



16.5 Florida Acquisition (1819)

In the early 1800s, most of the land we know today as Florida was controlled by Spain. Americans in the Southeast wanted the United States to take over Florida. Slave owners in Georgia were angry because slaves sometimes ran away to Florida. Often, the runaway slaves hid with a tribe of Native Americans, the Seminoles. Some even became members of the tribe.

White landowners in Georgia were also upset because Seminoles sometimes raided (attacked) their settlements and then escaped back into Florida. The Seminoles made these raids because they were afraid that the white settlers would eventually attack them.

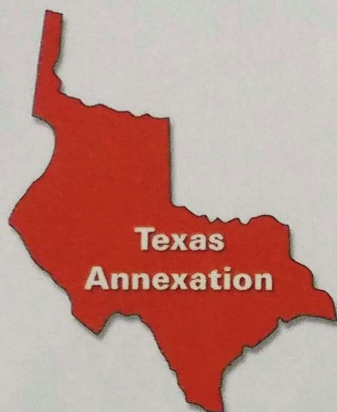
In 1817, General Andrew Jackson and his army marched into Florida. He put an end to the Seminole raids. Then he did even more. He blew up a fort that was controlled by runaway slaves. He captured two Spanish forts, including one at Pensacola, the capital of Spanish Florida. President James Monroe said he did not fully support General Jackson's attacks. But he was eager to acquire Florida, so he didn't stop Jackson.

Spain realized that it could not keep the United States from taking over the territory. In 1819, Spain agreed to give Florida to the United States. In return, the United States agreed to pay 5 million dollars to the Georgian settlers. The settlers wanted money from Spain to pay for lost slaves and damaged property.

Within 10 years, many white Americans had moved to Florida. The government ordered the Seminoles to leave, but many refused. They fought one more war against the United States before most of them were either killed or forced to leave their homeland and settle in the West.

This painting shows Seminoles from Florida attacking a settlement in Georgia. General Andrew Jackson used these raids as an excuse to attack Florida.





16.6 Texas Annexation (1845)

In the early 1800s, Spain controlled Mexico and most of what is now the southwestern and western parts of the United States. In the 1820s, Mexico gained its independence from Spain and took control of this territory. Part of it was the region known as Texas.

Most of the people in Texas were Native Americans, such as Apaches and Comanches. The Mexican government wanted more settlers in Texas who would raise crops and animals, pay taxes, and spread the Catholic religion. Mexican officials told Americans that they could have free land if they settled in Texas. The settlers had to promise to obey Mexican laws and to accept the Catholic religion.

By 1830, more than 20,000 white Americans had settled in Texas. By this time, there were far more Americans than Mexicans living there. Soon tensions grew between the settlers and the Mexican government. Although Mexico had outlawed slavery, most of the Americans owned slaves. Even when Mexico allowed some slaves to be brought into Texas, the slave owners worried that some day Mexico might free them. Most of the American settlers wanted Texas to become part of the United States. Many of them didn't even bother to learn Spanish.

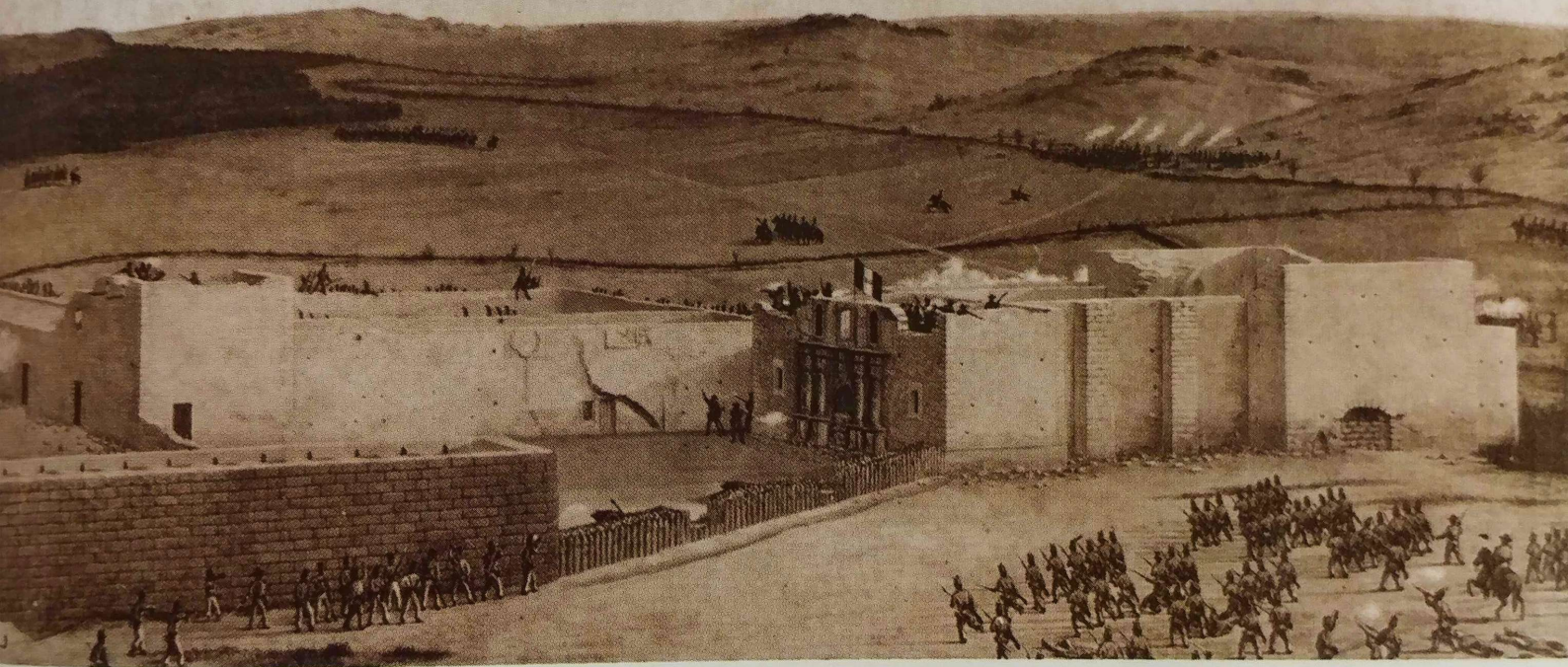
In 1833, a number of settlers asked Mexico to let Texas have its own government. Stephen Austin, who had been a loyal Mexican citizen, delivered their message to the government. Angriely, the Mexican government refused.

By 1835, fighting had broken out between groups of Texans and Mexican soldiers. In 1836, Texans declared independence. In response, the president of Mexico, Antonio López de Santa Anna, led an army into Texas to punish the American settlers for breaking their agreement with Mexico.

When Santa Anna's army reached the town of San Antonio, fewer than 200 Texans and other Americans stood in the way. They had chosen to defend an abandoned mission called the *Alamo*. Santa Anna demanded that they surrender. They answered bravely, "Victory or death!"

For more than 10 days, the tiny group of **defenders** fought off Santa Anna's army. Finally, the Mexicans were able to climb the walls and take over the *Alamo*. Nearly all the defenders were killed, including Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett, two famous American pioneers.

defenders: people who protect or defend against outside attack



Six weeks later, in April 1836, General Sam Houston led more than 700 Texans in a surprise attack against Santa Anna's army at San Jacinto. The Texans charged the army, shouting, "Remember the Alamo!" They won the battle and captured Santa Anna. They let him go when he promised to give Texas its independence.

In 1836, Texans declared their independence from Mexico. As a result, the Mexican army attacked a group of Texans at the Alamo. The Texans were totally defeated. In this painting, you can see the Mexican flag flying over the defeated Alamo.

Texans promptly approved a new constitution and chose Sam Houston as their president. For nine years, Texas ruled itself. Its flag showed one white star on a red, white, and blue background. People called Texas the *Lone Star Republic*. Some Mexicans moved away to Catholic, Spanish-speaking Mexico. Others stayed, marrying and doing business with American Texans and working in the government. However, in time, most Mexicans lost their lands and government positions.

Many Texans still wanted the United States to annex Texas. In 1845, their wish was granted. Congress admitted Texas as the 28th state.



16.7 Acquisition of Oregon Country (1846)

Since the early 1800s, Americans had dreamed of controlling the northwestern territory known as Oregon Country. This area included the present-day states of Washington and Oregon, as well as parts of other states and western Canada. For years, Oregon Country had been jointly occupied by Britain and the United States. To the north, Russia controlled Alaska.

boundary: the geographic line between two places, such as two countries

In 1844, James Polk was elected president. He promised to take control of all of Oregon Country, from the northern border of California to the southern edge of Alaska. This area's northern **boundary** was deep in British-controlled territory, at latitude 54°40' north. Polk's supporters demanded, "Fifty-four forty or fight!"

Neither Britain nor the United States really wanted to fight a war over Oregon Country. Britain knew that the southern part of the territory already contained more Americans than British

and Canadians. Besides, most of the British in the area trapped beavers or traded beaver furs. By the mid 1840s, few beavers were left.

In 1846, Britain agreed to a boundary drawn at latitude 49° north from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. The British gave up any claims to land south of this line.

The lives of Native Americans in Oregon Country soon began to change. By 1850, Congress was giving away land to American settlers. The settlers took Native American hunting lands for farming and ranching. For many years,

there were wars between Native Americans and white settlers and soldiers. Eventually, most Native American tribes were forced onto reservations.



Oregon City (just south of Portland), on the Willamette River, was the capital of Oregon Country until 1851.

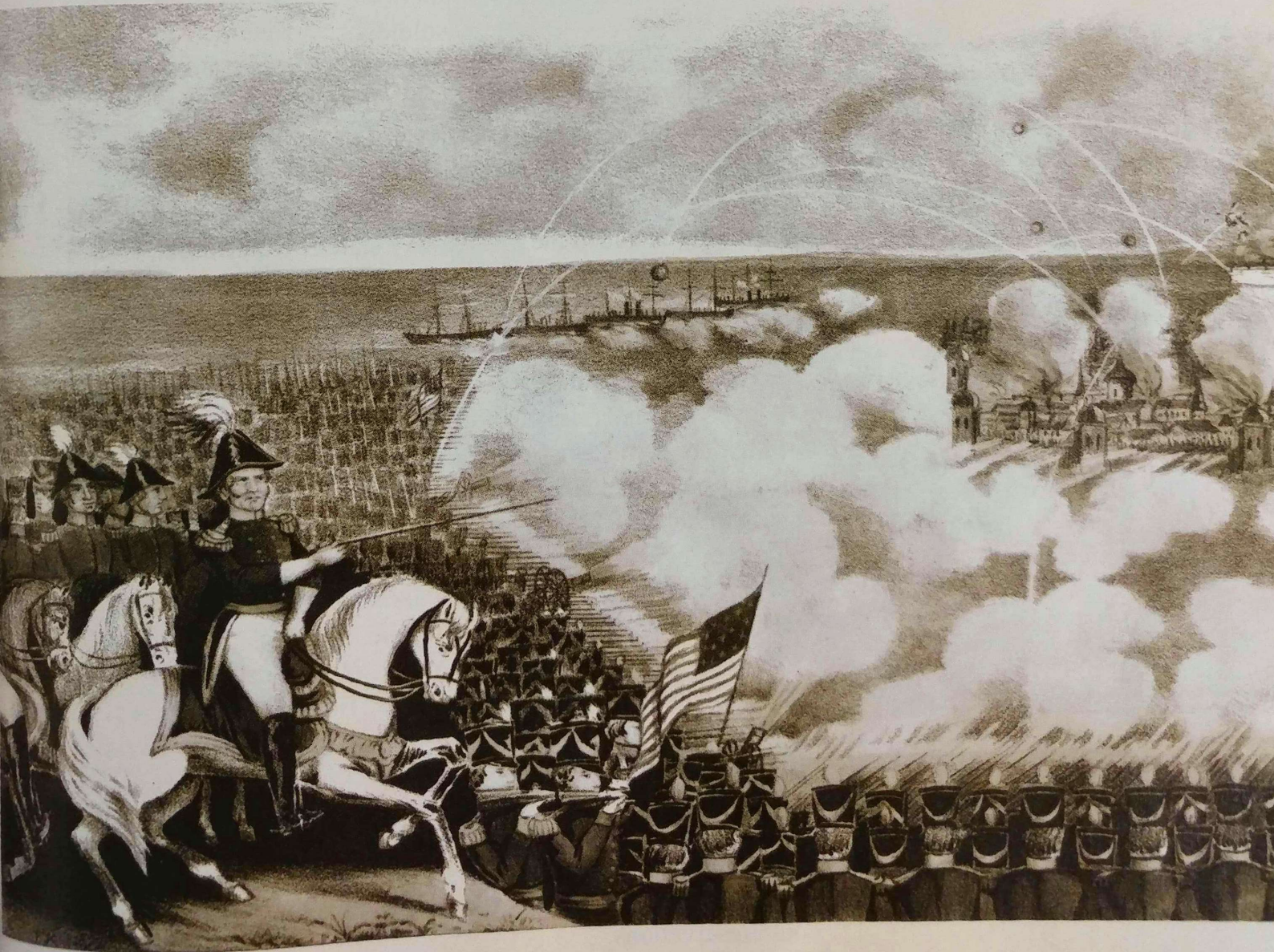
16.8 Mexican Cession and Gadsden Purchase (1848 and 1853)

The next large addition to the United States came as a result of war with Mexico. Part of the problem with Mexico developed when the United States annexed Texas. The Mexican government wanted Texas back. In addition, Mexico knew that many Americans wanted other Mexican lands, including California.

The two countries also disagreed about the southwestern boundary of Texas. Americans wanted the boundary to be the Rio Grande ("large river," in Spanish). Mexico wanted it to be about 150 miles farther north and east.

In 1846, President Polk sent an army under General Zachary Taylor to protect the Rio Grande. A group of Mexican soldiers tried to defend the land that they believed belonged to

American troops landed at the Mexican seaport of Vera Cruz in 1846 and began their march to Mexico City.





cession: the act of giving up ("ceding") territory, usually as the result of a treaty

Mexico. Crossing the river, they fought against a small number of Americans. "American blood has been spilled," General Taylor wrote to President Polk. Now the president had an excuse to go to war with Mexico. It was Mexico, he told Congress, that started the fighting. On May 13, 1846, Congress voted to declare war.

Many Americans were against the war, saying it was a "land grab" by the United States. Others supported President Polk and cheered every victory by U.S. soldiers.

The war went on for nearly two years. At first, the United States won several battles, but Mexico refused to give in. President Polk then ordered an army to capture the capital, Mexico City.

Mexican soldiers battled fiercely to defend their country. Both sides suffered great losses. In one of the battles at Mexico City, an estimated 900 U.S. soldiers and 4,000 Mexican soldiers died. Even when U.S. soldiers captured the capital, Mexico refused to surrender. American soldiers continued to attack, rob, and kill many Mexican citizens.

Finally, the Mexicans surrendered. In February 1848, Mexico agreed to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In this agreement, Mexico gave up ("ceded") a huge amount of territory. It included the present-day states of California, New Mexico, Utah, and Nevada, as well as parts of four other states. Mexico also agreed to the Rio Grande as the border of Texas. For the Mexican **Cession**, the United States agreed to pay Mexico 15 million dollars.

Five years later, in 1853, Congress bought one last piece of Mexico. It was an area of land south of the Gila River in present-day Arizona and New Mexico. This land contained a pass through the mountains that would make it easier to build a railroad across the southern United States. This agreement became known as the *Gadsden Purchase*, after the American representative who made the purchase.

After the war with Mexico, American farmers, ranchers, and miners poured into the new territories. Their arrival changed the lives of people in the Southwest. Many of the newcomers treated the Native Americans and former Mexican citizens poorly. They often ignored previous claims on land and took it for themselves. They gave Mexicans and Native Americans poor jobs. In the years to come, they fought many wars against Apaches and other Native Americans before forcing them onto reservations.

16.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, you read about how the United States spread across North America between 1783 and 1853. You used a map to study the large territories that the United States gained during this time.

Many Americans believed that it was their “manifest destiny” to spread their religion, government, and way of life all the way to the Pacific Ocean. With each new gain in territory, more settlers pushed westward. Their movements and desire for land led to deadly conflicts with Native Americans and with the country of Mexico.

Although ranchers, miners, and farmers created new settlements and opportunities, their westward movement also forced Native Americans from their homelands and onto reservations. Sometimes, the new settlers took land that was claimed by others as well, including former Mexican citizens.

What kinds of people were living in the West when the settlers arrived? What were their ways of life? Who were some of the settlers who pushed westward, and what was it like to settle these new lands? You will find out in the next chapter.

In their belief that it was their “manifest destiny” to settle the new lands of the West, settlers and miners overcame unheard-of obstacles. Here miners struggle up a road leading to newly discovered mines in the Rocky Mountains.

