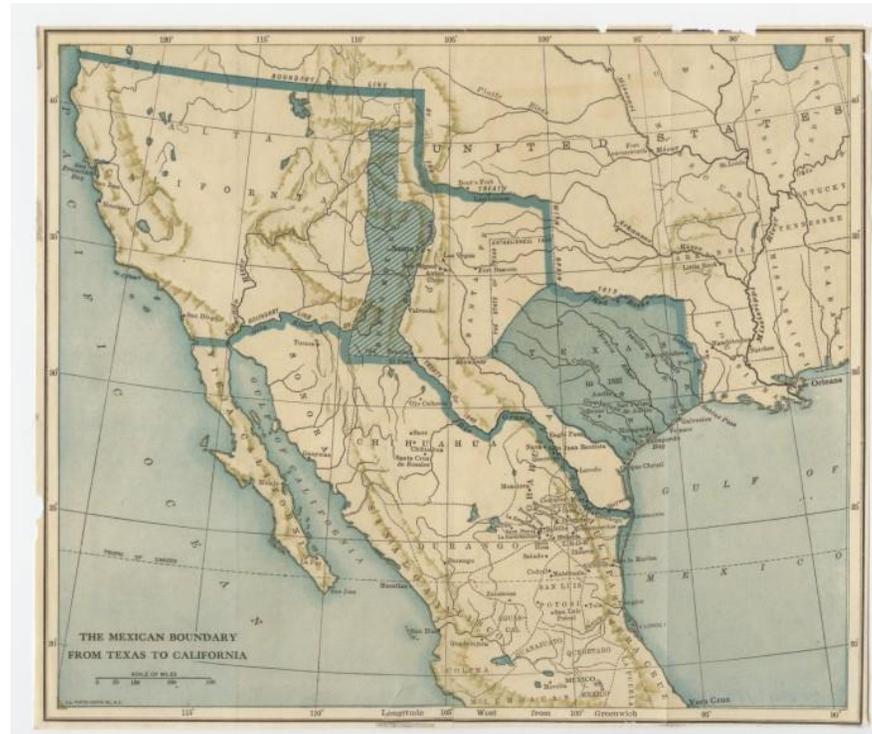


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UNIT NARRATIVE

The Republic of Texas

When Texas emerged as an independent republic (1836-1845), the new nation faced tremendous challenges: the nation was deeply in debt and Mexico, who refused to recognize Texas independence, threatened to reconquer the region. The United States also refused Texas's request to be annexed to the United States. Texans thus began forging their own nation, built on the Texas-grown cotton that made up more than 90 percent of the Republic's exports.

As the first president of the Republic, Sam Houston worked to put the Lone Star Republic on stable ground. Houston sought peace treaties with various Indian tribes in Texas, attempted to have Texas recognized by the nations of Europe, and tried to solve the Republic's financial problems. But Houston discovered that no European nations would recognize Texas, largely because slavery remained legal in the Republic. As a result, the Texas nation could not secure loans and had trouble selling its cotton abroad, driving the Republic deeper into debt.

The second president, Mirabeau Lamar, attempted to fix these problems by taking Texas in a radically new direction. Instead of making peace with Texas Indians, Lamar declared war on them, driving most groups out of East Texas. Lamar also failed to get most European nations to recognize Texas and his wars against Texas Indians had driven up the Republic's debt dramatically. When the price of cotton collapsed in Texas during the late 1830s (further compounding the nation's economic woes), Lamar launched a mission to nearby Santa Fe, New Mexico, that ended in disaster, embarrassing the Republic.

By the time Houston became president again during the early 1840s, challenges facing the Republic had made it difficult for Texas to defend itself. Mexico, indeed, invaded and took over San Antonio twice in 1842. As such, Houston pushed hard to have Texas annexed to the United States during the first half of the 1840s, an effort which finally succeeded under President Anson Jones in 1845.

Early Statehood

The annexation of Texas in 1845 led directly to the U.S.-Mexico War (1846-48), during which Texas served as the staging ground for U.S. armies that invaded both northern and central Mexico. When the war ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the United States took control of a massive swath of land between Texas and California (known as the Mexican Cession) that created the modern U.S.-Mexico border and ignited a political feud between Northerners and Southerners over whether slavery would be allowed to expand into these new western territories

During the twelve years that followed, American settlers poured into Texas. The population of Texas expanded from 212,000 in 1850 to more than 600,000 by 1860. Because the vast majority of these new Texans came from the southern United States, both cotton production and slavery also expanded dramatically. Cotton farming, the mainstay of the Texas economy, boomed: in 1849, Texans exported 58,000 bales of cotton; in 1860, Texans exported 430,000 bales. The enslaved African American population in the state also expanded from 58,000 in 1850 to more than 182,000 by 1860.

Texas, as a result, became increasingly involved in national debates over the future of slavery within the United States. Throughout the 1850s, Texan political leaders aligned themselves with the Deep South states that opposed efforts by the Republican Party and Northern politicians to stop the westward expansion of American slavery. Political turmoil over slavery and westward expansion during the 1850s ultimately led to the secession crisis of 1860-61, and the Civil War that followed. In February 1861, Anglo-Texans voted to leave the United States and soon thereafter joined the Confederate States of America.



This unit is adapted from the Texas History for Teacher Curriculum. For additional resources, check out: Texas History for Teachers.

CONTENT STANDARDS

Below are the standards **taught** and **assessed** in this unit.

Republic of Texas and Early Statehood		Connected Knowledge and Skills 7.10
7.4 History. The student understands how individuals, events, and issues shaped the history of the Republic of Texas and early Texas statehood.		
Readiness Standards	Supporting Standards	
7.1(A)^ identify the major eras in Texas history, describe their defining characteristics, and explain the purpose of dividing the past into eras, including ... Early Statehood ...	7.1(B)^ explain the significance of the following dates: ... 1845, annexation; ...	
7.4(B)* analyze the causes of and events leading to Texas annexation such as security and public debt	7.4(A) identify individuals, events, and issues during the administrations of Republic of Texas Presidents Houston, Lamar, and Jones such as the Texas Navy, the Texas Rangers, Jack Coffee Hays, Chief Bowles, William Goyens, Mary Maverick, José Antonio Navarro, the Córdova Rebellion, the Council House Fight, the Santa Fe Expedition, slavery, and the roles of racial and ethnic groups	
7.4(C)* identify individuals, events, and issues during early Texas statehood, including the U.S.-Mexican War, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, slavery, and the Compromise of 1850		
7.16(A)** identify different points of view of political parties and interest groups on important Texas issues, past and present	7.10(A)* identify why immigrant groups came to Texas and where they settled	
7.18(B)** describe how people from various racial, ethnic, and religious groups attempt to maintain their cultural heritage while adapting to the larger Texas culture	7.10(B)^ describe how immigration and migration to Texas have influenced Texas	

UNDERSTANDINGS AND QUESTIONS

Key Understandings

1. **The Republic of Texas faced major political, economic, and security challenges.** Heavy debt, lack of international recognition from Mexico, conflict with Texas Indians, and disagreements over annexation shaped the young republic's development and stability.
2. **Leaders of the Republic offered contrasting visions for Texas' future.** Presidents Sam Houston and Mirabeau Lamar disagreed on annexation, Indian policy, spending, and diplomacy, reflecting competing priorities for the Republic's growth.
3. **Conflict with Texas Indians defined life on the frontier.** Events like the Council House Fight and continued Comanche resistance revealed the tensions between westward Anglo migration and the survival of Native communities, while treaties such as the Meusebach-Comanche agreement showed alternative approaches to coexistence.
4. **Military expeditions demonstrated both ambition and vulnerability.** The Somervell Expedition and Mier Expedition illustrated Texans' attempts to retaliate against Mexico, but also exposed the republic's limited resources and international weakness.
5. **Annexation to the United States was widely supported by most Texans.** Despite concerns in the U.S. about slavery and war with Mexico, Texans saw annexation as a solution to debt, defense, and legitimacy, leading to statehood in 1845.
6. **The U.S.–Mexico War reshaped both Texas and the nation.** Causes such as border disputes and Manifest Destiny led to war, while U.S. victories and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo expanded U.S. territory to the Pacific and sparked debates about slavery in the new lands.
7. **Early Statehood brought population growth and cultural change.** Migration from the American South, European immigration (especially Germans and Poles), and the expansion of cotton and slavery transformed Texas' economy and society.
8. **National debates over slavery influenced Texas deeply.** The Compromise of 1850, conflicts over westward expansion, and events leading to the Election of 1860 tied Texas' fate to the growing sectional divide that would culminate in the Civil War.

Key Questions

- What political, economic, and security challenges shaped the Republic of Texas?
- How did leaders such as Sam Houston and Mirabeau Lamar differ in their visions for the future of Texas?
- In what ways did conflicts with Texas Indians and expeditions against Mexico reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the Republic?
- Why did many Texans support annexation to the United States, and why was it controversial in U.S. politics?
- How did the causes, key events, and outcomes of the U.S.–Mexico War impact both Texas and the United States?
- What changes did immigration, slavery, and westward migration bring to Texas during the Early Statehood era?
- How did national debates over slavery and expansion influence Texas' role in the United States leading up to the Civil War?