

Polk's Presidency and the Mexican War



Democrats in 1840's

- Logical choice in Van Buren
- Jackson writes letter to Van Buren to support annexation of Texas
- VB has to either gain NY or the South depending on his actions
- VB publishes letter with Clay about anti-slavery issues (loses Jackson & South)
- Polk gains appeal (w/ Jackson's backing)



Whigs in 1840's

- Clay agrees with Van Buren to NOT discuss Texas
- Clay's silence on Texas and Bank hurts him in long run
- Writes Raleigh Letter – “if you add Texas, add war”
- Writes Alabama Letter
 - favors adding Texas with honor, no war, and consent
 - slavery shouldn't enter the picture at all
 - angered anti-slave North and pro-slave South



Other Parties in the 1840's

- Liberty Party – James Birney (no slavery)
- Barnburners – MVB & soft democratic faction (uncompromising) “burn down the barn to kill the rats”
- Hunkers – Conservative New Yorkers & hard democratic faction (internal improvements, patronage, state banks)



1840-1844

- Tyler (His Accidency) runs the show
- Border disputes with Canada (Aroostook War)
- Webster-Ashburton Treaty
- Texas wants in to U.S.
- North opposes (Slave state)
- Tyler cannot win nomination in 1844



Election of 1844

➤ Democrats

- Van Buren opposes slavery
- Calhoun for slavery
- nominate “Dark Horse” candidate in Polk
- Young Hickory – wants Texas, Oregon, and California
- "54'40" or Fight!" "Oregon and Texas; Polk and Dallas"

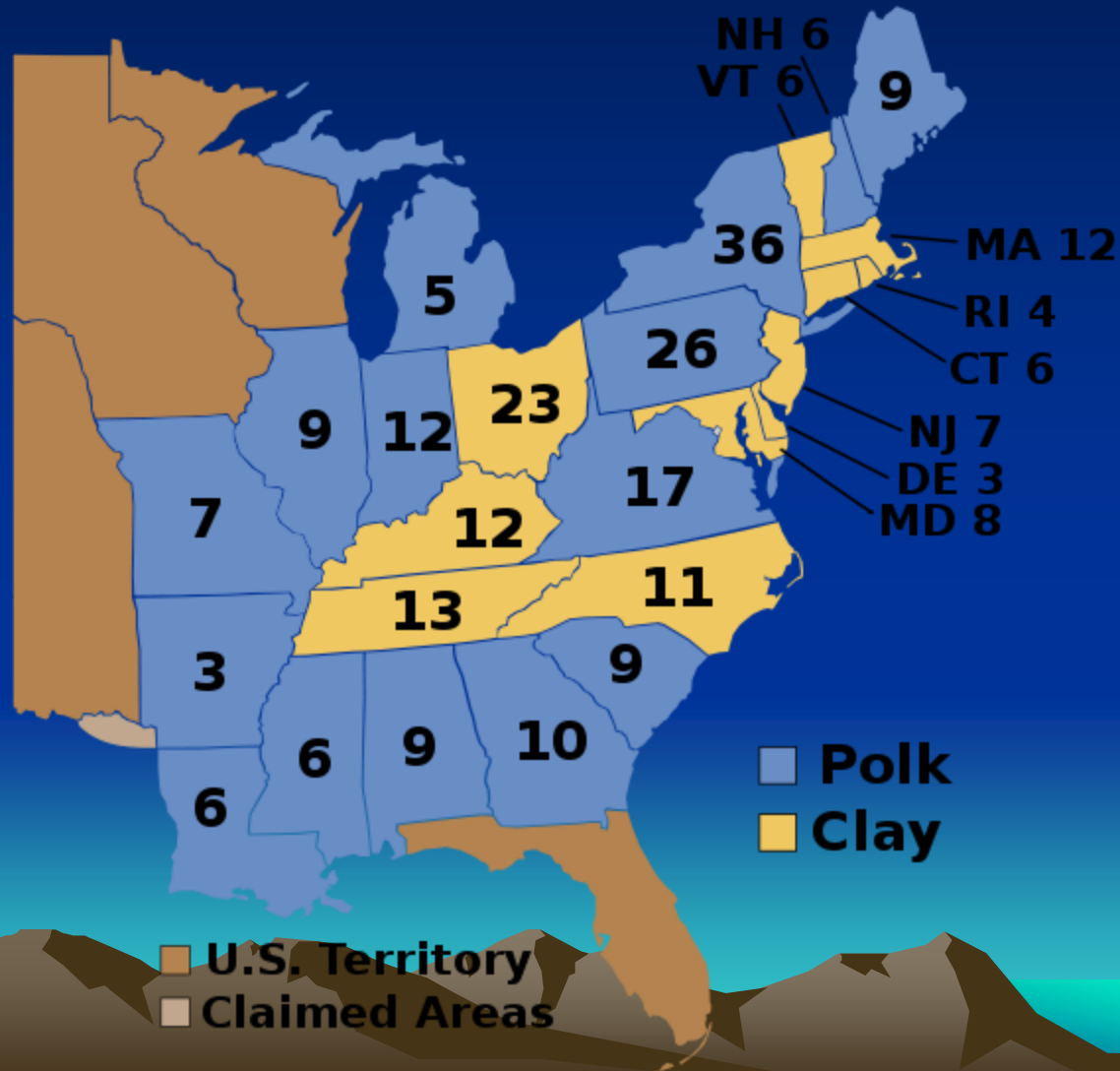
➤ Whigs

- Clay runs but “flip-flops” on the Texas issue
- Alabama & Raleigh Letters
- loses New York due to indecisiveness (Liberty Party)

➤ Polk wins close election



Election of 1844



The Polk Doctrine

- Tariff reduction
- Restore Independent Treasury
- Committed to Monroe Doctrine
 - warned about non-interference (Britain, France, Russia)
 - wants to add Oregon and California



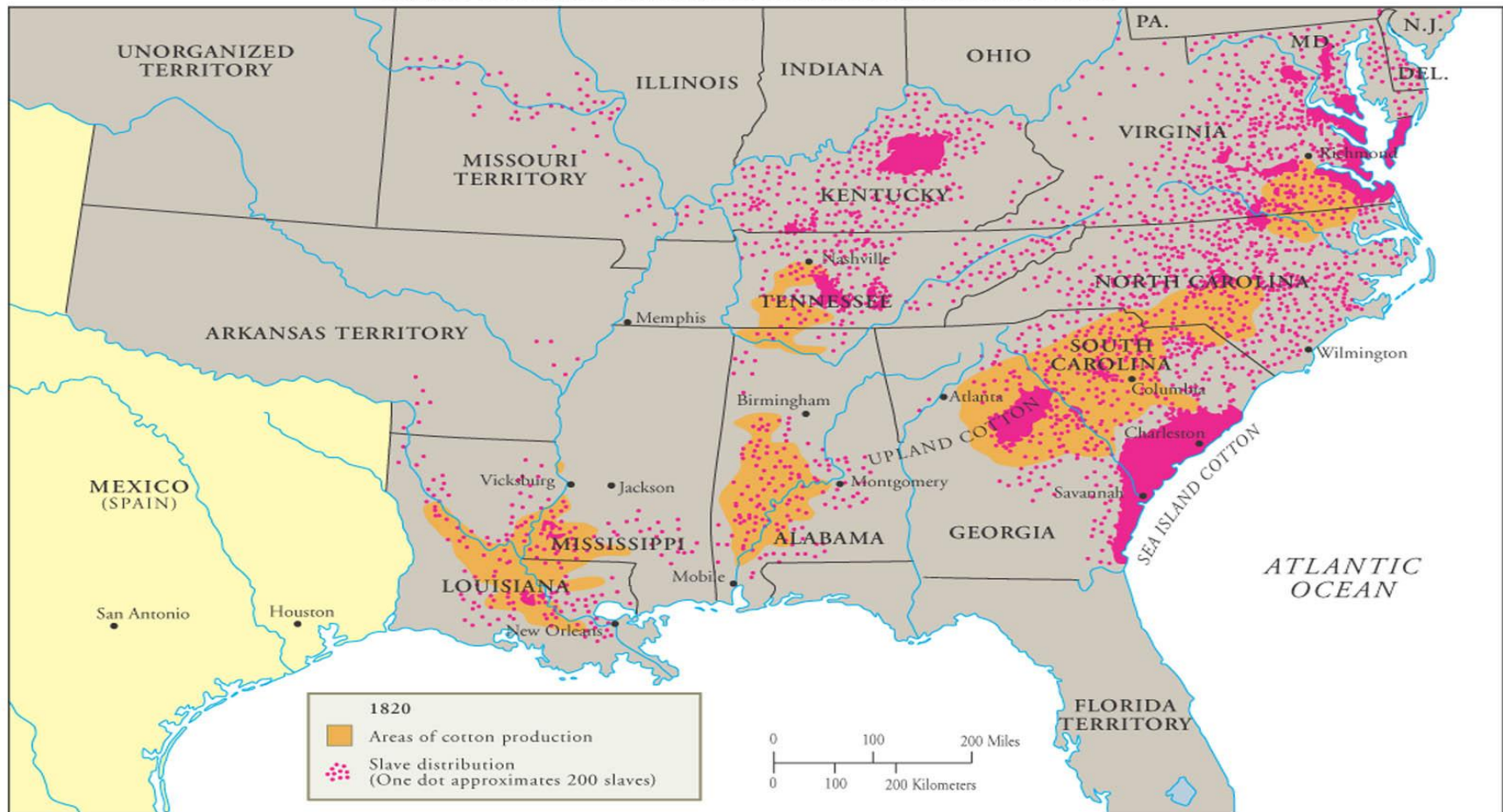
Independent Treasury System

- Idea started by Jacksonians
- 1846 - public revenues stay in Treasury building and subtreasuries
- Treasury pays out own funds
- Completely independent of the banking and financial system
- All payments by and to the government were to be made in specie.
- Separation never really completed,
- Treasury's operations influence the money market,
- Specie payments to and from the government affected the amount of hard money in circulation.



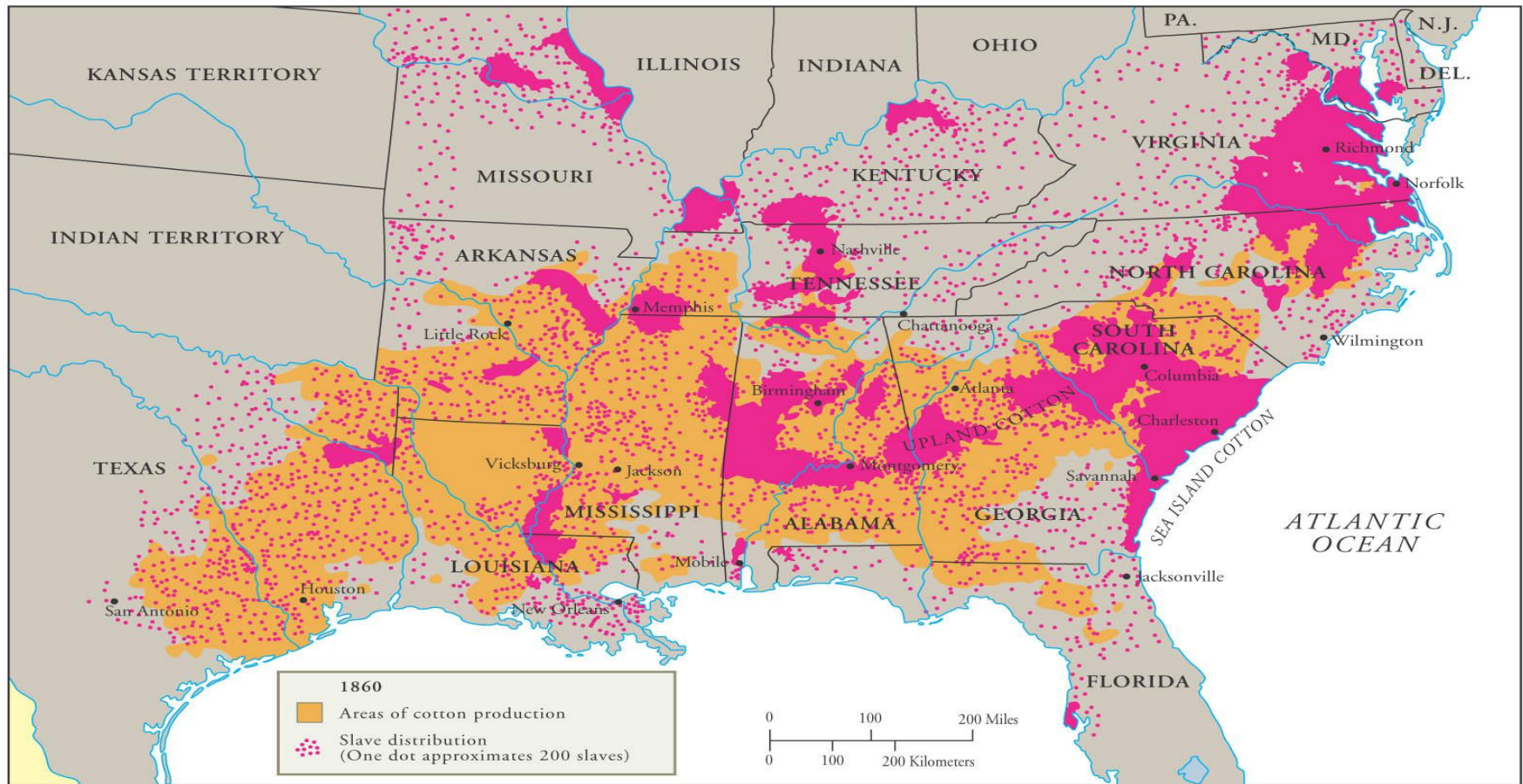
Cotton Production and Slavery in 1820

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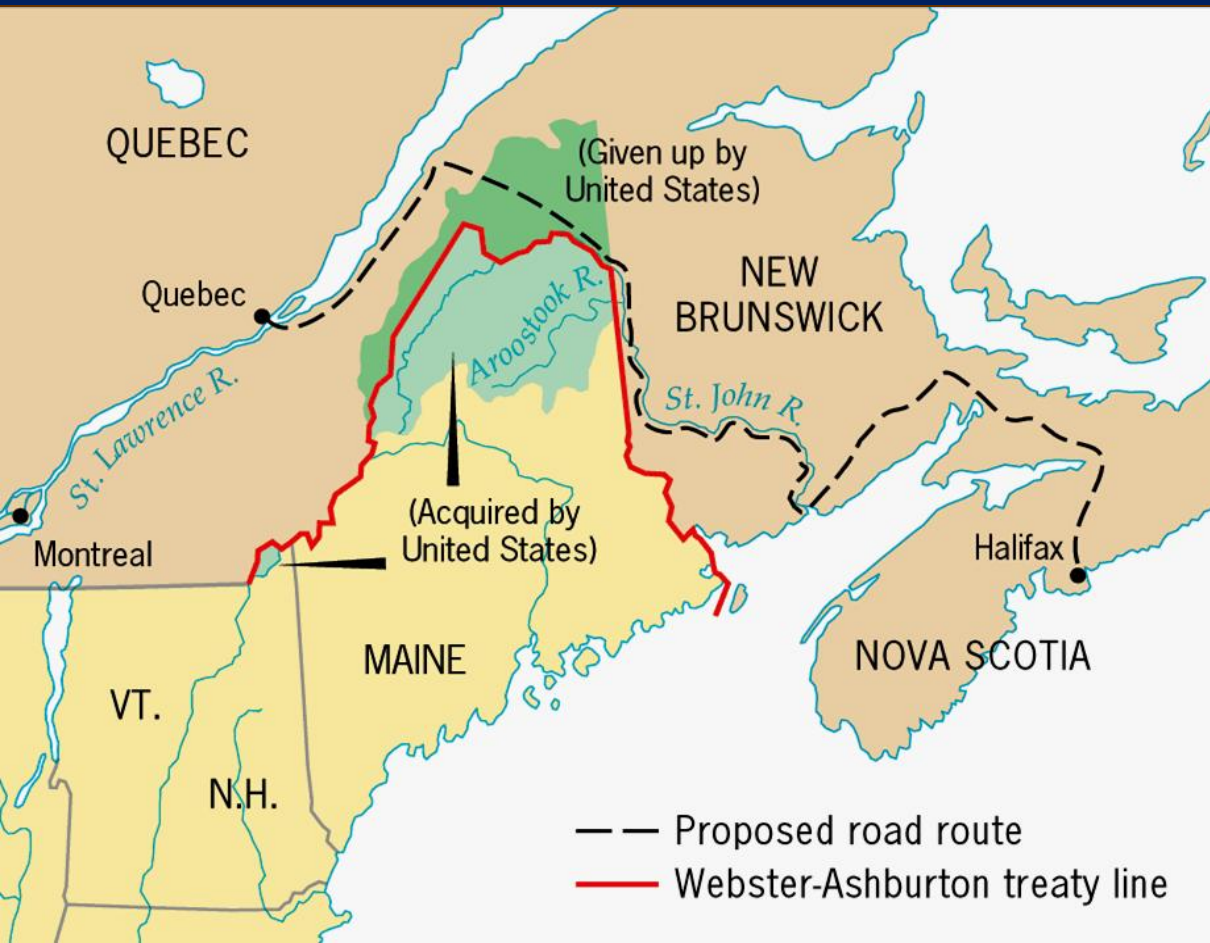


Cotton Production and Slavery in 1860

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Foreign Policy: Britain



- Tensions still high – 1830's
- Ashburton-Webster Treaty
 - Readjusts US Canadian border – gives Mesabi iron ore mine in Minnesota
- Wants an independent Texas
 - Checks American expansion

Oregon Country in Dispute (1846)

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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.



Mexico and Land in Dispute (1846)

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Oregon Bill

- Statehood allowed, but no slavery
- Argument about constitutionality of Congress to determine where slavery should and should not go
- In conflict with Northwest Ordinance and Missouri Compromise
- California is a whole separate issue



Results of Oregon Issue

- Polk suggests 49th parallel instead of 54'40''
- Britain says no/Polk holds ground, threatens war that nobody wants
- Britain takes Polk's suggestion
- Buchanon-Packingham Treaty
- Many saw it as a sell out by Polk
- He wants issue to disappear with Mexico issues around the corner



The Mexican War

- Boundary dispute over Texas
- Too much immigration into Mexican Territories
- Offer to buy disputed territories (Slidell)
- Send troops to offer “sympathetic” support “if” a revolt were to occur in California
- Lincoln’s Spot Resolution



The Mexican War

- Famous Generals (Taylor, Scott, Kearney, Fremont)
- Polk wanted war over before term was up
- Fremont takes California and creates “Bear Flag Republic”
- Scott takes Vera Cruz and marches to Mexico City
- New government will negotiate



The Mexican War

- Polk wants all of Mexico
- Polk wants war over sooner
- Accepts Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo
 - U.S. gets California, New Mexico, and disputed Texas region
 - Mexico gets debts paid and \$15 Million
- Incites debate over expansion of slavery
- All of Mexico and NOT all of Oregon?



The Mexican War

➤ Outcomes

- valuable war experience for several military leaders
- Taylor gains notoriety (wins Presidency)
- Dispute over expansion of slavery
- Santa Anna's Revenge
- Wilmot Proviso

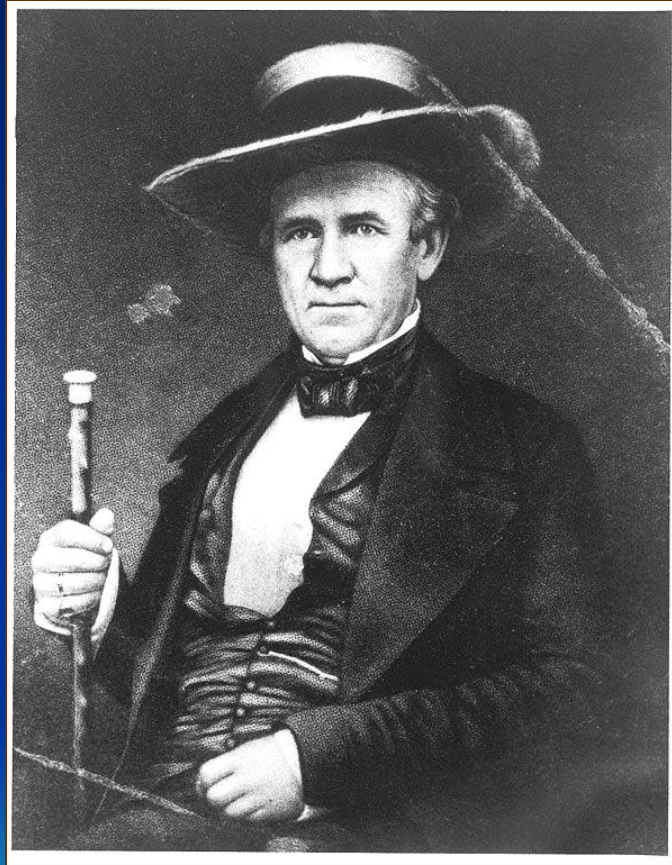


Rebellion in Texas



- Americans moving to Texas 1823
 - Resented Mexican rule
 - 1830 – ban slavery
 - Catholicism national religion
- 1835 – Santa Anna - army to put down revolt
 - 1836 – Texans declare Independence

KEY FIGURES IN TEXAS INDEPENDENCE, 1836



SAM HOUSTON
(1793-1863)



STEVEN AUSTIN
(1793-1836)

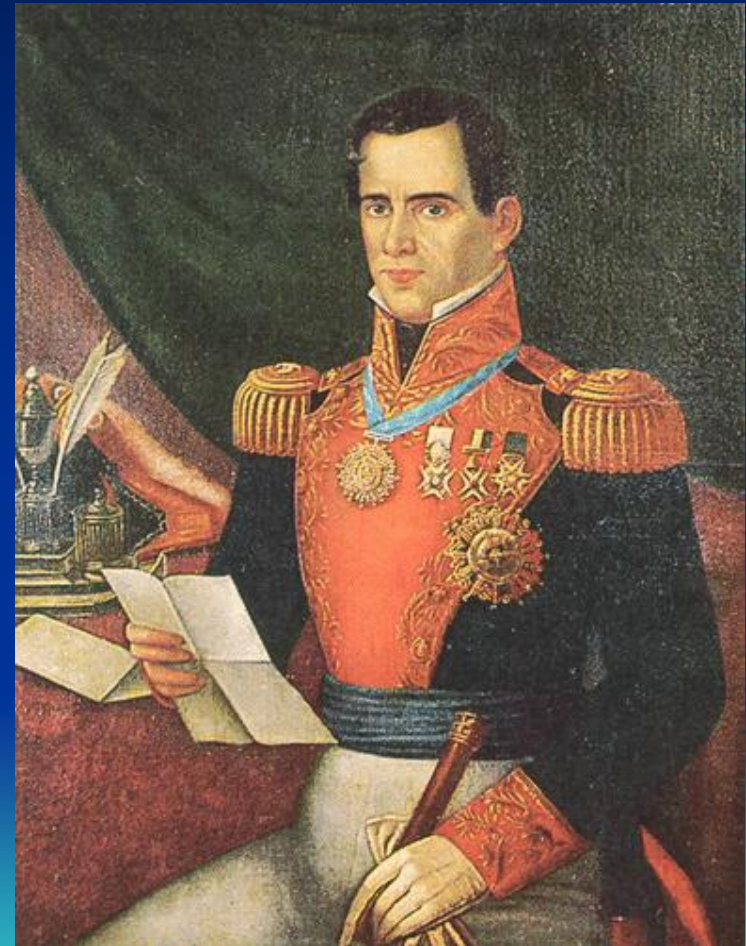
Getting Texas



- Independent since 1836
- 1844 election – Polk wins
 - Slogan 54/40 or fight
 - Oregon Territory
 - Wants lower tariff; independent treasury
 - Big into Manifest Destiny
 - Invites Texas into Union 1845
 - Webster Against
 - Wants California

War for the West

- Troops are attacked Spring of 1846
 - Causes “Spotty Resolutions”
- Fighting lasts 2 years; Santa Anna will be back in power
 - Hero's include
 - Winfield Scott
 - John Fremont
 - Zachary Taylor



War's End

- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo 1848
 - Gives US Southwest Territory
 - Cost: \$18.25 million
 - Sets border of Texas at Rio Grande



Results of the Mexican War?

1. \$100,000,000 and 13,000+ American lives (disease)
2. New territories force the SLAVERY issue to the center of national politics.
3. New territories upset the balance of power between North and South.
4. Created 2 popular Whig generals who ran for President.

Manifest Destiny partially realized.

Helps cause the Civil War

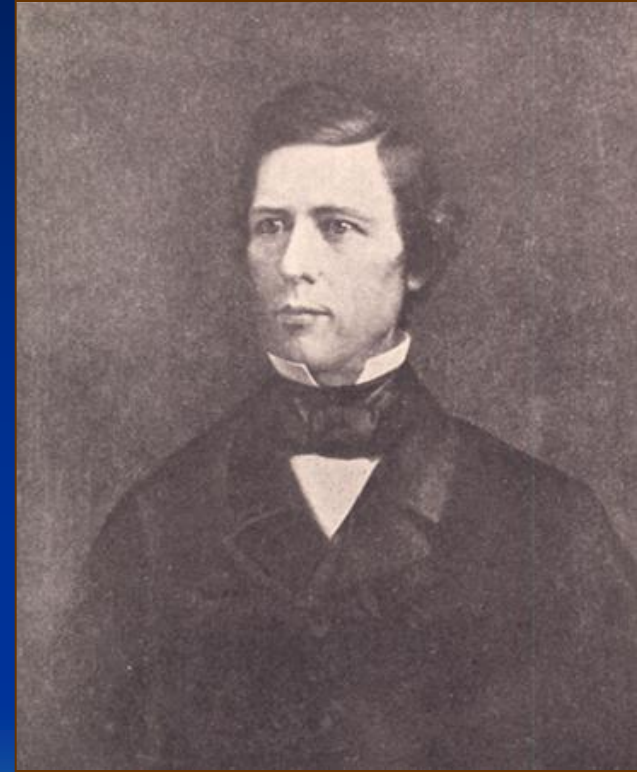
a. Proving ground for Civil War Gens.

7. Also causes...



WILMOT PROVISIO, 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)***

Major Events 1825 to 1850

- Immigration: Irish and Germans
- Women become more like “housewives” or factory workers
 - Gap between Rich and Poor grows
- Standard of Living rises
- Inventions: RR, Telegraph, Morse Code
- American Culture grows, writing, art etc.



Lands Acquired from Mexico

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California Gold Rush

- Sutter's Mill
- Population grows from 14,000 in 1848 to 220,000 by 1852
- Known as 49'ers (mostly men), threw caution to the wind
- Attracts Chinese immigrants (voluntary or involuntary (coolies))
- Large labor shortage
- Vigilantes kill off most natives
- Creates heterogeneous population
- Turbulent, needs government, apply for statehood



End of Missouri Compromise and start of Compromise of 1850

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