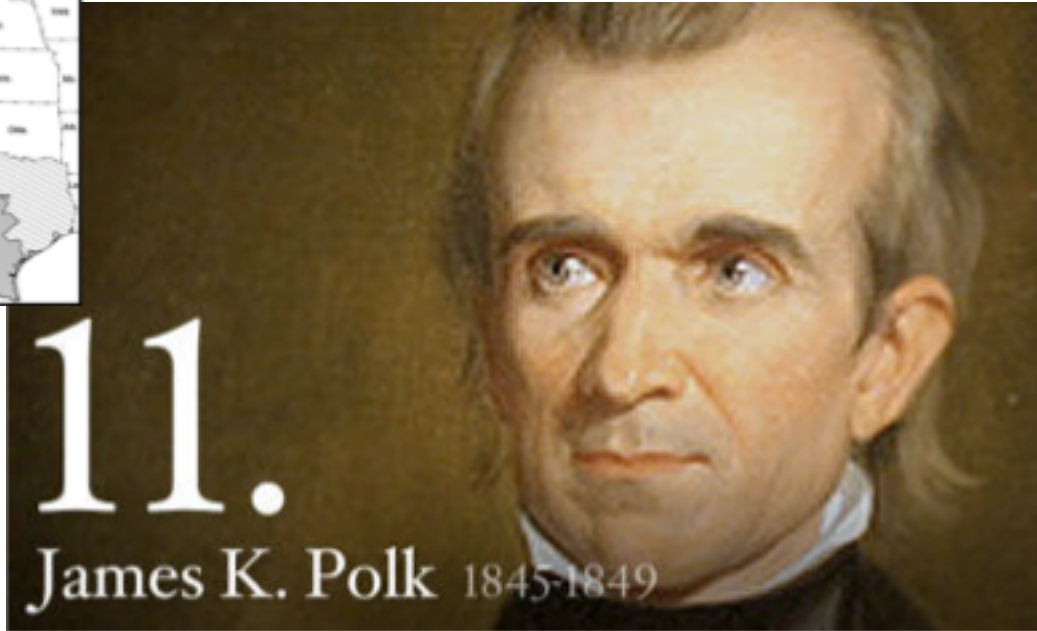


SSUSH8: EXPLORE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SLAVERY, GROWING NORTH-SOUTH DIVISIONS, AND WESTWARD EXPANSION THAT LED TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE CIVIL WAR.



ELEMENT B: *Examine James K. Polk's presidency in fulfillment of Manifest Destiny including the Texas annexation and Oregon.*



President James K. Polk

- ❑ James K. Polk became the eleventh President of the United States after winning a close election in 1844.
- ❑ Once in office, Polk added to the nation's western lands by annexing Texas and part of Oregon.
- ❑ Many Americans believed that expansion across the continent was the destiny of the United States.
- ❑ Others worried that the bold acquisition of land would lead to war.
 - The actions of James K. Polk during his presidency did both- he added territory to the United States and fought a war with Mexico over expansion.
- ❑ Americans have always looked westward.
 - As the coastal plains filled, colonists arriving from Europe sought unclaimed land in the backcountry of each colony.
 - After the French and Indian War, settlers crossed the Appalachians and entered the Tennessee and Ohio River Basins.
 - After the American Revolution, settlers began to fill the Ohio Valley and moved out into western Georgia and Alabama.
 - The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 doubled the size of America's land holdings and brought new opportunities to move westward into the Mississippi River Valley.
 - Florida, the last piece of foreign held territory in the east was acquired in 1819 from Spain.



Manifest Destiny



John Gast, *American Progress*

- ❑ By 1850, Americans had settled California, Oregon, and Washington on the Pacific coast.
- ❑ The process of settlement took 150 years to reach the Appalachians, 50 years to reach the Mississippi River and another 30 years to settle the Pacific states.
- ❑ In 230 years, Americans had come to dominate the continent.
- ❑ Americans believed such rapid expansion must have been a result of divine favor referred to as Manifest Destiny.

Manifest Destiny



- ❑ Manifest Destiny was a phrase coined to describe the belief that America was to expand and settle the entire continent of North America.
 - The phrase originated in 1845 when John L. O'Sullivan, a newspaper editor, wrote that it was America's "Manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions."
- ❑ The center of population growth in the years after the War of 1812 was in the future states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and northern Kentucky.
 - In this region three factors encouraged families in the eastern states to move into the Midwest.
 1. First, American Indians were removed from the region.
 2. Second, land speculators acquired large tracts of land and were eager to sell.
 3. Third, as the national infrastructure moved westward it was easier to migrate west.
 - Although interest rates on land were high, so were grain prices throughout the 1830s and 1840s.
 - Fertile soil and the development of better plows and harvesters allowed farmers to produce large crop yields, which increased the allure of westward expansion.



Presidential Election of 1844

- ❑ Westward expansion was a pivotal issue in the 1844 Presidential election.
- ❑ Texas was not a state at the time and was a region heavily entrenched in slavery.
- ❑ Many Northerners were opposed to the annexation of Texas due to the slavery issue and its political implications.
 - The Democratic Party struggled with the issue and was divided over which candidate to nominate to be their party's representative in the election.
 - Former President Martin Van Buren of New York was opposed to annexation.
- ❑ The Southern members of the Democratic Party supported John C. Calhoun of South Carolina for the nomination.
 - Calhoun was in favor of slavery and the immediate annexation of Texas.
- ❑ The nominating convention was at an impasse between the two Democrats until the Party finally nominated James K. Polk from Tennessee.
 - He was a true expansionist who believed in Manifest Destiny and wanted to annex Texas and take claim of Oregon and California.
 - His campaign slogan, "Fifty-four Forty or Fight!" was a reference to the latitudinal boundary between the Oregon Territory and Russian held Alaska.



Polk's Presidency in Fulfillment of Manifest Destiny

- ❑ The Democratic victory in 1844 was thought to be a signal from the public that annexation of Texas was the desire of the people.
- ❑ Texas was annexed and when Polk took office it was up to him to deal with Mexico's reaction to the American claim to land they viewed as their own.
- ❑ Polk also faced a decision about how to fulfill the campaign promise of acquiring Oregon that was also claimed by Great Britain.
 - Since 1818, Great Britain and the United States had essentially shared claim to Oregon through a treaty that was signed between the two nations calling for joint occupation.
 - It was likely that Polk would have to fight Mexico to resolve the southern border dispute in Texas and also fight Great Britain to secure claim to the Oregon territory.



- Fighting Great Britain for a third time was the least appealing option.
- Mexico had recently won its independence from Spain in 1821 after hundreds of years of occupation.
- Given Mexico's new status and uncertain leadership, Britain would be the less desirable opponent in a conflict over expansion.

Polk's Presidency in Fulfillment of Manifest Destiny



Oregon Territory Negotiation



- ❑ Polk ultimately negotiated with Great Britain concerning Oregon in an attempt to avoid armed conflict over the region.
 - Instead of acquiring the entire Oregon territory to the 54 Degrees 40" line, a compromise was reached.
 - The Oregon territory would be divided and the northern section would remain in Great Britain's possession and the southern section would be annexed by the United States.
 - The Senate ratified the Oregon Treaty in 1846, the same year the United States went to war with Mexico over Texas.
- ❑ Polk had fulfilled the Manifest Destiny of the United States to span the North American continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific coastlines.