



## 14.2 THE PUSH TO THE PACIFIC

<p><b>THE OREGON TRAIL</b>  <u>Destruction of Plains Indians:</u>  <b>Alcohol</b>  <b>Disease</b>  <b>Buffalo Extinction</b></p>	<p>One of the earliest targets of Manifest Destiny was the Oregon Country in the Pacific Northwest. GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES BOTH CLAIMED SOVEREIGNTY IN THE REGION and, in 1818, agreed to a treaty allowing both countries' citizens equal access to the territory. By the late 1830s, white emigrants, lured by missionaries' descriptions of bountiful, fertile land, began to travel in wagon trains along THE OREGON TRAIL to reach Oregon Country. On their journey, settlers encountered PLAINS INDIANS (the majority of whom were mounted-nomadic buffalo hunters and warriors). Although the Plains tribes could be fearsome, they were severely impacted by WHITE MIGRANTS who BROUGHT ALCOHOL AND DISEASE and KILLED THE BUFFALO on which the Indians depended for survival.</p>
<p><b>Forts</b>   <b>Policy of Concentration</b></p>	<p>As white migration increased, settlers demanded government protection. FORTS WERE ESTABLISHED along the western trails, and the government initiated a POLICY OF CONCENTRATION, confining Native Americans to specific areas, out of the way of white migration and settlement. Far more threatening to white settlers than Indian attacks was the reality of trail life – heat, drought, treacherous rivers, disease, and myriad other hardships. The journey was particularly challenging for women, many of whom took on some traditionally male tasks. Despite the difficulties, migrants kept coming, and by 1845, Oregon had a population of five thousand American settlers.</p>
<p><b>THE MORMON MIGRATION</b></p>	<p>A distinctive group of pioneers followed the Oregon Trail, not to the Pacific Northwest but instead to the region of the GREAT SALT LAKE. These people were the Mormons, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The Mormon trek resulted from a history of persecution in the eastern states. Joseph Smith Jr., founder of Mormonism, encountered strong opposition from the time he promulgated the new religion in New York in 1830. When Smith was arrested for polygamy and murdered by a mob in 1844, Brigham Young took over the leadership and led the Mormons to establish a SETTLEMENT IN UTAH. Under Young and other church leaders, the Mormons built a thriving community that was a model of discipline and cooperation.</p>
<p><b>MEXICAN BORDERLANDS</b>   <b>Texas Declares Independence</b></p>	<p>In 1821, Spain granted INDEPENDENCE TO MEXICO, which then encompassed areas extending from the Oregon Country to Guatemala. However, the new republic was beset with a multitude of problems: CIVIL WARS, ECONOMIC CRISES, INDIAN DESTRUCTION, and widespread POLITICAL INSTABILITY. Compounding these was the invasion of Anglo-Americans – first traders and settlers who entered Mexico's northern provinces in the 1820s and then settlers who flocked to Texas at the invitation of the Mexican government, which wanted to populate and develop this area. The thousands of Anglos in Texas (the majority of whom were white Southerners and their slaves) soon far outnumbered the Mexican population, and the Mexican government realized its mistake. A showdown ensued between the forces of General Antonio López de Santa Anna and Anglo Texans who had rebelled against Mexico, declaring TEXAS AN INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC.</p>
<p><b>Alamo San Jacinto</b>   <b>California's Bear Flag Revolt</b></p>	<p>With six thousand troops, Santa Anna crushed the Texans at the ALAMO and Goliad, but he was ultimately defeated at the battle of SAN JACINTO in April 1836 by troops commanded by General Sam Houston. The Republic of Texas was recognized by the United States in 1837. Meanwhile, the Mexican province of California also had attracted thousands of Anglo Americans. Caught up in the frenzy of Manifest Destiny, Anglos began conspiring to "liberate" CALIFORNIA from Mexican rule, much the same way Texans had. In 1845, a group of Anglos led by JOHN C. FRÉMONT initiated an independence movement called the Bear Flag Revolt.</p>

<p><b>THE POLITICS OF EXPANSION</b>  <b>Drive to Annex Texas &amp; Oregon</b>  <b>Reopened Slavery Question</b></p>	<p>The growing number of Anglo Americans in the trans-Mississippi West put GREAT PRESSURE on the government in Washington TO ANNEX TEXAS, OREGON, AND OTHER TERRITORY. In the 1840s, these expansionist pressures helped push the United States into diplomatic crises with Great Britain and Mexico. Even more ominous was the way the politics of expansion flamed the fires of sectionalism by REOPENING THE SLAVERY QUESTION.</p>
	<p>President JOHN TYLER initiated the politics of expansion. He had been vice president when William Henry Harrison died in office in 1841 after serving only one month. Tyler was actually a STATES' RIGHTS VIRGINIA DEMOCRAT who had been picked as Harrison's running mate to help broaden the Whigs' appeal in the South. Tyler was profoundly INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE IDEOLOGICAL MAINSTREAM OF THE WHIG PARTY, which supported Henry Clay's American System. He soon broke with congressional Whigs, who had united behind Clay's nationalistic economic program. Despite his lack of a base in either of the major parties, Tyler hoped to be elected president in his own right in 1844. To accomplish that, he EMBRACED THE ISSUE OF TERRITORIAL ANNEXATION, hoping to use it as a bridge back to his former party.</p>
<p><b><u>Election of 1844:</u></b></p>	<p>In 1843, Tyler decided to put the full force of his administration behind the annexation of Texas – a popular move, especially in the South. However, it was a dangerous strategy: northerners did not want to add another slave state, and Mexico had never relinquished its claim to the territory. But Texas had been exploring the possibility of allying with Great Britain, and Tyler worked vigorously to annex Texas before his term was up. His annexation treaty failed, however, when John C. Calhoun linked it to slavery, leading northern antislavery Whigs to charge that the whole scheme was a proslavery conspiracy to benefit the South. Consequently, the Senate rejected the annexation treaty in June 1844. The issue dominated the 1844 election. HENRY CLAY hoped to avoid the issue by focusing on his economic program but undercut his support in the South by coming out against annexation. Martin Van Buren lost his chance at the Democratic nomination by opposing annexation, and the Democrats chose JAMES K. POLK as their nominee. Polk ran full force on AN EXPANSIONIST PLATFORM, calling not only for the annexation of Texas but for acquisition of all of the Oregon Country as well. By combining the Oregon and Texas questions, the Democrats hoped to appeal to both northern and southern expansionists. Whig candidate Henry Clay finally hinted at his support for annexing Texas, but he only undermined his popularity in the North: POLK WON THE ELECTION. Before he left office, Tyler won congressional approval for annexation in February 1845, and TEXAS ENTERED THE UNION AS THE FIFTEENTH SLAVE STATE. Polk himself resolved the Oregon question, agreeing with the British to divide the territory at the forty-ninth parallel.</p>
<p><b>Henry Clay: the American System</b></p>	
<p><b>James K. Polk: Annexation of Texas &amp; Oregon</b></p>	
<p><b>Texas: 15<sup>th</sup> Slave State</b></p>	
<p><b>DISCUSSION QUESTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>What economic, social, and ideological factors contributed to westward expansion to Oregon, Utah, Mexico, and California in the 1840s?</b></p> <p><b>Why were the Whigs unsuccessful in the Election of 1844?</b></p>