I. Maine boundary dispute
   A. Britain desired to build a road connecting Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Quebec but the road ran through disputed territory in northern Maine.
   - The dispute threatened to escalate into a wider war

B. Webster-Ashburton Treaty (1842)
   1. U.S. retained over half of the territory while Britain got the Halifax-Quebec route
   2. Both agreed to cooperate in patrolling the African coast to prevent smuggling
   3. U.S. gained land in Minnesota (later, valuable iron ore was discovered there)
   4. Significance: improved U.S.-British relations

II. Manifest Destiny
   A. Millions of Americans in the 1840s and 50s believed that God chose Americans to control the Western Hemisphere.
   1. Believed their mission was to spread democratic institutions from "sea to shining sea."
   2. Land greed and idealism joined into a potent mix for expansion.
   3. "Manifest destiny" phrase coined in 1844 by John L. Sullivan
   4. Movement really began in the 1830s with Jackson and Van Buren removing the Indians from the southeast to Oklahoma.

B. Election of 1844 was an expression of Manifest Destiny as Texas became the leading issue of the campaign.
   1. Expansionist Democrats, especially Southerners, supported James K. Polk.
      a. Historians often extend "Jacksonian Democracy" through Polk's presidency (1828-1848)
      b. Sought to annex Texas and gain Oregon up to the 54°40' parallel.
   2. Whigs nominated Henry Clay (his third run for president)
      a. Northern Whigs were opposed to the incorporation of Texas as a new slave state.
      b. Clay’s attempt to straddle the Texas issue cost him the presidency.
3. **Liberty Party**: first party created for the anti-extension of slavery  
   a. Candidate: James G. Birney, founder of the Kentucky Anti-Slavery Society  
   b. Party ran in both the 1840 and 1844 elections  
4. Polk defeated Clay 170-105  
   a. The Liberty Party took enough votes away from Clay that he lost New York by only 5,000 votes and it cost him the election.  
   b. Democrats now claimed a mandate for annexation.

**Memory Aid for Manifest Destiny:**

“TOM” -- **T**exas, **O**regon, **M**exican War

### III. Texas joins the Union

A. The Republic of Texas lasted nine years  
   1. Mexico had refused to recognize Texas independence since 1836.  
      a. Threatened war if U.S. attempted annexation  
      b. Texas feared Mexico’s larger and superior military forces.  
      a. Britain was interested in Texas as a buffer zone against further U.S. expansion.  
         - Area could be used to challenge the Monroe Doctrine.  
      b. France also hoped to divide North America.  

B. 1845, **Tyler got a joint resolution through Congress for annexation**  
   (required only a majority vote)  
   1. Didn't push for a treaty as it required a 2/3 vote in the Senate; many Whigs were opposed to Texas’ entry into the Union.  
   2. Tyler interpreted the (narrow) election as a mandate for annexation.  
   3. Texas thus was already a part of the U.S. by the time Polk took the oath of office in March 1845.  

C. Mexico claimed the U.S. had unjustly taken Texas and refused to recognize its annexation.

### IV. President James K. Polk

A. One of the most successful one-term presidents in U.S. history  
   1. Strong proponent of Jacksonian ideals (his supporters called him “Young Hickory”)  
   2. Polk was a slave-owner his entire life and owned plantations in Tennessee and Mississippi.
B. Polk’s 4-point program (achieved in less than four years)

1. **Walker Tariff** (1846): lowered tariff of 1842 from 32% to 25%
   a. Its passage coincided with Britain’s repeal of the Corn Laws
      which led to increased trade and increased gov’t revenues.
   b. One of the lowest tariffs in U.S. history.

2. Restoration of the Independent Treasury System (1846)

3. Acquisition of California

4. Settlement of the Oregon dispute

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**Memory Aid for Polk's Presidency:**

**COIL** -- **California**, **Oregon**, Independent Treasury System, and **Lower tariff**

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C. Oregon

1. Region had been disputed in certain sections by Spain, Russia, Britain, and the U.S.
   a. **John Jacob Astor** developed the American Fur Company into a huge enterprise organizing the fur trade from the Great Lakes to Oregon.
      • When Astor died in 1848, he was the richest man in America.
   b. Spain gave away claims to Oregon in the Florida Purchase Treaty of 1819.
   c. Conflict with Russia
      • Fort Ross established by Russia in 1812 just north of San Francisco
      • Monroe Doctrine was intended by John Quincy Adams partly to reject Russian claims.
      • Russia retreated to the 54°40’ line due to 1824-25 treaties with the U.S. and Britain; U.S. and Britain became the sole possessors of the territory.

2. American migration flowed into the Oregon region (south of the Columbia River)
   a. **Oregon Trail**: 1840’s: flood of pioneers came to Oregon on a trail blazed by Jedediah Smith.
      • 2,000 mile trail; average of 17 deaths per mile
      • Trail began at Independence, Missouri or Council Bluffs, Iowa
      • By 1846, 5,000 U.S. settlers lived south of Columbia River; British had only 700 people living north of river
   b. Britain was concerned about a large U.S. migration into the region.
      • A disputed area existed between the Columbia River and the 49th parallel.
c. Polk abandoned the campaign pledge of a 54°40’ boundary
   • Some Democrats had advocated "54°40' or fight!"
   • He didn’t want to tip north-south political balance with new additional northern states.
   • Southerners, happy with Texas annexation and the election, accepted the 49th parallel.
   • Early in 1846, Britain agreed to the 49th parallel as the new Oregon border between the U.S. and Canada

3. **Oregon Treaty (1846):** U.S. received Oregon territory south of the 49th parallel
   a. War with Mexico influenced many senators to seek a quick end to the dispute.
   b. Northwestern states were angry that southerners got all of Texas but the U.S. did not get all of Oregon.

D **Mexican War** (1846-1848)

1. Polk sought to buy California from Mexico; Mexico was not interested as they were fuming over Texas’ annexation
   a. California was seen as gateway to the Pacific.
   b. Texas annexation caused Mexico to sever diplomatic relations with the U.S.
   c. Boundary dispute: original boundary was the northerly Nueces River; Texans claimed the Rio Grande to the South
      • Polk honored the Rio Grande as Texas’ boundary.
      • Mexico was less concerned over the boundary as it wanted all of Texas back.
   d. Polk sent an envoy to Mexico City in late 1845 to buy California for $25 million
      • Mexico refused.
      • Feeling slighted, Polk now looked for a reason to go to war.

2. Declaration of War
   a. Jan. 1846, Polk ordered Gen. Zachary Taylor to march from the Nueces River to the Rio Grande, and ordered the Navy in the the Gulf of Mexico and the California coast to be ready.
      • Polk was prepared to force a showdown but none occurred.
   b. April, Mexican troops crossed the Rio Grande and attacked one of Taylor’s surprised patrols resulting in 16 casualties
      • Polk sent his war message to Congress in response
      • May 13, Congress overwhelmingly voted for a declaration of war (only 14 Whigs voted “no”).
         o Although many antislavery Whigs joined in, they later condemned the conflict as "Mr. Polk’s War"
c. **“Conscience Whigs”:** A majority of Whigs opposed the war in principle.
   - Some Whigs questioned if the war had begun on U.S. territory and if Polk had started the war under false pretenses
     - **“Spot” Resolutions:** Rep. Abraham Lincoln sought to expose the exact "spot" where the war began.
     - Many Whigs believed the U.S. had no legal right to land south of the Nueces River.
   - Ralph Waldo Emerson feared slavery issue in new conquered territories would lead to a severe sectional crisis: **"Mexico will poison us!"**
   - **Henry David Thoreau** went to jail rather than pay taxes to support the war.
     - A few years later he wrote *Civil Disobedience* (1849)

d. Southern expansionists were eager to take more Mexican territory.

e. Mexico hoped U.S. involvement with Britain over Oregon would erupt into a war destructive to the U.S.
   - Wanted to humiliate the U.S. for the Texas issue

3. The U.S. conquered California and occupied parts of Mexico, including Mexico City, in a war that lasted over a year and a half.

4. **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo** (Feb. 2, 1848)
   a. U.S. gained California and the **Mexican Cession** (modern-day NM, AZ, UT, NV)
      - Mexico thus lost one-half of its territory
   b. U.S. agreed to pay $15 million and assumed the claims of U.S. citizens against Mexico of $3,250,000 for damages dating back to the Texas war for independence.
   c. Approved by the U.S. Senate 38-14 despite bitter debate
      - "Mexican Whigs" disapproved of war and even threatened to cut off supplies to U.S. forces in Mexico
      - Expansionists in South clamored for all of Mexico
      - Calhoun pushed for the treaty immediately before significant opposition mounted.

5. Results of Mexican War
   a. **Most significantly, the slavery issue was ignited:** would slavery exist in the new territories?
      - The Mexican War thus contributed to the Civil War.
      - Abolitionists saw the Mexican War as conspiracy of southern slave owners.
   b. **Wilmot Proviso, 1848** (proposed law; did not pass Congress)
      - Law proposed that slavery should never exist in any of the territory gained from Mexico.
      - Twice passed the House but not the Senate; endorsed by all but one free state
- Southerners resented Northern attempts to prevent the expansion of slavery
c. U.S. territory increased by 1/3 (including Texas); bigger than the Louisiana Territory purchased by Jefferson in 1803.
d. 13,000 Americans died in the war, mostly due to disease.
e. Sentiment for expansionism increased in the U.S.
f. Latin America began to negatively view U.S. as the "Colossus of the North"
g. U.S. forces became experienced in war; this would affect the scope of the Civil War

Terms to Know

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Essay Questions

Note: This sub-unit is a high probability area for the AP exam. In the past 10 years, 4 questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are some questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams.

1. Analyze factors that led to American expansion in the 1840s.

2. How did U.S. expansionism in the 1840s intensify sectionalism?

3. Compare and contrast American expansionism during “Manifest Destiny” in the 1840s with expansionism in the years between 1800 and 1840. (You may have to review Unit 3).

4. To what extent was President James K. Polk successful in achieving his political goals during his presidency?
Bibliography: