

## CHAPTER 7 MEXICAN WAR 1846-47

### Mexican–American War

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Jump to: [navigation](#), [search](#)






















*"The Mexican War" redirects here. For other uses, see [Mexican War \(disambiguation\)](#).*

#### Mexican–American War



A painting of the [Battle of Veracruz](#) by [Carl Nebel](#)

<b>Date</b>	April 25, 1846 – February 2, 1848 (1 year, 9 months, 1 week and 1 day)
<b>Location</b>	Texas, New Mexico, California; Northern, Central, and Eastern Mexico; Mexico City
<b>Result</b>	United States Victory; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo</a></li><li>• Mexican recognition of <a href="#">Texas</a> (among other territories) as independent; End of conflict between Mexico and Texas.</li></ul>

<b>Territorial changes</b>	
<a href="#">Mexican Cession</a>	
<b>Belligerents</b>	
 <a href="#">United States</a>  <a href="#">California Republic</a> <sup>[1]</sup>	 <a href="#">Mexico</a>
<b>Commanders and leaders</b>	
 <a href="#">James K. Polk</a>  <a href="#">Winfield Scott</a>  <a href="#">Zachary Taylor</a>  <a href="#">Stephen Watts Kearny</a>  <a href="#">John D. Sloat</a>  <a href="#">William J. Worth</a>  <a href="#">Robert F. Stockton</a>  <a href="#">Joseph Lane</a>  <a href="#">Franklin Pierce</a>  <a href="#">David Conner</a>  <a href="#">Matthew C. Perry</a>  <a href="#">Thomas Childs</a>  <a href="#">Kit Carson</a>  <a href="#">William B. Ide</a>	 <a href="#">Antonio López de Santa Anna</a>  <a href="#">Mariano Arista</a>  <a href="#">Pedro de Ampudia</a>  <a href="#">José María Flores</a>  <a href="#">Mariano G. Vallejo</a>  <a href="#">Nicolás Bravo</a>  <a href="#">José Joaquín de Herrera</a>  <a href="#">Andrés Pico</a>  <a href="#">Manuel Armijo</a>  <a href="#">Martin Perfecto de Cos</a>  <a href="#">Pedro Maria de Anaya</a>  <a href="#">Agustin Jeronimo de Iturbide y Huarte</a>  <a href="#">Joaquín Rea</a>
<b>Strength</b>	
<b>1846:</b> 8,613 <sup>[2]</sup> <b>1848:</b> 32,000 soldiers 59,000 militia <sup>[3]</sup>	c. 34,000–60,000 soldiers <sup>[4]</sup>

### Casualties and losses

c. 13,283 soldiers

c. 16,000 soldiers

[[show](#)]

- [v](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

[Mexican–American War](#)

•

[[show](#)]

- [v](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

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- [Prehistory](#)
- [Pre-Colonial](#)
- [Colonial period](#)
  - [1776–1789](#)
  - [1789–1849](#)
  - [1849–1865](#)
  - [1865–1918](#)
  - [1918–1945](#)
  - [1945–1964](#)
  - [1964–1980](#)
  - [1980–1991](#)
  - [1991–present](#)

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- 

By topic[\[show\]](#)

- 



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- [v](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

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•
<a href="#">First Republic</a> <a href="#">[hide]</a>
• <a href="#">Centralist Republic</a>
• <a href="#">Texas Revolution</a>
• <a href="#">Pastry War</a>
• <b>Mexican–American War</b>
<a href="#">Second Federal Republic</a> <a href="#">[show]</a>
•
1864 – 1928 <a href="#">[show]</a>
•
Modern <a href="#">[show]</a>
•
<a href="#">Timeline</a>
• <a href="#">v</a>
• <a href="#">t</a>
• <a href="#">e</a>

The **Mexican–American War**, also known as the **Mexican War**, the **U.S.–Mexican War**, the **Invasion of Mexico**, the **U.S. Intervention**, "The War of Irrelevants", or **the United States War Against Mexico**, was an armed conflict between the [United States](#) and [Mexico](#) from 1846 to 1848 in the wake of the 1845 U.S. [annexation of Texas](#), which Mexico considered part of its territory despite the 1836 [Texas Revolution](#).

Combat operations lasted a year and a half, from spring 1846 to fall 1847. American forces quickly occupied [New Mexico](#) and [California](#), then invaded parts of [Northeastern Mexico](#) and [Northwest Mexico](#); meanwhile, the [Pacific Squadron](#) conducted a blockade, and took control of several garrisons on the Pacific coast further south in [Baja California](#). Another American army captured [Mexico City](#), and the war ended in victory for the U.S.

The [Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo](#) specified the major consequence of the war: the forced [Mexican Cession](#) of the territories of [Alta California](#) and [New Mexico](#) to the U.S. in exchange for \$15 million. In addition, the United States assumed \$3.25 million of debt owed by the

Mexican government to U.S. citizens. Mexico accepted the loss of Texas and thereafter cited the [Rio Grande](#) as its national border.

[American territorial expansion](#) to the [Pacific coast](#) had been the goal of President [James K. Polk](#), the leader of the [Democratic Party](#).<sup>[5]</sup> However, the war was highly controversial in the U.S., with the [Whig Party](#), anti-imperialists and anti-slavery elements strongly opposed. Heavy American casualties and high monetary cost were also criticized. The political aftermath of the war raised the slavery issue in the U.S., leading to intense debates that pointed to [civil war](#); the [Compromise of 1850](#) provided a brief respite.

In Mexico, terminology for the war includes *primera intervención estadounidense en México* (United States' First Intervention in Mexico), *invasión estadounidense a México* (United States' Invasion of Mexico), and *guerra del 47* (The War of 1847).

## Contents

[\[hide\]](#)

- [1 Background](#)
- [2 Designs on California](#)
- [3 Republic of Texas](#)
- [4 Origins of the war](#)
  - [4.1 Conflict over the Nueces Strip](#)
  - [4.2 Declaration of war](#)
  - [4.3 Antonio López de Santa Anna](#)
  - [4.4 Opposition to the war](#)
  - [4.5 Defense of the war](#)
  - [4.6 Opening hostilities](#)
- [5 Conduct of the war](#)
  - [5.1 California Campaign](#)
  - [5.2 Pacific Coast campaign](#)
  - [5.3 Northeastern Mexico](#)
  - [5.4 Northwestern Mexico](#)
  - [5.5 Tabasco](#)
    - [5.5.1 First Battle of Tabasco](#)
    - [5.5.2 Second Battle of Tabasco](#)
  - [5.6 U.S. press and popular war enthusiasm](#)
  - [5.7 Desertion](#)
  - [5.8 Scott's Mexico City campaign](#)
    - [5.8.1 Landings and Siege of Veracruz](#)
    - [5.8.2 Advance on Puebla](#)
    - [5.8.3 Pause at Puebla](#)
    - [5.8.4 Advance on Mexico City and its capture](#)
    - [5.8.5 Santa Anna's last campaign](#)
    - [5.8.6 Anti guerrilla campaign](#)
- [6 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo](#)
- [7 Results](#)
  - [7.1 Altered territories](#)
  - [7.2 The home front](#)
  - [7.3 Political repercussions](#)

- [7.4 Effect on the U.S. Civil War](#)
- [8 Combatants](#)
  - [8.1 United States](#)
  - [8.2 Mexico](#)
- [9 Impact of the war in the U.S.](#)
- [10 See also](#)
- [11 Notes](#)
- [12 Bibliography](#)
  - [12.1 Reference works](#)
  - [12.2 Surveys](#)
  - [12.3 Military](#)
  - [12.4 Political and diplomatic](#)
  - [12.5 Memory and historiography](#)
  - [12.6 Primary sources](#)
- [13 External links](#)
  - [13.1 Guides, bibliographies and collections](#)
  - [13.2 Media and primary sources](#)
  - [13.3 Other](#)

## Background[[edit](#)]

Having recently attained [Independence](#) from Spain in 1821, Mexico was fraught with internal struggles that verged on civil war, however it was relatively united in refusing to recognize the [independence of Texas](#). Mexico threatened war with the U.S. if it annexed Texas.<sup>[6]</sup> Meanwhile, President Polk's spirit of [Manifest Destiny](#) was focusing U.S. interest on westward expansion. The military and diplomatic capabilities of Mexico declined after it attained independence and left the northern one-half of the country vulnerable to the [Comanche](#), [Apache](#), and [Navajo](#) Indians. The Indians, especially the Comanche, took advantage of Mexico's weakness to undertake large-scale raids hundreds of miles deep into the country to steal livestock for their own use and to supply an expanding market in Texas and the United States.<sup>[7]</sup>

The Indian raids left thousands of people dead and devastated northern Mexico. When American troops entered northern Mexico in 1846 they found a demoralized people. There was little resistance to the Americans from the civilian population.<sup>[8]</sup> (See: [Comanche–Mexico Wars](#) and [Apache–Mexico Wars](#))

## Designs on California[[edit](#)]

In 1842 the American minister in Mexico, [Waddy Thompson, Jr.](#), suggested Mexico might be willing to cede California to settle debts, saying: “As to Texas, I regard it as of very little value compared with California, the richest, the most beautiful, and the healthiest country in the world ... with the acquisition of Upper California we should have the same ascendancy on the Pacific ... France and England both have had their eyes upon it.”

President [John Tyler](#)'s administration suggested a tripartite pact that would settle the [Oregon boundary dispute](#) and provide for the cession of the port of San Francisco; [Lord Aberdeen](#) declined to participate but said Britain had no objection to U.S. territorial acquisition there.<sup>[9]</sup>

The British minister in Mexico, [Richard Pakenham](#), wrote in 1841 to [Lord Palmerston](#) urging “to establish an English population in the magnificent Territory of Upper California,” saying that “no part of the World offering greater natural advantages for the establishment of an English colony ... by all means desirable ... that California, once ceasing to belong to Mexico, should not

fall into the hands of any power but England ... daring and adventurous speculators in the United States have already turned their thoughts in this direction.” But by the time the letter reached London, Sir [Robert Peel](#)’s Tory government with a [Little England](#) policy had come to power and rejected the proposal as expensive and a potential source of conflict.<sup>[10][11]</sup>

## Republic of Texas<sup>[edit]</sup>

Main articles: [Republic of Texas](#), [Texas Annexation](#), and [Texas Revolution](#)



The [Republic of Texas](#). The present-day outlines of the U.S. states are superimposed on the boundaries of 1836–1845.

In 1820, [Moses Austin](#), a banker from Missouri, was granted a large tract of land in Texas, but died before he could bring his plan of recruiting American settlers for the land to fruition. His son, [Stephen F. Austin](#), succeeded and brought over 300 families into Texas, which started the steady trend of migration from the United States into the Texas frontier. Austin's colony was the most successful of several colonies authorized by the Mexican government. The Mexican government intended the anglophone settlers to act as a buffer between the Tejano residents and the marauding [Comanches](#), but the Anglo colonists tended to settle where there was decent [farmland](#) and trade connections with American Louisiana, rather than westward where they would have been an effective buffer.

In 1829, as a result of the large influx of U.S. immigrants, the Anglos outnumbered native Spanish speakers in the Texas territory. The Mexican government decided to reinstate the property tax, increase tariffs on U.S. shipped goods, and prohibit slavery. The settlers and many Mexican businessmen in the region rejected the demands, which led to Mexico closing Texas to additional immigration. However, immigration into the Texas territory continued illegally from the United States.

In 1834, General [Antonio López de Santa Anna](#) became the centralist dictator of Mexico, abandoning the federal system. He decided to quash the semi-independence of Texas, having succeeded in doing so in Coahuila (in 1824, Mexico had merged Texas and Coahuila into the



massive state of [Coahuila y Tejas](#)). Finally, [Stephen F. Austin](#) called Texans to arms; they declared independence from Mexico in 1836, and after Santa Anna defeated the Texans at the [Alamo](#), he was defeated by the [Texan Army](#) commanded by General [Sam Houston](#) and captured at the [Battle of San Jacinto](#) and signed a treaty recognizing Texas' independence.<sup>[12]</sup>

Texas consolidated its status as an independent republic and received official recognition from Britain, France, and the U.S., which all advised Mexico not to try to reconquer the new nation. Most Texans wanted to join the U.S. but annexation of Texas was contentious in the [U.S. Congress](#), where Whigs were largely opposed. In 1845 Texas agreed to the offer of annexation by the U.S. Congress. Texas became the 28th state on December 29, 1845.<sup>[12]</sup>

### **Origins of the war[[edit](#)]**

The border of Texas as an independent state had never been settled. The Republic of Texas claimed land up to the [Rio Grande](#) based on the [Treaties of Velasco](#), but Mexico refused to accept these as valid, claiming the border as the [Nueces River](#). Reference to the Rio Grande boundary of Texas was omitted from the U.S. Congress' annexation resolution to help secure passage after the annexation treaty failed in the Senate. President Polk claimed the Rio Grande boundary, and this provoked a dispute with Mexico.<sup>[13]</sup>

In July 1845, Polk sent General [Zachary Taylor](#) to Texas, and by October 3,500 Americans were on the [Nueces River](#), ready to take over by force the disputed land. Polk wanted to protect the border and also coveted the continent clear to the Pacific Ocean. At the same time Polk wrote to [Thomas Larkin](#), the American consul in Alta California, disclaiming American ambitions in California but offering to support independence from Mexico or voluntary accession to the U.S., and warning that a British or French takeover would be opposed.<sup>[13]</sup>

To end another [war scare with Great Britain](#) over [Oregon Country](#), Polk signed the [Oregon Treaty](#) dividing the territory, angering northern Democrats who felt he was prioritizing Southern expansion over Northern expansion.

In the winter of 1845–46, the federally commissioned explorer [John C. Frémont](#) and a group of armed men appeared in California. After telling the Mexican governor and Larkin he was merely buying supplies on the way to Oregon, he instead entered the populated area of California and visited [Santa Cruz](#) and the [Salinas Valley](#), explaining he had been looking for a seaside home for his mother.<sup>[14]</sup> The Mexican authorities became alarmed and ordered him to leave. Fremont responded by building a fort on [Gavilan Peak](#) and raising the American flag. Larkin sent word that his actions were counterproductive. Fremont left California in March but returned to California and assisted the [Bear Flag Revolt](#) in Sonoma, where many American immigrants stated that they were playing “the Texas game” and declared California’s independence from Mexico.

On November 10, 1845,<sup>[15]</sup> Polk sent [John Slidell](#), a secret representative, to Mexico City with an offer of \$25 million (\$674,519,231 today) for the Rio Grande border in Texas and Mexico’s provinces of [Alta California](#) and [Santa Fe de Nuevo México](#). U.S. expansionists wanted California to thwart British ambitions in the area and to gain a port on the [Pacific Ocean](#). Polk authorized Slidell to forgive the \$3 million (\$81 million today) owed to U.S. citizens for damages caused by the [Mexican War of Independence](#)<sup>[16]</sup> and pay another \$25 to \$30 million (\$675 million to \$809 million today) in exchange for the two territories.<sup>[17]</sup>

Mexico was not inclined nor able to negotiate. In 1846 alone, the presidency changed hands four times, the war ministry six times, and the finance ministry sixteen times.<sup>[18]</sup> However, Mexican public opinion and all political factions agreed that selling the territories to the United States





Overview map of the war.

Polk received word of the Thornton Affair, which, added to the Mexican government's rejection of Slidell, Polk believed, constituted a *casus belli* (cause for war).<sup>[25]</sup> His message to [Congress](#) on May 11, 1846, stated that "Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon American soil."<sup>[26][27]</sup> Congress approved the declaration of war on May 13, with southern Democrats in strong support. Sixty-seven Whigs voted against the war on a key slavery amendment,<sup>[28]</sup> but on the final passage only 14 [Whigs](#) voted no,<sup>[28]</sup> including Rep. [John Quincy Adams](#). Congress declared war on Mexico on May 13, 1846, after only having a few hours to debate. Although [President Paredes](#)'s issuance of a manifesto on May 23 is sometimes considered the declaration of war, Mexico officially declared war by [Congress](#) on July 7.

### Antonio López de Santa Anna<sup>[edit]</sup>

Once the U.S. declared war on Mexico, [Antonio López de Santa Anna](#) wrote to Mexico City saying he no longer had aspirations to the presidency, but would eagerly use his military experience to fight off the foreign invasion of Mexico as he had before. President Valentín Gómez Farías was desperate enough to accept the offer and allowed Santa Anna to return. Meanwhile, Santa Anna had secretly been dealing with representatives of the U.S., pledging that if he were allowed back in Mexico through the U.S. naval blockades, he would work to sell all contested territory to the United States at a reasonable price.<sup>[29]</sup> Once back in Mexico at the head

of an army, Santa Anna reneged on both agreements. Santa Anna declared himself president again and unsuccessfully tried to fight off the U.S. invasion.

## Opposition to the war[\[edit\]](#)

### Events leading to the U.S. Civil War

- [Northwest Ordinance](#)
- [Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions](#)
  - [Missouri Compromise](#)
    - [Tariff of 1828](#)
- [Nat Turner's slave rebellion](#)
  - [Nullification Crisis](#)
    - [The Amistad](#)
  - [Prigg v. Pennsylvania](#)
  - [Texas Annexation](#)
- **Mexican–American War**
  - [Wilmot Proviso](#)
  - [Ostend Manifesto](#)
  - [Manifest destiny](#)
- [Underground Railroad](#)
- [Fugitive Slave Act of 1850](#)
  - [Compromise of 1850](#)
  - [Uncle Tom's Cabin](#)
  - [Kansas–Nebraska Act](#)
    - [Bleeding Kansas](#)
  - [Sumner–Brooks affair](#)
  - [Dred Scott v. Sandford](#)
- [The Impending Crisis of the South](#)
- [Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry](#)
  - [1860 presidential election](#)
- [Secession of Southern States](#)
  - [Star of the West](#)
  - [Corwin Amendment](#)
  - [Battle of Fort Sumter](#)

- [v](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

In the U.S., increasingly divided by [sectional](#) rivalry, the war was a partisan issue and an essential element in the [origins of the American Civil War](#). Most [Whigs](#) in the North and South opposed it;<sup>[30]</sup> most Democrats supported it.<sup>[31]</sup> Southern [Democrats](#), animated by a popular belief in [Manifest Destiny](#), supported it in hope of adding slave-owning territory to the South and avoiding being outnumbered by the faster-growing North. [John L. O’Sullivan](#), editor of the *Democratic Review*, coined this phrase in its context, stating that it must be “our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.”<sup>[32]</sup>

Northern antislavery elements feared the rise of a [Slave Power](#); Whigs generally wanted to strengthen the economy with industrialization, not expand it with more land. Among the most vocal opposing the war in the House of Representatives was John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts. Adams had first voiced concerns about expanding into Mexican territory in 1836 when he opposed Texas annexation. He continued this argument in 1846 for the same reason. War with Mexico would add new slavery territory to the nation. When the vote to go to war with Mexico came to a vote on May 13, Adams spoke a resounding "NO" in the chamber. Only 13 others followed his lead.

Democrats wanted more land; northern Democrats were attracted by the possibilities in the far northwest. [Joshua Giddings](#) led a group of dissenters in Washington D.C. He called the war with Mexico “an aggressive, unholy, and unjust war,” and voted against supplying soldiers and weapons. He said:

In the murder of Mexicans upon their own soil, or in robbing them of their country, I can take no part either now or hereafter. The guilt of these crimes must rest on others. I will not participate in them.<sup>[33]</sup>

Fellow Whig [Abraham Lincoln](#) contested the causes for the war and demanded to know exactly where Thornton had been attacked and American blood shed. “Show me the spot,” he demanded. Whig leader [Robert Toombs](#) of Georgia declared:

This war is nondescript.... We charge the President with usurping the war-making power ... with seizing a country ... which had been for centuries, and was then in the possession of the Mexicans.... Let us put a check upon this lust of dominion. We had territory enough, Heaven knew.<sup>[34]</sup>

Northern [abolitionists](#) attacked the war as an attempt by slave-owners to strengthen the grip of slavery and thus ensure their continued influence in the federal government. Acting on his convictions, [Henry David Thoreau](#) was jailed for his refusal to pay taxes to support the war, and penned his famous essay [Civil Disobedience](#).

Democratic Congressman [David Wilmot](#) introduced the [Wilmot Proviso](#), which aimed to prohibit slavery in new territory acquired from Mexico. Wilmot’s proposal did not pass Congress, but it spurred further hostility between the factions.

## Defense of the war[\[edit\]](#)

Besides alleging that the actions of Mexican military forces within the disputed boundary lands north of the Rio Grande constituted an attack on American soil, the war's advocates viewed the territories of New Mexico and California as only nominally Mexican possessions with very tenuous ties to Mexico. They saw the territories as actually unsettled, ungoverned, and unprotected frontier lands, whose non-aboriginal population, where there was any at all, represented a substantial—in places even a majority—American component. Moreover, the territories were feared to be under imminent threat of acquisition by America's rival on the continent, the British.

President Polk reprised these arguments in his Third Annual Message to Congress on December 7, 1847.<sup>[35]</sup> In it he scrupulously detailed his administration's position on the origins of the conflict, the measures the U.S. had taken to avoid hostilities, and the justification for declaring war. He also elaborated upon the many outstanding financial claims by American citizens against Mexico and argued that, in view of the country's insolvency, the cession of some large portion of its northern territories was the only indemnity realistically available as compensation. This helped to rally congressional Democrats to his side, ensuring passage of his war measures and bolstering support for the war in the U.S.

### Opening hostilities<sup>[edit]</sup>

The [Siege of Fort Texas](#) began on May 3. Mexican artillery at Matamoros opened fire on Fort Texas, which replied with its own guns. The bombardment continued for 160 hours<sup>[36]</sup> and expanded as Mexican forces gradually surrounded the fort. Thirteen U.S. soldiers were injured during the bombardment, and two were killed.<sup>[36]</sup> Among the dead was Jacob Brown, after whom the fort was later named.<sup>[37]</sup>

On May 8, Zachary Taylor and 2,400 troops arrived to relieve the fort.<sup>[38]</sup> However, Arista rushed north and intercepted him with a force of 3,400 at [Palo Alto](#). The Americans employed "flying artillery", the American term for [horse artillery](#), a type of mobile light artillery that was mounted on horse carriages with the entire crew riding horses into battle. It had a devastating effect on the Mexican army. The Mexicans replied with cavalry skirmishes and their own artillery. The U.S. flying artillery somewhat demoralized the Mexican side, and seeking terrain more to their advantage, the Mexicans retreated to the far side of a dry riverbed (*resaca*) during the night. It provided a natural fortification, but during the retreat, Mexican troops were scattered, making communication difficult.<sup>[36]</sup>

During the [Battle of Resaca de la Palma](#) the next day, the two sides engaged in fierce [hand to hand combat](#). The U.S. cavalry managed to capture the Mexican artillery, causing the Mexican side to retreat—a retreat that turned into a rout.<sup>[36]</sup> Fighting on unfamiliar terrain, his troops fleeing in retreat, Arista found it impossible to rally his forces. Mexican casualties were heavy, and the Mexicans were forced to abandon their artillery and baggage. Fort Brown inflicted additional casualties as the withdrawing troops passed by the fort. Many Mexican soldiers drowned trying to swim across the Rio Grande.

### Conduct of the war<sup>[edit]</sup>

See also: [Mexican–American War campaigns](#)

After the declaration of war on May 13, 1846, U.S. forces invaded Mexican territory on two main fronts. The [U.S. War Department](#) sent a [U.S.](#) cavalry force under [Stephen W. Kearny](#) to



invade western Mexico from [Jefferson Barracks](#) and [Fort Leavenworth](#), reinforced by a Pacific fleet under [John D. Sloat](#). This was done primarily because of concerns that Britain might also try to seize the area. Two more forces, one under [John E. Wool](#) and the other under Taylor, were ordered to occupy Mexico as far south as the city of [Monterrey](#).

## California Campaign[\[edit\]](#)

Main article: [Conquest of California](#)

[\[show\]](#)

- [v](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

[California Campaign](#)

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[\[show\]](#)

- [v](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

[Pacific Coast Campaign](#)



A replica of the first "Bear Flag" now at [El Presidio de Sonoma](#), or *Sonoma Barracks*

Although the U.S. declared war against Mexico on May 13, 1846, it took over a month (until the middle of June 1846) for definite word of war to get to California. American consul [Thomas O. Larkin](#), stationed in Monterey, heard rumors of war and tried to maintain the peace between the States and the small Mexican military garrison commanded by [José Castro](#). U.S. Army captain [John C. Frémont](#), with about 60 well-armed men, had entered California in December 1845, and was slowly marching to Oregon when he received word that war between Mexico and the U.S. was imminent. On June 15, 1846, some thirty settlers, mostly American citizens, staged a revolt and seized the small Mexican garrison in [Sonoma](#). The U.S. Army, led by Frémont, took over on June 23. Commodore [John Drake Sloat](#), upon hearing of imminent war and the revolt in Sonoma, ordered his forces to occupy Monterey, the capital, on July 7 and raise the flag of the U.S.; San Francisco, then called Yerba Buena, was occupied on July 9. On July 15, Sloat transferred his command to Commodore [Robert F. Stockton](#), a much more aggressive leader, who put Frémont's forces under his orders. On July 19, Frémont's "California Battalion" swelled to about 160 additional men from newly arrived settlers near Sacramento, and he entered [Monterey](#) in a joint operation with some of Stockton's sailors and marines. The U.S. forces easily took over northern California; within days they controlled San Francisco, Sonoma, and Sacramento. Mexican General [José Castro](#) and Governor [Pío Pico](#) fled southward from *Alta California* (the present-day American state of California). When Stockton's forces, sailing southward to [San Diego](#), stopped in [San Pedro](#), he sent 50 [U.S. Marines](#) ashore; this force entered [Los Angeles](#) unresisted on August 13, 1846. With the success of this so-called "[Siege of Los Angeles](#)", the nearly bloodless conquest of California seemed complete. Stockton, however, left too small a force in Los Angeles; the *Californios* under the leadership of [José María Flores](#), acting on their own and without help from Mexico, forced the American garrison to retreat, late in September. The *rancho vaqueros* who had banded together to defend their land fought as *Californio lancers*; they were a force the [Americans](#) had not anticipated. More than 300 American reinforcements, sent by Stockton and led by Captain [William Mervine](#), U.S.N., were repulsed in the [Battle of Dominguez Rancho](#), fought from October 7 through 9, 1846, near San Pedro. Fourteen [American Marines](#) were killed. Meanwhile, General [Stephen W. Kearny](#), with a squadron of 139 [dragoons](#) that he had led on a grueling march across [New Mexico](#), [Arizona](#), and the [Sonoran Desert](#), finally reached California on December 6, 1846, and fought in a small battle with *Californio* lancers at the [Battle of San Pasqual](#) near San Diego, California, where 22 of Kearny's troops were killed. Kearny's command was bloodied and in poor condition but pushed on until they had to establish a defensive position on "Mule" Hill near present-day Escondido. The *Californios* besieged the dragoons for four days until Commodore Stockton's relief force arrived. The resupplied, combined American force marched north from San Diego on December 29 and entered the Los Angeles area on January 8, 1847,<sup>[39]</sup> linking up with Frémont's men there. American forces totaling 607 soldiers and Marines fought and defeated a *Californio* force of about 300 men under the command of Captain-general Flores in the decisive [Battle of Rio San Gabriel](#).<sup>[40]</sup> The next day, January 9, 1847, the Americans fought and won the [Battle of La Mesa](#). On January 12, the last significant body of *Californios* surrendered to U.S. forces. That marked the end of armed resistance in California, and the [Treaty of Cahuenga](#) was signed the next day, on January 13, 1847.

## **Pacific Coast campaign[[edit](#)]**



Main article: [Pacific Coast Campaign](#)



US (left) and Mexican (right) uniforms of the period.

[USS Independence](#) assisted in the blockade of the Mexican Pacific coast, capturing the Mexican ship *Correo* and a [launch](#) on May 16, 1847. She supported the capture of [Guaymas](#), Sonora, on October 19, 1847, and landed bluejackets and Marines to occupy [Mazatlán](#), Sinaloa, on November 11, 1847. After upper California was secure, most of the Pacific Squadron proceeded down the California coast, capturing all major [Baja California](#) cities and capturing or destroying nearly all Mexican vessels in the [Gulf of California](#). Other ports, not on the peninsula, were taken as well. The objective of the Pacific Coast Campaign was to capture [Mazatlán](#), a major supply base for Mexican forces. Numerous Mexican ships were also captured by this squadron, with the USS *Cyane* given credit for 18 ships captured and numerous destroyed.<sup>[41]</sup>

Entering the Gulf of California, *Independence*, *Congress*, and *Cyane* seized [La Paz](#), then captured and burned the small Mexican fleet at [Guaymas](#). Within a month, they cleared the Gulf of hostile ships, destroying or capturing 30 vessels. Later, their sailors and marines captured the port of Mazatlán on November 11, 1847. A Mexican campaign under [Manuel Pineda](#) to retake the various captured ports resulted in several small clashes ([Battle of Mulege](#), [Battle of La Paz](#), [Battle of San José del Cabo](#)) and two sieges ([Siege of La Paz](#), [Siege of San José del Cabo](#)) in which the Pacific Squadron ships provided artillery support. U.S. garrisons remained in control of the ports.

Following reinforcement, Lt. Col. [Henry S. Burton](#) marched out. His forces rescued captured Americans, captured Pineda, and, on March 31, defeated and dispersed remaining Mexican forces at the [Skirmish of Todos Santos](#), unaware that the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had been signed in February 1848 and a truce agreed to on March 6. When the American garrisons were evacuated to Monterey following the treaty ratification, many Mexicans went with them: those

who had supported the American cause and had thought Lower California would also be annexed like Upper California.

## Northeastern Mexico<sup>[edit]</sup>

The defeats at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma caused political turmoil in Mexico, turmoil which [Antonio López de Santa Anna](#) used to revive his political career and return from self-imposed exile in Cuba in mid-August 1846.<sup>[42]</sup> He promised the U.S. that if allowed to pass through the blockade, he would negotiate a peaceful conclusion to the war and sell the New Mexico and Alta California territories to the U.S.<sup>[43]</sup> Once Santa Anna arrived in Mexico City, however, he reneged and offered his services to the Mexican government. Then, after being appointed commanding general, he reneged again and seized the presidency.

Led by Taylor, 2,300 U.S. troops crossed the Rio Grande after some initial difficulties in obtaining river transport. His soldiers occupied the city of [Matamoros](#), then [Camargo](#) (where the soldiery suffered the first of many problems with disease) and then proceeded south and besieged the city of [Monterrey](#). The hard-fought [Battle of Monterrey](#) resulted in serious losses on both sides. The American light artillery was ineffective against the stone fortifications of the city. The Mexican forces were under General [Pedro de Ampudia](#) and repulsed Taylor's best infantry division at Fort Teneria.<sup>[44]</sup>



The [Battle of Monterrey](#).

American soldiers, including many West Pointers, had never engaged in urban warfare before and they marched straight down the open streets, where they were annihilated by Mexican defenders well-hidden in Monterrey's thick adobe homes.<sup>[44]</sup> Two days later, they changed their urban warfare tactics. Texan soldiers had fought in a Mexican city before (the Siege of Bexar in December 1835) and advised Taylor's generals that the Americans needed to "[mouse hole](#)" through the city's homes. In other words, they needed to punch holes in the side or roofs of the homes and fight hand to hand inside the structures. Mexican natives called the Texas soldiers the Diablo Tejanos - the Devil Texans).<sup>[45]</sup> This method proved successful.<sup>[46]</sup> Eventually, these actions drove and trapped Ampudia's men into the city's central plaza, where howitzer shelling forced Ampudia to negotiate. Taylor agreed to allow the Mexican Army to evacuate and to an eight-week armistice in return for the surrender of the city. Under pressure from Washington, Taylor broke the armistice and occupied the city of Saltillo, southwest of Monterrey. Santa Anna blamed the loss of Monterrey and Saltillo on Ampudia and demoted him to command a small artillery battalion.

On February 22, 1847, Santa Anna personally marched north to fight Taylor with 20,000 men. Taylor, with 4,600 men, had entrenched at a mountain pass called [Buena Vista](#). Santa Anna suffered desertions on the way north and arrived with 15,000 men in a tired state. He demanded and was refused surrender of the U.S. Army; he attacked the next morning. Santa Anna flanked the U.S. positions by sending his cavalry and some of his infantry up the steep terrain that made up one side of the pass, while a division of infantry attacked frontally along the road leading to Buena Vista. Furious fighting ensued, during which the U.S troops were nearly routed, but managed to cling to their entrenched position. The Mexicans had inflicted considerable losses but Santa Anna had gotten word of upheaval in Mexico City, so he withdrew that night, leaving Taylor in control of part of Northern Mexico.

Polk mistrusted Taylor, whom he felt had shown incompetence in the Battle of Monterrey by agreeing to the armistice, and may have considered him a political rival for the White House. Taylor later used the [Battle of Buena Vista](#) as the centerpiece of his successful 1848 presidential campaign.

## Northwestern Mexico[\[edit\]](#)

On March 1, 1847, [Alexander W. Doniphan](#) occupied [Chihuahua City](#). He found the inhabitants much less willing to accept the American conquest than the New Mexicans. British consul John Potts did not want to let Doniphan search Governor Trias's mansion, and unsuccessfully asserted it was under British protection. American merchants in Chihuahua wanted the American force to stay in order to protect their business. [Major William Gilpin](#) advocated a march on Mexico City and convinced a majority of officers, but Doniphan subverted this plan. Then in late April, Taylor ordered the First Missouri Mounted Volunteers to leave Chihuahua and join him at Saltillo. The American merchants either followed or returned to Santa Fe. Along the way, the townspeople of [Parras](#) enlisted Doniphan's aid against an Indian raiding party that had taken children, horses, mules, and money.<sup>[47]</sup>

The civilian population of northern Mexico offered little resistance to the American invasion, possibly because the country had already been devastated by [Comanche](#) and [Apache](#) Indian raids. [Josiah Gregg](#), who was with the American army in northern Mexico, said that “the whole country from New Mexico to the borders of Durango is almost entirely depopulated. The haciendas and ranchos have been mostly abandoned, and the people chiefly confined to the towns and cities.”<sup>[48]</sup>

## Tabasco[\[edit\]](#)

### First Battle of Tabasco[\[edit\]](#)

See also: [First Battle of Tabasco](#)

Commodore [Matthew C. Perry](#) led a detachment of seven vessels along the southern coast of [Tabasco](#) state. Perry arrived at the Tabasco River (now known as the [Grijalva River](#)) on October 22, 1846, and seized the town Port of [Frontera](#) along with two of their ships. Leaving a small garrison, he advanced with his troops towards the town of San Juan Bautista ([Villahermosa](#) today). Perry arrived in the city of San Juan Bautista on October 25, seizing five Mexican vessels. Colonel Juan Bautista Traconis, [Tabasco](#) Departmental commander at that time, set up

barricades inside the buildings. Perry realized that the bombing of the city would be the only option to drive out the Mexican Army, and avoiding damage to the merchants of the city, withdrew its forces preparing them for the next day.



#### [Second Battle of Tabasco.](#)

On the morning of October 26, as Perry's fleet prepared to start the attack on the city, the Mexican forces began firing at the American fleet. The U.S. bombing began to yield the square, so that the fire continued until evening. Before taking the square, Perry decided to leave and return to the port of [Frontera](#), where he established a naval blockade to prevent supplies of food and military supplies from reaching the state capital.

#### **Second Battle of Tabasco**[\[edit\]](#)

See also: [Second Battle of Tabasco](#)

On June 13, 1847, Commodore Perry assembled the [Mosquito Fleet](#) and began moving towards the [Grijalva River](#), towing 47 boats that carried a [landing force](#) of 1,173. On June 15, 12 miles (19 km) below San Juan Bautista, the fleet ran through an ambush with little difficulty. Again at an "S" curve in the river known as the "Devil's Bend", Perry encountered Mexican fire from a river fortification known as the Colmena redoubt, but the fleet's heavy naval guns quickly dispersed the Mexican force.

On June 16, Perry arrived to [San Juan Bautista](#) and commenced bombing the city. The attack included two ships that sailed past the fort and began shelling it from the rear. [David D. Porter](#) led 60 sailors ashore and seized the fort, raising the U.S. flag over the works. Perry and the landing force arrived and took control of the city around 14:00.

#### **U.S. press and popular war enthusiasm**[\[edit\]](#)

During the war, inventions such as the telegraph created new means of communication that updated people with the latest news from the reporters, who were usually on the scene. With more than a decade's experience reporting urban crime, the "penny press" realized the public's voracious need for astounding war news. This was the first time in American history that accounts by journalists, instead of opinions of politicians, caused great influence in shaping people's minds and attitudes toward a war.

By getting constant reports from the battlefield, Americans became emotionally united as a community. News about the war always caused extraordinary popular excitement. In the spring of 1846, news about [Zachary Taylor](#)'s victory at Palo Alto brought up a large crowd that met in a cotton textile town of Lowell, Massachusetts. New York celebrated the twin victories at Veracruz and Buena Vista in May 1847. Among fireworks and illuminations, they had a “grand procession” of about 400,000 people. Generals Taylor and Scott became heroes for their people and later became presidential candidates.

## Desertion[\[edit\]](#)



[Battle of Churubusco](#) by J. Cameron, published by [Nathaniel Currier](#). Hand tinted lithograph, 1847. Digitally restored.

Desertion was a major problem for the Mexican army, depleting forces on the eve of battle. Most soldiers were peasants who had a loyalty to their village and family, but not to the generals who had conscripted them. Often hungry and ill, under-equipped, only partially trained, and never well paid, the soldiers were held in contempt by their officers and had little reason to fight the Americans. Looking for their opportunity, many slipped away from camp to find their way back to their home village.<sup>[49]</sup>

The desertion rate in the U.S. army was 8.3% (9,200 out of 111,000), compared to 12.7% during the War of 1812 and usual peacetime rates of about 14.8% per year.<sup>[50]</sup> Many men deserted to join another U.S. unit and get a second enlistment bonus. Some deserted because of the miserable conditions in camp. It has been suggested that others used the army to get free transportation to California, where they deserted to join the gold rush;<sup>[51]</sup> this, however, is unlikely as gold was only discovered in California on [January 24, 1848](#), less than two weeks before the war concluded. By the time word reached the eastern U.S. that gold had been discovered, word also reached it that the war was over.

Several hundred U.S. deserters went over to the Mexican side. Nearly all were recent immigrants from Europe with weak ties to the U.S.; the most famous group was the [Saint Patrick's Battalion](#), about half of whom were Catholics from Ireland. The Mexicans issued broadsides and leaflets enticing U.S. soldiers with promises of money, land bounties, and officers' commissions. Mexican guerrillas shadowed the U.S. Army and captured men who took unauthorized leave or fell out of the ranks. The guerrillas coerced these men to join the Mexican ranks. The generous promises proved illusory for most deserters, who risked being executed if captured by U.S.



forces. About 50 of the *San Patricios* were tried and hanged following their capture at Churubusco in August 1847. <sup>[51]</sup>

## Scott's Mexico City campaign<sup>[edit]</sup>

[\[show\]](#)

- [v](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

### Mexico City Campaign



The [Battle of Chapultepec](#).

## Landings and Siege of Veracruz<sup>[edit]</sup>



Scott's campaign.

Rather than reinforce Taylor's army for a continued advance, President Polk sent a second army under General [Winfield Scott](#), which was transported to the port of [Veracruz](#) by sea, to begin an invasion of the Mexican heartland. On March 9, 1847, Scott performed the first major amphibious landing in U.S. history in preparation for the [Siege of Veracruz](#). A group of 12,000 volunteer and regular soldiers successfully offloaded supplies, weapons, and horses near the walled city using specially designed landing craft. Included in the invading force were [Robert E. Lee](#), [George Meade](#), [Ulysses S. Grant](#), [James Longstreet](#), and [Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson](#). The city was defended by Mexican General Juan Morales with 3,400 men. [Mortars](#) and naval guns under Commodore [Matthew C. Perry](#) were used to reduce the city walls and harass defenders. The city replied the best it could with its own artillery. The effect of the extended barrage destroyed the will of the Mexican side to fight against a numerically superior force, and they surrendered the city after 12 days under siege. U.S. troops suffered 80 casualties, while the Mexican side had around 180 killed and wounded, about half of whom were civilian. During the siege, the U.S. side began to fall victim to [yellow fever](#).

### **Advance on Puebla**[\[edit\]](#)

Scott then marched westward toward Mexico City with 8,500 healthy troops, while Santa Anna set up a defensive position in a canyon around the main road at the halfway mark to Mexico City, near the hamlet of [Cerro Gordo](#). Santa Anna had entrenched with 12,000 troops and artillery that were trained on the road, along which he expected Scott to appear. However, Scott had sent 2,600 mounted [dragoons](#) ahead; the Mexican artillery prematurely fired on them and therefore revealed their positions.

Instead of taking the main road, Scott's troops trekked through the rough terrain to the north, setting up his artillery on the high ground and quietly flanking the Mexicans. Although by then aware of the positions of U.S. troops, Santa Anna and his troops were unprepared for the onslaught that followed. The Mexican army was routed. The U.S. Army suffered 400 casualties, while the Mexicans suffered over 1,000 casualties and 3,000 were taken prisoner. In August 1847, Captain [Kirby Smith](#), of Scott's 3rd Infantry, reflected on the resistance of the Mexican army:

They can do nothing and their continued defeats should convince them of it. They have lost six great battles; we have captured six hundred and eight cannon, nearly one hundred thousand stands of arms, made twenty thousand prisoners, have the greatest portion of their country and are fast advancing on their Capital which must be ours,—yet they refuse to treat [i.e., negotiate terms]!<sup>[52]</sup>

### **Pause at Puebla**[\[edit\]](#)

In May, Scott pushed on to Puebla, the second largest city in Mexico. Because of the citizens' hostility to Santa Anna, the city capitulated without resistance on May 1. During the following months Scott gathered supplies and reinforcements at Puebla and sent back units whose enlistments had expired. Scott also made strong efforts to keep his troops disciplined and treat the Mexican people under occupation justly, so as to prevent a popular rising against his army.

### **Advance on Mexico City and its capture**[\[edit\]](#)

With guerrillas harassing his line of communications back to Vera Cruz, Scott decided not to weaken his army to defend the city but, leaving only a garrison at Puebla to protect the sick and injured recovering there, advanced on Mexico City on August 7 with his remaining force. The capital was laid open in a series of battles around the right flank of the city defenses, at the [Battle of Contreras](#) and [Churubusco](#), culminating in the [Battle of Chapultepec](#). Fighting halted for a time when an armistice and peace negotiations followed the Battle of Churubusco, until they broke down, on September 6, 1847. With the subsequent battles of [Molino del Rey](#) and of [Chapultepec](#), and the [storming of the city gates](#), the capital was occupied. [Winfield Scott](#) became an American national hero after his victories in this campaign of the Mexican–American War, and later became military governor of occupied [Mexico City](#).

### **Santa Anna's last campaign**[\[edit\]](#)

In late September 1847, Santa Anna made one last attempt to defeat the Americans, by cutting them off from the coast. General [Joaquín Rea](#) began the [Siege of Puebla](#), soon joined by Santa Anna, but they failed to take it before the approach of a relief column from Vera Cruz under Brig. Gen. [Joseph Lane](#) prompted Santa Anna to stop him. Puebla was relieved by Gen. Lane October 12, 1847, following his defeat of Santa Anna at the [Battle of Huamantla](#) on October 9, 1847. The battle was Santa Anna's last. Following the defeat, the new Mexican government led by [Manuel de la Peña y Peña](#) asked Santa Anna to turn over command of the army to General [José Joaquín de Herrera](#).

### **Anti guerrilla campaign**[\[edit\]](#)

Following his capture and securing of the capital, General Scott sent about a quarter of his strength to secure his line of communications to Vera Cruz from the [Light Corps](#) of General [Joaquín Rea](#) and other Mexican [guerrilla](#) forces that had been harassing it since May. He strengthened the garrison of Puebla and by November had added a 1200 man garrison at [Jalapa](#), established 750-man posts along the National Road at the pass between Mexico City and Puebla at [Rio Frio](#), at [Perote](#) and [San Juan](#) on the road between Jalapa and Puebla and at [Puente Nacional](#) between Jalapa and Vera Cruz.<sup>[53]</sup> He had also detailed an anti guerrilla brigade under Brig. Gen. [Joseph Lane](#) to carry the war to the Light Corps and other guerrillas. He ordered that convoys would travel with at least 1,300-man escorts. Despite some victories by General Lane over the Light Corps at [Atlixco](#) (October 18, 1847) and at [Izucar de Matamoros](#) (November 23, 1847) and over the guerrillas of Padre [Jaruta](#) at [Zacualtipan](#) (February 25, 1848), guerrilla raids on the American line of communications continued until August but after the two governments concluded a truce to await ratification of the peace treaty, on March 6, 1848, formal hostilities ceased.<sup>[54]</sup>

### **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo**[\[edit\]](#)

*Main article:* [Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo](#)





The [Mexican Cession](#), shown in red, and the later [Gadsden Purchase](#), shown in yellow.

Outnumbered militarily and with many of its large cities occupied, Mexico could not defend itself; the country was also faced with many internal divisions, including the [Caste War of Yucatán](#). The [Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo](#), signed on February 2, 1848, by American diplomat [Nicholas Trist](#) and Mexican [plenipotentiary](#) representatives Luis G. Cuevas, Bernardo Couto, and Miguel Atristain, ended the war. The treaty gave the U.S. undisputed control of [Texas](#), established the U.S.-Mexican border of the [Rio Grande](#), and ceded to the United States the present-day states of [California](#), [Nevada](#), [Utah](#), [New Mexico](#), most of [Arizona](#) and [Colorado](#), and parts of [Texas](#), [Oklahoma](#), [Kansas](#), and [Wyoming](#). In return, Mexico received [US \\$15,000,000](#)<sup>[55]</sup> (\$492,399,038 today) – less than half the amount the U.S. had attempted to offer Mexico for the land before the opening of hostilities<sup>[56]</sup> – and the U.S. agreed to assume \$3.25 million (\$87,687,500 today) in debts that the Mexican government owed to U.S. citizens.<sup>[16]</sup> The acquisition was a source of controversy then, especially among U.S. politicians who had opposed the war from the start. A leading antiwar U.S. newspaper, the *Whig Intelligencer*, sardonically concluded that "We take nothing by conquest .... Thank God."<sup>[57][58]</sup>



Mexican territorial claims relinquished in the [Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo](#) in white.

[Jefferson Davis](#) introduced an amendment giving the U.S. most of [northeastern Mexico](#), which failed 44–11. It was supported by both senators from Texas ([Sam Houston](#) and [Thomas Jefferson Rusk](#)), [Daniel S. Dickinson](#) of New York, [Stephen A. Douglas](#) of Illinois, [Edward A. Hannegan](#) of Indiana, and one each from Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, and Tennessee. Most of the leaders of the Democratic party – [Thomas Hart Benton](#), [John C. Calhoun](#), [Herschel V. Johnson](#), [Lewis Cass](#), [James Murray Mason](#) of Virginia, and [Ambrose Hundley Sevier](#) – were opposed.<sup>[59]</sup> An amendment by Whig Senator [George Edmund Badger](#) of North Carolina to exclude New Mexico and California lost 35–15, with three Southern Whigs voting with the Democrats. [Daniel Webster](#) was bitter that four New England senators made deciding votes for acquiring the new territories.

The acquired lands west of the [Rio Grande](#) are traditionally called the [Mexican Cession](#) in the U.S., as opposed to the [Texas Annexation](#) two years earlier, though division of [New Mexico](#) down the middle at the Rio Grande never had any basis either in control or Mexican boundaries. Mexico never recognized the independence of Texas<sup>[60]</sup> prior to the war, and did not cede its claim to territory north of the Rio Grande or [Gila River](#) until this treaty.

Prior to ratifying the treaty, the U.S. Senate made two modifications: changing the wording of Article IX (which guaranteed Mexicans living in the purchased territories the right to become U.S. citizens) and striking out Article X (which conceded the legitimacy of land grants made by the Mexican government). On May 26, 1848, when the two countries exchanged ratifications of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, they further agreed to a three-article protocol (known as the Protocol of Querétaro) to explain the amendments. The first article claimed that the original Article IX of the treaty, although replaced by Article III of the Treaty of Louisiana, would still confer the rights delineated in Article IX. The second article confirmed the legitimacy of land grants under Mexican law.<sup>[61]</sup> The protocol was signed in the city of Querétaro by A. H. Sevier, [Nathan Clifford](#), and Luis de la Rosa.<sup>[61]</sup>

Article XI offered a potential benefit to Mexico, in that the US pledged to suppress the Comanche and Apache raids that had ravaged northern Mexico and pay restitutions to the victims of raids it could not prevent.<sup>[62]</sup> However, the Indian raids did not cease for several decades after the treaty, although a cholera epidemic reduced the numbers of the Comanche in 1849.<sup>[63]</sup> [Robert Letcher](#), U.S. Minister to Mexico in 1850, was certain "that miserable 11th article" would lead to the financial ruin of the US if it could not be released from its obligations.<sup>[64]</sup> The US was released from all obligations of Article XI five years later by Article II of the [Gadsden Purchase](#) of 1853.<sup>[65]</sup>

## Results[[edit](#)]



American occupation of [Mexico City](#).

## Altered territories[[edit](#)]

Mexican territory, prior to the secession of Texas, comprised almost 1,700,000 sq mi (4,400,000 km<sup>2</sup>), which was reduced to just under 800,000 by 1848. Another 32,000 were sold to the U.S. in the [Gadsden Purchase](#) of 1853, for a total reduction of more than 55%, or 900,000 square miles.<sup>[66]</sup>

The annexed territories, although comparable in size to Western Europe, were sparsely populated. The lands contained about 14,000 people in [Alta California](#) and fewer than 60,000 in [Nuevo México](#),<sup>[67][68]</sup> as well as large [Native American](#) nations such as the [Navajo](#), [Hopi](#), and dozens of others. A few relocated further south in Mexico. The great majority chose to remain in the U.S. and later became U.S. citizens.

The American settlers surging into the newly conquered Southwest were openly contemptuous of Mexican law (a [civil law system](#) based on the [law of Spain](#)) as alien and inferior and threw it out the window by enacting [reception statutes](#) at the first available opportunity. However, they recognized the value of a few aspects of Mexican law and carried them over into their new legal systems. For example, most of the southwestern states adopted [community property](#) marital property systems.

## The home front[[edit](#)]

In much of the U.S., victory and the acquisition of new land brought a surge of patriotism. Victory seemed to fulfill Democrats' belief in their country's [Manifest Destiny](#). While Whig

[Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) rejected war "as a means of achieving America's destiny," he accepted that "most of the great results of history are brought about by discreditable means."<sup>[69]</sup> Although the Whigs had opposed the war, they made Zachary Taylor their presidential candidate in the [election of 1848](#), praising his military performance while muting their criticism of the war.

“ “Has the Mexican War terminated yet, and how? Are we beaten? Do you know of any nation about to besiege South Hadley [Massachusetts]? If so, do inform me of it, for I would be glad of a chance to escape, if we are to be stormed. I suppose [our teacher] Miss [\[Mary\] Lyon](#) would furnish us all with daggers and order us to fight for our lives...” ”

— The sixteen-year-old [Emily Dickinson](#), writing to her older brother, [Austin](#) in the fall of 1847, shortly after the [Battle of Chapultepec](#)<sup>[70]</sup>

## Political repercussions[\[edit\]](#)

A month before the end of the war, Polk was criticized in a [United States House of Representatives](#) amendment to a bill praising [Major General Zachary Taylor](#) for "a war unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President of the United States." This criticism, in which [Congressman Abraham Lincoln](#) played an important role with his [Spot Resolutions](#), followed congressional scrutiny of the war's beginnings, including factual challenges to claims made by President Polk.<sup>[71][72]</sup> The vote followed party lines, with all Whigs supporting the amendment. Lincoln's attack won luke-warm support from fellow Whigs in [Illinois](#) but was harshly counter-attacked by Democrats, who rallied pro-war sentiments in Illinois; Lincoln's Spot resolutions haunted his future campaigns in the heavily Democratic state of Illinois, and were cited by enemies well into his presidency.<sup>[73]</sup>

## Effect on the U.S. Civil War[\[edit\]](#)

Many of the military leaders on both sides of the [American Civil War](#) had fought as junior officers in Mexico. This list includes [Ulysses S. Grant](#), [George B. McClellan](#), [Ambrose Burnside](#), [Stonewall Jackson](#), [James Longstreet](#), [Joseph E. Johnston](#), [William T. Sherman](#), [William Rosecrans](#), [Braxton Bragg](#), [Sterling Price](#), [George Meade](#), [Robert E. Lee](#), and the future [Confederate](#) President [Jefferson Davis](#).

[President Ulysses S. Grant](#), who as a young [army lieutenant](#) had served in Mexico under General Taylor, recalled in his [Memoirs](#), published in 1885, that:

Generally, the officers of the army were indifferent whether the annexation was consummated or not; but not so all of them. For myself, I was bitterly opposed to the measure, and to this day regard the war, which resulted, as one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation. It was an instance of a republic following the bad example of European monarchies, in not considering justice in their desire to acquire additional territory.<sup>[74]</sup>

Grant also expressed the view that the war against Mexico had brought punishment on the United States in the form of the [American Civil War](#):

The Southern rebellion was largely the outgrowth of the Mexican war. Nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions. We got our punishment in the most sanguinary and expensive war of modern times.<sup>[75]</sup>

## Combatants<sup>[edit]</sup>

On the American side, the war was fought by regiments of regulars and various regiments, battalions, and companies of volunteers from the different states of the union and the Americans and some of the Mexicans in the territory of California and New Mexico. On the West Coast, the U.S. Navy fielded a battalion of sailors, in an attempt to recapture [Los Angeles](#).<sup>[76]</sup>

## United States<sup>[edit]</sup>

*Main article:* [List of U.S. Army, Navy and Volunteer units in the Mexican–American War](#)

At the beginning of the war, the U.S. Army had eight regiments of infantry (three battalions), four artillery regiments and three mounted regiments (two dragoons, one of mounted rifles). These regiments were supplemented by 10 new regiments (nine of infantry and one of cavalry) raised for one year's service (new regiments raised for one year according to act of Congress Feb 11, 1847).<sup>[77]</sup>

State Volunteers were raised in various sized units and for various periods of time, mostly for one year. Later some were raised for the duration of the war as it became clear it was going to last longer than a year.<sup>[78]</sup>

U.S. soldiers' memoirs describe cases of looting and murder of Mexican civilians, mostly by State Volunteers. One officer's diary records:

We reached Burrita about 5 pm, many of the Louisiana volunteers were there, a lawless drunken rabble. They had driven away the inhabitants, taken possession of their houses, and were emulating each other in making beasts of themselves.<sup>[79]</sup>

[John L. O'Sullivan](#), a vocal proponent of Manifest Destiny, later recollected:

The regulars regarded the volunteers with importance and contempt ... [The volunteers] robbed Mexicans of their cattle and corn, stole their fences for firewood, got drunk, and killed several inoffensive inhabitants of the town in the streets.

Many of the volunteers were unwanted and considered poor soldiers. The expression "Just like Gaines's army" came to refer to something useless, the phrase having originated when a group of untrained and unwilling Louisiana troops were rejected and sent back by Gen. Taylor at the beginning of the war.

The [last surviving U.S. veteran](#) of the conflict, [Owen Thomas Edgar](#), died on September 3, 1929, at age 98.

1,563 U.S. soldiers are buried in the [Mexico City National Cemetery](#), which is maintained by the [American Battle Monuments Commission](#).

## Mexico<sup>[edit]</sup>

At the beginning of the war, Mexican forces were divided between the permanent forces (*permanentes*) and the active militiamen (*activos*). The permanent forces consisted of 12 regiments of infantry (of two battalions each), three brigades of artillery, eight regiments of cavalry, one separate squadron and a brigade of dragoons. The militia amounted to nine infantry and six cavalry regiments. In the northern territories of Mexico, presidial companies (*presidiales*) protected the scattered settlements there.<sup>[80]</sup>

One of the contributing factors to loss of the war by Mexico was the inferiority of their weapons. The Mexican army was using British [muskets](#) (e.g. [Brown Bess](#)) from the [Napoleonic Wars](#). In



contrast to the aging Mexican standard-issue infantry weapon, some U.S. troops had the latest U.S.-manufactured [breech-loading Hall rifles](#) and Model 1841 [percussion rifles](#). In the later stages of the war, U.S. cavalry and officers were issued [Colt Walker revolvers](#), of which the U.S. Army had ordered 1,000 in 1846. Throughout the war, the superiority of the U.S. artillery often carried the day.

Political divisions inside Mexico were another factor in the U.S. victory. Inside Mexico, the *centralistas* and *republicanos* vied for power, and at times these two factions inside Mexico's military fought each other rather than the invading American army. Another faction called the [monarchists](#), whose members wanted to install a [monarch](#) (some even advocated rejoining Spain), further complicated matters. This third faction would rise to predominance in the period of the [French intervention in Mexico](#). The ease of the American landing at Vera Cruz was in large part due to civil warfare in Mexico City, which made any real defense of the port city impossible. As Gen. Santa Anna said, "However shameful it may be to admit this, we have brought this disgraceful tragedy upon ourselves through our interminable in-fighting."

[Saint Patrick's Battalion](#) (*San Patricios*) was a group of several hundred immigrant soldiers, the majority [Irish](#), who deserted the U.S. Army because of ill-treatment or sympathetic leanings to fellow Mexican Catholics. They joined the Mexican army. Most were killed in the [Battle of Churubusco](#); about 100 were captured by the U.S. and roughly ½ were hanged as deserters. The leader, [Jon Riley](#), was merely branded since he had deserted prior to the start of the war.

### Impact of the war in the U.S.[\[edit\]](#)



"An Available Candidate: The One Qualification for a Whig President." Political cartoon about the 1848 presidential election which refers to [Zachary Taylor](#) or [Winfield Scott](#), the two leading contenders for the [Whig Party](#) nomination in the aftermath of the Mexican–American War. Published by [Nathaniel Currier](#) in 1848, digitally restored.

Despite initial objections from the Whigs and abolitionists, the war would nevertheless unite the U.S. in a common cause and was fought almost entirely by volunteers. The army swelled from just over 6,000 to more than 115,000. Of these, approximately 1.5% were killed in the fighting

and nearly 10% died of disease; another 12% were wounded or discharged because of disease, or both.

For years afterward, veterans continued to suffer from the debilitating diseases contracted during the campaigns. The casualty rate was thus easily over 25% for the 17 months of the war; the total casualties may have reached 35–40% if later injury- and disease-related deaths are added.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

In this respect, the war was proportionately the most deadly in American military history.

During the war, political quarrels in the U.S. arose regarding the disposition of conquered Mexico. A brief "[All-Mexico](#)" movement urged annexation of the entire territory. Veterans of the war who had seen Mexico at first hand were unenthusiastic. Anti-slavery elements opposed that position and fought for the exclusion of slavery from any territory absorbed by the U.S.<sup>[81]</sup> In 1847 the House of Representatives passed the [Wilmot Proviso](#), stipulating that none of the territory acquired should be open to slavery. The Senate avoided the issue, and a late attempt to add it to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was defeated.

The [Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo](#) was the result of [Nicholas Trist](#)'s unauthorized negotiations. It was approved by the U.S. Senate on March 10, 1848, and ratified by the Mexican Congress on May 25. Mexico's cession of [Alta California](#) and [Nuevo México](#) and its recognition of U.S. sovereignty over all of Texas north of the Rio Grande formalized the addition of 1.2 million square miles (3.1 million km<sup>2</sup>) of territory to the United States. In return the U.S. agreed to pay \$15 million and assumed the claims of its citizens against Mexico. A final territorial adjustment between Mexico and the U.S. was made by the [Gadsden Purchase](#) in 1853.

As late as 1880, the "Republican Campaign Textbook" by the [Republican Congressional Committee](#)<sup>[82]</sup> described the war as "Feculent, reeking Corruption" and "one of the darkest scenes in our history—a war forced upon our and the Mexican people by the high-handed usurpations of Pres't Polk in pursuit of territorial aggrandizement of the slave oligarchy."

The war was one of the most decisive events for the U.S. in the first half of the 19th century.

While it marked a significant waypoint for the nation as a growing military power, it also served as a milestone especially within the U.S. narrative of Manifest Destiny. The resultant territorial gains set in motion many of the defining trends in American 19th-century history, particularly for the American West. The war did not resolve the issue of slavery in the U.S. but rather in many ways inflamed it, as potential westward expansion of the institution took an increasingly central and heated theme in national debates preceding the American Civil War. Furthermore, in doing much to extend the nation from coast to coast, the Mexican–American War was one step in the massive migrations to the West of Americans, which culminated in transcontinental railroads and the [Indian wars](#) later in the same century.

In Mexico City's [Chapultepec Park](#), the [Niños Héroes](#) (Monument to the Heroic Cadets) commemorates the heroic sacrifice of six teenaged military cadets who fought to their deaths rather than surrender to American troops during the [Battle of Chapultepec](#) Castle on September 13, 1847. The monument is an important patriotic site in Mexico. On March 5, 1947, nearly one hundred years after the battle, U.S. President [Harry S. Truman](#) placed a wreath at the monument and stood for a [moment of silence](#).

**See also**[\[edit\]](#)

- [Battles of the Mexican–American War](#)
- [Christopher Werner, maker of the "Iron Palmetto"](#) commemorating the loss of South Carolinians in the War
- [Reconquista \(Mexico\)](#)

- [Republic of Texas – United States relations](#)

## General:

- [History of Mexico](#)
- [List of conflicts in the United States](#)
- [List of wars involving Mexico](#)
- [Mexico-United States relations](#)

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## External links[[edit](#)]



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## Other[[edit](#)]

- [PBS site of US-Mexican war program](#)
- [Battle of Monterrey Web Site](#) – Complete Info on the battle
- [Manifest Destiny and the U.S.-Mexican War: Then and Now](#)
- [The Mexican War](#)
- [Smithsonian teaching aids for "Establishing Borders: The Expansion of the United States, 1846–48"](#)
- [A History by the Descendants of Mexican War Veterans](#)
- [Mexican–American War](#)
- [Invisible Men: Blacks and the U.S. Army in the Mexican War by Robert E. May](#)
- [Milton Meltzer, "Bound for the Rio Grande: Traitors--Or Martyrs"](#), Reading, video, and lesson for high school students, 1974, Zinn Education Project/Rethinking Schools.

	<div>[<a href="#">show</a>]</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">v</a></li><li>• <a href="#">t</a></li><li>• <a href="#">e</a></li></ul></div> <div><a href="#">History of California</a></div>
<div><a href="#">Through</a> <a href="#">1899</a></div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Precontact</a></li><li>• <a href="#">First explorations</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Later explorations</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Spanish colonization</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Mexican rule</a></li><li>• <a href="#">California Trail</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Mexican–American War</a></li><li>• <a href="#">U.S. rule</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Gold Rush</a></li></ul></div>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Civil War</a></li></ul>
	<a href="#">Since 1900</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Labor</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Engineering</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Water wars</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Industrial growth</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Postwar culture</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Development</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Legal revolution</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Tech boom</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Growing pains</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Present day</a></li></ul>
	<a href="#">By topic</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Highways</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Maritime</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Missions</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Ranchos</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Slavery</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Railroads</a></li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• </li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• </li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• </li></ul>
<a href="#">[show]</a>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">v</a></li></ul>		

- [t](#)
- [e](#)

### Major armed conflicts involving the [United States Armed Forces](#)

•

•

•

[[show](#)]

- [v](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

### [United States intervention](#) in [Latin America](#)

•

•

•

•

•

•



- 

[\[show\]](#)

- [v](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

[History of the United States](#)

- 

- 

- 

[\[show\]](#)

- [v](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

[Mexico](#) topics

- 

- [Cities](#)
- [Extreme points](#)
- [Islands](#)
- [Metropolitan areas](#)
- [Mountains](#)
- [Protected Natural Areas](#)

- [Regions](#)
- [Volcanism](#)
- [Water resources](#)

- [Administrative divisions](#)
- [Congress](#)
- [Constitution](#)
- [Elections](#)
- [Federal government](#)
- [Foreign relations](#)
- [Human rights](#)
- [Law](#)
- [Law enforcement](#)
- [Military](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Political parties](#)
- [President](#)
- [Supreme Court](#)

- [Agriculture](#)
- [Automotive market](#)
- [Central bank](#)
- [Economic history](#)
- [Energy](#)
- [Irrigation](#)
- [Labor law](#)
- [North American Free Trade Agreement \(NAFTA\)](#)
- [Oil](#)
- [Peso \(currency\)](#)

- [Petroleum](#)
- [Science and technology](#)
- [States by GDP](#)
- [Stock Exchange](#)
- [Telecommunications](#)
- [Tourism](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [States by unemployment](#)
- [Water scarcity](#)

- [Corruption](#)
- [Crime](#)
- [Demographics](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Health care](#)
  - [social determinants](#)
- [People](#)
- [Poverty](#)
- [Religion](#)
- [States by HDI](#)
- [Water supply and sanitation](#)
- [Welfare](#)
- [Pension system](#)

#### [Culture](#)

- [Architecture](#)
- [Art](#)
- [Cinema](#)

- [Cuisine](#)
- [Flags](#)
- [Folklore](#)
- [Languages](#)
- [Literature](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Narcoculture](#)
- [National symbols](#)
- [Public holidays](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Television](#)

- [Outline](#)
- [Index](#)
- [Book](#)
- [Category](#)
- [Portal](#)
- [WikiProject](#)

[\[show\]](#)

- [v](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

[United States](#) topics

[Timeline](#)

- [Pre-Columbian era](#)
- [Colonial era](#)

- [Thirteen Colonies](#)
  - [Colonial American military history](#)
- [American Revolution](#)
  - [War](#)
- [American frontier](#)
- [Federalist Era](#)
- [War of 1812](#)
- [Territorial acquisitions](#)
- [Territorial evolution](#)
- **Mexican–American War**
- [Civil War](#)
- [Reconstruction Era](#)
- [Indian Wars](#)
- [Gilded Age](#)
- [Progressive Era](#)
- [African-American Civil Rights Movement \(1896–1954\)](#)
- [Spanish–American War](#)
- [Imperialism](#)
- [World War I](#)
- [Roaring Twenties](#)
- [Great Depression](#)
- [World War II](#)
  - [Home front](#)
- [Cold War](#)
- [Korean War](#)
- [Space Race](#)
- [African-American Civil Rights Movement \(1955–68\)](#)
- [Feminist Movement](#)
- [Vietnam War](#)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Post-Cold War (1991–present)</a></li><li>• <a href="#">War on Terror</a><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ <a href="#">War in Afghanistan</a></li><li>◦ <a href="#">Iraq War</a></li></ul></li><li>• <a href="#">Timeline of modern American conservatism</a></li></ul>
	<a href="#">By topic</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Demographic</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Discoveries</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Economic</a><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ <a href="#">Debt Ceiling</a></li></ul></li><li>• <a href="#">Inventions</a><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ <a href="#">before 1890</a></li><li>◦ <a href="#">1890–1945</a></li><li>◦ <a href="#">1946–1991</a></li><li>◦ <a href="#">after 1991</a></li></ul></li><li>• <a href="#">Military</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Postal</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Technological and industrial</a></li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Cities, towns, and villages</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Counties</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Extreme points</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Islands</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Mountains</a><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ <a href="#">Peaks</a></li><li>◦ <a href="#">Appalachian</a></li><li>◦ <a href="#">Rocky</a></li></ul></li><li>• <a href="#">National Park System</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Regions</a></li></ul>



- [West Coast](#)
- [East Coast](#)
- [Great Plains](#)
- [Mid-Atlantic](#)
- [Midwestern](#)
- [New England](#)
- [Northwestern](#)
- [Northeastern](#)
- [Southwestern](#)
- [Southeastern](#)
- [Western](#)
- [Eastern](#)
- [Northern](#)
- [Southern](#)
- [Pacific](#)
- [Rivers](#)
  - [Colorado](#)
  - [Columbia](#)
  - [Mississippi](#)
  - [Missouri](#)
  - [Ohio](#)
  - [Rio Grande](#)
- [States](#)
- [Territory](#)
- [Water supply and sanitation](#)

[Federal](#)

Executive

- [President](#)
  - [Executive Office](#)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Cabinet / Executive departments</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Civil service</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Independent agencies</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Law enforcement</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Public policy</a></li> </ul>
		Legislature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Congress</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Senate</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Vice President</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">President pro tem</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <a href="#">House of Representatives</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Speaker</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
		Judiciary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Supreme Court</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Federal courts</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Courts of appeals</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">District courts</a></li> </ul>
		<a href="#">Law</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Constitution</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Federalism</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Preemption</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Separation of powers</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Bill of Rights</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Civil liberties</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Code of Federal Regulations</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Federal Reporter</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">United States Code</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">United States Reports</a></li> </ul>

		<a href="#">Intelligence</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Central Intelligence Agency</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Defense Intelligence Agency</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Security Agency</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Federal Bureau of Investigation</a></li> </ul>
		<a href="#">Uniformed</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Armed Forces</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <a href="#">Air Force</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">Army</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">Marine Corps</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">Navy</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">National Guard</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Coast Guard</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">NOAA Corps</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Public Health Service Corps</a></li> </ul>
	<a href="#">Politics</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Administrative divisions</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Elections</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <a href="#">Electoral College</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Foreign policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Foreign relations</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ideologies</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Local governments</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Parties</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <a href="#">Democratic Party</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">Republican Party</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">Third parties</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">51st state</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <a href="#">Political status of Puerto Rico</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- [Red states and blue states](#)
- [Scandals](#)
- [State governments](#)
- [Uncle Sam](#)

- [Economic issues](#)
- [Agriculture](#)
- [Banking](#)
- [Communications](#)
- [Companies](#)
  - [by state](#)
- [Dollar \(currency\)](#)
- [Energy](#)
- [Federal Budget](#)
- [Federal Reserve System](#)
- [Financial position](#)
- [Insurance](#)
- [Labor unions](#)
- [Mining](#)
- [Public debt](#)
- [Social welfare programs](#)
- [Taxation](#)
- [Tourism](#)
- [Trade](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Unemployment](#)
- [Wall Street](#)

	<p><a href="#">By topic</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Crime</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Demographics</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Education</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Family structure</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Health care</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Health insurance</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Incarceration</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Languages</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">American English</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Spanish</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">French</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">German</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Media</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">People</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Public holidays</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Religion</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sports</a></li> </ul>
	<p><a href="#">Social class</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Affluence</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">American Dream</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Educational attainment</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Homelessness</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Homeownership</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Household income</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Income inequality</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Middle class</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Personal income</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Poverty</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Professional and working class conflict</a></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Standard of living</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Smoking</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Wealth</a></li> </ul>
	Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Abortion</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Affirmative action</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Anti-Americanism</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Capital punishment</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Discrimination</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Drug policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Energy policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Environmental movement</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Exceptionalism</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Gun politics</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Health care reform</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Human rights</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Immigration</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Illegal Immigration</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">International rankings</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">LGBT rights</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Same-sex marriage</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Nationalism</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Obesity</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Racism</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Separation of church and state</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Terrorism</a></li> </ul>
	<a href="#">Culture</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Architecture</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Art</a></li> </ul>







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- [Wars fought in Arizona](#)
- [Wars fought in California](#)
- [Wars fought in Texas](#)

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## Navigation menu

### Personal tools

- [Create account](#)
- [Log in](#)

### Namespaces

- [Article](#)
- [Talk](#)

### Variants

### Views

- [Read](#)
- [Edit](#)
- [View history](#)

### Actions

### Search



### Navigation

- [Main page](#)
- [Contents](#)

- [Featured content](#)
- [Current events](#)
- [Random article](#)
- [Donate to Wikipedia](#)
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- [Help](#)
- [About Wikipedia](#)
- [Community portal](#)
- [Recent changes](#)
- [Contact page](#)

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- [What links here](#)
- [Related changes](#)
- [Upload file](#)
- [Special pages](#)
- [Permanent link](#)
- [Page information](#)
- [Data item](#)
- [Cite this page](#)

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- [Afrikaans](#)
- [العربية](#)
- [Azərbaycanca](#)
- [Български](#)
- [Boarisch](#)
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- [Català](#)
- [Чӑвашла](#)
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- [Dansk](#)
- [Deutsch](#)
- [Eesti](#)
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- [Esperanto](#)

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  - [Français](#)
  - [한국어](#)
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  - [Hrvatski](#)
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  - [Latina](#)
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  - [Ligure](#)
  - [Magyar](#)
  - [Bahasa Melayu](#)
  - [Nederlands](#)
  - [日本語](#)
  - [Norsk bokmål](#)
  - [O‘zbekcha](#)
  - [Polski](#)
  - [Português](#)
  - [Română](#)
  - [Русский](#)
  - [Simple English](#)
  - [Slovenčina](#)
  - [Slovenščina](#)
  - [Српски / srpski](#)
  - [Srpskohrvatski / српскохрватски](#)
  - [Suomi](#)
  - [Svenska](#)
  - [தமிழ்](#)
  - [ไทย](#)
  - [Türkçe](#)
  - [Українська](#)
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Figure 33 Battle of Chapultepec

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In the Marine Hymn, the phrase “From the Halls of Montezuma...” refers to the Battle of Chapultepec, a fierce engagement between Mexican and American armies during the Mexican-American War in 1847. When that battle ended, the United States had won a decisive military victory over General Santa Anna’s Mexican army that was holding Chapultepec Castle, located just west of Mexico City.

After 1845, when the United States annexed Texas, Santa Anna continued to claim that Texas was still a province of Mexico. He refused to recognize the secession and ignored the decisive victories by the predominantly American Texans in 1836. His attitude eventually led to war.

Early on September 12, 1847 the Americans began an artillery barrage against the Castle that continued throughout the day and resumed at dawn the next day. After the artillery bombardment ceased, General Winfield Scott ordered his troops to charge the Castle.

A storming party led by forty Marines was followed by a brigade of volunteers. For a time the detachment stalled while they waited for ladders to arrive and for reinforcements held up by heavy Mexican artillery. When the ladders finally arrived, the first wave of Americans ascended the walls led by the Marines. George Pickett (later famous for “Pickett’s Charge” at Gettysburg) was the first over the wall. Several American

Generals and other officers were wounded as they led their men over the walls before the Marines were finally able to raise the U.S. Flag over the castle.

During the battle a Mexican army cadet wrapped himself in the Mexican flag and jumped from the extremely high wall to prevent the seizure of the Mexican flag by the Americans. From a very safe distance, General Santa Anna (yes, the same Santa Anna who captured the Alamo in 1836) watched his army troops melt away in defeat.

The Battle for Chapultepec Castle was marked with extreme bravery and sacrifice by soldiers on both sides, many who were just cadets and volunteers. This was just one of several great battles fought during The Mexican–American War, now an almost obscure conflict between the United States and Mexico (1846-48).

At the end of the Mexican-American War, the United States forced the Mexican government, under the terms of the “Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo,” to give up the Mexican territories of Alta California (now the state of California) and Santa Fe de Nuevo México (parts of west Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Nevada). The Rio Grande became the official boundary between Texas and Mexico. Mexico was forced to forever drop all claims to Texas and California and all of the land between them.

- **Wm Alexander Crook** *Military Information*
- 1846-1847
- Mexican War: Enlisted 1 June 1846 to serve 12 months. Private, Company M, 1st Regiment of Tennessee Mounted Volunteers. Seriously injured, 21 Aug 1846, in the line of duty. Injured by explosion of the steamboat Enterprise on the Rio Grande River. Right arm

#### **Lt C.B. Crook ( Cincinnatus Berry Crook)**

- TNGenWeb--The Mexican War (Lawrenceburg Blues)

Officers:

Alexander, CPT.  
Burkitt, James B.; 1LT.  
Nixon, George Henry; 2LT  
Crook, C. B.; O. SGT.  
Allen, Sam Houston; 2 SGT.  
Kirksey, W. H. ; 3SGT.  
Burkitt, J.B.; 4SGT.  
Alford, William M.; 1CPL.  
Chaffin, E.M.; 2CPL.  
Blair, John W.; 3CPL.  
Goff, D. A.; 4CPL.  
Hughes, M.F.; Drummer  
Hughes, Cornelius; Fifer

PRIVATES:

Alexander, A.H. ~ Alexander, H. ~ Abernathy, M.C. ~ Allen, William B. ~ Askue, L. B. ~ Billindley, E.G. ~ Billingsley,  
Jacob ~ Brashears, Jesse ~ Black, Robert ~ Bailey, John M. ~ Boswell, A. ~ Calloway, W.H. ~ Carvel,  
William ~ Crook,  
William A. ~ Curtis, A.G. ~ Crook, Z. ~ Curtis, Isaac W. ~ Cunningham, M. T. ~ Camfield, Simeon ~  
Campbell, J.W.L.  
~ Dotson, Henry H. ~ Duncan, William F. ~ Farris, John ~ Ferguson, T.J. ~ Fielder, J.T. ~ Freeman,

William ~ Gray,  
Joseph M. ~ Goodson, Joseph ~ Goodson, W.G.. ~ Garrett, Leroy ~ Glover, Finley ~ Hail, W.P.A. ~  
Hiihouse, R. S. ~  
Hilton, WW. ~ Hubbard, David ~ Hamlet, J.C. ~ Helm, G.W. ~ Hunt, William H. ~ James, Willis H. ~  
Kirk, Lewis M. ~  
Kirk, W.F. ~ Keltner, S.G. ~ Lea, William ~ Lindsey, W. W. ~ Liles, D. A ~ Lindsey, A. J. ~ Long, T.C. ~  
Maulin, H.N.  
~ McCrory, Thomas ~ Murrell, W. W. ~ McWhirter, D.Y. ~ Richardson, F. ~ Richardson, W.M. ~  
Richardson, A. O. ~  
Rhodes, William ~ Ramsey, Thomas C, ~ Snow, A.J. ~ Tacker, John B. ~ Watson, M. D. ~ Turnbow, A. A.  
~ Walker,  
J.W. ~ Wilson, G.W. ~ Wilbanks, William

### [John Tipton](#)

John Tipton (1828 - 1861)

**is your 2nd great grand uncle**

[General John Tipton \(1786 - 1838\)](#)

father of John Tipton

[Jonathon Hall Tipton \(1816 - 1894\)](#)

son of General John Tipton

[John Worrall Tipton \(1852 - 1910\)](#)

son of Jonathon Hall Tipton

[Lucy B Tipton \(1885 - 1910\)](#)

daughter of John Worrall Tipton

[Ida Mae Tipton \(1907 - 1984\)](#)

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Jump to: navigation, search

John Shields Tipton

John Tipton from Who-When-What Book, 1900

Tipton was born in what is now [Sevier County, Tennessee](#). His father was killed by [Native Americans](#). His great uncle, also named [John Tipton](#), was a prominent man in the area. When he



was an infant, his uncle's house was besieged by supporters of an attempt to create the 14th state in Northeastern Tennessee called the [State of Franklin](#).

At the age of 17, Tipton moved to [Harrison County, Indiana](#). In 1806 he married Martha Shields.<sup>[1]</sup> He became a farmer. Fighting various [Native American](#) tribes, he commanded a militia unit of the [Yellow Jackets](#) in the [Battle of Tippecanoe](#) campaign in 1811, and served as Major in command of two companies of [Indiana Rangers](#) at [Fort Vallonia](#) during the [War of 1812](#).<sup>[2]</sup> When peace was declared, Tipton was promoted to Brigadier-General.<sup>[3]</sup> Tipton's marriage eventually fell apart and he was divorced in 1816.<sup>[4]</sup> He eventually entered politics. He served as a member of the Indiana State House of Representatives from 1819 to 1823. During this time, he founded the town of [Columbus, Indiana](#) originally known as Tiptonia, he participated in commissions to establish a new state capital for Indiana and to set the boundaries between Indiana and [Illinois](#). In 1823, he became the United States Indian agent for the [Potawatomi](#) and [Miami](#) tribes. Also a captain in the militia, Tipton was responsible for rounding up the uncooperative Potawatomi and forcibly moving them to [Kansas](#) in what became known as the [Potawatomi Trail of Death](#). In 1825, he married again, this time he married Matilda Spencer, the daughter of [Captain Spier Spencer](#) who died at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811.<sup>[5]</sup> In 1831, Tipton was elected by the state legislature to a seat in the [United States Senate](#) from Indiana to fill the unexpired term of [James Noble](#) who had died. He was reelected to a full term in 1832. He was a member of the [United States Democratic Party](#) and a strong supporter of [Andrew Jackson](#). He served as chairman of the committees on roads and canals and Native American affairs from 1837 to 1839. In 1838, at the behest of Governor [David Wallace](#), Tipton organized the forced [removal](#) of 859 [Potawatomi](#) from the vicinity of [Plymouth](#) and started them on the two-month-long "[Trail of Death](#)" to [Kansas](#), which resulted in the deaths of more than 40 of them.

## Death and legacy[[edit](#)]

Tipton declined to run for reelection due to poor health, and his term expired a month before his death. He died in [Logansport, Indiana](#), a town that he helped to found. He is interred in Mount Hope Cemetery in Logansport, Indiana.<sup>[6]</sup>

The towns of [Tipton, Indiana](#),<sup>[7]</sup> [and Iowa](#),<sup>[8]</sup> and [Tipton County, Indiana](#) are named after him.<sup>[9]</sup>

## References[[edit](#)]

- [Jump up](#) ^ [Indian Treaty of 1826 - Tipton's Quest, by Carl Leiter](#)
- [Jump up](#) ^ Allison, Harold (1986). *The Tragic Saga of the Indiana Indians*. Paducah: Turner Publishing Company. p. 246. [ISBN 0-938021-07-9](#).
- [Jump up](#) ^ Pershing, Marvin W. [Life of General John Tipton and Early Indiana History](#). Tipton literary and Suffrage Club. Also on [archive.org](#)
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- [Jump up](#) ^ Indian Treaty of 1826 - Tipton's Quest, by Carl Leiter
- [Jump up](#) ^ ["Gen John Tipton"](#). Find A Grave. Retrieved August 31, 2012.
- [Jump up](#) ^ ["Profile for Tipton, Indiana, IN"](#). ePodunk. Retrieved August 31, 2012.
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- [Jump up](#) ^ ["Profile for Tipton, Indiana, IN"](#). ePodunk. Retrieved August 31, 2012.

## External links[[edit](#)]

- [John Tipton Collection](#), manuscript collection finding aid, Indiana State Library.
- [John Tipton Collection](#), digital collection of ISL manuscripts at Indiana Memory.
- [John Tipton Papers, Vol. 1, 1809-1827](#), documentary edition published by the Indiana Historical Bureau, 1942.
- [John Tipton Papers, Vol. 2, 1828-1833](#), documentary edition published by the Indiana Historical Bureau, 1942.
- [John Tipton Papers, Vol. 3, 1834-1839](#), documentary edition published by the Indiana Historical Bureau, 1942.
- [John Tipton](#) Biography at Congress.gov
- [John Tipton Portrait](#)
- [Find A Grave](#)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Tipton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Tipton)

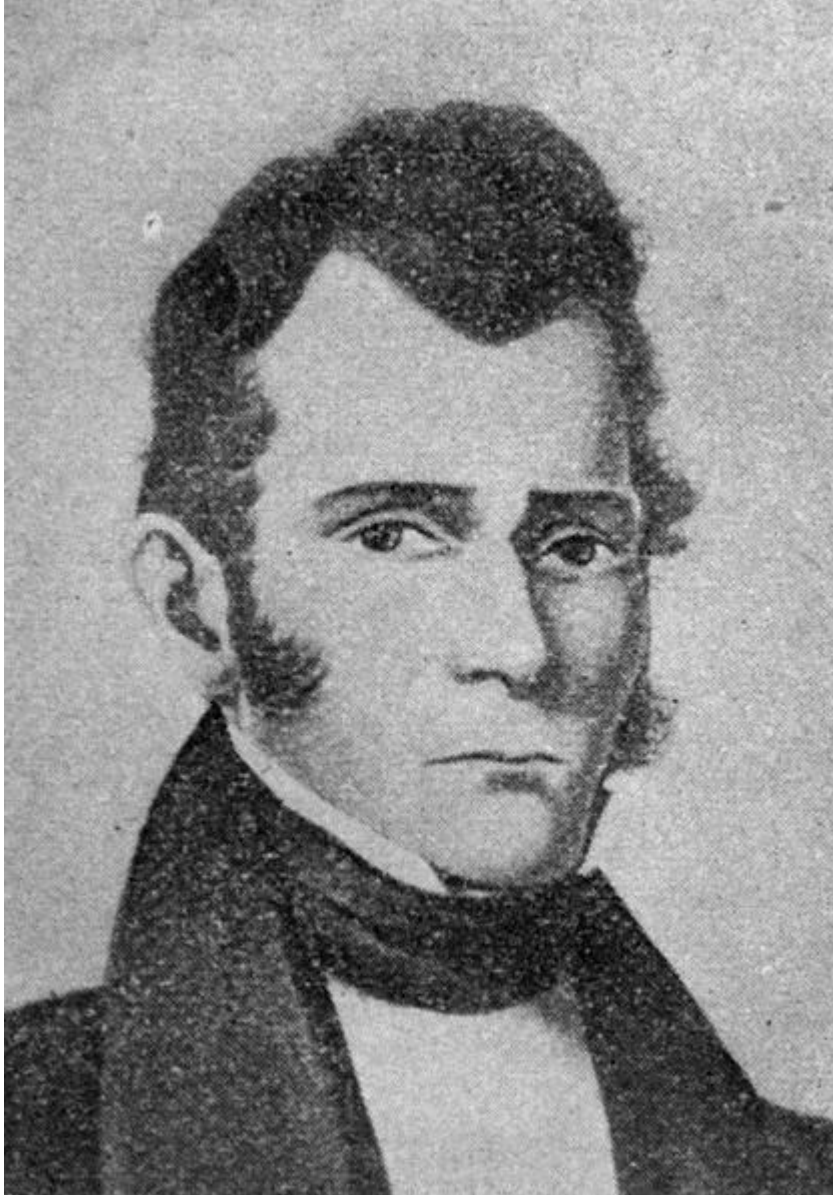


Figure 34 United States Senator John Tipton

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#### United States Senator

##### In office

1832 – 1839 Preceded by Robert Hanna Succeeded by Albert S. White

---

Born August 14, 1786

Sevier County, Tennessee Died April 5, 1839

Logansport, Indiana Political party Democratic **Military service** Service/branch Militia Unit Yellow  
Jackets Commands Indiana Rangers Battles/wars Tecumseh's War

- Battle of Tippecanoe

War of 1812

- Battle of Tipton's Island

- Siege of Fort Wayne

This article is about the American politician. For other uses, see John Tipton (disambiguation).

**John Shields Tipton** (August 14, 1786 - April 5, 1839) was an American politician.

Tipton was born in what is now Sevier County, Tennessee. His father was killed by Native Americans. His great uncle, also named John, was a prominent man in the area. When he was an infant, his uncle's house was besieged by supporters of an attempt to create the 14th state in Northeastern Tennessee called the State of Franklin.

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[edit] Affiliations

- o Past Grand Master Mason of Indiana

[edit] External links

- o John Tipton Portrait
- o John Tipton Biography at Congress.gov

[edit] References

- ↑ Indian Treaty of 1826 - Tipton's Quest, by Carl Leiter
- ↑ Allison, Harold (1986). The Tragic Saga of the Indiana Indians. Paducah: Turner Publishing Company. p. 246. ISBN 0-9380-2107-9.
- ↑ Pershing, Marvin W. Life of General John Tipton and Early Indiana History. Tipton literary and Suffrage Club. http://books.google.com/books?id=ramNGAAACAAJ&dq=Life+of+John+Tipton. Also on archive.org
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- ↑ Indian Treaty of 1826 - Tipton's Quest, by Carl Leiter