

Summary: Moving West

Texas and the Mexican War

In the 1820s, Texas was part of Mexico. By 1830, there were more Americans than Mexicans living in Texas. Mexico passed laws to stop Americans from settling there, but Americans continued to come. Americans in Texas disobeyed Mexican laws. They wanted to make their own laws.

In 1836, Texans began the Texas War for Independence. After about six months, Texans captured the ruler of Mexico, Antonio López de Santa Anna. He agreed to give Texas its independence. Texas became an independent republic. Texans elected Sam Houston as their president. Then, Texans voted to join the United States. In 1845, Congress approved the annexation of Texas.

Mexico and the United States disagreed on the border between Mexico and Texas. President James Polk said the Rio Grande, a river, should be the border. In 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico. The Mexican War lasted about 15 months. It ended when Americans captured Mexico City.

In 1848, the two nations signed a peace treaty. Mexico accepted the Rio Grande as the border. The United States paid Mexico \$15 million for a large area of southwestern land. This land was called the Mexican Cession.

Moving West

Many settlers traveled west on the Oregon Trail. Families went to find cheap farmland. In 1848, a worker found gold in a California river. Thousands of people rushed to California to find gold. They were called forty-niners because many came in 1849. Boomtowns were built near the mines. People came to sell goods and services to the miners. By 1850, California had enough people to become a state. Now the United States stretched across the continent.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

republic *noun*, a government in which the citizens elect leaders to represent them

annexation *noun*, the addition of an area to a country

forty-niner *noun*, someone who took part in the California gold rush

boomtown *noun*, a town that grows very quickly



After You Read

REVIEW What were the results of the United States' victory in the Mexican War? Draw a box around two sentences that tell the answers.

REVIEW What kind of people went to boomtowns? Circle the sentence that tells the answer.