Manifest Destiny

- 1840s: movement to west
  - Providential destiny to subdue the entire continent
- **Most settlers sought to exploit economic opportunities of new land**
  - Trappers, farmers, miners, merchants, hunters, ranchers, teachers, domestics, prostitutes
- **Others sought religious freedom or new converts to Christianity**

**The Tyler Years**

- Whig leaders expected President Harrison to be a tool of stronger statesmen like Clay and Webster.
  - Webster became Secretary of State
  - Clay was in senate but tried to fill cabinet with this friends
  - The two conflicted
- **Harrison died of pneumonia one month after inauguration**
- **John Tyler succeeded Harrison**
  - His opinions were widely known
  - Stubbornly opposed to American System
  - Favored states rights and strict construction of the Constitution
  - Rejected nationalism

**Domestic Affairs**

- **Henry Clay might have bridged divisions among Whigs over financial issues**
  - Resolutions to repeal Independent Treasury Act, establish Third Bank of United States, distribute money from federal land sales to states, instate higher tariffs
  - **Tyler only agreed to repeal of the Independent Treasury Act and higher tariff**
  - Tyler’s veto caused widespread upheaval in his cabinet and in Congress
    - Tyler replaced those who resigned with anti-Jackson Democrats who had become Whigs
  - Tyler became shunned by both parties.

**Foreign Affairs**

- British ships patrolling on African coast
- Slaves in the *Creole* (ship) mutinied and the British set them free, refusing to return them despite request
- **Negotiations began; Lord Ashburton sent from Britain**
  - Disputed Maine territory was settled in addition to other borders
  - **Webster-Ashburton Treaty**: provided for joint naval patrols off Africa to suppress the slave trade

**The Western Frontier**

- What aroused public interest was the mounting evidence that the “empire of freedom” was hurdling the barriers of the Great American Desert and the Rocky Mountains, reaching out toward the Pacific coast
- John O’Sullivan coined “manifest destiny”—asserted that territory was allotted by God
  - Moral justification for expansion

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Western Indians

- Indians and Mexicans already inhabited the west
- Spanish introduction of the horse and gun prompted Indian settlement of the Great Plains
  - Plain Indians: Arapaho, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Sioux—nomads, hunters
  - South and Southwest Indians: Acoma, Laguna, Taos, Zuni—agricultural
  - Along California coast: Indians gathered wild plants, fishing
  - Northwest Indians: Spokane, Yakama, Chinook, Nez Perce—most abundant natural resources
- Since Indian life depended on buffalo, white migrations were a direct threat
  - Fighting ensued when bribing didn’t work
- U.S. officials invited North plains Indians to conference
  - Federal negotiators and tribal leaders agreed to what became known as the Fort Laramine Treaty
    - Government promised annual cash payment to Indians as compensation
    - Indians agreed to stop harassing whites
  - Several tribes refused to stipulations—Lakota reluctantly signed

The Spanish West and Mexican Independence

- Many Americans hated Mexicans just as much as they did Indians
- Most were ranch hands or small farmers
- Spanish colonization was most successful in New Mexico and Florida
  - Yuma and Apache Indians thwarted missionary and colonization efforts in Arizona and Texas
- French forces imprisoned Spanish king in 1807
  - Miguel Costilla took advantage of the fluid situation and organized revolt of Indians and mestizos against Spanish rule in Mexico—failed miserably
  - Facing growing revolts, Spanish withdrew in 1821 and Mexico became independent

**Effects of Mexican independence**
- Fur traders streamed into new Mexico and Arizona
- American entrepreneurs flowed in
- Southern frontier suddenly bustled with activity

The Rocky Mountains and Oregon Country

- Rendezvous system: trappers, traders, and Indians from all over the Rocky Mountain gathered annually at some designated place to trade pelts, hides, and stories
  - Fur trade days were over by 1840
  - Fur trade had inspired “mountain men” who pursued adventure—they were the first whites to find their way around the Rocky Mountains
- Word of Oregon’s fertile soil, plentiful rainfall, magnificent forests prompted trickle of emigrants during Panic of 1837 who travelled along Oregon Trail
- Oregon Fever: trickle became mass migration

The Settlement of California

- To thwart Russian intentions, Spain had sent a naval expedition to settle the region of California
  - They discovered San Francisco Bay
  - Franciscan friars, led by Junipero Serra, established a Catholic mission at San Diego
In California missions were much larger, more influential, and longer lasting. Franciscan missionaries, aided by Spanish soldiers, gathered most of the coastal Indian population under control.

- Friars were determined to make Indians useful members of the Spanish empire and to convert them to Catholicism.
  - Spanish federal support

Labor in the Missions
- The California mission served multiple roles.
  - Church, fortress, home, town, farm, imperial agent
  - Economic and religious cultural institutions
  - Produced livestock, clothing, household goods
  - Indians supplied labor
    - Instead of wages, they received food, clothing, religious instruction
    - Rebellious Indians were whipped
    - Infectious disease was the primary threat

Early Development of California
- California remained thinly populated by Indians and mission friars despite rich natural resources.
- Started as feudal agrarian society
- Role of Mexican government on California
  - Rancho estates granted to Mexican settlers
  - Confiscation of California mission lands in favor of ranchos
  - Resemble southern plantations
- American demand for cowhide and tallow
  - Shippers sent representatives
  - Thomas Q. Larkin—leading role in acquisition of California
  - John A. Sutter—persuaded Mexican governor to give him land
    - Built New Helvetia—became mecca for Americans bent on settling Sacramento country

Moving West
- Most migrants were American-born males from upper South and Midwest.
  - Few African Americans
  - Most by land, some by sea

The Santa Fe Trail
- After gaining independence, Mexico became more interested in trade with America.
  - Trade flourished
  - Risky trail, possible Indian attacks
  - Organized caravans for common protection
  - St. Louis to Santa Fe

The Overland Trail
- Most who traveled this trail were settlers, not traders
- Traveled in families, came from all over the US
- Ox-drawn covered wagons—schooners
- **Indians rarely attacked wagon trains**
  - Indians were better than represented
- **Division of labor**
  - Women began participating in “unladylike” activities

**Great Plains Ecology**
- Settlers brought animals with them—consumed grasses
- Wagons trampled vegetation, caused ruts
- Drought coincided with migration

**The Donner Party**
- **George Donner and company made very mistake possible on the Oregon Trail**
  - Started too late in the year
  - Overloaded wagons
  - Took foolish shortcut
  - Crossed the desert
  - Truckee Pass snowfall divided them in two groups
  - Cannibalism

**The Pathfinder: John Frémont**
- Found path that the mountain men showed him
- Mapped the Oregon trail
- Published reports that excited migrants

**California in Turmoil**
- **Jackson’s plan: California’s admittance would balance Texas’s future admittance as a slave state**
- Mexican governors came and went rapidly—anarchy
  - Californians reasoned to separate themselves from Mexico
  - Some wanted independent state, most wanted to join US

**Annexing Texas**

**American Settlements**
- Mexicans invited Americans to colonize Texas, not knowing that they would later annex it
- **Stephen F. Austin**: had already established a colony before annexation of Texas
- In 1825, Mexican state of Coahuila-Texas offered large tracts to *empresarios* (ranchers)
- The Mexican government, opposed to slavery, grew alarmed at the flood of strangers engulfing the province
  - Forbade further immigration
  - Americans organized to form a state of their own
  - Governor-despot Santa Anna refused request
- **Texans drafted Declaration of Causes explaining rebellion**
  - Stopped short of declaring independence, but declared grievances
Santa Anna ordered that Americans be expelled

Texas Independence
- Texans were assaulted by Mexican army in Alamo
- Led by Colonel William Travis, troops included Tejanos, American volunteers (Davy Crockett)
- Refusal to surrender resulted in series of assaults
  - Complete victory for Mexicans
  - Showed that defenders of Alamo were willing to fight despite being outnumbered
- Meanwhile, delegates drafted declaration of independence, constitution, and government of Texas
- **Sam Houston** beat a strategic retreat—surprised a Mexican encampment
  - Santa Anna surrendered and recognized independence of Texas

Negotiations for Annexation
- **Lone Star Republic constitution**
  - Ban of free blacks
  - Sam Houston became president
  - Would be annexed to the United States as a slave state
- **Admission as a slave state**
  - Threatened quarrel that might endanger election of Van Buren
  - Jackson delayed official recognition of Texas
- Many settlers were attracted by low land prices
- Texans wanted to establish their own republic, separate from US
- **Growing British influence on Texas created tension**—southern slaveholders became proponents of annexation to the US
  - Calhoun and Tyler completed annexation treaty and submitted to Congress
  - Annexation was needed to foil British abolitionists—publication of it made it seem like Texas was only being annexed for slavery
  - Senate rejected annexation treaty due to sectional division, fear of war with Mexico, solid Whig opposition

Polk’s Presidency

The Election of 1844
- Van Buren and Clay both opposed Texas annexation
  - Clay’s Raleigh letter
  - Clay was afraid that Texas issue was being used to weaken Whigs
  - Whig platform omitted any reference to Texas
- Democratic convention supported annexation of Texas—Van Buren got pwnd
  - Democrats disapproved of Van Buren’s anti-Texas stance
  - James Knox Polk supported expansionism
  - Platform embraced expansion
- Democratic combination of southern and western expansion offered a winning strategy
  - Clay switched sides on Texas issue—Manifest Destiny, lol
  - More anti-slavery votes turned to Liberty party

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• Polk decidedly won New York
  ▪ Polk defeated Clay
• Polk was called “Young Hickory”

**Polk's Program**
• Polk warned that abolitionism would destroy the union.
• North drifted away from Democratic party
• Tariff reduction
• Reestablishment of Van Buren’s Independent Treasury
• Settlement of Oregon
• Acquisition of California
• Walker Tariff of 1846: reduced tariff rates
• Polk persuaded Congress to reestablish Treasury
• Vetoed internal improvement bills

**The State of Texas**
• Polk’s chief concern was geographic expansion
• Texas annexation was done by join resolution—required majority instead of two-thirds

**Oregon**
• Expansionists were willing to go to war with Britain for Oregon
• War with Mexico was brewing in the meantime
• In 1846 the British government submitted a draft treaty that extended the border in favor of US
  ▪ Fur trade was dying
  ▪ Not willing to go to war for remote territory
  ▪ Most citizens were satisfied; expansionists wanted more; Northern business valued British trade more than Oregon

**The Mexican War**

**The Outbreak of War**
• Mexico protested annexation of Texas
  ▪ Negotiation efforts failed
  ▪ American intrigues meant to subvert Mexican authority in California
  ▪ Military gathered under General Taylor
• Last hope for peace died when John Slidell, sent to Mexico City to negotiate a settlement, gave up on his mission
  ▪ Purposes could only be achieved by force
  ▪ Mexicans attacked Americans at Rio Grande
  ▪ Polk’s provocative scheme had worked
• War message: call to arms in response to Mexican aggression
  ▪ Congress approved
  ▪ Whigs voted against—thought Polk was only doing it for slave territory
Opposition to the War
- War was popular among expansionists in Mississippi Valley
- Less enthusiasm from New England
  - John Quincy Adams
  - Abraham Lincoln
  - Daniel Webster
  - Denounced war as pro-slavery; some changed sides because Mexican soil wasn’t fertile so slave labor wouldn’t be necessary and more land area could be obtained
  - Manifest destiny and additional land lured opposers

Preparing for Battle
- Both sides were ill-prepared
- Undisciplined forces
  - Volunteer militia companies
  - Reckless American policy
- Mexican forces were often recruited from prisons
  - Faulty powder
- United States entered without a plan of action
  - Polk sought to manage every detail
  - Winfield Scott send to lead—but quarreled over war policy
  - General Taylor sent instead—less political threat
- Quick victories made Taylor popular

Annexation of California
- Frémont led frontiersmen in California
  - They moved to Sacramento Valley
  - Americans in the area proclaimed Republic of California
  - Bear Flag Republic did not last long
  - Robert Stockton and Stephen Kearny prepared forces against Mexicans in southern California
- Rebellion broke out in south California due to Mexican resent of Americans
  - Rebels had ousted American force
- Kearny entered the rebel zone and capitulated them.

Taylor’s Battles
- California and New Mexico had been taken
- Polk was not happy with Taylor’s growing popularity
- The whole episode merely confirmed the president’s impression that Taylor was too passive to be trusted further with the major campaign
- Polk failed to realize harshness of desert
- Santa Anna reclaimed leadership of Mexican army
- Battle of Buena Vista: Taylor disobeyed orders to wait, Taylor’s son in law broke up Mexican cavalry charge
  - Neither side could claim victory

Scott’s Triumph
- Assault on Vera Cruz was first major amphibious attack
Vera Cruz surrendered to Scott
- He cut Mexican supply lines at Puebla
- Mexico City was dominated

**The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo**
- Santa Anna resigned
- Nicholas Trist negotiated peace
- **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo:**
  - Mexico gave up claims to Texas above Rio Grande
  - Ceded California and New Mexico to US
  - US agreed to pay $15 million and assumed claims of US citizens
  - Ratified by Senate in 1848

**The War’s Legacies**
- Deadliest war in American history
  - Next highest death rate would be in Civil War
- **Important firsts:**
  - First successful offensive American war
  - First occupation of enemy capital
  - First war in which martial law was declared on foreign soil
  - First in which West Point graduates played a major role
  - First reported by modern war correspondents
  - First significant combat experience for a group of junior officers
    - Robert Lee, Ulysses Grant, Thomas Jackson, George McClellan, George Meade
- National pride at first, later seen as president’s desire
- Scope of federal government increased
  - Department of Interior created to supervise distribution of land
- More land did not imply more solid union