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Manifest Destiny and Its Legacy, 1841-1848

PART I: Reviewing the Chapter

A. Checklist of Learning Objectives

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to

1. explain the spirit of "Manifest Destiny" that inspired American expansionism in the 1840s.
2. indicate how American anti-British feeling led to various conflicts over debts, Maine, Canadian rebellion, Texas, and Oregon.
3. explain why the movement to annex Texas gained new momentum and why the issue aroused such controversy.
4. indicate how the issues of Oregon and Texas became central in the election of 1844 and why Polk's victory was seen as a mandate for "Manifest Destiny."
5. describe how the issues of California and the Texas boundary created conflict and war with Mexico.
6. describe how the dramatic American victory in the Mexican War led to the breathtaking territorial acquisition of the whole Southwest.
7. describe the consequences of the Mexican War, especially its effect on the slavery question.

B. Glossary

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms.

1. **caucus** An unofficial organization or consultation of like-minded people to plan a political course or advance their cause, often within some larger body. "... the stiff-necked Virginian was formally expelled from his party by a caucus of Whig congressmen. . . ." (p. 372)
2. **royalty** The share of the proceeds from work paid to an inventor, author, composer, and so on. "... they were being denied rich royalties by the absence of an American copyright law." (p. 373)
3. **default** To fail to pay a loan or interest due. "... several states defaulted on their bonds. . . ." (p. 373)
4. **repudiate** To refuse to accept responsibility for paying a bill or debt. "When . . . several states . . . repudiated [their bonds] openly, honest English citizens assailed Yankee trickery." (p. 373)
5. **protectorate** The relation of a strong nation to a weak one under its control and protection. "... Texas was driven to open negotiations . . . in the hope of securing the defensive shield of a protectorate." (p. 374)
6. **colossus** Anything of extraordinary size and power. "Such a republic would check the southward surge of the American colossus. . . ." (p. 374)
7. **resolution** In government, a formal statement of policy or judgment by a legislature, but requiring no legal statute. "He therefore arranged for annexation by a joint resolution." (p. 375)

8. **intrigue** A plot or scheme formed by secret, underhanded means. "... the Lone Star Republic had become a danger spot, inviting foreign intrigue that menaced the American people." (p. 375)
9. **parallel** In geography, the imaginary lines parallel to the earth's equator, marking latitude. (There are 360 degrees of latitude on the globe.) "... the United States had sought to divide the vast domain at the forty-ninth parallel." (p. 376)
10. **deadlock** To completely block or stop action as a consequence of the mutual pressure of equal and opposed forces. "The Democrats, meeting later in the same city, seemed hopelessly deadlocked." (p. 377)
11. **dark horse** In politics, a candidate with little apparent support who unexpectedly wins a nomination or election. "Polk may have been a dark horse, but he was hardly an unknown or decrepit nag." (p. 377)
12. **mandate** In politics, the belief that an official has been issued a clear charge by the electorate to pursue some particular policy goal. "Land-hungry Democrats . . . proclaimed that they had received a mandate from the voters to take Texas." (p. 378)
13. **platform** The campaign document stating a party's or candidate's position on the issues, and upon which they "stand" for election. "Polk . . . had no intention of insisting on the . . . pledge of his own platform." (p. 379)
14. **no-man's-land** A territory to which neither of two disputing parties has clear claim and where they may meet as combatants. "... Polk was careful to keep American troops out of virtually all of the explosive no-man's-land between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. . . ." (p. 381)
15. **indemnity** A repayment for loss or damage inflicted. "Victors rarely pay an indemnity. . . ." (p. 385)

PART II: Checking Your Progress

A. True-False

Where the statement is true, mark T. Where it is false, mark F, and correct it in the space immediately below.

- ___ 1. After President Harrison's death, Vice President John Tyler carried on the strong Whig policies of leaders like Clay and Webster.
- ___ 2. By the 1840s, the bitter memories of two Anglo-American wars had disappeared, putting an end to major British-American conflicts.
- ___ 3. The "Aroostook War" over the Maine boundary was settled by a territorial compromise in the Webster-Ashburton Treaty.
- ___ 4. A primary motive driving Americans to annex Texas was fear that the Lone Star Republic would become an ally or protectorate of Britain.
- ___ 5. Because the two-thirds vote necessary for a treaty of annexation could not be obtained in the Senate, Texas was annexed by a simple majority resolution of both houses of Congress.
- ___ 6. In the dispute with Britain over Oregon, the United States repeatedly demanded control of the whole territory as far north as "fifty-four forty."
- ___ 7. In the election of 1844, Clay lost to Polk partly because he tried to straddle the Texas annexation issue and thus lost antislavery support.

- ___ 8. Polk's victory in 1844 was interpreted as a mandate for Manifest Destiny and led directly to the annexation of Texas and a favorable settlement of the Oregon dispute.
- ___ 9. The Polk administration aimed to seize California by force and made no effort at peaceful purchase of the territory.
- ___ 10. The immediate cause of the Mexican War was an attempt by Mexico to reconquer Texas.
- ___ 11. Polk's primary objective in fighting the Mexican War was to obtain California.
- ___ 12. The overwhelming American military victory over Mexico led some Americans to call for the United States to take over all of Mexico.
- ___ 13. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo gave the United States a small slice of present-day southern New Mexico and Arizona.
- ___ 14. The outcome of the Mexican War became a source of continuing bad feeling between the United States and much of Latin America.
- ___ 15. The Wilmot Proviso prohibiting slavery in territory acquired from Mexico helped shove the slavery issue out of sight.

B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and write the proper letter in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The conflict between President Tyler and Whig leaders like Henry Clay took place over issues of
 - a. slavery and expansion.
 - b. banking and tariff policy.
 - c. foreign policy.
 - d. agriculture and transportation policy.
- ___ 2. Among the major sources of the tension between Britain and the United States in the 1840s was
 - a. American involvement in Canadian rebellions and border disputes.
 - b. British support for American abolitionists.
 - c. American anger at British default on canal and railroad loans.
 - d. American intervention in the British West Indies.
- ___ 3. The "Aroostook War" involved
 - a. a battle between American and French fishermen over Newfoundland fishing rights.
 - b. a battle between American and Canadian lumberjacks over the northern Maine boundary.
 - c. a battle between British and American sailors over impressment.
 - d. a battle between Americans and Mexicans over the western boundary of Louisiana.

4. During the early 1840s, Texas maintained its independence by
- waging a constant war against Mexico.
 - refusing to sign treaties with any outside powers.
 - relying on the military power of the United States.
 - establishing friendly relations with Britain and other European powers.
5. Which of the following was *not* among the reasons why Britain strongly supported an independent Texas?
- Britain was interested in eventually incorporating Texas into the British empire.
 - British abolitionists hoped to make Texas an antislavery bastion.
 - British manufacturers looked to Texas as a way to reduce their dependence on American cotton.
 - Britain planned to use Texas as a check on American southward expansion.
6. Texas was finally admitted to the Union in 1844 as a result of
- the Mexican War.
 - the Texans' willingness to abandon slavery.
 - President Tyler's interpretation of the election of 1844 as a "mandate" to acquire Texas.
 - a compromise agreement with Britain.
7. "Manifest Destiny" represented the widespread American belief that
- Americans were destined to uphold democracy and freedom.
 - there would inevitably be a civil war over slavery some time in the future.
 - Mexico was destined to be acquired by the United States.
 - God had destined the United States to expand across the whole North American continent.
8. Britain eventually lost out in the contest for the disputed Oregon territory because
- the rapidly growing number of American settlers overwhelmed the small British population.
 - the British recognized the greater validity of American legal claims on the territory.
 - superior American naval forces made the British position in the region untenable.
 - an international arbitration commission ruled in favor of the American claims.
9. Henry Clay lost the election of 1844 to James Polk because
- his attempt to straddle the Texas annexation issue lost him votes to the antislavery Liberty party in New York.
 - his strong stand for expansion in Texas and Oregon raised fears of war with Britain.
 - he supported lower tariffs and an independent Treasury system.
 - he lacked experience in presidential politics.
10. The final result of the British-American conflict over the Oregon country in 1844–1846 was
- an American success in winning the goal of a boundary at "fifty-four forty."
 - an agreement to continue the joint occupation of Oregon for twenty years more.
 - a compromise agreement on a border at the forty-ninth parallel.
 - an outbreak of war between the two nations.

- ___ 11. The immediate cause of the Mexican War was
- American refusal to pay Mexican claims for damage to its citizens.
 - Mexican refusal to sell California and a dispute over the Texas boundary.
 - Mexican support for the antislavery movement in Texas.
 - American determination to establish democracy in northern Mexico.
- ___ 12. The phrase "spot resolutions" refers to
- President Polk's message asking Congress to declare war on Mexico "on the spot."
 - the amendment introduced after the Mexican War declaring that not one new spot of land be opened to slavery.
 - Congressman Abraham Lincoln's resolution demanding to know the exact spot of American soil where American blood had supposedly been shed.
 - the congressional act determining which spots of Mexican land should be ceded to the United States.
- ___ 13. The main American military campaign that finally captured Mexico City was commanded by
- General Stephen W. Kearny.
 - Captain John C. Frémont.
 - General Zachary Taylor.
 - General Winfield Scott.
- ___ 14. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ending the Mexican War provided for
- a return to the status quo that had existed before the war.
 - the eventual American acquisition of all of Mexico.
 - American acquisition of about half of Mexico and payment of several million dollars in compensation.
 - the acquisition of California and joint U.S.-Mexican control of Arizona and New Mexico.
- ___ 15. The major domestic consequence of the Mexican War was
- the decline of the Democratic party.
 - a sharp revival of the issue of slavery.
 - a large influx of Hispanic immigrants into the southern United States.
 - a significant increase in taxes to pay the costs of the war.

C. Identification

Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

- _____ 1. British colony where Americans regularly aided anti-government rebels
- _____ 2. State where "Aroostook War" was fought over a disputed boundary with Canada
- _____ 3. Nation that strongly backed independence for Texas, hoping to turn it into an economic asset and antislavery bastion
- _____ 4. Antislavery Whigs who opposed both the Texas annexation and the Mexican War on moral grounds
- _____ 5. Act of both houses of Congress by which Texas was annexed
- _____ 6. Northern boundary of Oregon territory jointly occupied with Britain, advocated by Democratic party and others as the desired line of American expansion

- _____ 7. Two-thousand-mile-long path along which thousands of Americans journeyed to the Willamette Valley in the 1840s
- _____ 8. the widespread American belief that God had ordained the United States to occupy all the territory of North America
- _____ 9. Small antislavery party that took enough votes from Henry Clay to cost him the election of 1844
- _____ 10. Final compromise line that settled the Oregon boundary dispute in 1846
- _____ 11. Rich Mexican province that Polk tried to buy and Mexico refused to sell
- _____ 12. River that Mexico claimed as the Texas-Mexico boundary, crossed by Taylor's troops in 1846
- _____ 13. Resolutions offered by Congressman Abraham Lincoln demanding to know the precise location where Mexicans had allegedly shed American blood on "American" soil
- _____ 14. Treaty ending Mexican War and granting vast territories to the United States
- _____ 15. Controversial amendment, which passed the House but not the Senate, stipulating that slavery should be forbidden in territory acquired from Mexico

D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

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|--------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. John Tyler | A. Congressional author of the "spot resolutions" criticizing the Mexican War |
| _____ 2. Henry Clay | B. "Old Fuss and Feathers," whose conquest of Mexico City brought U.S. victory in the Mexican War |
| _____ 3. Aroostook War | C. Leader of Senate Whigs and unsuccessful presidential candidate against Polk in 1844 |
| _____ 4. Daniel Webster | D. Long-winded American diplomat who negotiated the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo |
| _____ 5. Texas | E. Whig leader and secretary who negotiated an end to Maine boundary dispute in 1842 |
| _____ 6. Oregon | F. Claimed by United States as southern boundary of Texas |
| _____ 7. James K. Polk | G. Dashing explorer/adventurer who led the overthrow of Mexican rule in California after war broke out |
| _____ 8. John C. Fremont | H. Clash between Canadians and Americans over disputed timber country |
| _____ 9. Abraham Lincoln | I. Mexican military leader who failed to stop humiliating American invasion of his country |
| _____ 10. Rio Grande | J. Independent nation that was the object of British, Mexican, and French scheming in the early 1840s |
| _____ 11. Zachary Taylor | K. American military hero who invaded northern Mexico from Texas in 1846-1847 |
| _____ 12. Winfield Scott | L. Congressional author of resolution forbidding slavery in territory acquired from Mexico |
| _____ 13. Santa Anna | M. Dark-horse presidential winner in 1844 who effectively carried out ambitious expansionist campaign plans |

- ___ 14. Nicholas Trist N. Northwestern territory in dispute between Britain and United States, subject of "Manifest Destiny" rhetoric in 1844
- ___ 15. David Wilmot O. Leader elected vice president on the Whig ticket who spent most of his presidency in bitter feuds with his fellow Whigs

E. Putting Things in Order

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 5.

- ___ United States ends a long courtship by incorporating an independent republic that had once been part of Mexico.
- ___ The first American president to die in office is succeeded by his controversial vice president.
- ___ A treaty adding vast territory to the United States is hastily pushed through the Senate.
- ___ American and Mexican troops clash in disputed border territory, leading to a controversial declaration of war.
- ___ An ambitious "dark horse" wins an election against an opponent trapped by the Texas annexation issue.

F. Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

Cause	Effect
___ 1. Tyler's refusal to carry out his own Whig party's policies	A. Thwarted a growing movement calling for the United States to annex all of Mexico
___ 2. Strong American hostility to Britain	B. Enabled the United States to take vast territories in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
___ 3. British support for the Texas Republic	C. Helped lead to a controversial confrontation with Mexico along the Texas border
___ 4. Rapidly growing American settlement in Oregon	D. Increased American determination to annex Texas
___ 5. The upsurge of Manifest Destiny in the 1840s	E. Split the Whigs and caused the entire cabinet except Webster to resign
___ 6. Clay's unsuccessful attempts to straddle the Texas issue	F. Heated up the slavery controversy between North and South
___ 7. Polk's frustration at Mexico's refusal to sell California	G. Sparked bitter feuds over Canadian rebels, the boundaries of Maine and Oregon, and other issues
___ 8. The overwhelming American military victory over Mexico	H. Turned antislavery voters to the Liberty party and helped elect the expansionist Polk
___ 9. The rapid Senate ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo	I. Created widespread popular support for Polk's expansionist policies on Texas, Oregon, and California
___ 10. The Wilmot Proviso	J. Strengthened American claims to the Columbia River country and made Britain more willing to compromise

G. Developing Historical Skills

Reading Maps for Routes

Historical maps often include the routes taken in connection with particular events. The map of the *Major Campaigns of the Mexican War* (p. 382) includes a number of such routes.

Answer the following questions.

1. Near what Mexican port city did both General Taylor and General Scott pass?
2. From which city (and battle site) did American forces move both west to California and south toward Buena Vista?
3. According to the map, where did American naval forces come from? Where did they go during the course of the war? Where were they involved in battles?
4. Across what territories did Kearny and Frémont pass during the war? In which significant battles did each of them take part?

H. Map Mastery

Map Discrimination

Using the maps and charts in Chapter 17, answer the following questions.

1. *Maine Boundary Settlement, 1842*: The Webster-Ashburton Treaty line settled the boundary between the American state of Maine and which two Canadian provinces?
2. *The Oregon Controversy, 1846*: The part of the Oregon Country that was in dispute between the United States and Britain lay between what two boundaries?
3. *The Oregon Controversy, 1846*: How many degrees and minutes ($^{\circ}$, $'$) of latitude were there between the northern and southern boundaries of the *whole* Oregon Country?
4. *Major Campaigns of the Mexican War*: Stephen Kearny's invasion route from Fort Leavenworth to Los Angeles led him across what three rivers?

5. *Major Campaigns of the Mexican War*: Name any three of the cities within present-day Mexico that were occupied by the armies of generals Taylor or Scott.

Map Challenge

Using the map of *Major Campaigns of the Mexican War* on p. 382, write a brief essay explaining the relation between the movement of American military forces during the war and the *political* issues of the Mexican War.

PART III: Applying What You Have Learned

1. What led to the rise of the spirit of "Manifest Destiny" in the 1840s, and how did that spirit show itself in the American expansionism of the decade?
2. How did rivalry with Britain affect the American decision to annex Texas, the Oregon dispute, and other lesser controversies of the period?
3. Most Americans believed that expansion across North America was their "destiny." Was expansion actually inevitable? What forces might have stopped it? How would American history have changed if, say, the Mexican War had not occurred?
4. Why did the crucial election of 1844 come to be fought over expansionism, and how did Polk exercise his "mandate" for expansion in his attempt to obtain California?
5. What were the causes and consequences of the Mexican War?
6. How was the "Manifest Destiny" of the 1840s—particularly the expansion into Texas and Mexico—related to the sectional conflict over slavery?