

## **Mexican-American War**

1846–1848

The Mexican-American War began because of the United States' desire to acquire California and as a result of a disagreement about the border between Texas and Mexico. The Whig Party did not want war, but the Democrats supported Manifest Destiny (the idea that the United States could expand from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean) and wanted war. Mexico fought to keep its land.

The war began as General Zachary Taylor led the American army to the Rio Grande. The Americans said the river was the line between Texas and Mexico, but Mexico did not agree. Mexico said the border was the Nueces River, which was farther north. Taylor and his men built Fort Brown near the Rio Grande, and Mexico also prepared for war.

The battle began on April 24, 1846. The Mexican cavalry of 2,000 men attacked an American unit of sixty-three soldiers. Eleven United States soldiers were killed in what came to be called the Thornton Affair. The Americans retreated to Fort Brown. On May 3, a Mexican troop attacked the fort. U.S. soldiers fought back in this five-day battle. Taylor needed help and brought in more troops. The Mexican army retreated but began the Battle of Resaca de la Palma the next day. The United States won this battle, and the Mexican troops again retreated.

President James K. Polk received news of the Thornton Affair, and Congress declared war on May 13. Mexico declared war on July 7. General Stephen W. Kearny led the United States invasion of Mexican territory. Kearny's troops traveled west to Santa Fe, New Mexico, then to California. General Taylor and John E. Wood marched south to Monterrey, Mexico. General Ampudia led the Mexican troops in a brutal, three-day battle. The American troops won and they captured Monterrey. The Mexican government did not surrender; the United States military would have to capture Mexico City.

General Winfield Scott organized the largest naval invasion in American history. On March 9, 1847, General Scott led an army of 12,000 men who stormed the beaches at Veracruz, Mexico. Scott and Mexican President Santa Anna fought many battles as the American military advanced to Mexico City. By September 19, the United States controlled Mexico City. Santa Anna still headed the Mexican army, but his soldiers gave up. The Mexican-American War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, on February 2, 1848. Through this treaty, the

United States paid Mexico \$15 million for Mexican territory north of the Rio Grande. This territory became the states of Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, California, and Utah.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Discussion Questions:

1. Who was sent to the Rio Grande to claim the southern border of Texas?
2. When did the United States declare war with Mexico? When did Mexico declare war?
3. Who proposed the naval attack?