

Summary: Moving West

Texas and the Mexican War

In the 1820s, Texas was part of Mexico. The Americans in Texas disagreed with the Mexican government. They wanted to form a new government separate from Mexico.

In 1836, Texans began the Texas War for Independence. After about six months of fighting, Antonio López de Santa Ana, the ruler of Mexico, 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 called the Mexican Cession.

Moving West

Many settlers traveled west on the Oregon Trail. Families went to find good, 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. Miners built boomtowns near the mines. People came to sell food and clothing to the miners. The California Gold Rush lasted about five years and brought thousands of people to California. By 1850, California became a state. Now the United States stretched across the continent.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

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 whose population booms, or 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 two sentences that describe the people and what they did.