



Commemorating the 250th Birthday of the U.S. Army

The Army of Manifest Destiny: Texas and Beyond (1835-1848)

For the first 300 years of European settlement in North America, the region that would eventually become the State of Texas was part of the Spanish Empire. An informal northern boundary separating Spanish-held Texas and the French-occupied Louisiana Territory became clearer in 1803, when President Thomas Jefferson authorized the Louisiana Purchase. However, a formal border between Spain and the United States was not settled until the 1819 Adams-Onís Treaty. Despite the exclusion of Texas from United States possession, supporters of the idea that Americans had a “Manifest Destiny” to spread across the continent considered Spanish territory for potential expansion. These areas included Cuba, California, the Southwest, and Texas.



Louisiana Purchase - April 1803

The Adams-Onís Treaty

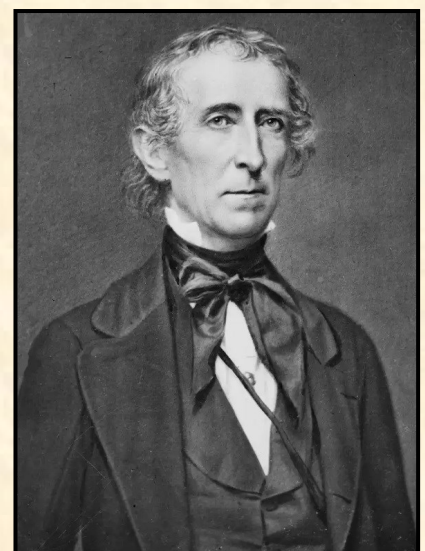
showing area claimed by the US before the treaty, and results of the new agreement



Interest in Texas intensified after 1821 because of two events. The first was the Missouri Crisis of 1819-1821, which culminated with the Thomas Proviso, declaring that new states founded north of the 36°31' parallel could not have slavery. For those who supported the expansion of slavery, this put a premium on territories below that line, including Texas and the Southwest. At the same time, Mexico gained its independence from Spain, prompting the John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson administrations to negotiate with Mexico to purchase all or part of Texas, without success. In the 1820s, residents of Texas encouraged Anglo-Americans to relocate to the area to develop territory, expand the economy, and provide potential defense against indigenous tribes. To live in the region, however, settlers had to agree to two provisions as of 1829: conversion to Catholicism and abolition of slavery.

Led by Stephen A. Austin, new settlers ignored these and other Mexican laws, as the central government was too far from Texas to effectively enforce them. In response, Mexico enacted new regulations through 1833, reinforcing the ban on slavery and prohibiting future Anglo settlement in Texas. To enforce these provisions, President Santa Anna led an army into Texas in 1835, prompting supporters of secession (Texians) to declare Texas independent in March 1836. Later that month, 260 unprepared Texians were surrounded by a Mexican army at the Alamo. Almost all of the defenders were killed, including frontiersmen Davy Crockett and James Bowie. One month later, a Texian force under Sam Houston decisively defeated Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto. The Mexican president escaped the battle only to be captured the next day. He subsequently signed a peace treaty under duress, paving the way for Mexico to recognize the independent Republic of Texas (1836-1846).

In the United States, outgoing President Jackson waited until his last day in office to recognize Texas, to avoid clouding the 1836 election for his hand-picked successor, Vice President Martin Van Buren. The subject of Texas' annexation would dominate the next eight years of political discourse in the U.S. Southerners supporting of the expansion of slavery favored annexation; northern abolitionists, including the new president, opposed it. Many were also concerned that the acquisition of Texas could provoke a war with Mexico. Van Buren quickly rejected an annexation offer from Texas, while Congress failed to pass any resolutions in support of the acquisition. In response, the Texas government withdrew its offer and opened negotiations with Mexico. The issue would remain a stalemate through the 1840 presidential election, which focused on personalities, not policy. Portraying Van Buren as an elitist and himself as a war hero, William H. Harrison easily defeated the incumbent, but only served one month before dying of pneumonia. The first death of a president in office created a short constitutional crisis over the issue of whether Vice President John Tyler was officially President or merely assumed the duties of the office.



President John Tyler



Tyler moved quickly to squash speculation by immediately declaring himself President and taking up residence in the White House. Another unique aspect of this power shift was a product of electioneering. Harrison, the Whig Party candidate, had added Tyler, a democrat, as his Vice Presidential running mate to broaden the appeal of the ticket. Tyler's acceptance of the role caused Democrats to disown him. With Tyler assuming the presidency, Whigs likewise refused to work with him. He would be a "lame duck" all four years of his term. With no political reins to hold him back, Tyler immediately announced an expansionist agenda for the United States and made the annexation of Texas the primary goal of his administration. The resignation of anti-annexation Secretary of State Daniel Webster shifted Tyler's cabinet to support for the plan, but Congress still refused to act.

Approaching the 1844 Presidential Election, both major parties opposed annexation. At the same time, Texas continued negotiating with Mexico to become an independent state within that nation. The potential agreement stalled, however, due to Mexico's insistence that Texas must agree to defend Mexican territory in any conflict with the United States. Tyler opened his own negotiations with Texas and submitted an annexation treaty to the Senate in April 1844. Due to the pro-slavery provisions of the treaty, the Senate soundly rejected it. Tyler then withdrew from the election, helping pro-expansion Democrat James K. Polk roll to victory. Tyler declared Polk's win a mandate for Texas annexation and resubmitted his treaty to a joint session of the lame duck Congress. Four days before Polk took office, the Senate narrowly approved annexation and Tyler signed it as his last act in office.

As a candidate, Polk had a clear pro-expansion platform, which included the acquisition of Oregon from Great Britain, annexation of Texas, and the purchase or seizure of California and the Southwest from Mexico. With Texas annexed and Oregon negotiations underway, Polk turned his attention to California and the Southwest, where citizens were increasingly

JMC Archives Spotlight: Speaking of annexation, while much of the JMC HQ archival collection preserves the history of installations and organizations that no longer contribute to the ammunition mission, our Annex currently holds the entire Pine Bluff Arsenal collection. JMC is actively processing these documents for inclusion in the Archivist Tools & Metrics System database, with approximately 260 cu. ft. of materials left to go.



This Month in Military History

Sept. 1, 1870: Prussian forces capture Emperor Napoleon III and 100,000 French soldiers at the Battle of Sedan. It is an early turning point in the Franco-Prussian War (July 1870 - January 1871).

Sept. 4, 476: Odoacer, leader of the Huns, invades Rome, forcing the abdication of the last Roman emperor Romulus Augustulus. Ironically, the latter's name was derived from those of the founder of ancient Rome (Romulus) and the founder of the Roman Empire (Augustus).

Sept. 7, 1191: As part of the Third Crusade, English King Richard I follows up his capture of Acre by defeating the forces of Ayyubid Sultan Saladin at the Battle of Arsuf. As a result, the Crusaders secure over the central coast of Palestine.

Sept. 10, 1776: Answering a request by Gen. George Washington, Connecticut soldier Nathan Hale volunteers to conduct an intelligence-gathering mission in New York City, making him the first official spy in the history of the United States.

Sept. 13, 1847: American forces capture Capultepec Castle as part of the Mexican-American War, opening the way for Gen. Winfield Scott's subsequent capture of Mexico City.

Sept. 16, 1940: U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Selective Training & Service Act, the first peacetime draft in American history.

Sept. 19, 1356: In the final battle of the first phase of the Hundred Years War (1337-1453), English forces under Edward the Black Prince defeat the French army at the Battle of Poitiers and capture King John II.

Sept. 22, 1914: German submarine SM U-9 sinks three British cruisers in the North Sea - HMS *Aboukir*, HMS *Cressy*, and HMS *Hogue* - during a single engagement, resulting in 1,459 deaths. Though only 15 years old, the British ships were already outdated and vulnerable to submarine attack. The failure led to heavy criticism of the British Navy.

Sept. 25, 1055: The English army of King Harold II defeats invading Norwegians under King Harald Hardrada and his brother Tostig at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. Hardrada and Tostig are both killed, ending the immediate Norwegian threat. However, the battle leaves England unprepared for the subsequent invasion by William, Duke of Normandy.

Sept. 28, 48 BCE: Following his defeat at the Battle of Pharsalus, Roman general Pompey the Great is assassinated by Ptolemy of Egypt to curry favor with Julius Caesar.

opposed to Mexican rule. Polk's opportunity to move into this territory came because of a disagreement over the southern border of Texas. Mexico claimed all land up to the Nueces River, while Texians claimed all land down to the Rio Grande. Declaring a need to protect Texas, Polk sent Gen. Zachary Taylor with 3,000 soldiers to the Nueces River in October 1845. At the same time, he sent a scouting expedition to California under John C. Fremont. Mexico viewed both actions as provocations and Polk's simultaneous offer to purchase the disputed Texas lands. In anticipation of what Polk viewed as an inevitable conflict, the U.S. organized troops by deploying a mix of seasoned soldiers and volunteers, dramatically expanding the Army's size from 6,000 regulars to over 115,000.

In April 1846, Polk ordered Taylor to seize the disputed territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. On April 25, a unit of 2,000 Mexican cavalry attacked a small American patrol in the region before moving against Gen. Taylor's position. Subsequent American victories at the Palo Alto (May 8) and Resaca de la Palma (May 9) forced the Mexican army to retreat south of the Rio Grande. Four days later, the U.S. Congress formally declared war on Mexico, prompting the return of disgraced and exiled former president Santa Anna. The U.S. military followed three operational plans in the war: seizure of California and the Southwest, invasion of Northern Mexico via Texas, and Southern Mexico via an amphibious assault under Gen. Winfield Scott.

The next year and a half saw an almost unbroken line of American victories in Texas, California, and Mexico, culminating in the capture of Mexico City in September 1847. Santa Anna made one last effort to counter the U.S. invasion, but his defeat at the Battle of Huamantla in October ended it. Formal peace came in February 1848 with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, which saw Mexico cede Texas, California, and the Southwest to the United States. Gen. Taylor, thanks to his reputation as a hero in the war, used his status to achieve one more victory in the Presidential Election of 1848.



JMC Historical Document Collection

The JMC Public and Congressional Affairs Office maintains the JMC Archives, which collects and maintains historically significant records, including: emails, manuscripts, letters, reports, studies, images, videos, films, photographs, oral history interviews, briefings, SOPs, policies, decision papers, memoranda, statistics, newspapers, newsletters, brochures, maps, blueprints, drawings, and artifacts. Such records are pertinent to the Army's knowledge of active and predecessor installations, the ammunition industrial base, and JMC missions. JMC regularly uses these materials to research command history, and to answer research queries. When JMC workers leave positions or make physical moves, it is vital that their records be assessed before disposal. If employees are uncertain about the historical value of materials, the best policy is to make the items available to Paul Ferguson (paul.t.ferguson14.civ@army.mil), Room 661.

This Month in Military History

Oct. 2, 1187: The forces of Ayyubid Sultan Saladin capture Jerusalem from the Crusaders, sparking the call for the Third Crusade, which will feature three European kings: Richard I of England, Philip II of France, and Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I "Barbarossa".

Oct. 5, 1274: In the first wave of Kublai Khan's planned invasion of Japan, 1,000 Mongol soldiers land on the southwestern island of Tsushima.

Oct. 8, 1480: At a standoff on the Ugra River (southwest of Moscow), Russian Grand Prince Ivan III forces the retreat of the Tatar-Mongol army of Akhmat Khan, leader of the Golden Horde, freeing Russia from Mongol control.

Oct. 11, 1776: In one of the first naval engagements of the American Revolution, a U.S. fleet under Brig. Gen. Benedict Arnold is defeated by British forces under Gen. Guy Carleton. Despite the American loss, the engagement ended British plans to invade the Upper Hudson Valley.

Oct. 14, 1066: Three weeks after a victory at Stamford Bridge, English King Harold II dies while facing the forces of William, Duke of Normandy, at the Battle of Hastings. As a result, the era of English kings ends, giving way to a dynasty of Norman-Angevin rule over England.

Oct. 17, 1660: The Nine Regicides, English revolutionary leaders who signed the death warrant for executed King Charles I, are themselves executed by hanging before being drawn and quartered.

Oct. 20, 1827: A combined fleet of English, French, and Russian ships defeats a Turkish-Egyptian force at the Battle of Navarino, paving the way for Greece to gain its independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Oct. 23, 1911: An Italian blimp pilot flies the first aerial reconnaissance mission over Turkish lines during the Italo-Turkish War, paving the way for the first aerial bombardment campaign by airplanes and airships in world history.

Oct. 26, 1864: Union Lt. Col. Samuel P. Cox ambushes 150 men under William "Bloody Bill" Anderson - notorious Confederate outlaw, guerilla fighter, and member of Quantrill's Raiders - near Albany, Missouri. Anderson dies, leading to the dissolution of his guerilla band.

Oct. 29, 1814: USS *Demologos*, a floating battery designed by Robert Fulton, launches from New York City as a defense against the British in the War of 1812. It becomes the first steam-powered warship in history.