

"OUR **MANIFEST DESTINY** IS TO OVERSPREAD THE  
CONTINENT ALLOTTED BY PROVIDENCE FOR THE FREE  
DEVELOPMENT OF OUR YEARLY MULTIPLYING MILLIONS."

-John O'Sullivan, *Democratic Review*

## The Big Picture

JAMES K. POLK MADE AGGRESSIVE  
TERRITORIAL EXPANSION THE CENTERPIECE  
OF HIS 1844 PRESIDENTIAL BID AND HIS  
VICTORY ARGUABLY PROVIDED THE  
MANDATE FOR THIS TO OCCUR.

**A MANDATE(?) FOR MANIFEST DESTINY**

"WESTWARD THE COURSE OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS WAY" WITH MR. CORMICK REAPERS IN THE VAN.


# MANIFEST DESTINY AND ITS LEGACY



# JOHN GAST'S *American Progress*, 1872



Columbia, the female figure of America, leads Americans into the West and into the future by carrying the values of republicanism (as seen through her Roman garb) and progress (shown through the inclusion of technological innovations like the telegraph) and clearing native peoples and animals, seen being pushed into the darkness.



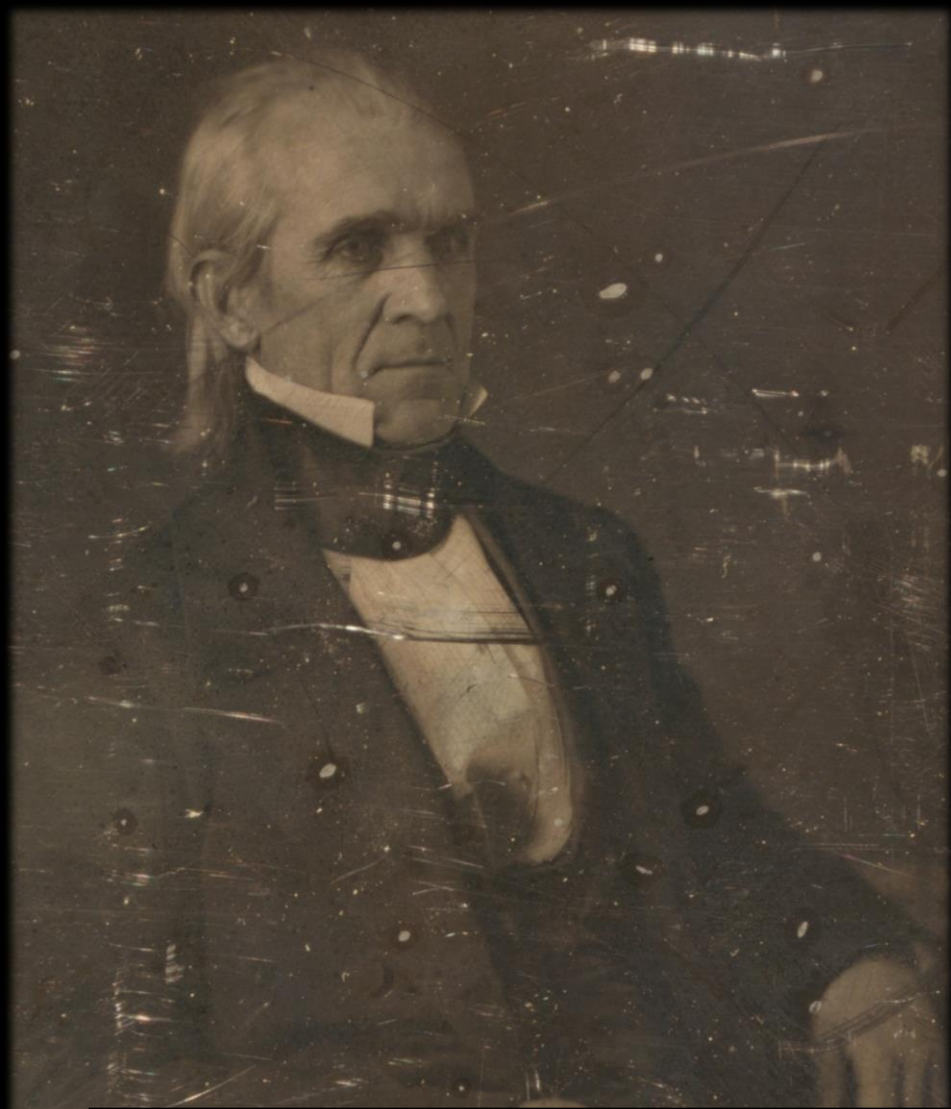
"THE WHOLE CONTINENT OF NORTH AMERICA APPEARS TO BE DESTINED BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE TO BE PEOPLED BY ONE *NATION*, SPEAKING ONE LANGUAGE, PROFESSING ONE GENERAL SYSTEM OF RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL PRINCIPLES, AND ACCUSTOMED TO ONE GENERAL TENOR OF SOCIAL USAGES AND CUSTOMS. FOR THE COMMON HAPPINESS OF THEM ALL, FOR THEIR PEACE AND PROSPERITY, I BELIEVE IT IS INDISPENSABLE THAT THEY SHOULD BE ASSOCIATED IN ONE FEDERAL UNION"

-John Quincy Adams, 1811

**Struggling to create a stronger global presence, US policymakers (expansionists) sought to dominate North America**



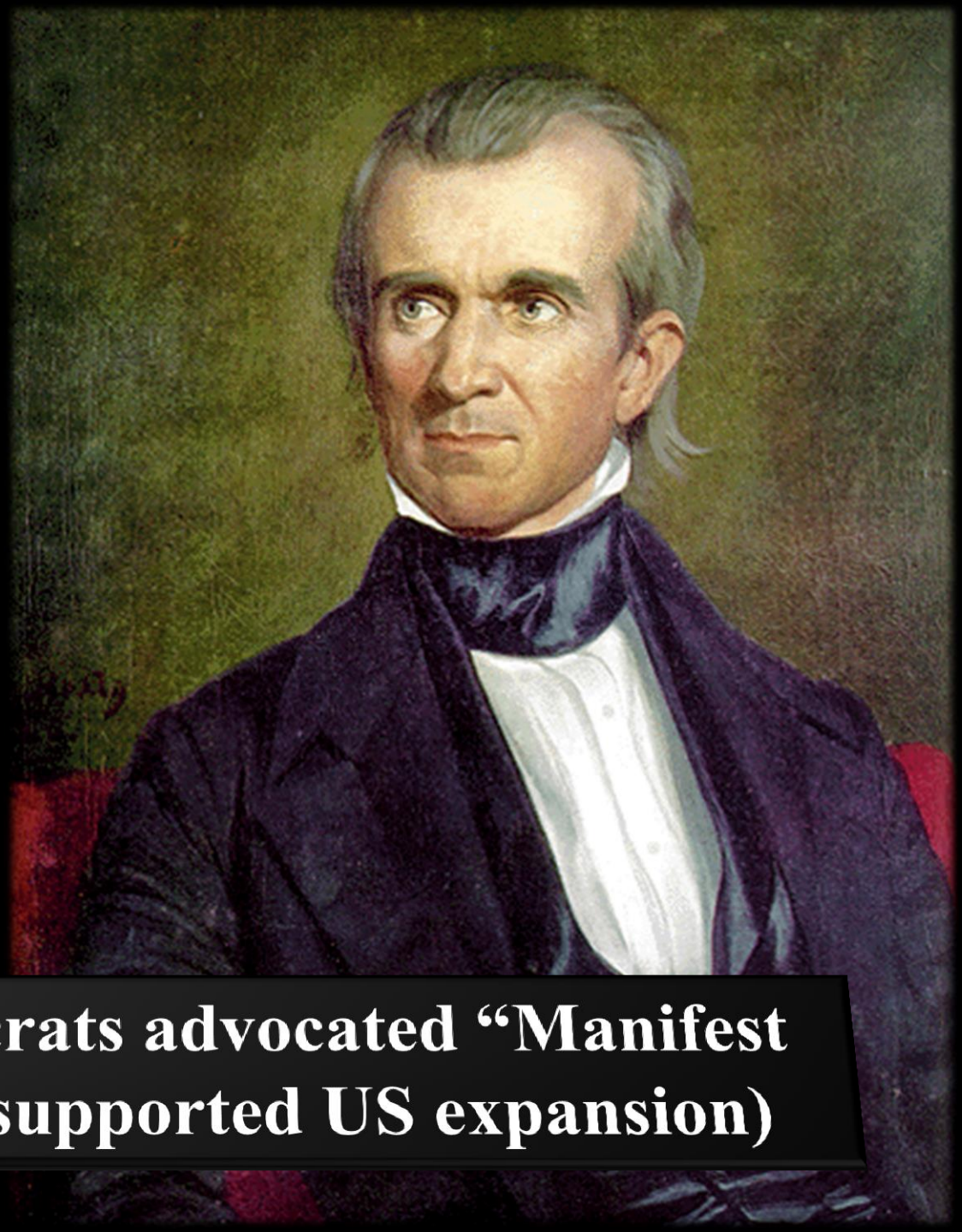
**Manifest Destiny (US expansion in North America) built on belief of white racial superiority and sense of American cultural superiority**



**(1844) Henry Clay (Whig) ran against a long-shot candidate James K. Polk (Democrat)**

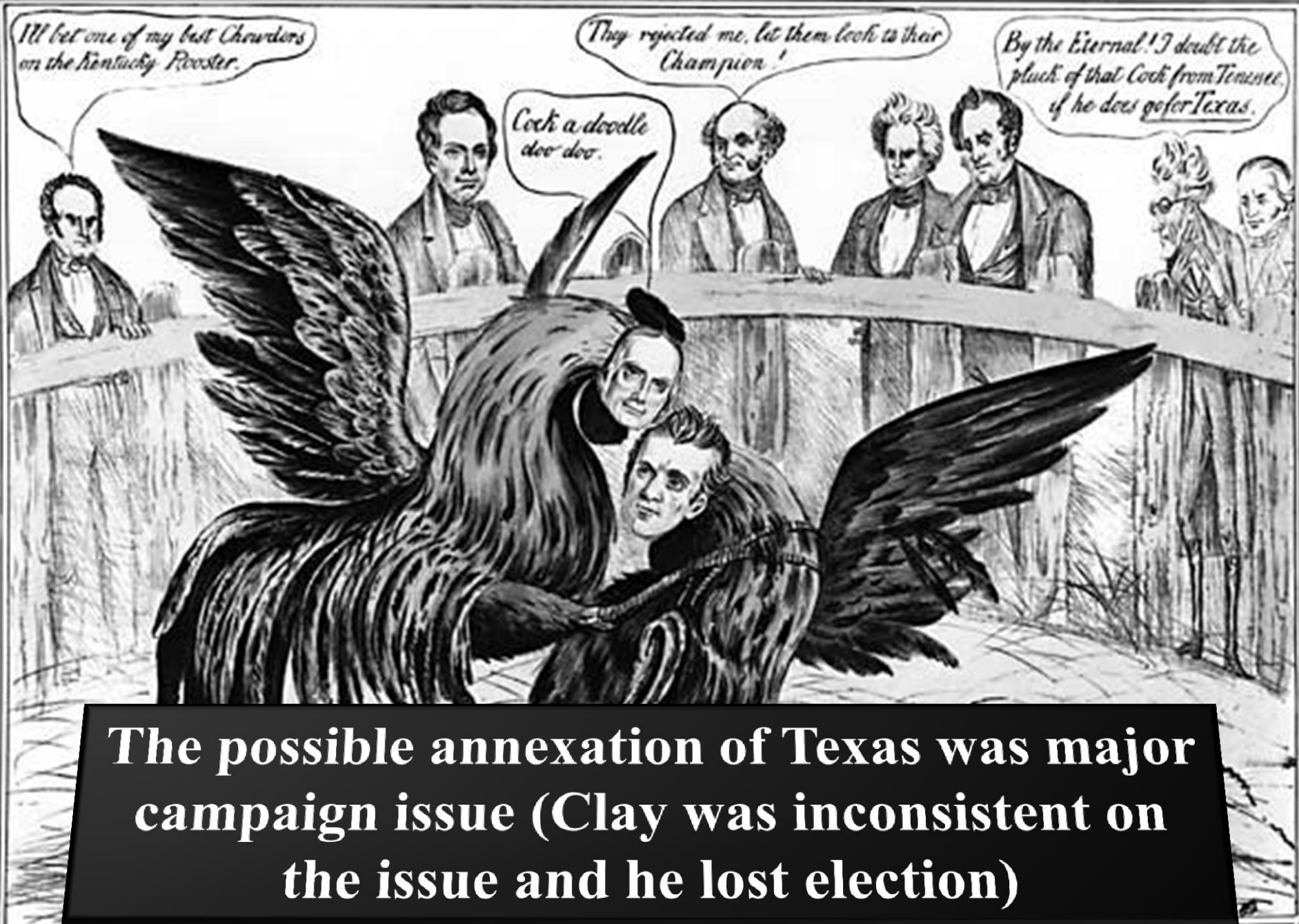


**Polk had been Speaker of the House, governor of Tennessee and “Young Hickory” was sponsored by Jackson**



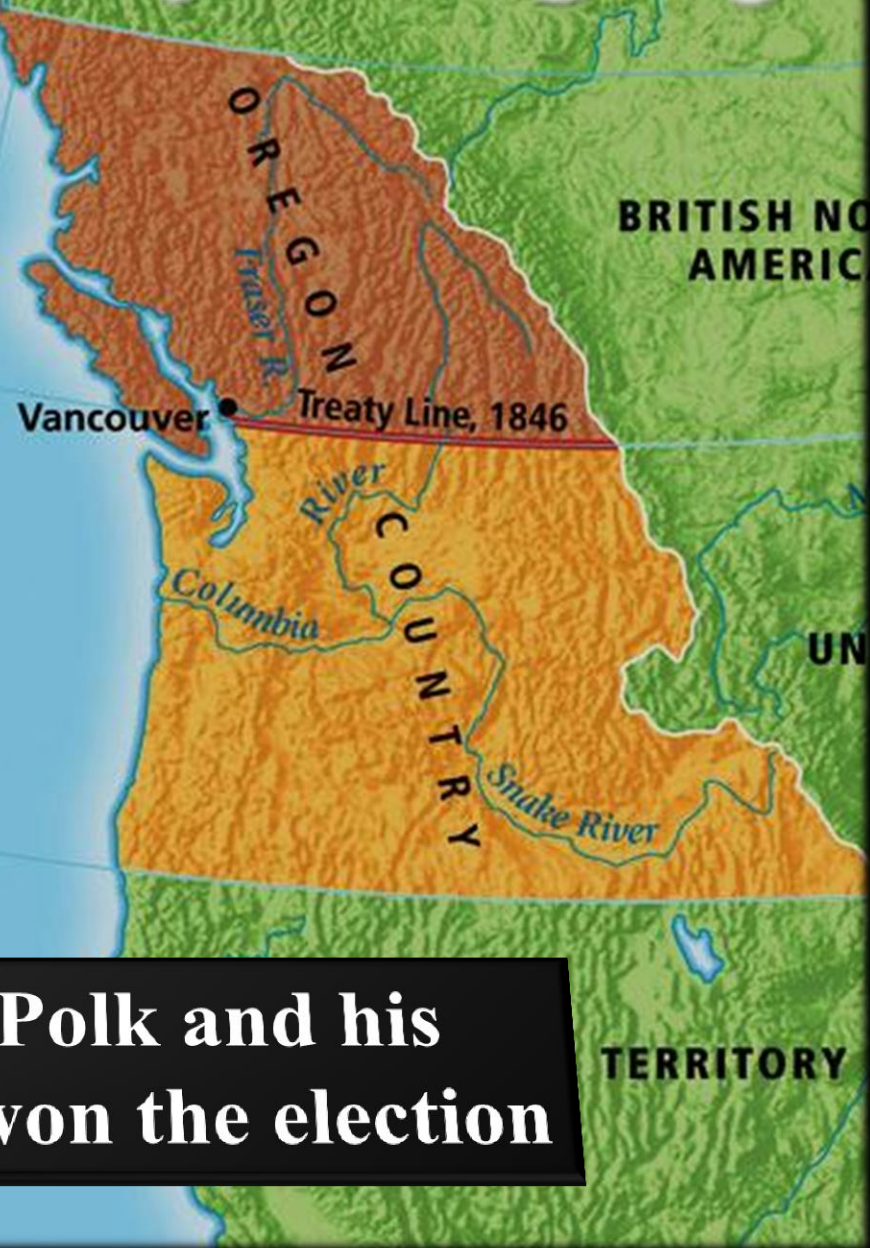
**Polk and Democrats advocated “Manifest Destiny” (God-supported US expansion)**





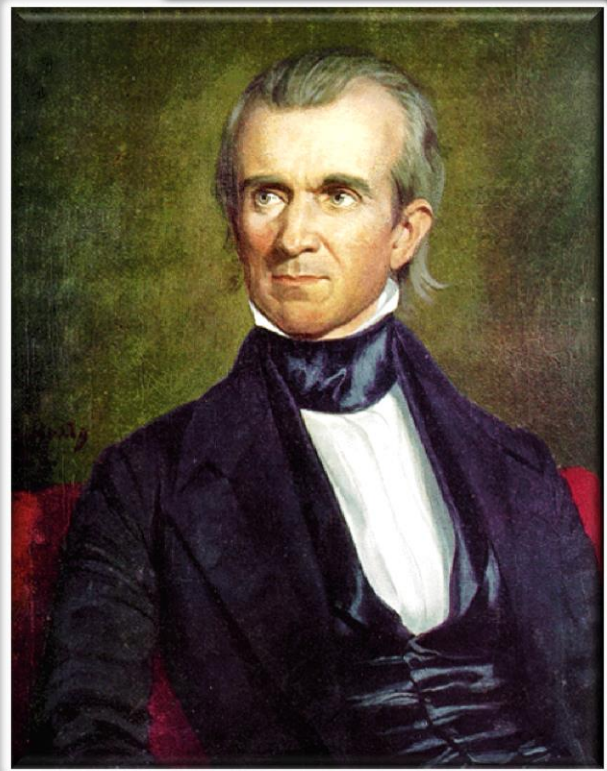
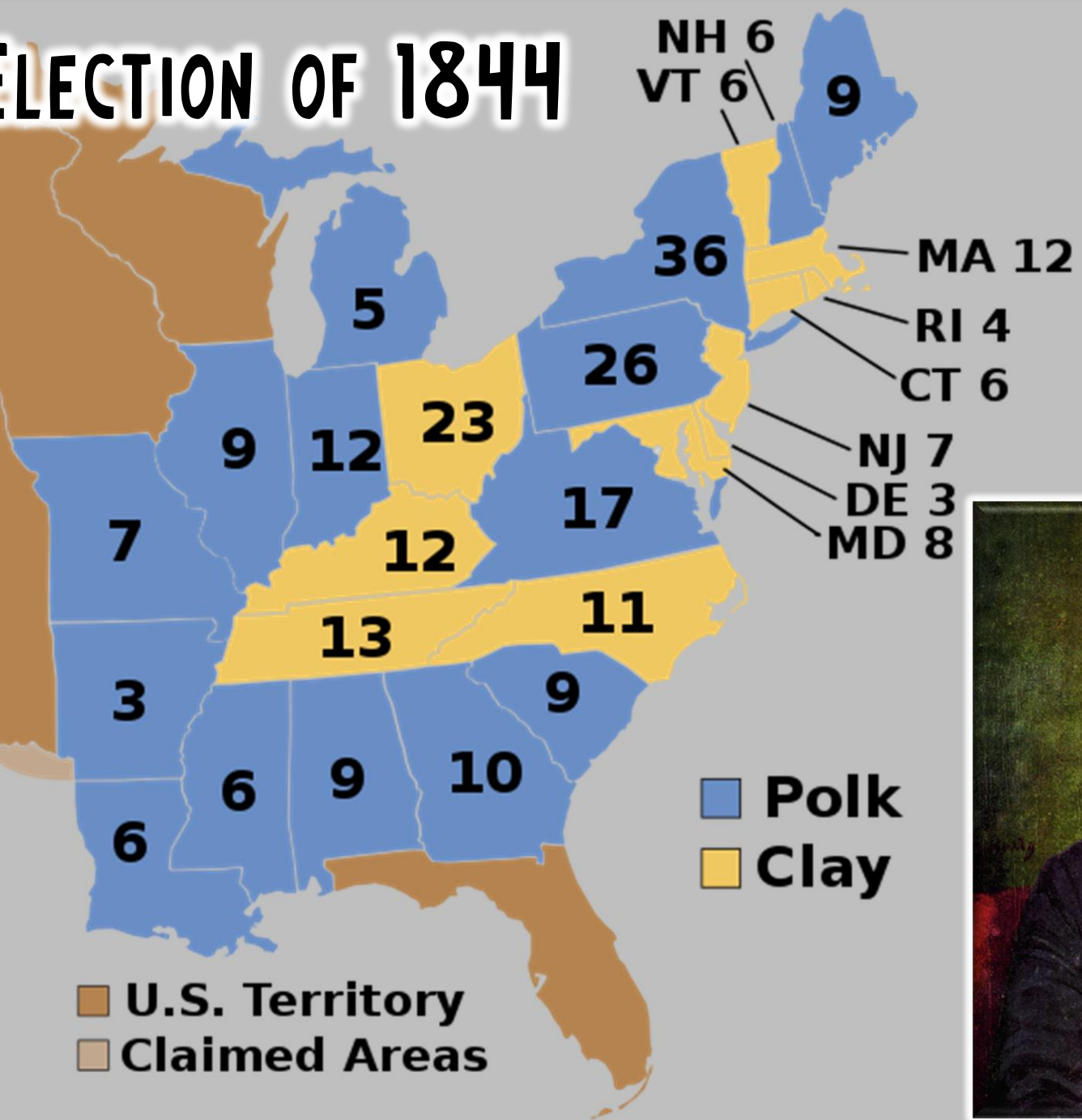
**The possible annexation of Texas was major campaign issue (Clay was inconsistent on the issue and he lost election)**

**“54° 40’ , or Fight!”**



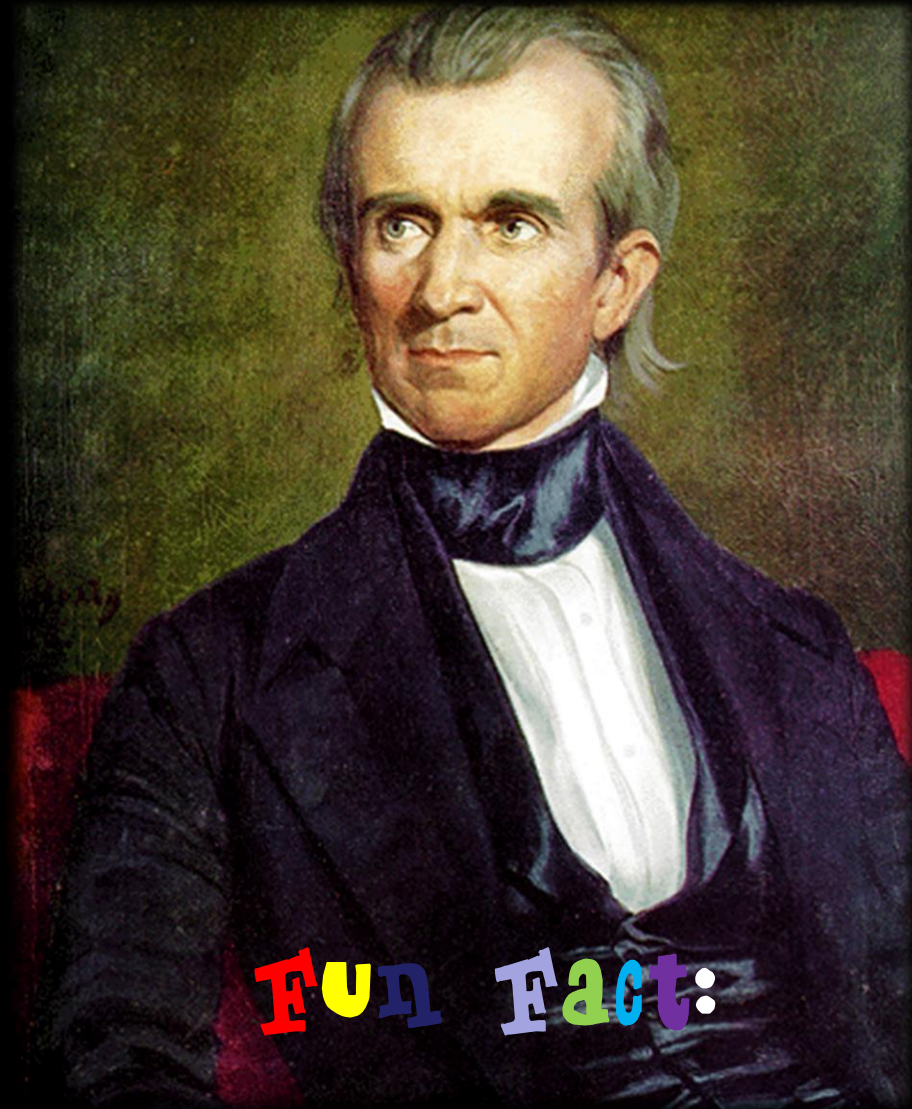
**(1844) James K. Polk and his expansionist ideas won the election**

# ELECTION OF 1844



**RANK** — **#12**

# **JAMES K. POLK**



**PRESIDENCY:** 1845-1849

**BIRTHPLACE:** NORTH CAROLINA

**EDUCATION:** UNC

**PARTY:** DEMOCRAT

**AGE UPON TAKING OFFICE:** 49

**VICE-PRESIDENT:** GEORGE DALLAS

**HEIGHT:** 5'8"

**NICKNAMES:**

"YOUNG HICKORY"

"NAPOLEON OF THE STUMP"

**SOUND BITE:**

**FUN FACT:**

POLK SUFFERED WITH AN INTESTINAL ORDER THAT "NO PRESIDENT WHO PERFORMS HIS DUTIES FAITHFULLY RESULTED IN CHRONIC DIARRHEA AND CONSCIENTIOUSLY CAN HAVE ANY LEISURE."

A portrait of James K. Polk, the 11th President of the United States, shown from the chest up. He has grey hair, is wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark blue cravat. He is looking slightly to the left of the viewer.

## The Big Picture

POLK HAD A CLEAR AGENDA FOR HIS PRESIDENCY, METICULOUSLY ACHIEVED THESE GOALS AND HAS ENJOYED GROWING RESPECT FOR HIS LEGACY AMONG MODERN HISTORIANS.

# POLK AND MANIFEST DESTINY

Territorio de  
Alta California

Territorio de  
Nuevo México

República  
de Texas

UNANIMOUS  
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

BY THE  
DELEGATES OF THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS,

IN GENERAL CONVENTION,  
AT THE TOWN OF WASHINGTON,

ON THE SECOND DAY OF MARCH, 1836.

Chihuahua

Coahuila

Sinaloa

Durango

Nuevo León

Tamaulipas

Islas Marias

Jalisco

Zacatecas

San Luis

Agua Calientes

Potosi

Quintana Roo

Quintana Roo

Colima

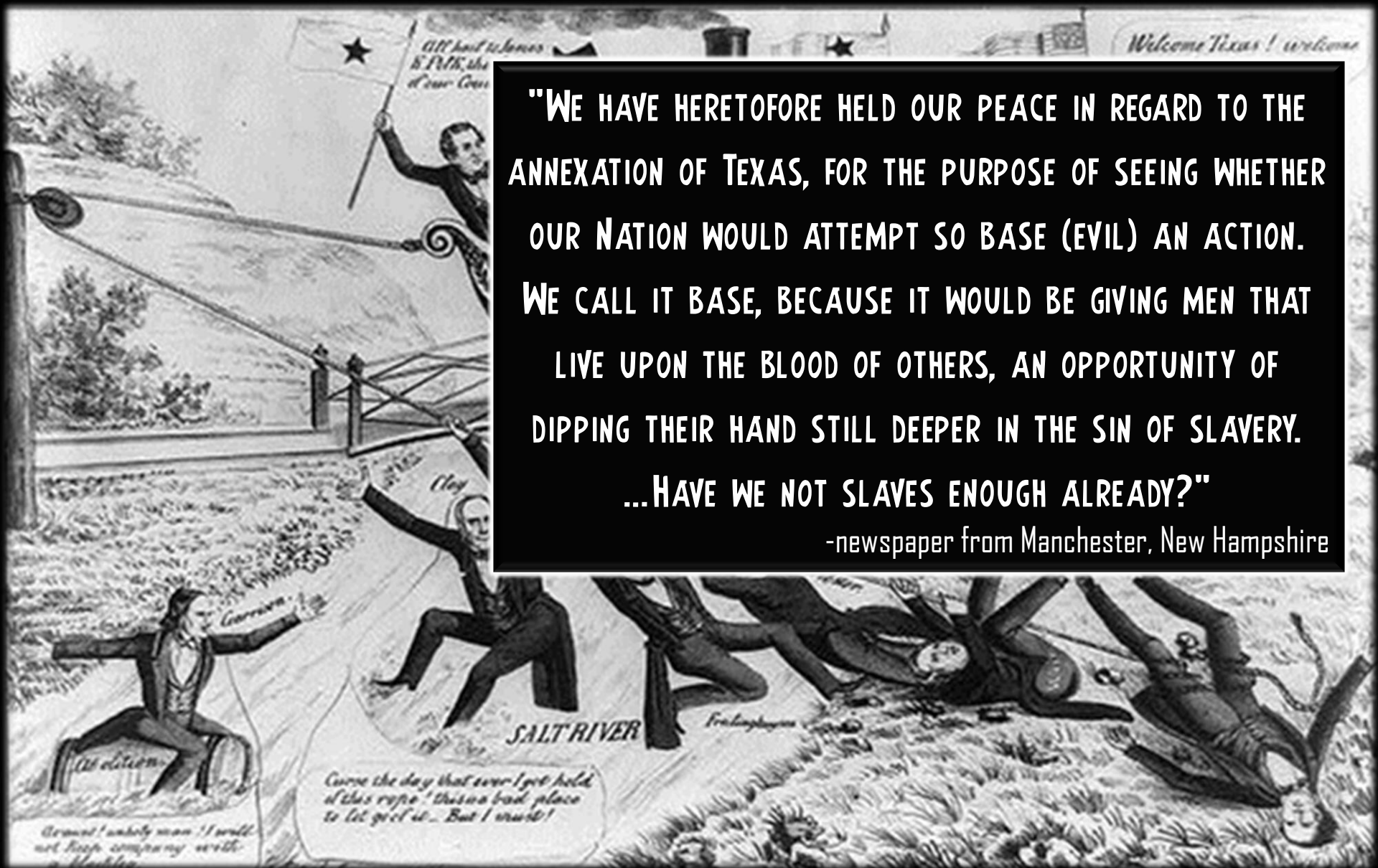
Michoacán

República de  
Yucatán

Polk wanted to annex Texas and knew it might cause war with Mexico

ESCALA

0 100 200 300 400 Miles

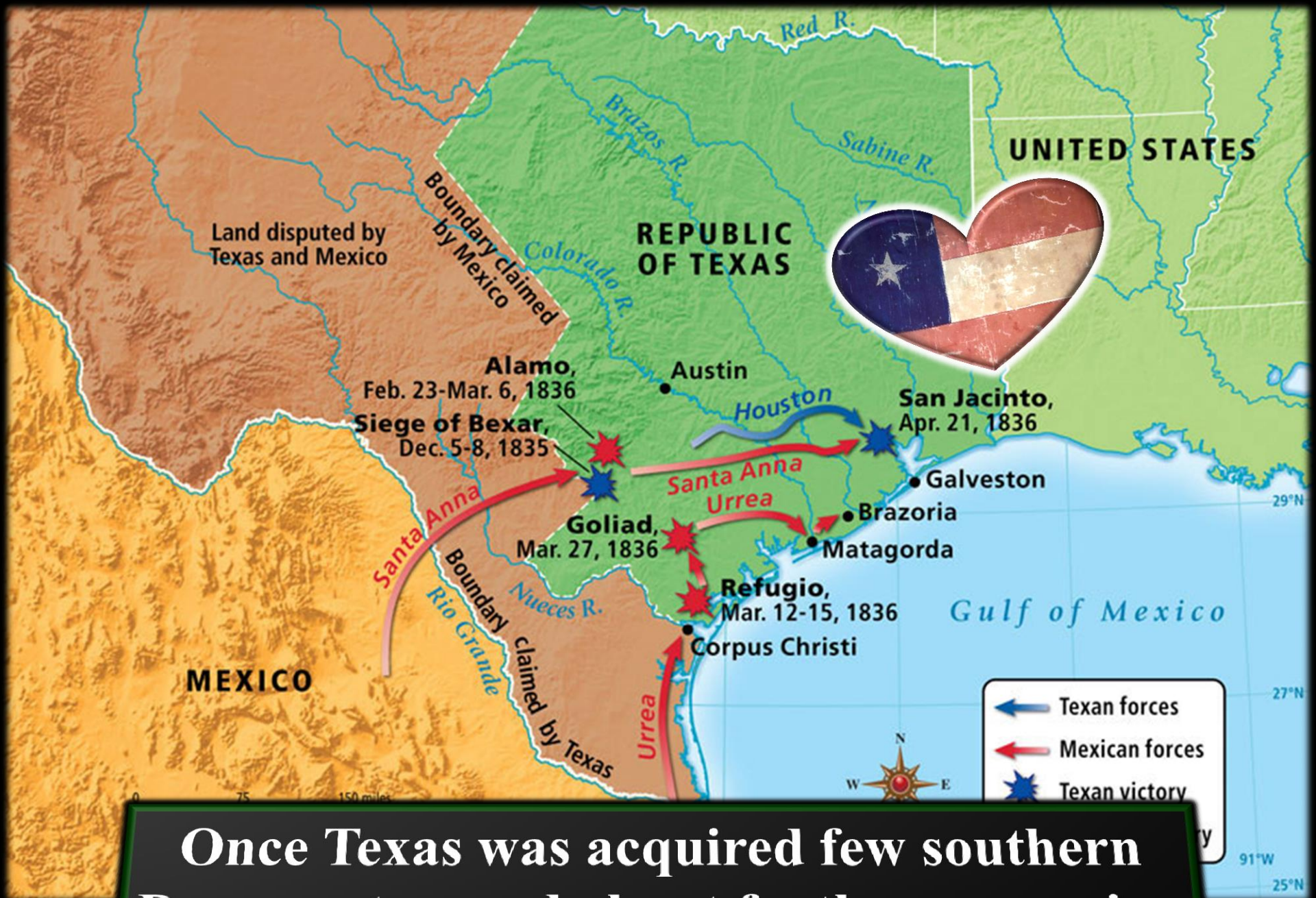


"WE HAVE HERETOFORE HELD OUR PEACE IN REGARD TO THE ANNEXATION OF TEXAS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEEING WHETHER OUR NATION WOULD ATTEMPT SO BASE (EVIL) AN ACTION. WE CALL IT BASE, BECAUSE IT WOULD BE GIVING MEN THAT LIVE UPON THE BLOOD OF OTHERS, AN OPPORTUNITY OF DIPPING THEIR HAND STILL DEEPER IN THE SIN OF SLAVERY.

...HAVE WE NOT SLAVES ENOUGH ALREADY?"

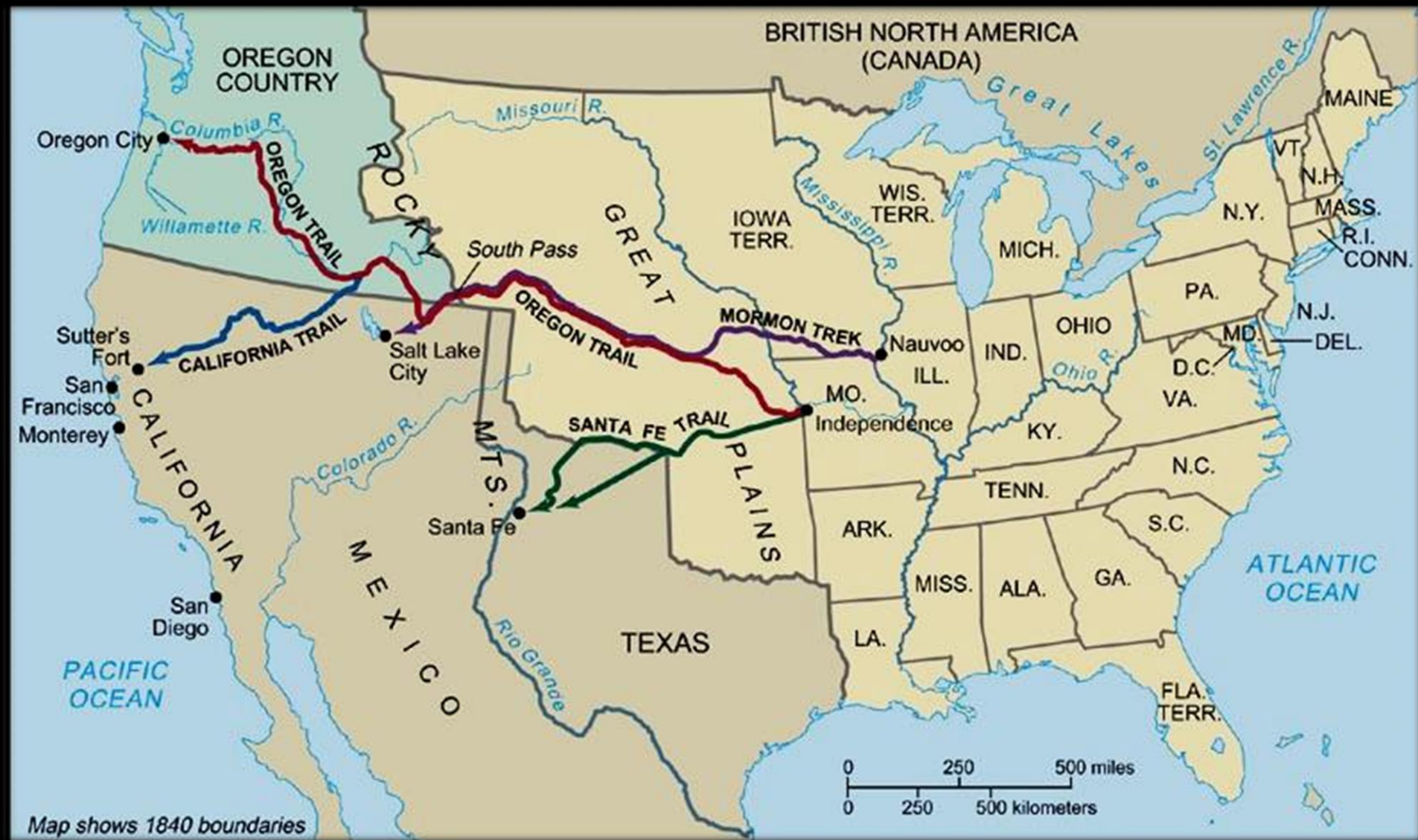
-newspaper from Manchester, New Hampshire

(1845) Polk invited Texas to be 28<sup>th</sup> state



**Once Texas was acquired few southern Democrats cared about further expansion**

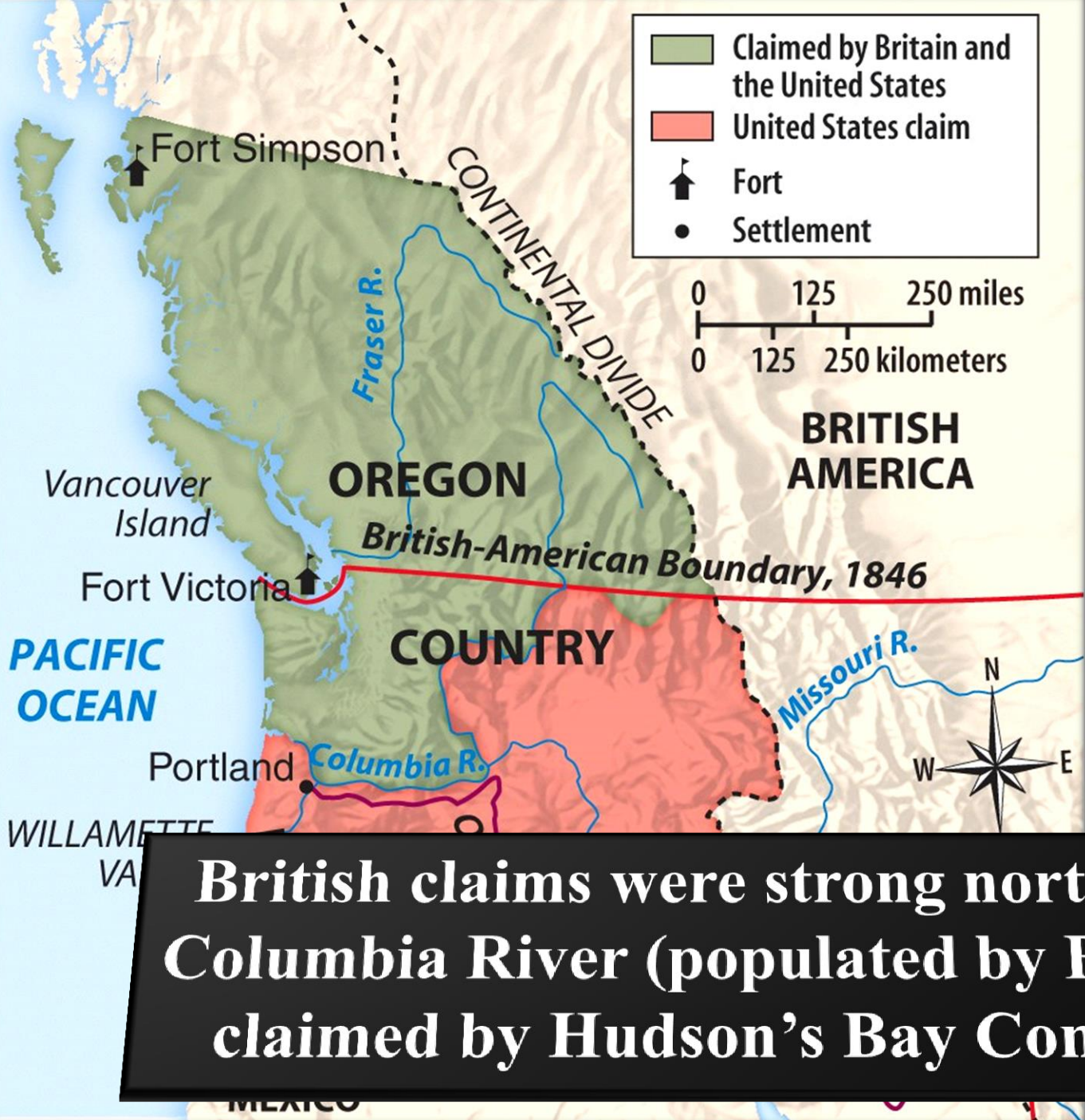




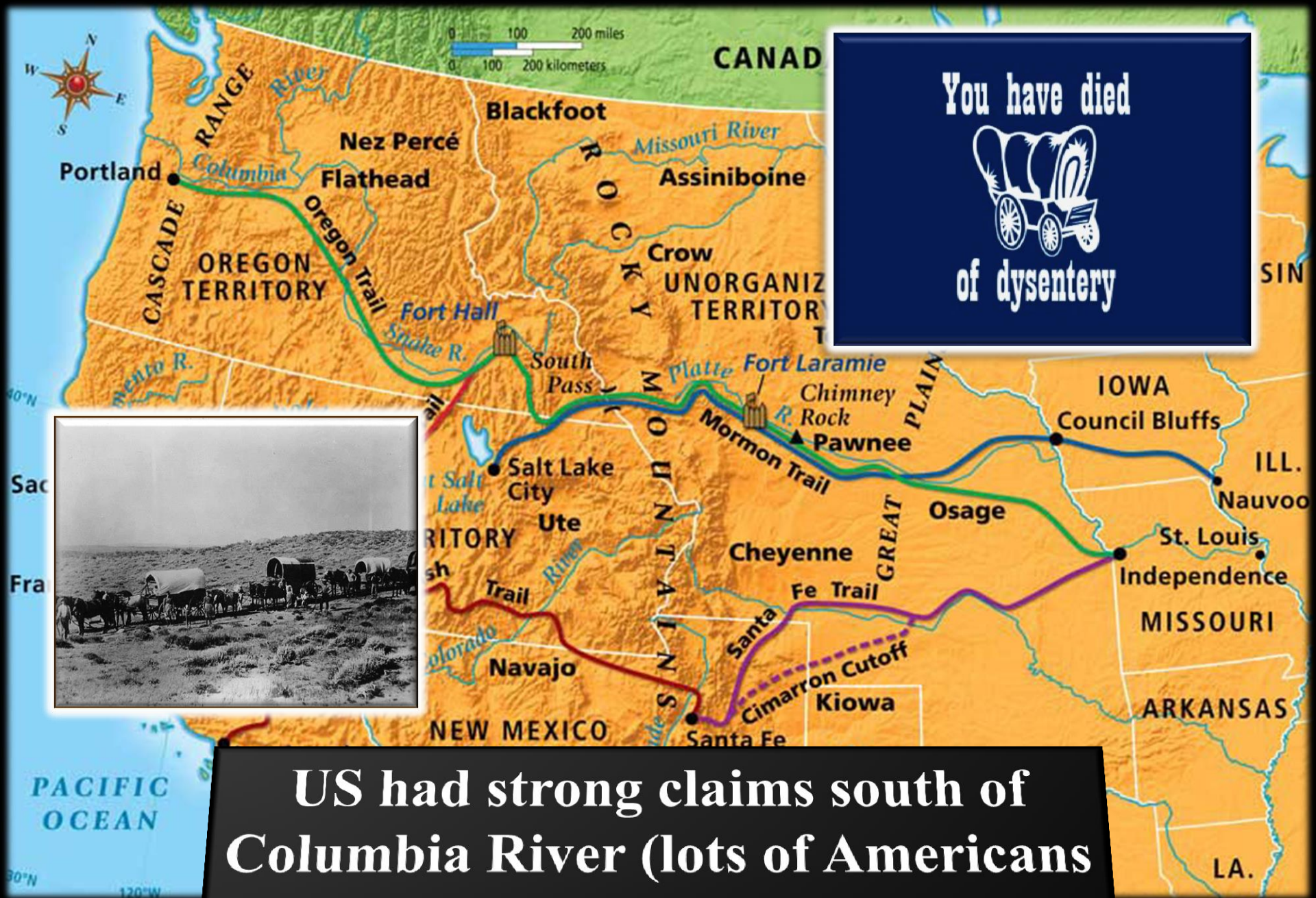
**Polk wanted to acquire California and settle the Oregon dispute**




**Oregon was huge (stretching from northern CA to the 54°40' line)**



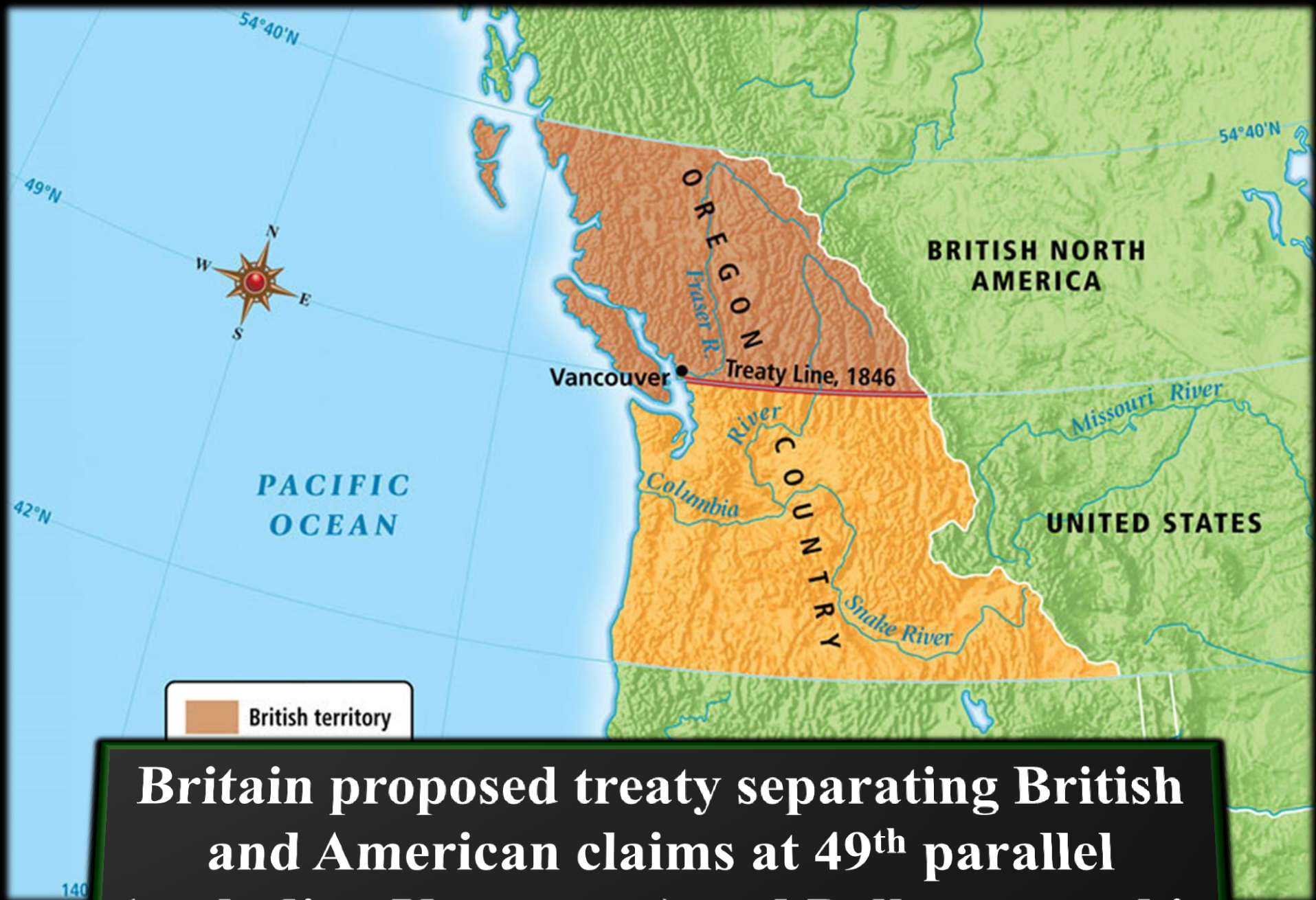
**British claims were strong north of the Columbia River (populated by Brits and claimed by Hudson's Bay Company)**



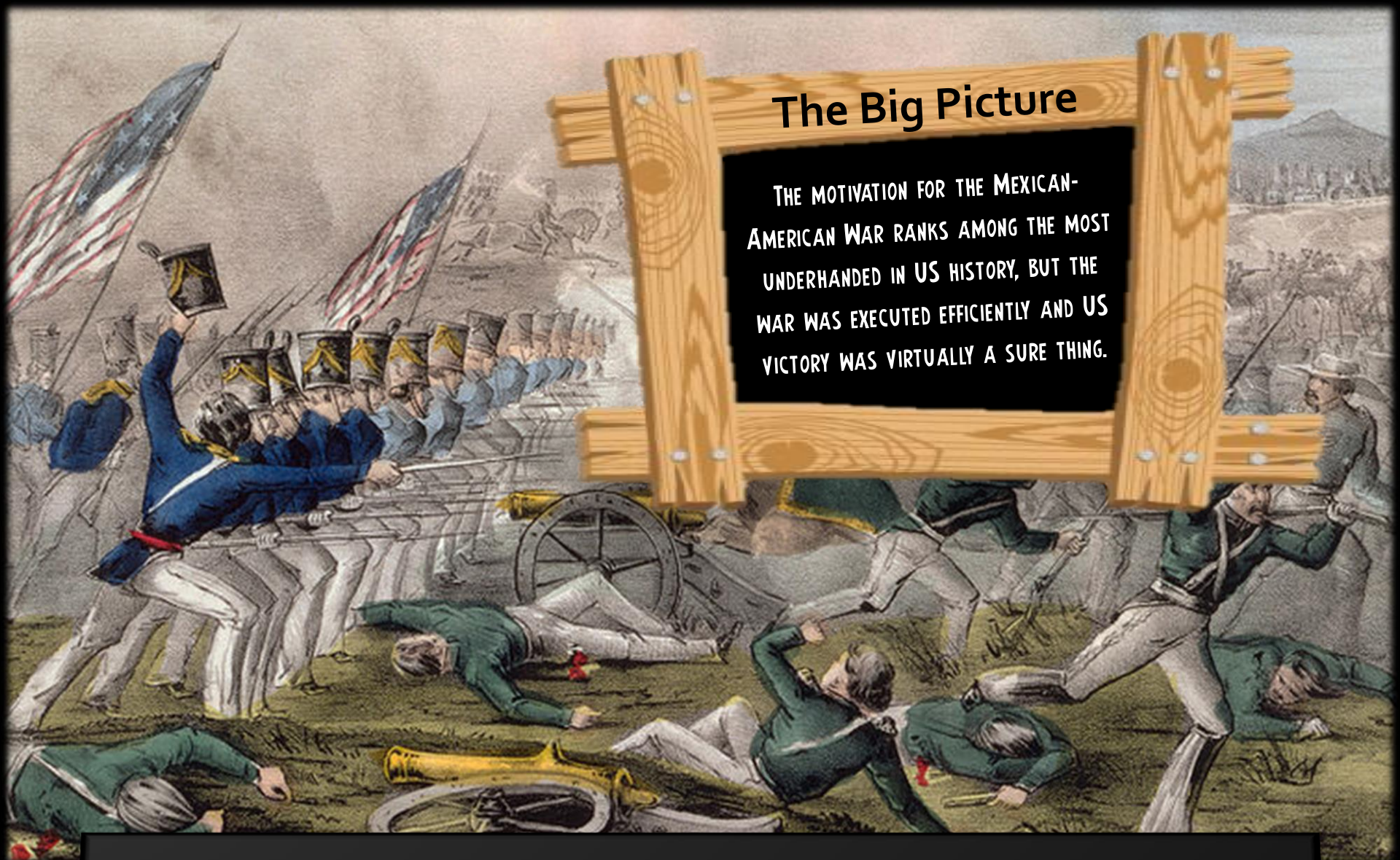
You have died  
  
 of dysentery



**US had strong claims south of  
 Columbia River (lots of Americans  
 lived there thinks to Oregon Trail)**



**Britain proposed treaty separating British and American claims at 49<sup>th</sup> parallel (excluding Vancouver) and Polk accepted it**



## The Big Picture

THE MOTIVATION FOR THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR RANKS AMONG THE MOST UNDERHANDED IN US HISTORY, BUT THE WAR WAS EXECUTED EFFICIENTLY AND US VICTORY WAS VIRTUALLY A SURE THING.

# THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR



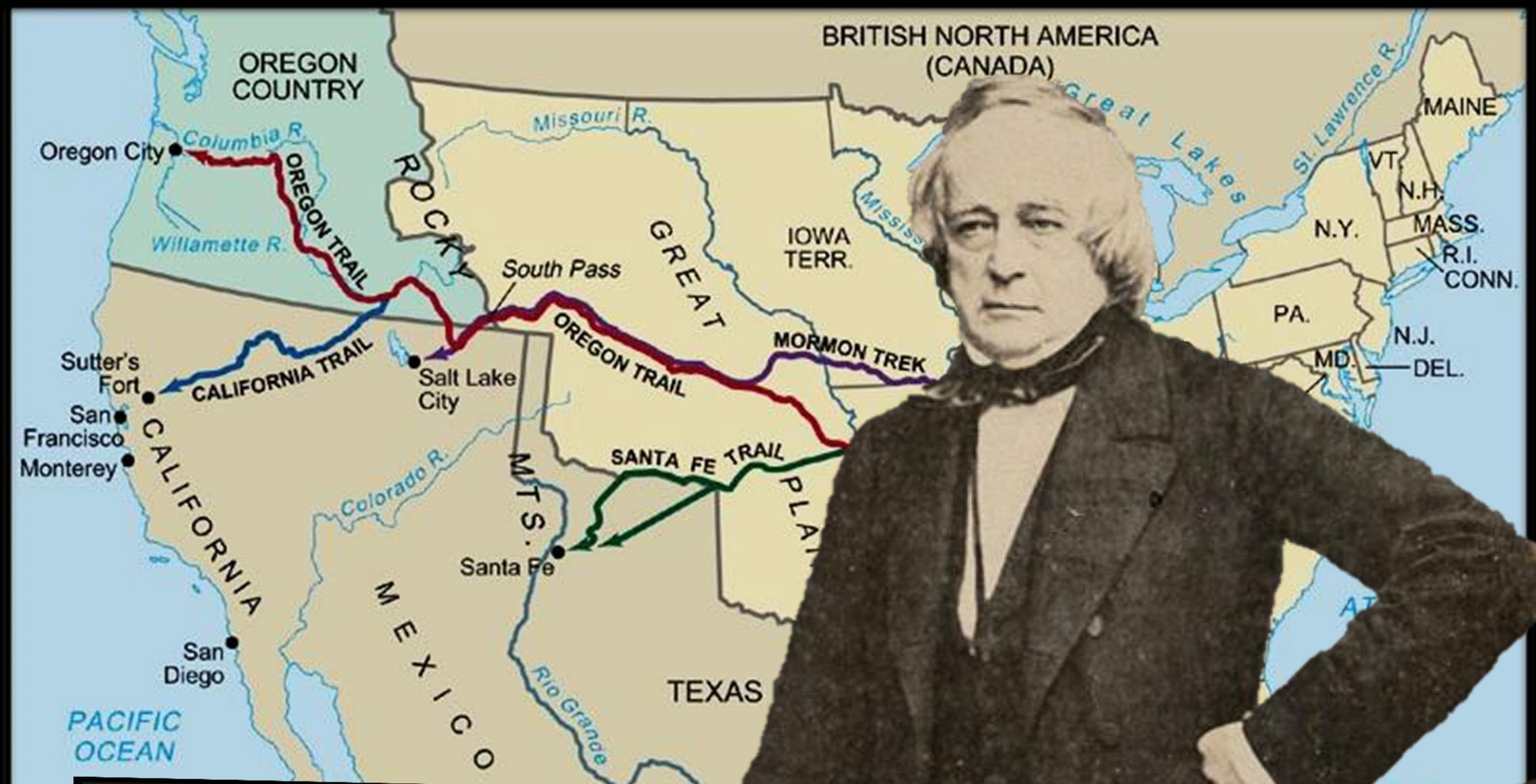
**"SHALL THIS GARDEN OF BEAUTY BE SUFFERED TO LIE DORMANT**

**"AS CALIFORNIA MEXICANS MUST YIELD TO "A SUPERIOR POPULATION, INSENSIBLY OOZING INTO HER TERRITORIES, CHANGING HER CUSTOMS, AND OUT-LIVING, OUT-TRADING, EXTERMINATING HER WEAKER BLOOD."**

*-American Review*

*-Illinois State Register*

**Polk wanted Mexican-owned California (a diplomatic solution less likely given annexation of Texas)**



**US sent John Slidell to Mexico  
City prepared to offer up to \$25  
million for CA (he was ignored)**





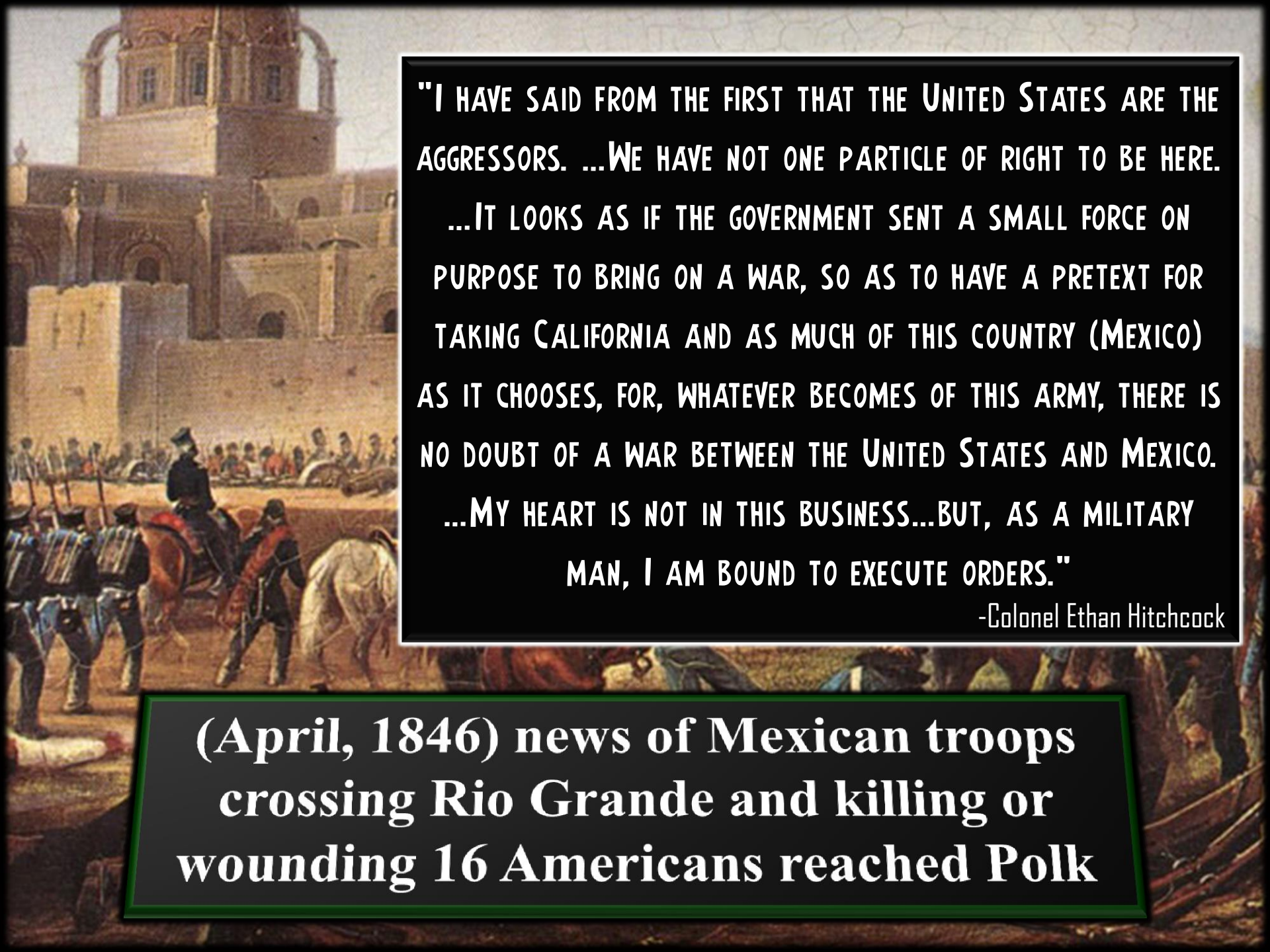
**Border between Mexico and US undefined  
(Texas claimed its border at the Rio Grande  
and not the Nueces River like Mexico)**

**"WE WERE SENT TO PROVOKE A FIGHT BUT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT MEXICO SHOULD COMMENCE IT."**

*-Ulysses S. Grant, officer under Taylor*



**(Jan, 1846) Polk sent 4000 men under Zachary Taylor to march from the Nueces River to the Rio Grande (near Mexican troops)**



**"I HAVE SAID FROM THE FIRST THAT THE UNITED STATES ARE THE AGGRESSORS. ...WE HAVE NOT ONE PARTICLE OF RIGHT TO BE HERE. ...IT LOOKS AS IF THE GOVERNMENT SENT A SMALL FORCE ON PURPOSE TO BRING ON A WAR, SO AS TO HAVE A PRETEXT FOR TAKING CALIFORNIA AND AS MUCH OF THIS COUNTRY (MEXICO) AS IT CHOOSES, FOR, WHATEVER BECOMES OF THIS ARMY, THERE IS NO DOUBT OF A WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO. ...MY HEART IS NOT IN THIS BUSINESS...BUT, AS A MILITARY MAN, I AM BOUND TO EXECUTE ORDERS."**

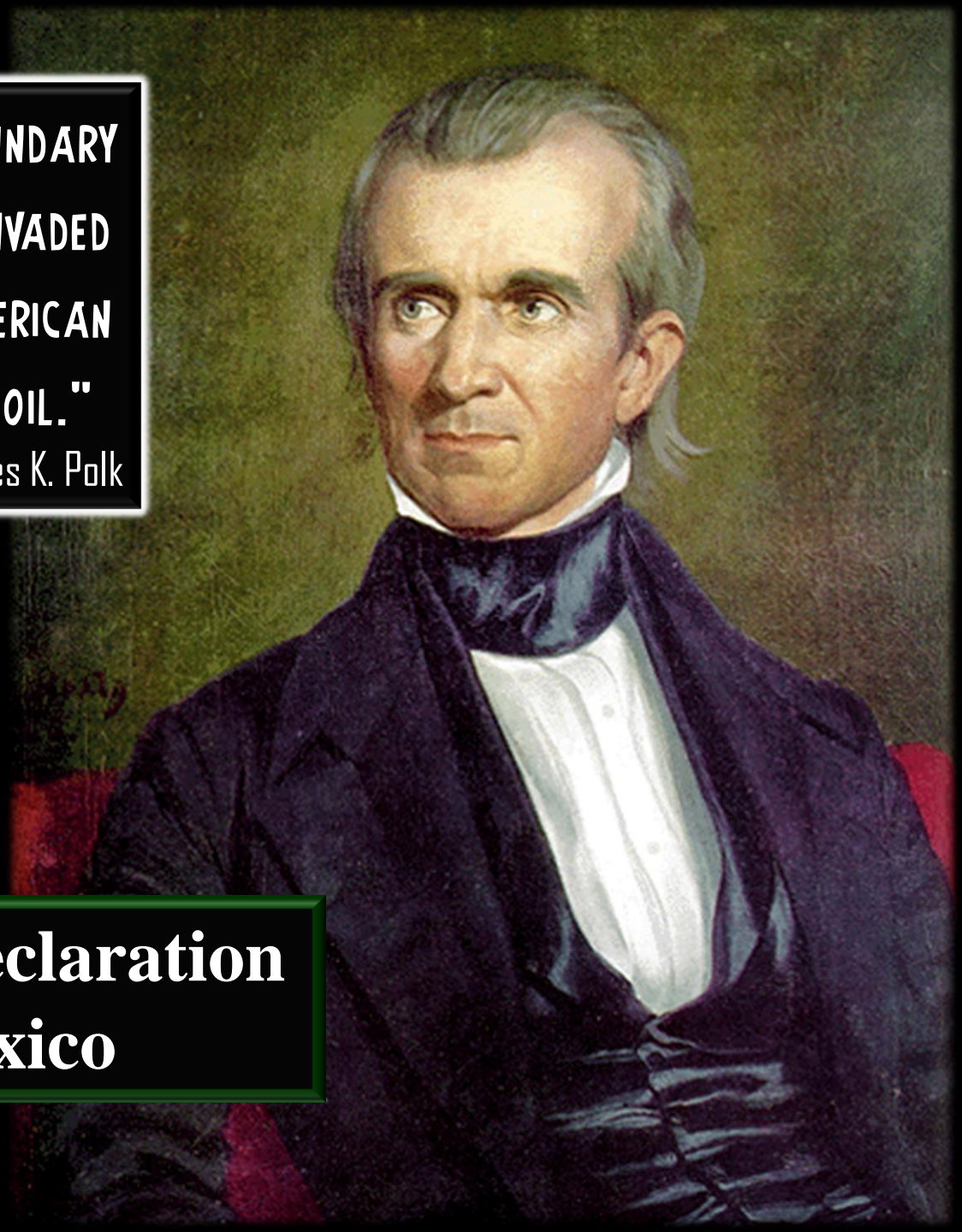
**-Colonel Ethan Hitchcock**

**(April, 1846) news of Mexican troops crossing Rio Grande and killing or wounding 16 Americans reached Polk**

**MEXICO "HAS PASSED THE BOUNDARY  
OF THE UNITED STATES, HAS INVADED  
OUR TERRITORY, AND SHED AMERICAN  
BLOOD UPON THE AMERICAN SOIL."**

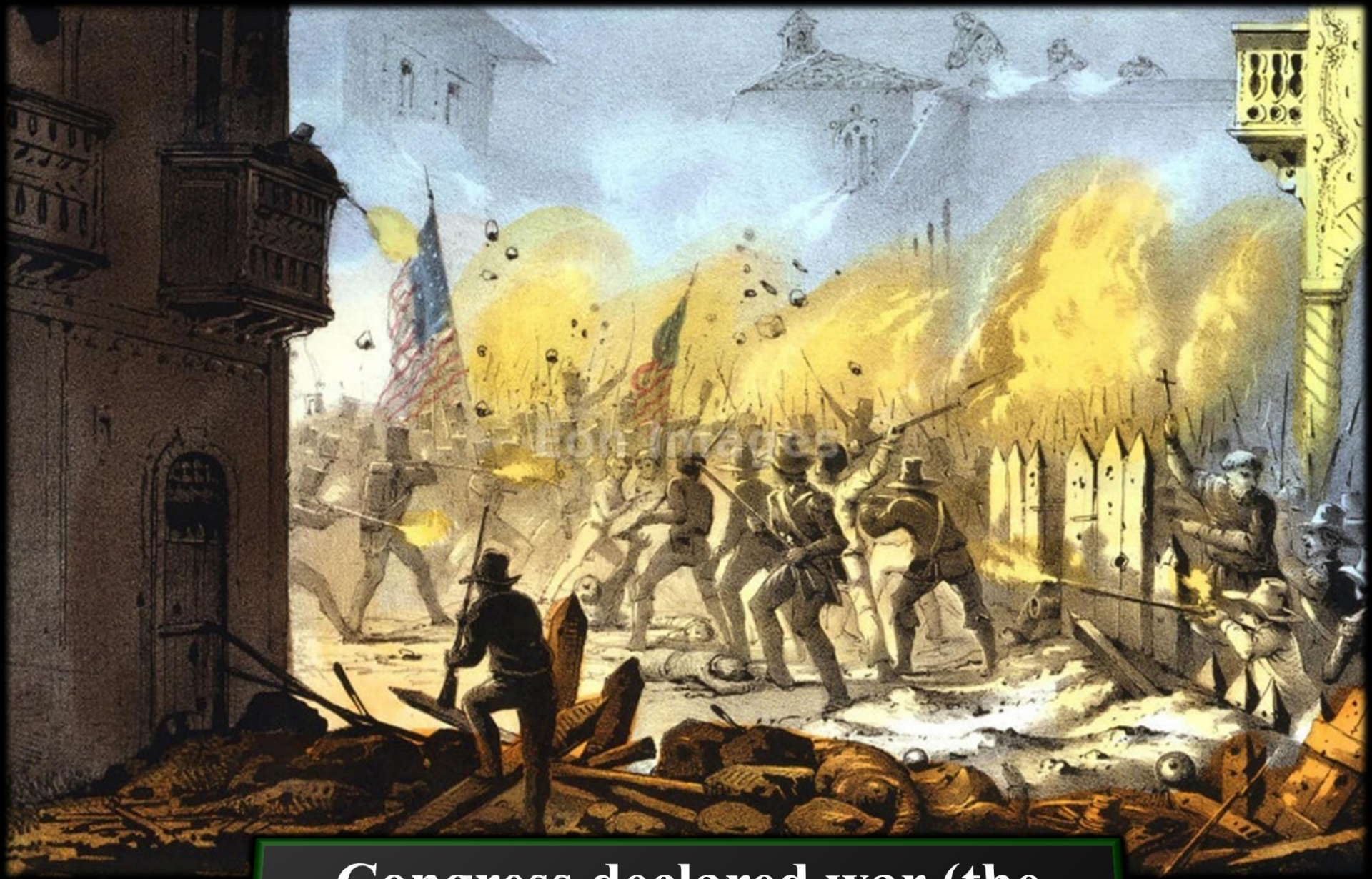
**-James K. Polk**

**Polk called for a declaration  
of war on Mexico**





**Some politicians wanted to know the exact spot of the fighting (including Abraham “Spotty” Lincoln)**



**Congress declared war (the  
Mexican-American War began)**

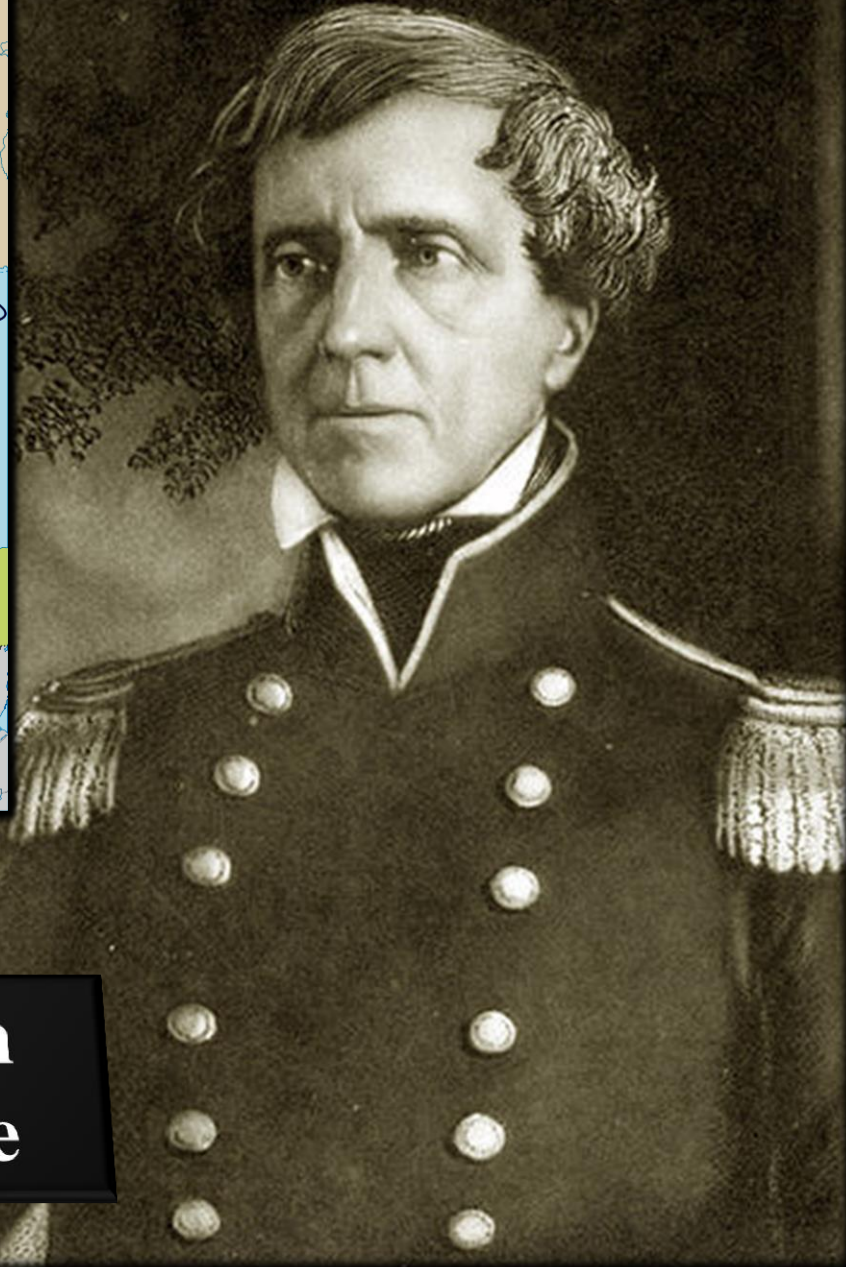


**Polk hoped to beat Mexico enough so they would sell CA**

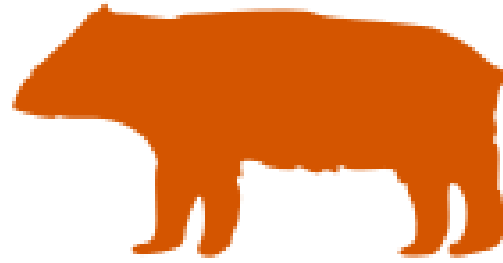


**The recently dethroned Santa Anna promised the US if he returned to power he would end war and give US CA (he lied)**

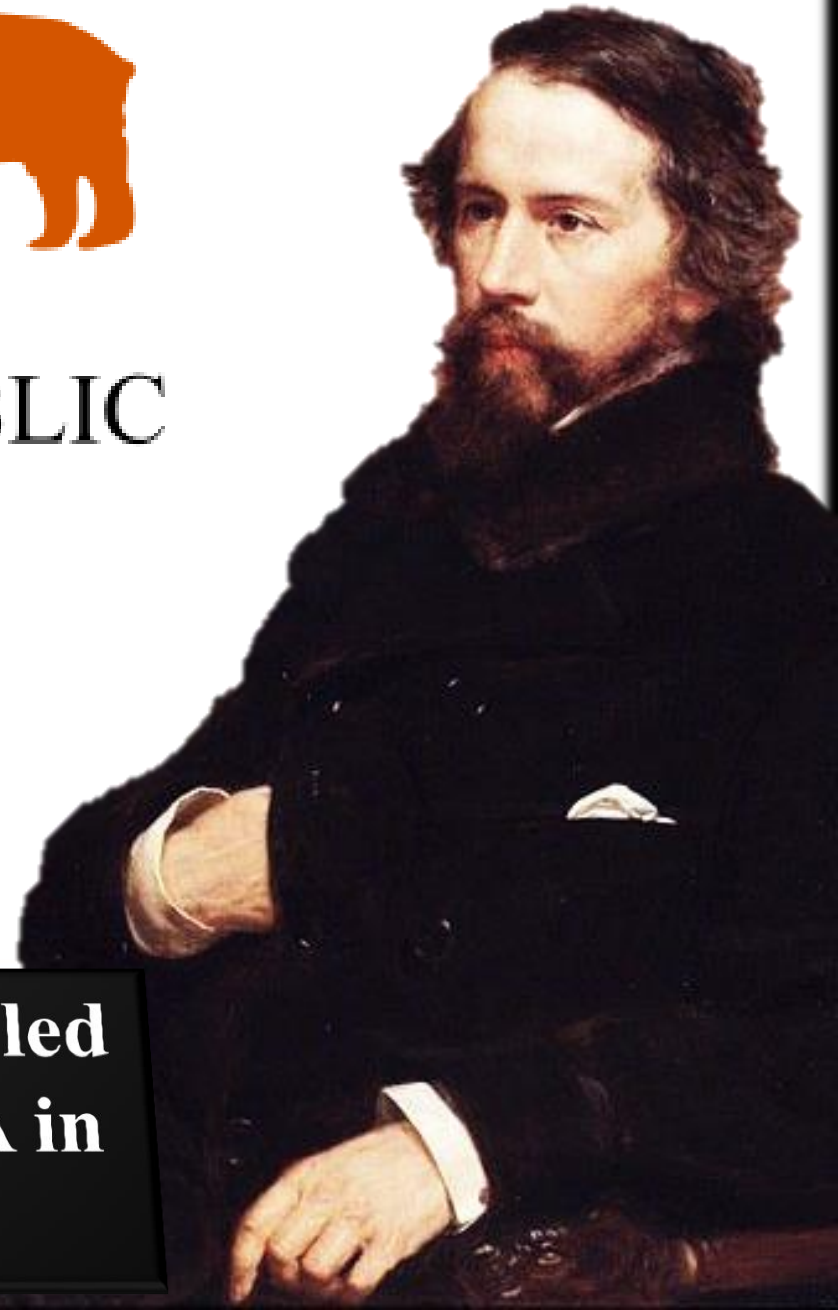




Operations under Stephen Kearny captured Santa Fe

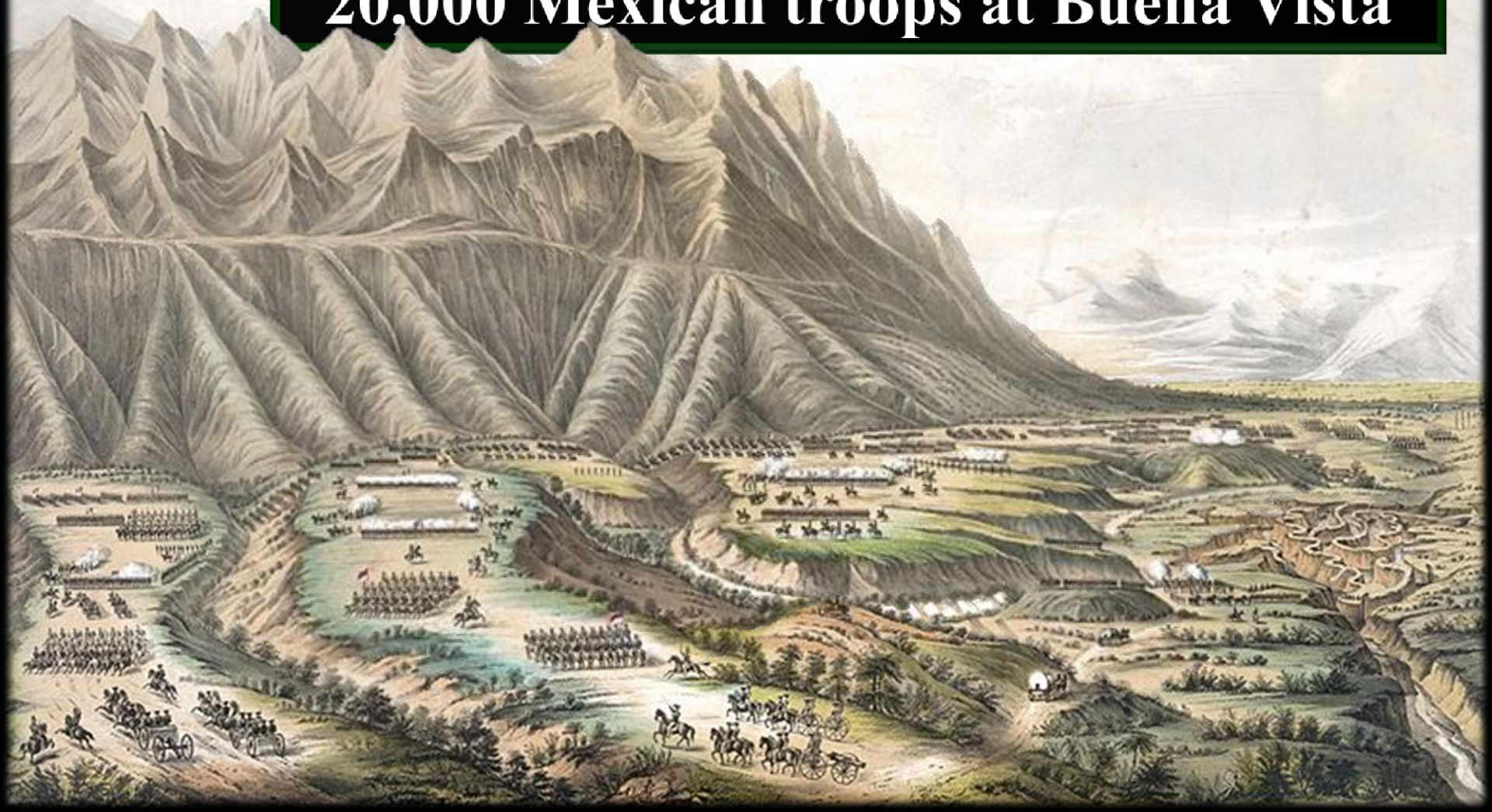


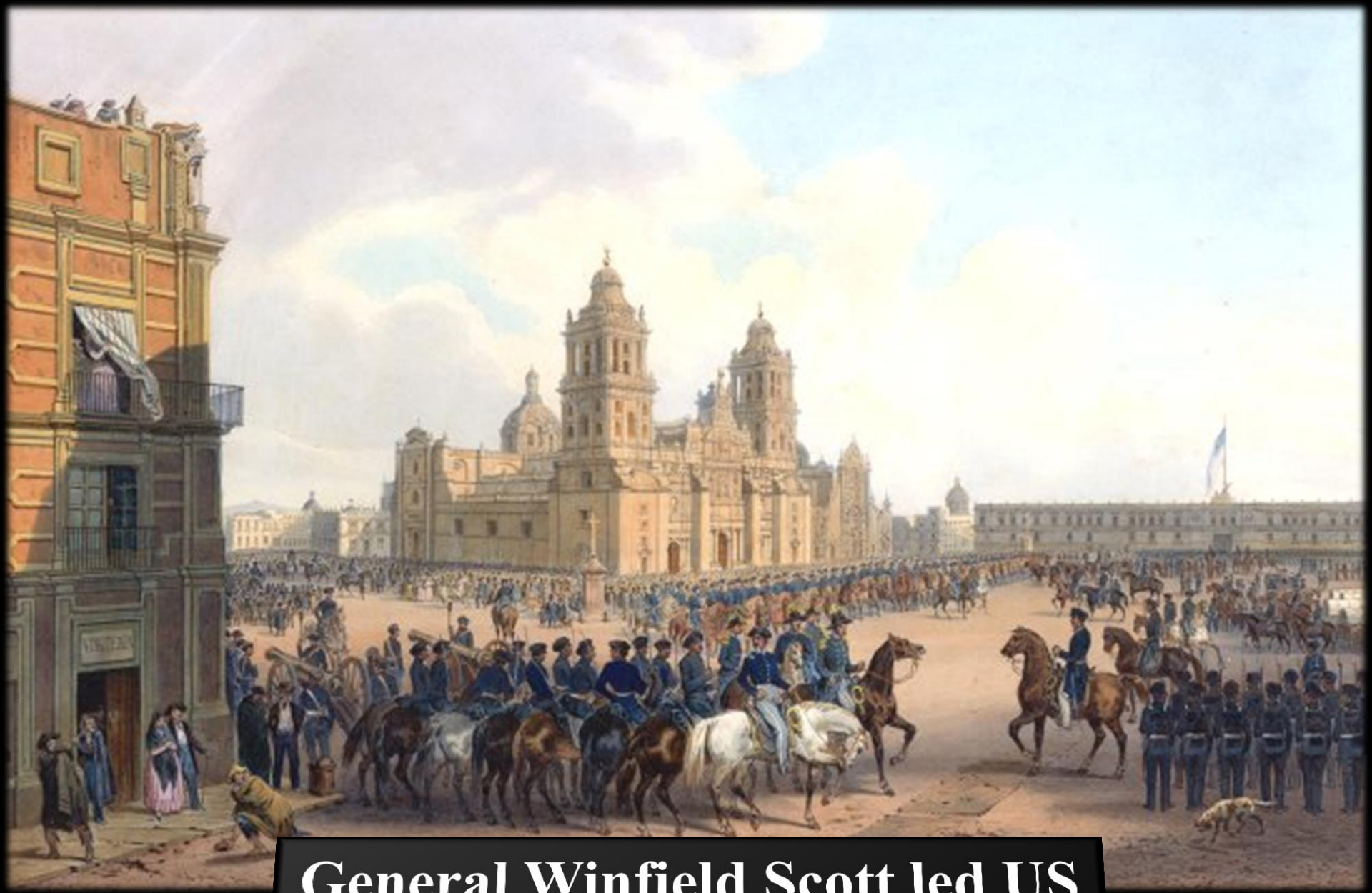
**CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC**



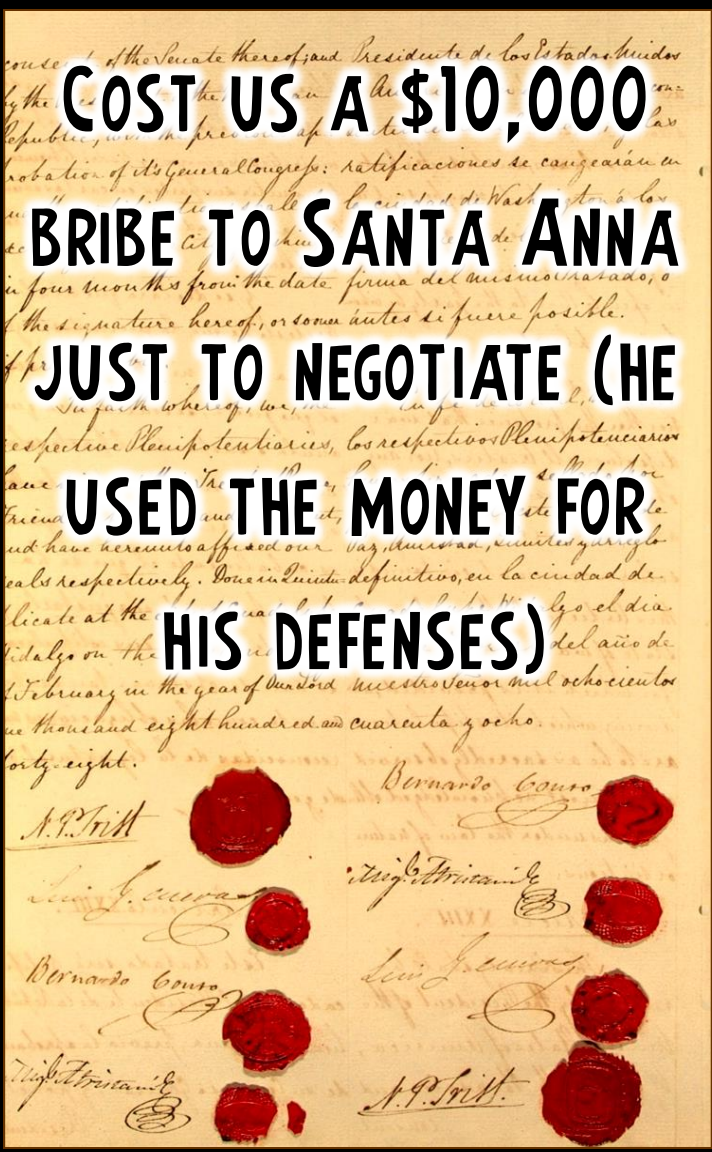
**John Fremont successfully led  
the Bear Flag Revolt in CA in  
1846**

**General Zachary Taylor pushed into Mexico with 5,000 men and defeated 20,000 Mexican troops at Buena Vista**

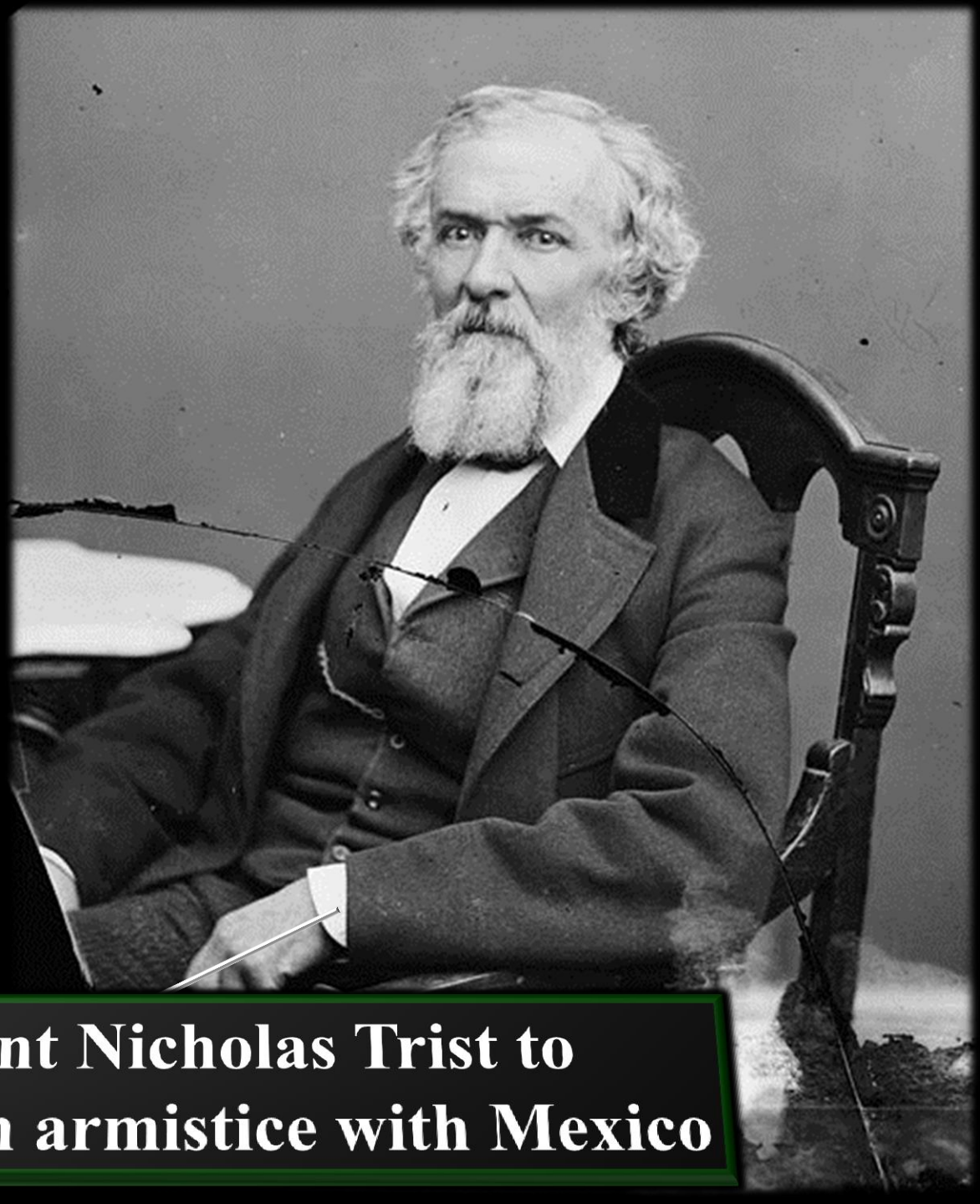




**General Winfield Scott led US  
troops into Mexico City**



**COST US A \$10,000  
BRIBE TO SANTA ANNA  
JUST TO NEGOTIATE (HE  
USED THE MONEY FOR  
HIS DEFENSES)**



**Polk sent Nicholas Trist to negotiate an armistice with Mexico**

A red book with gold decorative borders and a silver medal with a central eagle emblem on a blue fabric background. The book is open, showing the top and bottom covers with intricate gold patterns. The medal is circular and features a central eagle with spread wings, surrounded by a laurel wreath. The entire scene is set against a dark blue, draped fabric background.

**Trist negotiated the Treaty of  
Guadalupe Hidalgo (Feb, 1848)**

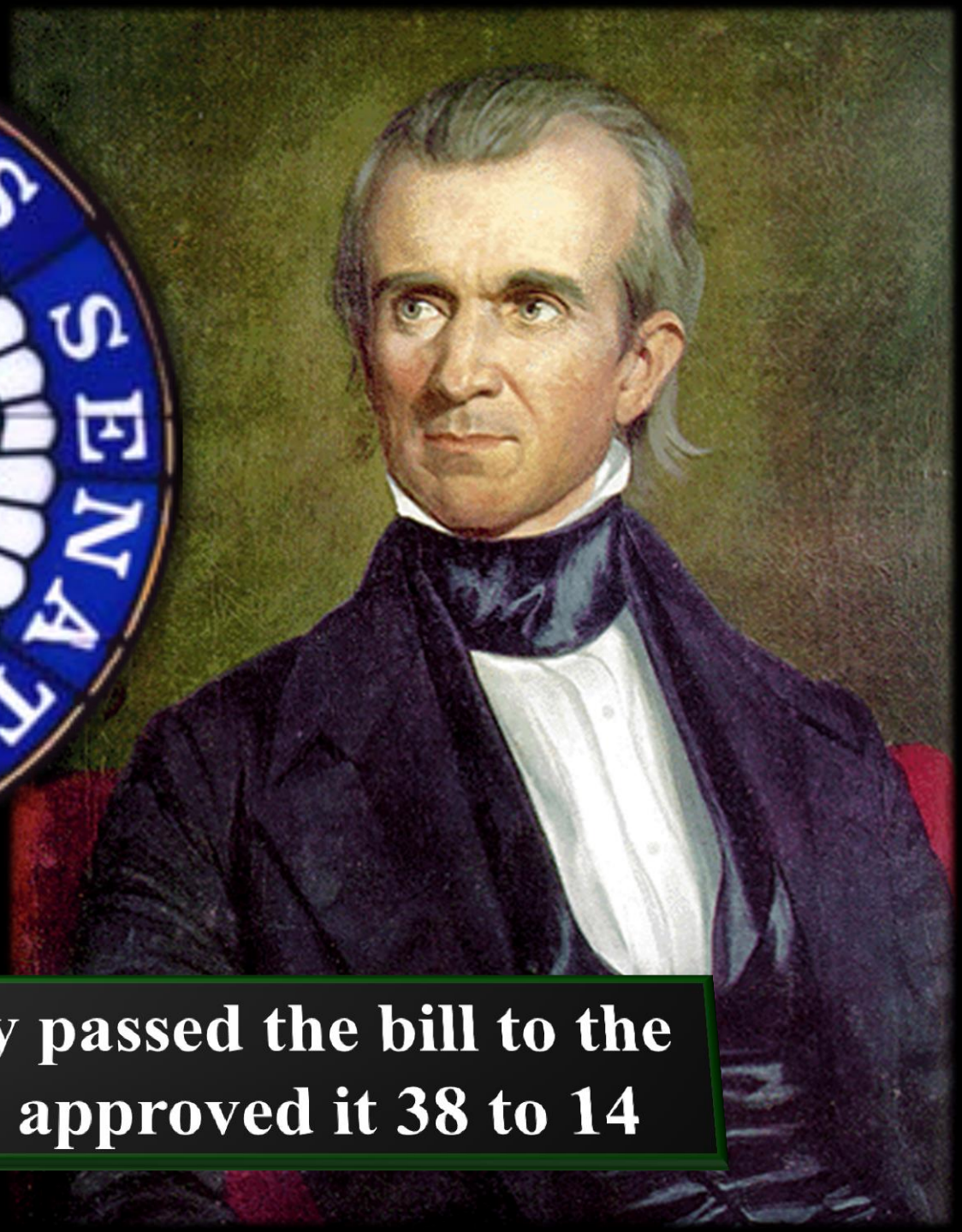


**Mexico gave US all land north of the Rio Grande from CA to TX (cost only \$15 million)**

**Some people in US wanted to end the war (northerners) while others wanted all of Mexico (many Southerners)**



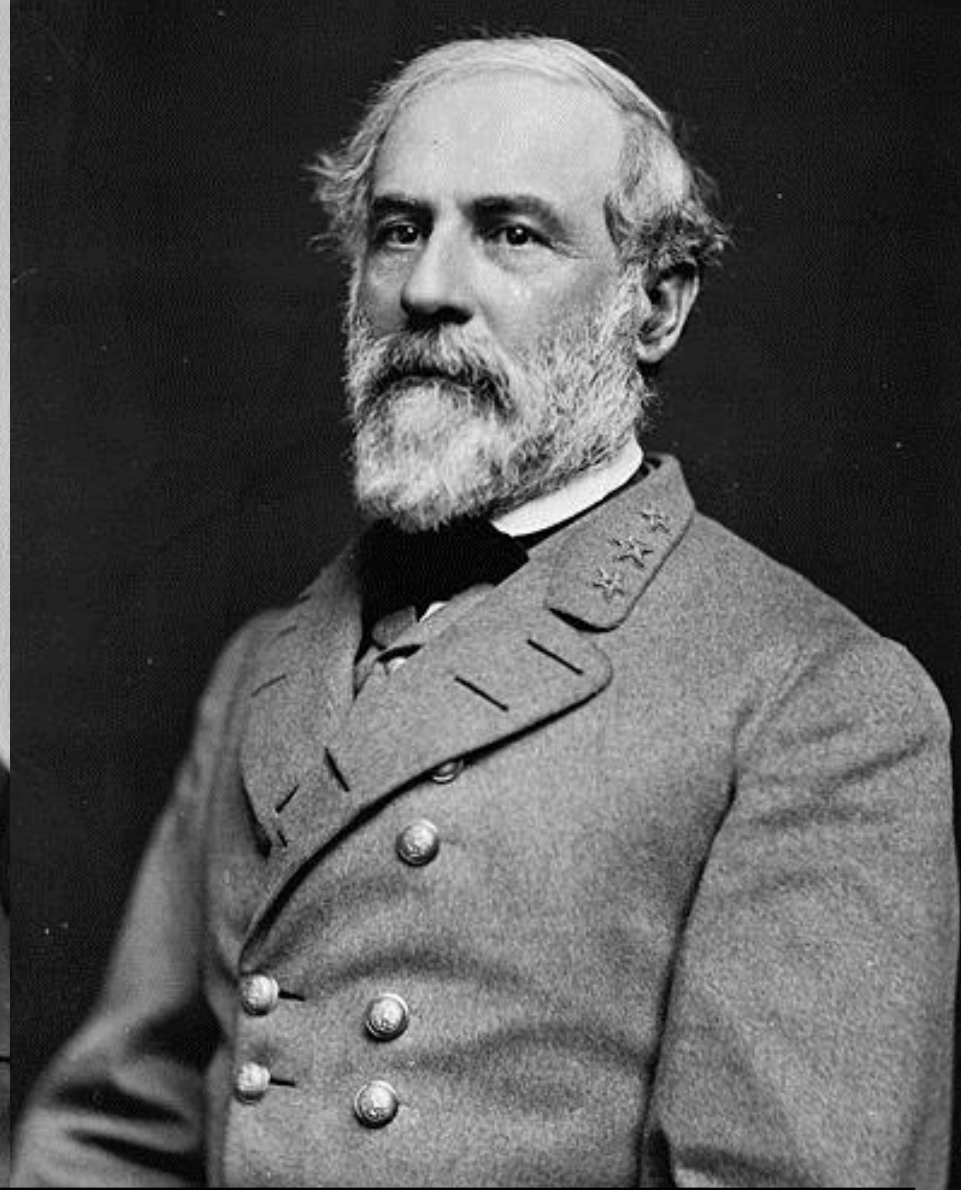
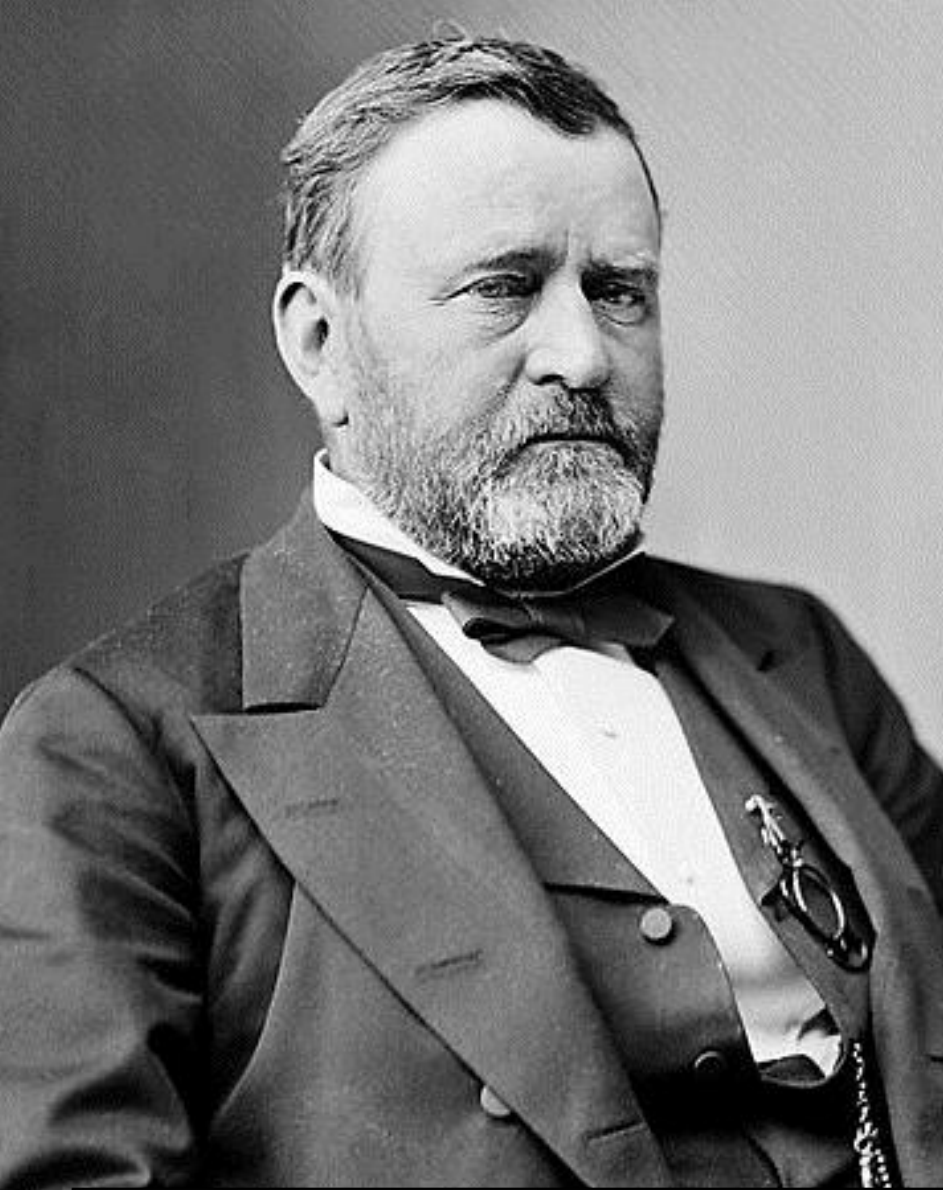




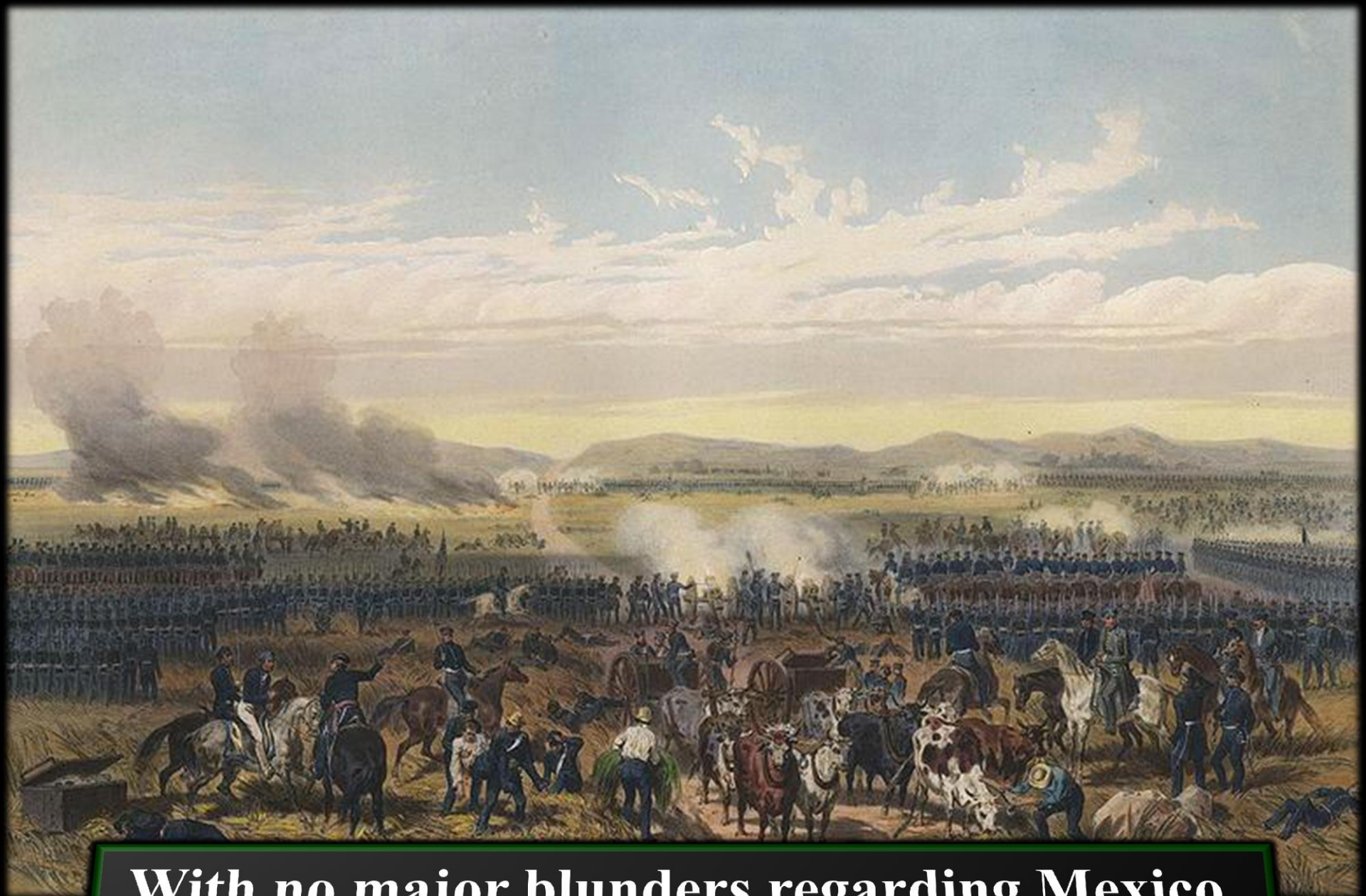
**Polk speedily passed the bill to the Senate who approved it 38 to 14**



**US lost 13,000 soldiers in  
the war (most by disease)**



**The war proved a practicing ground for the Civil War (Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee)**



**With no major blunders regarding Mexico, other countries now respected U.S. militarily**



**The acquisition of new territory in the West after the Mexican-American War led to a heated controversy over allowing or forbidding slavery in these territories**



**As overcultivation depleted arable land in the Southeast, slaveholders sought to relocate agricultural enterprises to the new Southwest (increasing sectional tensions)**

PROVIDED,...AS AN EXPRESS AND  
FUNDAMENTAL CONDITION TO THE  
ACQUISITION OF ANY (OF THE LAND FROM)  
THE REPUBLIC OF MEXICO BY THE UNITED  
STATES, BY VIRTUE OF ANY TREATY WHICH  
MAY BE NEGOTIATED BETWEEN THEM,...**NEITHER**  
**SLAVERY NOR INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE SHALL**  
**EVER EXIST IN ANY PART OF SAID TERRITORY.**

Northerners proposed the Wilmot  
Proviso hoping to ban slavery in the  
lands gained from Mexico

EIGHTH EDITION.

THE WILMOT PROVISIO

IS ABOLITION, AGGRESSIVE, REVOLUTIONARY, AND SUBVERSIVE OF  
THE CONSTITUTION AND ITS GUARANTIES TO THE  
SLAVEHOLDING STATES.

A

VOICE FROM THE SOUTH:

COMPRISING

LETTERS FROM

GEORGIA TO MASSACHUSETTS,

AND TO

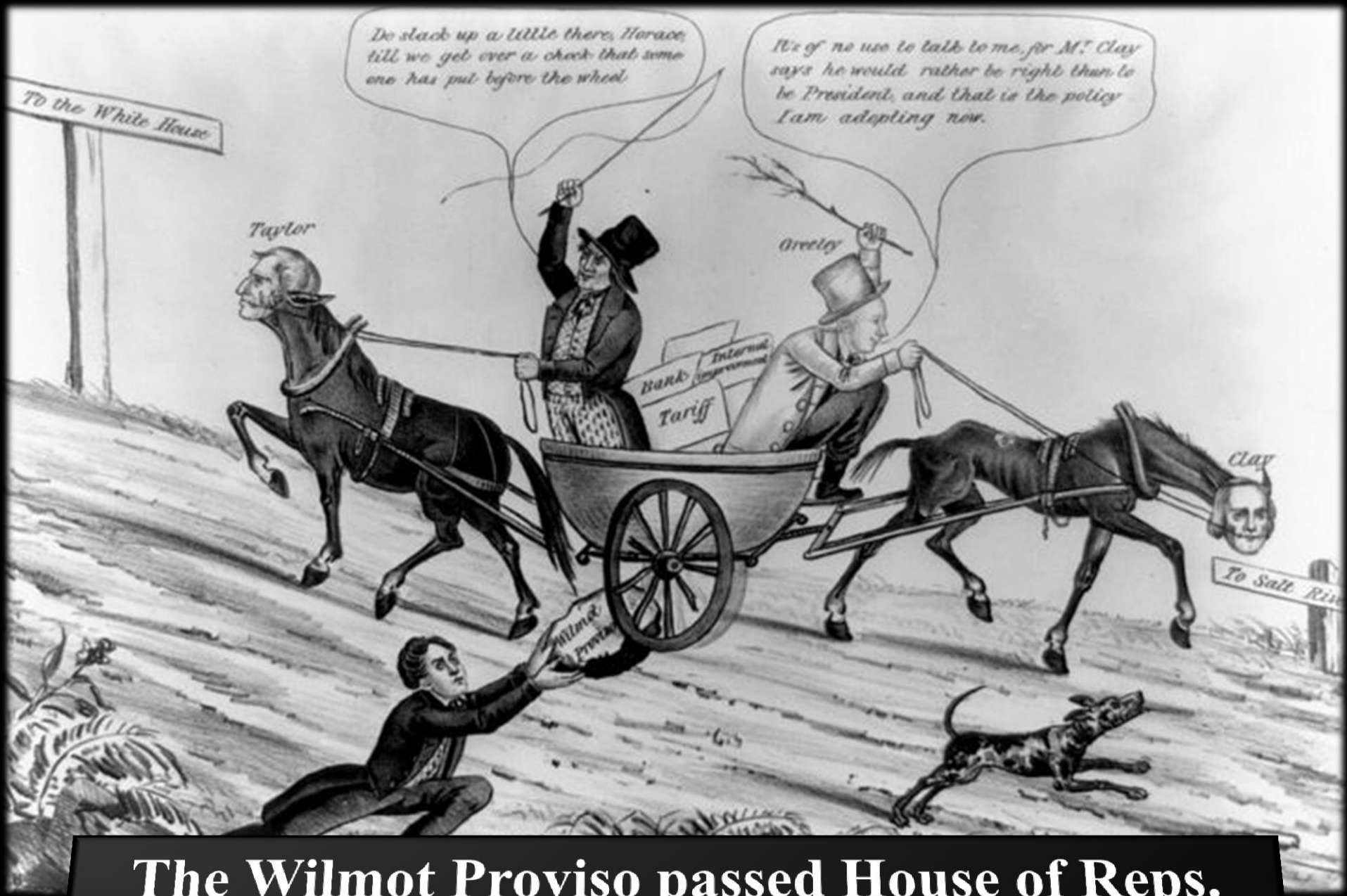
THE SOUTHERN STATES.

WITH AN

APPENDIX

CONTAINING AN ARTICLE FROM THE CHARLESTON MERCURY ON THE WILMOT PROVISIO, TOGETHER WITH THE FOURTH ARTICLE OF THE CONSTITUTION, THE LAW OF CONGRESS, THE NULLIFICATION LAW OF PENNSYLVANIA, THE RESOLUTIONS OF TEN OF THE FREE STATES, THE RESOLUTIONS OF VIRGINIA, GEORGIA AND ALABAMA, AND MR. CALHOUN'S RESOLUTIONS IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

H,  
ELLER,  
Gay.



**The Wilmot Proviso passed House of Reps.  
(controlled by North) twice but not the Senate**





**Mexico lost ½ its land in the war but took satisfaction that this land helped cause Civil War in U.S. (“Santa Anna’s Revenge”)**