

Reader's Guide

It would be difficult for most U.S. citizens to imagine the United States without the area known as the Southwest, which includes the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. However, this territory might have remained in Mexican hands had it not been for the Mexican American War (1846–48). Although the Mexican American War is sometimes viewed as a war of aggression on the part of the United States, the results of the conflict allowed increased U.S. settlement in the West during a period in which the young nation was undergoing rapid population growth.

Mexican American War provides students with a clear understanding of the issues that caused the United States to declare war against Mexico, the important battles of the war, and how the United States's victory in the conflict eventually contributed to the American Civil War (1861–65). Also looks at the motivations of the people involved in the conflict—both American and Mexican—and their attitudes toward the war itself.

Format

Mexican American War is divided into two sections: Almanac and Biographies. The Almanac contains six chapters that chronicle the war from its origins with Spanish settlement during the sixteenth century to its end with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. The Biographies section details the lives of ten people who had a strong impact on the Mexican American War. Coverage includes political figures James K. Polk and U.S. diplomat Nicholas Trist, military leaders Antonio López de Santa Anna and Winfield Scott, as well as California Bear Flag Rebellion leader John Charles Frémont and Texas revolutionary Sam Houston. Placed throughout the chapters and biographies are primary source documents, such as diary entries, letters, and newspaper articles, that allow readers the opportunity to see how the war affected ordinary people as well as political and military leaders.

Mexican American War includes more than sixty photographs, illustrations, and maps, a timeline of key events of the war, a glossary, research and activity ideas, a general bibliography, and a subject index.

Acknowledgments

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Comments and Suggestions

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