**Manifest Destiny (1818-1848):**

*The Annexation of Texas and the Mexican-American War*

**Texas Revolution** (1836)

When Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, it was almost twice the size it is now. Mexico included what is now Texas, California, Arizona, New Mexico and parts of several other states. The problem for the Mexican government was convincing its citizens to move into these northern territories. Most people in Mexico did not want to move to a desert landscape populated by aggressive Indian tribes like the Apache and Navaho.

In order to populate the Mexican state of **Coahuila y Texas,** the Mexican government created pro-immigration policies aimed at **Anglo** **Americans** (Anglo comes from the word English, and basically refers to white people). New immigrants could settle on Mexican land and pay no taxes on that land for ten years. This was a great opportunity for Americans who wanted to own property, but would have had to pay taxes on that property in the United States.

While American settlers in Texas were happy to take advantage of the inexpensive, tax-free land offered by the Mexican government, there Mexican laws with which they were unhappy. In the United States, the First Amendment of the Constitution gave people freedom of religion. In Mexico, all immigrants were expected to become Catholic when they came into the country. Most of the Anglo Texans were **Protestant**, and did not want to convert to Catholicism. Additionally, many of the white immigrants wanted to bring in their slaves into Texas to grow cotton, which they could then sell for profit. The Mexican government, however, had outlawed slavery, and only wanted the new immigrants to grow food crops, like corn.

Many of the Anglo immigrants to Texas simply ignored Mexico’s laws. They did not convert to Catholicism, brought slaves and grew cotton. By 1830, there were at least 20,000 Anglo immigrants and 2,000 slaves living in the Mexican state of Texas. These American Texans significantly outnumbered the 10,000 Hispanic residents. This trend worried Mexico’s president, and he outlawed further American immigration to Texas. He also imposed new land taxes on the settlers.

Many Texans continued to ignore the restrictions created by the Mexican government. Finally, in 1835, Mexico’s new president, Antonio López de Santa Anna, decided to assert federal control over the region. A few bloody battles followed between the Mexican army and Texan rebels. The most famous battle was a Mexican victory at the Alamo, where every rebel defending the fort was killed. After that, there was one more Mexican victory at Goliad, and then Santa Anna was defeated and captured by the Texans in April of 1836 at the Battle of San Jacinto. The Texans forced him to sign a treaty that gave Texas its independence, and then sent Santa Anna back to Mexico in disgrace.

**The Annexation of Texas** (1845)

Mexico’s new government did not recognize the independent nation of Texas, claiming it was still Mexican territory. Presidents Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren both turned Texas down when it offered to become a part of the United States because they did not want to go to war with Mexico. John Tyler, however, decided that his last act as president would be to **annex,** or add, Texas to the United States. The United States **annexed** Texas in 1845, making it the 28th state. This move angered the Mexican government, who claimed that Texas was still Mexican territory.

**The Mexican-American War** (1846-1848)

In 1845, James K. Polk took over as President of the United States. Polk wanted the Mexican territory of California, and offered to buy it from Mexico. The Mexican government refused to sell any of its territory, so Polk sent U.S. troops to the Mexican border, hoping to provoke a war.

The Americans claimed that the border between the United States and Mexico was at the Rio Grande River, where it is today. At the time, however, the actual agreed-upon border was the Nueces River about 150 north of the Rio Grande. President Polk sent General Zachary Taylor into the disputed area between the two rivers. One of Taylor’s patrols got into a skirmish with Mexican forces, and 16 American soldiers were killed. As soon as Polk heard about the deaths, he rushed to Congress and insisted on a declaration of war against Mexico. Despite protests from members of the Whig political party, Congress voted to go to war with Mexico.

Although Mexico’s army was larger than the American army, the Americans had better equipment and greater resources to put into a war. When war broke out, some Americans in California led a rebellion known as the **Bear Flag Revolt**, and this made it even harder for Mexico to hang on to its northern territories. Less than two years after declaring war, the United States Army had marched into Mexico City and forced the Mexican government to surrender.

Shortly after Mexico’s surrender, a treaty was signed that ended the war and gave nearly half of Mexico to the United States. The **Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo** gave California, Arizona, New Mexico and parts of several other states to the United States. In return, Mexico received $15 million. Polk had completed what he believed was the United States Manifest Destiny, and taken territory that extended the United States from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.

*For each of the following ideas, circle either* ***like*** *or* ***dislike****. Explain your decision.*

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| American Policy or Decision | Like  👍 | Dislike  👎 | Explain (“I like this because…”, or “I dislike this because…”) |
| **Indian Removal Act** | 👍 | 👎 |  |
| **Worcester v. Georgia** | 👍 | 👎 |  |
| **Second Seminole War** | 👍 | 👎 |  |
| **Texas Revolution** | 👍 | 👎 |  |
| **Annexation of Texas** | 👍 | 👎 |  |
| **Mexican-American War** | 👍 | 👎 |  |