**Manifest Destiny and The Mexican American War**

**Manifest Destiny**

* Manifest Destiny was the belief that it was the destiny of the U.S. to expand its territory over the whole of North America - all land between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

**Westward Ho!**

* Many Americans traveled through the Great Plains to the land between the Rocky Mountains and Pacific Ocean
  + Why?
    - Good farmland
    - Opportunity to start new
    - “Make something of yourself”

**Oregon Country**

* Present Northwest corner of the US and part of Canada
* Fertile soil, plentiful rainfall, mild temperatures
* Attracted farmers and trappers
* US, Britain, Spain and Russia all claimed Oregon

**Oregon Trail**

* 2,000 miles long
* 50,000 people traveled 1840-1860
* Inspired by reports about fertile land
* Travelers met in Independence, Missouri every May and hoped to arrive in the Oregon territory by October.
* Dangerous journey – weather, disease, geographic challenges

**Conflict with Mexico**

* Mexico became independent in 1821. The Spanish governor of Texas gave some land to American settlers
* Thousands of Americans flooded into Texas
  + Many did not feel any loyalty to Mexico, and refused to follow their laws.
* Mexican troops were sent to enforce laws.

**The Republic of Texas**

* Texans revolted against the Mexican government, and in 1836, Texans declared their independence from Mexico and created the Republic of Texas.
* Santa Anna, the president of Mexico responded with force. His troops laid siege to the Alamo, a mission in San Antonio.

**The Alamo**

* Defenders of the Alamo held out for 12 days under heavy cannon fire.
* All of the defenders were killed in battle or executed afterward.

**Texas Wins its Independence**

* Sam Houston led a small army in a surprise attack against Santa Anna’s army the following April. Texans shouted “Remember the Alamo!”
* Within 18 minutes, the Texans had captured Santa Anna.
* They forced him to sign a treaty recognizing Texan independence.

**Tensions Rise**

* The annexation of Texas increased tensions with Mexico – Mexico had never formally recognized Texan independence.

**The Mexican American War**

* President Polk knew that the Mexican government needed cash, so he offered money to settle the border dispute between Mexico and Texas. Polk also offered to buy California and New Mexico. Mexico refused the offer.
* Polk hoped to provoke a Mexican attack on U.S. troops, and sent General Zachary Taylor and his troops to disputed land.
* Mexico saw this as an act of war and ambushed an American patrol.
* Polk asked Congress for a declaration of war. He claimed that Mexico had forced this war by shedding “American blood upon American soil.”
* Polk sent General Taylor with 3,500 troops who defeated Mexico at Palo Alto.
* Gen. Scott then led troops to take Mexico City.
* With Mexico’s capital in U.S. hands, the United States had won the war.

**The Mexican American War Ends**

* The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican American War in 1848
* US got more than 500,000 sq. miles of territory (CA, NV, UT, AZ, NM, WY, and CO)
* Mexico dropped claims on Texas land at Rio Grande River.
* President Polk paid Mexico $18 million for the land

**Manifest Destiny is Achieved**

* In the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, the U.S. paid Mexico $10 million for a narrow strip of present-day Arizona and New Mexico.
* Manifest Destiny had been achieved.