

The United States goes to war with Mexico, 1845-1849

Chronology of Events

March, 1836: Texas declares independence from Mexico.

February, 1845: United States House and Senate pass resolutions to annex Texas.

March, 1845: Mexico ends diplomatic ties to the United States.

May, 1845: United States troops stationed in Texas.

July, 1845: Texas approves annexation. U.S. army based along Rio Nueces.

October, 1845: President Polk explores annexation of California.

November, 1845: U.S. offers to purchase California and New Mexico from Mexico and to establish the Texas-Mexico border at the Rio Grande.

December, 1845: Mexican army seizes control of its government and refuses to sell territory to the United States. Texas officially enters the U.S. as 28th state.

January, 1846: U.S. troops cross Rio Nueces and move south towards Rio Grande. U.S. forces enter California.

March, 1846: U.S. troops cross Rio Grande and build fort in Mexican territory.

April, 1846: Mexico warns U.S. forces to withdraw. Attacks U.S. forces blockading a Mexican town. James Polk sends war message to Congress declaring that American blood has been shed on American soil.

May, 1846: U.S. forces launch full scale multiple front invasion of Mexico.

June, 1846: U.S. Navy blockades Mexican ports. U.S. forces attack Santa Fe. Americans in California declare independence from Mexico.

August, 1846: U.S. forces annex California and New Mexico.

September, 1846: U.S. Army enters Mexico City.

November, 1847: Abraham Lincoln of Illinois elected to the House of Representatives. He serves only one term.

December, 1847: Lincoln demands to know the exact "spot" where American blood was first shed.

February, 1848: Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends war between the United States and Mexico. The United States pays \$15 million for California and New Mexico and \$3.25 to settle land claims along the Rio Grande.

December, 1848: Gold discovered in California.

November, 1849: California applies to enter the Union as a free state.

Excerpts from the debate over war with Mexico

"The Mexican Government not only refused to receive the envoy of the United States, or to listen to his propositions, but, after a long-continued series of menaces, has at last invaded our territory and shed the blood of our fellow-citizens on our own soil."
- President James Polk, May 11, 1846

"The Mexican Government refused even to hear the terms of adjustment which our minister of peace was authorized to propose, and finally, under wholly unjustifiable pretexts, involved the two countries in war, by invading the territory of the State of Texas, striking the first blow, and shedding the blood of our citizens on our own soil."
- President James Polk, December 7, 1846.

"We had ample cause of war against Mexico long before the breakout of hostilities; but even then we forebore to take redress into our own hands until Mexico herself became the aggressor, by invading our soil in hostile array, and shedding the blood of our citizens."
- President James Polk, December 8, 1846

This House is desirous to obtain a full knowledge of all facts which go to establish whether the particular spot on which the blood of our citizens was so shed was or was not at that time our own soil."
- Congressman Abraham Lincoln, December 22, 1847