**Chapter 17**

*Manifest Destiny and Its Legacy, 1841–1848*

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**“Manifest Destiny”**

- First coined by newspaper editor, John O’Sullivan in 1845.
- “...the right of our manifest destiny to over spread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federative development of self-government entrusted to us. It is right such as that of the tree to the space of air and the earth suitable for the full expansion of its principle and destiny of growth.”
- A myth of the West as a land of romance and adventure emerged.

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**I. The Accession of “Tyler Too”**

- Whig party:
  - Wm. H. Harrison, a Whig, elected in 1841 and John Tyler elected Vice-President
  - Cabinet: Secretary of State—Daniel Webster
  - Henry Clay in Senate, uncrowned king of Whigs
  - Harrison contacted pneumonia and died after only four weeks in office:
    - By far shortest administration in American history but longest inaugural address

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**I. The Accession of “Tyler Too”** (cont.)

- John Tyler:
  - “Tyler too” party of Whig ticket, now claimed spotlight
  - Stubbornly attached to principle
  - Resigned earlier from Senate, rather than accept distasteful instructions from Virginia legislature
  - Left Jacksonian Democrats for Whigs
  - Enemies accused him of being a Democrat in Whig clothing
  - Tyler was at odds with majority of Whigs

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**I. The Accession of “Tyler Too”** (cont.)

- Whig party platform:
  - Pro-bank, pro-protective tariff, and pro-internal improvements.
  - “Tyler too” rhymed with “Tippecanoe,” but there harmony ended.
  - Harrison, the Whig, served for only four weeks, whereas Tyler, the ex-Democrat but largely a Democrat at heart, served for 204 weeks.
II. John Tyler: A President Without a Party

• Whigs platform:
  • Outlined a strongly nationalist program
  • Financial reform came first:
    – Whig Congress passed law ending independent treasury system
    – President Tyler, disarmingly agreeable, signed it
    – Clay drove through Congress a bill for a “Fiscal Bank” which would create a new Bank of the United States
    – Clay—the “Great Compromiser”—would have done well to conciliate Tyler

II. John Tyler: A President Without a Party (cont.)

– Tyler vetoed bill on both practical and constitutional grounds
– Whig leaders tried again, passing another bill providing for a “Fiscal Corporation”
– Tyler again vetoed the offensive substitute
– Democrats were jubilant
– Whig extremists condemned Tyler as “His Accidency” and “Executive Ass”
– He was formally expelled from his party
– Entire cabinet resigned, except Secretary of State Webster, then in midst of delicate negotiations with England

II. John Tyler: A President Without a Party (cont.)

• Proposed Whig tariff:
  – Tyler vetoed bill
  – He disagreed with Whig scheme for distributing to states revenue from sale of public lands in West
  – He believed this would squander federal money
• Chastened Clayites redrafted tariff bill:
  – Removed dollar-distribution scheme
  – Lowered rates to moderately protective level of 1832—roughly 32% on dutiable goods
  – Tyler reluctantly signed Tariff of 1842

Trends in Antebellum America: 1810-1860

1. New intellectual and religious movements.
2. Social reforms.
4. Re-emergence of a second party system and more political democratization.
5. Increase in federal power → Marshall Ct. decisions.
6. Increase in American nationalism.
7. Further westward expansion.

“American Progress” by John Gast, 1872
The Pony Express
- Between April, 1860 and Nov., 1861.
- Delivered news and mail between St. Louis, MO and San Francisco, CA.
- Took 10 days.
- Replaced by the completion of the transcontinental telegraph line.

IV. Manipulating the Maine Maps
- Maine boundary dispute:
  - St. Lawrence River icebound several months of year:
  - As defensive precaution, British wanted to build a road west from seaport Halifax to Quebec
  - Road would go through disputed territory claimed by Maine
  - **Aroostook War** threatened to widen into full war

- Britain sent to Washington a nonprofessional diplomat, Lord Ashburton, who established cordial relations with Secretary Webster
- They agreed to compromise on Maine boundary A split-the-difference arrangement:
  - Americans retained 7,000 square miles of 12,000 square miles of wilderness in dispute
  - Britain got less land but won desired Halifax-Quebec route

- Congress called up 50,000 men and voted for $10,000,000 to pay for the ‘war.’
- General Winfield Scott arranged a truce, and a border commission was convened to resolve the issue.

- **Caroline affair** patched up by exchange of diplomatic notes
- Bonus in small print:
  - British, in adjusting U.S.-Canadian boundary farther West, surrendered 6,500 square miles
  - Area later found to contain priceless Mesabi iron ore of Minnesota

Aroostook "War," 1839
- The only war ever declared by a state.
  - Between the Canadian region of New Brunswick and the state of Maine.
  - **Cause:** The expulsion of Canadian lumberjacks in the disputed area of Aroostook by Maine officials.
  - Congress called up 50,000 men and voted for $10,000,000 to pay for the ‘war.’
  - General Winfield Scott arranged a truce, and a border commission was convened to resolve the issue.
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The first Texas land grant went to Moses Austin in 1821. He agreed to bring a number of settlers to Texas, but died before he could organize the project. After Moses died, his son Stephen F. Austin recruited 300 settlers to live on land along the Brazos and Colorado Rivers in Texas.

By 1830 there were more Americans than Mexicans in Texas. Alarmed by the number of Americans, and aware that the United States wanted to acquire Texas, Mexico forbade further immigration from the United States to Texas, and discouraged trade with the United States by taxing American goods.

Mexico wanted to encourage settlers from many places, not just the United States, to settle in Texas. To attract new settlers, Mexico passed laws giving cheap land to people who promised to learn Spanish, convert to Catholicism, and obey Mexican law. But most Texas settlers continued to be Americans who declined to adopt Mexican ways.

Texans were angered by the ban on American immigration and the taxes on trade. Stephen F. Austin went to Mexico City to ask Mexico’s president, Antonio López de Santa Anna, to remove the settlement ban and make Texas a separate state. He agreed to the first demand but not the second.
A Clash of Cultures (cont.)

Soon thereafter, Santa Anna declared himself dictator and overthrew Mexico’s 1824 constitution. These actions encouraged an increasing number of American settlers in Texas to seek independence.

The Struggle for Independence

Santa Anna, furious at the loss of San Antonio, marched north to retake the settlement and found only a small force barricaded inside a nearby mission called the Alamo. The defenders at the Alamo, including Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie, held off with rifle fire the larger and better-armed Mexican force for 12 days.

The Texas Declaration of Independence

When a government has ceased to protect the lives, liberty and property of the people, from whom its legitimate powers are derived, and for the advancement of whose happiness it was instituted, and so far from being a guarantee for the enjoyment of those inestimable and inalienable rights, becomes an instrument in the hands of evil rulers for their oppression.

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Key Figures in Texas Independence, 1836

Sam Houston (1793-1863)
Steve Austin (1793-1836)

The Struggle for Independence

The first fight of the Texan Revolution occurred in October 1835 at the town of Gonzales. After this skirmish, Texans asked for volunteers to help them fight Mexico. In December the Texans scored their first important victory as they liberated San Antonio from a larger Mexican force.

“Remember the Alamo” became a rallying cry for Texas rebels during the rest of the war with Mexico.
V. The Lone Star of Texas Shines Alone

- Texas's precarious existence:
  - Mexico:
    - refused to recognize Texas's independence
    - regarded Lone Star Republic as a province in revolt to be reconquered in future
    - Mexican officials threatened war if U.S.A. ever annexed Texas
V. The Lone Star of Texas Shines Alone (cont.)

– Threatened by Mexico, Texas maintained costly military defense
– Texas also negotiated with Britain & France to secure a defensive shield of a protectorate:
  • In 1839 and 1840, Texans concluded treaties with France, Holland, and Belgium.
– Britain & France interested in an independent Texas to help block further American expansion

• Other foreigners interested in Texas:
  – British abolitionists hoped to end slavery in Texas
  – British merchants regarded Texas as important free-trade area—an offset to tariff-walled United States
  – British manufacturers hoped Texas could produce enough cotton to reduce Britain’s chronic dependence on American fiber

VII. Oregon Fever Populates Oregon (cont.)

– British claims to Oregon were strong:
  • Especially portion north of Columbia River
  • Based on:
    – Prior discovery and exploration
    – Treaty rights
    – Actual occupation
    – Coloring agency Hudson’s Bay Company
– American claims to Oregon:
  • Exploration and occupation
  • Captain Robert Gray (1792) stumbled onto Columbia River, which he named after his ship

• Famed Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804-1806
• Presence of missionaries and other settlers, some of whom reached Willamette River valley
  – Missionaries, in trying to save the soul of the Indians, were instrumental in saving the soil of Oregon for United States
  – They stimulated interest in a faraway domain that many Americans earlier assumed would not be settled for centuries
• Scattered Americans and British pioneers lived peacefully side by side
VII. Oregon Fever Populates Oregon (cont.)

– Anglo-American Convention of 1818 (Chap. 12):
  • United States wanted to divide at forty-ninth parallel
  • British wanted Columbia River as dividing line
  • A scheme for peaceful “joint occupation” was adopted, pending future settlement
  • Handful of Americans in Willamette Valley was multiplied in early 1840s by “Oregon fever”

– Over 2,000 mile Oregon Trail (1846) five thousand Americans had settled south of Columbia River
– British could only muster seven hundred north of Columbia River
– Actually only a relatively small area was in dispute by 1845:
  • Americans proposed line at forty-ninth parallel
  • British again offered line at Columbia River
  • Issue now tossed into presidential election of 1844, where it became overshadowed by question of annexing Texas
Between 1840 and 1860, more than 250,000 people made the trek westward.

The Doomed Donner Party

April, 1846 – April, 1847

Of the 83 members of the Donner Party, only 45 survived to get to California!

CANNIBALISM ! !

James Reed & Wife

The Oregon Dispute: 54° 40' or Fight!

By the mid-1840s, “Oregon Fever” was spurred on by the promise of free land.

The joint British-U. S. occupation ended in 1846.

VI. The Belated Texas Nuptials

- Texas became a leading issue in 1844 presidential campaign:
  - Foes of expansion assailed annexation
  - Southern hotheads cried, “Texas or Disunion”
  - Pro-expansion Democrats under James K. Polk defeated Whigs
  - Lame duck president Tyler interpreted narrow Democratic victory as “mandate” to acquire Texas
  - Tyler deserves credit for shepherding Texas into fold
VI. The Belated Texas Nuptials (cont.)

- Despairing of securing necessary 2/3 vote in Senate for a treaty, Tyler sought annexation by joint resolution
- After spirited debate, resolution passed in 1845, and Texas formally invited to become 28th state
- Mexico angrily charged Americans had despoiled it of Texas
- But clear by 1845 that Mexico would not be able to retake Texas

By 1845 Lone Star Republic had become a danger spot:

- Invited foreign intrigue that menaced American people
- Continued existence of Texas as independent nation threatened to involve United States in wars
- United States can hardly be accused of haste in achieving annexation

MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR: Causes

- Election of 1844
- James K. Polk
- U.S. Annexation of Texas, 1845

X. Misunderstandings with Mexico

- Faraway California was another worry for Polk:
  - Diverse population: Spanish Mexicans; Indians; some “foreigners” (mostly Americans)
  - Given time these transplanted Americans might bring California into the Union
  - Polk was eager to buy from Mexico
  - Mexico owed United States some $3 million for damages to American citizens and their property
  - More serious contention was Texas
  - Deadlocked with Mexico over Texas’s boundaries

Election of 1844
- James K. Polk
- Annexation of Texas, 1845
- Texas boundary dispute
  - Nueces River
  - Rio Grande River
- War (May 13, 1846)
The annexation of Texas by the United States in 1845 worsened relations between Mexico and the United States, which had already been bad for years. The two countries also could not agree on the border between Texas and Mexico. The United States placed the border at the Rio Grande, while Mexico claimed it was at the Nueces River, 150 miles farther north.

X. Misunderstandings with Mexico
- Texas wanted boundary at Rio Grande River
- Mexico sought boundary at Nueces River
- Polk careful to keep U.S. troops out of no-man’s-land - 150 mile section between the two “borders”
- California continued to cause Polk anxiety:
  - Rumors—British wanted to buy or seize California
  - Americans could not accept under Monroe Doctrine
- Polk dispatched John Slidell to Mexico City (1845):
  - To offer $25 million for California and territory to east
  - Mexico would not even permit Slidell to present his offer

XI. American Blood on American (?) Soil
- Polk decided to force a showdown:
  - January 13, 1846, he ordered 4,000 men:
    - Under General Zachary Taylor to march from Nueces River to Rio Grande hoping for a clash
  - When nothing happened, he informed cabinet (May 9, 1846) that he proposed to declare war because of:
    - Unpaid claims
    - Slidell’s rejection
  - News of bloodshed arrived same night
  - Mexican troops crossed Rio Grande and met Taylor
  - Mexican soldiers attacked some of Taylor’s troops in this disputed area on April 24, 1846.

Some Americans opposed war with Mexico. Abraham Lincoln, a member of Congress, thought Taylor’s troops had been attacked in Mexican territory, meaning there were no grounds for retaliation or war. Some people, such as antislavery activist Frederick Douglass, feared that expansion into the West would carry slavery with it.
XI. American Blood on American (?) Soil (cont.)

– Did Polk provoke war?
  • California was imperative in his program
  • Mexico would not sell it at any price
  • Polk wanted California, so he pushed quarrel to bloody showdown
  • Both sides were spoiling for a fight
  • Both sides were fired by moral indignation
  • Mexicans wanted to fight “Bullies of the North”
  • Many Americans sincerely believed Mexico was aggressor

XII. The Mastering of Mexico

• Polk wanted California—not war:
  – When war came, he wanted to fight on a limited scale and then pull out when he captured prize
  – Santa Anna convinced Polk that he would betray Mexico, but he then drove his countrymen to a desperate defense of their soil

Many Americans turned their anger on Mexico, and on May 11, Congress declared war on Mexico.

War With Mexico (cont.)

Polk had a three-part plan to win the war with Mexico.
- First, drive Mexican troops out of the disputed territory in Texas north of the Nueces River and secure the Texas border
- Second, seize New Mexico and California
- Third, capture Mexico’s capital, Mexico City

XII. The Mastering of Mexico (cont.)

• American operations in Southwest & California completely successful
  Both General Stephen Kearny and Captain John Frémont had success in West
  – Frémont collaborated with American naval officers and local Americans who hoisted banner of short-lived California Bear Flag Republic

The Bear Flag Republic

John C. Frémont
Remember this Guy!

The Revolt ➔ June 14, 1845
XII. The Mastering of Mexico (cont.)

General Taylor defeated Mexicans in several battles and then reached **Buena Vista** (February 22-23, 1847):

- Here his 5,000 troops repulsed attack by 20,000 troops under Santa Anna
- Taylor became “Hero of Buena Vista”
- Taylor, however, could not defeat Mexico decisively in semi-deserts of northern Mexico
- Need a crushing blow at enemy’s vitals—Mexico City

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**Battle of Buena Vista (1847)**

*General Winfield Scott*

*Battle of Buena Vista, lithograph by Currier & Ives, c. 1847. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Digital file no. cph 3g02957)*

**General Zachary Taylor at Palo Alto**

*“Old Rough and Ready”*

**The Bombardment of Vera Cruz**

*U.S. Forces Land at Vera Cruz, Mexico, March 9, 1847*
XII. The Mastering of Mexico (cont.)

- General Winfield Scott succeeded in battling his way to Mexico City by Sept., 1847
  - One of most brilliant campaigns in U.S. history
  - Scott proved to be most distinguished U.S. general between American Revolution and Civil War

XIII. Fighting Mexico for Peace

- Scott and chief clerk of State Department Nicholas Trist arranged:
  - Armistice with Santa Anna (cost $10,000)
  - Polk ordered Trist home, but he wrote a 65-page letter explaining why he could not come home
  - Trist signed Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848, forwarded it to Washington
XIII. Fighting Mexico for Peace (cont.)

- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo:
  - Confirmed American title to Texas
  - Yielded enormous area stretching to Oregon, the ocean, embracing California
  - Total expanse was about ½ of Mexico
  - United States agreed to pay $15 million for land and to assume claims of its citizen against Mexico (amount = $3,250,000)

XIII. Fight Mexico for Peace (cont.)

- Polk submitted treaty to Senate:
  - Antislavery Whigs in Congress—dubbed “Mexican Whigs” or “Conscience Whigs”—denounced “damnable war”
  - Another peril impended:
    - A swelling group of expansionists clamored for all of Mexico
    - If America had seized it, she would have been saddled with an expensive and vexatious policing problem

- Victors rarely pay an indemnity:
  - Polk arranged to pay $18,250,000 after winning
  - Critics claimed Americans had guilty conscience
  - Apologists pointed proudly to “Anglo-Saxon spirit of fair play”
XIV. Profit and Loss in Mexico

- As wars go, Mexican War a small one:
  - Cost 13,000 American lives, most by disease
  - Fruits of war were enormous:
    - America’s total expanse was increased by 1/3
    - Proved to be blood-spattered schoolroom for Civil War
    - Campaigns provided priceless experience for army
    - Navy valuable in blockading Mexican ports

- Marine Corps won new laurels and to this day sings in its stirring hymn about the “Halls of Montezuma”
- Army waged war without defeat and without a major blunder
- Opposing armies emerged with increased respect for each other
- Mexicans never forgot that U.S.A. tore away about ⅓ of their country
- Marked an ugly turning point in relations between United States and Latin America

- War aroused slavery debate that not stop until Civil War
- David Wilmot of Pennsylvania introduced amendment that slavery should never exist in any territories wrested from Mexico
- Wilmot Proviso never became law, but:
  - Endorsed by legislatures of all but one of free states
  - Came to symbolize burning issue of slavery in territories
- More than any other issue, debate over slavery in new western lands divided North & South
- From perspective of history, opening shots of Mexican War were opening shots of Civil War

Wilmot Proviso, 1846

Provided, territory from that, as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any the Republic of Mexico by the United States, by virtue of any treaty which may be negotiated between them, and to the use by the Executive of the moneys herein appropriated, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted.

Congr. David Wilmot (D-PA)

Anti-Catholic Feelings

Who is immigrating to America on the east Coast in the early 1800s? Now what has just happened to American Culture, language, and religion now that we have added lands after the Mexican American War?

Results of the Mexican War?

1. The 17-month war cost $100,000,000 and 13,000+ American lives (mostly of disease).
2. New territories were brought into the Union which forced the explosive issue of SLAVERY to the center of national politics.
   * Brought in 1 million sq. mi. of land (incl. TX)
3. These new territories would upset the balance of power between North and South.
4. Created two popular Whig generals who ran for President.
5. Manifest Destiny partially realized.
Gen. Zachary Taylor

- Hero of Mexican War
- Elected President in 1849
- 2nd President to die in office, 1850

First War Fought by Graduates of U.S. Military Academy, West Point

Robert E. Lee
George G. Meade
William T. Sherman
Ulysses S. Grant
George McClellan

Free Soil Party

- Free Soil!
- Free Speech!
- Free Labor!
- Free Men!

- "Barnburners"— discontented northern Democrats.
- Anti-slave members of the Liberty and Whig Parties.
- Opposition to the extension of slavery in the new territories!

Unresolved Issues

New Opportunities

The 1848 Presidential Election

- Candidate: Zachary Taylor (Whig)
- Electoral Vote: 163
- Popular Vote: 1,360,967
- Percent of Popular Vote: 47.4

The Mexican Cession

- Territory ceded by Mexico on 6/8, 1848
For most Chinese immigrants of the 1850s, San Francisco was only a transit station on the way to the gold fields in the Sierra Nevada. By the late 1850s there were 15,000 Chinese mine workers in the “Gold Mountains” or “Mountains of Gold” (Cantonese: Gam Saan, 金山). Because of a hostile climate, Chinese miners developed a basic mining approach that differed from the white European gold miners. While the Europeans mostly worked as individuals or in small groups, the Chinese formed large teams, which protected them from attacks and, because of good organization, often gave them a higher yield. To protect themselves even further against attacks, they preferred to work areas that other gold seekers regarded as unproductive and had given up on. Because much of the gold fields were exhausted by the beginning of the 20th century, many of the Chinese remained far longer than the European miners. In 1870, one-third of the men in the Californian gold fields were Chinese.
Westward the Course of Empire
Emmanuel Leutze, 1860

Expansionist Young America in the 1850s
America’s Attempted Raids into Latin America

Congressional Scales, “A True Balance”, 1850

Sources
- Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library - [http://www.drtl.org/History/](http://www.drtl.org/History/)
- University of Texas - [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/united_states/](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/united_states/)
- Susan Pojer, “Manifest Destiny” PPT
III. A War of Words with Britain

- Anti-British passions:
  - At bottom lay bitter memories of two Anglo-American wars
  - Pro-British Federalists had died out
  - British travelers wrote negatively about American customs in travel books
  - Writings touched off "Third War with England"
  - Fortunately this British-American war fought on paper broadsides; only ink was spilled

III. A War of Words with Britain (cont.)

- America a borrowing nation:
  - Expensive canals to dig and railroads to build
  - Britain, with overflowing coffers, was a lending nation
  - During panic of 1837, several states defaulted on bonds or repudiated them altogether
  - 1837—short-lived insurrection erupted in Canada
    - Hot-blooded Americans furnished military supplies or volunteered for armed service
    - Washington regime tried to maintain neutrality

III. A War of Words with Britain (cont.)

- But it could not enforce unpopular laws in face of popular opposition.
- Provocative incident on Canadian frontier brought passions to boil in 1837:
  - American steamer, *Caroline*, was carrying supplies to insurgents across Niagara River
  - Attacked by British and set on fire
  - Craft sank short of falls, but one American was killed
  - Unlawful invasion of American soil had alarming aftermaths.

III. A War of Words with Britain (cont.)

- In 1840 a man, McLeod, who confessed to being involved in *Caroline* raid, was arrested and indicted for murder
- London made clear his execution would mean war
- Fortunately, McLeod freed after establishing alibi
- Tensions renewed in 1841 when British officials in Bahamas offered asylum to 130 Virginian slaves who had rebelled and captured American ship *Creole*
- Britain had abolished slavery within empire in 1833, raising southern fears that its Caribbean possessions would become Canada-like havens for escaped slaves
VIII. A Mandate (?) for Manifest Destiny

• Two major parties nominated their standard-bearers in May 1844:
  – Whigs selected Henry Clay
  – James Polk (Tennessee) chosen by Democrats—America’s first “dark horse”
  – Campaign an expression of Manifest Destiny:
    • Sense of mission, believing God had “manifestly” destined U.S.A. for career of hemispheric expansion

VIII. A Mandate (?) for Manifest Destiny (cont.)

– Expansionist Democrats:
  • Strongly swayed by Manifest Destiny
  • Platform: “Reannexation of Texas” and “Reoccupation of Oregon” all the way to 54° 40’
  • “All of Oregon or None” (Slogan “Fifty-four forty or fight” not coined until two years later)
  • Condemned Clay as “corrupt bargainer,” dissolute character, and slaveowner

VIII. A Mandate (?) for Manifest Destiny (cont.)

– The Whigs:
  • Countered with their own slogans
  • Spread lie that a gang of Tennessee slaves had been on way to slave market branded with initials J.K.P. (James K. Polk)
  • Clay “straddled” crucial issue of Texas:
    – While he personally favored annexing slaveholding Texas (an appeal to South), he also favored postponement (an appeal to North)

VIII. A Mandate (?) for Manifest Destiny (cont.)

– Election results:
  • Polk nipped Clay 170 to 105 votes in Electoral College
  • 1,338,464 to 1,300,097 in popular vote
  • Clay would have won if he had not lost New York State by a mere 5,000 votes:
    – Tiny antislavery Liberty Party absorbed nearly 16,000 votes that would have gone to Clay
  • Democrats proclaimed they received a mandate from voters to take Texas
IX. Polk the Purposeful

• President James Polk:
  • Not an impressive figure
  • His workload increased by his unwillingness to delegate authority
  • Methodical and hard-working but not brilliant
  • Shrewd, narrow-minded, conscientious, persistent
  • Developed a four-point program, and with remarkable success achieved it completely in less than four years

IX. Polk the Purposeful (cont.)

• Polk’s four-point program:
  — Lower tariff
    • Secretary of Treasury, Robert Walker, devised tariff-for-revenue bill that reduced average rates of Tariff of 1842 from 32% to 25%
  — With strong support from low-tariff southerners, Walker Tariff bill made it through Congress
  — Complaints came from middle states and New England (see Table 17.1)
  • Bill proved to be excellent revenue producer

IX. Polk the Purposeful (cont.)

— Restore independent treasury:
  • Unceremoniously dropped by Whigs in 1841
  • Pro-bank Whigs in Congress raised storm of opposition, but Polk successful in 1846
  — Third and fourth points on Polk’s “must list” were acquisition of California and settlement of Oregon dispute (see Map 17.2)

IX. Polk the Purposeful (cont.)

— Settlement of Oregon dispute:
  • “Reoccupation” of “whole” had been promised to northern Democrats in 1844 campaign
  • Southern Democrats, once Texas annexed, cooled off
  • Polk, feeling bound by three offers of his predecessor to London, proposed line at 49°.
  • British anti-expansionists now believed that Columbia River was not St. Lawrence of West
  • Britain in 1846 proposed line at 49°
IX. Polk the Purposeful (cont.)

• Polk threw decision to Senate
• They speedily accepted offer and subsequent treaty
• Satisfaction with Oregon settlement among Americans not unanimous
• Polk, despite all the campaign bluster, got neither “fifty-four forty” nor a fight
• He got something that in the long run was better: a reasonable compromise without a rifle raised