

Talk	Title	Time Period	Date of Talk	
8	The early Republic	1792-1800	October 30th	
9	Jefferson's America	1800-1808	November 6th	
10	War of 1812 and its impact	1808-1815	November 20th	
11	The Era of Good Feelings	1816-1828	December 4th	
12	Jacksonian 'democracy'	1828-1840	January 15th	
13	New Spain, Mexico and the Texas Republic	1820-1836	January 29th	
14	Continental Superpower	1840 -1850	February 5th	
14	California Gold Rush and its impact	1700-1850	February 19th	

American History

Talk 14: A Continental Superpower created
(1836-1850)



Overview

- Panic of 1837
- Rise of the 'Whigs'
- Manifest Destiny
- Election of 1844
- Annexation of Oregon
- Annexation of Texas and Mexican War
- The Continental Superpower



Panic of 1837

Leadership Change

- ▶ Jackson retires at end of Second Term in 1836
 - ▶ Booming land prices and speculation not Jackson's idea of America
 - ▶ Issues "Species Circular" : all US land sales to be made in gold (not paper money or loans)
 - ▶ Picks Martin Van Buren to be his replacement (VP and campaign manager)
- ▶ Opposition Party "National Republicans" in chaos... field 4 candidates!
- ▶ Van Buren winds landslide and takes office March 1841

Panic of 1837 begins

Martin Van Buren (1782-1862)

At aged 48 (1830)



Born to Dutch family New York..
Only President with English 2nd language

Lawyer turned professional Politician...and
deal maker and opportunist
....Abolitionism a threat to the Union
.....Political Parties offset North /South split

A President famous for nothing

Rejects annexation of Texas to avoid war
war with Mexico,

Rejects government intervention to help
for poor or improving economy
...Free market will correct

“The happiest days of my life that of
Entering office and that of leaving it”

The Panic of 1837

Underlying Causes:

- 30 million acres of Indian Land available for sale by government
- US pays off national debt...surplus distributed to Pet Banks ...surge in lending
- Land, cotton, slave price boom
- Surge in lending based on future prices...including 'slave mortgages'
- Removal of regulation: Bank of USA dissolved and 300 new banks created

Triggers:

- Reduction gold supply: Britain increases interest rates ...fears of US over-speculation + war in Mexico reduces production
- Increase gold demand: Jackson "Specie Circular"...all land sales in gold only
- Oversupply of cotton due to bumper crops US, Egypt, and British India Price ofcotton falls 25% in march 1836

The Panic



Out of 850 banks in US, 340 close
65 partially default as paper notes
Became worthless.. investors
Panic....no deposit insurance

Land prices crash (example
Michigan & Indiana)from \$10 to
\$3 per acre,

Money supply shrinks 30%

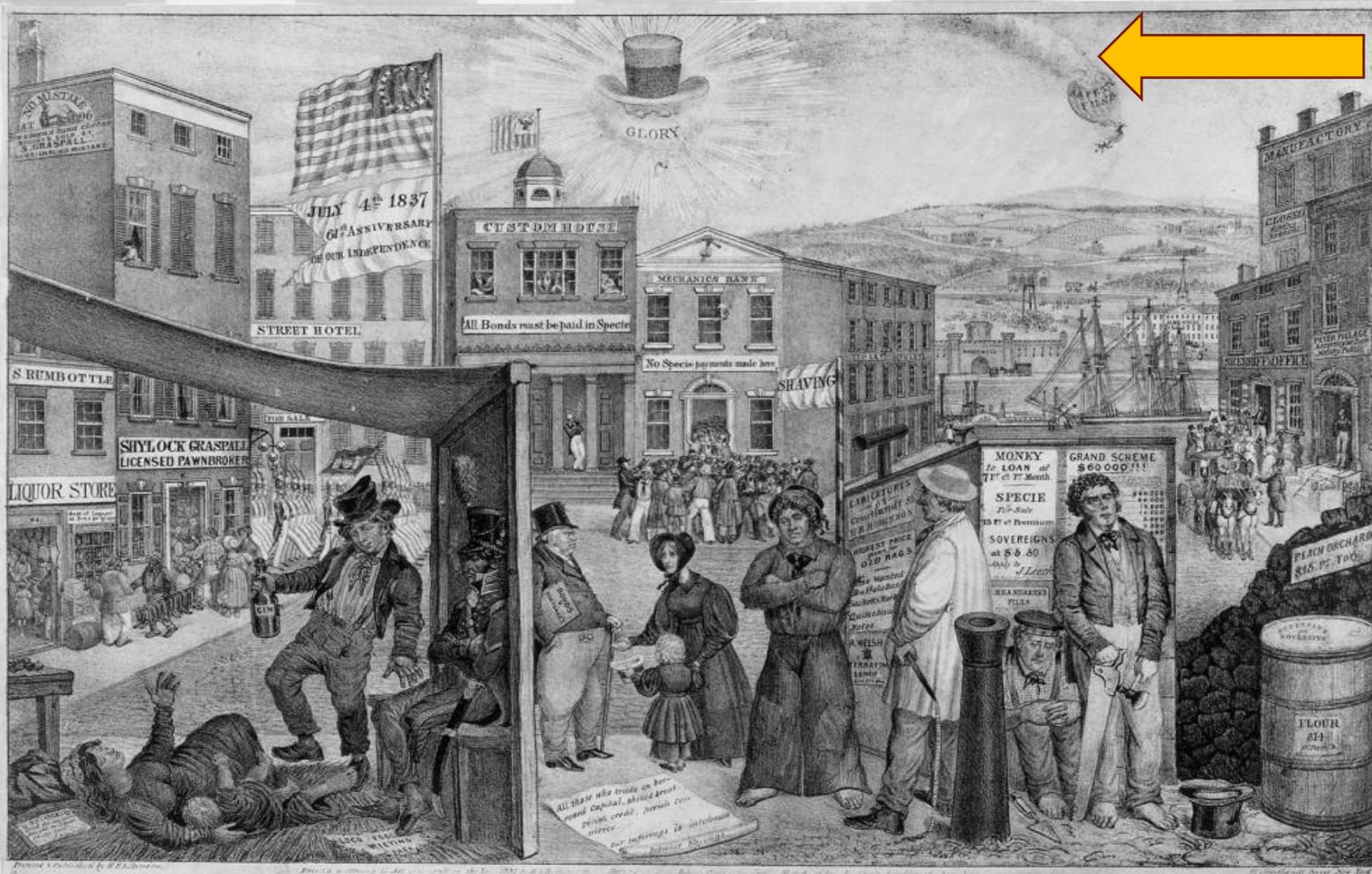
Northern manufactures and
Southern Plantation Owners most
effected. Creditors call in loans,
Debtors go to prison....or Texas

Panic as deep as that of 1819 and
Lasts longer....from 1837-1845

Impact Panic of 1837-1845

- ▶ Starvation avoided due to agricultural economy...extensive malnutrition
.....children 'shrink' 5 cm across northern industrialising areas
- ▶ Financial power consolidates in New York as weaker state banks flounder, and Florida, Arkansas and Mississippi repudiate debt
- ▶ Slaves 'sold south' to fund debts
 - ▶ ... 250,000 sold between 1837-1839 vs 1 million 1820-1860...families separated
 - ▶ ...Virginia and 'border' states focus on breeding slaves for resale
- ▶ Population of Texas soars...(no extradition treaty)

Political Impact



Jackson...shining in glory
...while country goes to hell

Van Buren "Van Ruin"

Democrat Republicans
Discredited 'Agricultural
Empire' of yeoman farmers
shattered

National Republicans
'rebranded' as The Whigs
..pro industry
High tariffs & Improvement,

Two party system back



Rise of the “Whigs”

The 'Whigs'

Named after British anti monarchists of Revolution of 1688...Jackson the despot

- Membership: Educated, former 'Federalists; Northern and Western businessmen, Protestant evangelicals, Non slave owning Middle Class, '

- Policies

- Free market internally, high tariffs externally

- Strong central Government....National Improvements, Central Bank

- Fair treatment to Indians, slavery to be 'gradual abolished", slaves to be 'repatriated'

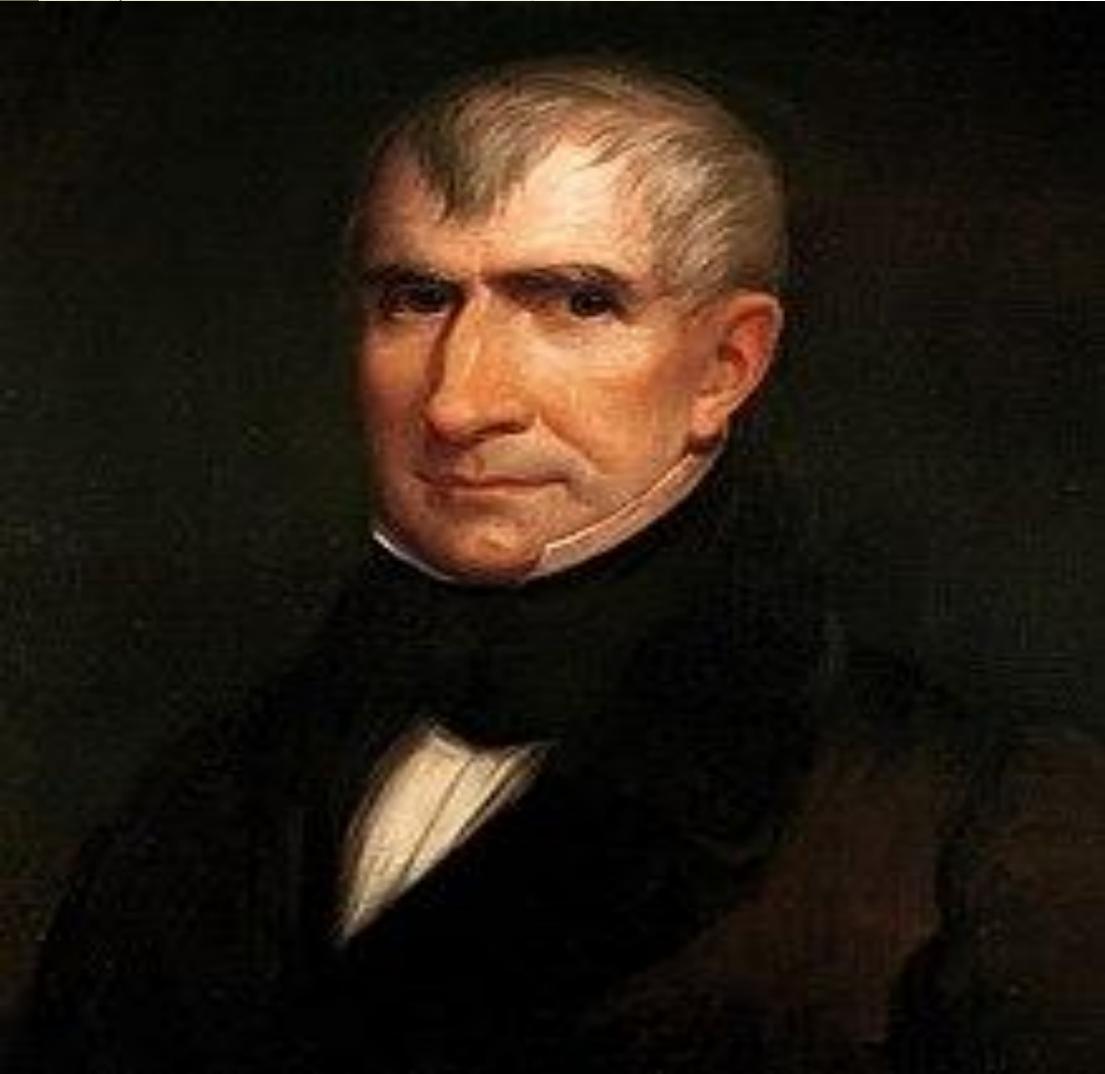
- Retain "British Protestantism"...oppose Catholic immigration

- Want to appeal to the "Common (white Protestant) Man" and South:

.....war hero 'Westerner" for President , Virginia plantation owner for Vice President

William Harrison (1773-1841)

William Harrison in 1835



Born to wealthy Virginia plantation.. Runs plantation and owns slaves.. Becomes Governor of North West Profits from “purchase” of Indian Lands”

‘Victor’ of Battle of Tippecanoe and Thames 1812

Leaves army to seek office.. ‘celebrity over duty”

Ambassador to Colombia....lectures Bolivar (leading Armies of Independence vs Spain) about liberty...Bolivar “The United States seems destined by providence to plague America with torments in the name of freedom”,

Returns to U.S moves to Ohio: Moralistic but owns distillery, Support ‘ gradual abolition” but continues to trade slaves, befriends former slave running “Underground Railway.., brings them to “free state” Ohio as ‘indentured servants”

Whigs rebrand Harrison as the “Common Man”

1840 Election Campaign

Harrison: 'log cabin' and cider



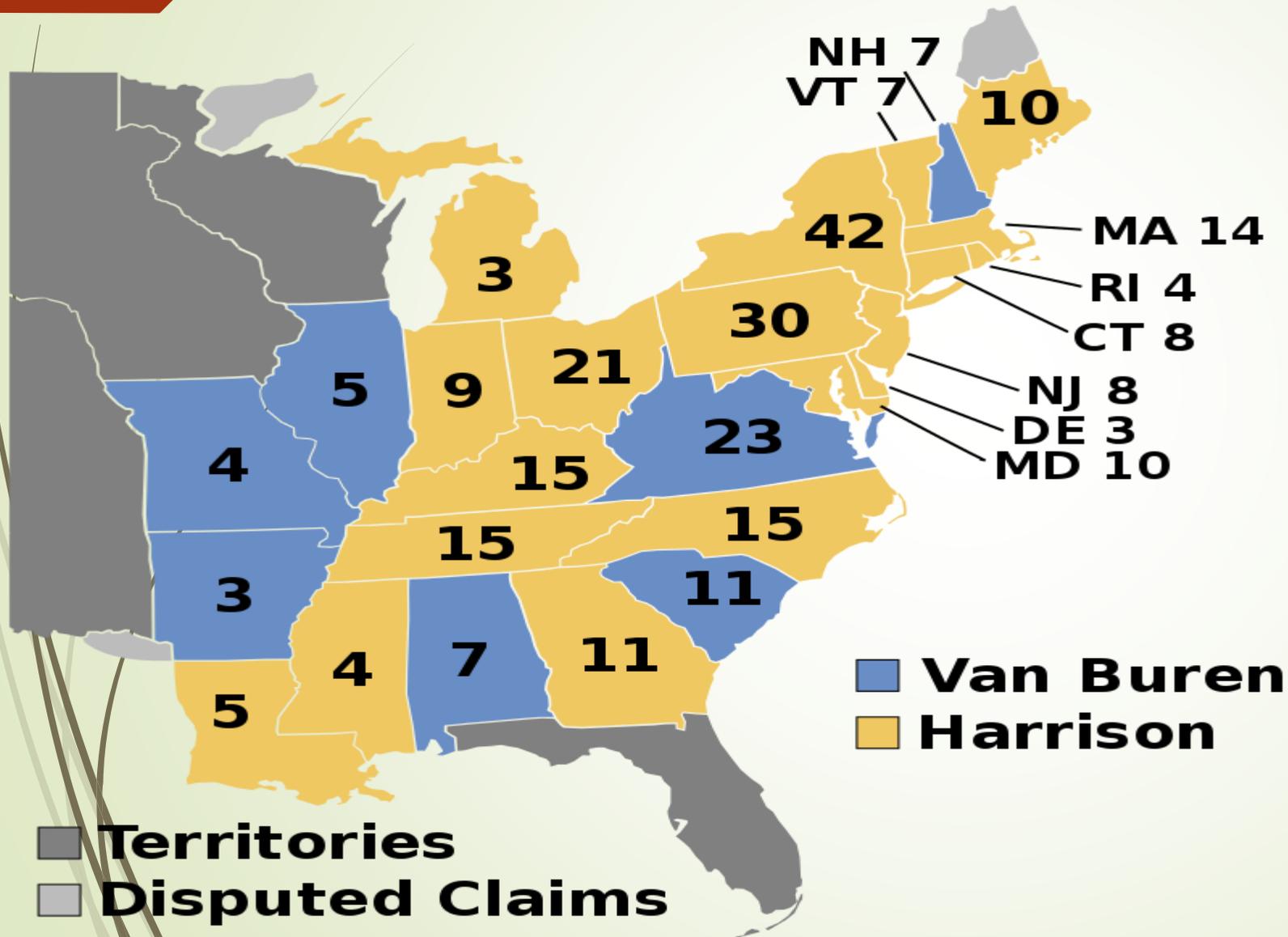
Democrats label Harrison a “drunk” provincial sitting in a log cabin drinking Hard Cider

Whigs “ Yes.....Harrison a hard drinking hero“Tippecanoe and Tyler too”

Avoids discussing Panic
....personality politics

Whig campaign chant:
“Old Tip he wore a homespun coat,
he had no ruffled shirt: wirt-wirt,
But Matt he has the golden plate,
and he's a little squirt: wirt-wirt!”

The Election of 1840



Strategy works...regional split broken

Whigs win landslide 234 electoral vote to 60, 53% popular vote

Congress Split : Whigs Win House Democrats Hold Senate

Harrison seeks to prove competence.. Delivers 3 hour speech to prove He is a man of learning

.....Gets ill and dies

His “Accidency”: Presidency of John Tyler 1840-1844

President John Tyler (1790-1862)



Vice President John Tyler replaces Harrison
'Whig' in name only...another Slave owning
Virginian...picked to balance ticket..
When asked why no one knew his views:
..."no one asked him what they were.."

Abandons Whig Agenda...seeks to re join
Democrats and expanding US and slave
economy

Agrees Canadian border along 49th parallel

Sends land expedition to assess California
Prospects, fleet to Pacific to threaten British

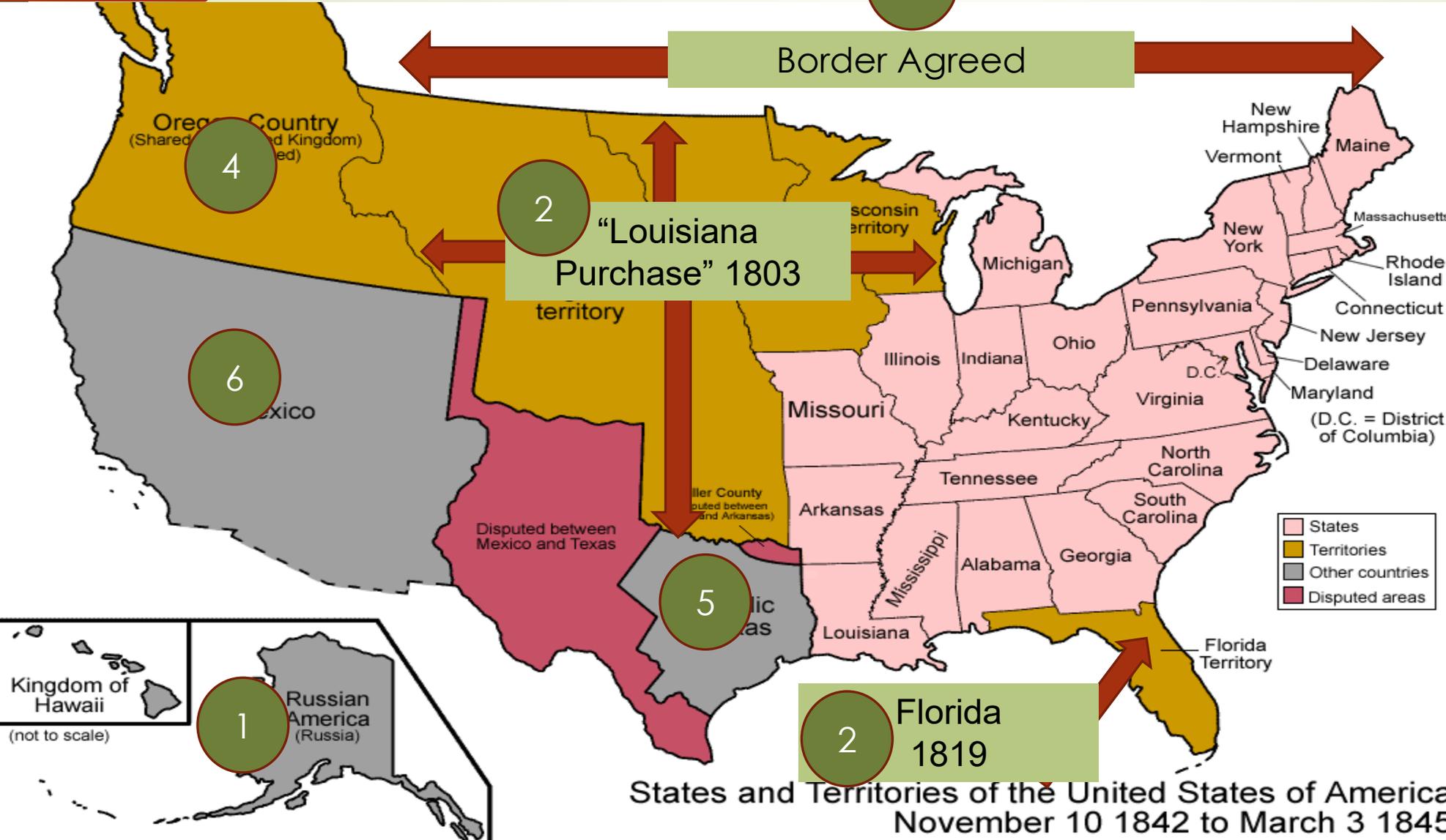
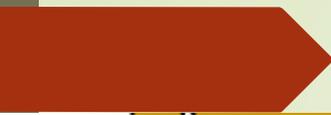
Agrees Texas can join US as slave States'



Manifest Destiny



North America 1845



1. Russians 'occupy' Alaska ...500 settlers Only by 1850's

2. Territories, part of USA but not yet states

3. Canada Border Agreed (1842)

4. "Shared sovereignty Oregon Territory with Britain

5. Texas annexed 1845..Mexico does not recognise **and** border disputed

6. Mexican West (California, New Mexico) Lightly Populatedopen for taking.....

Manifest Destiny

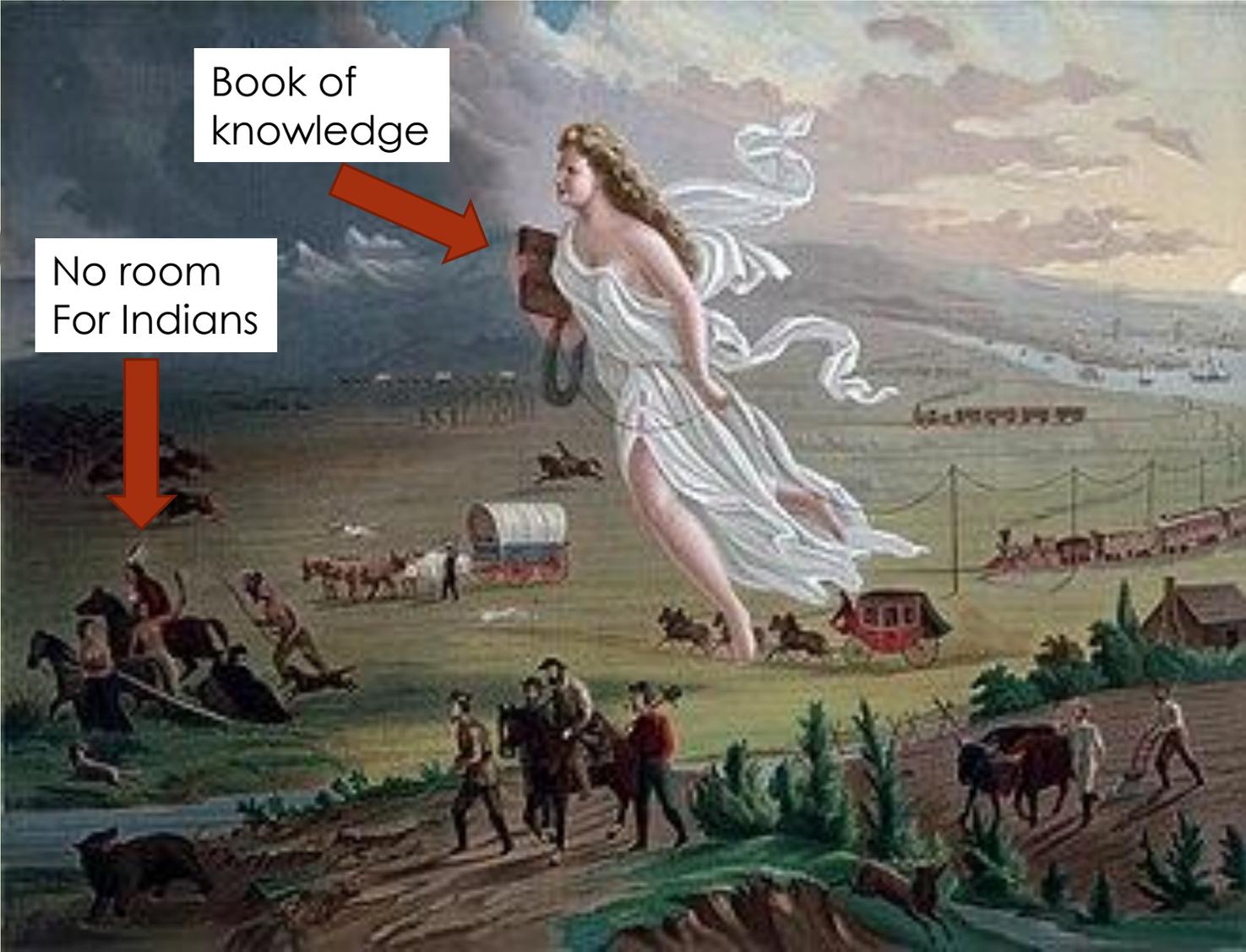
(John Ghasst 1874)

“Manifest” ---self evident
“Destiny” ...inevitable, hand of God

Origin: Puritan “House on a Hill” .
Washington Jefferson”Hand of Providence”, Jackson: Destiny Of American White Men

Manifest Destiny.....1845 version
(1) The superiority of the White Race and its Institutions (2) Western North America to be made like East (3) Americans have a duty to God to make use of his bounty

“Whigs” oppose. What matters is work and money



Book of knowledge

No room For Indians

Manifest Destiny implications

John Sullivan (1813-1895)



“And that claim is by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us.”

Two Competing ‘destinies’

North: Expansion to support economic growth across Continent.. provide opportunity to start new life and make room for Irish and German immigration

South: Expand slavery across North American Continent (Canada, all of Mexico)....(and some) : Cuba and Central America...even Latin America

Election of 1844 about Manifest Destiny
And what it means....

1844 Election : The prequel

- ▶ Texas approaching bankruptcy due to 'wars with Mexico'
 - ▶ .Sam Houston President wants annexation
- ▶ Tyler presents bill to Annex Texas as a 'slave state'
- ▶ Whig controlled Senate rejects treaty as Henry Clay claims Democrats trying to extend power of Slave States
- ▶ Tyler tries to re join Democrats...but dumped. Jackson (in retirement) Consider Tyler 'soft' ...supports radical expansionist James Polk



Election of 1844

The Candidates and campaign

Whigs Henry Clay: Secure wealth through industry

- Bring back high tariffs, improvements, restrict slavery, bring back the Central Bank, protect Indians, restrict immigration
- Democrats: uneducated, 'common' slave owners

James Polk: Deliver Manifest Destiny

- Annex Texas..and 'disputed territory; war with Mexico okay
- Welcome white immigrants to increase population
- Take **All** of Oregon Country...war with Britain okay
- Whigs...elite, 'British'...Clay debauched hypocrite, abolitionist and slave owner ... fathering his own slaves!

Manifest Destiny Wins....



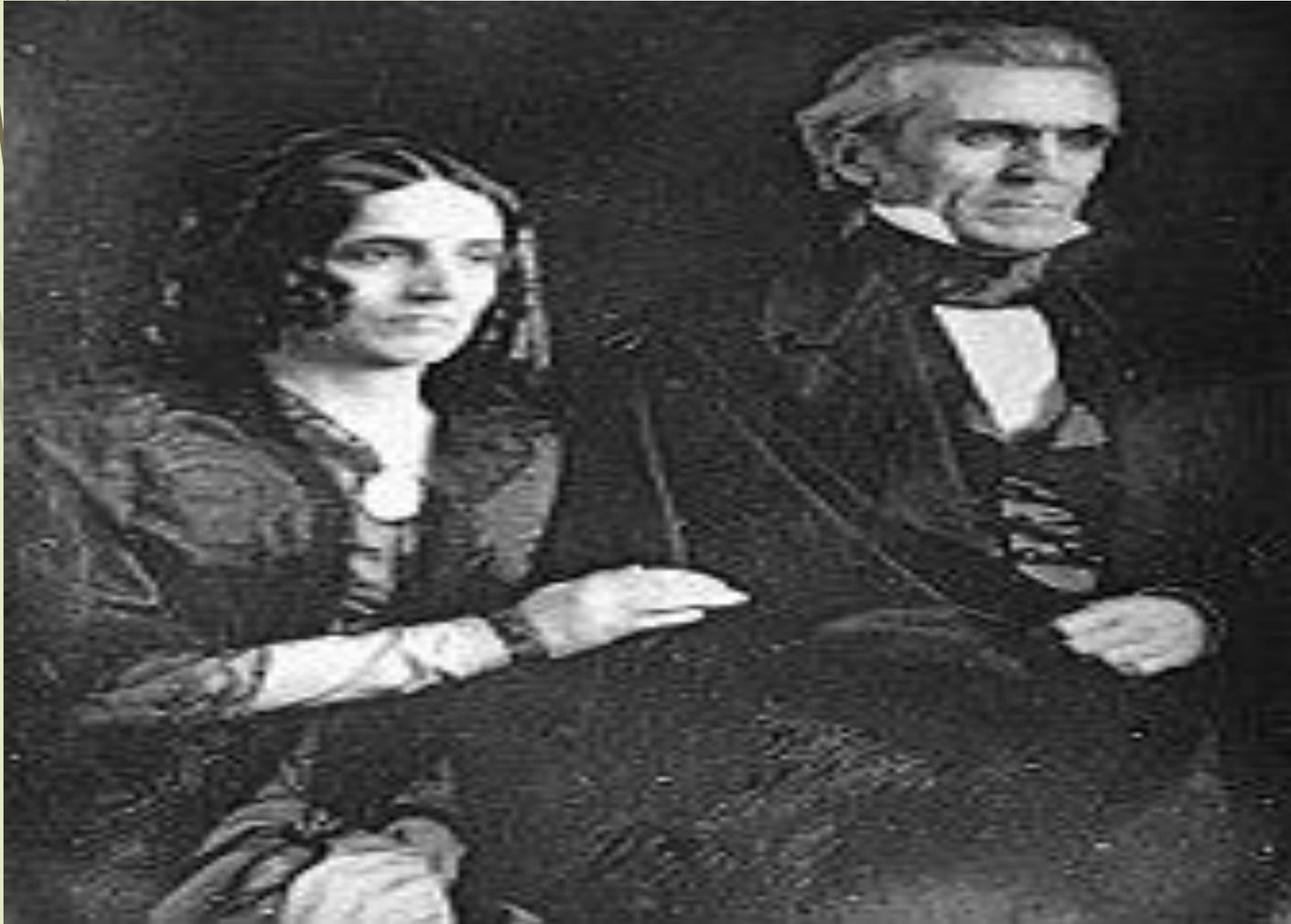
Closest election to date
Polk win 170 electoral votes to 101
But only 1% more of popular vote

Very high turn out...popular vote
expands to 3 million votes

Polk takes all lower South and New
York by only 5,000 votes...wide spre
fraud claimed...by both sides

James Polk(1795-1849)

James and Jessica Polk 1845



Born in log cabin North Carolina
...father surveyor and slave holder
Moves family west to Tennessee

Attends university, learns law from
attorney...becomes slave holder
...elected to Congress, then
Governor Tennessee

Jackson supporter. Manifest Destiny

Objectives: Annex Oregon and all
Texas.... California and all West

America's most successful...and
Least known president



Intermission



Annexation of Oregon Territory

Thickly wooded mountains and hills



Thickly wooded coastline



High Desert Country



Williamhette Valley: fertile, water, perfect agriculture



North West Indigenous Peoples

- Many disunited tribes and cultures
 - Inland ...nomadic hunter gathers inland....e.g. Nez Perce
 - Coastal...complex highly structured fishing and agriculture settled communities ...elaborate rituals, exquisite, canoes, totem poles and art, practice slavery
- Peaceful coexistence with early settlers...despite rough start (Tonquin incident)
 - first arrivals fur trappers
 - Trade regulated by British Hudson Bay Company..
 - Trade, not agriculture
- Disease reduces population from 200,000 to 10,000-20,000 before settlers begin arriving In 1840's'...

Chinook Tribe Coastal: highly stratified from Chiefs to slaves, ancestor worship, communal halls, canoes for coastal trade



Elaborate costumes, emphasis on ceremony
.....communal gift giving (Potlach)



The Dispute with Britain

'54/40 or "Fight"



Agreed Boundary

Shared occupation British Hudson Bay Company and American settlers 1800-1840

Farming communities arrive 1830's 15,000 settlers by 1845...

Polk "54/40' or fight... election slogan Threatens war.....but this a gambit

British invite Americans to divide region...want 49th parallel extension

Oregon Treaty Agreed 1846... Polk fears war with Britain, not Mexico does not want two wars!



Annexation of Texas ...and war

Preliminaries

➤ Texas 1845

- Bankrupted by wars in Mexico & Comanche
- Population rising rapidly from 50,000 at Independence from Mexico to more than 200,000
- Slavery core to economy, 50,000 slaves by 1850

➤ Negotiations

- Seek treaty with Mexico, Britain as mediator.. No agreement on border
- Britain demands emancipation of slaves as condition for Treaty
- Tyler and Southern Democrats want Texas annexed as 4 states, 3 'slave'. Northern States demand 2 states, one 'free', one 'slave';

Calhoun spreads rumour British seeking to acquire Texas

Declaration of war

New President Polk wants
Unconditional annexation by Texas
....after agreeing Oregon Treaty

Offers to 'buy' California' from
Mexican government ...rejected

Polk" ...secures Senate approval
for one state. borders to be agreed

Deploys regular army to Texas
Then a company to disputed
Territory to goad Mexican attack





US Mexican War

Mexico 1845

- Population 7.8 million (flat since 1800) vs 23 million USA (1850)
- 5 different Presidents 1845-1847...Army in/out of power
- Ongoing wars of Independence in Yucatan and Cahuilla
- 1847 'Polkos' rebellion by Catholics & Conservatives vs Liberals
- Northern Mexico ravaged by Comanche (supported by Texas) and undefended.....US Army welcomed by inhabitants

Mexican Army



Nominal Strength 80,000

Social gap cavalry/infantry

State close to bankruptcy

antique muskets

No mobile artillery

soldiers not paid

Lucas Alaman: "money spent on arming Mexican troops merely enabled them to fight each other and 'give the illusion' that the country possessed an army for its defence."¹

Outbreak of 'War Fever'

Abraham Lincoln in 1845



Abraham Lincoln. Illinois
Lawyer...house of representative
"Spot Resolution" challenges Pol

John Q Adams (fmr President)
..."unjust and unholy war"
Attempt by South to expand slav
empire

'War fever' takes hold:
Media embellish Mexican "attack"
& spread rumour British eyes
about to invade California

US Army 1846



Regular professional army
8,000 but well trained.
Junior officers West Point

Most infantry armed with
modern rifles Highly trained
mobile artillery.

Regular army increased to
30,000 plus 60,000 volunteers
50% newly arrived immigrants
Mostly from Ireland

Irish face discrimination
Hundreds desert to join Mexico
..St Patricks Regiment.

3 US Invasions of Mexico



1...Land and Ocean
...from West

2...North...Texas

3...Gulf Invasion



Invasion of the West

“Bear Flag Republic”



Total population California 1846
10,000 Californios (most in south)
1,500 Anglos (most in north)
150,000 Indians..no Mexican army

US Survey expedition of 60 men
arrives in north...rumour of war..
Join 30 Anglo settlers to claim
“Bear Flag Republic” June 1846
..Governor flees south

US Pacific fleet arrives
August... moves south

US occupies Los Angeles
...gets drunk. Chased
Out of town by Californios

US Army moving West from
Texas arrives in force

Invasion of New Mexico & California

Battle of San Pasqual December 1846



US Army invade New Mexico
July ...Mexican army retreats

Pueblo Indians revolt but crushed
...100's killed

Army enters California ...
California volunteer attack
...Americans lose 40 men
and retreat

Reinforcements arrive.....
Californios flee.. Americans
advance to Los Angeles

Treaty of Cahuenga January 1847



Fleet returns with army ...
attack Los Angeles "Battle
of the Old Woman's Gun"
...retreat

American sea and land armies
Merge 500+ men

Californios surrender
..Governor Pico surrenders

All South West is now
US America territory



Invasion of the North

General Zachary Taylor (1784-1850)



Home tutored career soldier
...practical Soldier 'soldier
....barely literate but capable

Veteran war of 1812, Indian wars

“Old Rough and Ready”

Commands 6.500 strong Army of
Texas....sent to invade North Texas

Invasion from the North

Battle of Monterrey September 21-24 1846



First major battle
6,500 US vs 7,000
Mexicans

Mobile artillery breaks
Mexican army....
Americans advance
street to street fighting

Americans win city
Mexican retreat
400 casualties each

Maria Josepha Zozoya (1822-1846)



Creole daughter of local family

Mexican women nurses both US and Mexican troops

Considered fearless by both sides

Killed during battle while tending to wounded US soldier

US troops bury her with Military honours and compose song in her honour
“Maid of Monterey”

Santa Ana....again



Exiled from Mexico after defeating Spanish return in 1839...living In Cuba

Promises Americans he will Persuade government to agree peace...in exchange For £2m today's money

Returns to Mexico, pockets Cash...takes control of Army..(again) and government

Assembles army of 15,000 to stop American invasion from north

Battle of Buena Vista

Battle of Buena Vista Feb 22-23 1847



Santa Anna army
Of 15,000 attack
5,000 Americans

600 Americans 2,000
Mexicans casualties
Drawn.

Both sides claim
Victory. US advance
Stopped..Santa Ana
Returns to Mexico to
Crush Catholic revolt

Polk. Impatient
Orders seizer of Mexico
City...from coast

Sarah Bowman (1813-1866)



6ft 2' Irish , 91KG ..Innkeeper, cook...known as "The Great Western"

Texas Ranger: "She could whip any man foul, could shoot a pistol better than anyone in the region, and at black jack could outplay (or out cheat) the slickest professional gambler."

Quoted on being told battle lost" You damned son of a bitch, there ain't Mexicans enough in Mexico to whip old Taylor. You just spread that report and I'll beat you to death."[\[5\]](#)

Runs brothel after war...dies of spider bite...given full military honours



Invasion East

Winfred Scott (1786-1866)

Career soldier, Virginia family

War hero during War of 1812, Indian Wars

“Fuss and Feathers” famous for attending needs & health of men.. Humane treatment of Cherokee during Indian Removal
....attacked by Georgia for kindness

Meticulous planner with ability To choose & mentor excellent subordinates Robert E Lee, Ulysses Grant,

Intolerant of poor discipline, desertion.



US Army landing at Vera Cruz

US army of 12,000
amphibious landing
March 1847

Scott leads inland
Following route Of
Cortes

Santa Anna opposes
...unable to form mass
army ...multiple battles
...Americans victorious

US captures 100
..Irish Catholic members
Of Mexican "St Patricks
Battalion". Deserters



THE LANDING OF THE NAVAL EXPEDITION, AGAINST TAMAUCOAC (MEXICO), COMD'G. G. C. PERRY IN COMMAND.

WITH DETACHMENTS OF OFFICERS, SEAMEN, AND MARINES, FROM THE U. S. STEAMER FRIGATE MISSISSIPPI, CAPT. MARY, COMD'G. MACKENZIE, AND ADAMS, U. S. SHIP, ALBANY, CAPT. BREESE, FRIGATE, RHAMPTON, CAPT. FORREST, U. S. SHIP, JOHN ADAMS, COMD'G. W. J. W'CLONEY, U. S. SHIP, GERMANTOWN, EDWARD BUCHANAN, U. S. SHIP, SCATER, EDWARD FEARSON, BOMB. BRIG., STROMBOLI, EDWARD WALKER, BOMB. BRIG., VIGOROUS, COMD'G. MADRUSER, BOMB. BRIG., L'ETA, COMD'G. VAN BRUNT, WARREN, COMD'G. BY CAPT. LUDLOW.

The landing was effected in 3 minutes after the Comd'g. gave the order (in the face of the enemy's fire) at about 10:00. American boats and Marines, armed with muskets, and 40 brass field pieces which were secured upon the beach after they had been drawn from their works by the heavy guns of the Steamer Scorpion Comd'g. Bigelow, Steamer Spittler Lieut. Comd'g. S. S. Lee, Steamer Vixen, Lieut. Comd'g. Smith, Steamer Scourge Lieut. Comd'g. S. Luskwood, and the Schooner Bando Lieut. Comd'g. Barron, which covered the landing.

Advance on Mexico City (March-September 1847)



Battle of Chapultepec September 1847



Luxury Mansion ...
Outskirts of Mexico City

Artillery led by Robert E
Lee breaches wall
& US troops storm
'castle". Ulysses Grant
reassembles cannons
.awarded medal

"Los Nino's Heroes"
...6 X 13-19 old
Mexican army cadets..
Last survivor wraps
Mexican flag around
him ..leaps from wall

Saint Patricks Battalion



Irish Catholic arrive
In U.S 1846...lured into
US army on arrival

Persecuted by Protestants
....Mexican Agents
approach during Northern
campaign ...'join us' vs
Protestants

Many captured during
Advance to Mexico

Gallows set up below Chaplet
Castle ...50 Irish forced to watch
Attack from gallows

Scott orders them to be hanged
when US flag raised on castle

Occupation of Mexico City



Mexican government
Abandon City and US troops
occupy

Guerrilla war September 1846
Feb 1847

Polk sends Nicholas Twist
To secure peace...US wants
Greater Texas, California,
New Mexico...pay \$15m
compensation

Treaty of San Guadalupe 1848

- ▶ “All Mexico” movement...excitement to annex all Mexico & Central America
- ▶ Polk sends message to Twist to annex all / most of Mexico
- ▶ Alliance anti war Whigs (JQ Adams, Clay, A Lincoln”and South John C Calhoun “We have never dreamt of incorporating into our Union any but the Caucasian race—the free white race. To incorporate Mexico, would be the first instance of the kind of incorporating an Indian race; for more than half of the Mexicans are Indians, and the other is composed chiefly of mixed tribes. I protest against such a union as that! Ours, sir, is the Government of a white race.
- ▶ Ambassador Twist ignores Polk message.....signs Treaty with new Mexican Government
...February 1848...(Santa Anno exiled...3rd time)
- ▶ US gets all “New Spain”.....Mexico gets \$100 million (2024 money)
...80,000 Mexicans living in New Spain ‘guaranteed’ citizenship & property rights...

Mexican war aftermath

20,000 US and 30,000 Mexican Deaths..20% of armies 80% by disease

- ➔ Manifest Destiny realised, myth of US military invincibility born
- ➔ Not all think this way: Ulysses S Grant “ to this day I regard the war [with Mexico]as one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation. It was an instance of a republic following the bad example of European monarchies, in not considering justice in their desire to acquire additional territory.†
- ➔ Debate whether new territory Free or Slave intensifies

Interesting news from California summer 1848

Gold



Lots of it! Accessible! Free for taking! Come and Get it!



News spreads around the world and
hundreds of thousands head for California

How that happened and what it meant
the subject of next talk on *Monday February 19th*