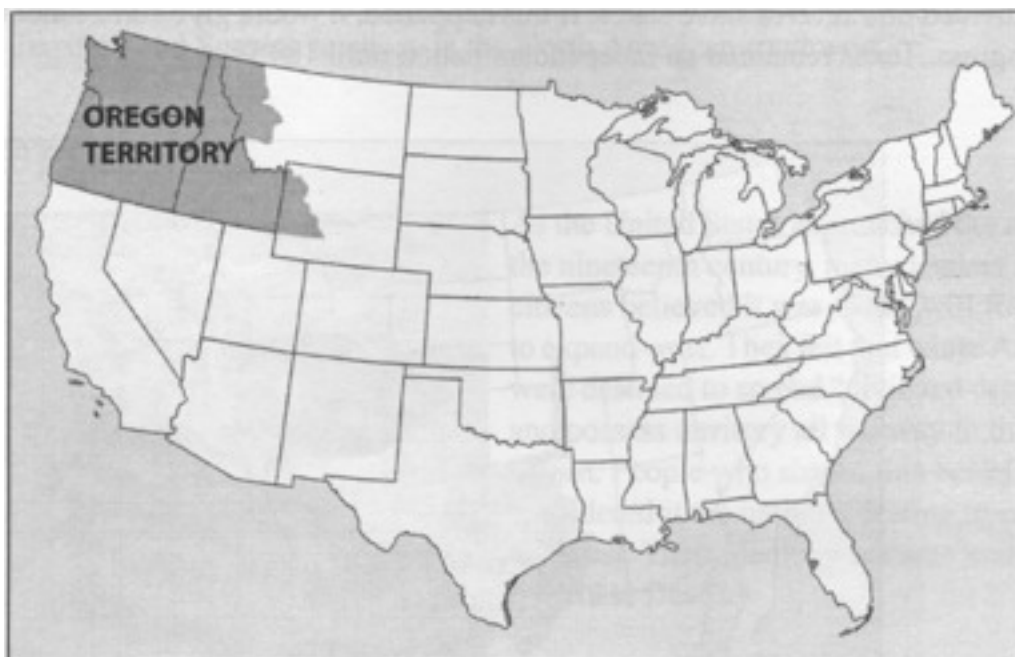
Whether or not to annex Texas was a critical issue in the election of 1844. James Polk took a strong stand as the Democratic candidate for president. He called for the annexation of both Texas and Oregon. Polk's election inspired his predecessor, President John Tyler, to call on Congress to pass a resolution admitting Texas to the Union as a slave state. Congress finally agreed, and Texas became a state in 1845.



President James Polk

OREGON

With the question of Texas settled, Polk turned his attention to annexing the Oregon Territory. President Polk approached Britain, arguing that the US had rightful claim to the territory up to 54°40'N latitude. Polk's aggressive tone irritated the British, but they were ready to give up Oregon because the territory was no longer profitable. The United States had also become an important consumer of British goods, leading Britain to want friendly terms with the US. The United States accepted a treaty declaring 49°N latitude the official boundary. In 1846, Oregon became a US territory.



Map of the Oregon Territory

WAR WITH MEXICO AND THE GADSDEN PURCHASE

Mexico was angry with the US for annexing Texas. However, this did not deter President Polk and leaders in Congress who believed in Manifest Destiny. In June 1845, Polk ordered US troops to the Texas border. He also sent a Louisiana businessman and politician, John Slidell, to Mexico. Polk wanted Slidell to settle disputes over the boundary between the United States and Mexico. Polk hoped to get treaty that would allow the US to purchase the California and New Mexico territories. After the



War with Mexico

Mexican president refused to meet with Slidell, Polk ordered US troops to move into the disputed territory. In response, Mexican troops crossed the Rio Grande and attacked Taylor's forces. Immediately, Polk demanded that Congress declare war on Mexico. He claimed that the Mexicans had "shed American blood on American soil." Though some representatives doubted Polk's claim, Congress passed a declaration of war on May 13, 1846. The war was a series of US victories leading up to September 14, 1847, when General Winfield Scott marched his troops into Mexico City and forced Mexico to surrender. After months of negotiations, the US and Mexico finally ended the war with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo on February 2, 1848. The treaty required Mexico to sell the New Mexico and California territories to the United States.

In 1853, boundary disputes with Mexico still remained. President Franklin Pierce sent James Gadsden to settle the problem and to purchase land for a southern transcontinental railroad. The **Gadsden Purchase** gave the United States parts of present-day New Mexico and Arizona in exchange for ten million dollars. The purchase of these areas finalized the expanse of the continental United States to the present day.

CALIFORNIA

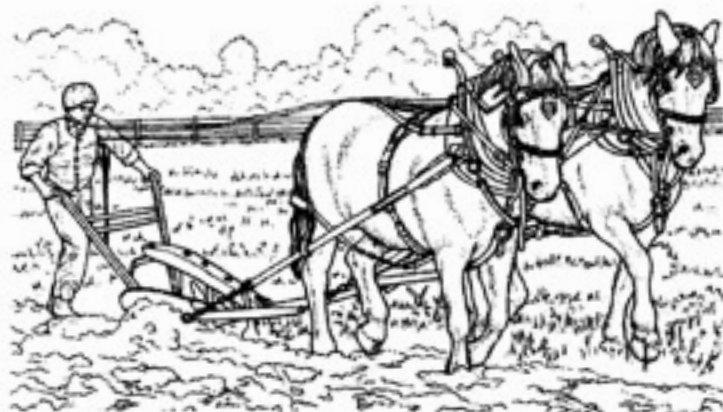


California 49ers

In 1848, settlers discovered gold just north of Sacramento, California. The following year, gold seekers came from all over the world as part of the California **Gold Rush** of 1849. These new arrivals were called “49ers,” and they rapidly increased California’s population. This growth produced a need for stable government almost overnight. After much debate over whether or not to allow slavery in the territory, Congress voted to admit California as a free state in 1850. Gold drew settlers west to other regions as well. (Review chapter 1, section 1.2.)

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

In order to fulfill Manifest Destiny, the nation needed citizens who were willing to move west. To encourage migration, the federal government passed several laws. The **Preemption Act** of 1841 stated that citizens who had lived on a particular piece of land for at least fourteen months could purchase up to 160 acres at a reduced price before the land was sold to the public. The law also promised partial reimbursements of the proceeds to some western territories once they became states (Louisiana was among them). The law encouraged people to move west and establish homesteads in hopes of eventually purchasing the land for very little. Later, the



Western Farmer in the Mid 1800s

Homestead Act of 1862 granted ownership of land to those willing to cultivate at least 160 acres for five years. The **Morrill-Land Grant Act**, passed the same year, gave certain western territories to state governments. These governments could then sell the land in order to raise money to establish colleges that would specialize in teaching new farming methods. The Morrill-Land Grant Act increased the western

population as it trained a new generation of farmers to tackle the rough terrain of the North American west.