

## Chapter 6.1 | History of the Shattered Frontier

The dissolution of the American Republic had its roots in the Industrial Revolution. Though there had been regional sparring in the nascent democracy dating back to colonial times, the economic changes brought on by industrialization served to divide the country on a latitudinal axis. Northern factory owners and, to a lesser degree, their workers demanded tariff barriers to protect their fledgling enterprises from ruinous competition with Great Britain's established manufacturers. Southerners by contrast depended on a cash crop for their livelihood and saw protectionism as wholly undesirable in two regards. Retaliatory tariffs would reduce the profitability of their key export, cotton, while simultaneously raising the price of manufactured goods.

Intertwined in this growing estrangement was the question of labor, or more directly the South's 'peculiar institution' of slavery. As the nation matured economically, European demand for raw cotton increased exponentially. Free men could not hope to compete with the virtually uncompensated labor.

The political bickering that ensued from the time of the founding of the republic until the 1830s has been well documented by other scholars and to rehash it here would serve no good purpose.

Many of the key events that would shape the political map of the North American continent and, in so doing, lead to the dissolution of the American Republic, occurred outside the borders of the young nation.

### THE BIRTH OF THE LONE STAR REPUBLIC

In 1804, the United States Senate ratified the treaty by which America would take possession of the French possessions to her west known as "Louisiana." This was not, as some now assume, without controversy. The matter so infuriated Federalists (who publicly fretted about war with Spain but privately feared loss of political influence once the vast territory was brought into the Union) that they went so far as to plot the secession of New England and New York and offering Aaron Burr the Presidency of the new confederation. Although Alexander Hamilton wisely put an end to his fellow party members' machinations, it was at a dear personal and political cost. Hamilton would die that same year in a duel with Burr, while the secessionist seeds sown in Boston would blossom in southern soil less than three score years hence.

Prior to 1804, a small number of American traders, outlaws, and settlers had ventured to the area near the Sabine River called Tejas by Spain. After the Louisiana Purchase, a steady stream of migrants began to join them. Numbered among these newcomers were soldiers of fortune called filibusters.

Unfortunately, the western and southern boundaries of Louisiana were never officially delineated by Napoleon, for he did not wish to instigate a diplomatic row with the Spanish crown that he was courting as an ally. The Louisiana Purchase thus led to a dispute between the United States and Spain over the boundaries of the area the former had bought. The United States claimed that it stretched all the way to the Rio Grande and the Rocky Mountains. This was wholly unacceptable to Spain, as it would mean all of Tejas and half of Nuevo Mexico, both Spanish colonies, would fall under it. There was also disagreement about the ownership of West Florida, a strip of land between the Mississippi and Perdido Rivers. The United States claimed it too was included in the purchase; Spain insisted it was not, and that east of the Mississippi only the city of New Orleans belonged to Louisiana.

Spanish authority over Nueva España (as her North American colonies were known) would soon be assailed on two fronts. In 1810, after a revolt in West Florida, the United States annexed the region between the Mississippi and Pearl Rivers. Later that year, a series of rebellions were instigated by Miguel de Hidalgo y Costilla, a priest of Spanish descent. Though he was eventually captured and executed, Hidalgo's leadership began a war of independence that culminated on September 27, 1821, when the rebel leader Vicente Guerrero and the royalist Agustín de Iturbide signed the Treaty of Cordoba.

The Spanish settlers of Tejas, called Tejanos, were struggling economically. One of their grievances was that many of them earned livings by domesticating wild mules and mustangs and then selling them in the neighboring Louisiana Territory. However, the Spanish crown had recently declared all wild animals to be the property of the crown, making this practice illegal. Around 1811 the Tejanos, with ample prodding from the American filibusters, finally joined the rebellion.

José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara and Augustus William Magee, with the tacit support of the United States, organized an expedition of about 1,400 men composed of Anglos, Tejanos, Indians, and former royalists to wrest Texas from Spain. Adopting a "Green Flag" for a banner, the Republican Army of the North crossed from Louisiana into Texas on August 7, 1812, and soon captured several towns including San Antonio, where a declaration of independence was proclaimed on April 6, 1813. This first republic of Texas, however, was short-lived, for Joaquín de Arredondo, commandant-general of the Provincias Internas, organized an army of 1,830 men and in August marched them from Laredo toward San Antonio to quash the rebellion.

The decisive Battle of Medina was fought on August 18, 1813. Under pressure by Tejanos who wanted to spare San Antonio from the ravages of battle, the Republican Army

opted to meet the Royalist army south of the city. They encamped about six miles from Arredondo's forces and planned to ambush the royalists as they traveled through a defile along the Laredo road. The next morning, however, Royalist scouts encountered the Republicans and lured them into an ambush in a dense oak forest where they had prepared breastworks on favorable ground. After a furious four-hour battle, the Republicans broke ranks and ran. The Royalists lost only fifty-five men. Arredondo subsequently established martial law in San Antonio and severely punished the rebels and their families. One of Arredondo's more notable subordinates was Lt. Antonio López de Santa Anna, who would return to Texas with another army twenty-three years later.

Having given up on attempts to wrest Tejas from Spain by force, the United States resolved its territorial claims with Spain through the 1819 Adams-Onís Treaty in 1819. The treaty provided for the cession of Florida to the United States for payment of \$5 million and established the border between Spanish and American lands westward to the Pacific – specifically along the Sabine, Red and Arkansas Rivers and the 42nd parallel. Under its terms, the United States gave up its claim to Texas, and Spain gave up its claim to the Columbia River basin in the Oregon Territory.

After Mexican independence, new immigrants from the United States, many who had been ruined in the Panic of 1819, settled in the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas, often with generous land grants from the young Mexican government. Most were grateful to Mexico for the opportunity to make a fresh start. The majority of Texans, for the new American colonists outnumbered the native Tejanos, immigrated under the auspices of Mexican Constitution of 1824. Under that covenant, Mexican citizens enjoyed a republican form of government with most of the power of government residing at the departmental [state] and local levels. Relations between the American settlers and their Mexican hosts would begin a precarious downward slide in April 1830 when the Mexican government forbade further immigration from the United States.

Mexican federalists had plenty of reasons to mistrust their northern neighbors. They recalled the filibusters' attempt to secure Texas for the United States. Mexican Secretary of State Lucas Alamán expressed such concern succinctly. "Where others send invading armies," he groused, "[the Americans] send their colonists." He understood that American newspapermen wrote incendiary articles calling for the occupation of Texas. He knew that in 1829 President Andrew Jackson had dispatched the brutish Anthony Butler to Mexico with an offer to buy Texas. He was also aware that Americans almost constantly spoke of the "reannexation of Texas," a belief that Texas should have been a part of the Louisiana Purchase owing to the short lived La Salle colony of 1685. Little wonder then that Mexican federalists viewed the colossus to the north and its wayfaring citizens as a threat to Mexican nationhood.

As if to validate Alamán's concerns, the Battle of Velasco (June 26, 1832) witnessed the first bloodshed in the forthcoming war between Tejas and Mexico. Domingo de Ugartechea, the Mexican commander of a fort at Velasco, attempted to block attempts by the Texans to transport a cannon for what he believed was possible use against Mexican forces at nearby Anahuac. After several days of fighting, the Texans prevailed when the Mexicans surrendered after exhausting their ammunition. Under the provisions of a hastily negotiated truce, Ugartechea and his soldiers were allowed to return to Mexico. When Mexican officials dismissed the Mexican commander at Anahuac, singularly the cause for the Texian's frustration with Mexican authorities in the area, tensions apparently eased. The Texicans, however, soon began to take a political tact that would provoke further violence.

The Convention of 1833 was a gathering of politicians and leaders of the state of Coahuila y Tejas in San Felipe on April 1, 1833. It was a successor meeting to the Convention of 1832, whose reforms had been rejected by the Mexican government. The volatile William H. Wharton presided over the meeting, which was attended by numerous regional leaders, including Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin. The convention's agenda mirrored the Convention of 1832, with the exception of the addition of a draft constitution (patterned after that of the United States) to be submitted to the Mexican congress. Austin traveled to Mexico City to present the petitions to the government. After some initial success in his negotiations, Austin came to an impasse and was imprisoned in early 1834 without any specific charges.

When Antonio López de Santa Anna revoked the Constitution of 1824 and declared himself dictator in 1835, many concluded that liberalism and republicanism in Mexico were dead. Norteamericano colonists considered themselves bound to the old constitution and unsurprisingly dissension and discord mounted.

They were not, however, alone. Many Federalistias – Mexicans loyal to the Constitution of 1824 – also took up arms to resist Santa Anna's tyrannical regime. The revolt that began near Gonzales in October 2, 1835, was a civil war – not a bid for complete separation from Mexico. Both Anglo-Texans and the native Tejanos fought for self-government within the federalist system created by the Constitution of 1824.

On November 3, 1835 a meeting was held to consider options for more autonomous rule for Texas. The "Consultation" drafted a document known as the "Organic Law", outlining the organization and functions of a new "Provisional Government". Texan leaders squashed any mention of independence, fearing that such remarks might alienate Mexican federalists. They were, however, disappointed when Federalists from the interior did not rush north to Texas to take up the struggle and so independence began to be openly spoken of.

Stephen Austin was a firebrand in the cause of Texas and leader of the independence faction. In a rambling letter dated January 7, 1836, he neatly summed up the situation.

*"I go for Independence for I have no doubt we shall get aid, as much as we need and perhaps more - and what is of equal importance - the information from Mexico up to late in December says that the Federal party has united with Santa Anna against us, owing to what has already been said and done in Texas in favor of Independence so that our present position under the constitution of 1824, does us no good with the Federalists, and is doing us harm in this country, by keeping away the kind of men we most need[.] [W]ere I in the convention[.], I would urge an immediate declaration of Independence - unless there be some news from the [Mexican] interior that changed the face of things - and even then, it would require very strong reasons to prevent me from the course I now recommend."*

When the well respected Stephen Fuller Austin spoke, Texans listened. Now nearly all of them believed that their best hopes for the future rested on complete separation from Mexico.

Texas leaders understood that they could not win the war alone. If Mexican federalists would not lend a hand, they must enlist assistance from the United States. They were not

so naïve as to believe that President Jackson would risk an international incident by openly supporting the Texas rebels against Mexico. They did, however, hope to enlist the support of individual Americans who believed in their cause. The ad interim government dispatched Branch T. Archer, William H. Wharton, and Stephen F. Austin to the United States to solicit men, money, supplies, and sympathy for the Texas cause. At New Orleans, in early January of 1836, the agents found enthusiastic support, but advised that aid would not be forthcoming so long as Texans squabbled over whether to sustain the Mexican constitution.

Southerners wholeheartedly embraced the Texans' cause for they anticipated that an independent Texas would remain so for only a few months before entering the union as a slave state. At the time, the United States had an equal number of free and slave states. Since both free and slave states voted as a block, it created a legislative gridlock with neither side being able to gain advantage. Southerners believed that adding Texas to the block of slave states would tilt the congressional balance of power in their favor. Such was the strength of their conviction that many Southerners

#### BATTLES FOR INDEPENDENCE

The Texican insurgency was of vital concern to Santa Anna and he aimed to personally deal a final crushing blow to the Noteamericanos. In the spring of 1836, he led a force of several thousand Mexican troops northward. They first entered San Antonio and defeated a Texican force at the Battle of the Alamo, and then shortly afterwards defeated a second Texican force near Goliad. Most of the captured men, over 350 all told, were considered outlaws and put to death.

Sam Houston, newly in command of the remaining Texican army, initially retreated east towards the Sabine River, the border with the United States, where a Federal army had assembled to protect Louisiana in case Santa Anna tried to invade the United States after quelling the rebellious Texans. However, at the urgent coaxing of his civilian masters, Houston turned to the southeast to act as a blocking force lest the Mexicans capture the nascent Texican government.

Santa Anna had been persuading Houston and devised a trap in which three columns of Mexican troops would converge on Houston's force and destroy it. However, the overconfident General committed a strategic error by diverting one column to attempt to capture the provisional government, and a second one to protect his supply lines. Santa Anna's remaining forces caught up to Houston on April 19 near Lynch's Ferry.

Believing Houston to be cornered, Santa Anna decided to rest and reorganize his army and attack in force on April 22.

On the morning of April 21, Houston decided to launch a surprise attack that afternoon with his army of roughly 800 men, concerned that Santa Anna might use the extra time to concentrate his scattered army which already numbered about 1,400. The assault was a dangerous endeavour as it would be made over open ground where the Texican infantry would be exposed to Mexican volley fire. However, Santa Anna made another crucial mistake—during his army's afternoon siesta, he failed to post sentries or skirmishers around his camp.

At 4:30 p.m. on April 21, after a scout relayed the burning of Vince's Bridge (cutting off the primary avenue of retreat for both armies), the main Texican battle line moved forward. They moved quickly and silently across the high-grass plain, and then, when they were only a few dozen yards away, charged Santa Anna's camp shouting "Remember the Alamo!" and "Remember Goliad!" only stopping a few yards from the Mexicans to open fire. Santa Anna's army was composed of professional soldiers who were trained in European fashion to fight in ranks, exchanging volleys with opponents employing similiar tactics. They were not trained for hand-to-hand skirmishing and many were also ill-prepared and unarmed at the time of the sudden attack.

Hundreds of the demoralized and confused Mexican soldiers routed, and many ran into the marshes along the river. Some of the Mexican army rallied and futilely attempted to push the Texans back, but to no avail. General Juan Almonte, commanding what was left of the organized Mexican resistance, soon formally surrendered his remaining men. The rest of Santa Anna's once-proud army had disintegrated into chaos.

During the short but furious engagement Santa Anna escaped. In a mere 18 minutes of combat, the Texican army had killed about 630 Mexican soldiers, wounded 208 and taken 730 prisoners.

Santa Anna was captured the following day. He attempted to disguise himself by shedding his ornate general's uniform and was initially thought to be an ordinary soldier. However, when placed with other captured soldiers, he was enthusiastically saluted as "El Presidente," and his true identity was revealed. Houston spared his life, preferring to negotiate an end to the overall hostilities and the withdrawal from Texas of Santa Anna's remaining columns.

Texican independence was a *fait accompli*, although Mexico did not officially recognize it until years later.

enlisted in the Texican army as organized regional units, the Kentucky Rifles and New Orleans Greys most notably.

In March of 1836, a constitutional convention was convened. This convention, held at Washington, was quite different from the acquiescent Consultation of the previous year. The convention delegates knew they must declare independence or submit to Mexican authority. If they chose independence, they had to draft a constitution for a new nation, establish a strong provisional government, and prepare to combat the Mexican armies invading Texas.

On March 1, George C. Childress, who had recently visited President Jackson in Tennessee, presented a resolution calling for independence. At its adoption, the chairman of the convention appointed Childress to head a committee of five to draft a declaration of independence. When the committee met that evening, Childress drew from his pocket a statement he had brought from Tennessee that followed the outline and main features of the United States Declaration of Independence. The next day, March 2, the delegates unanimously adopted Childress's suggestion for independence. Ultimately, fifty-eight members signed the document. Thus was born the second Republic of Texas. David G. Burnet was chosen as interim President of the Republic. Sam Houston, a former United States congressman and governor of Tennessee and a close friend of Andrew Jackson, was chosen commander-in-chief of the revolutionary army and left the convention early to take charge of all troops in the field-militia, volunteers, and regular army enlistees.

With news that the Alamo had fallen and Mexican armies were marching eastward, the convention hastily adopted the constitution, signed it, and elected an ad interim government. The delegates then quickly abandoned Washington. The government officers, learning that Houston's army had crossed the Colorado River on March 17 and was retreating eastward, fled to Harrisburg and then to Galveston Island. With news of the Texan victory at San Jacinto, the Burnet government hastened to the battlefield and began negotiations to end the war. On May 14 at Velasco, Texas officials had Santa Anna sign two treaties, one public and one secret. The public treaty ended hostilities and restored private property. Texan and Mexican prisoners were to be released, and Mexican troops would retire beyond the Rio Grande. By the terms of the secret treaty, Texas was to take Santa Anna to Veracruz and release him. In return, he agreed to seek Mexican government approval of the two treaties and to negotiate a permanent treaty that acknowledged Texas independence and recognized its boundary as the Rio Grande. However, word soon reached Texas that the Mexican Congress had repudiated Santa Anna, rejected his treaties, and ordered the war with Texas to continue.

### *Seeking Recognition*

Two days after the constitutional convention adjourned, interim President Burnet sent George Childress and Robert Hamilton, probably the wealthiest man in Texas, to Washington to seek recognition of the new republic. These

two men joined the three agents (Austin, Archer, and Wharton) already there. Childress and Hamilton met with Secretary of State John Forsyth, but they carried no official documents to prove that Texas had a de facto government, and therefore he refused to negotiate. In May Burnet recalled all the agents and appointed James Collinworth, who had been Burnet's secretary of state from April 29 to May 23, and Peter W. Grayson, the attorney general, to replace them. They were instructed to ask the United States to mediate the hostilities between Texas and Mexico and obtain recognition of Texican independence. They also were to stress the republic's interest in annexation.

During the summer of 1836, U.S. President Andrew Jackson sent Henry M. Morfit, a State Department clerk, as a special agent to Texas to collect information on the republic's population, strength, and ability to maintain independence. In August, Morfit filed his report. He estimated the population at 30,000 Anglo-Americans, 3,478 Tejanos, 14,200 Indians, of which 8,000 belonged to civilized tribes that had migrated from the United States, and a slave population of 5,000, plus a few free blacks. The population was small, Texas independence was far from secure, the government had a heavy debt, and there was a vast tract of contested vacant land between the settlements and the Rio Grande. Morfit advised the United States to delay recognition. In his annual message to Congress on December 21, 1836, Jackson cited Morfit's report and stated that the United States traditionally had accorded recognition only when a new community could maintain its independence. Texas was threatened by "an immense disparity of physical force on the side of Mexico," which might recover its lost dominion. Jackson left the disposition of the matter to Congress.

By July, Burnet and his cabinet began preparations for the transition to a permanent government. The ad interim president called an election for the first Monday in September 1836 to set up a government under the constitution. The voters were asked to (1) approve the constitution, (2) authorize Congress to amend the constitution, (3) elect a president, other officers, and members of Congress, and (4) express their views on annexation to the United States.

The choice of a president caused concern. Henry Smith, formerly governor of Texas prior to the Convention of 1836, became an unwilling candidate after being nominated by associates of his. Stephen F. Austin also entered the race, but he had accumulated enemies because of the land speculations of his business associates. Eleven days before the election, Sam Houston finally bowed to pressure and announced his candidacy.

On election day, September 5, Houston received 5,119 votes, Smith 743, and Austin 587. Houston received strong support from the army and from those who believed that his election would ensure internal stability and hasten recognition by world powers and early annexation to the United States. He was also expected to stand firm against Mexico and seek recognition of Texas independence. The people

voted overwhelmingly to accept the constitution and to seek annexation, but they denied Congress the power of amendment.

The First Texas Congress assembled on October 3, 1836. It consisted of fourteen senators and twenty-nine representatives. The next day ad interim President Burnet delivered a valedictory address. He urged Congress to authorize land grants to the veterans of the revolution and reminded his listeners that the national debt stood at \$1,250,000. On October 22 Houston took the oath of office as president before a joint session of Congress. In his inaugural, he stressed the need for peace treaties with the Indians and for constant vigilance regarding "our national enemies – the Mexicans." He hoped to see Texas annexed to the United States. Houston requested the Senate to confirm his cabinet appointments. He named Stephen F. Austin to be secretary of state; Henry Smith, secretary of the treasury; Thomas J. Rusk and Samuel Rhoads Fisher secretary of war and secretary of the navy, respectively; and James Pinckney Henderson, attorney general.

On December 19, 1836, the Texas Congress unilaterally set the boundaries of the republic. It declared the Rio Grande to be the southern and western boundary, even though Mexico had refused to recognize Texas independence. The eastern border with Louisiana presented problems. Houston took up the matter with the United States through diplomatic channels, and a treaty was signed in Washington on April 25, 1838, which provided that each government would appoint a commissioner and a surveyor to formally demark the boundary.

National defense and frontier protection were paramount to Texans. Threats of a Mexican invasion and the fear of Indian raids kept the western counties in turmoil. Congress passed several acts dealing with frontier defense. In December 1836, it authorized a military force of 3,587 men and a battalion of 280 mounted riflemen, and appropriated funds to build forts and trading posts to encourage and supervise Indian trade. In case of a Mexican invasion, Congress empowered Houston to accept 40,000 volunteers from the United States. President Houston took a more practical view of the situation. He downplayed Mexican threats, labeling them braggadocio and bombast. If the enemy invaded, he reasoned, Texans would rush to defend their homes. Ranger units on the frontier could handle the Indian situation. Houston's primary concern was to negotiate treaties with the Indians ensuring fair treatment.

As for the army, Houston feared that Felix Huston, the commander and a military adventurer, might commit a rash act. He was proven correct. Huston came to Houston and raised a clamor for a campaign against Mexico. Houston treated him cordially, but promptly ordered acting secretary of war William S. Fisher to furlough three of the four army regiments. The remaining troops were gradually disbanded. Houston planned to depend for defense on the militia, ranger companies, and troops called for special duty.

Houston dispatched William H. Wharton to Washington D.C. with instructions to seek recognition on both de jure and de facto grounds. If Wharton succeeded he would present his credentials as minister. Memucan Hunt soon joined him. They reported that Powhatan Ellis, United States minister to Mexico, had arrived in Washington and stated that Mexico was filled with anarchy, revolution, and bankruptcy. It would be impossible for her to invade Texas. France, Great Britain, and the United States were clamoring for the payment of claims of their citizens against Mexico. On March 1, 1837, the United States Congress, receiving memorials and petitions demanding the recognition of Texas independence, passed a resolution to provide money for "a diplomatic agent" to Texas. Jackson signed the resolution and appointed Alcée Louis La Branche of Louisiana to be chargé d'affaires to the Republic of Texas. The United States Congress adjourned on July 9, 1838, without acting upon the question of annexation.

Houston replaced Wharton with Anson Jones, a member of the Texas Congress. Jones had introduced a resolution urging Houston to withdraw the offer of annexation, saying that Texas had grown in strength and resources and no longer needed ties with the United States. In Washington D.C. on October 12, 1838, Jones informed Secretary Forsyth that Texas had withdrawn its request for annexation. The issue lay dormant for several years.

In the fall of 1838, Houston sent James Pinckney Henderson abroad to seek recognition of Texas by England and France. The withdrawal of the annexation proposal in Washington helped facilitate his mission. France, currently at war with Mexico, readily signed a treaty on September 25, 1839 recognizing Texican independence. England, in spite of slavery in the young republic and her desire to see the abolition of slavery worldwide, could not stand idly by and see France gain influence and trade privileges in Texas. Also, since she had just settled the Maine and Oregon boundary issues in the Aroostook War with the United States, recognition of Texas would be unlikely to provoke a diplomatic row. In the fall of 1840, Lord Aberdeen announced that Her Majesty's government would recognize Texican independence, and on November 13-16, three treaties were signed that dealt with independence, commerce and navigation, and suppression of the African slave trade. A month earlier, on September 18, Texas had concluded a treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation with the Netherlands. Houston named Ashbel Smith minister to Great Britain and France and sent James Reily to represent Texas in Washington, D.C. He instructed both men to urge the three nations to exert pressure on Mexico for peace and recognition.

Toward the end of Houston's term as President (Presidents of the republic could not succeed themselves) Lamar announced his candidacy. Houston supporters tried to get Rusk to run, but he refused. They next endorsed Peter W. Grayson, the attorney general, who had worked in Washington, but on his way back to Texas, Grayson com-

mitted suicide. The Houstonites then approached Chief Justice James Collinworth, but in late July he fell overboard in Galveston Bay and drowned. Lamar campaigned on a promise to remedy the mistakes of the Houston administration and easily won by a vote of 6,995 to 252 over the relatively unknown state Senator Robert Wilson. David Burnet, the former ad interim president, was elected vice president. At the Lamar inaugural in Houston on December 10, Houston appeared in colonial costume and powdered wig and gave a three-hour "Farewell Address." Algernon P. Thompson, Lamar's secretary, reported that the new president was indisposed and read his inaugural remarks.

In his message to the Texas Congress on December 21, President Lamar spoke against annexation. He saw no value in a tie with the United States and predicted that Texas would someday become a great nation extending to the Pacific. He urged that the municipal code be reformed to consolidate Mexican and United States law in the republic. He also wanted increased protection for the western frontier. Lamar recommended the building of military posts along the borders and the formation of a standing army capable of protecting the nation's borders. He promised to prosecute the war against Mexico until she recognized Texas independence. He also stated that Texas needed a navy to protect its commerce on the high seas and urged legislation to reserve all minerals for government use as well as a program to turn them to the advantage of the nation. Lamar favored continuing the tariff, but hoped some day to see Texas ports free and open. Congress responded to his message by authorizing a force of fifteen companies to be stationed in military colonies at eight places on the frontier. Congress also set aside \$5,000 to recruit and maintain a company of fifty-six rangers to patrol the Rio Grande from El Paso to Santa Fe and three mounted companies for immediate service against the hostile Apache Indians.

At the beginning of the Lamar administration, Mexico was temporarily distracted. Because of unresolved French claims, the French Navy had blockaded the Mexican coast and shelled and captured Veracruz. The Centralist Mexican government also faced a revolt by Federalists in its northern states. Tension increased when Lamar threatened to launch an offensive against Mexico if that nation refused to recognize Texas independence. Texan military units crossed the Rio Grande and joined the Mexican Federalists, ignoring Lamar's call to return. In February 1839 Lamar increased the pressure on Mexico. He appointed Secretary of State Bee minister extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Mexico to request recognition of Texas independence and to conclude a treaty of peace, amity, and commerce. Bee also was to seek an agreement fixing the national boundary at the Rio Grande from its mouth to its source. If Mexico refused these requests, Bee would offer \$5 million for the territory that Texas claimed by the act of December 19, 1836, territory that lay outside the bounds recognized by Mexican law. When Bee reached Veracruz, the French had withdrawn and the Centralists were strengthening their position. However,

Juan Vitalba, a secret agent of Santa Anna who was serving temporarily as president, made overtures and hinted at possible negotiations. Lamar asked James Treat, a former resident of Mexico who knew Santa Anna and other Mexican leaders, to act as a confidential agent and attempt negotiations. Unfortunately, Treat reached Veracruz on November 28, 1839 just as the Federalists and their Texican allies approached the gates of Matamoros. The alliance between the rogue Texicans and the Federales blocked his plans. When Treat proposed an extended armistice to the Mexican minister of foreign affairs a year later, he was again ignored.

A Mexican invasion of Texas was now rumored. General Felix Huston proposed sending an expedition of 1,000 men into Chihuahua, believing the move would force any Mexican army that crossed the Rio Grande downstream to withdraw. Congress did not concur with this plan, however, and in March 1841 Lamar appointed James Webb, former attorney general, to replace Bee as secretary of state and sent him to Mexico with another peace proposal. Webb was denied permission to land at Veracruz. Slighted by this affront, the President on June 29 recommended that Texas recognize the independence of Yucatán and Tabasco and join in a declaration of war against Mexico. Lamar also urged attention to the upper part of the Rio Grande. The Fifth Congress agreed to finance an expedition to establish Texican authority over its far-western claims.

Lamar believed that Texas must extend its authority over its western claims and divert a portion of the Santa Fe -St. Louis trade through its ports. He also sought to encourage the 80,000 inhabitants of Nuevo Mexico to sever their ties with Mexico and turn to Texas. If the United States took control of Nuevo Mexico, it could extend its influence to the Pacific and supercede Texican claims by force of arms.

On June 20, 1841, a large caravan, officially designated the Santa Fe Pioneers, left the Austin vicinity. Dr. Richard F. Brenham, William G. Cooke, and José Antonio Navarro traveled along as commissioners to treat with the inhabitants of Nuevo Mexico. Gen. Hugh McLeod commanded a military escort of 270 men. The civilian component included fifty-one persons, principally merchants, traders, and teamsters, with twenty-one wagons. After crossing the vast plains of West Texas under great hardship, on September 17 the expedition reached the village of Anton Chico, east of Santa Fe. There they met a small Mexican cavalry force and drove them off thus removing Mexico City's influence from the western Rio Grande.

In the fall of 1841, Houston and Burnet were candidates for president. On September 6, Houston easily won a second term, and Burleson beat out Hunt for vice president. In his second administration, Houston reversed many of Lamar's policies. He sought peace treaties with the Indians, took a defensive stand against Mexico, and encouraged trade along the southern and western borders. Houston was vitally concerned with the location of the capital. Austin was on the frontier, far from the center of population. If Indian or Mexican intruders captured and burned the capital, the

prestige of the government would suffer. In early March 1842, when Mexican General Rafael Vásquez crossed the Rio Grande with 700 soldiers and raided San Antonio, Houston seized the opportunity to order removal of the national archives from Austin, but local citizens blocked the move. During the session of Congress called to discuss the Vásquez invasion, Houston pushed through moving the capital. In October the government offices were moved to Washington. The Texas seat of government remained at Washington ever since.

On October 9, 1841, Santa Anna reestablished himself as provisional president of Mexico and determined to renew hostilities against Texas. In early January of 1842, General Mariano Arista, commanding the Army of the North, announced his intention of invading the "the Department of Tejas." After Vásquez seized San Antonio in March, the western counties demanded a retaliatory strike at Mexico. Houston knew that such a campaign was beyond Texas' means, but decided to let the agitators learn for themselves. On March 17 he approved the undertaking and sent agents to the United States to recruit volunteers and obtain arms, munitions, and provisions. The soldiers, assembling on the Nueces near San Patricio, quickly became restless. Provisions were short, and gambling and drunkenness prevailed. Learning of the disorder, a Mexican force launched a surprise attack on the Texan camp on July 7 driving it off.

The Mexican government was determined to keep the Texas frontier in turmoil. Santa Anna ordered Gen. Adrián Woll to again attack San Antonio and informed the Mexican Congress that he planned to resubjugate Texas. Woll crossed the Rio Grande and made a surprise attack on San Antonio on the morning of September 11. The defenders, learning that the soldiers were Mexican regulars, surrendered. On the eighteenth Woll moved to Salado Creek, assaulted the Texans assembled on the creek east of San Antonio, then withdrew to San Antonio and shortly afterwards returned to Mexico.

After the battle of Salado Creek, Texans demanded retaliation and rushed to San Antonio as individuals, in companies, and in small groups. Houston sent Brig. Gen. Alexander Somervell to take charge of the force there. On November 25, Somervell headed for the border with more than 750 men and seized Laredo. In December, Somervell led the rest downriver, crossed the Rio Grande, and seized Guerrero. Unable to find provisions, he recrossed into Texas and ordered his men to prepare to return home. The border war would thereafter settle down into an uneasy and unofficial truce.

Like Lamar, Houston expressed concern over the western boundaries of Texas. In February 1843, his administration authorized Jacob Snively to raise a volunteer group to make a show of force in the northwest territory claimed by Texas. They hoped to prey on the Mexican caravans traveling that section of the Santa Fe Trail that crossed Texas territory. The men were to mount, arm, and equip themselves and share half the spoils; the other half would go to the repub-

lic. Earlier, in August 1842, Charles A. Warfield had received a similar commission, recruited a small party largely in Missouri, and briefly occupied a Mexican town on the overland trail. Snively organized 175 men and in April 1843 they rode north. From his camp about forty miles below where the Santa Fe Trail crossed the Arkansas River, Snively captured a Mexican patrol guarding the trail. The ensuing foray was short-lived. United States dragoons escorting merchant caravans through Indian country arrested and disarmed the Texans, allegedly for being on United States soil, and sent them home. The United States later paid for the arms they had taken from the Texans but offered no apology.

While in Perote Prison as a prisoner of the Battle of Salado Creek, James W. Robinson, a former acting governor of Texas during the Consultation, sought an interview with Santa Anna. He stated that if granted an audience, he could show how to arrange a lasting peace between Mexico and Texas. Santa Anna, currently distracted by the war with Yucatán, agreed to hear Robinson. Under his proposals Texas would become an independent department in the Mexican federation, be represented in the Mexican Congress, and be allowed to make its own laws. Texas would be granted amnesty for past acts against Mexico, and Mexico would station no troops in Texas. Santa Anna approved the proposals on February 18, 1843, and released Robinson to convey them to Texas. Houston studied the proposals and reasoned that Santa Anna's Yucatán problem might lead the Mexican president to agree to more favorable peace terms. Houston asked Charles Elliot, the British chargé d'affaires to Texas, to ask Richard Pakenham, the British minister in Mexico, to seek an armistice. Robinson wrote Santa Anna that Houston wanted an armistice of several months to give the people of Texas an opportunity to consider the proposals. When Santa Anna received Robinson's letter, he agreed to a truce. Houston proclaimed an armistice on June 15, 1843, and sent Samuel M. Williams and George W. Hockley as commissioners to meet their counterparts at Sabinas, near the Rio Grande. They were to arrange a general armistice and request that a commission meet in Mexico City to discuss a permanent peace. The Texas and Mexican commissioners agreed on a permanent armistice on February 18, 1844, but Houston filed the document away without taking action because it referred to Texas as a Mexican department.

In the Texas presidential race of 1844, Vice President Edward Burlinson faced Secretary of State Anson Jones, who had the support of Houston. Jones won by a large vote. After he was inaugurated on December 9, he launched a policy of economy, peaceful relations with the civilized Indians, and a nonaggressive policy toward Mexico. Jones favored annexation to the United States but events would unfold in Washington D.C. that dashed his hopes.

The annexation of Texas had become a major issue in the United States election of 1844. Former Vice-President John Tyler had lured away a significant portion of southern democrats spurned by candidate Van Buren's anti-annexa-

## INDIAN RELATIONS

President Houston hoped, by keeping military units out of the Indian country and seeking treaties with various tribes, to avoid difficulties with the Indians. He sent friendly "talks" to all of the tribes that had been relocated from their lands in the east. The most pressing problem involved the Cherokees, who had settled on rich lands along the Sabine and elsewhere in East Texas. Neither Spain nor Mexico had given them title to their lands. At the time of the Texas Revolution, the Consultation, hoping to keep the Cherokees and their associated bands quiet, sent Sam Houston to make a treaty guaranteeing them title to their land, and they had remained quiet during the difficult days. When Houston became president, he submitted the Cherokee treaty to the Senate for ratification, which that body ratified in December 1837.

After the defeat at San Jacinto, Mexico sought to stir up discontent in Texas. Mexican commanders suspected that there were restless groups around among various Indian tribes, and sent agents to Texas to promote dissension. While they had little success with tribes in the east, the Apache in west Texas were eager to take the arms offered by Mexican agents and were subsequently responsible for causing all sorts of mayhem.

Upon taking office in December 1838, Lamar was convinced that the Comanches were in treasonable correspondence with the Mexicans, and launched a campaign that drove them from Texas. In 1839 ranger parties based in San Antonio invaded Comanche country and fought several engagements. The Comanches sent a small delegation to San Antonio to talk peace. Texas authorities agreed to negotiate if the Indians brought in their white captives. On March 19, 1840, sixty-five Comanches showed up with one white prisoner, a twelve-year old girl by the name of Matilda Lockhart. Matilda said the Comanches had other prisoners. The Texicans demanded the remaining prisoners and tried to hold the Indians as hostages. In what became known as the Council House Fight, thirty-five Indians and seven Texans were killed. Furious over the massacre, the Comanches killed their captives and descended several hundred strong on San Antonio but were unable to coax a fight and therefore rode away. Beginning in July the Comanches hit the frontier counties in force.

In subsequent years, Texas would build upon earlier treaties and develop close diplomatic and trade ties with the Cherokeeled nation of Sequoyah. The Apache and Comanche though would remain bitter enemies and a constant threat in west Texas.

tion platform. This action split the democratic vote and ensured that Henry Clay would become President. Though the Whigs and Clay attempted to obfuscate the position for political reasons, once in office they were prepared to join with the European powers in brokering a peace with an independent Republic of Texas.

The British Foreign Office, with French support, advised Ashbel Smith, the Texan agent to Great Britain and France, that a "diplomatic act" was needed to force Mexico to make peace with Texas and recognize its independence. Houston also favored a "diplomatic act," and Anson Jones, the president elect, with his hopes for US statehood dashed, reluctantly agreed.

The British, French and American emissaries reached Mexico City in mid-April. Luis G. Cuevas, minister of foreign relations, placed their proposals before the Mexican Congress, and in late April Mexico recognized Texas independence. The British minister handed a copy of the document to Jones on June 4, and he immediately announced a preliminary peace with Mexico.

President Jones issued a call on May 5 for a convention to be elected by the people to meet in Austin on July 4. At his call, the Texas Congress assembled on June 16 in special session at Washington and accepted the peace treaty and approved elections for a convention. The convention met in Austin on July 4 and passed an ordinance to accept the Smith-Cuevas treaty. It then drafted the Constitution of 1845 and submitted both the annexation agreement and proposed constitution to a popular vote. On October 13 annexation was approved by a vote of 4,245 to 257, and the constitution by a vote of 4,174 to 312. The fledgling republic was now officially at peace.

The establishment of an independent Republic of Texas was soon to have profound political effects on the United States. The 36°30' proviso of the Missouri Compromise legally barred any further expansion of slave territory as Texas now controlled land to the west of the USA below that line.

During the early years of the republic, the population of Texas increased about 7,000 per year, primarily from immigration. By 1847, the white population, including Mexican immigrants, had risen to 102,961 and the number of slaves to 38,753. The growth was due largely to liberal land policies and expanding opportunities. Texas acquired a reputation as a land of sharp dealers, lawlessness, rowdiness, and fraudulence. Land frauds were numerous and law enforcement agencies were weak or nonexistent, but Texicans have developed an ability to handle challenges.

## THE CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC

Mexico paid little attention to its far-flung northern possession until November 1845, when American settlers in the Sacramento Valley, sensing the weakness in Mexico City due to the strife between the Federalist and Centralist factions, revolted and established the California Republic. John C. Frémont, a U.S. Army cartographer and trail blazer, arrived the following January with a company of men intent of mapping the Pacific coast. Though initially reluctant to involve himself (and by virtue of his commission the U.S. government) in an internal Mexican dispute, his subsequent altercation with Mexican authorities over an alleged horse thieving incident changed his mind. The rebellious settlers subsequently gave him command of their militia – a move

legitimized by Commodore Stockton, commander of U.S. Pacific naval forces.

The Centralist leader General Parades entered Mexico City at the head of an army on January 2, 1846. Federalist President Herrera fled, and Parades, who assumed the presidency on January 4, set about to quash any nascent rebellion before Mexico's northern territories were eroded any further.

In June, weary of the oppressive martial law administered by the new Anglo dominated republic, Californios precipitated a counter-revolt in southern California. What began as a number of separate civil disturbances soon coalesced into a full scale insurrection under the leadership of Jose Maria Flores. The Californios soon expelled the Anglo-Californians from Los Angeles and San Diego and by the end of September they were joined by Mexican regulars under the command of Santa Anna.

On December 6, 1846, Frémont, unaware of the arrival of Santa Anna, marched his militia south to put down the Californio revolt. En route to San Diego, he met the Mexican forces in an indecisive action at the Battle of San Luis Obispo. Though both sides suffered heavily, it was a victory for Santa Anna as Frémont's militia retreated and most of southern California was now liberated from the California Republic.

On January 13, Frémont met with Santa Anna at Salinas and signed the Truce of Monterey. This truce only allowed for the cessation of regular and irregular military activity along the temporary line of Monterey Bay. No formal recognition of the California Republic was given by Santa Anna. Seeing as how Santa Anna could well march north into the Sacramento Valley, Frémont figured this was the best he could hope for. It would buy time to strengthen his position.

In May 1847, the self-proclaimed California Republic convened a constitutional convention in San Francisco. Their drafted constitution paralleled that of the United States, however it expressly prohibited slavery. It was ratified on July 4 by popular vote. Richard B. Mason was appointed as the first President of the Republic of California and his first official act was to dispatch Colonel Stephen Kearny, the former military governor of California, to Washington D.C. to ask for admission into the Union.

The potential admission of California to the Union provoked an intense period of crisis in the United States during which time the new Republic continued along in political limbo.

The Gold Rush that began in 1849 was to bring matters to a head. It established California as a viable political entity. Before this, there were too few people there even to even consider statehood. The distant Pacific Coast would have taken decades to acquire the population necessary to maintain a proper government. The Gold Rush changed all that as hundreds of thousands of people flocked there, walking the trails across the continent, or braving the perilous

10,000-mile- ocean journey around the treacherous Cabo de Hornos.

Before California was formally admitted into the U.S. as part of the Compromise of 1850, it occupied an ambiguous place politically. Nominally a free Republic, it's independence went unrecognized by major European powers and more importantly Mexico. The vast influx of colonists, however, made the prospect of reconquest a distant hope at best.

Finally, on May 30, 1850, it was admitted in the Compromise of 1850 as the 31st state and a free one as well. In order to abide by the Missouri Compromise, a treaty was formally signed with Mexico delineating the southern boundary of the state as 36° 30' north.

## **DESERET**

Joseph Smith founded The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1830 after years earlier claiming to have received visitations from an angel that decried all other Protestant denominations as erroneous and revealing additions to the Christian scriptures later to be known as the Book of Mormon. The sect attracted over 1,000 members during its first year.

Smith and a small band of followers first moved from western New York to Kirtland, Ohio where an entire congregation had converted to the new faith. This church grew so rapidly that it became the epicenter of Mormonism. Despite, or perhaps due to, heightening numbers and prosperity, the church alienated the local community who eventually tarred and feathered Smith. This spurred the Mormons' relocation to Jackson County, Missouri. Church members were again routinely persecuted, in part because their neighbors believed that the church was promoting the establishment of a religious dictatorship but more so because of the church's heretical belief that the Book of Mormon was the revealed work of God, with the same status as the Bible. The church was eventually expelled and resettled in an area of western Missouri that had been reserved for them. The Mormons were not welcomed here either and within a year 17 Mormon settlers were murdered.

A public organization called the Dantites was formed in the Mormon community to organize defense, construct homes and obtain provisions. In late 1838, violence broke out again, as the original settlers of the area attacked the Mormons out of fear that the church might become a political majority in their county. The Missouri state militia became involved after an officer in the Dantites persuaded his men to become a "covert renegade band" and to mount revenge attacks against the Mormons' adversaries.

Faced with diminishing supplies, the approach of winter, and an extermination order from the Governor, 15,000 Mormons capitulated and agreed to move. Their destination was Commerce, Illinois (renamed Nauvoo in 1839). Here local politicians anxious for the votes of the community unexpectedly welcomed them. At long last it seemed the church had found a place to live peaceably.

Trouble again surfaced though its genesis was internal. Smith began practicing polygamy (“celestial marriages” in Mormon parlance that superseded ‘earthly’ ones) and later revealed it as doctrine. By 1844, this resulted in a schism as husbands of the women Smith seduced challenged his leadership. These dissenters took their case to the community by publishing a newspaper that assailed his policies. Imbued with the intemperate spirit that had subtly begun to infiltrate the church hierarchy, Smith instructed a group of loyal men to destroy the press used by the rogue ecclesiastics.

For this act, Smith and his brother Hyrum were charged with violating the First Amendment. A mob later broke into the jail and assassinated both of them.

The death of the founder provoked a major crisis. The Twelve Apostles of the church eventually decided that the reluctant Brigham Young should be the second president of the church.

Having once again become entangled in a bloody conflict with the surrounding community, Young led most of the church in 1846 on a long and difficult 1,300 mile exodus to the Great Salt Lake in the Mexican state of Alta California where they could establish a new Zion sequestered from disapproving neighbors.

Though the region was desolate, it was not wholly unoccupied. A mountain man named Miles Goodyear operated a trading post along a wagon road leading to the Oregon Territory. He was of particular interest because he claimed to hold a Mexican territorial grant to the region. Establishing a legitimate claim was sufficiently important to the new immigrants that they settled for a price of \$2,000 with Goodyear to buy out any interest he might claim to land within the new colony.

Young christened the region Deseret. A General Assembly met in January 1850 and intermittently thereafter to enact ordinances having the force of law. No judges were initially selected, but a judicial system and a criminal code were later provided. Laws regulating elections were also passed. In practice, however, voters simply ratified choices previously made by church leaders. Functioning within the framework of the ecclesiastically created constitution, the General Assembly organized county governments and incorporated Great Salt Lake City, Ogden, Provo, and Manti. A militia (the Nauvoo Legion) was also established. Taxes on property and liquor were authorized, gambling was suppressed, and the use of water, timber, and other natural resources was regulated.

Brigham Young institutionalized racism within the Church of Latter Day Saints. Under his leadership, Deseret endorsed slavery and openly supported the Confederacy after it declared independence. Blacks were banned from the priesthood and interracial marriages were prohibited under penalty of death.

In May 1851, officials left Great Salt Lake City to serve notice to Mexico authorities that the Church of Latter Day Saints was executing their property rights and seceding from

the Republic laying claim to an area encompassing much of Alta California. Earlier, a slate of officers, all Mormon, had been endorsed in a mass meeting and the Nation of Deseret had begun to function under President Brigham Young.

Mexican officials were doubly outraged not only at the seizure of their territory by another band of American settlers but also at the affront the Mormon state posed to their Roman Catholic religion. The Mormons were quickly arrested and all but one was subsequently executed. A single representative was permitted to return to Great Salt Lake City with notice that their illegal and heretical communities were to be evacuated and that the Mexican Army was within its legal rights to kill any Mormon that chose to remain within Mexican territory.

Brigham Young took Mexico’s warning as an idle threat. Santa Ana would be hard pressed to make good on his word, for Salt Lake was on the farthest fringes of Mexican Territory and reaching it posed a considerable challenge – as most of the recently arrived Mormons knew only too well. In doing so he underestimated the effect Deseret had on Mexico’s Catholics. This was not simply a challenge to the civil authorities as the revolts in Texas and California had been. A heretical cult had rooted itself within the nation and dared the church to respond.

In 1852, with the blessing of Pope Pius IX, a Mexican army made its way from San Diego to the Great Salt Lake. Though the journey was arduous, the soldiers were filled with a religious zeal that the large number of clergy accompanying them kept at a fevered pitch. The first Mormon settlement they encountered was Manti. The frightened inhabitants understood no Spanish and so sheltered themselves within their homes rather than fleeing. The two score members of the Nauvoo Legion fired upon the Mexicans but to no avail. They were all quickly killed and the town burned to the ground incinerating most of the women and children.

The smoke was visible from Provo, alerting that town to the danger they now faced. The men sent their families north to Great Salt Lake City and grimly awaited their fate. Two days later, the Mexicans would engage them in the Battle of Provo. Though they fought to the last man, the outnumbered Mormons were no match for professional soldiers. Provo too was put to the torch.

Panic now ensued in Great Salt Lake City. Again, wives and daughters were sent away, this time to Ogden. Every man and boy that could carry a rifle remained behind to defend the city. When the Mexicans arrived, they fought with bitter tenacity. When their first assault failed, the Mexicans opened up with cannons destroying the tabernacle. Another two days of fighting would occur, much of it brutal hand-to-hand combat in burning buildings. The Mexicans finally prevailed though at great loss. After destroying what little remained of the city, the Mexican Army, having sustain significant casualties and apparently unaware of the existence of the last sizeable Mormon town at Ogden, began the long march home confident that what-

ever Mormons remained would soon return to the United States.

In the aftermath of this terrible raid, the Mormons vowed to rebuild. Much as the Israelites had overcome the Hittites and Philistines to survive and prosper in Canaan, they would do likewise.

Though their reputation for industriousness would never meet a greater challenge, the remaining Mormons rebuilt Great Salt Lake City within six months time. However, a noticeable change had overtaken the people. The once friendly Mormons, usually eager to trade agricultural commodities for manufactured goods, were now hostile and reluctant to trade. President Brigham Young issued a proclamation of martial law that, among other things, forbade people from traveling through the territory without a pass. The citizens of Utah were discouraged from selling food to immigrants, especially for animal use.

The Nauvoo Legion, which included every able-bodied man between the ages of 18 and 45, was on full alert. Staff officers, who were also church and civic officials, were dispatched to every remaining settlement under their command to explain and enforce militia decisions. George A. Smith, who commanded all of the southern militia units, began the task of preparing the people psychologically, militarily, and materially for war.

It was during this time of particularly high tensions that the Mountain Meadows Massacre occurred: A group of Mormons, aided by Southern Paiute Indians, deceived and attacked a group of 137 pioneers who were attempting to travel from Iowa, through Utah, on their way to California. This act triggered a condemnation from the United States Senate and in a rare act of unity with Mexico, a declaration of Deseret as an unrecognized rogue state.

## PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS

Scholars point to the election of 1840 as the seminal point for events that would very soon lead to the American Civil War and the subsequent founding of the Confederate States of America.

Martin Van Buren had inherited a pending economic crisis stemming from his predecessor Andrew Jackson's war with the Bank of the United States. The storm broke in a serious depression that became known as the Panic of 1837. The resulting years of economic hardship and the international humiliation of the Aroostock War left the electorate disgusted with "Martin Van Ruin" and opened the door for the newly formed Whig party.

Henry Clay of Kentucky was the early favorite at the Whig convention in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in December 1839. He was, however, a Mason, and anti-mason feeling was strong enough to block his nomination. In the final ballot Harrison was nominated with 148 votes to Clay's 90 and Scott's 16. John Tyler was nominated as the Vice Presidential candidate.

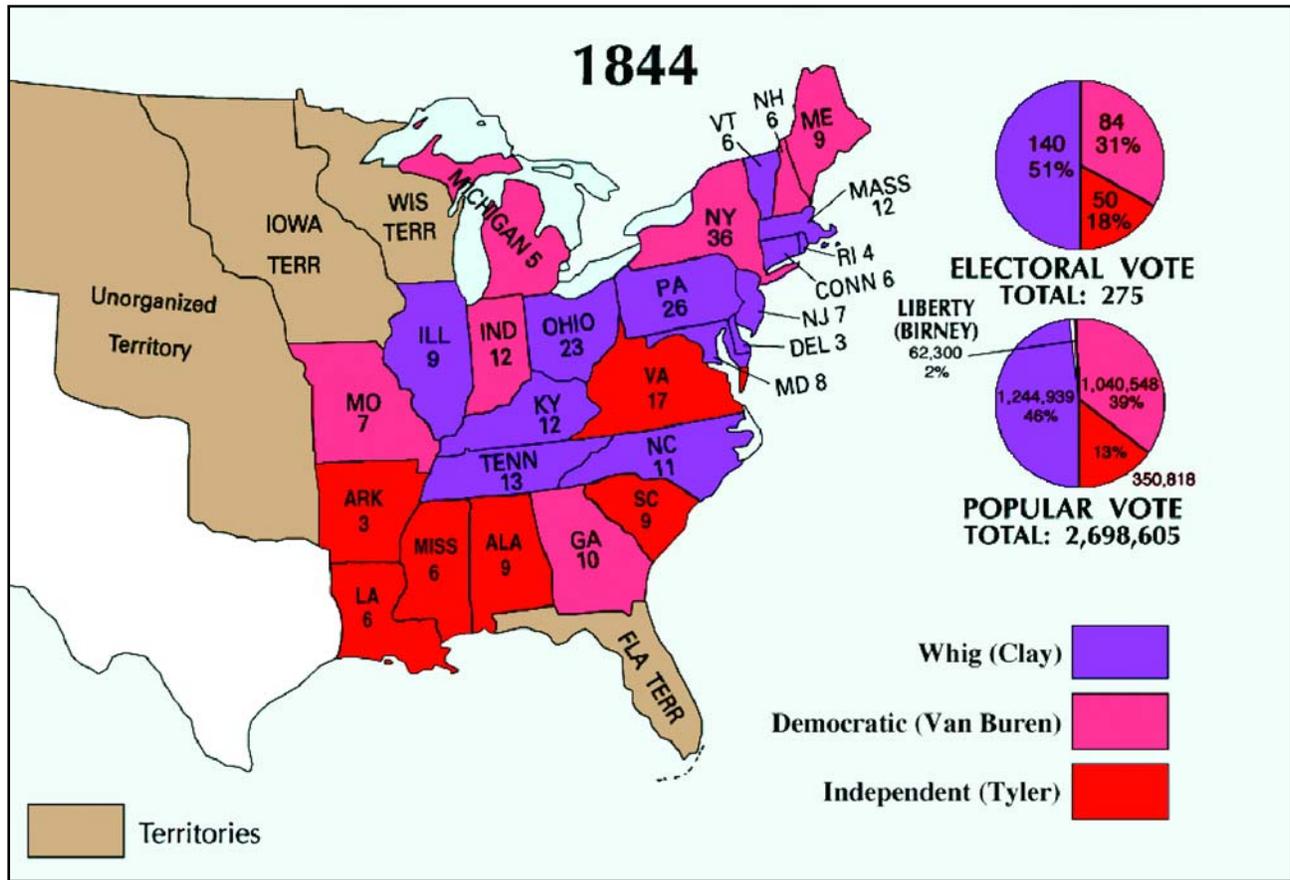
Despite an oratorical masterpiece of an inaugural address, President Harrison's administration was beset by internal disunity as would be expected in a party composed of disparate factions headed by a chief executive whose political ability was held in low regard. Nonetheless, during the 27th Congress he signed into law several important pieces of legislation sponsored by the Whigs including the rechartering of the Bank of the United States and stiffer protective tariffs whose revenue was earmarked for federally sponsored communication projects (subsidies for railroad and canal-building corporations).

This nationalistic economic policy (known as the "American System") would be a source of future political friction. Northern manufacturers and merchants were clearly the chief beneficiary of such policies in that their fledgling enterprises were guaranteed both profits and subsidized access to the rapidly developing markets of the interior. Southern plantation owners had little need for infrastructure improvements as the most productive land was already within easy reach of the seaports from which their cotton was shipped to markets in Europe. Further inflaming matters was the fact that their tax burden was disproportionately severe. As tariffs were structured along mercantilist lines of discouraging imports, the southern states, with less than half of the nation's population, were contributing over three-quarters of the funds available to the national treasury.

The Whigs' activist economic program was quickly challenged by both increasing economic prosperity and democratic dissension that led to a disastrous showing in the 1842 congressional elections in which they lost control of the House.

Harrison's pledge, "Under no circumstances will I consent to serve a second term" ensured that little of substance would be accomplished during his remaining time in office. Aspirants to the presidency began to mark out positions. Vice-President John Taylor advocated for the annexation of Texas much to the chagrin of both Harrison and Clay. Although the proposition was untimely, for it surely would have been defeated in the Senate had it been brought before that body, it forced the Whigs to evoke the name of their nemesis Andrew Jackson in stating that was and continues to be the policy of the United States not to engage in armed conflict with the Republic of Mexico. Tyler, after four years of ineffectually working against Whig policies, finally severed his ties with the party and returned to the Democratic camp.

As the Democrats convened their May 1844 presidential convention in Baltimore, the expected candidate was former President Van Buren. The question of Texas annexation had, however, by this time gained a significant following, especially among southern delegates. These delegates reinstated an old rule that required a two-thirds majority for nomination, which threatened to render it impossible for the anti-annexation platform to be adopted. Van Buren didn't receive the required two-thirds vote until the seventh ballot.



## AROOSTOOK WAR

The Treaty of Paris, which concluded hostilities between the British crown and her American colonists, was an inexact document that left a number of borders along the Great Lakes and Saint Lawrence seaway open to interpretation.

The subsequent War of 1812 and the U.S. purchase of the Louisiana territory from France would bring these border issues to the forefront.

In 1820, the state of Maine was formed from the discontinuous northern portion of Massachusetts. Eager to assert their territorial claims, the puerile Maine legislature began granting settlement claims north of the St. John's river in British claimed territory already inhabited by Acadians. Not wishing to engage in a third conflict with America, Britain sought to settle the issue diplomatically. The U.S. Senate, perhaps with an eye to making another attempt to wrest Canada, chose to ignore this attempted rapprochement.

The issue reached a crisis point in late 1837, when New Brunswick officials arrested a Maine census taker. Maine reacted by dispatching a company of militia to enter the disputed territory and establish a fort along the Aroostook river. New Brunswick, fearing another American invasion, mobilized her militia and called for British aid from regular troops stationed in Quebec while Maine called up several thousand of her own militia to press her claims.

Though General Winfred Scott, commander of the US Army, hastened north to mediate a compromise before the belligerent Mainers dragged the United States into war, he arrived

too late to prevent another blow to American pride. Shooting had begun between the two militia forces in early 1838, perhaps catalyzed by liquor. Once initiated, a series of skirmishes quickly followed in the Aroostook and St. John valleys.

The U.S. was at a considerable disadvantage, for Maine had no good route into the territory while the British regulars, supplied along the Halifax road, repeated the trouncing given American militia soldiers in the War of 1812 when they last attempted an invasion of Canada.

By the summer of 1839, the British were in firm control of the region, as well as the nearby disputed area of northern New Hampshire known as "Indian Stream". Their case made, they then agreed to formal negotiations to settle the various border issues once and for all.

In November 1839, an agreement was reached known as the Webster-Ashburton Treaty. Having judged the terms concluding the War of 1812 too generous in having returned all pre-war territory, the British presented the Americans with a border that granted the Aroostook valley to New Brunswick, the Indian Stream region to Quebec and the Mesabi Hills region along Lake Superior to Ontario.

Though humiliating to the brash Americans, they could at least console themselves that Britain had not pressed her claims further as well she could have. Soon though, the dreams of acquiring more territory would become forgotten as the United States struggled to retain her domestic integrity.

In the wake of the divisive Democratic convention, former Vice-President John Tyler presented himself as a third party candidate that would be supportive of the annexation of Texas. Sizeable numbers of southern democrats feeling spurned by their party, rallied behind his banner. The Whigs unanimously chose Henry Clay as their candidate despite his having lost two prior presidential elections.

Another candidate of historical interest was Joseph Smith, Jr., founder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The effort was aborted in June when Smith was murdered along with his brother Hyrum in Illinois.

The campaign itself was a sordid affair. Tyler's candidacy inflamed sectional rivalries and newspapers made no small show of partisanship by vociferously denigrating the character of all but their chosen man. The late entrance of yet another third party candidate, the abolitionist James Bireny, truly exposed the growing discontent within each of the major parties that Van Buren and Clay had both attempted to conceal.

The 1844 presidential election ended with Henry Clay amassing a mere 50.9% of the electoral college. The popular, or unpopular as some newspapers grouched, vote was closer still. Clearly Tyler's candidacy had given the election to the Whigs as they won the states of Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Illinois with barely over forty percent of the popular vote. The democratic party had been split along sectional lines, a rift that would soon widen.

Although the question of Texas annexation had ironically enough made possible his presidency, Clay clearly saw the danger in allowing this matter to fester in the American body politic. Not only had it engendered palpable ill will among southerners but it also served as rallying point for the growing abolitionist movement in the northeast. This vexing issue to which no compromise could likely be brokered between increasingly entrenched interests had to be settled. Although a "war hawk" in his youth, Clay had known for years that annexation would provoke an unnecessary and costly war with Mexico, one he felt the nation was wholly unprepared for. The humbling experience of the Aroostook War was still fresh in his mind and so he sought a diplomatic remedy.

In April 1845, Daniel Webster was dispatched to Mexico City to join his British and French counterparts in negotiating an end to the war that had been dragging on for over a decade. Webster informed the Mexican government that the United States was prepared to recognize Texas as an independent Republic and to hereafter dispense with any notion of annexation. This promise was however contingent on the Republic of Mexico settling all claims on the territory and formally recognizing her sovereignty.

On June 23, 1845, Mexico signed the Smith-Cuevas treaty recognizing Texas independence. On July 4, 1845 the Texas Senate, its hopes of annexation now forever dashed, accepted the Smith-Cuevas treaty (8-6). The Republic of Texas was now formally at peace with Mexico.

Freed of these international distractions, Clay was now able to turn his attention to domestic matters. Many of America's territories were quickly growing and had reached the state of political maturity that a generation ago would have guaranteed them statehood. Maintaining the delicate balance between free and slave states, however, would be more difficult than ever. Glancing at a map of the unorganized western territories, it was clear that the nation's future growth would be to the north and west, territory designated as future free states under the Missouri compromise.

For the time being, the admission of Florida would be paired with Iowa as the two states joined the union on March 15, 1845 and December 12, 1846 as the 27th and 28th states respectively.

On February 1, 1848, Wisconsin ratified its state constitution and petitioned to join the union. Southern congressmen openly balked at the idea of another free state. When a representative from the territory addressed the congress and demonstrated that not only does the territory have greater population but also a more mature civic structure than states now in the union, South Carolinian Senator John Calhoun sarcastically announced that, "then perhaps the more fortuitous course of action to present to this body would be to seek recognition of your national sovereignty, a approbation we gentlemen have of late graced with greater aplomb than statehood."

Notwithstanding Calhoun's block's intransigence, Clay set to work building a quorum that would ratify Wisconsin's admission. Various compromises were offered including the admittance of Kansas as a slave state (an idea vehemently opposed in the North, as it clearly violated the Missouri compromise and would set a precedent for the entire western territories to be opened to slavery) and the purchase of Cuba (to be earmarked as a slave state) from Spain. It was the latter that gained the tacit approval of key Southern leaders who indicated their willingness to approve the Wisconsin petition if this feat could be accomplished.

Clay directed his Secretary of State Daniel Webster to confer with the United States Ministers to Spain, France and Great Britain in order to decide if it was feasible to persuade Spain to sell Cuba to the States, while avoiding dissonances with France and Great Britain. The four men came together at Ostend, Belgium in the summer of 1848.

The British were to extract a price for their cooperation. Since 1818, they had engaged in a joint occupation of the Oregon Territory. In the early 1840s as large numbers of numbers of American settlers poured into the disputed area over the Oregon Trail, their position weakened. Rather than waiting for the inexorable tide of American settlement to transform the territory into a de facto American possession, the British wanted to see the southern boundary of British Columbia established at the Columbia River and based their claims on the Hudson's Bay Company's long history in the area.

In return for British aid in securing Cuba, Webster agreed to the Oregon Treaty. Senate ratification was, however, contingent on a successful conclusion to the negotiations with Spain.

Having secured Britain's assistance, they publicly issued their deliberations in August of the same year. The diplomats proposed to threaten Spain with the invasion of Cuba, if Spain was not willing to sell the island to the United States. The document, known as the Ostend Manifesto, caused enormous disturbances and served as a new rally cry for the growing abolitionist movement in the North.

On September 30, 1848, after tense saber-rattling on the part of the US (from which Clay would have backed down if his bluff were called), Queen Isabella II, her position already weakened by the Carlist Wars and the implicit threat posed by a powerful British squadron moored at Gibraltar, decided against war and a treaty was negotiated wherein the USA would purchase the island of Cuba for \$100 million. The new territories were to be granted statehood as soon as a constitution could be drawn up. The constitutional congresses for the territory was little more than a charade as wealthy Southern aristocrats hastily emigrated to the island and subsequently dominated its body. Much of this was overlooked as President Clay left office with a legacy of having preserved the Union.

*Continued in Aces & Eights: Shattered Frontier...*