Manifest
Destiny and Its Legacy
1841 – 1848
Territorial Expansion in 1840s

- Dominated US diplomacy and politics
- Settlers in Oregon Country provoked conflict with Britain
- Annexation of Texas caused problems with Mexico
- Mexican-American War and conflict over California
  - Victory led to fight over expansion of slavery
The Accession of “Tyler Too”

- 1841 – William Henry Harrison became president
  - Seen more as figurehead
  - Daniel Webster (secretary of state) and Henry Clay (in Senate) led Whig Party
  - Harrison finally reigned in Webster and Clay
- After only 4 weeks in office, Harrison got pneumonia and died
The Accession of “Tyler Too”

- John Tyler
  - Virginian aristocrat
  - Had left Democratic party because of dictatorial tactics of Jackson
  - Part of minority in Whig party that accepted many states’ rights ideas of Democrats
  - Opposed Whig party platform
    - Whigs were pro-bank, pro-protective tariff, pro-internal improvements
President
John Tyler
John Tyler: A President Without a Party

• Financial reform first for Whigs
  • Whig Congress first passed law ending Van Buren’s independent treasury
    • Signed by Tyler
  • Congress next passed law for a “Fiscal Bank” to establish new Bank of US
John Tyler: A President Without a Party

- Tyler vetoed bill for “Fiscal Bank”
  - Constitutional and practical grounds
- Congress retries; passes bill for “Fiscal Corporation”
  - Again vetoed by Tyler
John Tyler: A President Without a Party

• Political reaction to bank vetoes
  • Democrats extremely happy; if not for death of Harrison, they would have been stuck with new Bank of US
  • Whigs extremely angry
    • Tyler burned in effigy, attacked in words, and even threatened with death
    • Congress debated impeachment
    • Tyler’s entire cabinet (except Webster) resigned
    • Tyler formally expelled from his party
John Tyler: A President Without a Party

• The tariff
  • Whigs passed tariff that was protective (which Tyler opposed) and distributed money from sale of western land to states
    • Tyler opposed distribution of money to states because federal treasury was low on money
  • Whigs rewrote law; tariff rate lowered to 32% (about same as 1832 rate) and distribution of money to states dropped
    • Tyler signed into law because federal government needed money
A War of Words with Britain

• Anti-British feelings erupted periodically in 1800s
• Why Americans were anti-British
  • Bitter memories of 2 wars with Britain
  • Pro-British Federalists had disappeared
  • Aristocratic British looked down on crude Americans
    • Travelers and magazine writers attacked American backwardness
    • British writers attacked US because of lack of copyright in US (until 1891 for foreign writers)
A War of Words with Britain

- British loaned money to US economy
  - Owing money to British made them unpopular in US
- Panic of 1837 led to some states defaulting on loans
  - British attacked US for not paying back loans
A War of Words with Britain

- **1837** – short rebellion in Canada
  - Had no real chance of success
  - Americans (although US government was neutral) sent money and guns to rebels
  - Caroline – US ship transporting supplies to Canada set on fire by British
    - US protested without success
- **1840** – a Canadian (McLeod) arrested for Caroline attack in US
  - Britain threatened war if he was executed
  - Came up with an alibi and released
A War of Words with Britain

• 1841 – British in Bahamas offered 130 escaped slaves asylum
  • British had abolished slavery in 1834
  • South feared that escaped slaves would run to British Caribbean as well as Canada
Manipulating the Maine Maps

- British want to build a road from Halifax to Quebec
  - Would go through land disputed by British and US (1783 Treaty of Paris had been unclear)
  - “Aroostook War” (1838 – 1839)
    - Settlers on both sides clashed in Aroostook Valley
Manipulating the Maine Maps

• 1842 – Britain sent Lord Ashburton to make peace (working with Webster)
  • US and Britain split (approximately) the disputed area
  • Britain got the land needed to build its road
  • US got land to west (Minnesota), settling the US-Canada border there
Maine Boundary Settlement, 1842

- Proposed road route
- Webster-Ashburton treaty line
The Lone Star of Texas Shines Alone

• 1836 – 1844 – Texas’s hostile relations with Mexico
  • Mexico refused to recognize Texas’ independence
    • Planned to reconquer Texas
    • Threatened war if US annexed Texas
The Lone Star of Texas Shines Alone

- Texas entered into negotiations with Britain and France for protection
  - 1839 – 1840 – treaties with France, Holland, Belgium signed
  - French also wanted to divide and militarize America by working with Texas
The Lone Star of Texas Shines Alone

• British reasons for dealing with Texas
  • Wanted to stop advance of US in southwest and weaken US
    • US threatened British possessions in New World
  • Texas would give British excuse to move into New World and challenge Monroe Doctrine
  • British abolitionists wanted to use Texas as base to attack slavery in rest of South
  • Texas important for free trade (while US had protective tariff)
  • Texas would be grow a lot of cotton that British factories depended on, especially if supply from US was ever cut off
The Belated Texas Nuptials

- 1844 – Texas became important issue, including in presidential election
  - US feared British involvement in Texas
  - Pro-expansionist Democrat Polk won presidential election
The Belated Texas Nuptials

• Tyler gets Texas annexed by US
  • Believes Polk’s victory gives him “mandate”
  • Annexation opposed by “conscience Whigs” because of expansion of slavery
  • Tyler gets Congress to annex Texas by joint resolution (requiring simple majority – 50% + 1) instead of treaty (requiring 2/3 vote in Senate)
• Early 1845 – Texas annexed by US
The Belated Texas Nuptials

- **Mexican reaction to annexation**
  - Believed US had taken Texas from Mexico

- **Reality of Texas annexation**
  - Had been independent for 9 years
  - US had to stop foreign powers (especially Britain) from gaining foothold in Texas
Oregon Fever Populates Oregon

- Oregon Country
  - From Rockies to Pacific Ocean, northern California to 54° 40’ line (southern border of Alaska today)
  - 4 nations claimed all or part of Oregon
    - Spain, Russia, Britain, US
  - 1819 – Spain gave up its claim to US in Florida Treaty of 1819
  - 1824 – 1825 – Russia moved north of 54° 40’ line with treaties with US and Britain
Oregon Fever Populates Oregon

- British claims to Oregon
  - Strongest north of Columbia River
  - Discovery, exploration, treaty rights, and actual occupation supported British rights
- Hudson’s Bay Company traded furs with Indians
Oregon Fever Populates Oregon

- US claims to Oregon
  - 1792 – Robert Gray discovered Columbia River
  - 1804 – 1806 – Lewis and Clark expedition explored Oregon
  - 1830s – Christian settlers moved to Oregon to convert Indians and settle land
Oregon Fever Populates Oregon

- Treaty of 1818
  - US and Britain had agreed on 49th parallel as northern border of Louisiana Purchase
  - US and Britain would share Oregon Country
    - US had wanted to extend 49th parallel across continent, but British wanted area around Columbia River
U.S.-British Boundary Settlement, 1818

- **Natural boundary of Louisiana Territory**
- **Treaty boundary**

**OREGON COUNTRY**
(10-year joint occupation, renewable)

**CANADA**

**UNITED STATES**

- Columbia R.
- Snake R.
- Fraser R.
- Missouri R.
- Rocky Mountains
- Lake of the Woods
- Mississippi R.
- Plane R.
Oregon Fever Populates Oregon

- 1840s – Oregon Fever led thousands of Americans to settle Oregon
  - 1846 – 5,000 Americans south of Columbia River
    - British only had about 700 north of Columbia
- Area in dispute
  - 49\textsuperscript{th} parallel to Columbia River to Pacific Ocean
  - British saw need for peaceful solution
The Oregon Controversy, 1846
A Mandate (?) for Manifest Destiny

- **Election of 1844**
  - Whigs nominated Henry Clay
    - Nationally popular senator from Kentucky
  - Democrats nominated James K. Polk
    - “dark horse” (surprise) candidate
    - Had been speaker of the House and governor of Tennessee
A Mandate (?) for Manifest Destiny

- **Manifest Destiny**
  - US believed God had destined US to expand from Atlantic to Pacific Oceans
  - Combination of “empire” and “liberty”
    - US would control land and spread democracy over continent
  - Heavily influenced the election of 1844
Manifest Destiny
A Mandate (?) for Manifest Destiny

• Democratic campaign
  • Strongly in favor of annexation of Texas and Oregon
  • Condemned Clay as “corrupt bargainer” and slave owner
    • Even thought Polk also owned slaves
A Mandate (?) for Manifest Destiny

- **Whig campaign**
  - Campaigned for annexation of Oregon
  - “Polk, Slavery and Texas, or Clay, Union and Liberty”
  - Spread lie that slaves had been branded with Polk’s initials
- **On Texas, Clay tried to please North and South**
  - Claimed he was in favor of annexing Texas (for South), while also being in favor of postponing annexation (for North)
A Mandate (?) for Manifest Destiny

- The results of the election of 1844
  - Polk slipped by Clay in close election
    - 170 to 105 electoral votes
    - 1.338 million to 1.300 popular votes
  - Clay alienated many abolitionists in North with position on Texas
    - Clay would have won election, but lost New York by 5,000 votes
    - Small antislavery Liberty party won 16,000 votes in New York (most would have gone to Clay)
The Election of 1844

1844

ELECTORAL VOTE TOTAL: 275

POPULAR VOTE TOTAL: 2,698,605

Democratic (Polk)
Whig (Clay)
A Mandate (?) for Manifest Destiny

• Democratic mandate
  • Believed they had mandate for expansionist policy
  • Unclear that they did
    • Close election
    • Many difficult issues (not just US expansion) debated
Polk the Purposeful

- President Polk
  - Took life seriously
  - Refused to delegate authority
  - Hard-working but not brilliant
  - Developed 4-point program for US; achieved in his 1 term
    - Lower tariff
    - Restoration of independent treasury
    - Settlement of Oregon problem (with Britain)
    - Acquisition of California
Polk the Purposeful

• Lower tariff
  • Robert Walker (treasury secretary) got Congress to lower tariffs from 32% to 25%
    • Opposed by New England and middle states
    • Supported strongly by South
  • Walker Tariff of 1846 passed
    • Generated much money for government because of boom in economy and heavy imports
Polk the Purposeful

- Restoration of independent treasury
  - Van Buren’s had been dropped by Whigs in 1841
  - Opposed by pro-Bank of US Whigs
  - Passed in 1846
Polk the Purposeful

• Settlement of Oregon problem (with Britain)
  • South and North had agreed to annex both Texas and Oregon
  • Texas annexed in 1845
  • Sectionalism led South to not push for annexation of Oregon
    • North wanted 54° 40’ line
  • 1845 – Polk asked for 49° line but was rejected by Britain
What, You Young Yankee-Noodle, Strike Your Own Father?
Polk the Purposeful

• Early 1846 – Britain changed its mind; proposed border at 49°
  • Decided that issue was not worth a war; since many more Americans were there, US would probably be able to seize area anyway
• 1846 – Senate approved treaty with Britain
  • Antislavery northerners attacked compromise
    • Why all of Texas, but only part of Oregon?
  • What US got was much better than possible war with Britain
Misunderstandings with Mexico

- California
  - Expansionists (including Polk) wanted California
    - Fertile land, San Francisco Bay
  - Mixed population in 1845
    - 13,000 Mexicans
    - 75,000 Indians
    - Under 1,000 Americans
Misunderstandings with Mexico

• Polk wanted to buy California, but couldn’t because of poor relations with Mexico
  • Default of $3 million that Mexico owed to US citizens
  • Diplomatic relations cut off by Mexico after US annexed Texas
  • Dispute over boundary of Texas (northern Nueces River or southern Rio Grande River)
    • Polk kept US troops out of disputed area to avoid war
Misunderstandings with Mexico

• 1845 – false rumors in Washington that Britain was about to take California
  • Would be violation of Monroe Doctrine what would force war
• Late 1845 – Polk sent John Slidell to negotiate with Mexico
  • Authorized to buy California and other land for up to $25 million
  • Slidell not allowed to make proposal in Mexico
American Blood on American (?) Soil

- January 13, 1846 – Polk tries to provoke a war
  - Sent 4,000 troops under General Zachary Taylor to Texas
  - No war occurred
- May 9, 1846 – Polk proposed declaration of war to his cabinet
  - Based on unpaid money by Mexico and rejection of Slidell in Mexico
  - Cabinet concerned that these “reasons” weren’t good enough; needed Mexican troops to fire to justify war
American Blood on American (?) Soil

- Night of May 9 – news arrived in Washington that Mexican troops had fired on US troops
- April 25, 1846 – Mexicans troops had crossed Rio Grande and fired on Taylor’s troops; 16 killed and wounded
General Zachary Taylor in Mexico
American Blood on American Soil

- Polk sends war message to Congress
  - Claimed Mexico had forced war on US
  - Mexico had shed “American blood upon the American soil”
- Congress overwhelmingly voted for war
  - Even antislavery North supported war (although some later turned against Polk because of it)
American Blood on American (?) Soil

• Evaluating Polk’s claims
  • Mexicans had killed Americans on soil that they actually saw as theirs (not “American soil”)
  • Abraham Lincoln introduced “spot” resolutions in Congress
    • Called on Polk to specify exact “spot” on map where hostilities occurred
• Northern antislavery Whigs called Polk a liar
Congressman Abraham Lincoln
American Blood on American (?) Soil

- **Who caused the war?**
  - Polk wanted the war to take California
    - Mexico refused to sell it
    - Feared British might take it if US didn’t act
  - Mexico wanted to defeat US
    - Large standing army that even dreamed of invading US
    - Hoped fight with Britain in Oregon would turn to simultaneous war
    - Did not believe US could successfully invade Mexico
  - Americans and Mexicans both saw other side as causing the war
The Mastering of Mexico

• Santa Anna
  • Had been in exile in Cuba
  • US allowed him to return to sell out his country
  • Santa Anna betrays US and leads Mexican fight against US
Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna
The Mastering of Mexico

- August 1846 – General Stephen Kearny takes fort at Santa Fe
  - Kearny then marches to California
- June 1846 – Captain John C. Frémont works with Americans in California and US Navy to overthrow Mexicans
  - Establish independent Bear Flag Republic
Major Campaigns of the Mexican War
The Mastering of Mexico

- 1846 – 1847 – General Zachary Taylor invades Mexico
  - February 22-23, 1847 – Taylor (with 5,000) drives back Santa Anna (with 20,000)
- Early 1847 – General Winfield Scott lands at Vera Cruz and moves north to Mexico City
  - September 1847 – American victory at Mexico City under Scott
Major Campaigns of the Mexican War
Fighting Mexico for Peace

• Negotiator Nicholas P. Trist sent with Scott to Mexico city to end war with Mexico
  • Makes several mistakes (including failed bribe of Santa Anna)
  • Polk tries to recall him, but Trist refuses to go
Fighting Mexico for Peace

• February 2, 1848 – Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed between Trist and Mexicans
  • US given official title to Texas
  • Mexican Cession
    • Land of present-day Southwest, including California granted to US
    • About 1/2 of Mexico at the time
  • US would pay $15 million for the land
  • US would pay $3.25 million that Mexico owed to US citizens
The Mexican Cession
Fighting Mexico for Peace

- Polk submitted treaty to Senate
  - Opponents in Congress (“Conscience Whigs”) opposed war and expansion of southern land (where slavery would be practiced)
    - Threatened to cut off funding for war in 1847
  - Expansionists (especially Democratic Southerners) wanted to take all of Mexico
  - Congress compromised and approved treaty 38 – 14
Profit and Loss in Mexico

- Mexican War was relatively small
  - 13,000 US soldiers died, most from disease
- US increased its land by about 1/3
- Gave field experience to future generals of Civil War
  - Including Grant and Lee
- US military served with success
  - No defeats, no mistakes
  - Europe (especially Britain) saw US as more powerful
Profit and Loss in Mexico

- Mexican army fought fiercely, but with poor leadership
  - US gained more respect for Mexican fighting ability
- Turning point in relations between US and Mexico (and rest of Latin America)
  - Mexico angry at “theft” of their land
  - Before, US had been seen as friend; now seen as greedy bully
Profit and Loss in Mexico

• War aroused slavery issue
  • North claimed that war was fought to expand slavery
    • Most land gained was south of 36° 30’ line
    • Most soldiers were from South
      • Although real reason is that they were closer to the action
  • Wilmot Proviso
    • David Wilmot (WIL-maht), representative from Pennsylvania
    • 1846 – would ban slavery in any territory taken from Mexico
    • Passed House, but not Senate; southerners refused to give in
    • All but 1 free state legislatures endorsed it
  • Slavery issues brought up by Mexican War not settled until Civil War