

11-1 Westward to the Pacific

Rivalry in the Northwest

Main Idea: Many Americans wanted control of the Oregon country to gain access to the Pacific Ocean.

The Oregon country was a huge area that is today the states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho plus parts of Montana, Wyoming, and British Columbia in Canada. It extended from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. In the early 1800s this territory was claimed by Great Britain, the United States, Russia, and Spain. Americans wanted the land to gain access to the Pacific Ocean.

John Quincy Adams negotiated the Adams-Onís Treaty with Spain in 1819. With this treaty, Spain gave up claims to Oregon. Spain agreed that their land would only extend to the northern border of California. In 1824, Russia gave up their claim to Oregon country. Britain and the United States agreed to joint occupation of the territory. This meant that people from both countries could settle in Oregon country.

Fur traders were the first Americans to arrive in Oregon. They trapped beaver. The beaver furs were used to make hats. American John Jacob Astor created the American Fur Company. It traded with the East Coast, Pacific Northwest, and China. The Astors became one of the richest families in America.

Fur companies hired trappers called mountain men. Many mountain men had Native American wives and adopted Native American customs. They roamed the mountains in spring and summer collecting furs. Then in late summer, they held a gathering called a rendezvous where they traded furs for supplies.

As they traveled, the mountain men also explored the West. Jim Beckwourth was an African American mountain man who explored in Wyoming. Robert Stuart and Jedediah Smith found the South Pass through the Rocky Mountains.

In time, the mountain men had to find other work. They had killed off most of the beaver. Some settled on Oregon farms. Others, such as Jim Bridger and Kit Carson, became guides for settlers moving West.

Settling Oregon

Main Idea: Increased American settlement caused the United States and Britain to divide Oregon.

Missionaries came to Oregon to spread Christianity to the Native Americans. Dr. Marcus Whitman and his wife Narcissa built a mission among the Cayuse people. New settlers brought measles to the mission. An epidemic killed many Native American children. The Cayuse blamed the Whitmans and killed them in 1847.

The “great migration” to Oregon began in the early 1840s. Tens of thousands of settlers made the journey. The pioneers were called emigrants because they left the US to settle in a new region. The pioneers’ wagons were called prairie schooners. Pioneers stuffed their wagons with

everything they would need for the journey and their new life. They set out from towns in Missouri, such as Independence, to make the 2000 mile journey. They followed the Oregon Trail across the Great Plains, along the Platte River, and through South Pass of the Rocky Mts. Once they passed the mountains they took the trail north and west along the Snake and Columbia Rivers into Oregon.

As the number of American settlers grew, the British population remained about the same. As a result, many Americans felt that the US should get sole control of Oregon.

In the 1800s, many Americans believed that the US had the natural right to expand across the entire continent to the Pacific Ocean. This belief was called “Manifest Destiny”.

Many Americans began to push for sole ownership of Oregon. James K. Polk was the Democratic candidate for president in 1844. He campaigned with the slogan “Fifty-four forty or Fight”. This slogan referred to the line of latitude that Democrats believed should be the northern border of the US in Oregon. Polk defeated Whig candidate Henry Clay in the election and became President.

The British rejected the American proposal for the border. They did not want to give up all their claims to the territory. In 1846, the two countries signed an agreement that set the border between the American and British parts of Oregon at the 49th parallel.

11-2 Independence for Texas

A Clash of Cultures

Main Idea: Texas was settled by people from Mexico and The US, causing cultural tension.

In 1819, Texas was controlled by Spain. Most of the people in Texas were *Tejanos*, Mexicans who claimed Texas as their home. To encourage settlement, Spain offered large tracts of land to people who would move there with their families. The people who were given these land grants were called *empresarios*. American Moses Austin was given one of the land grants. When he died, his son Stephen Austin recruited 300 American families to move to Texas.

Before Austin could set up the colony, Mexico gained their independence from Spain. Now Texas was owned by Mexico. By 1830, there were many more Americans living in Texas than Mexicans. These American settlers refused to adopt the Mexican culture. The Mexican government issued a decree that would stop all immigration into Texas. Americans in Texas became angry, and many called for independence.

In 1833, the Mexican President General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna allowed immigration to resume. However, he would not grant independence to Texas. The Mexican government arrested Stephen Austin when he began planning for independence.

The Struggle for Independence

Main Idea: Texans wanted to be a nation separate from Mexico.

In 1825, Santa Anna sent troops to stop the conflict in Texas. They tried to seize a cannon in the town of Gonzalez, but the Texans pushed the Mexicans back. This was considered the first battle of the Texan Revolution.

In 1835, Texans freed San Antonio from Mexican control. But they could not agree on what the next steps should be. Thus, they were unprepared when the Mexican Army arrived in San Antonio the following year. About 160 Texans faced the Mexican Army at a mission called the Alamo.

Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie were among the Texan's leaders at the Alamo. The American commander William Travis sent messages to ask others to help them. The Alamo was under siege for 12 days. On March 6, 1826, the Mexican cannons destroyed the walls of the Alamo. Most of the defenders at the Alamo were killed. But they had bought Texans some time to gather an army.

On March 2, 1836, leaders from Texas met to declare independence as a new country – The Lone Star Republic of Texas. The Texas Declaration of Independence was very similar to the Declaration of the US. It accused the Mexican government of violating people's rights.

Texas set up a temporary government under the leadership of David Burnet as president. They named Sam Houston as the commander in chief of the Texan Army.

Texan soldiers retreating from Goliad met up with Mexican troops. After fighting, the Texans surrendered. Santa Anna had them executed even though they surrendered.

Houston gathered an army of about 900 at a place called San Jacinto. They launched a surprise attack on the Mexican Army. Half the Mexican troops were killed and the other half were captured, including Santa Anna. On May 14, 1836, Santa Anna signed a treaty recognizing Texas independence.

Texans elected Sam Houston as president. Houston sent representatives to Washington DC to ask the US government to annex Texas. President Andrew Jackson refused because adding another slave state would upset the balance of free and slave states in Congress.

Presidents Van Buren and Harrison also refused to annex Texas, When John Tyler became president, he persuaded Texas to reapply for annexation, but the US Senate denied the request.

By 1844, the idea of Manifest Destiny was growing. The South favored annexation of Texas. The North wanted the US to take control of Oregon. Democrat James Polk won the election. After his victory, Congress passed a resolution to annex Texas. Texas became a state on December 29, 1845.

11-3 War with Mexico

The New Mexico Territory

Main Idea: The Santa Fe Trail was a busy trade route through New Mexico. A territory owned by Mexico.

In the early 1800s, the New Mexico Territory extended from Texas to California. It included the present day states of New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada and parts of Colorado and Utah. Native Americans had lived in the area for thousands of years. In the late 1500s it became part of the Spanish colony of Mexico. The city of Santa Fe was founded in 1610. When Mexico became independent from Spain, New Mexico became a part of Mexico.

Spain had tried to keep Americans out of New Mexico. The Mexican government, however, welcomed American traders.

In 1821, William Becknell became the first American trader to reach Santa Fe. His route became the Santa Fe Trail. It began near Independence Missouri. After crossing the prairies, it followed the Arkansas River toward the Rocky Mts. Then it turned south toward New Mexico. It was easy to travel by wagon because the trail was mostly flat. It was a busy trade route until the railroad arrived in 1880. As trade increased more Americans settled in New Mexico. With the idea of Manifest Destiny, many Americans wanted to acquire the New Mexico Territory.

California's Spanish Culture

Main Idea: California was settled and populated by diverse cultures.

The first Europeans to settle in California were Spanish explorer and missionaries. After Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, California became a part of Mexico. In 1833 the Mexican government abolished the Spanish missions. It gave some of the land to Native Americans and sold the rest. Mexican settlers called *rancheros* bought the land and built huge properties called *ranchos*.

At first the Mexican government welcomed Americans into California. In 1839 the granted land to an American named John Sutter who opened a trading post. In the 1840s, American families traveled the Oregon Trail to settle in the Sacramento River Valley. American Army officer John Fremont wrote of the regions mild climate and abundant resources. Americans began talking about adding California as a state. This would give the US ports on the Pacific Ocean. President Polk offered to buy New Mexico and California twice, but Mexico refused both times.

War with Mexico

Main Idea: Strained relations between the US and Mexico resulted in war.

After Mexico refused to sell California and New Mexico, President Polk plotted to take the territories by force. He hoped to provoke Mexico into attacking first so that he could justify the war to Congress.

There was disagreement where the border was between Mexico and Texas. The US said the border was the Rio Grande River. Mexico said it was the Nueces River. Polk sent John Slidell to work out a deal, but the Mexicans refused to meet with him. So Polk told General Zachary Taylor to lead his troops into the disputed area (the land both countries claimed). In April 1846, the Mexican Army attacked Taylor's troops. The US Congress declared war on Mexico.

The war divided Americans. Democrats mostly supported the war. Many Whigs did not support the war. Northerners accused the democrats of starting a war so they could spread slavery.

General Taylor's forces captured Monterrey and Buena Vista. General Stephen Kearney led his troops into New Mexico and captured Santa Fe. In June 1846, a small group of Americans seized Sonoma and proclaimed independence for California. They called their new country the Bear Flag Republic. These actions outraged *Californios*, the Mexicans who lived in California. The US Navy captured Monterrey and San Francisco and declared that California was annexed to the US. By January 1847, American forces controlled all of California. In September 1847, American troops with General Winfield Scott captured Mexico City and the Mexican Government surrendered.

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was signed in February 1848. Mexico gave up its claims to Texas and Agreed on the Rio Grande as the border. Mexico also ceded California and New Mexico to the US for a price of \$15 million. This was called the Mexican Cession. In 1853, the US paid Mexico \$10 million for the Gadsden Purchase. This was a strip of land along the southern edge of present-day Arizona and New Mexico. This purchase resulted in the final size of the US as it is today, excluding Alaska and Hawaii.

11-4 New Settlers in California and Utah

The California Gold Rush

Main Idea: The discovery of gold in California had a significant impact on the settlement and economy of the region.

In 1848, James Marshall found gold on John Sutter's land. As word of the discovery broke out, the California Gold Rush began. In 1848 and 1849, nearly 100,000 people from all over the world flocked to California to look for gold. They were called forty-niners.

Many arrived by sea after sailing around the tip of South America. Most travelled overland by the Oregon Trail or Santa Fe Trail and then over the Sierra Nevada Mountains. More than half were Americans but others came from around the world. A group of 300 men arrived from China. Their descendants established California's Chinese American community.

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo had made Californios US citizens. It guaranteed them the rights to their land. However, the Land Law of 1851 required the Californios to prove their land ownership. Many lost their land because they did not have documents to prove ownership.

As the gold seekers arrived, new communities called boomtowns sprang up. Villages like San Francisco became large cities.

Very few forty-niners had actual experience in mining. While the California Gold Rush doubled the world's supply of gold, few forty-niners achieved lasting wealth. Most individual miners found very little gold; and those who did often lost it through gambling or wild spending. Merchants made huge profits. They could charge whatever they liked for items because the miners had no place else to buy supplies.

Few women lived in mining towns. The towns had no police so lawbreakers posed a real threat. Citizens protected themselves by forming vigilance committees. These vigilantes took the law into their hands as police, judge, and jury.

The Gold Rush only lasted a few years but it had a huge effect on California's economy. Many miners remained in California to farm or run a business. California's population rose from 20000 in 1848 to more than 220000 in 1852.

California applied for statehood in 1850. Southerners in Congress opposed it because California did not allow slavery. A new free state would upset the balance between slave and free states in Congress. California became a state later when Congress worked out a compromise.

A Religious Refuge in Utah

Main Idea: Utah was settled by Mormons, a religious group looking for safe haven.

The Mormons are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1830, Joseph Smith founded the Mormon Church. Smith formed a community in New York. However, they were forced to leave because neighbors did not approve of Mormon practices. The Mormons went on to Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. A mob killed Joseph Smith in Illinois and Brigham Young became the new Mormon leader.

Young decided to move his people west to the Great Salt Lake area where they could practice their faith without persecution. About 12,000 Mormons made the journey to Utah. They worked hard to make their new home called Deseret prosper. They built irrigation canals and set up industries to become self-sufficient.

The US acquired the Great Salt Lake area from Mexico in 1848. In 1850, the US set up Utah Territory with Brigham Young as its governor.. Utah finally became a state in 1896.